Welcome

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

The following are provided for your assistance:

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- Why the Bible Story Approach? (teacher introduction) [p. 3]
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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.*
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 www.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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| 1. Love Is Patient | Scripture Story: 1 Corinthians; 2 Corinthians.  
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| 3. God’s Eye for the Gay Guy | Scripture Story: Romans; Galatians.  
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3rd Quarter

1. A High Price for Faith  
   Scripture Story: Matthew 24; 2 Timothy 3:12.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 1, 2.

2. Natural Laws  
   Scripture Story: Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; Revelation 12:6.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 3, 4.

3. Guiding Light  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 5, 6.

4. Famous Faith  
   Scripture Story: Romans 1–3; John 15:19, 20.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 7, 8.

5. Great Humility  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 9, 10.

6. Everybody's Doing It  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 11, 12.

7. Commitment Under Fire  
   Scripture Story: Romans 1:8-17.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 13, 14.

8. Can I Get a Witness? (Two Would Be Nice!)  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 15.

9. Lift Up Your Head  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 16, 17.

10. X Marks Your Spot  
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11. Final Warning!  
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4th Quarter

1. Renewal  
   Scripture Story: 2 Corinthians 7:1-11; Matthew 7:15; James 2:14-24; Romans 12:1.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 27.

2. Investigative Judgment  
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3. Lucifer/Satan (1)  
   Scripture Story: Ezekiel 28; Isaiah 14; Genesis 3:15.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 29, 30.

4. Lucifer/Satan (2)  
   Scripture Story: 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:12; James 4:7, 8.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 31, 32.

5. State of the Dead  
   Scripture Story: Genesis 3:1-5; Psalm 146:4; Isaiah 38:18, 29; Revelation 16:13, 14.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 33, 34.

6. Arms of the Papacy  
   Scripture Story: Revelation 13; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 35.

7. Spiritual Challenge  
   Scripture Story: Revelation 12:17, 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 36.

8. The Bible  
   Scripture Story: Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 4:3; Psalm 119:11.  
   Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 37.

9. Last Chance  
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    Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 39.

11. Deliverance  
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    Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 40.

12. The End  
    Scripture Story: 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 10:1-3, 4-6.  
    Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 41.

13. The Beginning  
    Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapter 42.
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July

3—A High Price for Faith [p. 11]
The early Christians faced nightmarish circumstances in order to stand for their faith. But their relationship with God was so strong that it gave them courage to face the worst.

10—Natural Laws [p. 15]
One of the greatest crimes during the Dark Ages was that of owning a Bible. But God had a remnant then—and now—who value and guard His Word.

17—Guiding Light [p. 19]
Have you ever thought that God’s Word is merely a collection of irrelevant muck? A dull read? Think again!

24—Famous Faith [p. 23]
Even men such as Martin Luther, the great Reformer, struggled with their faith. No matter who we are, God has the ability to reform us into spiritual giants to accomplish His grand purposes.

31—Great Humility [p. 27]
God often chooses the humblest people to accomplish the most extraordinary things. This was true for the Reformers, and it’s still true for us today.

August

7—Everybody’s Doing It [p. 31]
Peer pressure is unavoidable. And it doesn’t stop after high school. But it can be positive if we decide what we want out of life and then hang around people who will help us get there.

14—Commitment Under Fire [p. 35]
Often our problems are so bad that we try to pretend they don’t exist. But acknowledging their existence and God’s power over them can make all the difference!

21—Can I Get a Witness? (Two Would Be Nice!) [p. 39]
A witness is someone who testifies to what they have seen and heard. Two witnesses give even greater clarity. What impact have the witnesses of God’s Word made in your life?

28—Lift Up Your Head [p. 43]
Walking with our heads down can make it so we can’t see clearly enough, and we could run into something! How much more important is it to lift our heads to see spiritual things?

September

4—X Marks Your Spot [p. 47]
Too few of us understand what it means to receive God’s spiritual gifts and talents. It isn’t a privilege. It’s a responsibility. But one that will bring us much fulfillment.

11—Final Warning! [p. 51]
The early Advent believers sold everything and waited in their homes and on hillsides for the coming of Jesus. What are we willing to do in order to give a final warning message to the world?

18—Cleaning Up [p. 55]
The ancient Jewish sanctuary service was messy—blood everywhere. But the hope that it offered ancient Israel is the same hope that it offers us today.

25—Standing, Standing . . . [p. 59]
The Sabbath has always been controversial. And if you are a Sabbath-keeper, then sometime in your life you’re bound to have this belief challenged. But what is the best defense?
a high price for faith

Preparing to Teach

I. Synopsis

The early Christians faced nightmarish circumstances in order to stand for their faith. It is difficult to imagine having to endure such things, let alone being willing to endure them. However, these people found courage to face the worst. Their relationship with God was so strong that they were willing to be martyred rather than turn from their beliefs. A simple belief does not give that kind of courage. Because of a strong belief people have been willing to fight wars. They have been willing to kill people. But a belief does not give a person the courage to accept death without a fight. Only God can live in a person and turn a nightmare into a heroic stand.

In Matthew 24 the disciples asked Jesus what the signs of the end would be. Jesus answered them in a unique way. He told them a double prophecy. He warned them of the destruction of Jerusalem to come in A.D. 70. He also told them what the end times would be like. If He had told them about His horrific death, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end times all at once, they would not have been able to deal with it. Jesus told them what was important for them to know. They needed to be warned about the destruction of Jerusalem so that those who believed could escape before the catastrophe. They also needed to know what the signs of the end would be so that they could pass the information along. If they watched for the signs they would be safe, even though they would not know exactly what would happen. It is the same for us.

II. Target

The students will:
- Understand why the early Christians were willing to face death for their faith. (Know)
- Sense the reality of God. (Feel)
- Choose to pursue a real and growing relationship with God. (Respond)

III. Explore

- First-century Christians
- Persecution
- The existence of a loving, faithful, personal God

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.

Offer the students two hypothetical situations:

Situation 1: You see someone you love in a burning building. You know that if you run in to save them, you will likely die, but they will live. If you don’t, they will die and you will live.

Situation 2: You are told that you will be killed unless you deny your belief in Jesus.

Which situation are they truthfully more inclined to die for? Why might this be? What makes us more will-
ing to die for someone we love? What makes a relationship with Jesus less real than a relationship with another person on earth?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Mother Teresa is known to have been the kindest, most giving woman in modern history. She was born August 26, 1910, and was named Agnes Gonxhe. When she was 18 and other girls were getting married and starting families, Gonxhe decided she wanted to become a missionary and joined the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland. It was there that she was given the name Sister Mary Teresa. That January she left for India.

After two years in the convent Mother Teresa gained permission to start a religious community dedicated to serving the poorest of the poor. On August 17, 1948, she dressed in her white sari with blue trim and headed out into the streets and the world of the poor. She nursed the sick and dying, bathed sores, fed the hungry, turning her attention to the people everyone else ignored. After a few months of working alone, she was joined by a number of her former students.

Mother Teresa opened houses in Communist countries, allowing her work with the poor to extend farther than India. She received many awards for her work. The world took notice of this tiny little nun who was doing what no one else cared to do. One woman, dedicating her life to helping the poorest of the poor, inspired thousands to follow in her path and serve the lowest of society.

When Mother Teresa died in 1997, she had 610 foundations in 123 countries of the world. What did she personally own? Nothing!

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Persecution is what happens when other people oppose you for your faith. Service is what happens when you dedicate your life to God. Not all of us will take such an extreme stance as Mother Teresa did, but we can certainly make it our business to be found doing what God asks of us when He returns. Jesus told His disciples about the trouble ahead for believers; however, He didn’t want them to live in fear. Instead of being afraid of hard times and hiding away, we should be looking for ways to help those around us, and letting God take care of the rest.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

- Underline the warnings of difficult times ahead.
- Circle the instructions for how Christians should be living.
- Put a box around the state of the world when Jesus comes again.
- How many things do we have control over? Realizing that those things are in God’s control helps take away our anxiety.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Acts 7; Mark 13; Luke 12:1-12.

Sharing Context and Background

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

Tertullian (A.D. 160-220) argued the case of the Christians before the Roman government: “But go to it, my good magistrates! The populace will count you a great deal better if you sacrifice the Christians to them. Torture us, rack us, condemn us, crush us; your cruelty only proves our innocence. That is why God suffers us to suffer all this. But nothing whatever is accomplished by your cruelties, each more exquisite than the last. It is the bait that wins men for our school. We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed. That very obstinacy with which you taunt us is your teacher. For who beholds it and is not stirred to inquire what lies indeed within it? Who, on inquiry, does not join us, and joining us, does not wish to suffer, that he may purchase for himself the whole grace of God.”

The early Christians faced horrible persecution, but there were several reasons for this. At first, Christianity was identified with Judaism, but people quickly realized that it was a different religion altogether. It did not belong to a certain geographical group, but it spread quickly like a cult, making the sensible Romans and Jews very nervous.

Christians refused to worship the Roman emperors. They would worship only their own God, and would not take part in the religious ceremonies that the pagan Romans believed would please their pantheon.
of fickle and self-centered gods. They saw the Christians as a very real threat to their safety and good fortune. Tertullian wrote: “The Christians are to blame for every public disaster and every misfortune that befalls the people. If the Tiber rises to the walls, if the Nile fails to rise and flood the fields, if the sky withholds its rain, if there is earthquake or famine or plague, straightway the cry arises: The Christians to the lions!”

Christians also seemed very narrow and inflexible. Their refusal to worship the emperor did not make sense to the society around them. What harm would it do to worship him just a little bit? Especially considering the death sentence for refusing to offer worship to the emperor, what kind of people would choose death over a little bit of incense and a few muttered words? Their obstinacy made them disliked by the population at large.

In spite of all of this, the Christians stayed true to their beliefs and faced persecution and death rather than betray Christ.


III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.
Have the class put the following items on a spectrum of importance, 1 being of the least importance to them and 10 being the most important.

1. Equality
2. Right to free speech
3. Right to privacy
4. Championing the rights of people in other countries
5. Furthering the rights of people in your own country
6. Right to worship as you choose

Focusing on the right to worship as you choose,
why did they put it where they did on the continuum? What is their reasoning?

Summary

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

The early Christians faced intense persecution. But with God’s strength and a sense of His presence with them, they were able to face death in order to stand for what they knew was right. God was very real to them. It is difficult for us to imagine having to face that kind of adversity for our religious convictions, but many people in different countries do. In our comfortable position where we are permitted to worship as we choose and face very little opposition, we do not experience the same test of our faith. How real is God to us? Is He real enough to give us the same strength of early Christians? If not, let’s get to know Him better. God is longing to communicate with us and to share a real relationship, not just lip service. Let’s decide today to ask God to show us how real He is.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy*, chapters 1, 2.

*A special adaptation of *The Great Controversy* 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.
natural laws

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The Dark Ages were a terrible time for anyone who thought differently or questioned the existing authority. The Catholic Church controlled kings and queens, commoners and servants. Disagreement was not permitted, and “heretics” were searched out and routinely tortured and executed for the crime of independent thought.

One of the highest crimes was that of owning a Bible. The church had mandated that only priests could read the Bible, and that laity would have the contents of the Bible told to them by their spiritual leaders. People were not permitted to read the Bible themselves and draw their own conclusions.

Satan knew that the Bible held power for the believers. The Bible not only showed them the truth about God’s character, but it also showed them exactly what they needed to do to be saved. The church had made religion so complicated and heavy that the common person no longer understood that their salvation was a free gift. The church allowed pagan influences to creep into doctrine so that even God’s law seemed to be changed.

God did not allow His Word to be shuffled aside, however. He always had His own little remnant of people who protected the Scriptures and passed them down to their children. The Waldenses are an example of these people. They had to live in hiding and were often persecuted, but they carefully guarded God’s Word. And God has a remnant of people today who value and guard His Word.

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Understand the value of God’s law. (Know)
- Sense the benefit of following the laws that God laid out. (Feel)
- Choose to explore their Bibles on their own to see what is really there. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
- Law of God
- Secularism/worldliness
- The great controversy

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

Ask the students a series of questions and ask them to back up their answers using the Bible.
1. God is a good God who loves us.
2. Jesus died for your sins.
3. We don’t have to do anything to be forgiven, only ask sincerely.

