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]
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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.
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Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapter 1.
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### 3rd Quarter

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### 4th Quarter

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October

3—Keeping It Real! [p. 11]
Jesus is truth, but He was constantly surrounded by lies. He challenged the pretense and false piety of the religious leaders, which is why they were determined to rid themselves of Him forever.

10—Two Faces, One Heart [p. 15]
The religious leaders attempted to use Scripture to trap Jesus. However, all of Jesus’ arguments were based on Scripture. He proved that God’s Word is reliable. An assurance that we can still have today.

17—Preparing for Tomorrow . . . Today [p. 19]
One of the key issues in the last days is remaining faithful to Jesus. So long as we are “in Christ,” we have nothing to fear. What does that mean?

24—Full-Serve and Self-Serve [p. 23]
When no servant was present to wash the disciples’ feet, Jesus did the job Himself. Service requires us to get our hands dirty for “the least of these.”

31—The Judas Factor [p. 27]
Jesus would have saved Judas had he surrendered, but Judas chose a path of greed rather than salvation. He could not bring himself to surrender himself to a humble Messiah.

November

7—The Choice [p. 31]
Christ came face-to-face with the hell of becoming a Sinbearer, yet He made the decision to choose God’s will over His own. He won the spiritual battle by surrendering to His Father’s will. How will you meet the temptation to go your own way?

14—Trials by Fire [p. 35]
The trials Christ endured the night before He was crucified revealed betrayal and injustice on the part of the Jewish legal system as well as cowardice and corruption from the Roman authorities. But Christ was always in complete control.

21—Crosswise [p. 39]
It is from the bloody tree at Calvary that Jesus calls us to live lives of sacrifice, forgiveness, perseverance, selflessness, and grace. Never underestimate the power of gazing upon the cross!

28—Resurrection Power [p. 43]
Satan and his evil host engineered the dark events that led to the death of Christ. They thought Christ’s sinless life and perfect death would be rendered moot by power of the grave. They were wrong!

December

5—First Witness [p. 47]
Mary of Magdala’s love of Christ gave her a special revelation: she was the first person to witness Jesus in His glorified post-death state. A lesson for us in that those who love Jesus with their whole heart and seek after Him will be given fresh revelations of God’s divine grace.

12—Heartburn [p. 51]
Viewing the two travelers on the road to Emmaus, we may wonder to ourselves, Couldn’t they see truth right in front of their eyes? But it may be that humanity is blinder today than they were on that ancient road.

19—Kiss and Make Up [p. 55]
Drained from grief, and in need of encouragement after Jesus’ death and resurrection, Thomas chose to doubt and Peter distanced himself from the group. How would Jesus bring them back to unity?

26—Stargazers or Earth Shakers? [p. 59]
God doesn’t need stargazers—Christians standing around looking into the sky and wondering when Jesus will be coming back. He needs earth shakers—fully committed disciples who will reach lost people and teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded. Which will you be?
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
Nothing was as it seemed. A joyful multitude celebrated Christ as King. Prophecy was being fulfilled, and the people finally appeared to be accepting God’s Son. However, this was not the case. The same people who shouted “Hosanna” would cry “Crucify Him” just days later.

The priests and Pharisees, who were supposed to be leading the people to God, did all they could to deter people from following Christ. Jesus continued to challenge their pretense and false piety. Thus, they were determined more than ever to rid themselves of Him.

God’s people turned out not to be His people after all. It was all a show! For centuries they sang, prayed, and looked for the Messiah. When the Son of God came, they rejected Him. Nothing was as it seemed.

Even Jesus showed a few surprises. In the midst of His grand parade, Jesus showed great pain as He wept over Jerusalem and the hypocrisy of those around Him. Though He came to bless, the disciples witnessed Jesus curse a fig tree, which, like Israel, was not as it seemed. It appeared to have fruit, but it was barren! Nothing was as it seemed.

This lesson is about Jesus’ frustration with the fake. He is truth, but He was constantly surrounded by lies. This story also serves as a warning to us to be authentic in our relationship with Christ. God is looking for people who are totally committed to Him and bear the fruits of love, obedience, and humility.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Understand the relationship between God’s mercy and judgment. (Know)
• Sense the heart of God concerning sin and its consequence. (Feel)
• Evaluate the authenticity of their own spiritual life. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Authentic spirituality
• Prophecy
• Sin and its consequences
• Judgment and mercy

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.

Have students get into pairs. Each student should come up with one “Would you rather . . .” scenario (see the What Do You Think? section for examples) to ask their partner. Give them time to discuss with their partner and then bring the class back together.

Discuss the last scenario in the What Do You Think? section. Ask students whether they think it is better to be a hardened criminal that everyone knows
is bad or to be a hardened criminal that attends church and has the people around him thinking he is a saint. What are the advantages of each position? What are the disadvantages? Which do you think God prefers? Why?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In 1979 New York weatherman Bob Harris, or “Dr. Bob” as he was known, faced his own personal storm. He had created quite a name for himself in the New York area. Sometime earlier, he had contacted the CBS television station and introduced himself as a Ph.D. in geophysics from the prestigious Columbia University. Truth be told, he had studied math, physics, and geology at three different colleges but never finished any degree. He decided he wanted to be a weatherman. Well, his phony degree paved the way. Before long, “Dr. Bob” began work as an off-camera weatherman for WCBS. His career took off as he began to work for other stations and even did weather for a nationally syndicated news program. He also worked for the then-baseball commissioner, the Long Island Railroad, and the New York Times.

He was just 40 years old when it all began to crumble. An anonymous letter came to the television station and caused his superiors to check out his credentials. It was then they found out that Dr. Bob was a fraud. The television station and the New York Times fired him. His story made national news, and he suffered public humiliation. Bob Harris was pretending to be something he was not and it finally caught up with him. He lost his job. He feels this mistake also had a lot to do with his divorce. It is a mistake he will always regret.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Bob Harris was not the only one who was pretending to be something he was not. This week’s lesson was filled with people who claimed to be one thing although they were something else. This week’s story also records Jesus’ strong reaction to folks’ phoniness. He cried. He cursed (a fig tree, that is). He even overturned tables. Why? Because if there’s one thing that God doesn’t like, it’s hypocrisy! God calls for us to keep it real.

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 people and things in this story that appeared to be something they were not.
- Place a star by the character you most identify with.
- The same people who praised Jesus on Sunday yelled for Him to be crucified on Friday. How could this happen?
- Why was Jesus irritated with the fig tree?
- Do you think Jesus overreacted in this story? Why or why not?
- Jesus told a parable about a man who had two sons. He asked them to work. One said, “Yes, sir,” but never went to work. One said, “No,” but regretted it and went to work anyway. Which one did the will of the father? Why? What does this passage teach us about God?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Matthew 21:28-32, 42-45; Isaiah 1:16, 17; 28:21; Hosea 11:8; 13:9; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Sharing Context and Background

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

Jesus’ earthly ministry was coming to an end. His ministry was often marked by hardship and humility. As Jesus marched into Jerusalem during His final week, He was met with royal treatment. People cried out, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” The disciples longed for this kind of recognition. It seemed they were finally coming into their own.

More than fulfilling the disciples’ dreams, Jesus was fulfilling the words of prophecy. Zechariah 9:9 prophesied that the Messiah would come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey. This was the Jewish custom for the entry of a king. The people, sensing what was taking place, began shouting honor due only to the King of kings.

The crowd was filled with those whose lives had been transformed by Jesus. Those who were healed from blindness led the processional. Those who could not speak before Jesus healed them shouted the loudest praise. Those who used to be lame leaped for joy! Lazarus, who was raised from the dead, led the donkey on which Christ rode. This commotion infuriated the Pharisees. When they couldn’t contain it, they became more bent on Jesus’ demise.
As the processional reached the crest of the hill, Jesus stopped. As He saw Jerusalem in all her jeweled splendor, something welled within Him. It was not the pride or joy the accompanying crowd felt. Jesus was overcome by heart-wrenching grief. As He looked at Jerusalem, He could see the destruction that awaited her because she would not turn from her ways. He also saw what she would have been had she remained faithful to God.

Israel had only a form of godliness. She carried out rituals and was steeped in religion, but was far from the God to which they pointed. God had given much mercy, grace, and love. He was now giving His only Son, but Israel refused to change her ways.

The fig tree Jesus found on the way to Jerusalem was a great illustration for Israel. Fruit grows on fig trees before the leaves do, so when Jesus saw this tree full of leaves, it was supposed to be full of fruit. Though it had a form of fruitfulness, it was barren like all the other trees. The pretentiousness of Israel, appearing to be godly, yet being so godless, is what angered God. “He declares that the open sinner is less guilty than is he who professes to serve God, but who bears no fruit to His glory” (The Desire of Ages, p. 584).

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Give each student a piece of paper and instruct them to draw a large clock. Ask students to draw a picture beside three times of the day when they think they might be tempted not to be real in their relationship with Jesus. Have students break into groups of three and share their pictures. Afterward, have students pray for one another to be authentic in their spiritual walk, even when tempted to do otherwise.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

• Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Sin is serious to God and should also be serious to us. In His mercy, God gives us grace, but a time is coming when mercy will end and judgment will begin. In our story, God’s patience with pretense had run out for Israel. God had done all He could do to show Israel His love for them, including emptying heaven of His only Son. Israel rejected Jesus and the freedom He came to give. Israel would much rather serve God with their lips than with their lives. 

Jesus wept bitterly over the judgment Israel would now face. Oh, how He loved them! Oh, how He loves us! Christ desires that we, too, be changed inside and out. He wants us to live for Him not just on the weekends, but every day. He is not looking for us to conform for our teachers or parents. God wants us to be transformed into disciples that serve Him with our whole heart!

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 63, 64, 65.

*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
When Jesus faced the powerful Pharisees and Sadducees, they were doing their best to trap Him to have Him put to death. However, Jesus was not only battling a war of ideas; He was fighting a spiritual war as well. His debates, meant to discredit Him, were instead written down for us to read 2,000 years later. God inspired the Bible writers to record these public debates in four separate accounts because there is something there for us today.

Jesus’ main accusation against the Pharisees was that of hypocrisy. The wealthy, religiously and socially elite men were looked up to by the common people. They were seen as both an example for godly living and a guide for all their questions. However, these religious leaders were the furthest from “good examples” that they could possibly be! They said one thing and did another. Jesus took that seriously.

Another important point that Jesus makes in a less direct way is that of the reliability of the Bible. The Pharisees attempted to use the Scriptures to trap Jesus into saying something damning. However, Jesus’ arguments were based in the Scriptures. All of Jesus’ wisdom was based in Scripture. He pointed to the inspired prophecies of the Messiah to come, proving that God’s Word, handed down through the generations, was still entirely reliable and trustworthy. We can have that same assurance today.

II. TARGET
The students will:

• Understand what hypocrisy is and why Jesus took it so seriously. *(Know)*
• Sense both the reliability of the Scriptures as well as God’s fairness in looking at each person's heart instead of their lip service or performance. *(Feel)*
• Choose to examine their own motives and keep it honest with God and others. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE
• Conflict/resolution
• Spirituality
• Hypocrisy

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 think of rules or attitudes that seem to have a double standard. For example, are some students at school able to get away with more than others? In their homes, are boys allowed more freedom than girls? Or vice versa? Does someone give a lot of lip service to all the work they do when everyone else seems to do far more than they do?

Look at each example and discuss why the behav-
ior might be considered hypocritical. How does it make the students feel?

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

Norman “the Kid” McCoy was a boxing champion in the late 1800s. He was known for being a real con artist in the ring. He would pretend to be sick, dying of consumption, or completely out of shape. He would “confide” in a member of the media, begging them not to tell anyone about his poor condition, knowing full well that word would spread like wildfire. Then, after putting up a good show of being weak and not at his best, and just when it seemed he would lose, he’d put in real effort and win the match with a knockout. He made good money off the betting.

The term “the real McCoy” came about because of Kid McCoy. People would wonder if he’d duped them again, and whether the man fighting in the ring was really Kid McCoy, after all. The newspapers took to calling him “the Real McCoy.”

