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]
• Complete Scope and Sequence [p. 5]
• Current Year Overview [p. 6]
• Current Quarter Overview [p. 9]

A WORD ABOUT WHAT’S AHEAD... (student introduction)

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; 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 will also 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.*
WHY THE BIBLE STORY APPROACH? (teacher introduction)

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 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

PS. Don’t forget to check out the reading plan.
What tools are provided for teaching the stories?

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

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

2. 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?”

3. 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.

4. 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.

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

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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. Anointed
8. Fugitive
9. Lunatic
10. Crowned King
11. Incombent
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 Demonic

**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
### 1st Quarter

#### 1. The Message
- **Scripture Story:** John 1:1-18.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 1.

#### 2. Countdown to the Savior
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 2, 3.

#### 3. Servant of the Lord
- **Scripture Story:** Luke 1:38-57.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 4.

#### 4. What You Seek Is What You Get
- **Scripture Story:** John 2:1-22.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 5.

#### 5. Following Yonder Star
- **Scripture Story:** Matthew 2:1-12.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 6.

#### 6. Growing Up
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 7, 8, 9.

#### 7. One of a Kind
- **Scripture Story:** Matthew 3:1-17; Luke 1:1-23.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 10, 11.

#### 8. Hard Target
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 12, 13.

#### 9. Come See
- **Scripture Story:** Matthew 4:14-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 14.

#### 10. Partying With Jesus
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 15.

#### 11. Get Out of My House!
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 16.

#### 12. A Slow Burn
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 17.

#### 13. It’s Your Turn
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 18.

### 2nd Quarter

#### 1. Unlikely Missionary
- **Scripture Story:** John 4:1-42.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 19.

#### 2. Seeing Is Believing?
- **Scripture Story:** John 4:43-54.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 20.

#### 3. Do You Want to Get Well?
- **Scripture Story:** John 5:1-17.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 21.

#### 4. Appearance Vs. Reality
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 22.

#### 5. A Tumultuous Homecoming
- **Scripture Story:** Luke 4:16-30.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 23, 24.

#### 6. I’m a Follower
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 25.

#### 7. The Day the Devil Went to Church
- **Scripture Story:** Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-28.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 26.

#### 8. Willing and Able
- **Scripture Story:** Matthew 9:9-17; Mark 2:14-22; Luke 5:27-39.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 27.

#### 9. Not Love at First Sight
- **Scripture Story:** Matthew 9:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 28.

#### 10. Front and Center
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapter 29.

#### 11. Jesus Calling
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 30, 31.

#### 12. Faith-FULL Soldier
- **Scripture Story:** Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-17.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 32, 33.

#### 13. Used-to-Be’s and Has-Beens
- **Scripture Story:** Luke 8:26-39.
- **Commentary:** The Desire of Ages, chapters 34, 35.
### 3rd Quarter

1. **Woman With Issue of Blood and Jairus' Daughter**  
   **Scripture Story:** Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56.  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 36.

2. **The Seventy**  
   **Scripture Story:** Matthew 10; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:1-6.  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 37.

3. **A Day in the Life of a Disciple**  
   **Scripture** Matthew 14:1, 2, 12, 13; Mark 6:30-32; Luke 9:7-10; Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13; Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 8:45-52; John 6:1-21.  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 38, 39, 40.

4. **Misunderstand the Messiah**  
   **Scripture Story:** John 6:22-71; Matthew 15:1, 2; Mark 7:1-23.  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 41, 42.

5. **Syrophoenician Woman**  
   **Scripture Story:** Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 43.

6. **Ministry of Jesus**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 44, 45, 46, 47.

7. **Who Is Jesus?**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 49, 50, 51, 52.

8. **The Lawyer and the Rich Young Ruler**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 53, 54, 57.

9. **The Children**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 55, 56.

10. **Lazarus, Mary, and Martha**  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 58, 59.

11. **Zack**  
    **Scripture Story:** Luke 19:1-10.  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 61.

12. **Mary**  
    **Scripture Story:** Matthew 26:6-13; Luke 7:36-50; Mark 14:3-11; John 11:55-57; 12:1-11.  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 62.

13. **James and John**  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 48, 60.

### 4th Quarter

1. **Jesus and Jerusalem**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 63, 64, 65.

2. **Jesus vs. Pharisees**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 66, 67.

3. **Jesus and the End of Time**  
   **Scripture Story:** John 12:20-43; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21:5-38.  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 68, 69.

4. **Jesus and Servanthood**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 70, 71.

5. **Jesus and the Last Supper**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 72, 73.

6. **Gethsemane**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 74.

7. **Trial of Jesus**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 75, 76, 77.

8. **Calvary**  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 78, 79.

9. **Resurrection**  
   **Scripture Story:** Matthew 28:2-4, 11-15.  
   **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 80, 81.

10. **Mary M**  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 82.

11. **Disciples on the Road to Emmaus**  
    **Scripture Story:** Luke 24:13-33.  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 83.

12. **John and Peter by the Sea**  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 84, 85.

13. **Jesus' Ascension**  
    **Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 86, 87.
April

4—Unlikely Missionary [p. 11]
On the strength of one woman’s witness, an entire village was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. Can one person’s story really make a difference?

11—Seeing Is Believing? [p. 15]
A royal official believed Jesus’ words that his son was healed—even before he returned to his son. A lesson in faith that can echo in our hearts still today.

18—Do You Want to Get Well? [p. 19]
Many people prefer bondage to redemption. Is it possible that the lame man by the pool of Bethesda preferred it as well?

25—Appearance Vs. Reality [p. 23]
John the Baptist had the incredible job of announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand. Unfortunately, he didn’t live long enough to see its ultimate fulfillment.

May

2—A Tumultuous Homecoming [p. 27]
What began for Jesus as a speaking appointment in His childhood synagogue turned into a vicious attempt on His life.

9—I’m a Follower [p. 31]
Peter and the other fishermen left everything behind to follow Jesus. What does commitment to Jesus look like in the twenty-first century?

16—The Day the Devil Went to Church [p. 35]
The demon-possessed man had just enough spiritual power to come to Jesus. That was all he needed. That is all we need to come to Jesus.

23—Willing and Able [p. 39]
A dying leper dares to enter society because he hears that Jesus is coming and has never turned anyone away. Would Jesus accept him, too?

30—Not Love at First Sight [p. 43]
Jesus would rather be in the midst of sinners than in a room filled with so-called “just and noble” people. Actually, He sought them out.

June

6—Front and Center [p. 47]
Criticism didn’t bother Jesus; He was used to it. But when the religious leaders missed the point about the Sabbath, offering His people an empty way of life, He couldn’t let it go.

13—Jesus Calling [p. 51]
Our call to discipleship is always followed by a call to live in service to humanity. But how do we do that?

20—Faith-FULL Soldier [p. 55]
A centurion, a servant, and a Savior. The family of God transcends all cultures and creeds.

27—Used-to-Be’s and Has-Beens [p. 59]
Even when the man’s best and only response to Jesus was spewed hate and hopelessness, Jesus could see the tiny part of his heart that demons did not occupy. And He set him free! He can do the same for us.
Scripture Story: John 4:1-42.
Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapter 19.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
Jesus travels through Samaria and has an encounter with an unlikely new disciple—a woman, and one who is not only a Samaritan but most likely an outcast within her own community. Jesus’ constant habit of reaching out to the margins of society was never more evident than on the afternoon when He sat down by a well and asked a Samaritan woman to draw water so He could have a drink. But not only did this woman become a believer in Jesus herself, she also became an active missionary within minutes of her first conversation with Jesus. On the strength of her first-hand witness, an entire village of Samaritans came to hear Jesus for themselves, and left convinced they had met the Messiah.

The experience of the woman at the well vividly illustrates that we don’t need to be experienced theology graduates or Christians of long standing in order to witness for Jesus. Witnessing is just telling what we’ve seen, heard, and experienced—and inviting people to discover for themselves.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Understand that anyone can be a witness for Jesus. (Know)
• Feel that their own experience with Jesus is worth sharing with others. (Feel)
• Choose to witness for Jesus by telling people what He has done in their lives. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Service to others
• Prejudice
• Acceptance

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.

Who can be a missionary? In fact, what does it mean to be a missionary, or to witness for Jesus? Are they the same thing? Can any Christian do them?

Ask students to brainstorm words and phrases that come to their minds when you mention “witnessing” or “missions.” Write words and phrases on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart. When everyone has had a chance to contribute, discuss the words and phrases you’ve written down. Are they positive images—things that young people feel good about? What are their emotions concerning witnessing? Do they think it’s something that they can do, should do, or have to do? Does it excite them, scare them, or leave them cold?

Emphasize that this week’s lesson will focus on the fact that anyone who has had a personal experience with Jesus can be a witness simply by sharing what they know with others.
Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:

About 30 years ago, in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., an American teacher developed a simple classroom exercise to illustrate the power of prejudice to her students. She told the children that having blue eyes meant they were more intelligent, and gave greater privileges to the blue-eyed children. Very quickly she observed that the blue-eyed children were bullying and oppressing the brown-eyed children, while those with brown eyes demonstrated fear and low self-esteem—even though she conducted the exercise for only one day! The next day, Ms. Elliot returned to her class and told the children that what she’d told them the previous day was untrue—it was actually brown-eyed children who were more intelligent and would have more privileges. The same experience happened in reverse—now the brown-eyed children began to oppress the others.

The experience opened students’ eyes—both blue and brown!—to the power of prejudice and the divisions we create between people. Just like the Jews and Samaritans in Jesus’ day, we tend to divide people up on the basis of race, language, culture, religion, and many other barriers. We decide who’s “in” and who’s “out,” who’s cool and who’s not. Jesus saw past all those barriers. He chooses His followers from every race, culture, and background, and He asks us to look past those barriers, too.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Share the following in your own words:

When Jesus sat down beside the well and asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water, everything He did was shocking. As a Jew, He wasn’t supposed to speak to a Samaritan. As a man in that culture, He wasn’t supposed to speak to a woman alone. And this particular woman had had five husbands, which probably made her a social outcast in her community. But Jesus always sees past barriers and labels to the person inside.

What kind of labels do we put on others? What labels do we put on ourselves? We may decide that a particular person could never do great work for God just because of who they are or where they come from. We might even decide that about ourselves! But God chooses all kinds of people—just like the woman at the well!

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.

Break down the experience of the woman at the well into the following steps, writing the headings on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart and asking students to contribute their ideas.

• What did she need? (some ideas might include: hope, acceptance, belonging, forgiveness)
• What did Jesus offer? (“living water,” promise that He was the Messiah, insight into her life)
• How did she respond? (questioned Him at first, ran off to tell others)
• What was the result? (her entire village came to hear Jesus and believed in Him)

Now ask the students to brainstorm ideas of other Bible stories in which a person had a memorable encounter with Jesus, and do the same for each of those stories. What kinds of needs did people bring to Jesus? (In many cases it was physical healing, but people also came in need of forgiveness and acceptance.) Try to find examples of stories in which the people went on to tell others what Jesus had done for them. (Two examples are given in the Punch Lines section of the student lesson and expanded upon in Wednesday’s student lesson.)

• Ask: “What qualifications did this woman, or any of the other people we’ve discussed, have that made them able to witness?” (personal experience, having met Jesus, been changed by Him).

Refer back to the brainstorming discussion at the beginning of the lesson. What kinds of qualifications do we feel like we need in order to be witnesses? Did these people have those qualifications?

• Challenge students to think of ways in which they can use their own personal experience to be witnesses—to share with others what God has done for them.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: see passages from the Punch Lines section of the student lesson.

Sharing Context and Background
Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.
There are two major themes within this story: Jesus’ willingness to reach out to outsiders and the marginalized within society, and the woman’s willingness to immediately become a missionary by sharing her personal experience with others.

These two threads come together when the disciples return and respond to Jesus’ interaction with the woman. (For further reflection on this, read The Desire of Ages chapter for this lesson: “At Jacob’s Well.”) The disciples didn’t see Samaria as a valid field for evangelism because their racial and religious prejudices were too deeply ingrained—they saw Jesus as the Messiah for the Jews alone. If He were to reach out to someone within the Samaritan community, a socially outcast, five-times-married, living-in-sin female was the last person they would have chosen.

Jesus’ vision of witnessing is so much broader than ours! It reaches out to everyone—not just those who are like us, those we are comfortable with—but also to the excluded, the outcast, the marginalized. Challenge students to think about who that might be in their community, church, or school. Jesus’ idea of a good witness is also broader than His disciples’ idea was—He had (and still has) a place in His work for anyone who has had a genuine experience with Him, no matter how others may view that person.

Young people in your group may have experienced prejudice directed at them—maybe because of race or culture or social class, or maybe just because they’re teenagers, and adults don’t like they way they dress, talk, or do things. Remind them that Jesus doesn’t look only for pastors, theology students, and Bible workers to share His love—He uses anyone who knows Him and loves Him to reach out to others.

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

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

### Tips for Top-notch Teaching

**The Rest of the Story**

The concept of “story” isn’t new. But especially in our attempts to share our personal stories of our relationship with Christ and how that relationship has impacted our lives, this concept can be challenging.