If the students aren’t able to back up their answers with Scripture, ask them if they are sure about their answers, and why they are so sure. Do they know what

Scripture Story: Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; Revelation 12:6.
Commentary: The Great Controversy, chapters 3, 4.
Key Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:7.
is in the Bible because they have read it themselves, or because they have been told what is in it?

Illustration

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

In marketing when a company is trying to sell something, they look at both the value of the gadget and the perceived value of the gadget. The value is a combination of the material it is made of and what people are generally willing to pay for it. The perceived value is the customer’s opinion of the value of the gadget to him or her.

Diamonds, for example, are not terribly expensive. To mine for diamonds costs a lot, but not nearly as much as it costs to mine for other minerals or gemstones. The value of diamonds is a combination of the number of diamonds available to be purchased on the market and a clever advertising campaign. There is no natural shortage of diamonds, only a control on how many are available for sale at any given time. In fact, it is never recommended that you invest in diamonds because the price of a diamond is largely based on the perceived value.

Sayings such as, “A diamond is a girl’s best friend” and “A diamond lasts forever” have been used to advertise a diamond’s perceived worth. Diamonds are used in engagement rings so a person’s attachment to the diamond is largely emotional. How much a man is willing to pay for an engagement ring is a social indicator of how much he cares for his bride-to-be as well as his financial standing.

How much a diamond is worth is really how much it is worth to you.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

*Share the following in your own words:*

The value of the Bible is similar to that of diamonds. The book itself is not worth very much. There is the cost of paper, ink, and binding. In fact, you can get entire versions of the Bible for free online. The true value of the Bible and of God’s law comes down to how much it is worth to you. When the Bible was denied to people in the Dark Ages, they saw immense value in it. Now that the Bible is very common, how much is it worth to you?

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

- **Underline** the sections that you think describe God’s true believers.
- **Circle** the words that describe the agency working against God’s true believers.
- Laws and lawlessness are mentioned in relation to the agency that works against God’s people. What will this agency do with God’s law?

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: John 14:15; Matthew 12:1-14.*

Sharing Context and Background

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

It is very important to remember in this study that while the Catholic Church grew corrupt and was used by Satan to persecute those who were loyal to God, Catholic people are not evil. Power corrupts, and when a few people hold a great deal of power, it is very difficult for those people to maintain their perspective without God’s strength.

Governments have done very wicked things on a global scale without the people under those governments being wicked people. Government workers may also be completely ignorant of what their government is really up to! It is too easy for Protestants to point the finger at Catholics and declare them “the beast.” However, there have been times in history when Protestants had the political power, and it is sad to report that they did not do much better when it came to fair and humane treatment of Catholics. Power, it seems, taps into human weakness and leaves us vulnerable to temptation and that slippery slope.

The real issue here is not Protestants versus Catholics, or one denomination being superior to another. The Bible is the focus of this lesson because God’s law is what should guide us. When the Bible is removed from our lives, we enter a personal Dark Age. We lack the guidance, wisdom, hope, and direction that God wants us to have.

In the Dark Ages the Bible was taken away from the general population, and those who tried to hold on to their beliefs were horribly persecuted. Revelation 12:6 (NIV) says that “the woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.” When we use the “day equals one year” formula, we can see that 1,260 years is exactly how long the Dark Ages lasted.
Daniel 7:25 speaks about a power that will speak against the Most High, oppress the saints, and attempt to change the “set times and the laws.” The reason why many theologians as well as Ellen White believed that this pointed to the Catholic pope was because the pope declared himself Jesus Christ on earth. The Catholic Church actively persecuted believers in the Dark Ages, and the Catholic Church declared that it had the power to change the Sabbath (one of God’s laws) from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week. However, we must remember that the power at work behind these political maneuvers was Satan’s, not a human being’s. The Catholic Church was used by the devil to do some evil things, but Satan uses many avenues to get his work done. The important thing to watch is that we turn to God for His strength so that the devil is not able to use us in the same way. But for the grace of God, there go WE.

III. CLOSING

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

As a class, make a list of reasons why your Bible is valuable to you. There is no wrong answer here. The point is to make them think honestly about God’s Word and how it impacts (or fails to impact) their lives. Examples of honest reasons why their Bibles are valuable to them might be:

- Because they have had it since they were little.
- Because it was a gift from a loved one.
- Because it has gotten them through difficult times.
- Because it reminds them that they aren’t alone, etc.

Look at the list and leave them with this question: What dollar amount would you put on your Bible and why?

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

In the Dark Ages people did not have access to the Bible, yet they realized its value. If they tried to gain access to a Bible, they were persecuted and often

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 Great Controversy. 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 Great Controversy, chapters 3, 4.

*A special adaptation of The Great Controversy 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.

killed. It was a terrifying time for believers. However, during this time God did not allow His Word to be eradicated. He always had His own people who protected the Scriptures.

The Bible gives power to believers. It holds promises, hope, guidance, and instruction. For those of us today who have constant access to the Bible in any language or version of our choice, we have forgotten the true treasure of God’s Word. Familiarity has bred contempt, but if we look back on the experiences of those who lived during the Dark Ages, we can remember why the Bible was worth the fight!

1Fundamental Belief No. 19.
2Fundamental Belief No. 8.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

About 92 percent of Americans own at least one Bible; the average household has three. Two thirds say it holds the answers to the basic questions of life. It remains unrivalled as the world’s all-time best seller. And yet Americans are showing themselves to be remarkably ignorant of biblical basics.

One Gallup survey, for example, shows that fewer than half of Americans can name the first book of the Bible (Genesis), only one third know who delivered the Sermon on the Mount (many named Billy Graham, not Jesus), and one quarter do not know what is celebrated on Easter.1

Chances are good that many students in your Sabbath School class are not well-versed when it comes to the Bible. This lesson presents an opportunity for you to open the Word of God and show your youth group that it is not a collection of irrelevant muck. Nor is it a dull read. It’s a love story, self-help text, autobiography and biography, book of prophecy, how-to manual, and an assortment of juicy love letters all wrapped up in one!

In the words of Franky Schaeffer: “God has given us in written form a volume which spans all the human emotions, the ups, the downs, the diversity of individuals, the good with the bad, the ugly, the beautiful, the sinners, the righteous, the perverted, the saved, the lost, the poetry, the poets, the wisdom, the wise, the human stories, the reality of life, pregnant with meaning, a book in fact of truth, not pale, narrow, religious sayings. The Bible, the Word of God, is solid, human, verifiable, divine indeed.”2

Seeing the Word of God as “divine indeed” helps us to grasp why men such as Wycliffe, Huss, and Jerome were willing to die for it. They endured unspeakable torture because they understood that the Bible is more than a nice history book or a collection of sayings; it is the wellspring of life. Seize this opportunity to challenge your youth to anchor their lives in the Word of God—just like the martyrs of old.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• See the Bible as the Word of God. (Know)
• Sense that the Bible is the primary vehicle through which God communicates with us today. (Feel)
• Be challenged (through stories of martyrs willing to die for the Bible) to spend priority time each day with God in His Word. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Bible/Holy Scriptures
• Faith
• Adversity/trials

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? sec-
tion of their lesson. After seeing where students position themselves on the wall between “Yes” and “No,” discuss their responses.

Illustration

There’s an old story of a candidate interviewing before the church membership committee. They asked him, “What part of the Bible do you like best?”

He said, “I like the New Testament best.”

“What part of the New Testament?”

He answered, “The Book of the Parables, Sir.”

They then asked him to share one of the parables. Seeming a bit uncertain, he began . . .

“Once upon a time a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves; and the thorns grew up and choked the man. And he went on and met the Queen of Sheba, and she gave that man, Sir, a thousand talents of silver, and a hundred changes of raiment. And he got in his chariot and drove furiously, and as he was driving along under a big tree, his hair got caught in a limb and left him hanging there! And he hung there many days and many nights. The ravens brought him food to eat and water to drink. And one night while he was hanging there asleep, his wife Delilah came along and cut off his hair, and he fell on stony ground. And it began to rain, and rained forty days and forty nights. And he hid himself in a cave. Later he went on and met a man who said, ‘Come in and take supper with me.’ But he said, ‘I can’t come in, for I have married a wife.’ And the man went out into the highways and hedges and compelled him to come in! He then came to Jerusalem, and saw Queen Jezebel sitting high and lifted up in a window of the wall. When she saw him she laughed, and he said, ‘Throw her down out of there,’ and they threw her down. And he said, ‘Throw her down again,’ and they threw her down seventy-times-seven. And the fragments which they picked up filled twelve baskets full! NOW, whose wife will she be in the day of judgment?”

The membership committee agreed that this was indeed a knowledgeable candidate!

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Unfortunately, that’s about how well many folk know their Bibles. This is unfortunate because the Bible represents the best resource we have for managing the daily grit of life. For example, do you struggle with a favorite sin? Read Romans 6. Is your mom battling cancer? James 5:14-16 tells you what to do. Are you dreading the chemistry final next week? Put Proverbs 2:5-7 on your study notes.

Simply put, the Bible is the best recipe we have on how to live. So read it regularly and put it into practice. You’ll be glad you did—especially if you ever have an interview with the membership committee!

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following excerpts from The Great Controversy to summarize the stories of three Reformers. Ask the students how the stories of Wycliffe, Huss, and Jerome enlighten the verses from Into the Story.

John Wycliffe—“As a professor of theology at Oxford, Wycliffe preached the Word of God in the halls of the university. So faithfully did he present the truth to the students under his instruction, that he received the title of ‘the gospel doctor.’ But the greatest work of his life was to be the translation of the Scriptures into the English language.

“The Word of God was opened to England. The Reformer feared not now the prison or the stake. He had placed in the hands of the English people a light which should never be extinguished” (The Great Controversy, pp. 87, 88).

John Huss—“With daily increasing boldness Huss thundered against the abominations which were tolerated in the name of religion; and the people openly accused the Romish leaders as the cause of the miseries that overwhelmed Christendom.

“Enfeebled by illness and imprisonment—for the damp, foul air of his dungeon had brought on a fever which nearly ended his life—Huss was at last brought before the council. When required to choose whether he would recant his doctrines or suffer death, he accepted the martyr’s fate” (The Great Controversy, pp. 103, 107).

Jerome—“In the presence of his judges Jerome kneeled down and prayed that the divine Spirit might control his thoughts and words, that he might speak nothing contrary to the truth or unworthy of his Master. To him that day was fulfilled the promise of God to the first disciples: ‘Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake. . . . But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall
speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” Matthew 10:18-20” 
(The Great Controversy, p. 112).

Sharing Context and Background

While Ellen White offers great commentary in The Great Controversy on these three Reformers, you may find it helpful in teaching about them to read brief summaries of each man. This simple, factual overview of each Reformer provides context and a point of reference to assist you in working through the broader narrative that Ellen White provides.

**John Wycliffe** . . . (mid-1320s–31 December, 1384) was an English theologian, lay preacher, translator, [and] Reformist. . . . [Wycliffe] was known as an early dissident in the Roman Catholic Church during the 14th century. His followers are known as Lollards, an Evangelical movement which preached a New Testament gospel. He is considered the founder of the Lollard movement, a precursor to the Protestant Reformation (for this reason, he is sometimes called “The Morning Star of the Reformation”). He was one of the earliest opponents of papal authority influencing secular power.

Wycliffe was also an early advocate for translation of the Bible in the common tongue. He completed his translation directly from the Vulgate into vernacular English in the year 1382, now known as the Wycliffe Bible. It is probable that he personally translated the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and it is possible he translated the entire New Testament, while his associates translated the Old Testament. Wycliffe’s Bible appears to have been completed by 1384, with additional updated versions being done by Wycliffe’s assistant John Purvey and others in 1388 and 1395.

**John Huss** . . . [1369-1415] was a Czech Catholic priest, philosopher, Reformer, and master at Charles University in Prague. He is famous for having been burned at the stake for what the Roman Catholic Church considered to be his heretical views on ecclesiology. Huss was a key contributor to the Protestant movement whose teachings had a strong influence on the states of Europe, most immediately in the approval for the existence of a reformist Bohemian Church, and, more than a century later, on Martin Luther himself.

**Jerome of Prague** (c. 1365-1416) was a Bohemian religious Reformer, born in Prague. He studied at the University of Oxford, in England, where he adopted the unorthodox doctrines of the English theologian John Wycliffe. On returning to Prague in 1407, he became an associate of the Bohemian religious Reformer John Huss and joined him in preaching against the abuses of the church hierarchy and the profligacy of the clergy. When Huss was denounced by the Council of Constance and arrested, Jerome hastened to Constance to defend him, but on learning that he, too, would be condemned, he tried to return to Prague. Arrested in Bavaria and returned to Constance, he recanted his views. Later he withdrew his recantation and was burned at the stake as a heretic.