In 1896 Kid McCoy was the welterweight champion. One time, Kid was fighting a deaf opponent who was very skilled. When Kid McCoy discovered the man’s handicap, he didn’t waste any time taking advantage of it. In the middle of the third round, the Kid suddenly stopped fighting, stepped back a pace, and pointed his glove at the bell as if it had rung.

“Thank you,” said his opponent, who wouldn’t have been able to hear the bell. “Very civil of you.” And when the man turned away, the Kid knocked him out with one blow, winning the match.

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

We laugh when we hear jokes about a hypocritical person not getting away with their behavior, but hypocrisy isn’t actually a laughing matter. Jesus took it seriously. It was just as much a part of people 2,000 years ago as it is now. We see hypocrisy in politicians and leaders, but we shouldn’t be so quick to point fingers. We can each be hypocritical, too, intentionally or unintentionally. Luckily the problem isn’t too big for God.

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

- Whom does Jesus criticize for hypocrisy?
- What does Jesus warn the people to avoid?
- The Pharisees are always trying to trap Jesus.
- Where does Jesus turn for His wisdom? What does that tell us about the integrity and reliability of the Bible?

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Mark 7:1-20; Zechariah 7; Isaiah 58:1-9.*

**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 Pharisees were religious leaders in Judea. They were not only the most educated, but also the most socially powerful. The people looked up to the Pharisees to tell them how to please God and how to properly live their lives. These religious leaders had a large responsibility to God’s people; however, many of them were abusing the power they held.

The Pharisees convinced the people that they must give their money to sacred causes. They would find ways to use the donated money for their own gain. They established traditions and treated them as God’s requirements, demanding that the people obey the man-made laws. They prayed loudly in the street, drawing attention to themselves and trying to appear more pious than others. The Pharisees also declared that people who were poor were poor because God was punishing them for their sins. If something bad happened to someone, they did not feel obliged to help that person because it would be “wrong” to get in the way of God’s punishment on them. All the while, they were accumulating more money and more influence.

The Sadducees were a rival group of scholars. They studied just as hard as the Pharisees did, but they held different theological views. Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection. They believed that the life a person had on earth was their only life. When Jesus discussed marriage in heaven, He was addressing this belief. Marriage, as they understood it, would not exist in heaven. Thus the Sadducees used the argument of the seven brothers having been married to the same woman to say that the resurrection was absurd since, if all the brothers were raised from the dead, who
would be the husband of the woman? Jesus made the point that God is more powerful than their traditions.

In ancient Judea, women were given in marriage. Neither marriage partner had a choice in their union, and the families decided for them. The groom’s family would pay a dowry for the woman, and she would go to live with them. In many marriages, there was no love present. A marriage that produced children was seen as a successful marriage. A woman had no choice but to remarry after her husband died, because she needed someone to provide for her. Her worth was seen in her ability to produce children. It was a far cry from the first perfect marriage that God created in the Garden of Eden!

III. CLOSING

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

Hypocrisy begins in the heart. List five situations in which a hypocritical attitude or action might be tempting or easily exhibit itself. What is common about these situations? Make another list. This time, list five ways that we can deal with our own hypocritical attitudes before they start spilling over into our actions. After making the list as a class, discuss God’s power to help us achieve the goal.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Jesus addressed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees head-on. He was concerned about the abuse the common people received at their hands. Not only did Jesus debate with the Pharisees; He always returned to the Scriptures to make His points. Jesus pointed out the truth, even the truth that the Pharisees misunderstood from God’s Word. We can rely on God’s Word

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Encouraging Participation
When a vocal student makes a comment, ask for reactions from the other students. Many students are not comfortable answering a direct question from the teacher, but are more comfortable responding to a peer. Look for cues that a student is ready to contribute: direct eye contact, body language, slightly raising a finger. Give the student an opportunity to speak without causing embarrassment by saying something such as “Was there something you would like to say?” or “What do you think?”

Ask for special input from the students who may have a particular knowledge about the subject. Students are more apt to contribute when they know that they have helpful information that no one else can contribute or refute.

Taken from: www.mcmaster.ca/cll/resources/teaching.tips/tip5.htm.

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*, chapters 66, 67.

*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.

just as heavily as Jesus Himself did.

Hypocrisy arises in many situations in life. There are times, as Jesus showed us in His debates with the Pharisees, in which a Christian’s responsibility is to stand up for what is right and for people who are not being treated fairly. As Jesus demonstrated, violence should never be an option—no matter how frustrated, angry, or justified we might feel.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
David Marshall observes: “To talk the language of apocalypse is to talk hope in a hopeless world. No hell conceived by human imagination could exceed in awfulness our own sick, polluted world going on in unending existence. Ecologists say things cannot go on. The Bible says things cannot go on. But the apocalypse of the ecologist is a catastrophe that would send the entire human race into eternal oblivion. The apocalypse of the Bible is an encounter with Jesus.”

This lesson focuses on the apocalypse. A natural place for the conversation to go would be toward the “signs” that suggest the soon return of Jesus. You may wish to reference the ecology (global warming, pollution, etc.), the economy (the plummeting stock market, the banking crisis, etc.), the shaky political climate around the world, the wars and rumors of wars, the natural disasters, and any one of a host of other indicators that suggest the Second Coming could occur in our lifetime. However you approach this topic, keep in mind that “the apocalypse of the Bible is an encounter with Jesus.”

This “encounter with Jesus” may take you to John 12:20-43 for a study about the Greeks who say to Philip: “Sir, we would see Jesus.” Chapter 68 in The Desire of Ages is rich with insights about mission, prejudice, and judging others outside of one’s personal faith.

Or, you may opt to follow the direction of this teacher’s guide and explore the apocalypse. The emphasis you make on this topic is of utmost importance. Of course, you could use scare tactics and freak the kids out with gory imaginations of the time of trouble and the mark of the beast! You could shame them into feeling unprepared for the impending judgment. A better approach, however, is to emphasize that the key issue in the last days is remaining faithful to Jesus. To live in the presence of Jesus—that is the invitation of apocalypse. So long as we are “in Christ” we have nothing to fear.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Be exposed to the doctrine of the Second Coming. (Know)
• Be challenged to assess world events in light of Jesus’ promise, “I will come again.” (Feel)
• Be offered an invitation to live in Christ until He comes. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Jesus and the end of time
• Second coming of Christ
• World issues
• Prejudice
• Missions (being a missionary)

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. Or consider this alternative activity to introduce the topic:

Organize a “hymnfest” in which you sing lots of the old Advent hymns that focus on the soon return of Jesus. Share some history of Seventh-day Adventists and their hope in the Second Advent that bound their hearts together as a community. Explain that an Adventist is simply someone who believes in the “Advent of Jesus.”

Illustration

There’s a story flying around the Internet that tells of a huge German shepherd named Bear. The watchdog was minding his family’s house when a burglar dropped in through a second-story window. Bear snarled like an idling bulldozer.

The burglar sprang to the top of a cabinet, trembling but happy to have a pumping heart. But now what? He couldn’t escape. He couldn’t relax for fear the monster dog might jump up. He’d have to sit there until the beast got distracted.

But Bear knew better. His master, Dave, trained dogs for a security company. Trained to use minimum violence, he patiently watched.

The burglar waited for the owners to come home and call the watchdog off. He figured he could bolt to safety at that point. He looked at his watch (well, someone else’s actually). Two o’clock in the afternoon on Friday.

He waited . . . and waited . . . and waited.

On Monday afternoon Bear’s family returned from their weekend vacation. Inside, they found Bear on guard, and the burglar sitting in his own filth atop the cabinet. For three days he hadn’t slept, eaten, or drunk. “Help!” he begged.

When Dave got close enough to take control, Bear bolted out the door toward the lemon tree. His house-training was impeccable. He guzzled from the water bowl, gulped some dry food, and then rushed back to report for duty.

The burglar had started his descent—until he saw Bear return. He bounced back to the top of the cabinet and stayed there sniveling until the police arrived. They were amazed at Bear’s “welcome.” The burglar is in prison now, eating food that tastes like Dog Chow pet food.

Bear was rewarded with a fresh prime rib and a dozen Hostess Twinkies. As tasty as the reward was, I suspect Bear didn’t keep watch for the reward, but rather because he loved his master.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Use the following discussion questions to follow up the story:

We too are commanded in Scripture to keep watch for our beloved Master, Jesus, who is coming soon. Matthew 24 lists the signs that alert us to the nearness of His coming.

Questions to consider:

• What is the difference between watching and waiting?
• What does it mean for you to be actively watching for Jesus to come as compared to passively waiting?
• What signs are there today of Jesus’ soon return?

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 assign each group one of the following passages (these Bible passages that complement Mark 13) and assignments. After approximately 15 minutes of working on the assignment, have each group share their final project with the rest of the class. (If your class is small, choose one assignment.)

Read John 12:20-43—Challenge this first group to create a seminar titled “We Would See Jesus.” Have the students key in on that request by the Greeks (verse 21) and share personal and practical suggestions on how we can see Jesus in daily life.

Read Matthew 24—Have this second group list all of the signs of the Second Coming that Jesus warned us to be aware of. Then have them produce a documentary (supply a video camera and a TV to show it to the rest of the class) connecting the prophecies of Jesus with our world today.

Read Luke 21:5-38—Have this third group leave the classroom to interview people, asking the question: “When you think about the second coming of Jesus, what do you look forward to the most? Why?” This group will then share the responses they received.
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. Jesus shared this teaching on the Mount of Olives—the very place where Zechariah had predicted that the Messiah would stand when He came to establish His kingdom (see Zechariah 14:4). This was the ideal place for the disciples to ask Jesus when He would come in power and glory. Jesus spoke of events that would transpire prior to His coming, but He emphasized that His disciples should be less concerned about the date of His return and more concerned about living God's way consistently. Thus, regardless of the time of the Second Coming they would be ready.

Prophecies Fulfilled. Jesus prophesied that “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken” (Matthew 24:29, NIV). Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventists have pointed to the following historical occurrences that correspond with this prophecy:

• The sun. The sun darkened on May 19, 1780. It was termed “the great dark day.”
• The moon. On the night of May 19, 1780, the moon looked as if someone covered it with a giant cloth—as if the sun had been veiled that day.

The dark day was described by a captain at sea in a letter in The Independent Chronicle (Boston), June 15, 1780, as “the blackest cloud” he ever saw. About 11:00 there was a little rain, and it grew dark. Between 1:00 and 2:00 he had to light a large candle to steer by.

In Conway, Massachusetts, they dined by candlelight, and the farmers had to stop working in their fields because it was too dark. At Fishkill, New York, in the afternoon many businesses were closed due to the darkness.

• The stars. On November 13, 1833, the greatest display in history of falling stars occurred. Jesus’ prediction about the falling of the stars was described in the American Journal of Science and Arts: “The morning of November 13, 1833, was rendered memorable by the exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably more extensive and magnificent than any similar one hitherto recorded. Probably no celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with so much admiration and delight by one class of spectators, or with so much astonishment and fear by another class.”³

Why the Delay? One activity for your class would be to see if the students can find the following reasons for Jesus’ delay (and any others that aren’t listed) as stated in the writings of Ellen G. White. Here are some of the reasons she offers for His delay:

1. Sin must run its course so we’ll worship God out of love, not fear.
2. Our failure to proclaim the third angel's message.
3. Sabbath reform hasn’t been carried out.
4. Our selfishness.
5. So that more people won’t die the eternal death.

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.
Question for discussion: In your opinion, what is the primary reason for the delay?

III. CLOSING

Activity

Summarize the lesson with this activity:

In light of the frequency of the signs of Christ’s coming, Sunnyside youth group organized a visit from their pastor. They wanted to know more about the Second Coming. Assuming you are the pastor, how would you answer their questions?

• Are we living in the last days?
• Why are there so many confusing opinions about Christ’s return?
• Since the coming is so close, should we bother finishing school?
• Why didn’t Jesus tell us when He was returning?
• How has your belief in the Second Coming affected your life?

Summary

Conclude by addressing the two simple questions:

So what?