One way to help students share their stories is to ask them to write down five of their life experiences that have impacted them spiritually. Then ask them to try to identify a particular theme that is woven throughout those experiences. For example, “All of these experiences involved my being afraid of something or someone, but Christ replaced my fear with courage,” or “All of these experiences made me feel very inadequate, but God gave me a sense of worth and value.”

It’s from this theme that students can share how Christ has impacted their lives.

### 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 The Desire of Ages. 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.
Some preachers and teachers have “soul winning” and “witnessing” boiled down to a formula by which you should be able to tell your personal story of what Christ has done for you in three minutes or less. Real-life conversations aren’t often like that. Witnessing works best when we’re talking to people who know us, people we can be honest with, about what’s really happened in our lives.

Give each student a blank card or postcard and ask them to write a few sentences to a friend who doesn’t know Jesus, telling this person something about what Jesus has done for them. After giving them a little time to write, challenge them to pray about whether they can share that card, or the message on it, with that person this week.

Summary

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

We draw so many lines to exclude and divide people. Jesus stepped over those lines. He was interested in including people, not excluding them.

One line that people in the church sometimes draw is to say that you can’t work for the Lord unless you’re older, or you’ve had a certain kind of training, or you’ve gotten everything in your life in order and you haven’t made any mistakes for the last 10 years. But that’s not the way Jesus recruited workers for His cause. Anybody who had really gotten to know Him—even the Samaritan woman at the well—was qualified to tell others what Jesus had done for them. It’s still the same today. If you know Jesus, if He’s touched your life in any way, then you have all the qualifications you need to share Him with others. You don’t need to be able to preach or give Bible studies—though those are wonderful gifts if you do have them. All you need is to be able to do what the woman at the well did: tell others, “I met this Man, and here’s what He did for me. Why don’t you come meet Him too?”
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This is a lesson about a father’s love for his child and God’s love for His children. Its focus is faith. The royal official who came to Jesus in Cana to beseech His intervention as his son lay dying becomes a lesson in trust for us all. He came believing Jesus must follow him home to heal his son. The nobleman made a favorable answer to that request a test for his accepting Jesus as Messiah, but God’s ways are not man’s ways.

He didn’t realize the Savior had beheld his affliction before he’d left home. He had a measure of faith, enough that he came to Cana to ask for the most wonderful of blessings, that Jesus would restore health to his son. Jesus had a greater gift in mind that involved not only healing the boy but also saving the nobleman and his family while laying the groundwork for His earthly ministry in Capernaum.

Speaking to the nobleman (and to those around him), Jesus said, “Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders you will never believe.” The nobleman grasped the import of those words and leaped in faith to realize that the word of the Lord was sufficient when Jesus said, “You may go. Your son will live.” Indeed, at that very instant, the boy was healed. His words, and that lesson in faith, echo to our hearts today.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Recognize that seeing isn’t believing in that God’s Word is sufficient and His will is to bless us beyond our furthest thoughts. (Know)
• Realize that the words of Jesus to the nobleman and to the residents of Cana are also directed to all people through human history and that they, too, must trust His promises. (Feel)
• Resolve to trust God fully, even without seeing signs and wonders. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Miracles and the miraculous
• Faith
• Promises

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.

Show a clip of a group of people engaged in a “trust fall” or experiencing a “rope challenge course” as a discussion starter to focus attention on trust-building exercises. Invite your students to discuss any experiences they may have had with such activities. Make a list in front of the class of how such experiences can strengthen faith.

The phrase “seeing is believing” is not necessarily true. Jesus sought to turn that way of thinking to a
higher plane—to trust that His Word alone is sufficient. Show your students several optical illusions you can find online or at your local library to debunk the adage.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

In 1978 there was a gas crisis in America leading to high prices and long lines at the pumps. I was still in college. My fiancée, who had recently graduated and begun work in a job that required a car, was involved in an accident one Friday afternoon. Her car was a total loss, although she was unhurt. She met me at an on-campus weekend Marriage Enrichment Seminar and explained what happened. We prayed that God would provide.

As introductions during the seminar took place, it was obvious we were troubled. My soon-to-be wife shared the traumatic story of the accident, how it had suddenly left her adrift without a way to work, without a car needed for work, and with no money to replace the car. One couple, well established in their medical professions, looked at each other and hatched a plan.

They had a like-new 1975 Mercury Grand Marquis Brougham, a huge car with a monstrous appetite for gasoline. It had been advertised for sale for months with no takers because it went 8 miles per gallon of gas. They donated the car to our church (thereby gaining a tax benefit for their charitable contribution) and the church transferred the title to my fiancée. By the end of the weekend God provided a way! The donors said it would be fine to exchange the car for a more economical model if we could not afford the gas. We couldn’t and we did. God saw our need before we knew it ourselves, had an answer to prayer parked in a driveway, and moved upon the hearts of two dear people to give away a perfectly fine car.

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

The phrase “seeing is believing” remains meaningful today because its message rings true to many people. If you can’t trust your own eyes, what can you trust? The paradox for Christians is that faith ultimately relies on the unseen (see Hebrews 11:1). God desires to bless us more than we can imagine and longs for our faith to be strong so we can easily ask, believe, and claim His promises. Miracles abound.

**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.

- One of the deepest pains is the anguish felt by a parent seeing their child suffering unto death. A measure of comfort comes when the utterly helpless turn to the utmost Helper as did the nobleman father. If you have a child, help your students to understand that feeling. If you don’t have a child, ask a parent to explain it to your students. Does it help to know that God the Father gave His Son so we may have everlasting life?
- The royal official dad changed from an attitude of “seeing is believing” to “believing in faith” that Jesus had healed his son. He realized the words of Jesus pertaining to signs and wonders were an indictment of his faith. He acted on his newfound faith by heading home with peace and joy that Jesus heard, healed, and had begun to help his entire family enter His gates with thanksgiving.
- Help your students understand the meaning of a “prophet has no honor in his own country,” perhaps by sharing examples of people you went to school with who were involved in boisterous activities back then but who matured to become upstanding citizens with responsible jobs.
- False christs, false prophets, signs and wonders . . . what is a young Christian to do so as not to be deceived? Lead your students to an awareness that the time to prepare is now. The time to commune with the Holy Spirit is today and every day. Fortified with knowledge gleaned from the Scriptures, the example of Jesus, the pen of Ellen White, and perhaps a future last-days God-led prophet, they can stand in faith that God is with them, an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Hebrews 11:1; Matthew 6:30-34; 8:25-27; 16:5-10.*

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

The Bible passage that is the focus of this week’s
lesson begins in John 4:43 with the phrase “After the two days,” meaning the day after the events recorded in verses 5-39. The journey of verses 3-5 is now resumed. In verse 45 the phrase “They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast” is probably a reference to the incidents of John 2:13-23, whereby the cleansing of the Temple led to reports that Jesus had declared Himself the Messiah.

The meeting between the royal official and Jesus took place in Cana, which is approximately 16 miles (25 km) from Capernaum where the sick boy was located. The request by the boy’s father is the first recorded request for healing made of Jesus (The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 943).

Jesus knew the father had, in his own mind, made conditions concerning his belief in Jesus as the Messiah. “Unless his petition should be granted, he would not receive Him as the Messiah. While the officer waited in an agony of suspense, Jesus said, ‘Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.’

“Like a flash of light, the Saviour’s words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible.

“‘Go thy way,’ He said; ‘thy son liveth.’ The nobleman left the Savior’s presence with a peace and joy he had never known before. Not only did he believe that his son would be restored, but with strong confidence he trusted in Christ as the Redeemer” (The Desire of Ages, pp. 197-199).

The royal official’s faith was emboldened by his experience with Jesus. He did not rush home, a four- or five-hour trip, to see what had happened to his son. His assurance in Jesus was such that his servants met him the following morning, some distance from home,
to report the boy had turned for the better about the seventh hour (i.e., 1:00 p.m.), the same hour that Jesus had told the father his son would live (The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 944).

III. CLOSING

**Activity**

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

If not used as an opening activity, show your students several optical illusions you’ve found online or at your local library. These illusions will clearly demonstrate that you can’t necessarily trust your own eyes. Quote Pontius Pilate’s “What is truth?” Lead your students to answers such as God’s Word, Jesus, etc.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

People rarely deal in absolutes anymore. Red lights used to mean Stop. Now they mean Stop, but it is OK to turn right sometimes. A copy machine used to make copies. Now they are multifunctional devices that copy, fax, print, scan, staple, sort, hole-punch, and provide Internet access. Some absolutes (that were part of this week’s lesson) remain. They include that God’s Word is sure, God desires to bless us beyond our furthest thoughts, we can turn to God as an ever-present help in time of need, and the Bible contains lessons for today’s world through the stories recorded there.

To ask, believe, and claim God’s promises seems so simple. It is—when we have the faith of little children.
do you want to get well?

Scripture Story: John 5.
Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapter 21.
Key Text: John 5:6, 8.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of the lame man is a compelling reminder of the power of God to heal us of our ailments. It should not be assumed, however, that every handicapped sinner wants to be healed. This explains the bizarre question that Jesus asked the paralytic: “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6, NIV).

Couldn’t Jesus have assumed the man wanted healing? After all, he was at the pool reputed to be a place of healing. Still, Jesus asked.

It’s a fair question. It’s the same question that we must ask ourselves if we are serious about overcoming the habits that sabotage the soul. Truth be told, often what poisons spiritual life is a daily diet of destructive choices. Given that these are our decisions, we may not really want to be healed.

Many people prefer bondage to redemption. As a pastor, I have seen a steady parade of people march through my office seeking freedom from some sin. The confession rings familiar: “Help!” comes the cry. “I want freedom from”—and you can fill in the blank—alcohol, anger, drug abuse, masturbation, food, soap operas, romance novels, gossip, shopping, or whatever avenue of escape you prefer.

At first, I thought I could cure everybody’s problems. That’s because I failed to start with Jesus’ question. I erroneously assumed that anybody seeking help from a pastor really wanted to be healed. More and more, however, I am discovering the rich discernment that Jesus displayed in His question of the paralytic.

The curious thing about us is that often the very behavioral patterns that tend to destroy us are the ones we are most reticent to change. We say on an intellectual or spiritual level, “Yes, my pride is ruining my life. My anger is destroying my relationships. Gluttony is sabotaging my self-esteem.” Yet we can’t seem to change—nor do we really want to.

This lesson provides an opportunity to challenge students to honestly confront the question of whether or not they really want freedom from spiritual disabilities. But more important, the story offers hope for healing!

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Learn about the power of God to heal. (Know)
• Discover our role in spiritual healing. (Feel)
• Assess the cost of sin versus healing and freedom. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Freedom/healing from sin
• Consequences
• Sabbath
• Outreach and service
• Sin/evil/evil

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.

After reading each statement below, have the students position themselves somewhere on a continuum in the room by standing on the far right (meaning “I emphatically agree”) or on the far left (meaning “I emphatically disagree”) or somewhere in between that reflects their opinion.

- Most people don’t want to change bad habits.
- People should always have to suffer the consequences of bad choices.
- Some decisions carry more serious consequences than others.
- If people depend on God, they can always be healed from addictive choices.
- Addictions are a disease, not a choice.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Start with some interesting questions:

- Why do they sterilize needles for lethal injections?
- What was the best thing before sliced bread?
- Why is it that the first piece of luggage out at baggage claim never belongs to anyone?
- Is there another word for synonym?
- Why are there interstate highways in Hawaii?
- If the cops arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?
- Why do you press harder on a remote control when you know the battery is dead?
- If a cow laughs, does milk come through its nose?

In today’s lesson Jesus asks a lame man, “Do you want to get well?” Strange question, huh? Why wouldn’t he want healing? Truth be told, sometimes we don’t want to be released from our infirmities.

Consider the story that Kurt shared one morning at church:

“Last week I was driving north on Pike Street in downtown Seattle when I passed a homeless man sleeping in an alley. He didn’t have a blanket and it was below freezing even though the night was still young. I couldn’t shake that image in my mind.”

Kurt paused to collect his emotion. “I worried he might freeze to death, so I did a U-turn and went back to the alley. I introduced myself and learned that his name was Ray. I told him to come home and live with me until he could get back on his feet again, or at least until the weather got warmer.”

Kurt went on to tell how Ray enjoyed a hot shower, a big meal, a warm bed, a key to the house with an invitation to stay however long he wanted.

The irony of the story is that the man stayed for only two days and then he disappeared. He left a note scribbled on a paper sack. It read: “Thanks, but I prefer to live on the streets.” How could this be? Ray scored the jackpot where all his needs were cared for! At last, he was redeemed from the streets of crime and hate.

But who said he wanted to be redeemed? Ray preferred the life of a homeless drunk.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Share the following in your own words:

Before we criticize Ray, let’s admit that many people prefer squalor over freedom. In some arenas of life we’d rather be homeless than to accept the provision that Jesus makes available to us.

Jesus taught us how to live the optimum life, that is, the life of the kingdom—“on earth as it is in heaven.” And yet, how many of us disregard His teaching? Given this human propensity for sin over freedom, Jesus asks the paralytic: “Do you want to get well?” After all, not everyone truly wants to be healed.

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.

Review this story from the perspective of different people. For each of the following characters in the story, consider the questions “What am I thinking? Feeling? Believing about God?”