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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 Great Controversy. 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

Break your group into smaller groups and have them brainstorm ways to get into the Bible. For example, they may recommend student versions of Bibles such as the NIV Student Bible (Zondervan, www.zondervan.com). Another group may spend the time you allow for this activity by surfing the Web on their phones for online Bible study tools such as www.christianteens.net. Conclude by having each group share their ideas with the whole group.

Questions to consider:

• Am I taking full advantage of the freedom I enjoy to study the Bible whenever I like?
• What is it about the Bible that so many martyrs throughout the centuries have been willing to die for it?
• Do I primarily depend on others interpreting the Bible for me or do I read it for myself?

Summary

As grizzly as the accounts of Wycliffe, Huss, and Jerome may be, we must not think that this is something that just happened “back then” to “those people.” Persecution continues today for believers who refuse to compromise their belief in the Bible. Consider these recent headlines:

“Iran Continues the Illegal Detention of Christian Converts” (August 10, 2009)
“The Genocide of Iraqi Christians” (August 10, 2009)
“Thirteen-year-old Forced to Watch Pastor Hacked to Death in Nigeria” (August 9, 2009)

You can find dozens of similar news stories at www.persecution.org. While you’re there, be sure to check out the Web page that answers the question “What can I do?” There you’ll find lots of great suggestions on ways that you can help to curtail the persecution that persists. Whether it’s through your prayers or a letter to your state representative or a contribution to International Christian Concern, there are dozens of ways that you can make a difference.

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 Great Controversy, chapters 5, 6.

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famous faith

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Martin Luther once was so depressed over a prolonged period that one day his wife came downstairs wearing all black.

Martin Luther said, “Who died?”

She said, “God has.”

“God hasn’t died,” he said.

She replied, “Well, live like it and act like it.”

Even the eminent Reformer Martin Luther was a real man who struggled with the same junk that we all do. This is important to remember when teaching about this man of great faith and courage. For when you expose Luther’s humanness students can see him as he really was—an ordinary guy that God used to do extraordinary things. Similarly, your Sabbath School class is full of ordinary kids that God wants to use in extraordinary ways. As you paint Martin Luther as a real person, full of faults and doubts, you will showcase God’s ability to use fallible, damaged sinners to accomplish His grand purposes.

Inherent in Luther’s story are many great themes of Scripture. You could explore his theology and highlight some of the most important and basic tenets of Christianity—righteousness by faith, the experience of salvation, and the authority of the Bible. Or you may opt to highlight some of the more nuanced learnings that Ellen White points out—the importance of parents training their children, Christian education, being willing to die for your convictions, and the importance of prayer. Whatever track you take, there are plenty of teachable gems from this ordinary Joe whom God used to change the course of history.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Be exposed to the history of the Reformation. (Know)
• Sense the importance of building one’s life on the unshakeable foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word. (Feel)
• Be challenged to act with the same conviction as Martin Luther did to the doctrine of righteousness by faith. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Christianity
• Conviction
• Salvation (experience of)²
• Bible/Holy Scriptures³
• Christian education

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. Using the questions in the Sabbath section under Making It Real, let the students discuss their experience in conducting the survey. If the stu-
dents did not do the activity on their own, perhaps you could give them time during class to do the survey.

As an alternate activity, show selected excerpts from the movie Luther (2003), starring Joseph Fiennes as Martin Luther.

Illustration

Remember those old-fashioned church picnics? The pastor would announce “Let’s all meet at Glendale Park tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. Bring your own supper.”

At the last minute you decide to go. Scrounging through the refrigerator you find some tired slices of bread, a rusty head of lettuce, just enough mayonnaise to scrape your knuckles getting at it, and a pile of cheese. You slap together a sandwich and hurry to the park.

The afternoon involves tug-of-war, egg tosses, three-legged relays, and lots of other games you haven’t played since third grade. Finally the pastor calls everyone together and blesses the food. You disappear into the shadows and plop down on a rickety picnic table. There you slump, ready to bite into your sorry sandwich when out of the corner of your eye you see something that looks like a living Norman Rockwell painting.

Here comes a chubby little grandma with a white bun on the top of her head. She’s carrying a picnic basket the size of a Sherman tank. She comes to your picnic table and unfolds a red-and-white checkered Gingham tablecloth right up to your elbow!

And there you sit clutching your cheese sandwich.

She unpacks her feast. She’s got blackberry cobbler, blueberry pie, hot dogs, potato salad, Doritos, roasted corn, Cracker Jacks, FriChik, pop, peaches, pears—it’s a feast that defies the senses.

And there you sit clutching your cheese sandwich.

Just then, she looks over at you and says, “What you say we just throw it all together? I’ve got plenty of cobbler and corn and pie—and besides, I just love cheese sandwiches.” You came as a pauper but you eat like a prince or a princess.4

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

So God comes to you sitting on that rickety picnic table called life. He unfolds His white linen tablecloth right up to your elbow. He looks down at you clutching your sandwich and He says, “Why don’t we just throw it all together? You need forgiveness? I’ve got more forgiveness than you could ever use in one lifetime.”

Ellen White wrote: “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With his stripes we are healed.’”5

Martin Luther put it this way: “This is the mystery of the riches of divine grace for sinners; for by a wonderful exchange our sins are now not ours but Christ’s, and Christ’s righteousness is not Christ’s but ours.”6

This was the core message that got Martin Luther in trouble. The organized church postured that we must earn our salvation by purchasing indulgences. Luther contended that righteousness comes only by faith—freely for all who ask.

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 15:19, 20

• Why does the world hate Jesus?
• How does Jesus’ statement “No servant is greater than his master” relate to persecution and fitting in with the world?

Romans 1:16, 17

• What is righteousness?
• What is the relationship between righteousness and faith? How can you strengthen your faith?

Romans 3:21-31

• Compare the New International Version (from Into the Story) with the King James Version below to write a definition of the word “propitiation.”
• King James Version: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).
Definition of “propitiation”: ___________________
__________________________________________
___________________________________________

• Why does faith not nullify the law (verse 31)?
• Summarize Paul’s conclusion about righteousness and the law.__________________________________________
___________________________________________
Sharing Context and Background

Use the following excerpts and quick facts as a reference for clarity on a few of the key people in the story of Martin Luther.

Martin Luther’s parents and family—“Luther’s parents bestowed great care upon the education and training of their children” (The Great Controversy, p. 121).

Martin Luther was born to Hans Luder and his wife Margarethe on November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany. Hans Luder was a leaseholder of copper mines and smelters and served as one of four citizen representatives on the local council. Religious scholar Martin Marty describes Luther’s mother as a hardworking woman of “trading-class stock and middling means,” and notes that Luther’s enemies would later wrongly describe her as a whore and bath attendant. He had several brothers and sisters, and is known to have been close to one of them, Jacob.

Staupitz—“When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the Word of God to Luther’s mind and bade him look away from himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God’s law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour” (The Great Controversy, p. 123).

Johann von Staupitz was a theologian, university preacher, and vicar-general of the Augustinian Order in Germany. Luther himself remarked, “If it had not been for Dr. Staupitz, I should have sunk in hell.” Although he died a Catholic monk and repudiated the Protestant Reformation, he was later commemorated as a priest in the Calendar of Saints of the Lutheran Church.

Tetzel—“The official appointed to conduct the sale of indulgences in Germany—Tetzel by name—had been convicted of the basest offenses against society and against the law of God; but having escaped the punishment due for his crimes, he was employed to further the mercenary and unscrupulous projects of the pope” (The Great Controversy, p. 127).

Johann Tetzel was a German Dominican preacher remembered for selling indulgences and for a couplet attributed to him, “As soon as a coin in the coffer rings/the soul from purgatory springs.” In 1517 Tetzel was trying to raise money for the ongoing reconstruction of St. Peter’s Basilica, and it is believed that Martin Luther was inspired to write his ninety-five theses, in part, due to Tetzel’s actions during this period of time.

Melanchthon—“God’s providence sent Melanchthon to Wittenberg. Young in years, modest and diffident in his manners, Melanchthon’s sound judgment, extensive knowledge, and winning eloquence, combined with the purity and uprightness of his character, won universal admiration and esteem” (The Great Controversy, p. 134).

Philip Melanchthon supported Luther at the Leipzig debates with Johann Eck in 1519. In the same year he received his bachelor of theology degree, his thesis supporting many of the critical points of Luther’s reform: justification by faith, and opposition to papal authority.

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 Great Controversy. 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
Recreate a modern-day court scene that puts Martin Luther on trial. Have your students research the primary issues that the church had with Luther and then attempt to prosecute him. Minimally you should set up the following characters in the drama:
- Martin Luther (defendant)
- Defense attorney
- Prosecuting attorney
- Judge
- The rest of the class can serve on the jury.

Summary
Break the class into small groups and give each group a 3" x 5" card. On one side place one of the questions below. Have the groups agree on a one-sentence answer to write on the back side.
1. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about Christianity?
2. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about conviction?
3. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about salvation?
4. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about the Bible?
5. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about Christian education?

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 Great Controversy*, chapters 7, 8.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The stories of the Reformers remind us that God often chooses the humblest folk to accomplish the most extraordinary things. Through the influence of common men such as Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Luther, and Oecolampadius, God changed the destiny of nations.

Still today, God calls young men and women like Martin Luther to stand with uncompromising courage and defend His loving character. Young people in your Sabbath School class could make the same kind of impact as did the Reformers of old.

What God needs in young people today is no different than the virtues He looked for in His servants during the Reformation—humility, courage, and faith. Ellen White emphasizes that “the leading Reformers were men from humble life—men who were most free of any of their time from pride of rank” (The Great Controversy, p. 171). To be used by God in supernatural ways begins with a humble spirit, completely yielded to following His biddings. This was true for the Reformers; it is still true for you and me.

Another theme weaving through the stories of the Reformers is that of courage. Ellen White writes: “Zwingli at Zurich was smitten down; he was brought so low that all hope of his recovery was relinquished. . . . In that trying hour his hope and courage were unshaken. He looked in faith to the cross of Calvary” (The Great Controversy, p. 179). If you can inspire your youth group to live with the same humility and unshakable courage and remain focused on the cross of Calvary, you will optimize the teaching opportunities of this lesson.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Hear stories of the Reformation. (Know)
• Sense the work of God through those who are humble. (Feel)
• Be invited to live with the same humility and courage of the Reformers. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Humility
• Natural world
• Courage

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Use an improvisation game as a fun activity to introduce the topic of humility. Ask for a volunteer to share a personal story of doing something that was humiliating or a personal illustration of the folly of pride. Get as many details in the story as possible. Next, get some volunteer actors to act out the same story three times. The first run through is a simple reenactment of the story that was just shared. For the second time through the story, have people assign each actor a certain emotion (e.g., angry, giddy, despondent, etc.) in which to reenact the same scene. The final run-through should be in a genre (e.g., sci-fi,
Illustration

A church leader of many centuries ago named Gregory the Great once said, “Pride makes me think that I am the cause of my achievements, and that I deserve my abilities, and leads me to despise other people that don’t measure up.”1 Pride causes this illusion of self-sufficiency. “I made myself great. I deserve all I have. I’m better than others.”

A story flying around the Internet tells of a CEO at a big corporation who possessed this spirit of self-sufficiency. One time, he was coming out of a service station only to notice his wife involved in an animated conversation with the attendant pumping their gas. Back on the road again, the CEO’s wife explained how she knew the attendant. “In fact,” she said, “we dated for a couple of years.”

After a long pause, the husband quipped, “I'll bet I know what you’re thinking. I'll bet you’re thinking that you’re pretty lucky that you married me, the CEO of a great corporation and not a lowly service station attendant.”

“No,” the wife replied, “actually I was thinking if I had married him and not you, he’d be the CEO of a great corporation, and you’d be a service station attendant.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

As we consider the stories of Reformers such as Ulrich Zwingli, it is clear that God uses those who are humble in spirit. We all fight this illusion, however, that “I made myself great. I deserve all I have. I’m better than others.”

Questions for reflection: Are you ever slow to acknowledge your limitations and dependence on God? Do you ever forget that whatever abilities you have are gifts from God? What might God dream of accomplishing in you if you manifest a character of humility?