The apostle Peter paints a sign that signals Jesus’ soon return. He describes a world of “. . . sex sin, lust, getting drunk, wild parties, drinking bouts, and the worship of idols, and other terrible sins” (1 Peter 4:3, TLB). He then concludes, “The end of the world is coming soon” (verse 7).

He does not stop there, however, but continues to suggest specific things we should do in order to be ready. “Therefore be earnest, thoughtful men of prayer. Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love makes up for many of your faults. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay for the night. God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God’s many kinds of blessings. Are you called to preach? Then preach as though God himself were speaking through you. Are you called to help others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies, so that God will be glorified through Jesus Christ—to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:7-11, TLB).

Now what?

Because the end is near, note the things Peter says you should do today:

• Pray (verse 7).
• Show deep love for each other (verse 8).
• Cheerfully share with those in need (verse 9).
• Help others (verse 10).
• Use your special abilities to glorify God (verse 11).

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 68, 69.

* 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

Service is often seen as an unpleasant duty, an obligation, or a punishment. However, Jesus taught that serving should be a Christian’s way of life. Serving others, however, isn’t a theological ideal; it is something that the Holy Spirit whispers to everyone, believer and nonbeliever alike. Ellen White tells us that there will be many people in heaven who never opened a Bible or knew about God, but who followed their consciences and helped people around them.

Jesus taught His disciples about service through an object lesson. When no servant was present to wash their feet, and when the disciples were too filled with their own competitiveness to lower themselves to the task, Jesus did the job Himself—washing their dusty, dirty feet. Jesus was showing them the importance of service. He was also showing them that their perceptions of status and social importance were of no consequence in His kingdom.

Jesus also told the parable of the sheep and the goats. Those who join in God’s kingdom and are saved are the ones who fed, clothed, and comforted “the least of these.” Service is not only about fund-raising for worthy causes; it also requires you to get your hands dirty with the socially unpopular, the dirty, the poor, the neglected and rejected. The condition of our hearts is not gauged by our lip service or theological stances, but by our actions. How did we treat the most vulnerable around us? When we saw suffering, did we try to relieve it?

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Understand that service is the way of life, not a once-in-a-while experience. (Know)
• Sense their own responsibility toward the vulnerable people around them. (Feel)
• Choose to listen to the Holy Spirit and look for opportunities to serve. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Service
• Leadership
• Compassion

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.

Have each student make a list of their talents. (There might be singing, drawing, math, athletic, etc.) Have them also list as many strengths as they can think of. Invite the students to share some of their lists with each other. Ask them how they can use their gifts to help other people both now and in the future.

For example, a talent in math and science might turn into a person becoming a medical doctor one day,
and helping many sick people. But what can you do with an aptitude for math and science that can help people right now?

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

During the American Revolution a small group of soldiers was laboring to repair a defensive barrier. The work was hard, their backs were sore, and their commanding officer kept barking orders at them from where he stood a few yards away, his arms crossed over his chest. It wasn’t a huge job, but it was bigger than the few men could accomplish easily. Their commander was getting more and more irritated with them, shouting for them to hurry up and put their backs into it.

Riding alone in civilian clothes, a man stopped to watch. He rode up to the commanding officer and looked on in silence for several minutes.

“Why don’t you help them?” the man asked the commanding officer.

“Sir, I am a corporal!” the officer snapped, irritated at being interrupted in his supervisory role.

The man shrugged his shoulders, dismounted, and went to help the struggling soldiers. He worked with them, muddying his clothes and straining his back right along with them. After some solid work, the job was done. The man wiped his face and hands and walked back to his horse.

“Mr. Corporal,” he said. “Next time you have a job like this and not enough men to do it, go to your commander-in-chief and I will come again.”

The man was none other than George Washington.

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

Service is not menial labor. It is not reserved for the lowest members of society. Service is our responsibility to each other. George Washington saw that helping his men would do more for them than simply commanding them. By helping them, by serving by their sides, he encouraged them more than a great speech or quotable quote could ever do. He also showed his corporal what leading men really meant. True leadership is not a “desk job.”

**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 kinds of service does Jesus talk about in these passages?
- Where would you rank these service opportunities if they were paying jobs?
- Would they be highly respected, elite jobs?
- What was Jesus trying to explain about serving others?

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Mark 9:33-37; 14:1-11; Matthew 15:32.*

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

It is important to remember that society in ancient Judea was stratified. People were born into a particular station in life, and there was very little they could do to move outside of it. You learned the trade of your father if you were male, and you learned to keep house if you were female. If your parents were wealthy and respected, you would also be wealthy and respected. If your parents were poor or had poor reputations, then you would also inherit their poverty or poor esteem in the public eye. One could not easily marry outside their station, since marriages were arranged between families and the families were mostly concerned with property, wealth, and business connections. Personal attraction didn’t factor into marriages at all. If you were poor, you would always be poor. If you were a servant, you didn’t have any hope of being anything else. You would marry a servant and your children would be servants, too.

Servants held the low jobs in society. They dealt with the dirt and grime. They washed the smelly feet of their betters, using a bowl of water and their hands to remove the dust and grime. No one wanted to marry outside their station, since marriages were arranged between families and the families were mostly concerned with property, wealth, and business connections. Personal attraction didn’t factor into marriages at all. If you were poor, you would always be poor. If you were a servant, you didn’t have any hope of being anything else. You would marry a servant and your children would be servants, too.

This is why Jesus’ teaching was so radical. Jesus taught that social ranking didn’t matter. In God’s eyes, we are all equal. Jesus taught that serving was the most important aspect of life! This turned their entire social paradigm on its head. Jesus told the common
school system and had to go take up their fathers’ trades.

Jesus called down the pompous rich for their hypocrisy and abuse of the poor. Jesus was indeed a radical.

III. CLOSING

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

Have each student make a list of five people whom they come across in an average week who could use a helping hand. Examples might include parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, teachers, strangers, bus drivers, fellow students, coworkers, etc. Make the lists as specific as possible. Then have the student write beside each listed person the way they could help them. Encourage the students to choose at least one person from their list and make a point of connecting with and helping that person in some way. Ask them to share their experiences the next week.

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Jesus taught that a life of service was the key to entering His heavenly kingdom. Knowing theology or even scanning the Bible won’t save us. It is easy to get into a rut and think that we are OK with God because our family goes to church or because we read our

people that they had value outside of the social structure. People would be part of His kingdom based on their ability to serve each other, not based on birth or breeding. According to Jesus’ teaching, who your family was, what level of society you belonged to, or how wealthy you were did not matter in God’s eyes. In fact, according to some scholars, Jesus chose His students from the failures of the rabbinical schools. He chose fishermen who had not made the cut in the

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

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

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book 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.
Bibles from time to time. It takes more than that. We must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is part of developing a personal relationship with God. Service helps us to put the world into God’s perspective.

The most precious things to God are not the newest gadgets or the corporate climb. God cares about people. When we get that into its proper priority, we understand God better, too.

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 70, 71.

*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
In this lesson we learn about Jesus’ sacrifice and the gift of salvation. We will discover that to truly surrender to God we must be humbled, as was Jesus. We learn that at the Lord’s Supper He instituted the tradition to remember Him and His sacrifice. To fully accept His death, we must surrender our lives to His will, and in humility walk according to that will. Judas didn’t fully surrender. He loved money and had pride as well. He betrayed Jesus even though Jesus loved him. Jesus would have saved Judas had he surrendered. But Judas chose a path of greed rather than of salvation. Judas could not bring himself to surrender to the will of a humble Messiah. He wanted a fighting warrior.

When we partake in the Lord’s Supper we should seek to have our hearts right with God. James 4:6 (NIV) says: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” As a teacher, explain to the students what humility is, how it’s an awareness of our own weaknesses and a need of God’s grace in our lives. A humble person is one who is willing to learn from others, aware that they still have a way to go in growing.

The point of this lesson is to show the students the mistakes that Judas made and that we can learn from those mistakes and not make them ourselves. Help the students realize that the need of grace in our lives should make us humble before God and others.

II. TARGET
The students will:

- Realize the importance of humility and God’s sacrifice in order for us to gain salvation. (Know)
- Feel a need to surrender fully to God. (Feel)
- Submit fully to God’s will for their lives. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
- Humility
- Salvation
- 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 an even number of groups. Give them each paper and pens and ask them to write down the top 10 things that they think could bring someone to Christ. Afterward, have each group read aloud their top 10 things and then discuss them as a whole group together.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
It was said by Plutarch that once when Caesar was crossing the Alps, he and his band of men came across a small and desolate native village that had hardly any inhabitants. It looked like a morbid, miserable place. While his friends joked and laughed among themselves, saying, “No doubt here too one would find people pushing themselves forward to gain office, and here too there are struggles to get first place and jealous rivalries among the great men.” Caesar then replied to them in utter seriousness: “As far as I am concerned, I would rather be the first man here than the second in Rome.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

This struggle for position and power didn’t begin with Caesar. It began in the heart of Lucifer, the most beautiful of all God’s created beings. Even Jesus’ disciples experienced this struggle.

Mark 9:35 states clearly: “Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all’” (NIV).

This struggle is also evident in our society today. It’s easy to forget about God’s grace. It’s easy to get caught up in a world that is far away from God’s kingdom. It’s easy to forget that we are called to be servant leaders. Remembering Christ’s sacrifice helps us to humble ourselves and surrender fully to Jesus. This can be difficult for many reasons (pride, love of the world, a desire to do one’s own thing, etc.). While the Lord’s Supper reminds us of Jesus’ death and sacrifice for our sins, Judas’ story can remind us of where straying from Christ can lead to. After all, who wants to wind up like Judas?

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 did Jesus mean when He stated to His disciples: “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29, KJV)?
• What kept Judas from truly surrendering to Christ?
• What is humility? Is there a counterfeit humility? Explain.
• Are there things that can keep us from displaying humility and humbleness in our lives? If so, what are they? Are there different things for different people? Explain.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Psalm 147:6; Proverbs 22:4; Galatians 6:14.

Sharing Context and Background

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

History of the Passover

When Jesus ate with His disciples in the upper room, they were celebrating the Passover, one of the most ancient of all Jewish festivals, one that the Jews all over the world still celebrate today. Wherever there are practicing Jews, there will be during the springtime the celebration of this sacred Jewish holiday.

The origins of this sacred ceremony are found in the book of Exodus. “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever” (Exodus 12:12-14, KJV).

The Israelites in the time of Exodus had been told to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and roast it without breaking any of its bones. They were then to apply the blood on the doorposts of their houses. This would protect them from the angel of death, who would pass through the land and kill every firstborn son in every home. This was the first step in the whole process by which God would save them from Egypt, and from the slavery they had suffered under for so long.
The fascinating thing about this was that it was the blood that saved them; the angel of death would see the blood and “pass over” their house. This, of course, was a powerful symbol of salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus. They were protected by the blood. Not that the blood of an animal itself would save them, but because that blood was a symbol of the blood of Jesus, which would be shed for all humanity. That’s why centuries later the apostle Paul could write: “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7, KJV). In the Passover celebration we are given a type, a symbol of the plan of salvation. When God’s final judgment falls upon the world, those under the blood, those who by faith claim the salvation found in Jesus, will be spared.

True Versus False Humility
Humility is not low self-esteem. It is not allowing oneself to be a “doormat.” And it is not denying one’s giftedness. True humility is our not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought, but equal to how God views us (Rom. 12:3). This distinction is most important for this topic—an often misunderstood one.

Obedience is an aspect of humility that would be helpful to also discuss with the students. We see this revealed in Phil. 2:8 when it talks about Jesus humbling Himself and becoming “obedient to death.”

In John 13 we also see humility lived out in Jesus’ life. Jesus walked with spiritual power and giftedness, a strong sense of identity, and unending purpose. And we can as well. Humility acknowledges the source of these characteristics: God.