- The paralytic
- Jesus
- The great number of disabled people lying by the pool
- The Jews
- What principles of Sabbathkeeping emerge from this story?
- What does this passage teach us about outreach and service?
- How would you respond to the critics who
claimed that the paralytic’s disability was the direct result of his sin? Look carefully at the way Jesus interacts with this man and think about what Jesus would say about the notion of sin causing physical ailments.

Note the two reasons that the Pharisees were so upset with Jesus—(1) breaking the Sabbath and (2) claiming to be God’s Son. Which sin do you think was more offensive to the Jews? Why?

Notice in the story how the Pharisees were more concerned about their rules than they were about the well-being of a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years. Clearly the church leaders valued rules above relationships. Does this kind of thing still happen in the church today? If so, how? What might we do to follow God’s ultimate rule (love God and love others as we do ourselves) rather than man’s petty rules?

In the Old Testament three signs are mentioned to identify the Messiah. In John 5 all three of these signs are fulfilled. Compare the following passages to the verses in John.

**Sign 1:** All power and authority are given to Him as the Son of man—compare John 5:27 with Daniel 7:13, 14.

**Sign 2:** The lame and sick find healing—compare John 5:20, 26 with Isaiah 35:5, 6; Deuteronomy 32:39.

**Sign 3:** The dead are raised to life—compare John 5:21, 28 with 1 Samuel 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7.

**Sharing and Background**

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

1. **Sabbath Laws.** The Jews said to the paralytic: “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat” (John 5:10). There is no such law in the Old Testament forbidding someone to carry a mat. It was the Pharisees’ interpretation of God’s command to “remember the Sabbath

**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 The Desire of Ages. 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.
day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8) that they are citing here. This was one of hundreds of rules they added to the Old Testament laws.

2. **Eternal Life.** John 5:24 offers this wonderful promise: “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” Accepting Jesus as Savior brings the assurance of a new life in Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

3. **Reference to Moses.** In John 5:45 Jesus said to the Jews: “Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set.” The Pharisees were well versed in the writings of Moses and prided themselves on following all the teachings of this great patriarch. Now for Jesus to suggest that Moses would accuse them—even though they followed all his laws to the letter—was an infuriating attack against them. Moses wrote of Jesus (see Genesis 3:15; Numbers 21:9; 24:17; Deuteronomy 18:15) and yet they missed the significance of the Messiah when He came.

4. **Sabbath Miracles.** The SDA Bible Commentary (vol. 5, p. 949) points out that this is the first of seven miracles that Jesus performed on the Sabbath. “Now for the first time Jesus openly challenged the rabbinical Sabbath regulations (see on Mark 1:22; 2:23-28; 7:6-13). That He did so when the city was filled with visitors for the feast, and that He dramatized His rejection of such traditions by performing a miracle and publicizing it by having the man carry his bed, demonstrate the importance He attached to the question.”

5. **Bethesda.** The name Bethesda seems to come from the Aramaic, *beth chesda’*, or “house of mercy.”

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

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

Make a list of common teenage struggles from which teens may not really want healing. Break the class into groups and assign one struggle per group. Have the group brainstorm a game plan as to how someone could experience the healing power of God in that area. Have each group then present their suggestions to the entire class.

**Summary**

*Share the following story in your own words:*

Candie grew up a teenage prostitute in Tacoma, Washington. Her life consisted of turning tricks to score the next drug fix. But then she met Jesus. An evangelist extended to her the invitation of Jesus: “Do you want to get well?” The preacher said, “God’s amazing grace can heal any brokenness.”

Candie couldn’t believe it. She feared that she had sinned beyond the boundaries of God’s grace. But she accepted God’s grace anyhow. Just as Jesus healed the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda, He healed Candie. Now, 20 years later, Candie works as a social worker in Seattle, helping teenage prostitutes find freedom in Christ.

Only God can change a prostitute into a promise-keeper. Only Christ can reconstruct the composition of a human heart. Only He can stoop into the shadows and salvage the brokenness of a spiritual casualty like Candie.

Lest you think Candie’s story is any different than yours or mine, I remind you that we are all sinners. It is only by God’s miracle of mercy that we can find forgiveness and freedom from our sins. All we have to do is acknowledge His grace. Accept His gift. And arise to walk with God.

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 *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 21.

*A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.*
II. TARGET
The student will:
• Learn the story of the “King’s herald,” John the Baptist. (Know)
• Examine the role an assistant, or forerunner, can play in launching the kingdom. (Feel)
• Understand success from God’s eternal perspective. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Selfless living
• Success
• World’s view of success

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, and have a group discussion to point out the elements of success defined there. Encourage them to react to the rest of the section using these questions for group discussion.

1. What would make you feel successful?
2. What percentage of success do you define as having money, or the things money can buy? Do you believe God looks at success that way?
3. Is there a success that lasts longer than a new
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.

- Describe briefly what the Bible texts say about John the Baptist: who he was, what he did, and how he viewed himself within God’s plan.
- This story is chiefly about . . . (choose three and explain):
  1. Obeying God’s call
  2. The role of a supporter
  3. Calling people to repentance
  4. The qualities of success
  5. How to witness to Pharisees
  6. The cost of standing for truth
- On one level, John the Baptist could have been seen as a colossal failure: he didn’t prevent Herod from continuing in a life of sin; instead, it was John who paid the ultimate price. Have you ever been in a situation in which you expected one result and got something totally opposite?
- And what about Herodias’ daughter, identified elsewhere as Salome? Her behavior wasn’t the kind a young lady should engage in; she certainly should not have asked Herod for John’s murder! How can you stand against temptation and influence to do wrong?
- Which verses do you believe convey the key lessons of this story?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Isaiah 40:1-5; Malachi 4:1-5; John 1:6-28.

Illustration

Annie Rebekah Smith lived only 37 years; she was a young teacher, poet, and editor who was instrumental in helping James White edit what is today the Adventist Review. Her contribution during the pioneering days of the church was said to be of immense value.

But Annie was a sensitive person. When another Adventist pioneer, John Nevins Andrews, courted Annie but chose to marry someone else, the disappointment broke her heart. Ellen White said it “cost her her life” as Annie succumbed to tuberculosis. At the end of her short life, Annie had not amassed many of the world’s riches or achieved great public position. She was, however, remembered most touchingly by her brother, Uriah, who incorporated one of Annie’s favorite phrases in the closing of his letters: “Yours, in the blessed hope.”

Even though Annie Smith died brokenhearted, her legacy lives on: Ten of her poems are still used today as hymns in The Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal. Her story is a part of Adventist history. And her enduring influence shows the kind of success that no amount of money can buy.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

We all stand on the shoulders of those who’ve come before us. One hundred years ago, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a much smaller movement. We are only as widespread as we are today because of the labor of thousands of people, many whose names are known only to the archivists.

While the names and stories of many who assisted Jesus in His earthly ministry are familiar from the Scriptures, many people are not named. For example, we never learn the name of the young boy who shared his lunch so that Jesus could bless and feed thousands with it.

Sharing and Background

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

1. “Repent and Be Baptized!”

John’s call for immersion wasn’t new to his hearers; they were familiar with ritual bathing before entering the Temple in Jerusalem, and for other purposes. Women, for example, were expected to bathe ritually once a month.

But this was different. In that the ritualistic baths were meant to prepare people for worship, the immersion (or baptism) that John preached was to symbolize an internal change—repent means to “turn away” from a previous lifestyle. It was to presage the approach of Jesus’ followers as the gospel spread:
accepting the good news meant changing one’s way of life, orienting it toward God’s way.

How does this relate to your understanding of repentance, change, and baptism? Is it a mere ritual or does it symbolize something deeper and greater?

2. A Flawed, Fatal Promise
At the same time, the actions of Herod and his “family” spoke to the evil and corruption John—and Jesus—would reject. Instead of ruling wisely and helping his subjects, Herod was all about pleasure and ease, conditions that would lead to a horrific crime. The murder of John was nothing more than the fulfillment of a rash promise made while under the influence of alcohol—a perfect argument for temperance if there ever was one!

This kind of pressure—and the tragic results—still affect lives today. The kids who “experiment” at a party or at a friend’s home and then suffer injury, or worse, in a subsequent traffic accident are the spiritual descendents of Herod, living for pleasure and not considering the consequences. And making a promise to “go along” with your friends can have life-altering results, sometimes serious and tragic ones.

What criteria do you use in choosing to “go along” with the crowd? Do you stand apart when it’s necessary?

3. A Promise for Restoration
As you read the biblical passages provided about John’s ministry (Malachi 4; John 1:6-28), you might get the idea that while Jesus was all about healing and God’s love, John preached a pretty harsh, judgmental message. He said things that were quite tough to hear. I mean, let’s face it, he was telling people to “shape up”

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Taking It Personally
Making the lesson personal and applicable to the student is key for making it have meaning in their own life.

• For this reason write three words on a large pad or board:
  Reward
  Compensation
  Congratulations
• Ask students to write examples of rewards they received or hope to receive based upon their dedication and hard work.
• Ask students what compensation they hope their achievements bring them.
• Ask students what part congratulation plays in their motivation to work and achieve.
• Compare that with the example of John the Baptist’s earthly rewards/congratulations for following his call.
• Lead them into a discussion of what it means to receive rewards of spiritual and eternal value.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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  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 The Desire of Ages. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

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  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 “get in line.” He knew that if the King was coming, He shouldn’t find a misbehaving, hard-hearted, cynical bunch of people—but rather an expectant crowd, with hearts clearly humbled, repentant, and ready to receive their King and enter into His kingdom.

Clearly, while John received a lot of attention because he was rather odd, he wasn’t really popular—certainly not with the religious leaders or the regional ruler! John had a hard edge, for sure, but he loved God and His people so much that he didn’t want to see any of them miss the boat when the Messiah came. He did his job—prepared the way for Messiah.

Do you think you would risk being “uncool,” or being labeled a freak, in order to help others hear a message that would save them? Could you sacrifice the rewards of life to take a hard line?

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Get students to pair off and plan how one would support the other in a public witnessing effort. It could be street dialogue (“Do you know God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life?” “Why no! Tell me about it.”) or a plan to pass out literature or to invite passersby to a meeting.

Who will take the lead? Who will support them?

Will you switch off? Why is the supporting person’s role as important as the leader’s? What lessons do you learn from this exercise?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

If you stop and think about it, there are very, very few great successes in life that are solely the work of one person. Even the most eccentric individual, if they are truly honest, will admit that someone somewhere gave them some help along the way.

While it is without question that Jesus and only Jesus could complete the mission He had—no one else could go to the cross, die, and rise again—it is also true that other people helped Him in His earthly ministry. From the disciples who accompanied Him to others who supplied items of need, to John the Baptist, who announced His mission, there are many who contributed to the life and work of Jesus.

As you consider what you’ve experienced in life so far, who’s helped you? Parents? Siblings? Friends? Teachers? A pastor? These relationships are part of life, and part of helping others in our common Christian walk. We’re here, in part, to encourage one another!

The story of John the Baptist and his role in supporting the ministry of Jesus should offer encouragement: even those of us who have small parts to play can be a key element of success in God’s great plan.

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 The Desire of Ages, chapter 22.

*A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The three-and-one-half-year ministry of the adult Jesus includes His repeated manifestations that the kingdom of God is at hand. A subordinate theme is the attitude of those from Nazareth who found it especially difficult to believe His divine connection, given they saw Him raised from infanthood. Interwoven through all this is the prophetic timetable that was fulfilled at every turn. This week’s lesson illustrates all three elements as we see Jesus come home to Nazareth.

The words He speaks in the synagogue excite His listeners as if they are hearing the text for the first time. In a way, they are, for He speaks them with grace, power, and authority, giving a true interpretation at odds with their own. Their excitement turns quickly to anger as they realize the import of His words. In a flash, they turn on Him with murderous intent.

The lesson ends with a miraculous rescue, directed by His Father. Jesus allows Himself to be forced to a hilltop by the frenzied mob, but then is miraculously cloaked by angels as He literally disappears and walks unseen through the crowd. Imagine their perplexity! Imagine His sorrow at their actions and His resolve to bring the great controversy to a close.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Realize that Jesus was unaccepted by those who knew Him longest. (Feel)
• Resolve to trust that “His Sonship to the Eternal” is their pathway to eternity. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Confession/repentance
• Kingdom of God
• 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.

Jesus didn’t draw people to Himself by focusing on externals. It was the power of His message coupled with the working of the Holy Spirit that softened hearts and ennobled minds. “His words are truth, and they have a deeper significance than appears on the surface. All the sayings of Christ have a value beyond their unpretending appearance. Minds that are quickened by the Holy Spirit will discern the value of these sayings. They will discern the precious gems of truth, though these may be buried treasures” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 110). Ask your students for personal examples they can share.
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In 1514 Polish mathematician and astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) put forth a mathematical model that the Earth rotated around the sun. His heliocentric (Greek for “sun-centered”) theory was at odds with the established view of the Roman Catholic Church that the Earth was at the center of the universe. The publication of his insight, in 1543, marked the beginning of the Scientific Revolution. He died soon after it was published, thereby avoiding the wrath of the church for stepping away from its view of things. It provided the basis for later scientific study by Johannes Kepler, Galileo, and Isaac Newton.

