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.*
• **Other Eyes**—a couple of quotes from various contemporary or historic sources that may open up a slightly different perspective on the central message of the lesson.

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

**WHY THE BIBLE STORY APPROACH? (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 than entertaining. You will discover a message just for you. “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13, NIV). Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24, NIV).

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

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

Welcome to **Cornerstone Connections**.

—The Editors

PS. Don’t forget to check out the reading plan.

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

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

❶ With each lesson in this Teacher’s Guide you will find an Explore 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.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Leadout Ministries** is a resource created especially for those who lead out in youth ministry at the local church. It is staffed by youth pastors and young people. Leadout Ministries can also be a clearinghouse for the great illustrations, activities, study guides, or other resources that you and your young people have used successfully and are willing to share. Just contact them (troy@leadoutministries.com) with your ideas.
**2007**

**1st Quarter**
1. Adam and Eve
2. The Serpent
3. Cain and Abel
4. Seth and Enoch
5. Noah
6. Tower People
7. Abraham
8. Isaac
9. Lot
10. Rebekah
11. Jacob and Esau
12. Jacob
13. Israel

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

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

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

**2008**

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

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

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

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

**2009**

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

**2nd Quarter**
1. Samaritan Woman
2. The Nobleman
3. The Lame Man
4. John the Baptist
5. The Anointed One
6. Peter
7. Capharnaum
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. Breaking Barriers
6. Jesus’ Ministry
7. Who Is Jesus?
8. Lawyer/Ruler
9. The Children
10. Lazarus’ Family
11. Zaccheaus
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. Philémon
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

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July

4—No Man Is an Island [p. 11]
Personal tragedy is no respecter of persons. Whether you are a woman with health issues or a revered religious leader with a dying daughter, God can give comfort and healing—if we are willing to go to Him.

11—Can I Get a Witness? [p. 15]
The thought of witnessing to our faith in God can often make us feel anxious and intimidated: What do I say? However, our witness can be merely one story away.

18—Days of Their Lives [p. 19]
Are you feeling physically weary and spiritually empty? As we follow Jesus’ example of rest, we have the prescription for living stress-free in a stressed-out world!

25—Misunderstood [p. 23]
Jesus’ followers didn’t always understand what He was trying to teach them. When we try to understand Jesus through the prism of selfish drives and ambitions, we can misunderstand Him, too. How can we accept Jesus for who He really is?

August

1—Pagan Faith [p. 27]
Is it possible for someone who doesn’t believe in God to have faith? The Phoenician woman is a perfect example of faith against all odds.

8—Move That Mountain [p. 31]
In spite of having face-to-face time with Jesus, the disciples still struggled with faith. But when they caught a glimpse of Jesus, the craziness of their lives became calm, and they were able to accomplish what seemed impossible.

15—Who Is Jesus? [p. 35]
Jesus was popular and well-liked by ordinary people. But He wasn’t the Messiah the religious leaders were expecting. What kind of Savior do we expect? Who do we say that He is?

22—A Tale of Two Seekers [p. 39]
A seeker of eternal life leaves Jesus’ presence sad because he discovers that what he loves most is not what he is seeking. But our story doesn’t have to end that way!

29—Rejuveniling Your Faith [p. 43]
When parents brought their children to Jesus for a prayer of blessing, His disciples tried to turn them away. But Jesus loved hanging out with children. Actually, He wants us all to learn lessons about faith from them.

September

5—Wake Up! [p. 47]
As Jesus was standing at the graveside of His friend Lazarus, Scripture tells us that He wept. Why? Was He sad? Did He miss His friend? Or was it more than that?

12—Out on a Limb for Jesus [p. 51]
Zacchaeus climbed a tree in order to see Jesus. But it takes more than merely seeing Jesus to be transformed. It was by being in Jesus’ presence that Zacchaeus was changed.

19—The Alabaster Disaster [p. 55]
For Simon, having Mary pour perfume on Jesus’ feet was scandalous. For those of us who, like Mary, feel the need for forgiveness, it represents an act of lavish love and grace.

26—Two Against One [p. 59]
In the great controversy between right and wrong, humility is locked up in a desperate battle against selfish ambition and pride. Does humility have a chance?
**PREPARING TO TEACH**

I. **SYNOPSIS**

The story of the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus’ daughter links the personal tragedies of two unlikely people. The first is a woman with a socially alienating illness. She would have been isolated, left out of all celebrations, gatherings, worship, and other social events. The second is a synagogue official, respected and revered. Yet despite his privileged position, his little girl is dying and he is powerless over the situation. Both people have breaking hearts, and Jesus is the only answer.

Throughout the Bible, God promises that He will care for the lonely and grieving. Grief and loneliness can be so overwhelming and overpowering that only God can heal and bring comfort. He always does! God is our companion and friend, but He also brings other people into our lives. The ultimate promise is that we will see our loved ones again in heaven, and sadness and tears will be no more.

Ellen White states in chapter 36 of *The Desire of Ages* that God wants our praise to be “marked by our own individuality.” For teens, individuality can often mean ostracism and loneliness. However, God created us to be unique and He created us to be exactly who we are. Students will explore how to use their own unique individuality to bring glory to God and comfort to others.

II. **TARGET**

The students will:

- Understand that their own uniqueness is a gift from God. *(Know)*

- Sense a responsibility toward the lonely and grieving. *(Feel)*

- Choose to turn to God with their loneliness and be the answer to other people’s prayers. *(Respond)*

III. **EXPLORE**

- Loneliness
- Death and resurrection*
- Faith

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

**TEACHING**

I. **GETTING STARTED**

**Activity**

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

Invite the students to share one thing that makes them completely different from everyone else. Ask them to think of things that make people “weird” or not fit in. What is the difference between being unique and being socially unpopular? When someone doesn’t fit in, what are their options? Is this fair? What is our Christian responsibility toward each other?

**Illustration**

Share this illustration in your own words:

In a large city, the school system had started a
program to send teachers to hospitalized children to help them keep up with their schoolwork. One such teacher was sent for a small boy. She went around to his different teachers, asking what he would need to study while in the hospital. His language teacher said, “We are studying nouns and adverbs, and it would be very helpful if he could keep up so he doesn’t fall behind.”

The teacher took the books and made her way to the hospital. She didn’t know the details of the accident, and when she was admitted into the room, she was horrified to see that the boy’s body was covered in horrible burns.

Unnerved and embarrassed, the teacher blurted out, “I’m here to help you study nouns and adverbs!”

Obviously, the session was not productive and she hurried away after a few minutes. Guiltily, she returned to the hospital a couple of weeks later.

“What did you say to that boy?” a nurse asked her. “I’m so sorry . . .” the teacher began. She was sure that her lack of sensitivity had done some horrible damage.

“No,” the nurse said. “You don’t understand. We were worried about that boy. He wasn’t responding to treatment, and after your visit it was like he decided to live!”

When the boy explained later, he said, “They wouldn’t send someone to teach nouns and adverbs to a dying boy, would they?”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Sometimes hope comes in the form of a person. The burned boy needed someone to believe he’d recover. He needed to be treated like he was “normal” for a change, and it made all the difference.

Loneliness and despair go hand in hand. We often don’t understand how lonely people feel. Loneliness can come from a terrible tragedy that makes a person feel alone with their grief, or from being socially isolated and not included. Regardless of how overwhelming it might feel, Jesus offers hope.

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.

• Underline the characters in this story.
• Which characters seem to be lonely, abandoned, or desperate? Who realizes it?
• Circle the words that denote emotion.
• How does each person seem to be feeling?
• Draw a rectangle around Jesus’ actions.
• Besides working a miracle, what does Jesus give back to both Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood?
• What do these characters have in common?
• How do they differ?
• What do we learn about God through this story?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story:

• Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: What is the basic human need explored in this passage? How does it relate to this story?
• Matthew 26:36-45: What were Jesus’ human needs in this passage? What are His spiritual needs? Who does He turn to in order to fulfill His needs?
• Revelation 21:1-7: Jesus has the ultimate power over death. But He doesn’t always choose to raise the dead now. What is our ultimate hope? What does God promise us until then?

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words. Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the whole Bible sheds more light on the story. It is critical to remember that Jairus was an elite synagogue official. However, he was so desperate that he came to Jesus and petitioned Him as One much greater than he was. His faith was found in his desperation.

This is much like the woman with the issue of blood. Her illness was of a private nature. She didn’t want to go declaring this particular problem in front of a group of people—especially men! She desired a private healing, so no one would know. However, if Jesus had not called attention to her, her community would not have known about her cure, either, and it would have taken much more embarrassment and infringement on her privacy to prove her healed.

This woman had spent all that she had on doctors. Jesus was her last chance at any kind of healing. She was not only sick and poverty-stricken; she was also ceremonially unclean.

Keep in mind that she would always be unclean
until she stopped bleeding and was ritually washed. Anything she touched would become unclean. If she were married, she could not sleep with her husband, eat at the same table, eat from the same plate or common pot, or be touched in any way. She could not go out in public. She could not attend feasts, gatherings, worships, or celebrations. She could not socialize. If any man touched her or anything she had touched, even unknowingly, he had to give a sacrifice for the offense. Not only was it inconvenient, but it could get expensive! For 12 years, she had been the walking dead.

Jairus, the synagogue official, would have been the opposite. He was one of the religious elite. He ruled a synagogue and held public respect. All the doctors would have been at his disposal, but like the woman with the issue of blood, they were obviously useless. He would have tried every other option before going to Jesus, and it shows his desperation that he would bow before Jesus and entreat so humbly. The Matthew Henry Bible Commentary suggests that the little girl was the family’s darling. She seems to have been much loved, and the loss of her was obviously very painful.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Ask each student to name two lonely people that they know or come in contact with during the week.

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.
**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

The woman with the issue of blood and the synagogue official were both desperate. Both felt isolated in their pain and knew that they had only one hope left. Jesus reached out to these hurting people and worked miracles to reunite them with their loved ones and their community. God can heal loneliness and grief—we have only to go to Him. But He doesn’t just help soothe the pain. God gives us people in our lives to build lasting relationships with, to fulfill that very human need for human contact. Ultimately, we are looking forward to the time when we are all in heaven and there will be no more loneliness or grief. The pain on this earth will not last. There is hope in the future. But most important, God brings us relief today through the companionship of other people. He wants to use us to be the answer to someone’s prayer for comfort.

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*Fundamental Belief No. 26.*
can i get a witness?

Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapter 37.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This lesson focuses on the calling of Christ for us to share the good news of salvation with those who are far from God. Often this can be an intimidating topic to teach and to motivate young people to put into practice. After all, isn’t evangelism best left for the professional evangelists?

To ease any anxiety you may be feeling and to offer some perspective on the topic, consider the story that Christian author Ken Davis tells of a girl named Beth, a.k.a. “Space Cadet.” Ken admits, “She was the ditziest blonde I’ve ever seen in my life.” Nevertheless, she responded to Ken’s challenge to be involved with their campus youth program.

One evening, Ken revved up the students with an evangelism pep talk. “You are God’s answer to reach the lost students in your high school,” he preached. “You have access. You have their ear. You have their respect. You are their age. So go and reach your lost friends for Jesus!”

Following the meeting Beth approached Ken. “Oh, Pastor,” she sobbed, “I, um, ah, well, I want to share Jesus with my friends, but, ah, I don’t know what to say.”

“Relax,” Ken consoled. “Beth, God will tell you what to say.”

Abruptly the tears stopped. “Oh,” she giggled, “OK.”

So Beth invited a friend to the youth meeting. Outfitted for battle, Beth carried a tract in her pocket that explained the miracle of salvation. She was waiting for that moment when she would whip it out and do that thing we call “witness.”

On the way home Beth’s heart was pounding like a spastic woodpecker. It was witness time! Casually she asked her friend, “So, what did you think of the meeting tonight?”

“Well,” her friend replied, “I liked it except for the Jesus part.”

Ouch! Beth thought. It’s the Jesus part that I’ve got in my pocket. Now what should I do?

Collecting her wits, Beth responded, “Why didn’t you like the Jesus part?”

The question prompted a sordid testimony shadowed by shame. Wisely, Beth reckoned she would save “witnessing” for later. Instead, she just shared her story—which was also filled with guilt and pain; but hers was punctuated with a sense of hope because she knew that Jesus had completely forgiven her.

At the end of the conversation Beth introduced her friend to Christ—without ever opening the pamphlet.

Her senior year in high school, Beth led seven kids into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. And to think, she never did know what to say!

How many “Beths” are in your youth group?

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Learn about the calling that Christ extends to His followers to share the gospel. (Know)
• Sense the heart of God for lost people. (Feel)
• Be challenged to share the gospel with those who are far from God. (Respond)
III. EXPLORE
- Missions (being a missionary)
- Witnessing/sharing
- Faith/evangelism
- Discipleship/mentoring
- Outreach and 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.