III. CLOSING

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Relevant Tips
Try to make the lesson relevant for the class. Some ways to make it relevant would be to:
Focus on what personal spiritual lessons they can take away from what you’re talking about. Ask what it means to be “under the blood on the door posts” today. How can we get under the blood?
Visit a local synagogue (if there is one in your area). Arrange beforehand with the rabbi there, and ask him to explain to the class his understanding of the meaning of the Passover.
Think about what changes the students need to make to their lives as a result of what they have learned. Try to make the lesson, then, as practical as possible. What have they learned that can impact how they live? How, then, can they make those changes in their own lives?

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

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

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

• Punch Lines
Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Have the students try to find as many verses that talk about pride or humility in a certain amount of time. After they have done this, have them read out loud to the class what they’ve found in the Bible about this topic. Afterward, discuss it as a class. What does the Bible say about these topics? How can we get rid of these attitudes if we see them in ourselves? How can we, by looking at Christ’s example, learn important lessons about what it means to be humble, and how we can avoid pride?

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

Jesus was a perfect example of humility and grace. Often we tend to see Him as a glorious and affluent God but, in reality, when He descended to this earth He took upon Himself a lowly status. Many times we strive to be first. We want the glory and honor. That is so different from the attitude Jesus displayed. Mark 9:35 says: “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all” (NIV). We must come to Christ with a humble spirit and be willing to surrender to His will. If we can’t let go of our pride, then we will have a big struggle. God died for us. He was a sacrifice for us. If we can accept His death on our behalf, come before Him in humility, and truly ask for salvation—it is ours.

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Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 72, 73.

*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

Next to the event of Calvary, Christ’s season of struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane is at the top of pivotal points in our salvation history. The drama of God’s plan to redeem humanity reaches a climax in which Christ must willingly choose to give His life as a ransom for many or fail. Some suggest that Jesus could have walked away and left humanity on its own. Several themes are powerfully taught in this story.

First of all, in the garden we get a strong sense of the horror of sin and its effects by looking at the way Christ shrinks back from the pain. Clearly, Christ knows perfect love personally, and will come to experience utter sin and depravity intimately—which leads to the discussion of choosing between what Jesus wants and what God’s will is. It is likely that young people will understand both the temptation to go their own way and the anxiety of trusting God’s will over theirs. Finally, a spiritual fight of universal proportions takes place in the little olive grove called Gethsemane. The name means “the olive press,” and it is no coincidence that Christ is squeezed to complete exhaustion by unimaginable agony.

It is important to convey to students that we will never, ever have to go through the second death experience because Christ has already walked that road. In Gethsemane Christ looked the hell of becoming the Sinbearer in the face and chose God’s will over human wishes. Jesus made the decision to “be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV).

II. TARGET

The students will:
- See the horror of sin and the love of God. (Know)
- Sense the battle that rages between good and evil. (Feel)
- Decide that embracing God’s will is the way to eternal life. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- The will of God
- Jesus
- Suffering
- Temptations (dealing with)

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 share their responses to the ranking exercise, invite them to share why they responded the way they did. You can make your way down the list of options, asking, “How many of you chose _______ as your first choice?” Comment briefly on the signifi-
cance of each event and ask: “What do you think was the most painful part of Gethsemane—what He knew about the future, or what He did not know?” Some might say, “Jesus knows everything.” But the Bible says that God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB). How does Christ negotiate through “knowing no sin” to “becoming sin”? Is there a greater example of going from one extreme to another?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:
The ocean is earth’s unknown frontier. Scientists have discovered that most of the ocean that immediately surrounds land is in the area of 60 meters deep, with rich marine life and beauty. But this characterizes only about 1/20 of the total ocean. The ocean is much deeper. Extending out beyond the ocean close to land the ocean level drops to a depth of 3,500 to 6,000 meters. This is what they call the abyssal plain, and it is the single largest environment on earth, covering over half of the total ocean surface. But the ocean is still much deeper. In some areas of the western Pacific Ocean, the sea floor drops away into elongated gashes, the trenches, with water depths of 10,000 to 11,000 meters.

Most of the world would not even recognize the deepest parts of the ocean. The shallow portion is beautiful and alive, but at its deepest level it is dark and unlike anything most humans have ever witnessed.

If you were to compare the nature of the ocean floor and all the depths and different qualities at each level with sin, what connections could you make?

As Christ came face-to-face with the choice to enter into the deepest part of sin—a place no person has ever imagined or conceived—it was like going into the deepest part of the ocean.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

In the Garden of Gethsemane Christ chose to experience the punishment of sin at its deepest, darkest level. While humanity splashes around the reefs thinking sin isn’t so bad, we simply have no clue what Jesus experienced when He chose to take the cup of suffering. At each point of prayer in the garden, Christ plummeted deeper and deeper into the darkness, witnessing a taste of the horror that awaited Him at Calvary. Not the whips or the nails pained Him most, but the deep, dark pit of separation from God. Read the story of Christ in the garden and imagine His agony, but pay careful attention to His decision.

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 this story and make a list of things Christ knew and what He didn’t know about the future.
• How do you think the disciples reacted to hearing Jesus say, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death” in verse 34? When has Christ ever spoken like this or conveyed such emotion?
• Underline the phrases in this passage that indicate how much the decision to go forward to Calvary weighed on Christ.
• Why did Jesus want the disciples to keep praying? Was it for them or Him that He longed for them to be praying?
• How is Christ’s attitude in verses 41 and 42 different from the first part of the scene?
• Why do you think the story of Gethsemane is such a pivotal story told in Scripture? What does this event reveal about Christ?
• What do you think was “the cup” Christ referred to in His prayer to the Father?

Extra Questions for Teachers:

Agree or Disagree
• The hardest prayer anyone will ever pray is “Lord, not my will, but yours be done.” Why?
Agree or Disagree
• The emotional trauma and knowledge of becoming the Sinbearer was far more torturous than any physical trauma Jesus endured. Why?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Genesis 3; Job 1; Genesis 22; Acts 9; Matthew 4.

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 for this week’s study on Christ’s struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane is clear. It was the
night of Christ’s Passover meal and just prior to His arrest. Judas is in the process of carrying out his horrible betrayal. The accounts of this event are portrayed in all four Gospels, some offering very little detail while others are as graphic as possible.

Matthew 26:36-50
Mark 14:32-46
John 18:1, 2

The focus of Christ’s season of agony in the garden has to do with a choice Christ must make if He is to redeem humanity from their sin. It is appropriate that the decision to accept sin’s price came in a garden. Human history began in a garden (Genesis 2:7-25) as did sin (Genesis 3). Adam and Eve’s choice to go their own way versus the revealed will of God’s way infected humanity with sin. Now Christ faced the decision to obey God’s will and stick to the plan of redemption.

The Temptation of the Garden

When Jesus was first tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He was not tempted to lie, cheat, steal, or commit adultery. He was tempted to abort the plan of God to redeem humanity by His blood (Matthew 4). When Jesus described His upcoming death at the hands of the Jews, Peter launched a rebuke at Jesus that prompted Jesus to reply, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men” (Mark 8:33, NKJV). Jesus rebukes Peter for trying to do what Satan wants more than anything else—AVOID CALVARY! Even on the cross Satan tried to tempt Christ to give up on the plan. Thus, he incited the people to shout:

“‘You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ Likewise the chief priests, also mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him

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.
now if He will have Him; for He said, “I am the Son of God”’” (Matthew 27:40-43, NKJV).

The temptation never changed over the course of the Savior’s ministry. Matthew’s account of the dramatic time of prayer depicts Christ going back three times, saying, “Let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39, NKJV).

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Have students (in pairs) make a list of as many sins committed by people in Scripture as they can think of. Give them one to two minutes. Then, in one minute, have them add to that a list of the most heinous sins committed in history. Then, at the bottom of the list simply write, “My sin.” Invite the students to be ready to read the lists out loud while you do the following demonstration:

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate how Christ took the cup of sin willingly. Using a large cup or glass, fill the container halfway with water and add elements that will drastically taint this water (dirt, oil, vinegar, ketchup, etc.). Have the students name the sins as you add the elements. At the end of the lists and the cup is full, say, “Christ said, Father, let this cup pass from Me, but not My will but Yours be done.” Christ took the cup when He made the choice to go to Calvary.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Gethsemane is truly one of Christ’s defining moments. We all have moments where we reach a crossroad. We have the option to go one way or turn to the other, but a choice is required. You make a decision, and that decision ultimately makes you.

Jesus suffered unimaginable agony in Gethsemane with The Choice. What do we do with what happened to Christ in the garden? One response is to thank Him for His willingness to take the cup. Another response might be to mirror His willingness to pray, “Not my will but yours be done.” It’s likely to be the hardest prayer you will ever pray. But pray it about specific areas of your life and things will change. Your choice to live by God’s plan for your life will produce a peace and a confidence that will enable you to deal with any adversity. In fact, knowing that Christ chose to experience death, the second death—anything you face from here on out pales in comparison to what waits for those who are faithful to Christ. As Paul says, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18, NKJV). When Christ faced His choice in Gethsemane, it is likely that He could see only the immediate future, but Paul assures us of the promise that:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9, NKJV).

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 74.

“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

The night Christ was betrayed He endured six trials in which He was questioned, beaten, accused, and condemned to death. The Jewish portion of the trial was a gross betrayal of their own legal system, and the Roman part of the trial an even sadder display of cowardice and corruption. The fact that the Jewish leaders would violate their own legal process is a testimony to their hatred of Christ. Trials typically have at least two purposes: to discover the truth and to establish justice. The truth about everyone was exposed in these trials. Jewish leaders were corrupt and hypocritical in the worst way. Pilate was displayed as a coward. Herod was a fool. The masses and the crowds were weak and mindless. The disciples had “quit school” and abandoned Christ. But Jesus stood tall, brave, and pure during these dreadful hours. The leaders thought they were getting justice by their power and schemes, but their depravity was exposed and the glory of Christ was unmistakable.

Perhaps one of the lessons in this story is how character is not developed in trials but revealed by them. Students would do well to be reminded that their inward person will be exposed by challenges, eventually. This may be a good opportunity to discuss how duplicitous we all can be, and how we all may desire truth in the inmost places but need to practice it in life. Another truth in this event is how this trial occurs because Jesus let it happen. Christ was in complete control—from the betrayal in the garden to the nails at Calvary. Christ laid down His life, purposefully. If we learn anything from this event we don’t have to be left with a sad, negative view of humanity. Christ chose to redeem us because He believed we could live for greater purposes than ourselves.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Witness how humans can be so wrong while thinking they are right. (Know)
• Sense that God is in control even in the worst of situations. (Feel)
• Decide to let the inward desire for mercy and truth live on the outside. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Politics
• Humiliation
• Peer pressure

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

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 ranking activity helps students prioritize their values and experiences. In this activity they must consider the attributes of each experience and then make a decision as to the order, according to their perceptions. Some students will feel betrayal more than others. There
may be young people who feel misunderstood, or are victims of hatred. Everyone will feel these emotions keenly, but differently. It is important to emphasize this dynamic. Another way to approach this activity is to have them choose a side on the following either/or exercise:

Which emotion do you think is more extreme: anger at those who cause injustice, or sympathy for those who are mistreated by injustice and endure the experience alone?

Invite students to explain, but also listen for another person’s perspective.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

At a juvenile court hearing, a young man was ushered in and sat in a chair. He had been caught stealing from homes, and capped off his conquests by stealing a car and wrecking the stolen vehicle into a police car—accidentally, of course. The judge read the reports and asked a few questions about the incident. He then looked at the young man, who hung his head in shame, mixed with some defensiveness. “Michael, do you want to explain why you are here today?”

“Because I ran into a cop,” he answered curtly.

“You were caught because you ran into a police officer. But I want to know why you are stealing?” replied the judge.

“Because I wanted to,” came the young man’s retort. Patiently the judge tried another angle. “Are you struggling in school? How are your grades?”

“I don’t know,” he said quietly.

The judge continued to try to find a way to understand the young man’s behavior. After Michael thwarted his every attempt, the judge said to the counselor appointed to Michael, “Would you mind taking a moment and explaining to Michael what I’m doing by all these questions?”

The counselor knew. Quietly he said to Michael, “The judge is asking you these questions because he is hoping that you will give him the tiniest reason to help you. You see, he wants to extend mercy in some way to you if he sees that you will try to make better choices. He is patiently begging you to give him something so he can help you.”