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 the key phrases with them (NIV):

Isaiah 57:15—“contrite and lowly in spirit”

Consider the following insight from The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 303. Read and discuss the Bible references in parentheses with your students.

“Contrition and humility—the spirit of sincere repentance for sin, coupled with a sense of one’s inability, of oneself, to earn salvation (see Rom. 7:18)—are the two essential qualifications for acceptance with God (see Micah 6:8; see on Ps. 51:10; Matt. 11:29). Contrition prepares the way for justification, as humility does for sanctification. God can do little for the man who does not feel a keen sense of his own need and who does not reach out for power from above (see on Luke 15:2).”

James 4:6—“God opposes the proud”

The Life Application Bible offers this commentary:

“The cure for evil desires is humility (see Proverbs 16:18, 19; 1 Peter 5:5, 6). Pride makes us self-centered and leads us to conclude that we deserve all we can see, touch, or imagine. It creates greedy appetites for far more than we need. We can be released from our self-centered desires by humbling ourselves before God, realizing that all we really need is His approval. When the Holy Spirit fills us, we see that this world’s seductive attractions are only cheap substitutes for what God has to offer.”

Isaiah 41:10—“Do not fear, for I am with you”

Notice another context in which Ellen White uses this verse from Isaiah:

“'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. . . . Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' Isaiah 40:26-29; 41:10, 13” (Education, pp. 115, 116).

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to provide for your
students a broader perspective of pride. In your own words, share the wider context and background of what is at the root of pride.

Of Christ’s disciples Ellen White writes that they “were humble and teachable. . . . So in the days of the Great Reformation. The leading Reformers were men from humble life” (The Great Controversy, p. 171). Throughout history God has used men and women who remained humble.

The Bible warns: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18, NIV). But where does pride come from? Is God really that concerned about arrogance? After all, a haughty spirit persists only in criminals, rapists, and thieves, right?

Not so fast.

Some years ago the Minnesota Crime Commission published this report about children:

“Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it. His bottle, his mother’s attention, his playmate’s toy, his uncle’s watch. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless.

“He is dirty. He has no morals, no knowledge, no skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy given free reign to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, or a rapist.”

That’s you and me in the raw. That’s the nature that rages within. It’s a condition that’s as old as Lucifer’s rebellion against God in heaven. It’s rooted in pride that exalts self over Christ.

Perhaps you’re tempted to think that only Lucifer had “I” problems. “I will ascend to heaven,” he boasted. “I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13, 14, NIV).

But in dozens of different ways, don’t we do the same?

“I will watch whatever movies I want.”
“I will do what I want on the Sabbath.”
“I will eat, drink, and dress as I please.”
“I will spread whatever gossip I so choose.”
“I will spend my money as I see fit.”
“I . . . I . . . I . . .” If we’re not careful, we start sounding like Satan.

Now to fix the “I” problem in your own strength is as likely as changing the color of your eyes. The trouble lies much deeper. The only way to get at the “I” problem is to park in the presence of Jesus. That’s where Satan blew it. When he left heaven, he abandoned his only hope of holiness. For it is only in the presence of the Holy One that we can radiate His holiness.

So stay close to Jesus today. Talk to Him often. Worship Him always. Lean on Him in every moment.

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 Great Controversy. 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

Have all the students turn on their cell phones and text their answers to the following questions. Read the answers as they come up on your phone. If the students don’t have cell phones you could have them write their answers on slips of paper that you would then read.

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 Great Controversy*, chapters 9, 10.

*A special adaptation of *The Great Controversy* 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.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

*Learning From the Learners*

If you’re not careful, teaching kids to be humble may come across with an edge of conceit. Obviously, the best way to teach humility is to model it (i.e., to show kids what a humble spirit looks like by the way you live).

One act of humility as a teacher is to be up front with your students and admit you don’t know it all. You can learn from them just as much as they can learn from you. So learn from the students in this lesson by asking them questions such as: “Who is the most humble person you know, and why? What can teachers do to humbly serve God and others? What does humility look like to you, and why?”

Listen carefully to the answers they give and by God’s grace apply what you learn.

What’s the first word that comes to mind when you hear the word “pride”?

What’s the first word that comes to mind when you hear the word “humility”?

What can you do this week to nurture a humble spirit?

*Summary*

Close by reflecting on the following statement from Ellen White:

“Lucifer in heaven desired to be first in power and authority; he wanted to be God, to have the rulership of heaven; and to this end he won many of the angels to his side. When with his rebel host he was cast out from the courts of God, the work of rebellion and self-seeking was continued on earth. Through the temptation to self-indulgence and ambition Satan accomplished the fall of our first parents; and from that time to the present the gratification of human ambition and the indulgence of selfish hopes and desires have proved the ruin of mankind.”

Break your class into small groups. Invite them to pray specifically that God would deliver them from this “human ambition and the indulgence of selfish hopes and desires.” Encourage them to allow for a time of silence for God to impress upon them ways that they might model the humility of Jesus in the next week.

1 As quoted at mns.lcms.org/gvlc/sermons/07-07-02.htm.
2 As quoted by Charles R. Swindoll, in a message delivered on December 1, 1974, at First Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, “How Fights Are Started and Stopped,” sermon 140A.
3 Ellen White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, pp. 32, 33.
I. SYNOPSIS

Peer pressure is a challenge for every teen growing up. Parents try to teach their children to stand up to it and to do what they feel is right in the face of public opinion. Peer pressure doesn't stop after high school. All through their adult lives they will face pressure from their peers to act or do things a certain way. However, we fail to recognize the positive effects of peer pressure.

Peer pressure is unavoidable. Regardless of whom you spend time with, you will find yourself influenced to behave a certain way in order to be fully accepted by the group. The trick is to decide what you want out of life and then find people who have similar goals.

This is why God gave us a church. The early Christians just after Jesus’ death and even the Christians of the Reformation found a great deal of comfort in the church. Fellow believers could encourage and strengthen each other during difficult times.

In fact, God created us to need companionship. Adam was not happy alone, and when God created Eve he felt complete. We were created with a need for each other. While our need for companionship and group support can be our weakness when we turn to the wrong people, it can also be our strength when we turn to God’s church. Yet regardless of choosing fellow believers to spend time with and to gain support from, we must always turn first to God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the pressure they feel in fitting in with a group. (Know)
- Sense their responsibility toward choosing a support group that will encourage them to have the life that they dream of. (Feel)
- Choose to make use of some of the support networks that God provides such as church and family. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Friendship
- Peer pressure
- Church *

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.

Bring enough party hats, plastic gloves, or pins with sayings on them for each member of the class. (The item is not important, only that it is something they can wear.) Tell the students that they should each put on one of the items, but if they really don’t want to, that is all right. Then watch as they decide what to do.

After they have each made a decision, ask them these questions:
1. “Did what the other students chose affect your choice?”
2. “Did you change your mind on your choice after seeing someone else’s choice?”
3. “Did the opinion of the other students matter to you?” Explain.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

Ben Carson is a famous Adventist doctor known for many newsworthy operations. He’s made a name for himself as a highly skilled surgeon. However, if you knew him as a boy, you wouldn’t have thought he’d grow up to be anyone at all.

Ben’s mother, Sonia, had dropped out of school when she was in third grade. She got married at the age of 13 to a much older minister and found herself divorced eight years later with two boys to raise. She worked two or three jobs at a time to make ends meet, but Ben’s family still lived in extreme poverty.

Ben was never very good at school, and eventually fell to the bottom of his class. He was picked on, and because of the bullying he developed a nasty temper.

So what turned him around? His mother. She started to expect things from him that no one else did. She made him limit his TV watching and finish his homework before going out to play, even though she could barely read the assignments that her son had written. Ben said, “It was at that moment I realized that I wasn’t stupid.”

Ben went on to become a world-renowned neural surgeon. He was the first to separate Siamese twins joined at the back of the head in 1987. He was also the first to insert an intrauterine shunt for a hydrocephalic twin, a brain surgery that he performed on a baby still in its mother’s womb. Dr. Ben Carson certainly became a somebody!

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

The change in Ben’s life was because his mother believed in him. She didn’t let the kids at school have the last say. They said he was a loser. *She* said otherwise! When he spent less time with those kids and more time studying and listening to the positive things his mother had to say to him, he stopped being the kid at the bottom of the class and started being the future neural surgeon. Whom you spend time with matters!

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

- Underline the names of the individuals dealing with social pressure.
- How does each person deal with the pressure put on them?
- For each person, what is the “right thing” for them to do? Why?
- Why do you think that they make the choices they do?

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Luke 14:25-33; Psalm 109.*

**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 was not the first or the last man to claim to be the Messiah. There were many men who made that claim, which might have been part of why the Pharisees were so skeptical about Jesus. In this passage of Scripture Gamaliel, a well-respected Jewish teacher, stood up and reminded the rest of the Sanhedrin about other leaders who got the people excited, claiming to be the Messiah, and then fizzled out.

Flavius Josephus was a historian who wrote about the time of Christ. He mentions Theudas, as well:

“It came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain charlatan, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it. Many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them. After falling upon them unexpectedly, they slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem” (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.97-98).

Josephus also describes Judas the Galilean:

“There was one Judas, a Galilean, of a city whose name was Gamala, who, taking with him Zadok, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt.
Both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exorted the nation to assert their liberty; as if they could procure them happiness and security for what they possessed, and an assured enjoyment of a still greater good, which was that of the honor and glory they would thereby acquire for magnanimity. They also said that God would not otherwise be assisting to them, than upon their joining with one another in such councils as might be successful, and for their own advantage; and this especially, if they would set about great exploits, and not grow weary in executing the same. So men received what they said with pleasure, and this bold attempt proceeded to a great height” (Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.4-6).

Many men had made the same claims that Jesus did, and from an outside observer, the end results were the same: the man who claimed to be the Messiah was killed. But some things were different in the case of Jesus. First of all, His followers only gained strength after His death and did not fizzle out, and second, Jesus did not advocate a revolt.

**III. CLOSING**

**Activity**

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

Ask the students to give advice for a hypothetical younger teen who is just entering high school. What advice would they give on how to be true to their own beliefs and not be pushed around? What wisdom have the students gleaned from their adolescence so far?

Make a list of the answers at the front. Ask the students how successful they feel that they have been in staying true to their beliefs. Is there anything they would like to improve on in the future?

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Critical Thinking Skills**

Remember that teens are almost adults. Giving them the reins in their learning and allowing them some autonomy can be very beneficial. Allow them to question, draw their own conclusions, and grapple with issues without threat of punishment or disapproval for a “wrong answer.”

Many teens, when they hit on a subject or field of knowledge that interests them, will absorb a shocking amount of information on the subject. Make use of this. If there is a student who indicates that they know something on the subject you are speaking on, encourage them to contribute. This makes learning a team effort, and not a monarchy.

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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 Great Controversy*. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

We often think of peer pressure as a bad thing. Teens joke about the line “Come on, everybody’s doing it!” Peer pressure is seen as one of the main reasons kids today start drinking and smoking. However, we seldom look at the good side of peer pressure.

Peer pressure is going to be a fact of life for the rest of your life. It will never stop. But when you know what you want out of life, everything gets easier! When you spend time with people who want the same things out of life, you are encouraged toward your goal. This is positive peer pressure. When you spend time with people who study, you tend to study more and your grades go up. When you spend time with people who love God, you are encouraged toward God and grow closer to Him.

* Fundamental Belief No. 12.

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 Great Controversy, chapters 11, 12.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Often the problems that get us down are far worse than just a grumpy morning. Maybe someone’s mom was diagnosed with cancer and isn’t expected to live through the year. The solution is not to subscribe to a clichéd faith that says, “It’s OK, we’ll just keep praising God and pretend that the cancer isn’t real.”

That’s not what Paul and Silas were doing in Acts 16:16-40. Locked in a jail cell, they didn’t pretend that they were in the Ritz Carlton, eating ice cream by the pool. Instead of pretending their circumstances did not exist, they chose to acknowledge that it did—but first they acknowledged God’s power—a power that is more loving, more wise, and much greater than themselves or their challenging circumstances.

In Romans 8:28 God assures us that everything that happens to us happens for a greater, more divine purpose. Perhaps our circumstances are a training ground for our characters. Maybe because of what we went through someone close to us is finally able to trust in God and take that step to accept Him as their Savior. And, in many ways, because our personal pain makes us more empathetic toward others in similar situations, we become more effective sources of comfort and strength.