As an alternate activity, use this scenario:
Role-play the following scenario with your group:
You are a foreign exchange student from India. The only religion you know is Hinduism. Now you’re staying in the home of Seventh-day Adventists. You find it fascinating that Christians believe in heaven, not reincarnation. You’d like to know more about what Seventh-day Adventists believe.

Divide your class into small groups and have them outline a study to share with you. What are they going to say? How will they share their beliefs? Then bring the groups together to present their study and explain their beliefs to you. The purpose of this exercise is to get the young people to think about their faith and how to defend what they believe.

Illustration
Share the following stories in your own words:

Every year thousands of Seventh-day Adventist young people volunteer to serve the poor, feed the hungry, love the orphans, and share the gospel of Jesus around the world. Often these volunteers willingly accept the harshest of circumstances—buggy beds, violent weather, cold showers, bland food, and miserably long and expensive flights—just to participate in a mission experience. Why would anyone trade the cushy comforts of home for the difficulties inherent in the mission field? Listen to an excerpt from just one of hundreds of online testimonies from Seventh-day Adventist young people:

My experience in Ghana was one of the most important experiences of my life. I knew that God took me out there for a reason, and I am thankful because I know what that reason was.

When God has called me and I have accepted, I have seen His hand working through me in very vivid ways. This trip was no exception. God put me on that plane, flew me for about 20 hours, and began to teach me my mission. However, the process was not easy. I faced trials and obstacles different from any I had ever faced before. I encountered a culture foreign to my own. I was completely ignorant about it, but once again, God used me in spite of me!

When I arrived in Ghana, I was clueless to all the experiences I was going to encounter in that place. I had no idea of the war zone I was about to step foot into. However, God fought the battle for me, and was victorious (Manuel Arteaga, referring to a mission trip with the Quiet Hour).

For the rest of Manuel’s story, and for other mission adventures and opportunities, check out www.thequiethour.org/evan/ghana/students.php

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Use the following discussion questions to follow up Manuel’s mission experience:
Discussion questions:
- Why do you think young people would give up their comfort to serve God in the mission field?
- Would an experience like this interest you? Why or why not?
- What might you learn from this kind of experience?

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. Split your class into three groups and designate to each group one of the following passages and assignments. (If your class is small, simply choose one of the following assignments.) After 15 minutes of working on the assignment, have each group share their final project with the rest of the class.

Read Luke 9:1-6: Challenge this first group to create a seminar on how to win the world for Jesus. Using the same principles that Jesus taught His discl-
ple in Luke 9:1-6, have the young people design and present a course about witnessing. Instruct them to take all of their training and techniques only from this passage in Luke.

Read Mark 6:7-11: Have this second group re-create Mark 6:7-11 using pictures. Their assignment is to pretend they are living in a cave shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven but they want to preserve this teaching of Jesus for all time, for all people, in all languages. Using a chalkboard or an easel pad, have them communicate this entire passage by sketching it out.

Read Matthew 10: This third group is tasked with the challenge of “selling” this calling of Christ to Christians. Jesus clearly states they will be arrested and persecuted and betrayed by their own family members—even unto death. Tell the young people they are working on Madison Avenue at an advertising agency and their job is to brainstorm ways to make people want to sign on for this unsavory task.

Sharing Context and Background

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

Go to the lost sheep of Israel. Jesus clearly directed His disciples where to preach this message: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel” (Matthew 10:5, 6, NIV).

In the Old Testament, God’s people were often referred to as sheep and their leaders as shepherds (see Ezekiel 34:2-16, etc.). In Jeremiah 50:6 God refers to Israel as being “lost sheep.” Isaiah refers to those who have drifted into sin as sheep that have gone astray (see Isaiah 53:6). Jesus referred to Himself as the Shepherd, leading the sheep of His fold (see John 10:1-16). Thus Jesus instructed His disciples to first share the gospel with the Jews.

Preach: “The kingdom of heaven is near.” Jesus called the disciples to “preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’” The term kingdom of heaven is used 31 times in the New Testament but only by Matthew. The other New Testament writers prefer the term kingdom of God. The substitute of “heaven” for “God” reflects the custom of the Jews in Jesus’ day to avoid uttering the sacred name of God.

Jesus was continually teaching about the kingdom of God (see Luke 4:43; 8:1). He introduced many of His parables with the phrase “The kingdom of heaven is like . . .” (see Matthew 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, NIV). He taught His followers to pray for God’s kingdom to come (Matthew 6:10).

Pastor John Ortberg offers insightful commentary on this central theme of Jesus’ teaching:

“Everybody has a kingdom, in a biblical sense. Your kingdom is that little sphere in which what you say, goes. Your kingdom is the range of your effective will. . . .

“My kingdom is the range of my effective will; that is where things go the way that I want them to go. . . . OK, everybody is made to have a kingdom.

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.
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 37.

*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.

### III. CLOSING

#### Activity

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

Equip your students with the tools they need to share a gospel presentation—the essential verses they can use when presenting the love of God to others. Go through the verses with your group and have them put the verses in their own words. For example, you could share with them the Romans Road to Salvation—Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, 9, and Romans 10:9-13—and then have them cross-reference their Bibles so they are always prepared and confident to share the gospel when an opportunity presents itself.

#### Summary

*Share the following story in your own words:*

Arthur Burns, a Jewish economist of great influence in Washington during the tenure of several presidents, was once asked to pray at a gathering of evangelical politicians. Stunning his hosts, he prayed, “Lord, I pray that Jews would come to know Jesus Christ. And I pray that Buddhists would come to know Jesus Christ. And I pray that Muslims would come to know Jesus Christ.”

And then, most stunning of all: “And Lord, I pray that Christians would come to know Jesus Christ.”

In the end, evangelism is all about sharing Jesus Christ. Of course, we cannot share Jesus Christ with others if we do not know Him ourselves. In this light, witnessing is nothing more than one friend telling another friend about a Friend.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

God must have anticipated our high-speed, technologically driven culture and all the problems it would produce. This week’s lesson provides the prescription for living stress-free in a stressed-out world. We are told in this week’s Key Text that Jesus called the disciples aside following one of their most successful evangelistic campaigns.

When the disciples returned from their journey they were elated about what God had done through them, but Jesus saw through their momentary euphoria. What did He see? He saw that His disciples were in danger of attributing to themselves the very works of God (see The Desire of Ages, p. 360). He saw that they were physically weary and spiritually empty. Having been in hand-to-hand combat with the devil since birth, Jesus knew when He needed to get away to gain strength and direction for battles ahead.

This week’s lesson teaches several lessons. It places special emphasis on the need for rest, even when that rest means taking a break from God-sanctioned activities. Notice that Jesus did not tell the disciples to do something that He Himself was not doing. After the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus sent the disciples away so that He could pray and commune with His Father. Jesus modeled the spiritual disciplines for His followers.

Another important highlight of the lesson is this: “The rest which Christ and His disciples took was not self-indulgent rest. The time they spent in retirement was not devoted to pleasure seeking. They talked together regarding the work of God, and the possibility of bringing greater efficiency to the work” (The Desire of Ages, p. 361). Our teens need to know that they must glorify God even in times of leisure.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Understand that the life of a Christ follower requires periods of rest, prayer, study, and one-to-one communion with God. (Know)
• Experience the peace that comes from the quiet assurance of God’s presence. (Feel)
• Be challenged to ask God to help them order their priorities to live a disciplined life in Christ. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Spiritual disciplines
• Entertainment and leisure
• Stress

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 key to this week’s activity is to get the students thinking about how they spend their leisure time.
Note that there may be activities they engage in that were not mentioned on the list. Ask them to share some of those, if time permits.

Once the students have been given time to share their responses, ask them whether or not they believe one should pray before engaging in leisure or entertainment activities. Many teens do not see the need to bring God into their leisure activities, but we are admonished in Scripture: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV). Jesus understood and lived this principle long before Paul ever wrote it, and so should we.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

One man challenged another to an all-day wood-chopping contest. The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had.

“I don’t get it,” he said.

“Every time I checked, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did.”

“But you didn’t notice,” said the winning woodsman, “that I was sharpening my ax when I sat down to rest.”

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

Think for a moment about the awesome work that Jesus was preparing His disciples to do. Following His sacrifice on the cross, the disciples were to be endowed with the Holy Spirit so that they might build the foundation of a faith that would reach across centuries to the time when Jesus would return again. It was a job that would cause them to face fearful persecution and death.

There was absolutely no way that Jesus’ disciples would be able to do the work they were called to do without becoming disciplined followers of God. The spiritual disciplines were essential preparation for ministry!

**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.*

- A day in the life of Jesus’ disciples was filled with unpredictability. For instance, notice how the crowds continued to follow the disciples and Jesus—eventually breaking into their recreation time. The life of a Christ follower is equally unpredictable, hence our need to know God’s voice and leading.
- In addition to dealing with multitudes of people in need of physical and spiritual food, not to mention challenges of mentoring disciples in need of direction, Jesus was also suffering from the loss of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-11). What does Jesus’ ability to minister through all these challenges tell you about His relationship with His Father?
- John’s account of the feeding of the 5,000 found in John 6 is the most complete of all the Gospels. He notes carefully how the disciples responded to Jesus’ directive to give the people something to eat. Note that Jesus spent no time on their doubt and sarcasm, because He knew what He was going to do (John 6:6). Emphasize the point that Jesus was never faced with a ministry dilemma for which He was unprepared. Can we have this same experience? If so, how?
- The episode on the Lake of Galilee also gives us insight into the power Jesus derived from a life of prayer and communion with His Father. After feeding the multitude and sending the disciples away, Jesus heard the call to prayer (Matthew 14:23). Jesus didn’t just decide to have some fun on the lake that night. He knew that that awesome miracle would serve to build up the kingdom of God, because His Father told Him so.

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Revelation 21:1-4; Psalm 37:1-7; Luke 12:16-20.*

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

**Take a Sail.** The place where Jesus and His disciples assembled to rest from their ministry labors was at the northeastern end of the Lake of Galilee. The area around the lake was lush and verdant. Jesus understood the rejuvenating powers of nature—after all, He created it. Sitting among the trees away from the
crowds that buffeted them from day to day, Jesus could drop the hidden language of the parables and speak directly to His loved ones. We hear God differently when we are alone with Him than when we are engaged in the hustle and bustle of life. When our minds and hearts are quiet, God’s voice can become clear and positively deafening with time and practice.

Ellen White notes that Jesus was constantly dogged by the machinations of the scribes and Pharisees. This getaway was as much a break for Jesus as it was for His disciples (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 361).

**Go Sailing.** After feeding the 5,000 Jesus sent the disciples out for a sail while He dismissed the people. Ellen White notes that this miracle aroused within the multitude a desire to make Jesus king. They saw in the One who had fed them the Deliverer who would free them from Roman occupation. Even the disciples were swept up in the moment. They began to lead the uprising. This was not the way that Jesus planned to establish His kingdom, so He squashed the uprising by sending its leaders out on the lake (see *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 378, 379).

It bears noting that the disciples had just come from a period of rest and relaxation with Jesus when they got swept up in the excitement of the moment. This fact demonstrates just how much they needed the discipline that Christ longed to give them.

**Prayer Power.** After Jesus sent the crowd away, He went up into the nearby hills overlooking the Lake of Galilee to pray. From this place, Jesus entered into a prolonged conversation with His Father. Prayer was an integral part of Jesus’ life. “Upon this occasion His prayer was twofold in purpose, first, for Himself, that He might know how to make the true purpose of His mission clear to men, and second, for His disciples in their hour of disappointment and testing” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 415).

entered into a prolonged conversation with His Father. Prayer was an integral part of Jesus’ life. “Upon this occasion His prayer was twofold in purpose, first, for Himself, that He might know how to make the true purpose of His mission clear to men, and second, for His disciples in their hour of disappointment and testing” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 415).

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**The Finer Point**

This week’s lesson study provides numerous points of emphasis. You might decide to teach from the perspective of what it was like to be a disciple of Jesus from day to day. You may choose instead to focus on the theme of rest, and lightly cover the other themes. There are more angles to explore in this lesson, to be sure, but you would probably do well to pick one and develop that one.

For instance, studies are beginning to show that today’s hyperconnected teens are suffering from sleeplessness, exhaustion, depression, extreme narcissism, and other maladies due to what some are calling technology overload. Emphasizing the need for rest, balance, and discipline is extremely important.

Try to get across one important point and the scriptures that support that point.

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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.
III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Find a day planner and make copies of one day’s entry to distribute to the class. Ask class members to reflect on a day during the past week. Then ask the students to fill in the day planner sheet, detailing everything they did that day.