Italian mathematician and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) improved the telescope and was first to turn its optical power from objects on Earth to the sky, making numerous observations that led him to advocate the Copernican view about the Earth and sun. This put him into the view of the church when a Dominican friar called him a heretic in 1614. In 1616, at the request of Pope Paul V, he was formally warned against defending the Copernican theory. After years of focus on his teachings, Galileo was interrogated before the Inquisition in 1633, softened some of his views, and ordered by Pope Urban VIII to be imprisoned indefinitely under house arrest. He died at his villa in 1642.

Galileo endured the consequences of his sun-centered view.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Most times, when someone reads a section of the Scriptures aloud, listeners usually respond with silence, affirmative head nods, maybe some amens, or sometimes even throaty exultations. One day long ago in Nazareth, when Jesus read that day’s scripture in the synagogue, the listeners turned on Him with a vengeance, wanting to kill Him for having heard what He’d said. His powerful words drew a powerful response.

Like Galileo, Jesus endured the consequences of providing a new way of looking at things that was at odds with the church of His time (the Jewish leaders).

Are you willing to endure hardship for holding to a Son-centered view?

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.

Ask your students about the special difficulty Jesus faced by going home to Nazareth to interact with those who had known Him the longest. If any in your class converted to Seventh-day Adventism after leaving their childhood home, ask them to share any awkward or difficult incidents they may have experienced upon returning home.

Ellen White’s added insight explains it was Jesus reading their minds and speaking to their unspoken thoughts that led to their turning on Him. Their view of themselves as God’s chosen people was imperiled.

Can your students think of any other time when Jesus was saved from harm because it was not yet His time?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: John 4:21-30; 12:31-33; Matthew 15:30-32.

Sharing Context and Background

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

In his Gospel Luke emphasizes the human side of the nature of Jesus, presenting Him as the Friend of humanity. In this week’s story the reaction that greeted Jesus was far from friendly. This was His first visit to His earthly hometown since taking up His public ministry. Mary and His brothers and sisters still lived there and were likely in the synagogue to see their neighbors turn on Him.

Jesus read Isaiah 6:1, 2 from a scroll while standing—a customary show of reverence for the written Word. He purposefully did not read the closing clause of verse 2 that talked about vengeance because the Jews had wrongly believed their salvation was automatic because they were Jews, not by a personal submission to God. Also according to custom, Jesus presented His sermon while seated. That special seat, located on a raised platform near the lectern, was sometimes called “the chair of Moses.”

They clamored for signs of His divinity, but it was their lack of faith that prevented Jesus from performing miracles in Nazareth. It was not because He was unable to do so but because they were unprepared to receive the blessings He wished to give them.
“Aware that the words of Jesus described them perfectly, they were unwilling to hear more. To accept Him they must admit that they were no better than the heathen, whom they looked upon as dogs” (The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 731).

“As they opened the door to doubt, their hearts became so much the harder for having been momentarily softened. Satan was determined that blind eyes should not that day be opened, nor souls bound in slavery be set at liberty. With intense energy he worked to fasten them in unbelief. They made no account of the sign already given, when they had been stirred by the conviction that it was their Redeemer who addressed them” (The Desire of Ages, p. 238).

Their guilty consciences rose to silence His words of truth. With murderous hearts, even on the Sabbath, they took Him to a cliff and were prepared to hurl Him down. The traditionally accepted site, referred to as the “Mount of the Precipitation,” is likely not the actual location of this incident because it is more than a Sabbath day’s journey from Nazareth. More likely is a limestone cliff about 40 feet (12 m) high at the southwestern corner of Nazareth. Angels shielded Him and took Him to safety. His hour had not yet come.

III. CLOSING

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

Search online for images of “Mount Precipice,” the traditional site where Jesus was taken by the Nazareth mob, then shielded by angels. Assuming the site is correct, you can point to it with certainty as a place where Jesus walked, angels gathered, and a supernatural rescue took place. As your students view the images, ask them to think about and share ideas about places in today’s world where angels tread.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Point Out the Parallels
There are many parallels to notice when reading Bible stories, and pointing them out to your students, or asking them to look for them, goes a long way in understanding the Bible even better. In the story found in Luke 4:16-30 here are some to note:

The synagogue as a focal point used by Jesus when He was 12, when He drove out the money changers, and when He spoke to the locals in Nazareth.

Jesus quoting Scripture to help people see He is the fulfillment of what had long been foretold.

The times Jesus was miraculously rescued because it was not yet His time to die.

“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 The Desire of Ages. 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.
Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

In this week’s lesson, when Jesus spoke to the people in the synagogue, His words at first were greeted with amazement. Yet many thought, Was this not Joseph’s son? and fostered doubt concerning Him. He then brought a message home to each of His listeners that did not go down easy. It was as if they were seeing themselves in a mirror and not liking what they saw. They became so furious that the people in His hometown sought to kill Him by throwing Him off a cliff!

What is your reaction as you hear Jesus’ words spoken to you?

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 The Desire of Ages, chapters 23, 24.

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i’m a follower

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
Peter and the other fishermen—his brother Andrew and their friends and business partners, James and John—had put in a hard and unsuccessful night’s fishing when Jesus asked them to let their nets down again. Peter was skeptical, but he was willing to take a chance on trusting Jesus. When Jesus’ advice resulted in a huge catch of fish, Peter was convinced he’d experienced a miracle. Certain that Jesus was more than just another great teacher, Peter was overwhelmed with a sense of his own sinfulness and fell to his knees before Jesus. He asked Jesus to go away from him, feeling he wasn’t worthy to be in the presence of someone who might be the Messiah. But Jesus’ response was to ask Peter and the others to follow Him—and they instantly did, leaving everything else behind.

Jesus still calls people—including young people—to leave everything behind and follow Him. But what are we to leave behind? Our families, work, and livelihood, as Jesus asked the fishermen to do? What does that call mean for young people who are still living with their parents, going to school, planning a future career? What does total commitment to Jesus look like in the twenty-first century? This week’s lesson explores some of those questions.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Know that God calls people to leave their everyday lives behind and follow Him. (Know)
• Sense God’s presence and His call in their lives. (Feel)
• Choose to respond to God’s call and follow Jesus completely. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Purpose
• Discipleship
• Obedience

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.

Write the answers to What Do You Think? on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart and ask each student to share the answers they checked. Tally answers on the board, adding any that they wrote in themselves, to see which responses are most popular.

For each response, ask: “Why do you think someone might say this? What is it about the idea of following Jesus that might get this reaction from some people?”

Ask: “What things in our lives hold us back from completely following Jesus?” Have students brainstorm ideas and write them on the board. Then, across
from that list, ask them to suggest benefits of following Jesus—what we get if we obey His call. Do the benefits outweigh what we would have to give up?

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

As a young man, William Wilberforce had a brilliant political career ahead of him. He entered the English Parliament at the age of 21, one of the youngest men ever to do so. He was wealthy, well-educated, a good speaker, and looked like he would be a huge success.

But soon after his political career began, William Wilberforce had a conversion experience and decided to dedicate his life completely to God. Still in his early 20s, he considered abandoning politics, perhaps entering the ministry or some other career in which he could dedicate himself to doing God’s work.

He went to several people he trusted for advice, including his old minister John Newton, author of the hymn “Amazing Grace.” Newton, who had been the captain of a slave ship before he was converted, advised Wilberforce, as did other people, that he could continue to serve God by staying in government and working to do God’s will there.

Instead of giving up his political career to follow God, Wilberforce dedicated his political career to God. He worked tirelessly for more than 20 years to end the slave trade, which he saw as one of the great evils of his day. Despite many setbacks and poor health, Wilberforce continued to be a voice in Parliament for those who were working to end slavery. He finally saw success for his efforts—first with the abolition of the slave trade, then, just before his death, with the abolition of all slavery and the freeing of all slaves in the British Empire (this was more than 30 years before American slaves were freed during the U.S. Civil War).

Wilberforce was an example of a young adult who obeyed the call to “Come, follow Me.” He did it not by leaving the career he had started, but by transforming all his goals and plans to conform to what he believed God wanted him to do.

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

On a sunny morning near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus met up with a group of fishermen. He’d met these men and talked to them before; they were interested in what He had to say, but none of them had yet made a complete commitment to Him. Now, seeing that they had fished all night without catching anything, He challenged them to try once more. When they found themselves with more fish than they could handle, Jesus quickly shifted gears. He invited them to do a new kind of fishing—going out into the world and saving people for His kingdom. But to do that, they’d have to leave behind everything that was familiar, including their fishing boats.

**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.*

Divide your class into four groups and give each group one of the following Bible passages:

- Matthew 8:18-22
- Matthew 9:9
- Matthew 19:16-22

After each group reads their text, have them prepare a short skit in which they act out the story of that verse for the rest of the group. When each of the four scenes has been presented, ask: “What do all these stories have in common? What does Jesus ask people to do before they follow Him? How do they respond?”

Then ask for a few volunteers from the group (probably those who were most enthused about acting out a scene in the last activity). Ask this group, on the spot, to improvise a scene in which Jesus approaches a modern teenager and asks him or her to leave something behind, and follow Him. As they prepare to act, ask them: “What sorts of things does Jesus ask us to leave behind for Him today? How do they respond?”

After the role play has been presented, discuss what kinds of things Jesus asks us to leave behind if we’re going to follow Him. At first glance it seems obvious that He would ask us to leave our sins behind—but which sins? Is that as easy as it sounds?

Will Jesus ask us to leave other things behind that aren’t sinful, but might still get in the way of following Him? (See the Sharing Context and Background section for further thoughts on this.) Ask students what they think “total commitment” to Jesus means in today’s world? Can a young person who is completely committed to Jesus still:
How might total commitment to following Jesus affect your decisions in any one of these areas of your life? In what way is Jesus calling you to leave your nets and follow Him?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: See the Punch Lines section of the student lesson.

Sharing Context and Background

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

When we think of leaving everything behind to follow Jesus, it’s typical to think of leaving behind a life of sin. The criminal leaves his life of crime, the drug addict leaves her addiction; people begin a new life when they follow Jesus.

But the fishermen in today’s story, and the other people whose experiences were explored in the Out of the Story passages, were not living particularly sinful lives. Even Matthew, the tax collector, was just doing his job—although it was a job that many considered sinful and disreputable. The fishermen were working for a living to support their families. The disciple who wanted to bury his father was taking care of family responsibilities. And the rich young ruler was a good man who kept the commandments.

Throughout the last 2,000 years Christians have wrestled with what it means to really leave everything behind to follow Jesus. For the early disciples, it was straightforward. Many of them, like Peter and his friends, made a complete break with their former lives and left homes, families, and jobs to travel around Galilee with Jesus. Even after Jesus’ return to heaven, they committed themselves full-time to missionary work. Total dedication in the early days of Christianity meant risking your life, since persecution was often a reality (as it still is in many parts of the world today).

Once the Roman Empire “converted” to Christianity and it was safe and comfortable to be a Christian, the Desert Fathers (and Mothers) set off to live lives of isolation and deprivation in the wilderness, leaving behind the comforts of home to focus completely on prayer and worship of God. Out of their movement grew the monastic movements within medieval Christianity. Although some monks and nuns were truly dedicated to a life spent pursuing God (and Reformers such as Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila, and others came along every few generations to remind them of their purpose), laziness and corruption crept into monastic life too. For many of the early Protestant groups, following Jesus all the way once

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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 The Desire of Ages. 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.
again meant risking punishment and even death. It also meant, for some, giving up worldly possessions, living in community with other believers, and going to overseas mission fields.

But most of us don’t make those kinds of sacrifices—especially in twenty-first-century North America. For most of us, following Jesus means what it has meant to most Christians throughout history—living a “normal” life with the same material comforts and goals as the rest of society; paying lip service to our “commitment” to Jesus without allowing it to make any serious difference in our lives.

As you discuss this week’s lesson, challenge your students with these questions: “Can a committed Christian ever live a ‘normal’ life? In what ways does God call us to be out of step with society? What does He want us to give up in order to follow Him?”

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 The Desire of Ages, chapter 25.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This story of the demoniac is ripe with teaching opportunities. You can use this lesson to teach a variety of spiritual truths. Pray that the Spirit will guide you to emphasize the spiritual insight that will be most life-transforming for the students.

One option for emphasis could be to explore the occult and satanic worship. (The student lesson in the quarterly is weighted in this direction.) Many young people today are exposed to the supernatural world through popular entertainment choices such as movies (Underworld, The Sixth Sense, The Exorcism of Emily Rose), television programs (Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Ghost Whisperer, Sabrina the Teenage Witch), books (Harry Potter, Goosebumps), and video games (Doom, The Darkness).

Another teaching you might explore considers the role of Jesus as a teacher. The passage highlights the amazement that people had because Jesus taught as one with great authority. A worthwhile track to take on this text would be to challenge the young people to accept Jesus as Teacher. Often we speak of accepting Jesus as Savior (i.e., to trust Him for salvation after I die); but Christianity gets real practical when we accept Jesus as Teacher (i.e., to trust that what He taught determines how I will live every day). To underscore the idea of the authority of Jesus’ teaching as the best way to live today could be a very helpful discussion.