Michael finally began to understand the basic nature of the legal system: innocent until proven guilty was an attempt to protect the innocent and compel the guilty to change their ways.

What is your perception of the legal system of your government? Do you feel like it is too harsh or too lenient? Explain.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

While Michael learned that the basis for law is restoration, the Jews suspended practically every rule they had to maintain a noble justice system when they decided to put Christ to death. It is clear, as you read the story, that the Jewish leaders were desperate to kill Jesus. They stopped at nothing to make sure this happened. But remember, Jesus could have stopped the proceedings at any point. You will also notice that it was Jesus who was vindicated, not maligned, by this trial.

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.

For a step-by-step description of the six trials of Christ, follow the sequence:

1. Before Annas, John 18:12-23
2. Before Caiaphas and the elders, Mark 14:55-65
3. Before the Sanhedrin, Matthew 27:1, 2

• Circle the names of individuals and groups mentioned in this passage that were part of the trials of Christ. Compare the attitudes of the religious leaders to Pilate and Herod. What do you know about these people, and what is revealed about them as Christ is tried?

• As you read through this portion of the trials, underline every phrase or sentence that conveys accusations or the stubborn intent to execute Jesus. How would you describe their mind-set as they try to convict Christ?

• What one verse or phrase seems to summarize the meaning of this event? Explain.

• Christ seems to be alone during His trials. What do you think was going through His mind? What thoughts kept Him so composed?

• What are some unanswered questions you wonder about as you read the story of Christ’s trials?

• How do you think the trials are part of the plan
of redemption? How are all the events that lead up to Calvary related to each other?

Extra Questions for Teachers:

• Think of a time in your life when you witnessed someone suspending their beliefs and values because they wanted something to happen so desperately. How do you see this taking place in the trials of Christ?
• Discuss what you think is the motivating emotion for the religious leaders?
• How would you describe Pilate and Herod as leaders?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Acts 6:7; John 7:45-53; Matthew 27:19; John 8:1-11; Acts 16:35-40.

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 the trials of Christ occurred even as Judas left the table and settled his deal with the religious leaders to hand over Jesus. While praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Temple guards came with key religious leaders to arrest Christ on Thursday night. Christ had already suffered the agony of the road that lay ahead of Him. Enduring essentially six different trials before sentencing might seem to have sapped Jesus of His will, but the opposite was true: Christ became more glorious as His enemies sank deeper into their darkness.

In order to understand the trial of Christ it is important to look at the background of the Jewish legal system. Under Rome the Jews lost their capacity to try capital cases on their own. While it is common knowledge that Jesus faced an unfair trial, the trial of Christ was blatantly unlawful. Notice the simple description for capital cases:

“The provisions relating to criminal trials, and especially to those in which the offence was punishable by death, were very stringent and were all framed in the interest of the accused. Among them were the following: The trial must be begun by day, and if not completed before night it must be adjourned and resumed by day; . . . a verdict of acquittal, which required only a majority of one, might be rendered on the same day as the trial was completed; any other verdict could only be rendered on a subsequent day and required a majority of at least two; no prisoner could be convicted on his own evidence; it was the duty of a judge to see that the interests of the accused were fully protected” (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.).

The Jewish law was designed to make certain no one was ever falsely punished, even at the expense of letting the guilty go free. No night courts. No hasty judgments. Two or three eyewitnesses were required. Furthermore, to ensure no dubious witnesses were procured, the death sentence applied to those who falsely testified. If one person felt the accused was not guilty—they were acquitted. You could not be con-

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.
Activity

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

Divide the students into groups of two or three and share the following experiences:

- Share a time in your life when you were falsely accused of doing something wrong.
- Share a time in your life when you were treated with mercy, although you did not deserve it.
- Share a time in your life when you struggled to give someone else the benefit of the doubt.
- Students can share one or all of the experiences as they have time. You might want to extend the discussion by asking the class to answer: What did you learn about mercy and justice? How does adversity reveal who we really are inside?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

As always, adversity exposes who we really are. Christ, fresh from His choice to surrender Himself to the plan of salvation, stood before men, they pretending to have the authority, yet He remaining noble. His character stood tall while priests were screaming and ripping their clothes, guards were slapping Jesus, Pilate was quaking, and Herod was partying. The Jewish leaders mocked their own rules by ignoring them in order to put this penniless teacher to death. Everyone in the scene became small, petty, and wrong. And the accused, Jesus Christ, emerged as true, good, and righteous. Keep in mind, at any moment Christ could have called down angels and they all would have been wiped out. But Jesus was clear about His purpose: His Father's will was to send His only Son to die, so that even His accusers would have a chance at life.

The real question has to do with what's on the inside. What is inside of you? What are your deepest aspirations? Are they about eternal things or cheap, temporary stuff? What's on the inside will be revealed.

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 75, 76, 77.

*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

Ellen White tells us: “The cross of Calvary appeals in power, affording a reason why we should love Christ now, and why we should consider Him first, and best, and last, in everything. We should take our fitting place in humble penitence at the foot of the cross. We may learn the lessons of meekness and lowliness of mind as we go up to Mount Calvary, and, looking upon the cross, see our Saviour in agony, the Son of God dying, the Just for the unjust. Behold Him who could summon legions of angels to His assistance with one word, a subject of jest and merriment, of reviling and hatred. He gives Himself a sacrifice for sin. When reviled, He threatened not; when falsely accused, He opened not His mouth. He prays on the cross for His murderers. He is dying for them. He is paying an infinite price for every one of them... Look, O look upon the cross of Calvary; behold the royal victim suffering on your account.”¹

This lesson affords the ideal opportunity to “Look, O look upon the cross.” Never underestimate the power of gazing upon the cross! The Bible reminds us that by beholding we become changed (2 Corinthians 3:18). To this end, challenge your young people to focus daily on the cross with the prayer to live as Jesus died. For it is from the bloody tree at Calvary that Jesus calls us to live lives of sacrifice, forgiveness, perseverance, selflessness, and grace.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Be informed of the sacrifice that Jesus made for humankind at Calvary. (Know)
- Sense the need to accept Jesus’ sacrifice. (Feel)
- Have an opportunity to live in the shadow of the cross. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Calvary
- Christ (life, death, resurrection)²
- Sanctuary (Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary)³
- Sacrifice

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.

Or use this as an alternate activity:

Bring the elements used in a traditional Communion service. Divide the class into three small groups and ask each group to search the Bible and find texts that tie their specific element into the story of the cross. (If your class is small, do activity as a group.) For example, the first group will have a basin and towel. They are then to find the passages in Scripture about the cross that inform about the practice of foot
washing and service. The second group will do the same using the bread. The third group will do the same with the grape juice. After they have searched and discussed their element in the small group, have them share highlights of their discussion with the group at large. You may wish to follow this discussion by leading out in a Communion service.

Illustration
Begin with a question that a lot of Seventh-day Adventist youth struggle with:

Ever wonder if you’re good enough to be saved? Oh, you’re working at it all right. You volunteer at the soup kitchen. You go to Sabbath School. You don’t drink or swear or chew or date those who do. But in your honest moments maybe you wonder if you’ll ever be good enough. Perhaps you have no real assurance of salvation.

If this describes you, take heart. God does not want you to be fuzzy about being saved. The apostle Paul explains: “Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men” (Romans 5:18, NIV).

In other words, because of what Jesus did on the cross, if you accept Him as your Savior, you are saved. Period. Calvary is complete and you are saved!

How, then, do works fit into the equation? Consider this: When the Golden Gate Bridge was constructed, initially there was no safety net constructed under the bridge. During the first phase of the construction, 23 men fell to their death. Finally, some bright engineer suggested that they suspend a net beneath the bridge. For the modest price of only $100,000 the net was installed.

During the second half of the construction, 10 men fell. All of them were saved in the net. But what’s amazing is that production increased 25 percent during the second half! Why? Because once people knew that they could work—and even fall—without fear of death, they were more productive. They did better work.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Use the following discussion to follow up the story of the Golden Gate Bridge:

Your heavenly Father does not want you to live with the fear of falling. He wants you to know that there is a net in the shape of a cross anchored beneath you, securing you in your salvation. And in that assurance you can do better work.

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.

- After reading Matthew 27:31-53, what immediately strikes you, stops you cold, stands out?
- Is there anything in the account that you have never noticed before? If so, what?
- For what crime was Jesus crucified?
- Why do you think the accusers insulted Jesus in the way that they did?
- Had Jesus come down from the cross, do you think people would have believed in Him then? Why or why not?
- If Jesus came today, who would crucify Him? Under what charge(s)?
- What is the significance of Jesus’ cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46, NKJV)?
- Why are the supernatural events surrounding the death of Christ significant? According to the centurion, how dramatic were these events?
- What do you imagine the women present at the cross were thinking?
- How do the Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion differ? What details do all of the Gospel writers include?
- Explain Ellen White’s commentary on the story: “When the loud cry, ‘It is finished,’ came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain. . . . All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God’s Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open” (The Desire of Ages, pp. 756, 757).

Sharing Context and Background
Use the following information from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion and www.thenazareneway.com/details_history_of_crucifixion.htm to shed more light
Crucifixion is an ancient method of execution whereby the condemned person is tied or nailed to a large wooden cross (of various shapes) and left to hang until dead. It was in use particularly among the Persians, Seleucids, Carthaginians, and Romans from about the sixth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., when in the year 337 Emperor Constantine I abolished it in his empire, out of veneration for Jesus Christ.

**Details of Crucifixion.** Crucifixion was never performed for symbolic purposes; usually, its purpose was only to provide a painful, gruesome, and public death, using whatever means was readily available toward that end. In fact, crucifixion is only an arbitrary subset of a much wider continuous spectrum of slow and painful execution methods, which include varied forms of impalement, hanging from hooks, burning at the stake, and exposure to wild beasts.

Thus, the details of any crucifixion varied considerably with location and epoch, and even from case to case; therefore, very little can be said about the practice in general.

**Cross Shape.** The horizontal beam of the cross, or transom, could be fixed at the very top of the vertical piece, the upright, to form a T called a tau cross, or Saint Anthony’s cross. The horizontal beam could also be affixed at some distance below the top, often in a mortise, to form a T-shape called a Latin cross, most often depicted in Christian imagery. Alternatively, the cross could consist of two diagonal beams to form an X also known as the Saint Andrew’s cross. A single, vertical wooden stake with no transom at all has also been cited; this is how Jehovah’s Witnesses typically describe the device on which Jesus was crucified.

**Location of the Nails.** For the sake of expediency, the victim was probably affixed to the cross by ropes, nails, or some combination of the two. In popular depictions of crucifixion, possibly derived from a literal reading of the description in the Gospel of John, of Jesus’ wounds being “in the hands,” the victim is shown supported only by nails driven straight through the feet and the palms of the hands. However, the flesh of the hands cannot support a person's body weight, so some other means must have been used to support most of the weight, such as tying the wrists to the crossbeam.

**Cause of Death.** Death could come in hours or days, depending on exact methods, the health of the victim, and environmental circumstances. A theory attributed to Pierre Barbet holds that the typical cause of death was asphyxiation. He conjectured that when the whole body weight was supported by the stretched arms, the victim would have severe difficulty exhaling, due to hyperexpansion of the lungs. If death did not come from asphyxiation, it could result from a number of other causes, including physical shock, dehydration, and exhaustion.

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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.*

Remind the students that because of the cross we can be forgiven and freed from all of our sins. One way to illustrate this in closing is to have a cross in the room. Play a song about the cross and invite students to write their struggle(s) on a piece of paper. Have them come to the cross and hammer the paper on the cross. There is something powerful about hearing the hammer pounding sin into the cross. Assure the students that their papers will be destroyed (you may wish to do that as part of this activity) and nobody will read them. Underscore one more time that because of the cross they can have full assurance of salvation.