After a few minutes, ask a few class members to share their activity log with the class. The objective of this activity is to see whether or not the teens had set aside time with God at any point in their day. Before praying for the class, make the point that all other activities in life must be built around time spent with God. This is our first priority.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:
The call that Jesus made to His disciples to come aside and rest is the same call that He makes to us today. The disciples didn’t have the Internet, cell phones, laptops, and iPods, but they did have their share of distractions. In every age Satan plies humanity with an endless stream of things to occupy our time.

The enemy’s plan is to prevent us from ever spending deep, prolonged periods of time in the presence of God. He knows that God will expose his schemes, while simultaneously empowering us for greater devotion and service. This is how Jesus was able to take five loaves of bread and two fishes and feed the multitude. Time spent in solitude, contemplation of the Scriptures, and prayer was the secret to His unbelievable capacity to minister at all times and in all circumstances.

God yearns to give us victory over the cares of this life and power to do His will, but unfortunately He has to do it on the “fly,” because His people just cannot stop running. We need to stop while there’s time, and consider 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*, chapters 38, 39, 40.

*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.
misunderstood

Preparing to Teach

I. SYNOPSIS
To say that Jesus was misunderstood is truly an understatement. The Bible record of His life during the formative years of childhood is largely silent. However, given how much people misread Him during the three short years of His public ministry, could His childhood have been any different?

In John 6 and Matthew 15 we get a glimpse of the Savior in hand-to-hand combat with Satan as He sought to unfold the deeper meaning of His life and ministry. Following the awesome feeding of the 5,000, crowds flocked to Him in search of more “bread.” But when Jesus declared that He was the “Bread of Life,” sent down from God to feed humanity’s hungry soul, He was met with doubt and disdain. The people looked for a conquering king, a deliverer from Roman oppression. When Jesus didn’t play along, they began to view Him with suspicion and disdain. In short, they were looking at Jesus through the eyes of their desires. If they had studied the Scriptures, they would have understood Jesus and His mission.

While the ordinary people struggled to comprehend Jesus and His mission, the Pharisees knew the Old Testament prophecies that validated Jesus’ life and ministry, but they too couldn’t “see” Jesus because of their desire for power and their refusal to repent.

The truth at the core of this week’s lesson is this: When we look at Jesus through the prism of our selfish drives and ambitions, we are bound to misunderstand Him. This week, special emphasis must be placed on the need to come to Jesus with an open heart and mind, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the Christ to us. Once revealed, we must accept all of who Jesus is if we are to become all of whom God created us to be—children of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Learn that we have a unique opportunity to know and understand Jesus’ life and ministry. (Know)
• Experience the joy and peace that comes from fully embracing the Savior. (Feel)
• Look for opportunities to share Jesus and His mission with those who do not know Him. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Christ (life, death, resurrection)^1
• Bible/Holy Scripture^2
• Trust
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 get teens talking about some of the barriers to effective communication and understanding.

The CEO’s message was misinterpreted several times and became unrecognizable as people shared it. The message changed because those passing it along added their own “spin” to it, instead of simply sharing the message as the CEO had given it.

Make the point that we human beings are the sum of our experiences—both good and bad. Every piece of communication we engage in is colored by these experiences. This is largely why Jesus was misunderstood.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Several years ago a story from the war in Afghanistan captivated citizens of the United States of America. It was the story of Pat Tillman, a professional football player who left a lucrative NFL career, joined the U.S. military, and was deployed to Afghanistan.

While pursuing Taliban forces in a mountainous region in Afghanistan, Tillman’s unit had been split in two and sent out to hunt them down, despite the objections of the platoon leader. The Washington Post newspaper later reported: “a mistaken decision to split his platoon over the objections of its leader, and negligent shooting by pumped-up young Rangers—some in their first firefight—who failed to identify their targets as they blasted their way out of a frightening ambush.”

Tillman was heard screaming to his fellow soldiers, “Cease fire! Friendlies!” He repeated this phrase until he was fatally wounded. A miscommunication had cost Pat Tillman his life. Eager to use the Tillman story for propaganda purposes, the military initially reported the incident as a death at the hands of the enemy. Only later did several investigations get at the truth.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Misunderstandings happen every day in life. Someone says one thing and we think they mean another. Usually we laugh it off and try to communicate better the next time. But some misunderstandings are fraught with eternal consequences. Such is the case during wartime. Military planners spend countless hours and dollars to minimize loss of life due to miscommunication and misunderstanding. They understand that once the “fog of war” sets in, communication often breaks down and costs lives.

We, too, are caught in a war zone between God and Satan. It is absolutely imperative that we hear, understand, and accept Jesus. We cannot afford to allow anything to prevent us from clearly perceiving who Jesus is and what He did for us at Calvary!

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.

• In this week’s Scripture story Jesus is desperately trying to get the people to see beyond their temporal need to the deeper need of their hearts. Explore what Jesus meant when He told His listeners: “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”

• Jesus told His hearers that the work of God is to “believe” in the one whom God had sent. This simple statement seems almost too simple, yet what Jesus is referring to here is much deeper than what appears on the surface. Belief in Jesus requires a radical change of life and submission of our will to the will of God. It requires a daily dying that is much more challenging than it first appears.

• Why were the people requesting miraculous signs and wonders before being willing to believe? Is this spirit still alive today? This point offers a good opportunity to discuss how charismatic “miracle-working” leaders mislead large numbers of people and sometimes cause their death.

• It was obvious that the Jewish multitude was aware of God’s provision for Israel during their sojourn in the wilderness. They knew that Moses had given the people bread, but couldn’t see in that provision a foreshadowing of Jesus, the Bread of Life. Even today, the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and His work are essential to comprehending who He is.

• Pay special attention to the role of family in this passage—specifically, Jesus’ family. Because people knew His parentage, or so they thought, they refused to believe. This is something that all followers of Christ will face. Once people
know your background they tend to put you in a box.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: John 3:18, 19; Mark 7:1-23; John 14; John 1:10-12.

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 Place. It is important to note that Jesus’ discourse on the Bread of Life took place in the Jewish synagogue in Capernaum. This challenging message was not spoken on a hillside or in a busy thoroughfare. This adds special meaning to the significance of the message. The Bread spoken of by Jesus is not just His earthly life and ministry, but also the Bible, which is a manifestation of Christ (The Desire of Ages, p. 390). The synagogue was a place where God’s Word was supposed to be taught and celebrated.

2. The Turning Point. The feeding of the 5,000 and the sermon on the Bread of Life in the synagogue at Capernaum signaled a major turning point in the ministry of Jesus. These two events formed the climax of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee (The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 419). Many followers had deserted Him following the sermon on the Bread of Life.

3. Not for Show. Why didn’t Jesus perform miracles to prove that He was the Son of God? Ellen White notes: “Christ never worked a miracle except to supply a genuine necessity” (The Desire of Ages, p. 366). There are many things that humans can do for themselves, but do not do. Then, when we get in trouble we ask God to move earth and heaven to help us. God responds when human beings are at the end of their skill and wisdom, when they are genuinely in need of His help.

4. The Rest of the Story. Read John 6:53-58. These words of Jesus led many to leave Him. John 6:66 says: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (KJV). Even the disciples, who loved Jesus dearly, exclaimed: “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60, KJV). From this moment onward, Jesus’ ministry was never the same.

This part of the narrative is critical to this week’s Scripture Story. Christ did many things to bless and give hope to the people of His day, but He also asked hard things of them. Jesus asked the people to eat His flesh and drink His blood. This shocked the mind of a
people whose laws forbade them to use blood for food. This was a hard saying.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Bring a loaf of bread to class, one that has not been sliced. You’ll also need a cutting board, a bread knife, and napkins. Ask a student to cut the bread into slices. Pass a slice of the bread to each student. Tell the students to take a bite of the bread and enjoy.

Ask the students the following questions:

1. What did you have to believe about the bread before you could eat it? (Answer: They had to believe that nothing was wrong with the bread, and that it was good for food!)

2. What had to be done to the loaf before it could be eaten? (Answer: They had to slice it or break it into edible chunks.)

3. How is Jesus like this loaf of bread? (Answer: We must believe in Him. We cannot digest His entire life at once. We partake of Him in bite-sized pieces, through His Word and the agency of the Holy Spirit.)

Close with prayer, asking God to feed us all this week through Christ.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

As followers of Jesus Christ today, we have everything we need to put our complete faith and trust in Christ. Jesus was misunderstood during His lifetime because people refused to let go of self—their wants, their wishes, their desires. The life of Jesus was the fix for their every need, and He remains so today. When we partake of Christ’s life by feeding on God’s Holy Word, we will cease to find fault with Him and His life will be manifested in ours.

One of the hidden truths that many who seek God overlook is this: Truth can be fully understood only when the heart of the seeker is open to obeying what God reveals. The Jews and their leaders did not want to obey Jesus, so they found fault with Him. As Christ reproduces His character in us, we will see Him ever more clearly and be equipped to lead others to Him.

1 Fundamental Belief No. 9.

2 Fundamental Belief No. 1.

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 41, 42.

*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 lesson teaches us about prejudice as well as faith. In this story we see how the Phoenician woman came to Jesus even though the odds were all against her. Her people were scorned and looked down upon by the Jews because they were pagans, yet there was still that spark of hope in her heart that gave her the courage to approach Jesus and beseech the healing of her daughter. Jesus seemed to at first deny her, but when she kept persistently seeking Him, He granted her prayer. He was in a way testing her faith. She was a perfect example of faith against all odds. Jesus knew she would be a good example to all witnesses to show that prejudice has no place in His kingdom. It didn’t matter where she was from or what her past was; she too could be accepted through faith. Psalm 145:18, 19 says: “The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them” (NIV).

Make it clear to the students how prejudice is as rampant today as ever. Ask them to share any stories about experiencing prejudice in their lives, whether it be about race or even age or gender. But don’t stop there. This offers an excellent opportunity to discuss not only our experiencing prejudice, but our responses.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Come to a deeper understanding of prejudice and its negative impact on people. (Know)
• Desire to put your faith in God even when the odds don’t favor you. (Feel)
• Eliminate all bias and prejudice from your life. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Faith
• Prejudice
• The gospel

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 going over the What Do You Think? section, divide the students into groups. Have them take a pen and piece of paper and write down examples of prejudice that they have either witnessed, read, seen on television, or any other ways they have been exposed to it. Afterward, have each group read their examples and then discuss and compare the differences and similarities.

(Note to Teacher: It will be up to you to keep the discussion “redemptive,” rather than digressing into a “gripe” session.)
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:
In the 1950s John Howard Griffin, a White journalist, took melatonin tablets that made his skin turn dark. In addition to that he rubbed dye on his skin and shaved his head. After he changed his appearance, he went to New Orleans and lived his daily life as an African-American. He befriended many other Black people, and they thought he was the same race as they were. He befriended a shoe shiner, and he confided the truth about his true race. After his confession, his newfound friend showed him the ropes about life as a Black man in New Orleans. Afterward he traveled all over the South living as a Black man. He wrote about how Whites treated him as a second-class citizen. He was allowed to stay in certain hotels only; he couldn't use the regular restroom but was forced to use the “Black restroom.” He could not drink out of the “White” water fountains, but had to walk farther to quench his thirst from a “Black fountain.” He spoke about how he was always forced to sit at the back of the bus, and how many restaurants had refused to serve him. Toward the end of his experiment he washed the dye off and was once again White, his natural skin color. He wrote about how the next day he walked into a fancy restaurant and they seated him at the finest spot and served him whatever food he asked for. He said, “I am the same person, just a different color skin, and to these people it’s solely the color that defines me.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:
In our world today we can find prejudice anywhere. Bias has been embedded into our minds whether we realize it or not. No doubt many of the Whites in the above story had no clue how bias and prejudice were operating in their lives. In their eyes, the color of a person’s skin gave them value. But in God’s eyes, we are all equal. He died for every human being on this earth—no exceptions. All He asks of us is to put our faith in Him.

The story of the Phoenician woman is not one of the more famous stories in the Bible, yet its importance is obvious. She sets forth the perfect example of faith and trust. Even though the odds were against her, she didn’t give up on asking Christ to heal her daughter. She truly put her faith in Him. And because of that, Jesus was able to use her to all who witnessed the event as an example of eliminating prejudice and how, no matter who comes to His throne, no one will be turned away.

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 is more important: eliminating prejudice, or having faith in God? Or do you think they are of equal importance?
• Name a few other instances in the Bible in which people harbored prejudice.
• Why do you think Jesus seemed to ignore the woman’s plea in the beginning?
• Have you ever been in, or witnessed, a situation similar to this story?
• What do you think went through the woman’s mind when Jesus healed her daughter?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Deuteronomy 31:8; Psalm 91:14-16; Colossians 3:11; Psalm 145:18, 19.

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 Phoenicians were of the old Canaanite race; thus, they considered themselves Canaanites. It was the Greeks who called them Phoenicians, apparently after the name of a purple dye (Gr. phoinix).