Through it all, it is crucial to remember that we serve a God who has infinite understanding, who is running the whole universe, who works all things according to His will, and who searches out all things and knows all things.

Our situation might stink, but it doesn’t change the fact that God is still God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Understand that being a Christian is not without challenges. (Know)
• Realize that God uses our difficult circumstances in order to mold our characters and make us better people. (Feel)
• Be challenged to use their own experiences in order to help others in similar situations. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Persecution
• Character building
• Faithfulness

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, give them the answers and discuss their responses.

(a) Those who live godly lives in Christ Jesus can expect to be persecuted. True (See 2 Timothy 3:12)

(b) King David asked God for permission to avenge those who persecuted him. False (see Psalm 31:15)
(c) The prophet Jeremiah understood that others rebuked him for God’s glory. True (see Jeremiah 15:15)
(d) Jesus taught that whoever is persecuted for righteousness sake is blessed. True (see Matthew 5:10-12)
(e) As a result of persecution, the gospel was spread. True (see Acts 8:3, 4)
(f) Through a parable Christ explained that some believers would endure for a time, but when trouble comes, they fall away. True (see Mark 4:17)

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

A mom asked her 7-year-old daughter to clean up her bedroom. The little girl didn’t want to and ignored her mother. An hour later, the mother clarified that it was not a request, but a directive. “You will clean up your bedroom.”

The little girl got risky and said, “No, I don’t want to clean my room.”

The mother responded, “You will clean your room or there will be a serious consequence, young lady.”

The girl took a deep breath, slumped her shoulders, scowled at her mother, and said, “I will be cleaning my room on the outside, but I’m not on the inside!”

In this same way we can be captive to some difficult situations but still be aware—on the inside—that we’re free because of Jesus Christ.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Praising God when our lives are going great may only cause people to ignore us. However, praising God even when our life is rotten makes people sit up and take notice. God is always working in our lives. Always. Often we cannot see the bigger picture, much less understand the reason behind what is happening to us. We can only see the problem; we can’t see why we’re stuck in the problem.

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 characters or groups of people men- tioned in this story. What have they done or are going to do?
• Are there any themes or goals that Paul keeps repeating? What are they?
• Share any aspects of the story that are new to you.
• Are there times in your life when you have felt weak and overwhelmed by your problems? What did you learn from those times?
• Do you have any friends who might be going through the same difficulties as you did? What would you say to them? What helped for you that you could do the same to help them?

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

Romans 8:28 (KJV): “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Interestingly enough, this verse is often misunderstood to mean either:
(a) God will make everything turn out the way I want it to, or
(b) God causes everything to work out to have a happy ending on earth.

The truth is, we live in a sin-infested world. Perfection can be experienced only in heaven. When God promises it will all “work together for good,” He means that while life can be painful and distasteful, when you look at the big picture, it all comes together in a purposeful way. Much like the ingredients of a cake, when eaten separately, can taste horrid. But beaten together and placed under extreme heat, after some time, the results can be delicious.

1 Peter 1:7 (NLT): “These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.”

The Bible often uses the analogy of a metal refiner’s fire that burns away impurities. If God did not exempt Jesus from suffering, then why would He exempt us? Jesus went through loneliness, rejection, criticism, and many other problems. Yet, the Bible says in Hebrews 5:8, 9 (NLT) that “even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him.”
Sharing Context and Background

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

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary reveals that this letter to the Romans was written in Corinth during Paul's three-month stay there. He was returning to Palestine, carrying with him contributions for the poor from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia. Despite having preached at the great cities of Ephesus, Athens, and Corinth, Paul had yet to visit and proclaim the gospel in the capital city of the Roman Empire.

Rome was the capital city and travelers were constantly passing through on their way to other parts of the empire. Perhaps that is how the message of Jesus Christ was "being reported all over the world."

In the book of Romans Paul shows that all mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike, have sinned and fallen short of God's ideal. But God Himself provided a remedy—the sacrifice of His Son. Paul develops the plan of salvation in the first part of the book, and in the latter half he deals with the practical application of the gospel.

The King James Version of Romans 1:17 uses the phrase "the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Compare that structure with "from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18) and "from strength to strength" (Psalm 84:7). As faith is exercised we are able to receive more faith and so on . . . thus a victorious cycle is born.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Cut card paper into bookmark size. Then, using ribbons or other craft materials that you can obtain, tell the students that they will be making their own bookmarks today. Have the students read the following verses:

Psalm 34:1
Psalm 16:8, 9
Psalm 90:1, 2

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 Great Controversy. 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.
Let each of them pick which one they like the best, then, using markers and card paper, encourage them to write the verse onto the paper and then decorate and trim it. Encourage students to keep these in their Bibles or in their bedrooms and to pray their verses whenever they are having a difficult time focusing on God amid their problems.

**Summary**

*Share the following story in your own words:*

During China’s Boxer Rebellion of 1900 insurgents captured a mission station, blocked all the gates but one, and in front of that one gate placed a cross flat on the ground. Then the word was passed to those inside that any who trampled the cross underfoot would be permitted their freedom and life, but that any refusing would be shot. Terribly frightened, the first seven students trampled the cross under their feet and were allowed to go free. But the eighth student, a young girl, refused to commit the sacrilegious act. Kneeling beside the cross in prayer for strength, she arose and moved carefully around the cross, and went out to face the firing squad. Strengthened by her example, every one of the remaining 92 students followed her to the firing squad (*Today in the Word*, February 1989, p. 17).
can I get a witness? (two would be nice!)

Key Text: Revelation 11:3.

**PREPARING TO TEACH**

**I. SYNOPSIS**

This week’s lesson grows out of the prophetic passage in Revelation 11 that describes an era of stubborn belligerence to God’s authority and His Word. The 1260-year period in which “the suppression of the Scriptures” had been foretold by John the revelator demonstrates the scary results of disregarding the Bible and its relevance to mankind. Perhaps the Renaissance and the cultural stand many in France made against the existence of God became a foundation for others to create a religion that served their own desires and purposes. Recently, books that promote atheism are not only on the rise but have exploded on the world, spreading the kind of thinking that was disseminated in France by prominent atheists such as Voltaire. On one hand we have the Christian church refusing to make the Bible accessible to common people followed by a time when the Bible becomes available but is undermined by an emerging secular culture.

This week’s theme is really about the role of the Bible in our hearts and lives. The “two witnesses” referred to in the book of Revelation refer to the Old and New Testaments that testify to God’s character and plan for salvation. But these “two witnesses” are more than just pages of Scripture—they are the people who declare the risen Christ to the world. They are not simply people who testify about the Bible, but their story becomes part of the story of God and His people. The objective is to engage students to embrace the Bible as God’s Word that keeps us connected to Him as our Creator and Redeemer.

**II. TARGET**

The students will:
- Understand the enduring role of the Bible as what is good, right, and true. *(Know)*
- Embrace the power of God’s Word in their personal lives. *(Feel)*
- Decide to live as a witness in these last days to God’s authority and grace. *(Respond)*

**III. EXPLORE**

- The Bible
- Persecution
- Atheism

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at [www.leadoutministries.com](http://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. Students may choose to say that openly defying God’s Word is ultimately wrong. A good follow-up question might be “Why?”—Why is denying the truth that the Bible is God’s Word so damaging? Some might say that to do so makes you ultimately harder to reach, while others might maintain that knowing God’s Word
is holy but never choosing to honor it by reading or obeying it is even more distressing. Again, invite the students to explain why.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Dawson Trotman was born prematurely. In 1906 the baby was not expected to live, but miraculously made it. The little boy’s mother attributed the blessing to being a miracle of God while the father maintained that it was simply luck. While this was not the only difference of opinion, the couple divorced. Dawson Trotman managed to become quite a student leader in high school. He was the valedictorian of his class and a leader in the Christian Endeavor Society. But Trotman was leading a double life. It was like the two different voices of his parents urging him down two different roads, only it was one person trying to lead two lives.

After high school Trotman went full on into the Roaring Twenties, in which he lived with reckless abandon for alcohol and gambling. He was going downhill fast. One day he and his girlfriend nearly drowned while swimming. When his girlfriend was unable to swim back to shore he tried to help her, but they both went down. They were both saved by a couple in a boat and Dawson Trotman took stock of his life—both of them. He visited his old church group and found them working on the task of memorizing Scripture. He immediately began to memorize Scripture, and he continued to grow and bear witness to God’s powerful Word. He started the Navigators, a group of believers whose motto was: “To Know Christ and to Make Him Known.”

Twenty-five years later, Trotman was at a Navigators conference where he saw a girl fall out of a speedboat and he dove in to rescue her. He held her up long enough for others to save her, but Dawson Trotman drowned before anyone could reach him. Time magazine featured a photo in the obituary section of Trotman that read: “Always holding someone up.”

Whom do you know who lives their life completely for the truth in God’s Word? Do they ever face persecution or ridicule? How would they answer the skeptics or atheists in this world?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Trotman chose to add his witness to the two witnesses John refers to in this prophecy. Prophecies in Revelation are timeless, so they are not always easy to understand. But take the time and energy to study this passage, which reveals some amazing truths about how God’s Word will ultimately prevail.

Out of the Story for Teachers

As you read this prophetic passage in Revelation 11, first know that it is the story of God’s people who emerge from a dark season in earth’s history. What are some basic themes that you think are prominent in this passage?

• Make a list of words and phrases that you don’t understand.
• Who are the two witnesses and why are they mentioned?
• Why are they “clothed in sackcloth”?
• What is the significance of the mention of the “forty-two months” and the “one thousand two hundred and sixty days”?
• Whom do “Sodom” and “Egypt” represent? Why are they linked with Jerusalem, particularly where “the Lord was crucified”?
• What are some examples from Scripture of open rebellion against God and His Word?

More Questions for Teachers:

Read the stories found in the following verses and note how they describe an outright disregard for God’s Word, and even God’s existence.

Jeremiah 36
Exodus 5:2
Psalm 73:1-12

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: 1 Kings 18; Genesis 11; 6.

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 tempting to pass over difficult sections of Bible prophecy when teaching young people, but this section is immensely relevant to the growing secular world in which they live. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary is very helpful, as is Ranko Stefanovich’s commentary on the book of Revelation.

The setting of this passage is an interlude of sorts between the sixth and seventh trumpet in Rev-
the two most popular passages that refer to a day equaling a year in Bible prophecy (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6).

Here is how the time period is delineated in the Bible:

- 42 months (Revelation 11:2; 13:5)
- 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3; 12:6)
- “a time, times and a half a time” (Revelation 12:14, NIV)

If we do the math, 42 months = 1260 days.

Also, a time (a year) = 360 days.

A times (two years) = 620 days.

A half a time (half a year) = 180, which comes to a total of 1,260 days. And if you apply the prophetic day-for-a-year principle to this prophecy, then you have a time period of 1,260 years of persecution and repression of God’s Word and His people.

What does it mean that the two witnesses “will lie dead in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (Revelation 11:8, NKJV)?

Stefanovic explains:

“The ‘great city’ where the witnesses are martyred integrates the wickedness and moral degradation of Sodom (Genesis 18:20, 21; 19:4-11) with the atheistic arrogance and self-sufficiency of Egypt (Exodus 5:2). Both cities were places where God’s people “lived as aliens under persecution” (Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 350). The reference to the place where “our Lord was crucified” notes that what hap-
pened to the two witnesses later in history is essentially what happened to Christ when He was rejected and put to death.

This section of Revelation ultimately speaks to the way that God’s people will be persecuted at the end of time, as God’s Word has been undermined, and as Christ had been treated on earth (John 1:10). But, as Christ was raised from the grave, as God’s Word has endured through seasons in which people sought to destroy it, so will God’s faithful people in every generation bear witness to God’s great plan of salvation.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Invite (or choose) students to select key characters in the Old and New Testaments. Give the students a card that has a name of a biblical hero that corresponds with the section (e.g., Elijah—1 Kings 18 and 19, or Daniel—Daniel 1 and 6). Ask each student to write out what you think they would say in a court of law if asked: “What can you say about God in 25 words or less?” Have the students write and read what they think the person would say. Ask the students: “What would you say if you were asked to testify in the way others have been called on in history?”