Finally, you may wish to explore the topic of temptation with the students and emphasize that healing and freedom come by being in the presence of Jesus. Too often we try to be good by willpower—only to fall again and again to the same old sin. The key, as it flows naturally out of this story, is not to try harder to be good; rather, it is to be in the presence of Jesus. Ellen White points out that the demon-possessed man had just enough spiritual power to come to Jesus—and that was all he needed; after all, wholeness happens when we live in Christ.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Think about the cosmic battle between good and evil. (Know)
- Realize how high the stakes really are in this spiritual battle. (Feel)
- Completely trust in Jesus as Savior and Teacher. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Occult/astrology
- Character
- Authority/respect

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? sec-
tion of their lesson. After they have completed it, dis-
cuss their responses.

Ask your students to name all of the movies, TV
shows, and video games that contain demonic or
satanic themes. Keep a list on a flip chart. Discuss the
growing trend in our culture toward satanism.
Questions to discuss:
• How should Christians respond to this trend?
• Why is there such an interest in the demonic?
• Are these media options good for Christians to
see? Why or why not?
• How about non-Christians? How do they por-
tray the spiritual dimension?

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:

She was known as the Queen of the Occult. She
has sold millions of books about vampires and
witches. Many of her novels have been produced into
movies, starring Hollywood brass such as Tom Cruise
and Brad Pitt.

But things are different now for Anne Rice. In 1998
she slipped into a coma and nearly died. That’s when
Anne had a change of heart—she turned to Christ.

In 2005 she stunned the world by declaring, “I
promise from now on that I will only write for the Lord.”
Her November 2005 release, Christ the Lord: Out of
Egypt, portrays Jesus as a 7-year-old. Rice worked
painstakingly to avoid contradicting Scripture in her
interpretation of Jesus’ life.

The book was released in November 2005 and
immediately hit the New York Times best-seller’s list. In
the afterword of Christ the Lord, Rice summarizes
what she has found in Jesus, calling Him “the ultimate
supernatural hero” and “the ultimate immortal of them
all.” More recently, Rice followed up her first book
about Christ with another historical novel entitled
Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana.

In an interview with Time magazine Rice said:
“After 38 years of being an atheist, faith came back to
me. I had to stop writing about vampires, because
they had been a metaphor for lost souls. Instead, I
made up my mind to concentrate on Jesus Christ.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Share the following in your own words:

How many of you have read anything by Anne
Rice? How many of you have seen a movie based on
her books (Interview With the Vampire, Exit to Eden,
The Feast of All Saints, etc.)? What did you think of her
work before her conversion? How do you react to her
testimony? What comparisons do you find between
Anne Rice’s testimony and the story of the demon-
possessed man in Mark 1?

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. Next, have the class read the story
as a drama from The Message translation. Encourage
each reader to put emotion into it. For example, when
the narrator says the man was “deeply disturbed and
yelling,” the demoniac should read his lines accord-
ingly. Assign students to read the following lines:
• Narrator reads all the parts that are not in italics,
underlined, or in bold.
• The person reading for the demon-possessed
man should read what is underlined.
• The person reading the quotes of Jesus
should read the bold type.
• The person reading for everyone should read
what is in italics.

Reading:
(21, 22) Then they entered Capernaum. When the
Sabbath arrived, Jesus lost no time in getting to
the meeting place. He spent the day there teach-
ing. They were surprised at his teaching—so forth-
right, so confident—not quibbling and quoting like
the religion scholars.

(23, 24) Suddenly, while still in the meeting place,
he was interrupted by a man who was deeply dis-
turbed and yelling, “What business do you
have here with us, Jesus? Nazarene! I know what
you’re up to! You’re the Holy One of God, and
you’ve come to destroy us!”

(25, 26) Jesus shut him up: “Quiet! Get out of
him!” The afflicting spirit threw the man into
spasms, protesting loudly—and got out.

(27, 28) Everyone there was incredulous, buzzing
with curiosity. “What’s going on here? A new teach-
ing that does what it says? He shuts up defiling,
demonic spirits and sends them packing!” News of
this traveled fast and was soon all over Galilee.

Questions for discussion
• Is there anything in the story that jumps out at
you when you listen to it read aloud as a drama?
If so, what?
• What does this story have to teach us about
  Satan? Jesus? the crowd?
• What lessons can we learn from this passage?

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

1. Note the context. Mark, the shortest of the
   four Gospels, starts with Jesus’ baptism,
   moves to the temptation in the wilderness,
   and then quickly transitions to the calling of
   the disciples in order to go public with the
   proclamation of the gospel. “Jesus went into
   Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.
   ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of
   God is near. Repent and believe the good
   news!’” Jesus launches His ministry by teach-
   ing in the synagogue. No sooner do you finish
   reading the story of Satan attacking Jesus in
   the desert for 40 days, and now Jesus is con-
   fronted once again by the devil (only this time
   it is in church!) through this demon-possessed
   man.

2. Note the culture. William Barclay explains the
   prevalence of the belief in demons and devils
   in the ancient world. Consider his commen-
   tary: “Dr. A. Rendle Short cites a fact which
   shows the intensity with which the ancient
   world believed in demons. In many ancient
   cemeteries skulls were found which had been
   trepanned. That is to say, a hole had been
   bored in the skull. In one cemetery, out of 120
   skulls, six had been trepanned. With the lim-
   ited surgical technique available, that was no
   small operation. Further, it was clear from the
   bone growth that the trepanning had been
   done during life. It was also clear that the hole
   in the skull was too small to be of any physical
   or surgical value; and it is known that the
   removed disc of bone was often worn as an
   amulet round the neck. The reason for the
   trepanning was to allow the demon to escape
   from the person’s body. If primitive surgeons
   were prepared to undertake that operation,
   and if people were prepared to undergo it, the
   belief in demon-possession must have been
   intensely real.”

3. Note the city. Jesus had recently moved from
   Nazareth to Capernaum (see Matthew 4:12,
   13). Capernaum was known as a city of great
   wealth. Its reputation for great sin and deca-
   dence was well deserved. Being the head-
   quarters for many Roman troops, pagan influ-
   ences from all around the Roman Empire were
   commonplace. This was an ideal place for
   Jesus to confront the skeptics and believers
   alike with the gospel (Mark 1:14, 15).

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

• Other Eyes
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes con-
  vey 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 The
  Desire of Ages. 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.
brainstorm a list of tools (such as reading the Bible, memorizing verses, hanging out with godly people, communicating with God through prayer, etc.). Compile a tool chest by asking the small groups to share their ideas with the whole class. Close by emphasizing that the best way to resist the devil is to live in the presence of Jesus, because Satan and God cannot coexist in the same heart.

Summary
Share the following story in your own words:

In his book *The Heat: Steelworkers’ Lives and Legends*, Joe Gutierrez shares five stories from his 42 years as a steelworker. His story entitled “Snow Danced in August” describes a scene of silvery dust flakes that frequently floated to the floor in an area of the mill where steel strips rolled over pads in a tall cooling tower. For years, workers and visitors alike flocked to the sight, which was especially picturesque at night.

The dust was asbestos. “Everybody breathed it,” wrote Gutierrez. He now suffers from the slow, choking grip of asbestosis, as do many plant workers.

“How am I? I’m everybody. Can’t walk too far now. I get tired real fast and it hurts when I breathe, sometimes. And to think we used to fight over that job.”

How many things in our world are like the silver flakes in that steel mill? Enchanting but deadly.

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 *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 26.

* A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week’s lesson focuses on the stunning event of the leper who came to Christ for healing. The dreadful disease was common in New Testament times, and anyone who contracted the infectious skin disease was considered dead and isolated from the community. If being excommunicated did not imprint hopelessness on the victim’s mind, the foul disease itself would be a continual reminder of eminent death. Moreover, leprosy was seen as a judgment of God. No disease depicted sin’s work like leprosy on a human being. In this story, the dying man dares to enter society because he hears that Christ is coming close and has never turned anyone away. His appeal and Christ’s response are the central message of this story: God is willing and able to save.

In The Desire of Ages Ellen White observes: “When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life.” The words of Christ, “I am willing,” and the touch of His hand declare what God wants more than anything else—to save His children. Throughout this lesson there are several angles to appeal to the young person to respond to God’s gift of salvation. One way is to approach from the viewpoint of the leper—one who seeks and asks. Another approach is from the viewpoint of God who never turns away an honest seeker. And finally, you might consider stepping back and seeing the larger picture through the Old Testament ritual for the cleansing of the leper, as discussed in the Context and Background section.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Observe key elements to the plan of salvation. (Know)
• Sense God’s urgent desire to forgive and to save people. (Feel)
• Decide to ask for God’s matchless gift of salvation. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Forgiveness from God
• Experience of salvation
• Sin

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 their responses to the ranking activity in the What Do You Think? section. It is likely that most of the students would rank “to receive the gift of salvation” as the number one
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.

- Compare the three perspectives of the same event and note how the stories are different and how they are similar.
- What words and phrases do Mark and Luke use that Matthew leaves out?
- What words or phrases does Luke use that Mark and Matthew leave out?
- What words or phrases does Mark alone use?
- How is the disease of leprosy like sin?
- The leper makes an interesting appeal, saying, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Is there any question from the leper’s perspective as to whether Jesus is able to heal him or not? What is the primary issue? Why do you think someone with leprosy would think this way? (Read John 9:1-3; 5:13, 14; Mark 2:3-5; Isaiah 59:1, 2.)
- Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What is the message God has in it for you today?
- Explain the advice of Jesus to immediately show himself to the priest and offer the sacrifices Moses commanded. Why do you think Jesus asked the leper to do this?
- What other story in the Bible does this event remind you of?

Extra Questions for Teachers:
- Why do you think Jesus insisted that the man healed of leprosy go show himself to the priest? Read Leviticus 14:1-9 and see if you can imagine what the ritual might have pointed to and the lasting image that would have been imprinted on the one healed.
- What would this event look like today? Some might compare this miracle to someone being healed of AIDS or cancer. AIDS is probably the most comparable disease in that there is no cure and those who contract the disease are basically preparing to die. Also, initially, people treated those with the HIV virus with a similar kind of isolation, fearing it to be contagious. All of these internal elements only compound the physical impact of the disease.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Exodus 4:6, 7; Numbers 12:10; 2 Kings 5:1-10; Luke 17:11-15.

choice. But it is possible that some might respond differently. Either way, it is crucial to invite the students to explain why they answered the way they did. Some might choose “serving others with a humble heart” or “to live in harmony with His commands.” Why they think these are important to God provides rich discussion.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In January 2008 a story about an amazing transformation made the headlines. A 15-year-old girl in Australia named Demi-Lee Brennan became the world’s first person to change blood types. Demi-Lee was a transplant patient with O negative blood type, but that changed when the transplant caused her to take on the immune system of her organ donor, changing her blood type to O positive. Initially the doctors thought it must have been a mistake because that has never happened before, and such a transformation in the human system simply can’t happen. Apparently, the blood stem cells in this young lady’s new liver invaded her body’s bone marrow, and ultimately took over her entire immune system. Now she has an entirely different blood type. Her new blood embraces life and healing and is restoring to this day. Brennan says, “It’s like my second chance at life.”

It is the same with us when we invite Christ to save us from our sin. Some changes take place over the course of a lifetime: developing good, healthy, wholesome habits is the continual journey. Character qualities that mark us are made over seasons, but your invitation to forgiveness and a new standing in Christ is but a simple, sincere request away.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The kind of massive transformation Demi-Lee Brennan experienced was an internal change, which in turn showed up in her new life. This week we meet up with a mind who was transformed from the inside out. As someone dying from leprosy, you know the changes that occur in your body began not on the skin but somewhere deep inside. As Christ restores this man, look carefully at the story and see whether this change begins internally or externally.
**Sharing Context and Background**

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

There is no other disease in Scripture that portrays the work of sin like leprosy. In fact, the term “walking death” captures the common perception of the disease. When people were diagnosed with leprosy, they were virtually excommunicated from society. In some cases their names were taken off the public records of living citizens, for it was only a matter of time. But some may not know that leprosy attacks the central nervous system first before it ever affects the skin. Jerry Vines graphically captures the way leprosy destroys a person:

“For no reason he would have a feeling of fatigue. Then his joints would begin to get sore. One day he would notice little white spots all over his skin. Later those white spots would begin to harden into nodules. They would turn from white to pink to brown, and then become scaly. The appearance of his face would change until he began to resemble a lion. The nodules would ulcerate all over his body, producing a foul odor. They would cover his vocal chords so that when he breathed there would be a wheezing sound. When he talked his voice would be raspy. His eyebrows would fall out. His hair would turn white. Inch by inch this man’s body would begin to rot. As he walked he would have putrid spots where the pus oozed out of his feet. His fingers and toes would begin to fall off” (Jerry Vines, *Exploring the Gospels—Mark* [Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1990], p. 29).

But in this story Jesus asks this man who had been healed to show himself to the priest and offer the sacrifices Moses commanded. Why, and what is this ceremony all about?