**Summary**

*Read the following summary and appeal from Max Lucado about the pivotal role of the cross in history:*

It rests on the time line of history like a compelling diamond. Its tragedy summons all sufferers. Its absurdity attracts all cynics. Its hope lures all searchers. History has idolized and despised it, gold-plated and burned it, worn and trashed it. History has done everything but ignore it. How could you ignore such a piece of lumber? Suspended on its beams is the greatest claim in history. A crucified carpenter claiming to be God on earth. Divine. Eternal. The death-slayer. Never has timber been regarded so sacred. No wonder the apostle Paul called the cross event the core of the gospel. It's bottom line sobering: if the account is true, it is history's hinge. If not, the cross is history's hoax.

Which is the cross for you, hinge or hoax? Or in the words of Jesus, “Who do you say that I am?”

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1 Ellen White, *That I May Know Him*, p. 65.
2 Fundamental Belief No. 9.
3 Fundamental Belief No. 24.
II. TARGET

The students will:
• Discover that the resurrection of Jesus meant that Christ had successfully finished His work on earth. **(Know)**
• Be urged to embrace the truth that He who raised Christ from the dead can do the same for them. **(Feel)**
• Seize opportunities to share with others the power of Christ’s resurrection. **(Respond)**

III. EXPLORE

• Christ’s life, death, and resurrection
• Assurance of salvation

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 students thinking about some of the attitudes and beliefs people generally have about death, based on how it is portrayed in the media.

After the students complete the exercise, ask them to share their responses with the class. More than likely, there will be a combination of answers that
best explain our human fascination with death and what happens after death. The point to remember here is that Satan seeks to cloud our understanding about the state of the dead in part because He hopes to undermine our belief in the resurrection of Christ. If we can live on without the power of God, then we do not need the hope of Christ’s resurrection.

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:

- The Into the Story for this week is but one account of the Resurrection story, perhaps the most complete of all the Gospels. Did you notice anything new in this account of the events following Jesus’ death? Share any new insights you glean with your class.
- In addition to the theme of hope inherent in Luke’s account, the reader is treated to a close-up of grief. Grief can be powerful—so powerful, in fact, that it can blind us to the facts. Explore with your students all of the things that the women at the tomb and Jesus’ disciples overlooked because of their sorrow. For one, they forgot that Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection. How can we grieve in a way that does not discard God’s promises and pronouncements?
- Another important truth that arises from this biblical narrative is that God will not leave us wandering during times of perplexity and pain. Notice that the angels appeared in response to a sincere search for Jesus. Jeremiah 29:13 makes it clear that we will find the Lord, when we seek Him with all our hearts, as Christ’s followers did that day.
- The Gospels also make clear that Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week, but there is no accompanying injunction to worship on that day. Make the point that as miraculous as Resurrection Sunday was, God chose not to memorialize it by making it a day of worship. What does this fact tell us about the sanctity of the Seventh-day Sabbath?
- Why didn’t the disciples believe the report of Jesus’ resurrection brought to them by the women who had spoken with the angels? What does this tell us about the mind-set of the disciples after the Crucifixion? It should give us pause to think that those who were closest to Jesus while He walked the earth forsook Him in His hour of need, and then refused to believe that He had risen. Could this happen again?
Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Mark 16; John 20; 1 Corinthians 15; Romans 4–5.

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. First Things First. It bears remembering that the fact of Christ’s bodily resurrection (Luke 24:36-43) preceded all written accounts of that Resurrection. Why is this important to note? C. S. Lewis, Christian apologist and theologian, makes the point in his book Miracles:

“The Resurrection is the central theme in every Christian sermon report in the Acts. The Resurrection and its consequences were the ‘gospel’ or good news which the Christian brought: what we call the ‘Gospels,’ the narratives of our Lord’s life and death, were composed later for the benefit of those who had already accepted the gospel. They were in no sense the basis of Christianity: they were written for those already converted. The miracles of the Resurrection, and the theology of that miracle, come first: the biography comes later as a comment on it. Nothing could be more unhistorical than to pick out selected sayings of Christ from the Gospels and to regard those as the datum and the rest of the New Testament as a construction upon it. The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the Resurrection” (C. S. Lewis, Miracles, pp. 143, 144).

2. Powerful Symbol. The resurrection of Jesus is:
- the heart of the gospel (Romans 4:24, 25; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- the key indication of the believer’s daily power to live the Christian life (Romans 6:4-14; 8:9-11; Philippians 3:10).
- the reason for the total commitment of our lives (Romans 7:4; 1 Corinthians 15:57, 58).
- the antidote to the fear of death (John 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58).
- the example of our resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The implications of Jesus’ resurrection to Christian theology are inexhaustible!

3. The Back Story. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead disquieted many people. The soldiers guarding the tomb were treated to a lightning show that left them dazed and confused. Mary Magdalene and the other women who came to the tomb met angels for the first time in their lives. They took off running to share the good news of Jesus’ resurrection with the disciples.

While the soldiers guarding the tomb were knocked senseless by the glory of the angel sent to...
wake Christ, and the women ran off with the good news, the Jewish leaders who instigated the death of Christ were tormented.

Ellen White writes: “The priests, in putting Christ to death, had made themselves the tools of Satan. Now they were entirely in his power. They were entangled in a snare from which they saw no escape but in continuing their warfare against Christ. When they heard the report of His resurrection, they feared the wrath of the people. They felt that their own lives were in danger. The only hope for them was to prove Christ an impostor by denying that He had risen” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785).

III. CLOSING

**Activity**

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

Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair of students a 3 x 5 card and a pencil. Ask each pair to come up with three ways in which they can share the significance of Jesus’ resurrection with a friend this week. Encourage the students to think creatively. For instance, how would they go about sharing the good news of the resurrection of Jesus with an online friend? How could they approach the subject with a friend from school?

Ask one or two pairs of students to share their responses, and then ask someone to close with prayer, asking God for wisdom and opportunities to share this important truth with others this week.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*  
The good news of salvation would have perished in the grave had Jesus not been raised back to life. Jesus Himself declared: “The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father” (John 10:17, 18, NIV).

Ellen White writes that when the angel of the Lord spoke to Jesus in Joseph’s tomb, “the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785). Jesus’ power over life and death not only assured our salvation, but gave us the blessed hope that like Christ, we too would one day be raised back to life to live in peace with God.

This was the revolutionary message that birthed Christianity, and it remains the heartbeat of the gospel today. No matter what habits bind us or struggles threaten us, Jesus can breathe new life into us. Even if we are forced to taste the brutal cup of death, we are assured that one day Jesus will raise us back to life to live with Him for eternity.

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*Fundamental Belief No. 26.*  
*Fundamental Belief No. 10.*

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

*Musically Speaking*

Music is one of the obsessions of teenagers around the world. It doesn’t matter the continent or culture, music unites today’s teens. There have been numerous songs written about the resurrection of Jesus.

Consider playing one as a way to introduce or close this week’s study. Distribute copies of the words to the students so that they can follow along. One song you might consider is Kirk Franklin’s “Don’t Cry.” It captures the hope of the resurrection in a beautiful and thought-provoking way.

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 80, 81.

*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](http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net).*
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Mary Magdalene’s reaction to Jesus’ crucifixion is perhaps the most heartrending of all of Jesus’ followers. We can picture her tear-stained face and hear her sobbing cries of anguish. The Gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus have a very human face, and that face is Mary’s.

Mary of Magdala loved Jesus very much, and for good reason. Mark 16:9 tells us that Jesus had cast seven demons out of her. That’s reason enough to make anyone rejoice, but Mary was also a prostitute. Mary’s gratitude for what Jesus had done in her life preceded His death. It was this same Mary who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, to the utter dismay of everyone gathered at Simon’s house that day (Luke 7). She had been forgiven much, so she loved much.

Mary’s all-encompassing love of Christ won her a revelation that no other human being could match. She was the first person to witness Jesus in His glorified post-death state. Jesus conversed with her and comforted her before He did so for any of His disciples. This is one of the most important points to be emphasized this week. Those who love Jesus with their whole heart and seek after Him will be given fresh revelations of God’s divine grace.

Also, it bears noting that in patriarchal culture, Jesus chose to show His glorified state to a woman. Jesus broke many social taboos of His day, and this is one more poignant example of that.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Learn that God offers hope to all who are brokenhearted. (Know)
• Experience the joy of knowing that God has a unique role for each of them to play in His plan of redemption. (Feel)
• Embrace the joy of knowing that Jesus rose from the dead and offers this hope to them. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Hope
• Gender identity
• Joy

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 purpose of this activity is to get the students thinking about the role of women in Scripture. You may expand the activity by focusing on the exploits of other women in Scripture, such as Rahab, Huldah, and Dorcas, to name a few.
Many feminist theologians criticize what they consider the Bible’s “servile” roles for women in Scripture. Remind the students that the Bible records the stories within the cultural framework of the time in which the events occurred. This does not mean that God approved or sanctioned social mores that subjugated women. This week’s lesson gives us a picture of how God views the special role of women in His plan.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

The September 29, 1992, edition of *Today in the Word*, a daily devotional by Moody Bible Institute, carried the following story:

“Edith Rockefeller McCormick, the daughter of John D. Rockefeller, maintained a large household staff. She applied one rule to every servant without exception: they were not permitted to speak to her. The rule was broken only once, when word arrived at the family’s country retreat that their young son had died of scarlet fever.

“The McCormicks were hosting a dinner party, but following a discussion in the servants’ quarters it was decided that Mrs. McCormick needed to know right away. When the tragic news was whispered to her, she merely nodded her head and the party continued without interruption.”

To be sure, Mrs. Edith McCormick felt the pain of the loss of her young son, but her high breeding didn’t allow for a public show of emotion—even at the death of her child. We all deal with grief differently, but one thing is for sure: if we live long enough on this sinful planet, we will all grieve over something or someone.

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

Can you imagine what it must have taken for Edith Rockefeller McCormick to continue sitting there at a dinner party while the news of her son’s death hung in the air mixing with the aroma from the food? Her reaction begs the question: Did she really love her son?

Now contrast her reaction with that of Mary Magdalene in the aftermath of the death of Jesus. One gets the sense that had it not been for the Sabbath, Mary would have remained at Jesus’ tomb until the angel showed up to call Him back to life. Mary’s grief gave way to hope and joy as she met the resurrected Savior.

**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.*

- John’s Resurrection narrative is unique in several ways. For instance, John is the only person who mentions that Jesus’ burial cloth was folded neatly along with the strips of linen used to wrap Him. Luke mentions the strips of linen, but he omits the folding nugget. Why do you think John mentioned this? This detail should not be overlooked, especially by teenagers who hate to clean their rooms! It is also important because the Jewish leaders alleged that someone had stolen Jesus’ body. Thieves would not have stopped to fold clothes.
- Peter and John rushed to the tomb once Mary and the other women told the disciples that Jesus’ body was missing. Luke 24:12 makes clear that even after seeing the empty tomb and grave clothes, Peter left “wondering to himself what had happened” (NIV). The disciples did not understand Old Testament prophecies about Jesus’ resurrection, and they had forgotten His words.
- The first recorded words of Jesus after He had risen were: “Woman, why are you crying?” (John 20:13, NIV). Jesus knew why Mary was weeping. Why did He ask her this question? Might this question be linked to the hope that Jesus had spoken about before His crucifixion? Perhaps Jesus was asking a deeper question: Why are you weeping when I told you that I would rise again?
- The students were asked to share two lessons that they might take away from the Into the Story passage. One takeaway is the blessing that comes to those who seek earnestly after Christ. Another is the tender compassion that Jesus showed toward those who were brokenhearted at His death. Jesus was the first Comforter sent by God to earth.

**Sharing Context and Background**

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Psalm 39:7; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Lamentations 3:24.*
made with Christ, that He would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 790).

3. **Order of Resurrection Events.** Each of the Gospels supplies a slightly different account of the events surrounding Jesus’ resurrection. Keeping up with the order of it all can be challenging. Here is a synthesized order of events:


b. Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples (John 20:1, 2).

c. Mary, the mother of James, draws near and sees the angel (Matthew 28:1, 2). She goes back to meet the other women following with spices.

d. Meanwhile Peter and John arrive, look in, and depart (John 20:3-10).

e. Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees two angels, then Jesus (John 20:11-18). The risen Christ bids her to tell the disciples (John 20:17, 18).

f. Mary, mother of James, meanwhile returns with the women (Luke 24:1-4). They return and see the two angels (Luke 24:5; Mark 16:5). They also hear the angel’s message (Matthew 28:6-8). On their way to find the disciples, they are met by the risen Christ (Matthew 28:9, 10).