Phoenician Deities. The ancient Phoenicians had a very cruel and degrading form of religion. They were known to, among other things, sacrifice their children to their gods. This was not totally uncommon in the ancient world at that time, which explains why, time and again, the writers of the Old Testament warned against doing the same thing. It’s difficult to imagine today any religion asking that of anyone. But it’s apparent that the entire practice is based on Satanic deception that cruelly mocked the one true Sacrifice, who died for the sins of the world. The ancient Hebrews were repulsed by this horrible practice and generally showed contempt for the “gods” that would ask such a thing. Hebrew scholars believe that the goddess Ashtoreth spoken of so often in the Bible is a combination of the Greek name Astarte and the
Hebrew word *boshet*, which translates “shame,” another illustration indicating the Hebrew contempt for their cultic practices.

The Phoenician practice influenced other religions as well, such as in the famous city of Carthage, which had originally been settled by Phoenicians, who were seafaring people. Altars have been found there as well with the bones of small children. How glad we can be that our God never asks anything like that of us. When the Lord wanted to show us in symbols what Messiah’s sacrifice was all about, He asked that animals be slain—never, never human children.

**Jesus’ Response:**

There were many Jews living in Phoenicia, so it was most likely that the woman had heard of Jesus before this time. For her to address Jesus by the title “Son of David,” which implied recognition of His being the Messiah, seems surprising. But it could be that she had heard from the Jews living in her country about the miraculous deeds Jesus had performed, and her faith had already begun to grow.

Jesus’ response, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24), comes across as callous. Even modern-day people have a difficult time with His words, taking them literally and not within their full context. But Jesus was in actuality seeking to teach the disciples a lesson. A typical rabbi would have responded exactly how the disciples had responded: harsh, calculated, sans mercy—especially in light of the Hebrews’ contempt for the Phoenician people. In addition, she was not only a Gentile; she was a woman. But Jesus was no typical rabbi. By acting out the contrast between the usual Jewish attitude and His own, He revealed to them the favor with which He looked upon the Gentiles. “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34, NRSV). He is no respecter of persons. Faith is faith, wherever it may be found.

**III. CLOSING**

Bring a short movie or YouTube clip, or possibly

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Prejudice in the Media**

In this story the main focus is about prejudice and faith, as well as the gospel. Try to center the students’ attention on modern-day prejudice as well as ancient biblical prejudice. Try to find stories and examples on the Web on these topics, especially of things that have happened in recent years. This is important because it helps them become more aware of the fact that these types of things surround them on a daily basis, especially since media is such a part of their daily life.

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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.
documentary, about prejudice or faith. Try to find something that’s powerful and that will have a moving effect on the students. Afterward discuss their opinions on what they just saw.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

How many times in your life have you witnessed prejudice? How many times in your life have you witnessed faith? The Lord knows our hearts despite what others see. He can read our minds and look into our souls more so than any human on this earth ever could. The Lord wants us to look past differences of culture, background, race, or shady histories. He wants us to look to and put our faith solely in Him. In God’s kingdom prejudice doesn’t exist. In His heaven we are all equally entitled to His love and glory. And as we see this Phoenician woman’s example of faith, and Jesus’ example of unconditional love, we should yearn and strive to follow it. In the upcoming days, ask the Lord to remove all bias from your heart, and look to the heavenly Father for the faith to live accepting of those different than we are.

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 43.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

One of the greatest hurdles for the disciples to overcome during their time with Jesus was to break through the faith barrier. They would listen to His parables, see Him perform miracles, and be taught privately for the trials they would face after Jesus returned to heaven.

In spite of all the one-on-one time, the disciples were still weak in their faith. They had so much growing to do. Jesus continued to lead them toward a full-blown faith that would allow God’s purposes and workings to be in full control in each of their lives.

Imagine the scene as Jesus and the three disciples were coming down off the mountain and they encountered the chaos of the crowd. There was no faith to be found. The disciples were humiliated, the father was devastated, the boy was in crisis, the crowd was boisterous and bordering on becoming an out-of-control mob, and the scribes were smirking and jeering.

As soon as the crowd saw Jesus, things changed. Isn’t that how we are today? When we can get a glimpse of the Savior, the craziness and the clatter of our lives becomes calm and reorganized.

As Jesus talked with the disciples, He used a familiar saying that would help them understand how they needed to grow in faith.

By having faith, we can accomplish what seems impossible. By having faith, our relationship with Christ grows in ways that we can’t even begin to imagine. By having faith, we are able to allow God to work out His purposes daily in our lives.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Understand that to grow in faith they have to be honest about their own spiritual condition. (Know)

• Desire to have a growing faith experience. (Feel)

• Determine their own action steps to grow in their own personal faith. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Faith development

• Self-honesty

• Why bother with faith?

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

Write the words “Belief,” “Wisdom,” “Knowledge,” and “Faith” on separate 8½” x 11” sheets of paper.

Distribute the sheets of paper to four students and ask them to stand at the front of the classroom facing the class. Ask the class to decide what order the words should be in, each time giving reasons for their choice of order.

Ask, “Which of these has to come first, before any
of the others can happen? Why?” Ask which has to come next (using each word). When the activity is finished post them in the final order. They will be used later in the lesson.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

On April 11, 1970, Apollo 13 was launched to send astronauts on a third lunar landing mission. Just two days after launch, the space capsule was crippled by an explosion, which caused a loss of electricity and oxygen. The three astronauts were stranded in space. Their first call to Earth was “Houston, we’ve got a problem.” They needed help, but this had never happened before. Thousands of miles away from Earth, the astronauts were totally dependent on what the scientists at the Houston Space Center could tell them in order to fix their spacecraft enough to come home. The astronauts had to trust the scientists enough to keep communicating. When the scientists gave them the solutions, the astronauts had to trust in what they were told to do to fix the spacecraft.

As the world watched, bringing the astronauts home seemed an impossibility. How could the scientists on Earth fix a disabled spacecraft floating thousands of miles above the Earth?

In order to come home the Apollo 13 astronauts had to take the following steps:

- They had to contact their base in Houston.
- They had to believe the scientists could solve the problems.
- They had to wait for an answer.
- They had to put action to the solutions that the scientists gave them.

Impossible things are never accomplished without faith that leads to action. Who was in the driver’s seat in this situation: the Apollo 13 astronauts or the Houston scientists?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Ask the students if anyone came up with the same answer. Then share the following in your own words:

God allows us to have free choice in having faith in Him. He doesn’t force His way into our lives. As humans, we can’t grow in faith without depending on God. We need Him for faith, and He needs us to make the choice to allow Him to work in our lives before He can begin to take action that will direct us.

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.

- Distribute a sheet of paper and various colored markers to each student. Ask them to mind-map the following things:
  - The main characters in this story.
  - The actions of the characters in the story.
  - Something new that they learned about this story.
- Ask them to consider the following questions and add them to their mind maps:
  - Which of the father’s actions actually healed the son? (None of them. Jesus healed him.)
  - Which of these actions, if omitted, could have prevented his son’s healing? (Any one of them.)
- The disciples had been with Jesus for just over three years when this story took place. After having spent so much time with Him, how did they manage to fail in such a big way?
- What do you think the nine disciples who failed to heal the boy were feeling? What do you think the three disciples who had been with Jesus were thinking and feeling?
- The crowd wavered from attacking the disciples and making fun of them to believing Jesus could heal the boy. Have you ever experienced this wavering in your life? Add something on your mind map that would illustrate this incident in your life.
- How did this event help the father and son to grow in their faith? the crowd? the disciples? you?

Sharing Context and Background

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

1. The disciples were confronted with a situation they couldn’t solve. Although the disciples had healed people before, this time they failed and they failed big. There was a crowd gathered and they must have felt the pressure of being in such a public setting and not fulfilling what they had been tasked by Jesus to do.
The scribes were constantly looking for some way to bring derision on Jesus and His followers. The failure of the disciples allowed an opening for the scribes to begin questioning whether Jesus was who He claimed to be. There were willing ears in the crowd who were ready to take up the chant that there was a chance that Jesus and His followers were fakes.

2. Jesus had just come down from the mountain. Just prior to this story, Jesus had been on the mountaintop with three of His disciples. They had witnessed the Transfiguration and knew that God had shown them something special. They had been in a solitary setting and now were confronted by a noisy, raucous crowd.

The situation was on the brink of being out of control. People were running around and shouting. The disciples were standing by, helpless to change the situation. The boy was writhing on the ground and his father was in agony, seeing his hopes for healing crushed under the failure of the disciples and the doubt of the crowd.

When Jesus arrived, things quickly calmed down. His presence had a calming and soothing effect. As He surveyed the situation, Jesus recognized what was going on but He took His time. He didn’t immediately heal the son. He asked the father for a history of his son’s struggle. He wanted to know if the father had faith. He began to build a relationship with him. Then

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Motivating Your Students**

In today’s world it’s often hard to catch and keep the attention of students. Here are some things to consider as you try to motivate your Sabbath School class to become involved in studying their lesson on a daily basis and participating in class.

1. Build a relationship with your students that promotes personal encouragement, honesty, and support.
2. Be a role model. If you aren’t in the Word daily, it will show.
3. Don’t assume your students are someone they are not.
4. Provide opportunities for your students to take the initiative.
5. Allow students decision-making choices about their Sabbath School class and outreach.
6. Peer pressure can be good or it can be bad. Help guide your students to use their influence on others in positive ways.
7. Guide your students into making commitments. Begin with short-term goals and then lead them into lifetime commitments.
8. Make sure your class is a safe place for your students to express their beliefs and feelings.

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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.
Jesus turned His attention toward the boy.

3. **Jesus wanted the people to understand what having faith really means.** Jesus used a phrase well known to the Jews when He spoke of removing mountains. According to William Barclay in *The Daily Study Bible Series, The Gospel of Matthew*, volume 2: “A great teacher, who could really expound and interpret Scripture and who could explain and resolve difficulties, was regularly known as an *uprooter*, or even a *pulverizer*, of mountains. To tear up, to uproot, to pulverize mountains were all regular phrases for removing difficulties. Jesus never meant this to be taken physically and literally. After all, ordinary people seldom find any necessity to remove a physical mountain. What Jesus meant was: ‘If you have faith enough, all difficulties can be solved, and even the hardest task can be accomplished.’ Faith in God is the instrument which enables men and women to remove the hills of difficulty which block their path.”

**III. CLOSING**

**Activity**

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

Ask the class to read 1 Peter 1:3-8. Remind them of the order in which they placed the words “Wisdom,” “Belief,” “Knowledge,” and “Faith.” Ask them if their choice of order has changed after what they have learned in class. Why or why not?

**Summary**

The story is told of how during World War II, Allied soldiers checking bombed out buildings for snipers discovered words etched on a basement wall. A Jew who had been in hiding had probably written them. The words said:

“I believe in the sun—even when it does not shine;
I believe in love—even when it is not shown;
I believe in God—even when He does not speak.”

The person who wrote this had been stripped of all that was normal to them. Yet their faith was strong enough to help them move the mountains of doubt and threat of loss of everything important in their life.

Distribute a mustard seed to each student. Remind them that during the next week when they face impossible situations, even if they have only a tiny amount of faith, with His help they will be able to do whatever God puts in their path.

*A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items that are arranged radially around a central word or idea.*

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 44, 45, 46, 47.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
The Jews enjoyed a rich history full of oral tradition, the Scriptures, their weekly Sabbaths and annual feasts, and the Temple with all its ritual and worship to prepare them to recognize and receive their Messiah when He should come. So why was there all the whispering, confusion, and outright anger and rejection of Him, particularly by the religious leaders? It wasn’t as though most people weren’t impressed by His miracles or His teachings. Jesus was very popular and well liked by ordinary people. They were convinced for the most part that He was a prophet and healer. The problem with Jesus was that He went too far. Performing miracles and showing compassion, sounding authoritative about the Scriptures—that was sort of OK. But as we read through these chapters of John, what is very clear is that Jesus was claiming His deity. In doing so, both in His teaching and in the way He chose to perform His miracles, He was challenging the traditional ways in which the Jews had come to interpret the Scriptures. Bottom line: He wasn’t the Messiah they were expecting. They were expecting a Messiah who would come as a gloried and conquering King to establish the nation of Israel and to rule all the nations through them in Jerusalem. They were looking for the Jesus that we Adventists anticipate seeing in His second coming. Jesus missed the mark and was disappointing to them because they didn’t want a spiritual kingdom brought on by the new birth and the remaking of the human heart. Are we any different?

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Deepen their understanding of how Jesus is the greatest expression of God’s love and redemptive plan for the human race. (Know)
• Gain a greater sense that faith in Jesus is not merely about religious belief, but a real relationship with God. (Feel)
• Choose to put their complete faith in Jesus and respond to His offer of abundant life and His promise to meet their deepest needs. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Festivals (biblical)
• Humiliation
• Jesus
• Compassion
You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with the 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.