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

When John the revelator refers to the two witnesses, he is also referring to you and me—people who testify. It’s crucial to remember that God’s Word is the only anchor for us through the deceptive season ahead. Some get wary of danger, evil, war, earthquakes, and famine. While those events threaten the lives of people on earth, an even greater danger awaits in the notion that the Bible is irrelevant and that God does not exist. While some may get set in their ideas about God and His Word, continue to pray and live out His Word in your life. Like Dawson Trotman, make Scripture a part of your mind and memory. It is not easy to study the Bible. It doesn’t wrap you up like a novel or a movie. It takes work to understand a book that is centuries old. But think about the book as “two witnesses” in a courtroom standing up to give their side of the story of God.

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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 Great Controversy*, chapter 15.

*A special adaptation of *The Great Controversy* 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

From the Reformation to the emergence of the early Adventist awakening, it was a time of openness and searching of Scripture for God to reveal His truth about the end times. This lesson celebrates the Pilgrim Fathers and the long history of leaders who long for the coming of Christ. Chapters 16 and 17 of *The Great Controversy* contain a beautiful summary of the thoughts and hopes of those who long for the appearing of the Lord. The story in Luke 21:7-28 (and Matthew 24:3-30) where the disciples ask Jesus, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?” (NKJV) offers both warning and comfort for fellow disciples today: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.” The events that mark the era of Christ’s soon return are clearly upon us, but the teaching of Christ urges us to “lift up our heads” or live as though Christ were coming this day.

The challenge of this week’s lesson is to answer the question the Reformers and “heralds of the morning” sought to answer each day: “What does it mean to ‘be ready’ for the second coming of Christ?” Being ready is about seizing every moment available to gladly share with others the hope of Christ’s soon return.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Be mindful that disciples of Christ live each day as though it were the last. *(Know)*
• Feel joyful and confident when they think of Christ’s second coming. *(Feel)*
• Decide to “be ready” by receiving the promise of salvation. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

• Service
• Second coming of Christ
• Signs of the Second Coming

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. What do you think should be our primary motivation for “being ready” for Christ to return? Does it really matter? Does our motivation affect the way we live in light of the coming day of the Lord’s return?
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

A young man named Philip Bliss wrote these words in a hymn:

“I know not the hour when my Lord shall come,
To take me away to His dear home,
But I know that His presence will lighten the gloom,
And that will be glory for me.”

Philip Bliss always had a heart for going home. In fact, he could not remember a time in his life when he did not feel his need for a Savior. He grew up a poor country boy in Rome, Pennsylvania. He loved music and made instruments out of whatever he could find. As a 10-year-old he had still never heard the sound of a piano, but heard an amazing sound coming from someone’s house. He followed the sweet music into a woman’s living room. He urged her to keep playing. He received no formal training in music, but it was already inside him. As he grew he helped children come to know Christ in song.

Shortly after writing the hymn “I Know Not the Hour When My Lord Shall Come,” he and his wife boarded a train and set out to return to Chicago to work as a minister of music. While his train was crossing a bridge in Ohio, the structure collapsed and the train plunged into a ravine. Observers witnessed Philip Bliss escape the horrible wreckage alive and well, but they also saw him climb into the burning wreckage to try to save others, including his wife. Such a passion for Christ’s second coming breeds a devotion to help others in the here and now.

Perhaps you have heard the saying “We can be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? How can we live with our heads lifted high waiting for Christ’s return and still be attentive to the needs of those around us?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

It is likely that, like Philip Bliss, when we are aware that Christ is coming soon, everything that happens on earth has meaning. Read the words of Christ about the events that frame the end and hear His warning and words of hope.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

• Underline some of the specific events Christ mentions that indicate the season in which we live.
• Describe the mood you think the disciples felt as they listened to Jesus talk about what was to come.
• How should those who are living for the second coming of Christ negotiate between what’s happening in the world and what Christ has called them to do?
• To what degree do you think the disciples were certain they would see Jesus come in their lifetime? How should we answer the age-old question “The signs are all around, but why is it that Christ still hasn’t come?”
• Why do you think that the signs of the end tend to be negative in nature?
• Based on this passage, what do you think should be our motivation to “be ready” for the second coming of Christ?
• What do you think Jesus means by “lift up your heads” at the close of this passage?

Extra Questions for Teachers:

Invite students to compare this passage in Luke with Matthew 24 and note what is similar and what is different.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Acts 1:8-11; Matthew 24; 25; 20; Revelation 1.

Sharing Context and Background

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

Since there are many stories and references in the Bible to the Second Coming, it is also helpful to spend some time thinking about what we are to be doing in the meantime.

It has been said that fear and guilt do not motivate people to “be ready” for very long. As we teach this lesson to young people it is essential to remember the context of this passage in Luke as well as the parallel passage in Matthew 24.

In both Luke and Matthew the background of the
“signs of the end” is the question “What will be the sign?” You will notice that the word for sign is singular, meaning a single sign. Often the long list of events that Christ refers to (earthquakes, famines, wars, false messiahs, stars falling, etc.) are considered to be signs, but Jesus is clear, “for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately” (Luke 21:9, NKJV). “The sign” is explicitly given when Jesus says, “They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 24:30, NKJV). The version in Luke mentions that “there will be signs in the sun, and the moon, and the stars. . . . Then they will see the Son of Man coming.” There is the idea that there is one sign—the coming of Christ, and the events that build to that day are also considered “signs.” The point is to be awake. To be aware.

“Being ready” when Christ comes is just as prominent a theme as all the signs and wonders that take place before the second coming of Christ. Notice that Matthew 25 is all about what it looks like to be ready in the form of three parables Jesus tells about the end:

The parable of the ten maidens (Matthew 25:1-13)
The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30)
The parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46)

Read The Great Controversy, chapter 17, as it gives specific examples of these signs being fulfilled in history as well as offering a rich source of history to the human tendency to fall asleep because Christ hasn’t come yet. It is essential to speak honestly and openly with youth about the fact that Christ hasn’t come when everyone expected Him to. It is never our duty or cause to guess or place energy on the “when” of Christ’s return. We are called to be entirely focused on living watchful lives.

III. CLOSING

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

Have students make signs (like road signs) for 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 Great Controversy. 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.
Second Coming, but instead of the signs being about events, have them make signs that describe people. What will the people look like at the end? What will be their qualities? How will others perceive them? For example, a sign could look like a stop sign reading: “Stop—and rest” because the people at the end will be a commandment-keeping people according to Revelation 14:12. Or a speed limit sign that reads “70 X 7”—because God’s people are a forgiving, grace-oriented people. Have the students share their signs and their rationale.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

Jesus is coming. He assured us of this. But one thing is sure: God’s people grow tired of waiting and do other things. History shows us that our attention span for His coming is short. So how do we stay attentive? How do we live with our heads lifted high?

The signs are clear, and anyone paying attention can feel that this can’t go on much longer—but it has. We are warned not to be cynical because in the last days “scoffers will come.” We must stay proactive and hopeful by celebrating with joy that we are going home. We continue to keep the Lord’s return before us by living, giving, and sharing with others that His promise to return is real. Christ gave us more than enough information about the end of time. Clearly Jesus did not want us to know when He would return, so let us keep focused on what He wanted us to do in the meantime.

*Fundamental Belief No. 25.*
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

What keeps young people from using their spiritual gifts and talents in your church and community? Are they lazy, unmotivated, or only committed to doing easy jobs that can be completed quickly? Perhaps they simply have not yet realized what their gifts are, and have not been given the appropriate avenue to live up to their potential?

Sadly, too few of us understand what it means to receive God’s gifts and talents. It isn’t a privilege; it’s a responsibility. Although there are those who do not believe that they have any gifts, Scripture teaches us that God has given all Christians spiritual gifts—specially endowed abilities that enable them to do the work of ministry enthusiastically and effectively.

Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to all of Christ’s followers so that the common good of His church can be achieved.

Spiritual gifts can be discovered and used effectively. And once we understand and apply these gifts in the right positions and projects, our lives become more fruitful and fulfilled.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Understand that they are unique and when they accept Christ they are endowed with gifts, experiences, and talents that God distributes for the common good of His church. (Know)
• Realize that if we don’t use our talents and gifts, they will be taken from us. Conversely, the more we use them, they become more evident and we become more effective. (Feel)
• Be challenged to reflect and research what their spiritual gifts are and apply them into the different needs of the church and community. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Talents and gifts
• Character building
• Faithfulness

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. Use the following activity to further illustrate the importance of using the gifts that we have.

Give each student one or more puzzle pieces from a fairly simple 50-piece puzzle. Explain that these pieces represent the gifts and talents that God has given them. The picture cannot be put together unless everyone contributes their piece. Everyone has a different piece—a corner, a side, a piece of sky, etc.—and they need to know what type of piece they have in order to know where to place them. Have them complete the puzzle as an illustration of what can come together when everyone contributes what they have.
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In Segovia, Spain, there is what remains of an aqueduct built by the victorious Romans in the year A.D. 109. For 18 centuries this aqueduct carried sparkling water from the mountains to one town.

Around the turn of the century it was decided that the aqueduct should be preserved for posterity. Modern pipes were laid and the sparkling water was rerouted through these new pipes.

Shortly thereafter, the aqueduct started to fall apart. Because water was no longer running through it, the sun dried the mortar and it crumbled. Then the stones sagged and fell into ruins.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

God is in the process of developing your gifts. Unfortunately, when you fail to use the talents that God has given you, they will be lost. When you read 1 Corinthians, you can see that Paul is aware that this church is relatively young. He doesn’t designate specific leaders within the community but, instead, gives them a vision for what they (by the grace of God) will become. Here is a list of some of the gifts that Paul mentioned in his letters:

Wisdom
Knowledge
Faith
Healing powers
Prophecy
Discernment
Tongues
Interpretation
Administration
Leadership
Teaching
Miracles

Young people are like this young church of Corinth—they need time to mature, time to develop their gifts. Sometimes, some young people will deny that they have any gifts or talents. That isn’t modesty or humility. That is a theological slap in God’s face.

What is a spiritual gift?

What it is not . . .
- A talent (something you just happen to be good at)
- An ability (a developed skill)
- A personality trait (whether environmental or genetic)

What it is . . .
- You get it when you become a Christian (Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:7).
- There are no believers without gifts.
- There are no unbelievers with gifts.
- It is a supernatural ability that works through God’s Holy Spirit (1 Peter 4:11).
- The reason you have it is to do God’s work.
- You supply the availability and God will supply the ability.
- Your gift is not for you—it is for the youth group and the church (Ephesians 4:12).
- God gave us all different ones so that we could all work together (Romans 12:4-6).

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

Romans 12:6 (NIV): “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.”

It is a misconception that we have to discover our gifts first before volunteering to serve in the appropriate place. Many times we won’t know what we are gifted or not gifted in until we get involved. There are so many ministries out there that you’ll have ample opportunities to experiment. You’ll eventually learn what you’re good at.

Galatians 6:4 (CEV): “Do your own work well, and then you will have something to be proud of. But don’t compare yourself with others.”

There is a line in the Desiderata that says:
If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV): “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.”

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on specific aspects of the story for your students. Share it in your own words.
Wisdom—“A man possessed of this gift was not only wise, he was able also to explain his wisdom to others.” For a contrast between wisdom and knowledge, see Proverbs 1:2.

Knowledge—An “ability to apprehend facts,” or in terms of the gospel, the ability to understand spiritual truth and arrange it in an orderly manner in order to facilitate explanation to others.

Faith—This faith mentioned here is not simply the belief that all Christians have. It is a special manifestation of faith that enables the wielder to undertake exceptional tasks for the glory of God.

Healing—See Mark 16:18; Acts 3:2-8; 14:8-10, etc.

Miracles—This was “a special gift performed under divine direction.”

Prophecy—“The power to speak authoritatively for God, or on God’s behalf, either by foretelling future events or by declaring God’s will for the present.” See Exodus 3:10, 14, 15; Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; 2 Samuel 23:2.

Discernment—The ability “to distinguish between divine and counterfeit inspiration.”

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Talk about specific things someone could do in the following areas to put their gifts to work. Come up
with at least two ideas for each area.
1. Home
2. School
3. Youth group
4. Church (outside of youth group)
5. Work
6. Other (your choice)
Then pray when you are finished.

Summary

Share the following story in your own words:

As mentioned in a Lesson 1, Mother Teresa was a Catholic nun who took care of the destitute and dying in India by establishing homes and hospitals where they could come to die with some dignity. She told people who asked to work with her in Calcutta to find their own Calcutta.

- Where is your Calcutta?
- Are you willing to serve regardless of the affirmation from others?
- Are you willing to serve regardless of the inconvenience to you?

 Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy, chapters 18, 19, 20.

*A special adaptation of The Great Controversy 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

In the early to middle nineteenth century, a wind began blowing across America and other nations around the world. A Holy Ghost-filled Baptist preacher named William Miller traveled around the nation warning men and women about the coming judgment of God and urging them to make preparation to meet their God in peace.

The early Advent movement, as it became known, came to a crescendo on October 22, 1844, when believers waited in homes and hillsides for the advent of the Savior. They had sold everything, searched their hearts, confessed and forsook sin, and made things right with anyone with whom they had had disagreement. They also proclaimed a “Behold the Bridegroom cometh” message of warning to their family, neighbors, friends, and strangers, urging them to prepare to meet God. To their great dismay, Jesus did not come according to plan, and many lost their faith.

Those who persevered in studying Bible prophecy were led to see that in 1844 Christ moved from the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to the Most Holy Place, thus initiating the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and beginning the investigative judgment. The early Advent believers missed this truth, but their work to warn the world was led by God and their attention to Bible prophecy was admirable!

This week your students should leave knowing that, like the Millerites and early Adventists, we have been entrusted by God with a message of warning outlining the world’s failed system of confusion (Revelation 14:8). Inherent in this message is a call to repentance and preparation to meet God. This is part of the message that God’s remnant end-time church will proclaim. As was the case during the time of William Miller, many will hear the call of God and give their hearts to Christ, but many others will choose to hear the call of the world and its prince, Satan. In the face of these challenges, we must not waver or shrink. Jesus is soon to come, and we must do our work to help prepare people to meet God!

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that God’s remnant people are called to give a message of warning to the world. (Know)
- Understand that God will give His people power to proclaim this message as He did William Miller and his followers. (Feel)
- Accept the challenge to share the love of Jesus and God’s solemn warnings with their family, friends, and neighbors. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Prophecies
- Remnant and its mission
- Church

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.

In the course of a typical day, we see many different warnings. Signs warn us to drive at certain speeds, avoid dangerous substances, and dress appropriately for the weather—and that short list doesn’t include the numerous threat-level warnings we receive in the age of terror.

Many of us become accustomed to warnings, so much so that we filter out those that we think are unimportant or that have no direct bearing on our lives. This is the climate in which God’s remnant church is called to share the love of Jesus and warn men and women about the judgment to come. The objective of this activity is to examine how students prioritize the warnings they receive from day to day. Which ones do they pay attention to and which do they file away in the back of their mind?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

On August 6, 2001, the leaders of the United States intelligence services gathered in the office of then-President George W. Bush for the presidential daily briefing. Each day the president of the United States—the same practice happens in other countries—receives an important briefing on threat developments that have the potential to affect the nation’s national security.

On August 6, 2001, the presidential daily briefing was titled “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S.” Here’s some of what it said: “Clandestine, foreign government, and media reports indicate bin Laden since 1997 has wanted to conduct terrorist attacks in the U.S. Bin Laden implied in U.S. television interviews in 1997 and 1998 that his followers would follow the example of World Trade Center bomber Ramzi Yousef and ‘bring the fighting to America’.”

A few paragraphs later the report noted: “We have not been able to corroborate some of the more sensational threat reporting, such as that from a service in 1998 saying that bin Laden wanted to hijack a U.S. aircraft to gain the release of ‘Blind Sheikh’ Omar Abdel Rahman and other U.S.-held extremists. Nevertheless, FBI information since that time indicates patterns of suspicious activity in this country consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks, including recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York.”

Many people have wondered what happened in the White House after this briefing, what happened in the days leading up to September 11, 2001. What we do know is that on that fateful day, the predicted events eclipsed their warnings.

(Source: www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/04/10/august6.memo/)

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Warnings are important, some more so than others, as was the case with the September 11 tragedy. God never inflicts a punishment without first warning us about the error of our ways. In fact, the Bible says that God is “longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, NKJV).

The Millerites, led by the Holy Spirit, set about delivering the “Midnight Cry” of God’s judgment and Jesus’ soon return. Many heard the call to repentance, but countless others simply disregarded it.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

This week’s Into the Story Scripture is one story in two parts. The parable of the ten virgins was used by Jesus to urge His disciples, then and now, to be ready for His return. Inherent in the story is the dichotomy that some will be ready and others will not. This tension is the great tension of life on earth as we await the second coming of Jesus. Some will hear the call to prepare to meet their Lord while others will not.

This parable was part of a central impetus that led the Millerites to proclaim the imminent return of Christ. The call “Behold the Bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet Him” was the rallying cry of the movement. The urgency with which believers in the Advent movement delivered this message was seen by the speed with which the movement caught on and swept across America. God has entrusted His last-day church with a similar message.

The Advent believers were disappointed when Jesus didn’t come, just as the disciples were disappointed when the Man whom they thought would save them from Roman oppression was crucified. But they
completed the work given them.

The second part of Into the Story for this week, Revelation 14:6-8, represents part of the message that we, members of God’s last-day remnant, must give.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Ezekiel 12:21-28; Hebrews 10:35-39; Luke 19:40; Leviticus 16:29-34.

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. Why they set a date. Why did the Advent movement believers fixate on October 22, 1844, as the day when Christ would come? How could they overlook Scriptures that clearly state that no one, not even Jesus, knows the exact date of Christ’s return (Matthew 24:36)? Ellen White comments: “Though no man knoweth the day nor the hour of His coming, we are instructed and required to know when it is near. We are further taught that to disregard His warning, and refuse or neglect to know when His advent is near, will be as fatal for us as it was for those who lived in the days of Noah not to know when the flood was coming” (The Great Controversy, p. 371).

This was the spirit in which the Advent believers searched the Scriptures. They wanted to be keen on the time when Jesus would return, and so should we. They studied the prophecies of Daniel 7–9 and arrived at the October 1844 date. They were mistaken only in the event that would occur on that date.

Some who have no intention of changing their lives dismiss the signs of Jesus’ return. To them it represents attempts at date-setting, and they use this as an excuse to reject truth.

2. What the early Advent movement missed. It is easy to laugh at the seeming naiveté of those in the Advent movement who looked for Jesus to come on October 22, 1844, but this belief was based on the Jewish sanctuary service in which the high priest would cleanse the sanctuary on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month (Leviticus 16:29-34). The believers coupled this understanding with God’s pronouncement to Daniel that in 2,300 days (years) the sanctuary would be cleansed (Daniel 8:14). This 2300-day/year period began when King Artaxerxes gave the command to rebuild Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25) in 457 B.C. Add 2,300 years to autumn 457 B.C.—counting down, of course—and you’ll get the year A.D. 1843. But, remember, the sanctuary was cleansed on the tenth day of the seventh month, and since the decree to rebuild went out in the autumn of 457 B.C., the prophecy leads directly to the autumn of 1844. (For a more complete explanation of the prophecy see The Great Controversy, pp. 409-411.)

The tenth day of the seventh Jewish month that year fell on October 22, 1844. What the Advent believers did not know was that on this date Christ was not coming to make an end of sin and save the righteous. His role in mediating for humanity was changing. Jesus was going into the Most Holy Place to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary and His people of all sin once and for all, just as the earthly high priest would do each year. But before Jesus can complete the cleansing forever, He must examine the record of all humanity to determine

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 Great Controversy. 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.
What is the remnant’s mission today? The book of Revelation clearly states that it is to proclaim the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12, which will bring a “full and final restoration of the gospel truth” (Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . , p. 163).

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Say a prayer for your class asking God to show them how to share His love and proclaim His soon return.

Once you have prayed, allow your students a minute to pray silently to God. Ask them to focus on their mission as God’s youth in a sinful world. Encourage them to ask for the power of God’s Holy Spirit to help them live a holy life. Close with everyone repeating the Lord’s Prayer.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

William Miller and the early Adventists had been faithful to a God-inspired calling. They proclaimed the message that Jesus, the Bridegroom, was soon to appear and all needed to be ready to meet Him. At the time when this message of warning was delivered, it swept the land. Many joined the movement. But soon Satan brought an air of fanaticism into the work, leading many church leaders to disregard the deep searching truths of the Advent message and forbidding their membership to attend the meetings.

When their hopes were dashed, many of the Advent believers gave up the faith, but many went back to the Bible, searching earnestly for truth, for some explanation from God to illumine the 2300-day prophecy. Their perseverance was rewarded, as we’ll study next week.

1 Fundamental Belief No. 13.
2 Fundamental Belief No. 12.

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 Great Controversy, chapters 21, 22.

*A special adaptation of The Great Controversy 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

It probably bears mentioning that this week’s lesson encompasses one of the signature truths of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. More than that, it represents the very heart of the gospel—the good news of salvation—because it explains how God through Jesus extends mercy to fallen humanity while satisfying the demands of justice. The heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly was a type, shows us God’s “way” of saving humanity (Psalm 77:13).

Understanding the workings and significance of the ancient Jewish sanctuary service is challenging for adults, let alone teenagers. It was a misunderstanding of the sanctuary service that led the early Adventists to believe that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of in Daniel 8:14 would happen at the second coming of Jesus. What in fact occurred, as you’ll study this week, was something different. As Leviticus 16 explains, on the ancient Day of Atonement, the high priest would cleanse the sanctuary of all the sin which had been transferred to the sanctuary—and to himself—through the sprinkling of blood on the veil separating the holy place from the Most Holy Place. Daniel’s 2300-day prophecy pointed to this event in the heavenly sanctuary.

While the intricacies of this truth may be challenging for your teens to grasp, there is much here that they can understand. For instance, you might choose to emphasize that this cleansing of the sanctuary from sin is a work of judgment. Before Jesus cleanses the sanctuary and removes the sins of His people once and for all, He has to be sure that they are worthy, that all their sins have been confessed and forsaken. While Jesus is examining our record, we must purify ourselves, humble our souls, and forsake anything that is unlike Christ. You may also choose to focus on Jesus’ indispensable sacrifice of blood, the “coin of the realm” as it were, which washes away all sin.

The truth of Christ’s ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is fertile spiritual ground for young Christians living in and through the closing scenes of earth’s history.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Know that the current work of Jesus in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary is the final work to be performed before Christ returns. (Know)

• Understand that during the cleansing of the sanctuary they must search their hearts, asking God to show them what needs to be made right with Him. (Feel)

• Sense their responsibility to share the good news of salvation, and warn the world of God’s impending judgment. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• The judgment

• Sanctuary (Christ’s ministry in the heavenly)*

• Jesus

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.
Many people today take the sacrifice of Jesus for granted. God’s awesome act of grace—shedding the precious blood of His Son for the remission of sins—is not something that God did so that we humans could keep on sinning. Christ’s sacrifice is supposed to lead us to repentance, restoration, and love to God.

Just as the ancient Jews who rejected Jesus and crucified Him were shut out of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, just as they lost their unique status as God’s chosen people, men and women today face a similar fate. Jesus’ current ministry in the Most Holy Place is a careful examination of the record of every human being. This reality should make us think carefully about the current condition of our hearts.

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 apostle Paul, believed to be the writer of Hebrews, goes to great lengths to show that the earthly sanctuary was a “copy” or “type” of the heavenly sanctuary. Here we see an essential truth, which is: God planned for the salvation of humanity. Make the point that humanity’s salvation was no afterthought. The plans for what happened on earth were first set in motion in heaven.

- Paul notes that Jesus’ sacrifice supersedes that of innocent animals, because Jesus was sinless. Not only does He contribute His innocent blood for the remission of sins; He also gives us His spotless life as a substitute for our sinfulness and then lives that life out in us through the Holy Spirit. It is this aspect of Christ’s ministry that makes the new covenant better than the old.

- What point about sin was the earthly sacrificial system designed to make in the mind of the sinner? Did it work? (It is serious; it is costly; it is messy.)

- Explore with your students what it means to maintain a healthy hatred for sin, and what it means to nourish one’s love for God and the sacrifice Christ made for us.

- The apostle Paul, believed to be the writer of Hebrews, goes to great lengths to show that the earthly sanctuary was a “copy” or “type” of the heavenly sanctuary. Here we see an essential truth, which is: God planned for the salvation of humanity. Make the point that humanity’s salvation was no afterthought. The plans for what happened on earth were first set in motion in heaven.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Share the following in your own words:

- “Two thousand years ago, Jesus went to a cross to bear the penalty that rightly belonged to us. He died in our place. And through Him, our names are written in the book, with His name written beside ours.”