(Source: Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible*)

1. **Cosmic Conflict.** The resurrection of Jesus fits into an intergalactic struggle between God and Satan, and we must never forget this. Isaiah 14:12-15 gives a description of the thinking that led God to expel Satan and his followers from heaven. Revelation 12:12 describes Satan’s attitude when he was hurled out of heaven, and gives this frightful warning: “But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short” (NIV).

Satan’s anger at God has been directed toward the inhabitants of earth. It is his goal to destroy every human being by any means necessary. Jesus chose to come to earth that He might save us—not in the might of His divine nature, but in the weakness of humanity. The resurrection of Jesus not only saved humanity; it also sealed Satan’s fate. The only parts left in this cosmic drama are the second coming of Jesus to retrieve the righteous, the millennium examination of life’s record, and the end of sin forever.

2. **Quick Stop.** After His resurrection, Jesus forbade Mary to touch Him until He had returned to God the Father. Though Jesus had died, the acceptance of His life as a ransom for sinful humanity was not just dependent on what He had done. The sacrifice had to be accepted by God, as was the case in the earthly Jewish sacrificial system. Ellen White notes: “He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God Himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain eternal life. The Father ratified the covenant made with Christ, that He would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 790).

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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.
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 82.*

*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.*

Joy was the emotion that enveloped the disciples in the days following the resurrection of Jesus. Ask the students to close their eyes and picture the newly resurrected Christ walking toward them. His face is glowing. His clothing is luminescent. A warm smile greets each of them as He extends His arms. This is their personal Savior, and the Savior of the world.

Ask the students to think of something they want to say to Jesus. Maybe they want to thank Him for something, ask His forgiveness for something, etc. Allow the students a minute of silence to converse with Jesus.

Close with a prayer thanking Jesus for His sacrifice and the hope of eternal life.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

“Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning,” wrote the psalmist David (Psalm 30:5, NIV). Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, the disciples, and all the other unmentioned believers who witnessed the resurrected Lord would testify to the truth of David’s words.

Mary Magdalene was the first person to arrive at Jesus’ tomb. She embodied the pain that everyone felt. When she discovered that Jesus’ body was missing, a sad terror sent her running to the disciples for help. In the next frantic moments, Mary yearned to know what had become of her Lord. The answer came from Christ Himself.

Jesus appeared to her before He had even returned to see His Father. He appeared to His disciples only after He had gone back to His Father and returned. Mary Magdalene was no spiritual giant of her time. She was a simple sinner who believed that Jesus could change her life. He did, and she remained forever grateful. For this devotion, she received a unique honor.

The lesson teaches us that God sees our sorrows and offers us hope that is found only in Christ.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
Perhaps the angels in heaven say of us today, “What are you thinking? Can’t you see the truth right in front of your eyes?” It’s easy for us to look back at the pivotal story of Christ’s death and resurrection and feel baffled by the disconnect, lack of clarity, and utter disbelief of Christ’s disciples. But it may be that humanity today is more blind than the two travelers on the road to Emmaus on the day Christ rose from the dead.

The story is rich with insightful angles and poignant lessons. They walk home at the end of the day having not seen Christ yet, but walking with their eyes cast down. In defeat they trudge their way home with Christ at their side, and their attitude has everything to do with how they process the events of the weekend. Another insightful moment comes when Christ teaches them from the Scriptures along the way. The disciples would later say, “Did not our hearts burn within us as He opened the Scriptures to us?” (see Luke 24:32). Furthermore, the disciples invited the stranger to stay and, as a result, Christ revealed Himself to them.

Students will be able to draw various lessons from their study of this story. But one key theme is the risen Christ, who comes to us in our disillusionment and dismay and, if we listen and cling to Him, He will reveal Himself to us.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Understand that the process of revelation and learning takes time and effort. (Know)
• Sense a growing confidence that Christ comes to us when we struggle. (Feel)
• Decide to let God’s Word reveal who He is to us today. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Prophecy
• Doubt
• Coping with feelings

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 answers to the activity with the rest of the class. As they respond, you might note the trends and similarities of the responses as they share.

It’s often believed that being an eyewitness to Jesus would remove all doubts in our relationship with Him. That if we were able to see Jesus face to face our faith would never waver. Being in the literal, physical presence of Jesus is no guarantee that our faith would be stronger—as the disciples’ lives reveal. As we’ll discuss in our lesson today about the disciples on the road to Emmaus, feelings can cloud our vision of who God is.
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

It is clear that the two disciples who walked the road to Emmaus on Resurrection Sunday did not get the right message. It is like the story of how the Napoleonic Wars ended. General Wellington led the armies to victory at the Battle of Waterloo. However, when the battle had ended, Wellington sent news of the great victory back to England. A series of stations had been set up to send code messages back to England. The message that Wellington sent to the homeland was: “Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.” But a thick fog set in and clouded the message so that the people in England heard only the first part: “Wellington defeated.” The news devastated many back home until the fog lifted and the full, clear message was revealed. What a difference it makes having all the information!

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

It is likely that the disciples and many others on that Sunday had only part of the message, which left them with a completely different outcome. When in your life have you had a situation that left you disillusioned and confused—as though you were in a fog? How did you emerge from the cloud? What did you do to try to see your situation more clearly?

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 story and underline the phrases that you think are key to understanding the interchange between Jesus and the two disciples.
• How does the Bible describe their attitude? What do they do and say that reveals their emotional state?
• Why do you think Jesus is not immediately recognized? Is it because Jesus is concealing His identity or are they so confused they don’t see who He is?
• When the disciples said, “We thought He was the one who would redeem Israel . . .,” what other way could this happen other than Christ dying?

• What do you think changed in their understanding Christ and His death when Jesus taught them from the Scriptures as they walked? What in particular do you think made their hearts burn?
• When Christ broke the bread, what images do you think went through their minds?
• What do you think is the message God has for you in this passage?

More Questions for Teachers

• How much would knowing that Christ is risen change their mind-set? Notice that they heard rumors from the women that Christ’s body was not there. Can you say their first words in verses 19-24 with a different attitude and have it mean something entirely different? Try reading it out loud both ways: one with an attitude of despair and failure and the other with an attitude of hope and possibility. How does our mind-set shape the meaning?
• How do the symbols and rituals (such as Communion, baptism, etc.) attempt to awaken our experience in worship? What would make them more effective reminders for us today?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Matthew 17:1-8; Revelation 1:1-3; John 21:4-8; Acts 9; 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 town of Emmaus was about seven miles west of Jerusalem, which means the disciples were walking into the setting sun as they made their way home. It is hard to know how long they walked, but it took long enough to approach their destination as it became dark. Given that they were deep in discussion, it is likely that they were not pressed for time, but were pressed by a more important conundrum.

Looking at a few key words Luke uses to describe the mind-set of the disciples helps to provide background that explains their behavior. Luke says: “And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned . . .” (Luke 24:14, 15, NKJV). These three words describe an ongoing discussion—back and forth—throwing ideas around. In a sense they were playing
the tape forward and backward of the weekend events, trying to make sense of it.

Christ did two things to help them understand. First, Christ reminded them of what God said in His Holy Word: “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27, NKJV). It is likely that Jesus used the same passages of Scripture and repeated the same things He had been teaching for three years. But timing can be everything. Not only did Christ teach them who He was, but He showed them by breaking the bread. The text says: “He sat at the table with them, . . . took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them” (Luke 24:30, NKJV). The entire Hebrew worship/education tradition rests on the reenactment of God’s acts in their history. Every festival was a vivid display of who God is and what He has done. The Hebrew mind was trained to observe and remember every gesture, nuance, and symbol. In Deuteronomy 6:6-9 the lesson plan for learning actively reads: “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (NKJV).

To get an idea of the significance of the revelation at the table, consider the fact that the two disciples made their way back to Jerusalem that very night, in the dark, to find the rest of the other disciples. This whole story is rich with spiritual truths. But understanding how the Hebrew mind viewed how we learn colors in the background of this story, and offers some practical insight on how to experience a “revelation” 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.

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### Tips for Top-notch Teaching

**Time Teaches**

Students, whether they are talkers or thinkers, need time to flesh out their thoughts or let them marinate. You can tell the students in your class who talk out their ideas and those who simply ruminate. The key for both is that time helps both types of learners. In your teaching make sure there is time to think and time to discuss the things that matter the most.

This lesson is a case study in discussion and reflection. The travelers were “discussing,” but it wasn’t enough—they needed time for the biggest event in history to settle in to its great significance. Whether you offer students time to think in class, or reflective opportunities after class, the critical point is to give them permission to be patient with their conclusions.
III. CLOSING

Activity

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

The goal of this activity is to demonstrate how time, discussion with others, and persistent vision enable us to see and know Christ better.

Using a photo, a picture, or a display of fruit or flowers, invite students to describe what they see on a piece of paper. Make sure you unveil the item briefly and then cover it up. Invite students to share what they initially noticed. As they discuss what they saw, some will notice things others will not have noticed and, therefore, will have a broader understanding. Also, reveal the item on display again for a little bit longer period of time and see what else they see.

Compare your first response with what you now understand. How did having a conversation with others about what you saw help? How does this activity connect with what the two disciples experienced on the road to Emmaus? What can we learn from it today?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

First impressions always make a significant impact. But if first impressions were the primary basis for how we see each other, and Christ for that matter, we would miss the mark. This story is not a case of misplaced first impressions. The disciples on the road to Emmaus walked and talked with Jesus. They knew Him beyond the first impression. But trauma and tragedy have a way of creating a fog that clouds our vision and suspends our ability to put the whole picture together. In Hebrews the Bible says: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9, NKJV).

If you are saying to yourself, “Yeah, I see Christ and know who He is, but . . .,” then you are still in a fog. If who Christ is and what He has done for you does not do much to stir your soul to want to follow Him, then you are not seeing Him clearly. The disciples on the road thought they had Christ figured out. But their discussion revealed there was more to know. The revelation occurred because they cared enough to walk, talk, and keep looking; because in time, the risen Christ appeared. Even though it was dark and dangerous on that road, “they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, ‘The Lord is risen indeed’” (Luke 24:33, 34, NKJV).

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 83.

*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
After Jesus’ death and resurrection, the disciples were emotionally exhausted and in need of encouragement. They were still drained from grief, yet excited at the knowledge that Jesus had risen from the dead. The stress and pressure was affecting each of them differently. Thomas decided not to believe, pulling away from his friends and not believing their word that they had indeed seen Jesus in the flesh and alive. Faced with all of their personal stories, he simply shut the door on the possibility unless he was to see it himself. He separated himself from the strength and comfort of his friends, emotionally pushing away from them.

Peter, on the other hand, longed to belong with the other disciples the way he used to. But ever since he denied Jesus in His weakest hour, Peter had lost their respect and trust. He used to be a loud-mouthed fellow, speaking his mind before he knew it himself. He used to brag that he loved Jesus more than the others did. But now that he had been tested and failed, he was publicly humiliated and distanced from the group.

Jesus not only had a commission for His disciples to go out and preach to all the world, but He also wanted to reunite them into the bonded group they used to be. Thomas needed to be shown the proof he required to bring him back into unity with the believing group. Peter needed an opportunity to show himself loyal to Jesus after his denial. Jesus also needed to show the others that He had forgiven Peter and that He still trusted Peter with the important work to be done.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Understand their need for other people and relationships. (Know)
• Sense their need for God’s intervention to heal breaches in trust as well as damage to their own self-worth from past mistakes. (Feel)
• Turn to God to heal their hearts and help them build and nurture relationships with the people around them. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Love is . . .
• Unity in the body of Christ*
• Forgiveness of self
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 own defense tactics that they use when they are uncomfortable, ill at ease, or under stress. How do they respond? Do they pull away from the group? Do they seek solace with other people? Do they get sarcastic or mouthy? Do they get quiet or tight-lipped?
Great deal. We wish they wouldn’t bother us, but we aren’t as independent as we might like to think. We were created to need each other, and only when we care for each other are we truly secure and happy. Even the disciples had to learn that lesson, and Jesus took great pains to show them just how much they needed to be a united group.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

The story is told about a mouse in a farmhouse. One night he smelled the delicious smell of cheese, and he peeked out a hole in the wall to see a mousetrap.