**The Ritual of Cleansing and the Law of the Leper:**
There were several reasons to make a visit to the priest their first action as healed individuals. First of all, in order to be recommunicated back into society the priest had to examine you and pronounce you clean. But there is more to the command Jesus made than just getting your paperwork fixed. The ceremony of cleansing for the leper had a deep, enduring spiritual experience embedded in the ritual. In Leviticus 14:2-7 this ritual is described. The bird that is sacrificed is clearly Christ, and the live bird that is set free over the open field is unmistakably any sinner who receives the mercy of God.

Imagine the scene: A leper comes to the priest and the priest must perform this ceremony outside the city. Where was Christ crucified? Outside the city. Then, the leper watches as two live birds are brought out and one is killed over running water (or as the Hebrew has it living water). The blood of the bird is mixed with the living water and gathered in an earthen vessel. The one who has been healed watches intently the dead bird and the bowl of blood and water. What could such a person be thinking? Why blood? Why a bird—a living creature? What does this mean? The meaning is made clear when the one healed watches as the live bird is dipped in the blood and water and set free over an open field. Picture the

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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 *The Desire of Ages*. 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.
man standing there gazing into the sky as the live bird flaps its wings and the blood and water spray off as the bird soars freely. If leprosy portrays sin, then going to experience this ritual is the most important ritual of all, because it typifies your redemption. It is not lost on anyone that this service is about the Savior and the sinner.

No wonder Jesus wanted them to see the priest, because He knew that if they were to go through this ritual, the significance of their salvation would be deeply embedded in their heart and mind.

III. CLOSING

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

Divide the class into groups of two or three and ask them to respond to the following questions:

Say: “Think of some examples of people today who get alienated or written off because of something they have done or something that happens to them.” Make sure you make two lists: one for choices that cause negative impact, and two, things that happen to people that are out of their control. (Someone getting the HIV virus by promiscuous sex is an example of a choice one makes that brings serious results. Getting it from a blood transfusion, however, is an example of something that happens to someone.)

Share the results around the classroom and ask this question as a way to wrap up the lesson: “Is there any scenario we can think up from which Christ cannot save, if we ask?” The answer is clearly “No.” God is willing and able.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:
Sometimes the storied lives of people such as the leper can seem like a fairy tale, like something so unreal that you put it in the category of a cartoon. But the event was real, and the experience is real today. By the thousands, people will come to Christ and ask for a new life. Some will doubt and think, “This is too good to be true,” but will ask anyway, just as the leper did long ago, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Whatever gets in the way of your asking God to save you needs to be put away because God’s voice does not give that message. The overwhelming, undeniable truth is that God is willing and more than able to cover you and restore your life completely. He is willing to do this as often as you ask.

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 The Desire of Ages, chapter 27.

*A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
not love at first sight

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPTIS

In this story we will learn about accepting others even if at first we don’t like what we see in these people. In Jesus’ time tax collectors were hated. They were seen as dishonest and sinful because they were often corrupt. Yet Jesus went out of His way to seek their company. He would rather be in the midst of sinners than in a room filled with so-called “just and noble” men. He knew that it was the sinners who needed His help rather than the righteous. As He said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick” (Matt. 9:12, NIV).

God wants us to accept all people. He doesn’t want us to look at their appearance, reputation, or pasts. Let the students know that if God—who is Lord of the universe and who created all things—can forgive our sins, then surely we can accept others and seek to help them find salvation.

While we should guide our students to choose their friends wisely, we should also share with them the importance of seeking out the “sick.” If we constantly befriend only those who are obviously “healthy,” then how will we make a difference in the world? Jesus came into this world, not as King, but as a man without a home. He came into this world as a man who ate with tax collectors and found His company among sinners. The Lord instructs us to accept all who come in need. Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40, NKJV).

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Realize the importance of accepting others, despite their appearances or pasts. (Know)
• Feel a desire to reach out and witness to those who need it most. (Feel)
• Find more opportunities to show all people God’s love. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Acceptance (of others)
• Self-image
• Purpose (knowing your)
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.

Ask the class to imagine the following scenario. You are in church and the following kinds of people arrive. Ask the class how they think they would respond if these people were to come in to church:
1. A homeless drunk whose smell fills the entire room.
2. A famous rock star.
I have drawn you.’"

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 do you think initially angered the Pharisees in this story?
- Give a few reasons why you think people hated the tax collectors so much.
- How do you think Levi felt when Jesus said, “Follow Me”?
- In this story Jesus said, “Who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before” (Matthew 9:16, NLT). What do you think He meant by that?
- What do you think Jesus saw when He first met Levi? What do you think His disciples saw?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: 1 Timothy 1:15; Ephesians 1:3-6; Genesis 4:7; John 15:16; 1:12; Matthew 11:28; Acts 10:35.

Sharing Context and Background

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

During the time of Jesus, ancient Israel was under the dominion of the powerful Roman Empire, which would tax all the provinces under its control. In ancient Israel a group of tax collectors was taken from the people themselves, who were contracted by Rome to collect taxes for the Romans. Their pay would be that they could keep a “fraction” or a percentage of the taxes they collected. Of course, this led to the potential for great abuse, for the more they collected, the more they got to keep.

These tax collectors were known to be crooks and cheats. Although there were some honorable exceptions, most weren’t. This helps us understand the words found in Luke 3:12-14 (NKJV): “Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he [Jesus] said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’” Interesting, Jesus wasn’t attacking them for being tax collectors; He was warning them about cheating the people from whom they were supposed to collect the taxes.

III. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Many times when we see people who have bad reputations we try to keep our distance. We don’t want to damage our reputation by associating with them, or we feel as if they are beneath us. Yet instead of looking at all the bad, we should look for their potential and try to see past their faults and be able to see them and help them seek out their true purpose in life. Jesus saw Levi and, instead of judging him and his faults, He saw that this man had potential. He recognized that this man, too, could be in His kingdom.

Jeremiah 31:3 (NKJV) says: “The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.’"
These tax collectors could become very rich, too. Some of them would actually petition the Roman government for the right to collect taxes and tolls from their own people. Then, having paid the government for this right, they were free to collect as much as they could, trying to milk every extra “dime” for themselves. Rome received a certain amount; the rest was theirs to keep for themselves.

Tax collectors gathered various taxes. The Roman Empire levied upon the Jews a land tax, a poll tax, even a tax for the function and operation of the Temple. There were different kinds of taxes for every territory. Some provinces, such as Galilee, were not under a Roman governor; thus, taxes remained in the province rather than going to Rome.

This helps us better understand how outraged some of the leaders and perhaps people were because Jesus would associate with these greedy tax collectors—who truly were working against the interests of their own nation. How low could you get! And yet, Jesus loved them and wanted to save them. What a message for us!

III. CLOSING

Activity
Download from the Internet pictures of all sorts of people, from the rich and famous to the most unsavory, ugly, and unloving. Try to imagine their stories. How did they get the way that they are? Now, try and imagine how God, who knows all things, would view them. How different is God’s view of them from ours? What should we learn from that difference?

Summary
Share the following thoughts 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 The Desire of Ages. 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.
We all have seen people who appear to be unworthy of our acceptance. There have been cruel, heartless, insensitive, sinful, and arrogant individuals whom we have more than likely tried to avoid at all costs. Yet before we judge someone, we must first try to identify with them. Many people who outwardly seem unacceptable may have suffered in ways that we ourselves might never understand. But Jesus calls us to accept all individuals, even if we don’t at first like what we see. He wants us to give all people a chance in showing them the road to eternal life. He wants us to help people know that no matter what their past has been, or no matter what horrible things they might have done, they still have a chance to find their true purpose; they still have a chance to come to the light of Jesus. We should never close the door to anyone, but demonstrate Jesus’ love and acceptance through our unselfish love toward them.

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 *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 28.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
You can tell a lot about a person by looking at what they spend their time doing and by what makes them angry. As Christ mingled with people and healed them from their disease He was often criticized mindlessly for “working” on the Sabbath. Jesus did not become “indignant” because of criticism, but because the leaders of the Jewish faith missed the point of the Sabbath and led others down the same empty way of life. Such is the case with the story of the man with the withered hand who was healed by Jesus up front and on stage in the synagogue one Sabbath morning.

Throughout this week’s lesson there is a tension between thinking about what we should not do versus being preoccupied with the things we should be doing. Sometimes when we disagree with someone else, we simply “let it go.” But in this story and on this subject, Jesus would not let it go. Ellen White says: “Jesus did not let the matter pass without administering a rebuke to His enemies. He declared that in their blindness they had mistaken the object of the Sabbath.” It is essential that we review the ultimate purpose of the Sabbath with young people, not in vague terms, but with the same passion that Jesus defended its sacredness long ago. The Sabbath is made “for man” (Mark 2:27, 28). It is a nonnegotiable reminder of who God is, and who we are in relation to Him (Genesis 2:1-3; Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15). We can best keep the Sabbath by being passionate about “doing good” and “saving lives” as noted in this week’s story. Consider how to keep the students focused on the primary purpose of Sabbath and the best things to experience on that day.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• See the reminders of God’s purpose in the Sabbath. (Know)
• Sense the importance of genuine worship. (Feel)
• Fill their Sabbath hours with goodness. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Sabbath
• Anger
• 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.

Invite the students to share their responses to the voting activity in the What Do You Think? section. Often students will place themselves in the middle of a continuum, but the point is to get them to show their tendency. For students who tend to stew with anger you might ask: “What do you tend to do as your frus-
tation builds? Does it lessen over time? Does it help if you calmly talk about it with people?” For those who explode, you might ask them to share what might be problematic about such eruptions as well as what is positive about “not hiding” how you feel. What makes us angry and how we respond show what our values are. In this week’s lesson we see how valuable the true Sabbathkeeping is for Jesus.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

During a Bible study on the Sabbath a frustrated young person blurted out, “Just tell me what I am NOT supposed to do on the Sabbath and I will be fine!” Apparently, this young person was so confused because people were pulling him back and forth with criticism on appropriate Sabbath behavior. He was missing the point. Why do we always focus on what not to do? I handed him a bottle of water and replied, “I’ll give you a list of what NOT to do, but first, give me a list of what is NOT in this bottle of water.” Sitting there, stunned in silence by the request, I repeated the challenge. “Go ahead, just make a list of the things that are contained in that bottle of water. Look at the ingredients on the back and then just start naming things that aren’t in it.” Still stunned I offered a few hints to get him going: “Is there chili in the water? How about guacamole? Radishes? What about mashed potatoes? Aluminum foil? Motor oil? Scotch tape? Aloe Vera gel? 100% cotton socks? Apple seeds? Polyester? . . .” “Okay, okay, okay, I get it!” he interrupted. We then began to look at all things that Jesus did on the Sabbath and formulated our approach to Sabbathkeeping based on what we should do instead of what we should not do.

Calvin Miller said: “Our focus needs to be on hungering after what God wants rather than merely trying to quit what He doesn’t want.”

How is this principle true in your life as well as aspects of life other than the Sabbath?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

This principle works in many areas of life: looking for a job, finding a spouse, picking out a pair of shoes. Keep your eyes on what to do instead of what not to do. As you study the story for this week, you will notice three perspectives on the story from three different Gospel writers. Notice how they are different, but notice the central message in the story as you answer the questions that guide you through the passage.

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:

- Compare the three perspectives of the same event and note how the stories are different and how they are similar.
- What words and phrases do Mark and Luke use that Matthew leaves out?
- What words or phrases does Luke use that Mark and Matthew leave out?
- What words or phrases does Mark alone use?
- When Jesus invites the man with the withered hand to “stand in front of everyone,” what do you think is His frame of mind? Why did He do this?
- What criteria does Jesus use for Sabbathkeeping? How does Jesus’ question, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?” (Luke 6:9, NIV), change the way you look at Sabbath?
- Consider Jesus’ question: “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep!” (Matthew 12:11, 12, NIV). What is the central point of this exchange?
- How would you describe the reaction of the Jewish leaders to what Christ does in the synagogue?
- What would you say is the primary purpose of the Sabbath according to this story?

More Questions for Teachers:

- What other experiences in the Christian faith seem a little empty because we tend to miss the true purpose for why it exists? (Communion/foot-washing service. Giving tithes and offerings. Memorizing Scripture. Kneeling for prayer.)
- How do you see Christ’s way of Sabbathkeeping reaching people who don’t know God or have contact with a community of faith? (Doing good and saving lives are really the ultimate witness to the world. Being right and having answers
don’t necessarily compel people to follow Christ.)

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Luke 4; Genesis 2:1-3; Isaiah 66; Luke 13; Mark 2; Acts 13; 16; 20.

Sharing Context and Background

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

To be fair to the religious leaders, they were the ones trying to preserve the Hebrew faith during seasons of moral, ethical, and intellectual bankruptcy. The Pharisees and scribes were passionate people but simply became more devoted to the law than to the bigger picture of God’s will. In order to preserve the rich beauty of God’s law and the history of God’s people, they made rules and subsets and tried to capture every scenario that might trip a believer up in their walk with God. This behavior, of course, became a deformed catalog of unbelievably tedious rules—especially regarding Sabbathkeeping.