Prepare and distribute scripts from John 8–10 in the form of a play. Assign parts: have someone read the part of Jesus, assign a narrator, some would be groups of people whispering, others would be the

Scripture Story: John 7; 8; 9; 10:1-30.
Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapters 49, 50, 51, 52.
Key Text: John 8:12.
Pharisees. Choose a passage that wasn’t previously used in Into the Story—perhaps the woman brought in sin to Jesus, or the healing of the blind man. Or both. After the class acts out the scene and the reaction to Jesus, have a discussion with them about what insights they got from role-playing the Scriptures. Then ask how the reactions to Jesus compare to how people react to Him today.

Illustration
In January 2001 three young teens, refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan, were transported to Fargo, North Dakota, landing in the middle of winter: “This is a stove burner. This is a can opener. This is a brush for your teeth. The new things came in a tumble” (“The Lost Boys of Sudan; The Long, Long, Long Road to Fargo,” Sara Corbett, the New York Times, April 1, 2001).

Just as a youngster from the barren desert of the Sudan might not know what to make of a snow-covered prairie, many denizens of Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Galilee weren’t quite sure what to make of Jesus. “Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” (Mark 6:3, NIV).

In this case, familiarity with Jesus would ultimately breed contempt for Him and an inability for the “native son” to perform the miracles He did elsewhere, saying: “‘Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.’ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith” (Mark 6:4-6, NIV).

How we see Jesus will determine what we do with Him. If all we see is an itinerant teacher, we will not understand His place in the Godhead. If we don’t see His high priestly role, our understanding of His present ministry will be deficient. And if we don’t see Jesus as soon-coming King, our lives may be spent in ways other than those He would desire.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
One of the most important things a follower of Jesus can do is share His love with others. How well we know Jesus and what our understanding of Him is will determine what we share. Just like the early disciples, and like His neighbors in Nazareth, we need to make sure that our picture of Jesus is full, complete, and even compelling. If we lift Jesus up, He will draw all men unto Him.

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

Use a board or a large pad and be prepared to have to write down all the lists of responses that flow from a question-and-answer session with your class.

Ask:
• What did Jesus’ brothers think about Him? Did they believe He was the Messiah?
• What are some of the things people were saying as they “gossiped” about Jesus?
• How did Jesus respond to the questions raised by the people?
• What was the Pharisees’ reaction to Jesus?
• Why were the religious leaders critical of Jesus’ healing of the blind man?
• What angered them about Jesus’ response to the woman taken in sin?
• What claims did Jesus make about Himself?

Say:
Jesus was very deliberate and strategic in the way He presented Himself, the words He said, and the miracles He performed. For example, it is no coincidence that it was the time prior to, during, and after the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus made these significant claims: “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, NIV); “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12, NIV); “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (John 7:37, 38, NIV).

Ask the students if they know what the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated. Ask for volunteers to read out loud Leviticus 23:33-36, 39-43. Facilitate a discussion about all the provisions God made for the Israelites during the time they journeyed from Egypt, through the desert, until they came into their Promised Land. Then, using the background and context section, lead the students to understand how Jesus was the physical embodiment of God’s fulfilled promise and provision for His people.

Sharing Context and Background

Coming Full Circle
Just before coming upon Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7, He already had a major conflict
with the religious leaders (John 6); many of His early admirers walked away. Why? After feeding the 5,000 Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.” He was comparing Himself to the manna God sent from heaven—saying He was the true manna. That’s why we see John 7 opening with Jesus brushing off his brother’s challenge to go to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. Already the Pharisees were out for His blood. Even before Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, people were talking about Him and looking for Him.

It was no coincidence that Jesus stood on the steps of the Temple proclaiming: “I am the light of the world” during the Feast of Tabernacles. He placed Himself in the center of all the imagery God had given, preparing them to recognize Him when He would walk among them and usher in His kingdom. Jesus was ready to use this feast as a way to reveal more of Himself and His mission to men—just as God through the centuries had used the feasts as a way to reveal His plan of salvation.

Tabernacles was a time of celebrating all of the provision and protection God had shown His people as they journeyed from slavery in Egypt to a land promised to them—where they would be a nation and God would be their King. They celebrated by coming into the city of Jerusalem and setting up tents made from tree branches and leaves, bringing their gifts of thanksgiving—grain, grapes, and oil—to present to the priests at the Temple as a thank offering for their harvest; thanking God for providing rain and sun so that their land prospered. Also, they remembered how God provided food from heaven—manna—when they had no place to settle or plant in the rough desert as

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

*Make It Personal*

As teachers we have a balancing act between giving proper historical context to the biblical teaching and bringing it down to our own context so the student will glom on to relevant points to ponder and practice. If we take too much time with the exposition and word studies, we risk losing the attention of our students. If we move too quickly to modern application, we lose vital information that gives the student time to process the spiritual depths there for them.

One great way to handle that tension is to make the Scriptures come alive for the student by engaging them not merely in group reading and lecturing, but as the text lends itself, to role-playing. Type it up ahead of time like a script; assign students parts, including a narrator to fill in background. Have a group of them perform the scripture for the rest of the class. Then facilitate a roundtable discussion to unpack the nuances and meanings of the scripture. You may very well find yourself amazed at the depth of insights the students will share!
but He had a way of drawing people to Himself. What can we learn from that?

**Summary**

There has never been—and there never shall be again—Someone on this earth like Jesus. He was unique. But that uniqueness made for misunderstandings, resentment, and rejection. Yet in the midst of all this, Jesus knew who He was, why He had come, and what He had to do.

His questioning of the disciples—"Who do you say I am?"—wasn’t to clarify any confusion on His part. It was to sharpen the minds of the disciples and help them understand that this wasn’t another rabble-rousing movement; it was a mission that would change the world.

Having the correct picture of Jesus—Savior, Redeemer, High Priest, coming King, and Lord of lords—is vital to understanding His mission today, which really is our mission.

**Activity**

Have the students think back to a new situation or a new environment: how they reacted, how they observed the people there, and how the people there received them. Was there a connection? Were they misunderstood? If the latter, how did they overcome it? Jesus didn’t need to overcome misunderstanding, but He had a way of drawing people to Himself. What can we learn from that?

**III. CLOSING**

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 49, 50, 51, 52.

*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

Unlike popular movies, some stories don’t have a happy ending. This week’s lesson examines the rich young ruler who came to Christ with the question: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” After a thorough discussion Jesus appealed to the weak link in his chain of faith—his wealth. His genuine desire for eternal life was unmistakable, but when Jesus challenged him to give up his wealth and follow Him, it became clear he loved his money more than eternal life. This lesson is about learning to seek for what we love most or discovering that what we love most will lead us away from what we seek. So the story ends sadly, but it doesn’t have to for Christ’s followers today.

The second story has to do with an expert in the law who sought Christ with the same question about eternal life. His prejudice was exposed and he was given the opportunity to respond actively to the call to live differently. While we don’t know what he did, we can challenge our young people to examine the things that get in our way from a rich, enduring walk with Christ. Coming to an understanding of “what matters the most” is an awakening these two individuals in this week’s lesson discovered. Jesus said: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Observe how our truest values can be undiscovered. (Know)
• Sense God’s deep desire to free us of shortsighted treasures. (Feel)
• Choose to value eternity more than anything else in the world. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Service
• Prejudice
• Money

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.

As the students rank the list, invite them to share their responses. You may want to look for trends in their answers. It may be that money and wealth are the prominent response, but if it isn’t, discuss why they answered the way they did. Furthermore, how much more difficult is it when people are not even aware that they treasure something that might be in the way of their walk with God?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:
Finns who can’t get enough of winter swarm to a town called Kemi for the grand opening of the famous ice castle. There is a chapel, an art gallery, a theater, and even an ice playground for kids.

This year it took 30 people to build the castle. The whole experience is a huge undertaking that captures the attention of people all over the world. The ice chapel is booked solid for weddings and other religious events. In the theater they will book rock concerts, plays, modern dance, opera recitals, and various musicals. This entire project takes months of work and more than a million dollars to build and keep up, not to mention that a surprisingly warm day could cause a meltdown. But the sad truth is that by the end of April the castle will be melting and the people will be going somewhere else. This ice castle is a reminder that the world will pass away, so perhaps we should consider placing our treasure in something more eternal.

When have you put your emphasis on something that doesn’t last? How does getting a vision of the big picture help you prioritize what is important to you today?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Share the following in your own words:
While the ice is melting, the stories of the lawyer, the ruler, and the good Samaritan have lasted for centuries, bearing witness to a truth that is sometimes hard to take. What matters most to us will be revealed. Read the stories carefully, and try to witness the mood of the two seekers to get a clear sense of their request.

Out of the Story for Teachers
After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.
Read the two stories carefully and highlight their basic question for Jesus. What do they want from Him?

Below, make a list of the commonalities of these two seekers as well as the differences.

Commonalities
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________

Differences
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________

- Underline the key words and phrases you see in this passage.
- Why do you think Jesus first and foremost directs both seekers back to the law of God?
- Is there anything you can tell from the text that signifies either of these seekers is genuine? What evidence, if any, is there that their heart might be in the right place?
- Why do you think Jesus asked, “Why do you call me good? No one is good—except God alone.”
- What do you think is the primary lesson in each story?
- What do you think is the message God has for you in these stories?

Extra Questions for Teachers:
- Why does an expert on God’s Word ask such a basic question? What do you think is his attitude or motivation?
- How do you know what your deepest treasure is? Is the only way to know what you value to have to give it up or have someone take it from you? Explain.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Acts 9; Luke 9; Daniel 3; Genesis 39; Philippians 3:1-11.

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 two encounters featured in this week’s lesson have a similar question but come from different settings. The first in our study is the encounter between Jesus and the expert in the law. To simply say “a lawyer” doesn’t accurately convey the gravity of this scene. He wasn’t “just a lawyer,” but an expert in the law of God. Other than the Author Himself, few would have known the law better than this man. Yet he inquired about the single most basic question about life: eternal life. It is important to note that the mood of this exchange is key to understanding the lawyer’s motives. The Bible says that he asked this question to “test” Jesus (Luke 10:25). One commentary describes the atmosphere the following way:
“We should not see this as an expression of hostility: the man accepts Jesus as a teacher (didaskale), and most likely sought to engage Him in one of those lengthy discussions about the law in which his class took such delight” (The Victor Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, p. 182).

The spirit of this encounter was thoughtful and earnest. But the very question demonstrates that the rabbis of that time taught that eternal life was a reward to be earned.

The parable of the good Samaritan is used as more than just a teaching tool or a powerful illustration—but a painful exposure to a deep prejudice that could likely cause the expert to miss out on eternal life.

The second encounter is with the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-31). Like the expert in the law, his motives seem pure and his desire appears genuine. In Jewish society a notion existed that riches were the blessing of God, but did not eliminate the possibility that wealth could fully corrupt a person. In this case, the young ruler seemed to be truly living a righteous life. It seems evident that “he had not used his wealth to do harm, but rather was fully committed to good” (The Victor Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, p. 129). His sincerity moved Jesus to a unique response: “Jesus looked at him and loved him” (Mark 10:21, NIV). But Jesus knew the deceitfulness of riches—a spell so powerful that you can live well and right but deny the truth that you love it more than anything else.

These two stories depict real people who met Jesus face to face with the same burning question humanity has today, “How do I live forever?” Keeping the law is not the way, but treasuring anything more than eternity can disqualify you.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it 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.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

The Power of Relationships

Showing relationships is a powerful activity in the learning process. Different ways can be used to demonstrate how things are related: (1) Compare and contrast. In this lesson there are two individuals who come to Christ with the same question. When you compare and contrast, the students think critically and carefully about the attributes of each story. (2) Cause and effect. Early in childhood development children learn how certain actions or events can cause an effect. Nebuchadnezzar’s stubborn pride and arrogance caused his seven-year season of humility as an animal. Looking to the snake on a stick in the desert caused some to be saved. As we wrestle with spiritual truths, we understand them more when we learn how to see them relationally.
Using tape or glue and strips of paper about six inches long, invite each student to make a chain. Say: “The chain represents our nature as humans. Think of specific aspects of your character—both good and bad—as links in a chain. There are some links that hold your faith together. Is there one link in this chain weaker than another? It is likely. If there is a point where we will be tested, it will probably focus on the area of our weakness. If it is the love of wealth or popularity, or even success, you can be sure that that link in the chain will be challenged.”

Share this brief story: On returning from a mission trip students reported about the transformation that happened through selfless service to others. The circumstances were rough and often uncomfortable. Some students stated: “This trip has made me more grateful for what I have, and I know I will appreciate the blessings of life more.” But the last student to share simply said, “This trip was amazing. The biggest change in me was not that I appreciate what I have more, but that I love it less.”