“There’s a mousetrap in the house!” he squeaked in horror, and ran outside to tell the rest of the animals.

“There’s a mousetrap in the house, a mousetrap in the house!” he cried.

“I don’t see how it affects me,” said the cow. “Stop bothering me.”

“Mousetraps never hurt pigs,” said the pig.

“I don’t see the big deal,” said the chicken. “Just calm down and stop worrying about it.”

So the mouse went back to his hole in the farmhouse wall, dejected and very much afraid of the mousetrap.

One night, the mouse heard a terrific snap, and he peeked out his hole to see what was happening. Caught in the mousetrap was a snake. As the farmer’s wife bent down to check the trap, the snake bit her arm. It didn’t take long for her to get very ill.

The farmer was not a wealthy man, and when he called the doctor he had to pay the bill somehow. So he slaughtered the pig to give the doctor payment. The farmer’s wife got worse and worse, and everyone knows that chicken soup is good for the sick. So the farmer killed the chicken to make soup. Eventually, the farmer’s wife died, and the farmer had a houseful of mourning guests come to comfort him. He didn’t have anything to serve such a crowd, and so he butchered the cow to feed them.

Sometimes a mousetrap affects the whole farm!

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

Like the story about the mousetrap, sometimes we don’t think that other people’s problems affect us a great deal. We wish they wouldn’t bother us, but we aren’t as independent as we might like to think. We were created to need each other, and only when we care for each other are we truly secure and happy. Even the disciples had to learn that lesson, and Jesus took great pains to show them just how much they needed to be a united group.

**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 what ways does Jesus show the disciples that He loves them?
- When could Jesus have given the disciples a talking to, or a rude awakening?
- What was Jesus trying to do when He questioned Peter?
- Why was this way of reaching His goal the kindest and gentlest way to achieve it?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Job 42:7-17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; 13.

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

When Jesus died, the disciples were put through the most emotional, stressful times of their lives up to that point. Not only were their hopes dashed that Jesus had, in fact, been the Messiah, but they also lost a close friend in the cruelest way that Rome could think up. They were grief-stricken for their personal loss. But they were also second-guessing everything they thought they knew up to that point. Had Jesus really been the Christ? Had everything they had grown to trust and believe been false? If He did not overthrow Rome and become their king, had He lied about who He was? They were also afraid for their own lives. What would happen to them, Jesus’ devoted followers, if the Jewish leaders and Rome would crucify Jesus?

When Jesus rose from the dead and showed Himself to them, the disciples were overjoyed! However, this was an equally emotionally intense time for them. The shock of Jesus rising from the dead, the remembering of Jesus’ words that pointed to this, and the emotional jolt each time they saw Him, was taking its
They would gather together to encourage each other and remind each other of Jesus’ promises, but not everyone responded to this stressful time in the same way.

Peter and the others had been fishermen up to the point when Jesus called them. Some theologians conjecture that they had not been successful in the rabbinical schools, and had been forced to take up their fathers’ trades. When Jesus called them to follow Him, He had shown them their value to Him. But when Jesus died, and even after He had risen, they felt lost. What would they do? How would they support themselves? The whirlwind time with Jesus was over, so they turned back to what they knew—fishing.

Even in the fishing boat, they were talking about Jesus. This was a time of transition, and while they knew that Jesus had risen, they also knew that things would never be the same again. Peter had lost the respect of his friends and fellow disciples. He was not the loyal follower of his Master that he had believed he was. The others felt let down, too. Even in the joy of Jesus’ resurrection they felt lost and disillusioned. They needed something... Someone to reunite them again.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Ask the students to think of one way in which they would like to contribute to the church as a Sabbath School class. Perhaps they will want to help with song service, welcome visitors, or help in an outreach for the community. They might not have a solid idea right away, but ask them to think about it and come to Sabbath School the next week with an idea.

What makes them feel like they are part of the...
church? What makes them feel like they contribute and are appreciated? How would they like to make that happen?

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

Unity was important to Jesus, but it was also important to the disciples. They wanted to be united. Peter wanted to be part of the group, respected once more. God wants us to be united because that is how He created us to be happiest, most useful, and most secure. Belonging is important on many levels of the human experience.

Belonging in a spiritual family is a key part of our spiritual growth. We need each other for encouragement, accountability, and friendship. When we join with other believers . . . really join with them—not just sitting in a service and then escaping—we experience the fellowship that God intended for us to enjoy.

Sometimes, like Peter, we have to make up for past mistakes. Sometimes, like Thomas, we have to choose to believe instead of choosing not to. The end result is the same, however. We are no longer struggling alone.

*Fundamental Belief No. 14.*

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 84, 85.

*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.*
stargazers or earth shakers?

Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapters 86, 87.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

When Jesus ascended from this earth, He left a clear mission for His followers: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV). Two men dressed in white punctuated this command of Christ with the pointed question: “Why do you stand here looking into the sky?” (Acts 1:11, NIV).

Still today, as followers of Christ we are confronted with the Great Commission to go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, failure to carry out this calling confronts us with the same question: “Why are you standing around looking into the sky?”

We might tout airtight theology and offer inspiring church services, but if we’re not fulfilling the Great Commission then we’re just stargazers. As the old cliché reminds us: “We can be so heavenly minded that we’re of no earthly good.”

God does not need stargazers. He wants earth shakers—fully committed disciples who will reach lost people and then teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded.

This lesson provides the ideal story to challenge your young people to throw themselves into a cause bigger than themselves. Use this opportunity to inspire your class to respond to Jesus’ invitation to share the gospel with the world.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Hear the story of Jesus’ ascension and the parting challenge He gave to His followers. (Know)
- Sense God’s calling to share the gospel with friends who are far from God. (Feel)
- Be challenged to respond to the Great Commission. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Angels
- Trinity
- Jesus
- Discipleship/mentoring
- Gospel

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

Or use this as an alternate activity: Invite your students to imagine the ascension of Christ. While their eyes are closed read Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:9-12. Give them a minute of silence to envision the scene. Then ask them to shout out the first words that come to mind when you ask the following questions:
through the clouds and splashed down on heaven’s shores—what a celebration! Jesus had just completed the most dangerous and most important mission of all time. He had faced every temptation but never gave in to sin. He stood up to the intense hatred of people with only truth and love. He willingly obeyed God and fulfilled His mission of giving up His life as a sacrifice to bring people back to God. He defeated the devil. He destroyed death. Now He’s returned in victory.

Why do we celebrate the Ascension? Because all heaven celebrates the victorious return of the Son, the Lamb who was slain, the Lion who conquered, the One who says in joy and power: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Use the following transition from Kevin Miller to bridge the story and the lesson:

When Jesus Christ accomplished the greatest act of love and redemption of all time—when He went through the clouds and splashed down on heaven’s shores—what a celebration! Jesus had just completed the most dangerous and most important mission of all time. He had faced every temptation but never gave in to sin. He stood up to the intense hatred of people with only truth and love. He willingly obeyed God and fulfilled His mission of giving up His life as a sacrifice to bring people back to God. He defeated the devil. He destroyed death. Now He’s returned in victory.

Why do we celebrate the Ascension? Because all heaven celebrates the victorious return of the Son, the Lamb who was slain, the Lion who conquered, the One who says in joy and power: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

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.

Matthew 28:16-20

- Do you think seeing the resurrected Jesus changed the opinions that the disciples held about Him and His mission to this earth? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Notice how some of the disciples “worshipped” Jesus but “some doubted.” Had you been one of the disciples that day, which camp do you think you would have been in? Explain.
- Have each student write a contemporary translation of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, 20).


- Compare the disciples’ reaction to the Ascension with the feelings and emotions of the two people on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27). What is the difference between the absence caused by the Crucifixion and the absence caused by the Ascension?
- How does the Ascension impact a Christian’s worldview?
- Compare and contrast the worship described in this passage with the worship described in Matthew 28:17.

Acts 1:9-12

Ellen White offers this description of the scene: “While the disciples were still gazing upward, voices addressed them which sounded like richest music. They turned, and saw two angels in the form of men.

“...These angels were of the company that had been
waiting in a shining cloud to escort Jesus to His heavenly home. The most exalted of the angel throng, they were the two who had come to the tomb at Christ’s resurrection, and they had been with Him throughout His life on earth. With eager desire all heaven had waited for the end of His tarrying in a world marred by the curse of sin. The time had now come for the heavenly universe to receive their King. Did not the two angels long to join the throng that welcomed Jesus? But in sympathy and love for those whom He had left, they waited to give them comfort” (The Desire of Ages, pp. 831, 832).

- In what ways might we be indicted for standing around, looking up into the sky?
- How does God comfort us when we long to be in the presence of our ascended Lord?

**Sharing Context and Background**

**Matthew 28:16-20**—Last words are very important. If someone is dying or leaving us, they’re not likely to sign off with trivial small talk. In the case of Jesus, He departed this earth with very important words of instruction for His followers. Jesus made it clear that His followers were under His authority; they were to make more disciples; they were to baptize and teach these new followers to obey Jesus; and in case there were any doubts, Jesus would be with them until the end. In previous missions Jesus sent His disciples to preach His message to the Jews (Matthew 10:5, 6), but now His mission knew no bounds. Jesus died to redeem people from all nations.

We must go—whether that means across the street or across the ocean—and make disciples. This was not a suggestion; it was a direct command from our risen Savior! As we go, take comfort in knowing that Jesus is always with us.

**Luke 24:50-53**—Except for Mark’s brief description of the Ascension (Mark 16:19), only Luke (here and in Acts 1:8-12) mentions this incident. He alone records the time (Acts 1:3) and the place (Luke 24:50) of the event.

This story makes a fitting conclusion to Luke’s Gospel because it contains strong components of both the physical and spiritual realities of Jesus. Throughout his Gospel, Luke portrays Jesus as the supreme example of a life lived perfectly in harmony with God’s plan—as a child living in obedience to His parents and yet startling the religious leaders in the Temple with His knowledge; then as an adult serving God and others through teaching and healing; finally, as a sacrifice for sin without complaint.

This emphasis was well suited to the Greek audience that Luke was addressing. The Greeks put a high value on being an example and improving oneself, and were often engaged in conversations about perfection. The Greeks, however, struggled to reconcile the spiritual importance of the physical world. They believed the spiritual was more important than the physical. To help them understand the God-man who perfectly combined the physical and the spiritual worlds, Luke emphasized that Jesus was not a phantom spirit but a...
The prayer should focus around the simple question: “God, how can I fulfill the Great Commission this week?” Allow enough time for students to wait in silence for impressions from God. You can discuss the experience in the larger group if you wish; or simply have students leave when they are done.

**Summary**

The bottom line is this: Jesus called us to be earth shakers, not stargazers. Can we change the world for Christ? We must at least try. Close with the following story:


They also spotlighted his attempts to move beyond the boundaries of this country and use a global network of churches to revolutionize the way we tackle what he believes are the five biggest problems facing the world today: poverty, disease, illiteracy, spiritual emptiness, and egocentric leadership.

As the interview progressed, a nagging question seemed to persist: can it really work? Can one man—or one church, or one network, or one nation—really heal all of the hurts of the world?

Warren was not ignorant of the presence of this question, however, nor did he shy away from answering it. At the very end of the interview, he identified the four words that he would like written on his tombstone: “At least he tried.”

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1. Fundamental Beliefs Nos. 2–5.
2. Kevin Miller, as posted at the subscription resource at preachington.com/illustrations/weekly/07-07-30/2073007.html.
3. Adapted from depts.washington.edu/next/storyID_08953.php.
4. *Can Rick Warren Change the World?* a Fox News television special (8-20-06).