William Barclay comments: “The commandment says that there must be no work on the Sabbath. The scribe immediately asks: ‘What is work?’ Work then is defined under thirty-nine different heads which are called ‘fathers of work.’ One of the things which are forbidden is the carrying of a burden. Immediately the scribe asks: ‘What is a burden?’ So in the Mishnah there is definition after definition of what constitutes a burden—milk enough for a gulp, honey enough to put on a sore, oil enough to anoint the smallest member (which is further defined as the little toe of a child one day old), water enough to rub off an eye-plaster, leather enough to make an amulet, ink enough to write two letters of the alphabet, coarse sand enough to cover a plasterer’s trowel, reed enough to make a pen, a pebble big enough to throw at a bird, anything which weighs as much as two dried figs” (William Barclay, The Mind of Christ, pp. 152, 153).

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 The Desire of Ages. 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.
These rules were set up so people wouldn’t have to think about it. But the last thing God wanted was for us to not think about it. The last thing God wanted was for us to not think about Him. You could spit on a rock, but not on the ground, because adding moisture to the soil would be a part of the process of making the earth more likely to grow something—farming.

When Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath, the only thing the leaders see is the breaking of a rule. William Barclay comments:

“Medical attention could be given only if a life was in danger. . . . A fracture could not be attended to. Cold water might not be poured on a sprained hand or foot. A cut finger might be bandaged with a plain bandage but not with ointment. That is to say, at the most an injury could be kept from getting worse; it must not be made better” (William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark*, p. 67).

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Divide the class into groups of two or three and ask them to respond to the following questions:

In pairs, make a list of five things you think should be done on Sabbath that you don’t currently do. Have students share their lists around the room and hear the responses of others. Now ask: “If you were to focus on those five things next Sabbath, would you be bored? Would you still be tempted by some of the things that would not be best to do on the Sabbath? Would your activities be a positive witness to others?”

Summary

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

It’s so human to take a beautiful experience and mindlessly repeat it until it loses its meaning. It happens in so many areas of life. If we don’t think about why the Sabbath is given and what God’s greatest desire is for us, we get lost in all the rules and nuances to the point where our behavior becomes mindless. Watching animals at the zoo you will occasionally notice creatures that lumber and walk and repeat behavior in their small area only because that is what they have always done. It is sad, but God wants us to live, to remember we are created for a greater purpose than to pace around. God wants us to practice goodness and participate in the cause of saving lives for eternity because that is our ultimate purpose as created beings—to become like our Creator. We will never experience this if we forget who God is, and we remember by entering into His work on the Sabbath.

His work? That’s right. God’s work is to serve, to save, to live fully and abundantly for others.

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 *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 29.

*A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.*
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week’s lesson focuses on the calling of the 12 disciples and the Sermon on the Mount, which follows this call. Five disciples were with Jesus from the very onset of His ministry, but it is instructive that Jesus ministered for more than a year before He chose the rest of the group. Jesus lived a life of discipleship to His Father before He asked anyone to follow Him. Is that a lesson for us?

Although Jesus was God in human flesh, He did not depend on His deity to determine whom He should select to be His disciples. Instead, He spent a night in prayer, after which He chose the twelve. Jesus was about to launch a movement that would change the world, so He wanted to be sure that He had the right people. This is one of the important parts of the story to be emphasized. God is waiting, listening, and ready to give us guidance—no matter how big or small our decisions are.

Following His call of the twelve, Jesus moved to lay out the principles of the kingdom of heaven by which they must live. The multitude that overheard His message was made up largely of downtrodden and forgotten people—people at the margins of society. Jesus’ message was for them. Make the point this week that our call to discipleship is always followed by a call to live that discipleship in service to humanity. How do we do that? By following the principles outlined in the Sermon on the Mount. We are all integral parts of God’s family, but continued membership in God’s family is determined by the love we show to one another.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discover that God calls all to follow Him, and some to special ministry. (Know)
- Look for opportunities to serve lost members of God’s family. (Feel)
- Accept and live passionate lives of discipleship. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Kingdom of God
- Knowing God
- Selflessness

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.

The objective of this activity is to compare the roll-out of a new product with the way in which Jesus rolled out His new product: the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

Give the students an opportunity to share highlights from their marketing campaigns. Then ask them to consider how Jesus rolled out His campaign. First, He “lived” the product—so well, in fact,
that multitudes followed Him because of what He had. Second, He chose people, whom He personally trained, to help Him “promote and market” the product. Finally, He laid out the principles by which He wanted His people to live. If they were representing His product, He wanted their lives to match their profession.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

Pastor Jimmy Chapman of Washington, Georgia, once related the interesting story behind the call of one of history’s Christian giants.

“In Yorkshire, England, during the early 1800s, two sons were born to a family named Taylor. The older one set out to make a name for himself by entering Parliament and gaining public prestige. But the younger son chose to give his life to Christ. He later recalled, ‘Well do I remember, as in unreserved consecration, I put myself, my life, my friends, my all, upon the altar. I felt I was in the presence of God, entering into covenant with the Almighty.’

‘With that commitment, Hudson Taylor turned his face toward China and obscurity. As a result, he is known and honored on every continent as a faithful missionary and the founder of the China Inland Mission (now known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship). For the other son, however, there is no lasting monument. When you look in the encyclopedia to see what the other son has done, you find these words, ‘the brother of Hudson Taylor.’ ‘...he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever’ (1 John 2:17).”

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

From the moment that God walked through the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day in search of Adam and Eve to this very day, God has been calling fallen human beings. Why He bothers with us should make us wonder.

If the truth be told, God doesn’t need us to do His work. Did Jesus really need Thomas’s doubting and Peter’s verbosity? Probably not, but they needed Him. The call of the 12 disciples was another way of demonstrating that fallen human beings can be reclaimed and repurposed for the cause of God. It is a privilege to hear and accept God’s call to discipleship.

**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:

- Most students and probably adults have never read the entire Sermon on the Mount. Take a moment to read the sermon in full (Matthew 5–7). Ask the students to share parts of the sermon that they’d never heard before, or were not familiar with.
- Among the topics addressed by Jesus are: peace, kindness, slander, God’s people as salt in the earth, where murder begins, where adultery begins, marriage and divorce, making oaths, going the extra mile, loving enemies, doing good, fasting, worrying, judging, seeking God, the way to heaven, and how to build a life—among others. Choose some of these topics and ask the students to share what Jesus said about each.
- In this sermon on the mountainside Jesus was addressing His disciples within earshot of a multitude who had followed Him. The Jews should have already known the principles enunciated by Jesus here. Why didn’t they? Did the religious teachers of the day have anything to do with the situation?
- Much of what Jesus outlined in the principles that undergirded the kingdom of heaven is considered radical today. For instance, most people do not believe that it is possible to love an enemy. If someone smacks you on the cheek, would you offer them the other? Was Jesus asking the Jews—who were chafing under Roman occupation—to become doormats?
- Ask the students how they can live out the principles of the Sermon on the Mount in their day-to-day lives. Ask: “Can someone who is not called by God live for God?”

**Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story:** 1 Samuel 3; Exodus 20; Matthew 4:1.

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

1. **The Best?** The 12 disciples chosen by Jesus were not the best that humanity had to offer,
most people would conclude. Most of them were poor laborers. This is demonstrated to some degree by the disdain with which the Jewish leaders viewed them. Jesus basically took the worst of the human lot and showed what a little exposure to the Sun of Righteousness could do for them.

Consider the results: “Three of them became able writers. John was a profound scholar” (The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 594). Peter became a great preacher. Through these simple men, Jesus had built the foundation for a new church that would span the rest of time until He returns. The question we must ask ourselves is this: If Jesus could do so much with so little, what could He do with us?

2. **Something Better.** Jesus aimed a Spirit-filled barrage at the excesses of His time. This was the message of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, and in the Sermon on the Mount the thrust of Jesus’ message is the same. Here’s what Ellen White wrote about the way in which Jesus delivered His message:

“Christ disappointed the hope of worldly greatness. In the Sermon on the Mount He sought to undo the work that had been wrought by false education, and to give His hearers a right conception of His kingdom and of His own character. Yet He did not make a direct attack on the errors of the people. He saw the misery of the world on account of sin, yet He did not present before them a vivid delineation of their wretchedness. He taught them of something infinitely better than they had known” (The Desire of Ages, p. 299).

3. **A Kingdom of Grace—Not Force.** In the Sermon on the Mount Christ is speaking not only about the future kingdom of glory but about the kingdom of grace that dwells in the hearts of His followers. The Jews had a popular conception of the kingdom as one built on force, able to subdue the hated Romans.

### 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 The Desire of Ages. 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.
In parables, such as the tares, mustard seed, leaven, and dragnet, Jesus sought to give them examples of how to live out the kingdom of grace. “The kingdom Christ came to establish was one that begins within men’s hearts, permeates their lives, and overflows into other men’s hearts and lives with the dynamic and compelling power of love” (The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 325).

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Ask the students to say a silent sentence prayer to God in answer to His call. Ask the students to finish the following statement with their silent prayer to God.

“Father I hear You calling me. By Your grace I plan to...”

The objective of this prayer is to let the students know that God is still looking for disciples to help Him build up His kingdom. Close with a prayer of consecration and dedication to God and His service.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

On a hillside more than 2,000 years ago, Jesus chose 12 human beings to help Him build a kingdom. The kingdom of grace, as it later came to be known, was inaugurated on that day, and we are its beneficiaries today.

The Sermon on the Mount that followed the choosing of the 12 outlined in clear tones the constitution of God’s new kingdom on earth. The way of the world had been changed by Christ—the Way. This new kingdom would be built on selfless love and devotion to God and fellow human beings. The disciples didn’t know it at the time, but they had just been selected for the greatest mission ever entrusted to humans, and that mission transformed their lives.

God calls men and women to a life infinitely more meaningful than the one they are currently living. He gives all who answer the call a new way of living, a new way of being, in the world.

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 The Desire of Ages, chapters 30, 31.

*A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Jesus never missed a teachable moment. He was always clued in to the needs of those who came to Him, and He never missed a chance to help them grow. In this week’s lesson we see Jesus reaching out to people in need, and in the process teaching His followers—and His detractors—how to live.

The story of the centurion and his sick servant is at the heart of this week’s study. The Jewish leaders had concluded that this Roman commander was worthy of Jesus’ help, unlike the common people whom Jesus helped from day to day, because he had built them a synagogue. Jesus got delayed on His trip to the centurion’s home, but soon the centurion came to meet Him along the way and expressed a confidence in Jesus’ power that no Jew had ever exhibited before. Jesus said as much, adding: “Many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 8:11, NIV).

There are several points to emphasize here. For one, the faith of the centurion in the authority of Jesus to simply speak healing upon His servant is the kind of faith God’s people should exhibit. In response to the centurion’s faith, Jesus dropped an important hint about the makeup of the kingdom of heaven. Those who are believers will find that many others from the east and west will come to follow Christ. Let the students know that the family of God will transcend all cultures and creeds.

In the story of the demon-possessed man brought to Jesus, we see again the attitude of the Pharisees as they accused Jesus of being a devil worshipper. Here again Jesus took the opportunity to answer His critics with logic that they could not refute. In every act of mercy performed by Jesus, He looked for opportunities to make His people better followers of Himself.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Learn that true faith takes God at His Word and believes that He can do anything. *(Know)*
• Experience the blessing of being a part of God’s family. *(Feel)*
• Place their implicit trust in God as they seek to be used by Him to help save others. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

• Church as family (that cares)
• Authority/respect
• Unity in the body of Christ*

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.*

The answers to the True or False statements are as...
follows: 1. False—the United States Congress must approve declarations of war. 2. True. 3. False—even the president is still bound by what’s left of our privacy laws. 4. False—Congress can overturn presidential vetoes provided they have a two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives, and a filibuster-proof 60 votes in the Senate. 5. False—the president must abide by the laws of the land like any other citizen.

The objective of this exercise is to make the point that just like the United States Constitution gives the president certain powers, God gave Jesus power and authority over all things in earth and in heaven. The centurion recognized Jesus’ power was not from this world.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

In April 1988 the evening news reported on a photographer who was a skydiver. He had jumped from a plane along with numerous other skydivers and filmed the group as they fell and opened their parachutes. On the film shown on the telecast, as the final skydiver opened his chute, the picture went berserk.

The announcer reported that the cameraman had fallen to his death, having jumped out of the plane without his parachute. It wasn’t until he reached for the absent ripcord that he realized he was freefalling without a parachute. Until that point, the jump probably seemed exciting and fun. But tragically, he had acted with thoughtless haste and deadly foolishness.

Nothing could save him, for his faith was in a parachute never buckled on. Faith in anything but an all-sufficient God can be just as tragic spiritually. Only with faith in Jesus Christ dare we step into the dangerous excitement of life.

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

Faith in Jesus is key to living the Christian life. It was faith in His Father that allowed Jesus to walk around helping people with no seeming concern about where His next meal would come from or where He would lay His head at night.

Occasionally Jesus would see such faith, as He did in the centurion, and where He saw it, He highlighted it. As we explore the story of the centurion and the demon-possessed man brought to Jesus, we see the authority of Jesus to meet every human ill, the care with which the body of Christ should love one another, and sadly, some of the attitudes that must be renounced if we will be Christ’s disciples.