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

As Joshua once said, “Choose this day whom you will serve.” The choice will come to every person in one form or another. No one is going to sneak into the kingdom of heaven or find their way in a crowd to eternal life. Every person must make a choice. Times of testing will come to you. God will probably test our commitment to Him at its weakest, most vulnerable point or points, such as the links in a chain. Not to belittle us, but to expose the hidden treasures we cling to that secretly may be more valuable to us than our relationship to God. The weak link in the rich man’s commitment to God was his love of his wealth. Even though his initial interest in eternal life was sincere, what became clear was his surprising devotion to riches. He simply counted the cost and made his decision. In the other story, the expert in the law who came to Christ truly wanted one thing: to please God with loving devotion. But his prejudice was exposed, and his choice was to change his mind or hold tight to his ideas. Based upon the answer “the one who had shown mercy,” it is clear that he got the message. What did he do? More important, what will you do?

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 53, 54, 57.

“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 targets a brief encounter between Jesus and His disciples, and a host of parents and children. it was customary to bring a child to a rabbi for a prayer of blessing, but the disciples believed the activity was a waste of time and behavior not suitable for their Rabbi. Ellen White states: “but the Saviour’s disciples thought His work too important to be interrupted in this way. . . . They thought these children too young to be benefited by a visit to Jesus, and concluded that He would be displeased at their presence” (The Desire of Ages, p. 511). But Jesus redirected those wrong-headed ideas into a beautiful teaching moment for children, parents, and all those who would claim to be followers of Christ.

At least four salient truths emerge in this week’s lesson: (1) You are never “too young” to learn about the love of Jesus and His matchless character. (2) Children can teach us and lead us to a closer walk with Christ by their simplicity, trust, and dependence on God. (3) Those who obstruct a child or another seeker’s access to God stir up the Lord’s indignation like nothing else. (4) Jesus loved to be in the presence of children. This passage is rich with opportunities to call youth to “rejuvenile” their faith in a season of life when their sense of self-reliance is so strong.

ii. target

The students will:

- Experience the affirmation of God’s love for children. (Feel)
- Choose to relate to Christ with simplicity, trust, and joy. (Respond)

iii. explore

- Discipleship
- Growth
- Faith

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

Teaching

i. getting started

activity

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

Getting students to discuss self-reliance and dependence is valuable due to the season of life they are in. The paradox of this lesson is that the way to real maturity is easier to achieve with a childlike spirit than it is with a grown-up approach to faith. Invite the students to share their list of qualities with the rest of the class. As they respond, you might note the trends and similarities of the responses as they share.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Dr. Karl Barth was one of the most brilliant thinkers
of the twentieth century. He wrote volume after volume on the meaning of life and faith. I think it was during a large gathering just before coming to the States that Dr. Barth was asked if he could summarize what he had said in all those volumes in one sentence. Dr. Barth thought for a moment and then said: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."


When the stress of work gets to be too much, an increasing number of executives are escaping from the cares of this world in less conventional ways. Instead of simply retreating to the beach, to the mountains, or a golf outing, many adults are, well, acting like children.

At California’s Camp GetAway, an adult can participate in sing-alongs, water balloon fights, kickball, s’mores around the campfire, pillow fights, and sneaky excursions out of the cabin to toilet-paper the cars and cabins of other campers.

The simplicity of having fun is catching the corporate world by storm.

Who do you think is more passionate? The adult who wants to play like a child or the child who wants to act like an adult? Adults tend to be able to reflect on their experience as a child while children can only imagine what the world of adulthood is like. What a stirring image of how faith is supposed to be simple. How does your relationship with God get more complicated as you get older? *You get so used to doing everything on your own that faith can get swallowed up in self-reliance.*

II. TEACHING THE STORY

*Bridge to the Story*

*Share the following in your own words:*

We don’t have to look long or far to find examples of how the simplicity of childhood mirrors the journey of faith. In the story of Jesus blessing the children there is a beautiful scene of Jesus covered with kids and loving every minute of it! But a teaching moment also emerges in which the disciples learn a valuable truth or two about their Rabbi.

*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.
- Why do you think people were bringing their children to Jesus? What are some attributes of Jesus that endear Him to parents?
- How did the disciples respond to this attention? Why do you think they responded the way they did?
- Mark’s Gospel says that Jesus became “indignant” when the disciples rebuked the people. What does this say to you about how Jesus related to common people?
- How does a child receive the kingdom of heaven differently than someone who is older?
- What are some attributes of children and their approach to faith that adults tend to struggle with?
- Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What is the message God has in it for you today?

*More Questions for Teachers:*

- What specific issues do young adults face that require self-reliance? How do you achieve the skill of self-sufficiency without losing your childlike dependence on God? Think of specific scenarios in which this might be challenging. *Developing healthiness, learning to make wise decisions on your own, working to pay for things your parents used to pay for.*
- What does it look like to be childlike and spiritually mature at the same time? *Ask for examples from people they know, and even examples of people in Scripture that demonstrate this trait.*

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Mark 5; Luke 7:11-17; John 6:1-14; Matthew 15:21-28; 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 story of Jesus blessing the children rests in a broader context of a discussion on “who is the greatest?” It is important to keep in mind that the notions the disciples held about “the kingdom” and “the Messiah” shaped the way they thought about themselves.
In short, they were thinking far too often about themselves. So, before the children even showed up to be blessed by Jesus, the Savior was already dealing with an ongoing discussion of discipleship greatness. Notice the setting in Matthew 18:1-6:

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea’” (NASB).

The stories of the lost sheep and blind Bartimaeus show the way Jesus singles out the one or the little people that tend to be ignored or pushed aside, even overlooked. When the parents brought their children to be blessed by Jesus, He had the perfect illustration to awaken humility instead of self-exultation.

But even more, the “indignation” (the idea of spitting darts) referred to only in Mark is another example of the kind of thing that upsets the Son of God. What makes God happy is childlike faith. What makes Him angry is when people get in the way and overlook this quality.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Divide into groups of two or three and, drawing

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Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Powerful Paradox

The Master Teacher often used the tool of paradox—the idea that something sounds impossible or seemingly contradictory initially, but the more you think about it the more it might be true. The first shall be last and the greatest is the one who serves. To find something you have to lose something, and the way in is out. You will never be more mature than when you are acting like a child. There are these truths that simply get you to think. In fact, the only way they will ever make sense is by seriously thinking about them. Scan through the words of Christ in red and you will discover the upside-down kingdom Jesus teaches about. Moreover, the method of stretching their thinking with the powerful paradox is a tool that strengthens the mind.

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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.
stick figures on a piece of paper, show the major stages of growth from infancy to adulthood. Say: Break the stages of life up into five seasons. Indicate general ages for each season. Describe some of the things that tend to happen to children/young people during the different seasons or stages of life. Invite the students to share out loud or with other groups their stages to see how they are similar and how they might be different. Ask: “What stage do you see the most transformation? Why?” Furthermore, ask: “What stage or season do you think it is likely that people move from a childlike faith to a more self-reliant approach to faith.”

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:
The episode of blessing the children is more than just a cute story about how Jesus loved children. Jesus taught His disciples about humility and dependence using the simple behavior of children. The way Jesus reacts conveys a powerful truth as well: Don’t overlook or underestimate the value of a child. Don’t get in the way of a little one having contact with Christ. Don’t in any way discourage or distract them. Perhaps one of the greatest achievements we will ever accomplish is making Jesus accessible to little children instead of getting in the way. If the youth in the church were to take this seriously, the children today would be disciples of today and tomorrow in ways we have never seen.

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 55, 56.

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**PREPARING TO TEACH**

I. SYNOPSIS

Of the many individuals Jesus healed, taught, and interacted with, we know only a few people He considered close friends. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were dear friends of Jesus. This week’s lesson examines the death of Lazarus and the unforgettable scene of Christ raising him back to life. This chapter is rich with drama, story, and unforgettable sayings of Christ, as well as fundamental truths about life, death, and hope.

The Story. This event is pivotal in that it cements in the minds of the religious leaders that Jesus must go away (die). John 11:47 says: “Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, ‘What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs’” (NASB). The conclusion of their deliberations is summarized in verse 53: “So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.” But the story of Jesus raising His friend Lazarus to life again is one of the greatest events because this becomes a constant reminder that God indeed has power over death.

The story contains sayings such as: “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God” (John 11:4, NASB), and “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies” (John 11:25, NASB). Even the shortest memory verse in the Bible where “Jesus wept” is colored in by the story. Why did Jesus weep? It wasn’t just death, or sadness, but stubbornness as well. The mission of Christ is clearly conveyed in this event in which Jesus comes to save. Yet many don’t know how that will happen, and many don’t even believe that needs to happen. While Jesus calls for Lazarus to “Wake up!” He calls everyone to do the same.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- See the humanity and the divinity of Christ and His mission. *(Know)*
- Feel confident that Christ is bigger than death. *(Feel)*
- Purpose in their hearts to receive the One who is the Resurrection and the Life. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

- Death
- Resurrection
- Hope

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 voting questions can be argued from either side, but taking a position is part of the learning objective. You might have the students write out their response to this question anonymously on a small sheet of paper or a 3” x 5” card and read the
responses—especially why they answered the way they did. Why is raising people from the dead so amazing? It is the one thing we can’t do on our own. Some miracles seem more miraculous. But are they? The other voting question has to do with the motivation behind Jesus raising the dead. Why Lazarus? Why not more people? If this is the miracle that will “cause” people to believe, why are there not more than four or five stories such as this one?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

“Walking through a park, I passed a massive oak tree. A vine had grown up along its trunk. The vine started small—nothing to bother about. But over the years the vine had gotten taller and taller. By the time I passed, the entire lower half of the tree was covered by the vine’s creepers. The mass of tiny feelers was so thick that the tree looked as though it had innumerable birds’ nests in it.

“Now the tree was in danger. This huge, solid oak was quite literally being taken over; the life was being squeezed from it. But the gardeners in that park had seen the danger. They had taken a saw and severed the trunk of the vine—one neat cut across the middle. The tangled mass of the vine’s branches still clung to the oak, but the vine was now dead. That would gradually become plain as weeks passed and the creepers began to die and fall away from the tree” (Twenty Questions God Wants to Ask You, by Troy Fitzgerald).

Answer the question Jesus asked of Martha, “Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” Do you believe this? If so, and if many others believe this as well, why is death such a sad event? We are sad because we will miss our loved ones. Because while we “believe” Jesus is correct, our belief is not entirely strengthened by our experience.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Many people who experience loss become experienced believers in the hope of the resurrection. As you read this story and meander through the many beautiful portions of this event, Jesus becomes more vivid. Believers such as Mary and Martha are more vividly seen. The Pharisees are clearly exposed. Notice how death, life, and most of all, Jesus makes everyone and everything appear as it really is. What is death—really? What is life—really? Who are we—really? Who is Jesus—really?

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

• Read John 11:1-16 and 11:45-57 for the rest of the story.
• Circle the names of all the key people mentioned in this story.
• Underline the words and phrases that make up the heart of this story.
• What are some basic questions that come to your mind as you read this passage?
• Mary and Martha both approach Jesus in this story. What is similar about their interaction with Jesus and what is different?
• Why do you think Jesus wept? Was He sad that Lazarus had died? Was He sad because everyone else was crying? What about this event brings Jesus to tears?
• In this story the words Jesus speaks are as powerful as what He feels and what He does. What saying in this story do you think is most significant? Why?
• In a world where death, the afterlife, and the immortality of the soul are prominent themes, what does this story teach about death and the afterlife?
• Describe the various reactions of the people that witnessed the raising of Lazarus?
• What surprises you the most in this story?
• Why do you think this story is included in John’s Gospel?

More Questions for Teachers:

• How do amazing events such as this clarify who we are and what death is?
• Discuss how people can witness an event such as this and still seek to put Jesus to death? (For another look at this question, read Luke 16:19-31.)

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 to putting together all the wonderful pieces that are familiar. One key reality is that the public perception of Christ was not entirely popular. He said things that caused controversy. In fact, the religious leaders in Jerusalem were looking for a reason to get their hands on Jesus. This mood of unpopularity and suspicion was evidenced by the comment Thomas made when Jesus decided to go back to the Jerusalem area: “Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him!’” (John 11:16, NIV). Going back to Bethany, right on the edge of Jerusalem, was to put Jesus and the disciples in harm’s way. Clearly, Jesus was ready to meet His ultimate calling—to die as an atoning sacrifice.

So why did Jesus wait a few days? First of all, although Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha as friends, He also seized this moment as a time to teach people about who He was. Perhaps Jesus knew that a seed planted about the reality of the resurrection would help believers believe more fully in His. Furthermore, “Rabbinical literature suggests that the burial place should not be visited for three days to make sure that person was really dead. . . . Jesus waited to appear on the fourth day so that there would be no question in anyone’s mind that Lazarus was truly dead when called forth from the grave” (Victor Bible Back-ground Commentary, p. 247).