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Dwight L. Moody told of the young man who did not want to serve in Napoleon Bonaparte’s army. When he was drafted, a friend volunteered to go in his place. The substitution was made, and some time later the surrogate was killed in battle. The same young man was, through a clerical error, drafted again. “‘You can’t take me,’ he told the startled officers. ‘I’m dead. I died on the battlefield.’

“The officers argued that they could see him standing right in front of them, but he insisted they look on the roll to find the record of his death. Sure enough, there on the roll was the man’s name, with another name written beside it.

“The case finally went to the emperor himself. After examining the evidence, Napoleon said, ‘Through a surrogate, this man has not only fought, but has died in his country’s service. No man can die more than once, therefore the law has no claim on him.’

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. **Why the book of Hebrews.** The book of Hebrews was written to clarify the Old Testament symbols that illustrated the plan of salvation and the reality of Christ’s ministry on behalf of sinners since the cross. In the early apostolic church, devout Jews wondered whether they should continue observing the ceremonial laws. A group of believers, led by the apostle Paul, argued that the ceremonial laws had met their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Sometime around A.D. 49, a council met in Jerusalem to settle the issue—specifically whether new Gentile believers needed to be circumcised or not, in keeping with ceremonial law. The finding of the council was that they did not need to be, but many Jews refused to give up the ceremonial laws with their requirements for sacrifice, etc. The apostle Paul is believed to have written the book of Hebrews to clarify Jesus’ priestly ministry in heaven for us.

2. **Sanctuaries.** When God gave Moses the command to make a sanctuary that He might dwell among His people (Exodus 25:8), Moses complied and a traveling structure was built. This sanctuary was replaced by another sanctuary once the children of Israel settled in Canaan. It was furnished like the first sanctuary and it had the same dimensions. During the time of Daniel it lay in ruins because of Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of Jerusalem, but it was not completely destroyed until the Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70. This was the only earthly sanctuary spoken of in the Bible and it represented the first covenant God made with His people. What was that covenant? You can find it in Exodus 19:5-8. Israel broke its first covenant (Psalm 78:10, 11) through disobedience to God’s laws and forgetting God’s goodness. So God instituted a new, better covenant, one that would transform them from within by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-28). This new covenant also has a sanctuary, but, as Paul notes in Hebrews 7–9, its sanctuary is in heaven where Jesus is now mediating on our behalf.

3. **Duplication says it all.** The earthly sanctuary was a duplicate of the heavenly in every way. One of the most powerful teachable portions of this lesson surrounds the furniture present in the Most Holy Place of both the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. Consider, for instance, that God’s immutable law, the Ten Commandments, were present both in the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary and in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly sanctuary. This ought to tell us how sacred God’s law is. It is not only the rule by which we humans are being judged; it is the very backbone of heaven’s system. It is so sacred that Jesus had to die to meet its demands (Romans 6:23). For this and other reasons we should obey God’s precepts. They are sacred, even in an environment in which sin does not exist!

4. **Revelation 14.** The messages of the angels of Revelation directly tie in with the work of Christ during the current investigative judgment underway in heaven. While Christ is examining the record of men and women, boys and girls, a final warning is to be given to the world. God’s end-time followers are called...
to deliver three distinct messages: 1. Respect God and worship Him who made all things. Intrinsic to this message is the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. 2. Babylon, the world’s corrupt system of sin, is fallen, broken, and dead. 3. Those who persist in following the world and religious systems that do not teach the truth of the Bible or live up to all its dictates will be marked for destruction.

These messages are to be delivered in love, and out of a love for God and a love for our fellow human beings as we see the hour of God’s judgment approaching.

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 Great Controversy*, chapters 23, 24.

*A special adaptation of *The Great Controversy* 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.

Give each student a 3” x 5” card and a pencil or pen. Ask them to discretely complete the following statement using at least two sentences:

I know that Jesus is currently examining the life record of every human being to see who is worthy to be sealed. I want Jesus to know that . . .

________________________________________________

________________________________________________

________________________________________________

After the students have finished, allow them a moment of silent prayer to God, asking Jesus to forgive them of any known sin in their lives, and to reveal those that they do not see.

Close with a prayer dedicating your students to God and thank Him for saving each of them!

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Jesus is the central figure in the plan developed by God to save fallen human beings. Jesus volunteered to come and die for our sins, leaving the perfection of heaven. While on earth, He suffered all that we would ever suffer, and never committed a sin. He laid down His life willingly at the cross, paying the penalty for our sins, and was raised back to life breaking the power of death, hell, and the grave.

Given what Jesus has done for us, and the reality of the serious work currently under way in the Most Holy Place, what kind of people ought we to be? What message should we be sharing with the world? Now is the time to humble our souls, search our hearts, put away all sin, and share the good news of salvation—and warning—with a dying world.

*Fundamental Belief No. 24.

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Move Them Around**

Respected educator and researcher Gary Anderson notes that “teenagers are discovering their (often awkward) bodies, so use movement by giving students an opportunity to move around during class."

This week’s subject matter may offer an opportunity to get your students moving. If time permits, encourage your students to put together a short skit detailing what would happen when an Israelite brought their sin offering to the Temple. You’ll need a sinner, an animal, and a priest. The students could decide what the offense was, what animal would be sacrificed, and how the priest would do it all. Be sure to have the priest transfer the sin to the sanctuary by sprinkling the blood in the sanctuary.

Another option may also be to have a young adult reenact the high priest’s work on the Day of Atonement. They would explain what they are doing at each step.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
The Sabbath has always been controversial. There are those who say it’s necessary and biblically correct to keep it. And then there are those who insist that when Christ died, the law (especially the Sabbath) was done away with. But before it was controversial, it was a gift given to us by God. Perhaps the synopsis should begin in Genesis 2. God instituted the Sabbath as a memorial of His creative power. With each Sabbath we see that He, who created humanity, still sustains them, and is able to re-create them when needed.

If you are a Sabbathkeeper, then sometime in your life you’re bound to have your belief of this commandment challenged. Thus, it is important to know what you believe—and why. But the best defense of the Sabbath is a Christian in love with God who delights in showing that love through obedience. Keeping God’s laws is an act of love, a sign of a healthy spiritual relationship. We don’t keep it to prove points, though we should be able to give the reason as to why we do; we keep it because we love God and He has asked it of us.

This week’s lesson covers mainly the topics of the Sabbath and the law. However, if you want to get into the prophetical side of this story, you will find studying the two Ellen White chapters to be helpful.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Understand the importance of the Sabbath and realize how many people deny its validity. (Know)
• Have a strong sense of confidence and understanding of their beliefs. (Feel)
• Embrace the Sabbath as their own, and share it with others. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Sabbath
• Law of God
• Obedience

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

List the responses on a whiteboard. Then have the students list their reasons why they think Sabbath is important. Have them see if any of their reasons would be a good response to those who don’t think it’s important. Say: When people say, for example, that they have no time to keep the Sabbath, you can share from your experience how resting on God’s day makes your time on the other six days more productive.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
In a brutal Thailand prison a man sits with humble
dignity. With no heat or air-conditioning, and minimal amounts of food and water, he suffers from dehydration and malnutrition. However, it was in these dark times of this individual’s imprisonment that the Lord convicted him about the Sabbath. Even after experiencing this brutal prison environment, the man felt convicted by God about the truth. Though he wasn’t a believer when he entered these cold cells, he now is saved through His faith in Jesus. As a result of that faith he wanted to keep the commandments, and that included the Sabbath.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

*Share the following in your own words:*

If this man found a way to keep the Sabbath amid all the oppression and prison brutality, how can we say it’s too difficult to keep it? When Paul speaks about how we should not be in bondage to the law, he simply was referring to the people who thought that keeping the law was the way to be saved. The Bible clearly says that works do not save us, but that it is faith. However, the Bible also says that faith without works is dead. We need both to have a solid relationship with Christ.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

- **Underline** the areas in which you think people could possibly misinterpret these words.
- **What would you say to someone who believes that Sabbathkeeping has been nullified and how would you share this verse?**
- **Circle** the key words in these passages that prove the main points.

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: James 2:10, 11; 1 John 2:4; Exodus 20:8-11.*

Sharing Context and Background

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

1. **Different laws.** What are the ceremonial laws? Define them from Scripture. What is the moral law? How are the two different? What was the background to Jesus’ strong pronouncement about the moral law in Matthew 5? What were the prevailing attitudes about the laws? For instance, the Pharisees had established more than 100 additional laws surrounding the Sabbath alone. The people of Jesus’ day were burdened with a legalistic faith with no emphasis on love for God as motivation for living. The Pharisees had literally sucked the life out of the faith. They had replaced heart religion for “hand” religion—doing instead of being. The people hungered for a new way.

2. **Purpose of law.** Why not explore the significance of the law as a marker of truth (Isaiah 8:16-20). It is one of the means by which we are to be sealed, and it separates truth from error.

   Ellen White notes: “The seal of God’s law is found in the fourth commandment. This only, of all the ten, brings to view both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given. When the Sabbath was changed by the papal power, the seal was taken from the law. The disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it by exalting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to its rightful position as the Creator’s memorial and the sign of His authority: ‘To the law and to the testimony.’ While conflicting doctrines and theories abound, the law of God is the one unerring rule by which all opinions, doctrines, and theories are to be tested. Says the prophet: ‘If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ Verse 20” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 452).

3. **Purpose of Sabbath.** The Hebrew word for rest, *shabbat*, literally means ‘to cease’ from labor or activity. To the Jews, rest meant not doing anything related to the building of the Temple. And to ‘place a hedge’ around a day that they valued, they mistakenly went to the extreme of creating a tedious list of rules and regulations. Before we shake our finger too much at the Jewish people, however, know that we Christians throughout the centuries have created our own. Listen to the list from eighth-century Ireland:

   “There shall be no dispute, or lawsuit, . . . or horse-driving, or sweeping the floor of the house, or shaving, or washing, or bathing, . . . or adultery . . . or boiling food or swimming . . . or splitting wood . . . or going on a boat . . . or anything involving wrong.”

Quite an interesting list, wouldn’t you say!
In the Jewish tradition, the question is asked, “After the six days of creation—what did the universe lack? Menuha. Came the Sabbath, came menuha, and the universe was complete.”

The Hebrew word menuha, which is usually rendered rest, is translated in many more ways than just withdrawal from labor and exertion. It connotes a place of tranquility, serenity, peace, and repose. In Isaiah 66:1, menuha is translated God’s abode.

While the physical element of the Sabbath—the cessation of work after a week of labor—is beneficial to anyone, believer and nonbeliever alike, the true Sabbath experience is not something that can be objectively looked at and entered into, independent of a relationship with the Creator. It is time made holy, and only those who enter it by faith can experience the true menuha that it offers. One of the purposes of the Sabbath is to remind us at least once every seven days of our creatureliness, and of the fact that apart from God we are unable to understand ourselves or find the right relation to our work.

III. CLOSING

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

Even with all the important theology of the Sabbath, it’s easy to forget just how practical it is. Have you ever been forced to do something, perhaps go on a long walk, and not be given time to rest? When you finally had that rest, how great did it feel?

Have the class share a time that they were very tired but had to keep going, for whatever reason. Then ask them to share how great it felt to have the opportunity to rest. Isn’t that, in a sense, another reason why God gave us the Sabbath?

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Think-Pair-Share
In order to make the classroom feel more at ease, create an environment of good communication. Ask questions but don’t direct them to any individual student. This takes the pressure off of them. Let the students answer the questions on their own without being volunteered. Let the students ask questions as well. This will also create an environment which lets the conversation flow and generates different ideas and viewpoints on the topic being discussed. Make the lesson less about your reading to them, and more about the conversation and input the students have on this topic.

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 Great Controversy. 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.
From the Garden of Eden onward God’s Sabbath remains a weekly reminder that He is the Creator. When we look at the flowers, the trees, the birds, everything created, it all points us to God. Yet sometimes it’s so easy to forget. We get so caught up day by day in doing all the things that we do. Once a week, however, God gives us the Sabbath day, a day to remember Him as our Creator. This is so important, in fact, that He commands us to keep it, just as He commands us not to steal or kill or lie. That alone should tell us how important it is.

Many sincere Christians don’t understand this truth; hence they miss out on the special blessing of the Sabbath. How important that we not only enjoy the Sabbath ourselves, but allow the Lord to use us to show others how the Sabbath is a joy, and a special way of showing our love for the Lord, who has done so much for us.

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3 Ibid.