**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.*

- Both the centurion episode and the story of the demon-possessed man give us a look into the heart of the Jewish leaders. What can we learn about the leaders from the way in which they came to Jesus about the centurion’s servant?
- What are we to make of the statements the Pharisees made about Jesus after He cast out the demon from the possessed man? Make the point that Jesus was not universally loved. He often faced strong detractors, some of whom killed Him.
- In each episode, Jesus’ words are quite powerful. After He spoke, the centurion’s servant was healed that same hour. When He commanded, the demons left the possessed man, and not only that, but the man could see and speak again. What does this tell us about the power of Jesus’ words and of the Word of God—the Bible?
- The Pharisees were believers, yet they seemed to sow division among the people. Are God’s people called to be a family, even when we disagree with each other? What if those disagreements are theological? Do we still remain a family?
- We see vivid pictures of human compassion in these two stories. The centurion cared about his servant. The friends of the demon-possessed man cared about him. How do we show that we care for hurting people? How can we bring them to God?
- Make the point that Jesus recognized ethnic and social distinctions among different groups of people, but He never allowed these things to prevent Him from ministering to people in need.

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Matthew 12:1-8; Hebrews 11; Matthew 20:1-16; Psalm 33:8, 9.*

**Sharing Context and Background**

*Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.*
1. **Not Worthy.** Jewish synagogues were and are sacred spaces. For a Roman soldier to help build a Jewish synagogue during the time of Jesus was quite a feat. For one, Jews did not like their Roman occupiers. They yearned for the day when the Romans would be overthrown, but not all Romans were cut from the same cloth. Perhaps the centurion decided to do a little “community relations” by helping the people build the synagogue, but after it was finished, he could not go there to worship. Perhaps he would stand afar off, watching the people assemble there, longing to be included. Who knows?

In verses 7-9 we see something of how this centurion viewed the Jews. He notes that he is not worthy that Jesus should set foot in his house. His faith in Jesus is matched and surpassed by the sense of his own unworthiness. This centurion is an intuitive person who knows who he is and who God is. Sometimes people who are unbelievers have a sense of humility that many believers lack.

2. **Blinded by the Light?** When God’s blessings are taken for granted, they become lost to the blessed. Consider this comment by Ellen G. White on the knowledge entrusted to the Jews for centuries:

“The Jews had been instructed from childhood concerning the work of the Messiah. The inspired utterances of patriarchs and prophets and the symbolic teaching of the sacrificial service had been theirs. But they had disregarded the light; and now they saw in Jesus nothing to be desired. But the centurion, born in heathenism, educated in the idolatry of imperial Rome, trained as a soldier, seemingly cut off from spiritual life by his education and surroundings, and still further shut out by the bigotry of the Jews, and by the contempt of his own countrymen for the people of Israel—this man perceived the truth to which the children of Abraham were blinded” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 317).

3. **Choosing Deception.** The life that Jesus lived and the works that He performed pricked the Pharisees. This often led them to attack Him, even at times when the results of His ministry were obviously God-ordained. This happened during the episode with the demon-possessed man.

Jesus defended Himself against their slander that He’d done this miracle with the help of Satan. He also said: “And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven” (Matthew 12:31, NIV). The Holy Spirit had been working with many of the Pharisees as they witnessed Jesus in action. God desired to save them, but with every choice to attack Jesus, to disregard His offers of mercy, they hardened their hearts.

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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 *The Desire of Ages*. 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 Jewish leaders knew that Jesus’ power was divine, but they chose to attribute it to Satan. This was a deception of the highest order, and their refusal to change doomed them. We should never put off the voice of the Holy Spirit when we are presented with truth.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Choose two Christian songs to play for your students. One should focus on the power of God and the other on the love and compassion of God. Give the students index cards and writing utensils.

As the first song plays, ask the students to write down a time in their life when they exercised faith in God and saw Him answer their prayers. As the second song plays, have them share a time when they helped someone who is not a family member, and how helping that person made them feel.

If time permits, have one or two students share their experiences. Close with a prayer of thanks to God for loving us.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

“Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence,” wrote Ellen G. White in *Steps to Christ* (p. 94). That treasured quotation has come to mean much to many through the years, but often the emphasis is placed on the power of prayer. Prayer is the key, indeed, but faith is the hand that holds the key.

Without faith akin to that of the centurion we cannot please God, because all who come to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards all who seek Him diligently (see Hebrews 11:6). This week’s lesson reminds us that we have a God who loves to meet our needs. Jesus spent more time attending to those in need than He did preaching the good news of salvation. His was a living, breathing salvation that didn’t require a pulpit to save lives. It also teaches us that as the family of God, we must love all people and seek to bring them to Jesus, the “Place” where they can find salvation and healing.

Finally, we also take away from this study a warning against the human tendency to take the blessings of God for granted. The Jews had been given sacred truths, but because they were not lived, they were lost.

*Fundamental Belief No. 14.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Parent Support

By now you know that the spiritual instruction you give to your youth each week is pivotal to their growth in Christ. However, the most powerful force shaping a teen’s walk with God are their parents or guardians. Gather the parents of your students together once a quarter. Share with them any highlights or concerns you may have about their youth.

If you schedule the meeting for the beginning of the quarter, give them an overview of the upcoming quarter’s lessons. Parents are powerful allies in the spiritual instruction that you hope to impart on Sabbath. They must encourage their teens to study and complete each day’s section. We need their help and support.

The Jewish leaders knew that Jesus’ power was divine, but they chose to attribute it to Satan. This was a deception of the highest order, and their refusal to change doomed them. We should never put off the voice of the Holy Spirit when we are presented with truth.

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 *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 32, 33.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
used-to-be’s and has-beens

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week’s lesson focuses on the healing of the demon-possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes. It is a storied event where a man so possessed by evil had to be chained in a cave or a graveyard far from people. The story reveals that thousands of demons occupied his mind and tortured his soul to the point where he tried to cut himself with rocks. When he broke free from the cave and ran at Christ the sight must have been terrifying, but Christ saw the tiny part of his heart that the demons did not occupy and found a mustard seed of faith there, which was enough to free this man from his suffering. Sometimes Christ calls us to exhibit faith in His power, but there are times when our best and only response is like the man whose words spewed only hate and hopelessness, and Christ set him free. Perhaps this is one message that young people need to hear this week.

Another focal point is what happens after the miraculous restoration of the demoniac. He becomes a “has-been.” Where he has been becomes key to his witness to Christ’s mercy. Often young people wonder why they don’t experience power and joy in their walk with God. They believe all the right things and have asked God into their lives, but still they search for a sense that their relationship with God is real. It becomes real when we share it with someone else. Christ tells the man: “Go home and tell everyone what God has done for you and how He has had mercy on you.” Challenge young people to think about their walk with God and fashion their testimony about what God has done for them. As they share it, a new part of their experience with God will come alive.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Personally witness the power and mercy of Christ. (Know)
• Feel compelled to receive and share their story. (Feel)
• Choose to tell their story to someone else. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Witnessing
• Demon possession
• Grace

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 their responses to the voting activity in the What Do You Think? section. So often young people don’t think they have a “testimony” because they haven’t had a dramatic conversion such as the demon-possessed man in this week’s
meant nothing against the tender demeanor of a sweet 89-year-old woman. Just as I began to explain what really happened a young man walked over from the emergency vehicles and explained to the policeman, “I saw the accident...” His testimony saved me. He saw the entire accident and decided to turn back and make known what he knew about this strange event.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

According to the above story, how would you define a witness? Clearly, there are those who hear and believe, but only those who are willing to testify are actually witnesses. When have you experienced a scenario such as the one mentioned above?

The amazing story of the “once demon-possessed man” is a powerful example of the power of Christ to save anyone and how anyone’s experience with Christ is powerful. Read the story, answer the questions in this week’s lesson, and consider what your storied testimony might look like.

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 this story underline the key words or phrases that you think shape the meaning of this event.
- Read the context of this event (the events that lead up to this story) and describe the attitudes and experiences of Christ and the disciples as they face another frightening moment.
- Circle some of the key words and phrases that describe the demoniac before and after meeting Christ. What do these details say about the nature of Christ’s kingdom and the nature of Satan’s world?
- Based on what you observe in this story, how do demons respond to the presence of Jesus? How do you think the disciples and other witnesses of events such as this relate to Jesus’ power?
- How do you explain the reaction of the villagers to this event? How do you compare their reaction to Jesus with other stories in which people received Jesus with adoration? What does this lesson.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The screeching tires and hollow “woof” of metal crushing metal still haunts my senses every time I drive by the spot. My New Year’s Eve plan consisted of a large pizza and a lonely evening unpacking boxes and moving furniture into our new home while my wife and child visited the relatives several hours away. The accident occurred when an oncoming car swerved into my lane and smashed my economy-size car head-on, bouncing me deep into juniper bushes. Imagine a kindergartener colliding with a 250-pound linebacker running headlong into each other at top speed. That linebacker was an 89-year-old woman, attempting a left-hand turn as I inconveniently thwarted her efforts with the front of my car. The story becomes even more surreal when the little old lady that jousted me off the road with her 1974 Dodge Dart immediately left the scene, on foot, and made her way to the bank to make a deposit before the New Year. Unbelievable. After negotiating my way out of the wreckage, the lights of emergency vehicles emerged and found me, my smashed car, and an empty classic Dodge unblemished by the accident. The policeman asked, “Where is the other driver?” When I told him, “I think she went to the bank,” he almost administered a sobriety test on me. After a few minutes she exited the bank and underwent a thorough examination by the paramedics and the police. Her words almost caused me to come unglued. “I was just turning to go into the bank and all of a sudden this car crashed into me.” Unbelievable! The officer reinterviewed me because clearly my word
say about their previous knowledge of Christ?

- Why do you think the man healed of the demons so desperately wanted to stay with Jesus and get in the boat with Him? How did Jesus respond, and why do you think Jesus urged Him to share what he had witnessed?

**Extra Questions for Teachers:**

- Think of the most compelling sermons you have ever heard. What do you think is the most powerful part of the sermon? It is probably the personal testimonies that really capture our hearts—personal stories of how God made an impact in their life. Why is it when people describe where they have come from to where they are now that it is so inspiring?
- It is likely that the demoniac wanted to stay close to Christ because he was afraid the demons would return. How does telling people what God has done for you strengthen or defend you as in this story?
- How much did the “has-been demoniac” know about Jesus before he went through the 10 cities to spread the news? When have you held back your testimony because you thought you didn’t “know enough”? How does this story change the way you think about what you might have to contribute?

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Psalm 126:2, 3; Daniel 4; Mark 1:45; Acts 7:58–8:3; Acts 9; Mark 9:14-29.*

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

The setting of this story is crucial because Jesus is dealing with questions about His authority as well as misconceptions about the nature of His ministry among His disciples. Because of the exhausting work they have done and the building popularity of Jesus, they cross the lake for some peace of mind. But the disciples learn a valuable lesson about peace in Mark 4:35-41. The disciples and Jesus are beset by a storm so severe these trained fishermen fear for their lives. But Christ speaks to the wind and the waves and the seas calm. Again, Jesus speaks to heaven and food for thousands appears. He speaks to the elements and they obey. And in this story, He speaks with power to thousands of demons and they run and hide. The context of this story is set in the middle of several life lessons on the power and authority of Christ.

Demon possession has such a range of behavior, from people who are constantly not in their right mind (Mark 5) to people who occasionally demonstrate erratic behavior (Mark 9). A legion of demons, as reported in this story, is equivalent to six thousand Roman troops. A legion of soldiers could have—and did—wreak unspeakable havoc on towns and cities in that region. Combine that with the Jewish mind-set that...
demons were everywhere and if the human eye could see them, one would be frozen with fear. Nonetheless, the way in which Christ dispossesses the demons reveals the ultimate power of the Son of God as well as His compassion.

One of the likely reasons the man tried to get in the boat with Jesus was fear that the demons would return as soon as Jesus left. But Christ compels him to tell his story back home. The once-possessed man is said to have told the people of Decapolis what Christ had done for him. Decapolis means Ten Cities. Now these cities were not average Galilean towns; they were essentially inhabited by Greeks, but the territory was predominantly Syrian. But they were isolated by the roads so they didn’t receive the Roman protection as did other cities along the main highways. Therefore, the ten cities banded together and formed their own protection and maintained their Greek culture, religion, and influence in a unique way. That this man’s story paved the way for great inroads for the gospel that would come later is amazing.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

The recipients of Christ’s healing power in the New Testament are many. In groups of two or three, make a list of three people of whom you would want to hear their testimony. Invite the groups to share whom they chose as interview candidates, why they chose them, and what you think they might say. Have the students report.

If your group does well at speaking freely and honestly with each other, you might ask if the group would be willing to share their testimony over the next few weeks.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The demoniac, even though he was screaming and disturbed by demons, came to Christ with a mustard seed of faith. I love the way The Desire of Ages shows this man’s heart that longs for freedom but cannot even speak the right words to ask for help. But Jesus knew his heart and banished the evil spirits from him, bringing him to his right mind. When we come to Jesus, even though we are not entirely right with our lives or even when we are terribly distracted, Christ sees us, hears our hearts, and can draw us close. What Christ does for us will be real, but what will make it last is sharing our testimony with someone else. In the same way that the demoniac sowed seeds throughout Decapolis, our stories, even though simple, can foster growth and new life in ways we will never be able to count.

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 The Desire of Ages, chapters 34, 35.

*A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.