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Word Studying

Language is our chief way to communicate ideas. Therefore, words become important. But words over time can be the teacher’s tool or the teacher’s frustration. For example, what does it mean when someone is “cool”? Below normal temperature? Someone with a frosty disposition? Someone socially acceptable—even admirable? Yes, to all. The phrase “I love you” can mean: “I am in love with you.” “I appreciate you.” “I will put a roof over your head and protect you.” There are so many ways to interpret words. As teachers, what you mean by what you say is crucial. In understanding the Bible, finding out what the Bible writers mean by what they say is essential to understanding the story. Make a word study reference tool or a commentary your friend!

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.
sadness all around Him mixed with the hateful stubbornness of Israel’s shepherds boiled down to a showdown with death. And the whole drama made Jesus weep. But not the same kind of weeping as Mary and Martha. When “Jesus wept,” the word *dakryo* does not convey an angry outburst, but simply means “shed tears” with quiet grief.

### III. CLOSING

#### Activity

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

In the extra passages for further study at the end of the Out of the Story section of this week’s lesson are the stories of resurrected people in Scripture. Each one is different. Each one can teach about God’s power to overcome death. Organize the class into seven groups and give each group one of the resurrection stories. Have them read it and bring a brief summary about what happened, what they learned about God’s power over death, and the impact such a victory has on people. (If you have a small class, either give a resurrection story to each student or have the class do two or three together.)

*Ask: “In light of these stories, how can we be more confident about eternal life and the resurrection that will soon appear?”* Invite the students to reach out to someone who has lost a loved one and offer a word of encouragement.

### Summary

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

Jesus wept—the easiest memory verse in the whole Bible. But we can only guess at how alone Jesus must have felt with His disciples short-circuiting, His friends wailing and accusing Him of failing to be there for them, the Pharisees and Sadducees watching carefully to arrest Him, and the overwhelming grief that “these people don’t even get why I am here.” So, do you know why He came? Was it just to feed the hungry and befriend the lonely? Did He come to catch a bunch of fish for Peter and save the celebration at the wedding with more wine?

From the beginning of time “the wages of sin is death.” We are dead in our sin and need someone to save us. In order to save us, someone needs to die for us. And in order for all of this to matter, that person needs to rise up to a new life. When someone comes back from the grave in Scripture, it is only a taste, a reminder that death “has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54, NIV) because “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV).

Does death scare you? Should it? It scares me, but so do snakes. But because of what Christ has done and promised to do, I’m not frozen with fear but confident in His Word that “those who believe in me, even though they die, will live” (John 11:25, NRSV).

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1 Fundamental Belief No. 26.
2 Fundamental Belief No. 26.

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 58, 59.

*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.
out on a limb
for Jesus

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Zacchaeus offers a classic case study about transformation and salvation. Clearly, after his encounter with Jesus Zacchaeus was a changed man. He surrendered half of his possessions to the poor and paid back four times the amount to people he had defrauded. His story is a great example of how a Christian is sanctified.

Often we try to grow spiritually by muscling up our willpower and trying to be good. This works about as well as clenching your fists and trying real hard to change the color of your skin. Sweat and strain all you’d like, but in the end you’re sure to feel exhausted and defeated.

So what’s a better approach to sanctification? Follow the example of Zacchaeus. His righteousness was a natural response to his encounter with Jesus. By being with Jesus, he was changed to be like Jesus.

Thomas Kelly put it this way: “Don’t grit your teeth and clench your fists and say, ‘I will! I will!’ Relax. Take hands off. Submit yourself to God. Learn to live in the passive voice—a hard saying for Americans—and let life be willed through you.”

Therein is the key to a rich life with God—live in the passive voice. Allow God to live through you. Chill out.

Use this lesson to teach your students about the futility of trying to “act” spiritual. Help them understand that spiritual growth is not about trying or acting; rather, the focus must always be on nurturing an ongoing friendship with Jesus. Challenge them to put their trust in Him. Invite them to take risks and step out on that limb of faith. As they do, they will discover the adventure of kingdom life. And they will experience the miracle of transformation from the inside out.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Be taught that spiritual life is not about trying to be holy; rather, it is all about a relationship with Jesus. (Know)
• Be urged to put their trust in Jesus. (Feel)
• Be challenged to engage in the spiritual practices that nurture a friendship with God. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Experience of salvation
• Confession
• Repentance
• Personal identity
• Restoration

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.
much willpower we can muster up, these cookies will not go away.

In seeking a deep life with God, willpower is not the answer. You can try real hard to stop sinning, but it’s only a matter of time and you’re back to the case of cookies. You see, the experience of salvation is not about trying real hard to be good. It’s all about living in the presence of our God who is good. As we live in His presence, we are then changed into His likeness and the cookies no longer hold the same power over us that they once did. A great case study that illustrates this principle is Zacchaeus.

Illustration

Pass out a cookie to each student and have them hold it while you share the following story and the bridge leading into the lesson.

A popular children’s story called Frog and Toad Together touches on the futility of willpower. In the story, Frog bakes a batch of cookies.

“We ought to stop eating,” Frog and Toad say, as they keep eating.

“We must stop,” they resolve, as they eat more.

“We need willpower,” Frog emphatically declares.

“What is willpower?” asks Toad, swallowing another mouthful.

“Willpower is trying very hard not to do something you want to do very much,” Frog says.

Then Frog suggests boosting their willpower by putting the cookies high in a tree—but Toad points out (in between bites) that they could climb the tree and still get them. In desperation, Frog dumps the cookies on the ground: “Hey, birds!” he calls. “Here’s the cookies!”

“Now we have no more cookies,” says Toad sadly.

“Yes,” says Frog, “but we have lots and lots of willpower.”

“You can keep it all,” Toad replies. “I’m going home to bake a cake.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Use the following discussion to follow up the story of Frog and Toad:


We all have our cookies. These are the bad habits that sabotage our spiritual lives. But no matter how much willpower we can muster up, these cookies will not go away.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

Opening up:
Who brings out in the best in you? Why?

Digging in:
Verse 1: The text tells us that Jesus “was passing through” Jericho. Do you think this was coincidental or a divine appointment? Explain your answer.

Verse 2: Do you think Jesus knew the “dirt” on Zacchaeus (i.e., that he was a deceitful tax collector)?

Verse 3: In your opinion, what was it about Jesus that attracted Zacchaeus to go to such lengths to see Him?

Verse 4: What insights into the character and personality of Zacchaeus do we get from this part of the story where he climbed a tree to catch a glimpse of Christ?

Verse 5: What do you make of the emphatic statement of Jesus when He said, “I must stay at your house”?

Verse 6: How can we welcome Jesus “gladly” in our lives today?

Verse 7: Why do you suppose the people responded differently to Jesus’ acceptance of Zacchaeus than they did to His healing of the blind man in Luke 18:43?

Verse 8: Based on this verse alone, what word do you think best describes the personality of Zacchaeus? (A) Extremist; (B) Impetuous; (C) Generous; (D) Sympathetic.

Verse 9: What does Jesus mean by the word “salvation”?
Verse 10: Compare this verse with the three parables in Luke 15.

**Applying it:**
Suppose you were teaching this lesson to a group of children. What one specific thing would you encourage the kids to do this week in order to put this story into action?

**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:** The setting for this story is Jericho. Listen to William Barclay’s description of this city: “Jericho was a very wealthy and a very important town. It lay in the Jordan valley and commanded both the approach to Jerusalem and the crossings of the river which gave access to the lands east of the Jordan. It had a great palm forest and world-famous balsam groves which perfumed the air for miles around. Its gardens of roses were known far and wide. Men called it ‘the City of Palms.’ Josephus called it ‘a divine region,’ ‘the fattest in Palestine.’ The Romans carried its dates and balsam to worldwide trade and fame. ‘All this combined to make Jericho one of the greatest taxation centers in Palestine.’

- **The Main Character:** Today, Zacchaeus might be thought of as the tax commissioner. As such, he would have been very powerful in his day. Moreover, he controlled the passage at the Jordan River, which was the only place to cross during certain seasons of the year. Thus, he could charge travelers exorbitant tolls to pass through. By doing this he became very rich. Luke often mentions tax collectors such as Zacchaeus (see Luke 3:12; 5:27; 7:29; 15:1; 18:10), and in each case they are postured in a positive light—consistent with the way Jesus unconditionally loved and accepted these social outcasts.

**The Central Theme:** The real story here in Luke 19 is one of transformation. It reminds us that it is possible to be changed into the character of Christ. Zacchaeus demonstrated that he had been transformed from the inside out. He pronounced that he would give half his possessions to the poor. Furthermore, he would use the other half of his funds to make restitution for the money he gained by gouging taxpayers. In setting things right Zacchaeus went beyond his legal obligation. Only if the robbery was a violent and calculated act would the thief need to pay four times the amount stolen (see Exodus 22:1). In the case of an ordinary robbery and the original goods could not be returned, then double the value had to be repaid (see Exodus 22:4). If voluntary confession and restitution was offered, then only the original value plus one fifth of the goods had to be repaid (see Leviticus 6:5; Numbers 5:7). Zacchaeus decided to do far above and beyond the demands of the law. He was a changed man.

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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.
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Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Making the Story Come Alive

Regardless of the age of the students, one of the most effective methods of teaching truth is through stories. It is no surprise, then, that Jesus—arguably the greatest teacher in history—shared transcendent truths through stories.

This lesson is simply a story. To share this or any story consider these tips:

• **Stimulate the senses** so the listeners can feel, smell, touch, hear, and see vivid pictures.
• **Describe the characters and settings** to help them sympathize with the character’s feelings.
• **Research the history and cultural meanings**.
• **Live with your story** until the characters and setting become as real to you as people and places you know.
• **See it!** Visualize the sounds, tastes, scents, and colors in the story. If you don’t see it clearly in your imagination, the students won’t see it either.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Interview someone in your church that your students may not know very well. Have this person share their conversion story. Ask them to describe what life was like before they met Jesus, and how things changed after they accepted Christ as their personal Savior. While the details and the setting will obviously be different, chances are good that the story will be very similar to the story of Zacchaeus.

Summary

Share the following story in your own words:

The story of Zacchaeus illustrates the power of God to instantly change a person. For many, however, the change is stretched over the course of a lifetime. Young people need to know that in either case, regardless of the timing, the transformation is genuine. Perhaps the testimony of Bono, the lead singer of U2, will strike a reassuring chord in the hearts of some of your youth. Bono shares, "Your nature is a hard thing to change; it takes time. . . . I have heard of people who have life-changing, miraculous turnarounds, people set free from addiction after a single prayer, relationships saved where both parties ‘let go, and let God.’ But it was not like that for me. For all that ‘I was lost, I am found,’ it is probably more accurate to say, ‘I was really lost. I’m a little less so at the moment.’ And then a little less and a little less again. That to me is the spiritual life. The slow reworking and rebooting the computer at regular intervals, reading the small print of the service manual. It has slowly rebuilt me in a better image. It has taken years, though, and it is not over yet.”

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 61.

*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.*
I. SYNOPSIS
This lesson explores the story of Mary pouring costly perfume on the feet of Jesus amid condemning scowls from the Pharisees and cruel criticism from Judas. Nevertheless, Jesus forgave and defended this woman of ill repute by telling a parable of the grateful debtor. Next, Jesus forcefully reprimanded Simon for his insulting breach of etiquette.

As teacher, you have numerous options for emphasis in a classic story such as this one. Moreover, you can work from any one of the four Gospel accounts, or use a combination of texts to present the narrative.

There are many themes that emerge naturally from this story. First, you could look at the gender dynamics going on. A cursory study into the abuse of women in the ancient world underscores just how radical Jesus was when it came to His treatment of women. No rabbi had ever accepted women and included them in his inner circle like Jesus did.

Another direction you could take this study is to delve into the virtue of humility. The humility of Mary juxtaposed against the arrogance of the Pharisees makes for an interesting case study into a topic dear to God’s heart. “I hate pride and arrogance,” the Lord declares. A nuance on this topic could spotlight the humiliation that Mary surely felt at the hands of pious, holy men and how Jesus slammed their pompous “righteousness.”

Perhaps the most obvious teaching from this story centers in the topic of gratitude. This is the emphasis of Ellen White in her treatment of the story. Thus, the teacher’s helps in this lesson will also be weighted toward this theme.

Finally, you could opt for a more general thematic approach and simply focus on the gospel. The grace of Jesus and His lavish forgiveness upon a repentant sinner displays the heart of the gospel. Furthermore, the radical transformation of Mary gives clear evidence of the power of the gospel to change a person from the inside out.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Hear a story that speaks to the grace of God and its power to transform a messed-up life. (Know)
• Sense the loving heart of God for sinners. (Feel)
• Receive an invitation to connect with Jesus in the same intimate, grateful manner as Mary did. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Gender identity
• Humiliation
• Thanksgiving
• Gospel
• Outreach and service

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED
Ignoring someone. Also, the washing of feet was mandatory before a meal. If the guest was of high honor, the host would have done this himself. If not, a servant would have performed the duty. In any case, not seeing that Jesus’ feet got washed (Luke 7:44) would be the equivalent today of asking guests to wash their own dishes after the meal. Simon also failed to anoint Jesus’ head with oil (Luke 7:46). In ancient Palestine it was hot and people didn’t have the luxury of deodorant; so this custom of dabbing a guest’s head with oil was considered a refreshing, thoughtful gesture. Bailey summarizes: “The insult to Jesus has to be intentional and electrifies the assembled guests. War has been declared and everyone waits to see Jesus’ response.”

Out of the Story for Teachers

Divide your class into four groups and assign each group one of the following four passages: Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-11; Luke 7:36-50; and John 12:1-8. (If your group is small, assign each person one text.) Supply each group with a New International Version of the Bible. Explain to your class that this is one of those rare stories that can be found in all four of the Gospels. However, the details vary between the authors.

Instruct each group to carefully study their passage—noting all the details of their specific Gospel narrative. Allow the groups about 5 to 8 minutes to study, then reconvene the large group and play a variation of Bible Bowl in which they will answer by standing up if the detail you read is found in their account. They must answer as a united group; so they must decide together whether or not to stand. Every time they correctly stand or remain seated they score a point. The team with the most points wins. Of course, once the game starts they can no longer consult the Bible. Following the game have the groups share how they perceive the Gospel accounts to be different, and why they think each Gospel writer emphasized what he did.

Have your group stand if the following detail is included in your Gospel (the group that should be standing is in parentheses):

• The woman anointing Jesus is identified as Mary (John).
• The Pharisee hosting the party is identified as Simon (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).
• Mentions that it was an “alabaster flask”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Pastor John Ortberg uses this etiquette quiz as a way to introduce the story of Mary and point out how rude and offensive Simon’s behavior would have been in the ancient culture. Bible scholar Kenneth Bailey explains that a customary greeting was a kiss. To skip this ritual (as Simon did—Luke 7:45) was equivalent to ignoring someone. Also, the washing of feet was mandatory before a meal. If the guest was of high honor, the host would have done this himself. If not, a servant would have performed the duty. In any case, not seeing that Jesus’ feet got washed (Luke 7:44) would be the equivalent today of asking guests to wash their own dishes after the meal. Simon also failed to anoint Jesus’ head with oil (Luke 7:46). In ancient Palestine it was hot and people didn’t have the luxury of deodorant; so this custom of dabbing a guest’s head with oil was considered a refreshing, thoughtful gesture. Bailey summarizes: “The insult to Jesus has to be intentional and electrifies the assembled guests. War has been declared and everyone waits to see Jesus’ response.”
(Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

- Does not identify the location of this event as Bethany (Luke).
- Says that this woman “began to wet his feet with her tears” (Luke).
- Records that Jesus sat at a “table” (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).
- Jesus explains that the poor will always be with us (Matthew, Mark, and John).
- Exposes Simon’s rude breach of etiquette and his failure to wash feet, greet with a kiss, and anoint with oil (Luke).
- Has Jesus saying of Mary: “Wherever this [the] gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her” (Matthew 26:13; Mark 14:9).

Sharing Context and Background

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

The Story

Most Bible commentaries suggest this story recorded in Matthew, Mark, and John is the same, but the story in Luke is a different event. The SDA Bible Commentary (vol. 5, pp. 764-767) argues that all four Gospels describe the same event.

Note: Luke’s story of the supper at Simon’s home is clearly identified in The Desire of Ages with that of the feast in the house of Simon of Bethany, as recorded in the other Gospels (The Desire of Ages, pp. 557-563). “Furthermore, the unnamed woman of Luke’s account is identified with Mary of Bethany (DA 558-560, 566) and with Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons (DA 568). Also, Simon himself is declared to be the one who had led Mary into sin at some previous time (DA 566)” (The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 767).

The Party List: As alluded to above, this narrative recorded in the different Gospels spells some confusion as to who was present. To clarify, here is a list of attendees at the party:

- **Simon**: A Pharisee whom Jesus had cured of leprosy. According to Ellen White, “Simon of Bethany was accounted a disciple of Jesus. He was one of the few Pharisees who had openly joined Christ’s followers. He acknowledged Jesus as a teacher, and hoped that He might be the Messiah, but he had not accepted Him as a Saviour. His character was not transformed; his principles were unchanged (The Desire of Ages, p. 557).
- **Lazarus**: Ellen White explains that on one side of Jesus sat Simon and on the other side sat “Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead” (The Desire of Ages, p. 558).
- **Jesus**: It was in His honor that this feast was held.
- **Martha**: She served at the table.
- **Mary**: Devoted and grateful follower of Christ.

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.
Have your students share or tell about some experiences or times in their lives when they felt like King David in Psalm 16:9. When did your kids feel their heart filled with joy and their tongue express happiness and praise? What was it about those experiences that made your kids feel thankful? And when they felt this happiness and joy, did they give God the honor and praise Him? Why or why not? How does their story intersect with the story of Mary’s thankfulness?

**Summary**

*Share the following story in your own words:*

A fascinating study done by Professor Vicki Medvec reveals the relationship between the attitude of thankfulness and objective circumstances. Medvec studied Olympic medalists and discovered that bronze medalists were quantifiably happier than silver medalists. Here’s why: silver medalists tended to focus on how close they came to winning gold, so they weren’t satisfied with silver; bronze medalists tended to focus on how close they came to not winning a medal at all, so they were happy to just be on the medal stand.4

**Questions to consider:**

• Do you tend to view life from the bronze medal platform or the silver medal platform?

• How can we cultivate hearts of gratitude?

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1 Proverbs 8:13, NIV.


3 Kenneth Bailey, Through Peasant Eyes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

4 Mark Batterson, In a Pit With a Lion on a Snowy Day (Multnomah Publishers, 2006), p. 68.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
The story on the conversation Christ had with His disciples on pride, ambition, and humility brings to light issues that are connected to human life today. The three are major human characteristics, with one standing out against the other two. In the real sense, humility as a virtue of Christ is evident in the life He lived among men. “He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly” (Isaiah 53:7, TEV).

On the other hand, selfish ambition and pride are qualities that originated with Satan (Rev. 12:7, 8). Speaking to His disciples on these three issues, Jesus assured them that humility is part and parcel of a true Christian’s life, as contrasted to selfish ambition and pride, which are characteristics of our enemy.

Christ goes on to instruct His followers that greatness in the kingdom of heaven does not come through pride, arrogance, and selfish ambition. Rather it comes through a humble, contrite heart, likened to that of a small child (Matthew 18:2-4). For this reason, we realize that humility is locked up in a desperate combat against selfish ambition and pride, to perpetuate the great controversy between right and wrong—Christ and Satan.

Ellen White offers a summary of the whole thing: “Jesus had told them that He was to die for their sake, and their selfish ambition was in painful contrast to His unselfish love. . . . The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place” (The Desire of Ages, pp. 435, 436).

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Understand the connection between humility, pride, and ambition. Conversely, they will see how humility stands out against the other two. (Know)
• Sense the greatness that ultimately comes with humility. (Feel)
• Seek to be humble and shun pride and ambition. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Pride
• Selfish ambition
• Humility

You will find material to help you explore this 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.

Give each student in your class a piece of plain paper to respond to the statements in the What Do You Think? section. After all the students have finished the exercise, divide the class into small groups with
Is there any part of the story that you don’t understand? Underline the words and phrases that may be new to you. Is there any new thing you have learned about God from these stories? Explain.

Read Mark 9:33. Why do you think the disciples kept quiet when Jesus asked them about their argument on who should be the greatest in the new kingdom?

In a short sentence write what you think the good news is in those passages.


II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Queen Elizabeth had every reason to show up at this reception in her regal attire. Yet for the sake of the honored musician, she chose to remain out of the limelight.

We sometimes tend to think of ourselves first before we consider the welfare of others. This happens throughout society: family, school, workplace, church, etc. However, as Christians, God requires us to possess the virtue of humility to help us think of others first before ourselves. Christ said, “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4, NIV).

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.

Circle the main characters in these Bible passages.

As you read through them, identify the minor characters as well. Share how each of the actors, both major and minor, contributes to the overall development of the key subject of these stories.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words.

At a reception honoring musician Sir Robert Mayer on his 100th birthday, elderly British socialite Lady Diana Cooper fell into conversation with a friendly woman who seemed to know her well. Lady Diana’s failing eyesight prevented her from recognizing her fellow guest until she peered more closely at the magnificent diamonds and realized she was talking to Queen Elizabeth! Overcome with embarrassment, Lady Diana curtsied and stammered, “Ma’am, oh, ma’am, I’m sorry ma’am. I didn’t recognize you without your crown!”

“It was so much Sir Robert’s evening,” the queen replied, “that I decided to leave it behind” (Today in the Word, April 3, 1992).

Sharing Content and Background

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

1. Ambition

The feeling of self-worth that was expressed by Zebedee’s sons is pertinent to the character of the prince of darkness. The return journey to Jerusalem was done on a level ground, with Christ Himself according each of His disciples equal value. However, James and John thought above the level of the rest of the disciples. With their mother they became too ambitious for a higher place in the would-be kingdom that was to be established by Christ after His death. Thinking of themselves first before others, they rushed to Jesus with their mother as their spokeswoman to plead with Him regarding their selfish deals.

But Christ, being a Servant to all, challenged them to overcome the temptations of Satan first as He also did, before they could talk of being next to Him in the new kingdom (Revelation 3:12-21).

The ambitious feeling that filled the heart of James and John is characteristic of what happens in our
present societies. We rush for higher positions in our churches, schools, and workplaces, without consideration of others.

2. Pride

As Christ toured the cities of Galilee, Capernaum, and Jerusalem, He was touched by the manner in which the Jews carried themselves high under the umbrella of religion. They had heard the message that Christ was spreading across the cities, that all should acknowledge the love of Christ among themselves and uphold the instructions according to the Scriptures. However, their hearts remained hardened. They looked for ways and means by which they could lead Christ into sin, but found none, being ignorant of the fact that He was “divine-human.”

On many occasions and with hearts full of pride, they demanded that Jesus follow their laws and pay taxes, and He did according to their wishes. But Christ, with a contrite and a humble spirit, took a low profile on every issue and situation that came into view. The main reason for Jesus to do all this was to expose the humility and love and service that were needed for Christian work.

Little did they know that Christ had all the ability and love to bring every situation under control, but they considered themselves seniors, untouchables, and leaders in whatever they did. Pride caused them to refuse the charge that was brought to their doorsteps by Christ Himself, and pride followed them to their graves.

3. Humility

The following is Ellen White’s commentary on humility: “Before honor is humility. To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labor for God. The heavenly intelligences can cooperate with him who is seeking, not to exalt self, but to save souls. He who feels most deeply his need of divine aid will plead for it; and the Holy Spirit will give unto him glimpses of Jesus that will strengthen and uplift the soul. From communion with Christ he will go forth to work for those who are perishing in their sins. He is anointed for his mission,

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

One-Sentence Summary

The one-sentence summary is one of the proven classroom assessment tools. The teacher challenges the students to answer the questions “Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why?” These questions are based on a given topic, and the teacher synthesizes the answers given by students into a simple, formative, grammatical, and single long-summary sentence. It is easy to remember and memorize, and helps to recapture the major concepts of the lesson subjects.

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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.
and he succeeds where many of the learned and intellectually wise would fail” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 436).

What does it take for us to score the goal of humility?

III. CLOSING

**Activity**

Organize a small debate with your class for about 10 to 15 minutes on the topic “Humility is better than ambition and pride.” Allow the students to choose sides, and note the number of proposers and those in the opposition wing. Move the motion, and let the speaker open the floor for each side to speak out their points for or against the motion. At the end of the debate, let the secretaries from both sides read aloud the points noted from each respective side. Which side wins the motion?

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

“Most sins turn away from God, but pride is a direct attack upon God. It lifts our hearts above Him and against Him. Pride seeks to dethrone God and enthrone itself. How can Christians fight against this sin and develop genuine humility?”

A. W. Tozer once wrote an article called “Humility True and False,” and concluded: “I have met two classes of Christians: the proud who imagine they are humble, and the humble who are afraid they are proud. There should be another class: the self-forgetful who leave the whole thing in the hands of Christ, and refuse to waste any time trying to make themselves good. They will reach the goal far ahead of the rest.”

Based on Tozer’s suggestions, in which category do you find yourself?

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2 A. W. Tozer, quoted at John Mark Ministries (jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/2267.htm).