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.
What tools are provided for teaching the stories?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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For resources that provide discussion questions, activities, and illustrations, go to www.cornerstoneconnections.net and click on Topical Resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
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| 2011  | 1st Quarter| 1. Adam and Eve  
2. The Serpent  
3. Cain and Abel  
4. Seth and Enoch  
5. Noah  
6. Tower People  
7. Abraham  
8. Isaac  
9. Lot  
10. Rebekah  
11. Jacob and Esau  
12. Jacob  
13. Israel |
|       | 2nd Quarter| 1. Joseph  
2. The Brothers  
3. Moses  
4. Egyptians  
5. Fleeing Slaves  
6. Unhappy Campers  
7. Chosen Nation  
8. Aaron  
9. The Tabernacle  
10. Miriam and Zipporah  
11. Twelve Spies  
12. Korah  
13. The Bronze Serpent |
|       | 3rd Quarter| 1. The Borders Revisited  
2. Balaam  
3. Questionable Neighbors  
4. Law Review  
5. Moses' Death  
6. Crossing Jordan  
7. Rahab  
8. Blessings and Curses  
9. Gibeonites  
10. Canaan Divided  
11. Last Words of Joshua  
12. Annual Feasts  
13. Early Judges |
|       | 4th Quarter| 1. Samson  
2. Samuel  
3. Eli  
4. Philistines  
5. First King  
6. Saul’s Death  
7. Anointed  
8. Fugitive  
9. Lunatic  
10. Crowned King  
11. Incumbent  
12. Sinner  
13. Absalom |
| 2012  | 1st Quarter| 1. God’s People  
2. Solomon  
3. Temple Builder  
4. Proud Potentate  
5. Repentant Author  
6. Rehoboam  
7. Jeroboam  
8. Asa, Ahab, Jezebel  
9. Elijah  
10. Evangelist  
11. Coward  
12. The Sabbath  
13. Jehoshaphat |
|       | 2nd Quarter| 1. Ahab  
2. Elisha  
3. Prophet  
4. Naaman  
5. Jonah  
6. Hosea  
7. Isaiah  
8. Jehovah  
9. Ahaz  
10. Hezekiah  
11. Assyria  
12. Manasseh  
13. Josiah |
|       | 3rd Quarter| 1. Jeremiah  
2. Approaching Doom  
3. Last King  
4. Captives  
5. Daniel  
6. The Dream  
7. Three Hebrews  
8. Nebuchadnezzar  
9. Belshazzar  
10. Daniel  
11. Daniel 7  
12. Daniel 8, 9  
13. Daniel 10-12 |
|       | 4th Quarter| 1. Haggai/Zerubbabel  
2. Zechariah  
3. Temple Two  
4. Esther  
5. Queen  
6. Ezra  
7. Nehemiah  
8. Builders  
9. Plotters  
10. Reformers  
11. Jesus  
12. Deliverer  
13. Future Glory |
| 2013  | 1st Quarter| 1. Jesus  
2. It’s Time  
3. Mary  
4. Simeon/Anna  
5. The Wise Men  
6. The Child Jesus  
7. The Voice  
8. Victory  
9. Messiah Found  
10. Marriage Feast  
11. The Temple  
12. Nicodemus  
13. John the Baptist |
|       | 2nd Quarter| 1. Samaritan Woman  
2. The Nobleman  
3. The Lame Man  
4. John the Baptist  
5. The Anointed One  
6. Peter  
7. Capernaum  
8. The Leper  
9. Levi-Matthew  
10. The Sabbath  
11. The Disciples  
12. The Centurion  
13. The Demonic |
|       | 3rd Quarter| 1. Woman/Jairus  
2. The Seventy  
3. The Disciples  
4. Misunderstandings  
5. Broken Barriers  
6. Jesus’ Ministry  
7. Who Is Jesus?  
8. Lawyer/Ruler  
9. The Children  
10. Lazarus’ Family  
11. Zacchaeus  
12. Mary  
13. James and John |
|       | 4th Quarter| 1. The King Comes  
2. The Pharisees  
3. The End of Time  
4. Servanthood  
5. The Last Supper  
6. Gethsemane  
7. The Trial  
8. Calvary  
9. Resurrection  
10. Mary Magdalene  
11. The Emmaus Road  
12. By the Sea  
13. Jesus’ Ascension |
| 2014  | 1st Quarter| 1. The Mission  
2. The Holy Spirit  
3. The Lame Man  
4. Ananias/Sapphira  
5. God’s People  
6. Stephen  
7. Paul  
8. Peter  
9. Paul/Barnabas  
10. Gentiles Included  
11. Spreading Good News  
12. The Thessalonians  
13. The Ephesians |
|       | 2nd Quarter| 1. The Corinthians  
2. Workers for Christ  
3. Romans/Galatians  
4. Last Journey  
5. Adventures and Trials  
6. Philemon  
7. Colossians/Philippians  
8. Final Arrest  
9. Before Nero  
10. John the Beloved  
11. Patmos  
12. The Revelation  
13. Church Triumphant |
|       | 3rd Quarter| 1. First Believers  
2. Seekers  
3. Wycliffe  
4. Luther  
5. Zwingli  
6. French Reformation  
7. English Reformers  
8. French Revolution  
9. American Reformers  
10. William Miller  
11. Prophecy Fulfilled  
12. The Sanctuary  
13. God’s Law |
|       | 4th Quarter| 1. Renewal  
2. Investigative Judgment  
3. Origin of Evil  
4. Snares  
5. Great Deception  
6. The Papacy  
7. Spiritual Challenge  
8. The Bible  
9. Last Chance  
10. Time of Trouble  
11. Deliverance  
12. The End  
13. The Beginning |
1. The Way of Two Worlds
   Scripture Story: Isaiah 14; Revelation 12; Genesis 1; 2.
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 1 and 2.

2. Law Meets Love
   Scripture Story: Genesis 3.
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 3 and 4.

3. Out of Control
   Scripture Story: Genesis 4:1-16.
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 5.

4. A Very Long Walk With God
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 6.

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

6. Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 10.

7. Long, Strange Trip
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 11 and 12.

8. Boy Wonder

9. No Laughing Matter
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 14.

10. Winsome . . . And Then Some
    Scripture Story: Genesis 24.
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 15.

11. Identity Theft
    Scripture Story: Genesis 25:19-34; 27.
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 16.

12. Struggle by a Stream
    Scripture Story: Genesis 28–33.
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 17 and 18.

13. Family Fiascoes
    Scripture Story: Genesis 34; 35; 37.
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 19.
1. The Trust Test  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 39.

2. Greed: The Bottomless Pit  
   Scripture Story: Numbers 22-24.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 40.

3. Roads to the Soul  
   Scripture Story: Numbers 25.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 41.

4. Law and Love Revisited  
   Scripture Story: Deuteronomy 4-6; 28.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 42.

5. Last Longing Look  
   Scripture Story: Deuteronomy 31-34.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 43.

6. Promises Don't Die  
   Scripture Story: Joshua 1-5:12.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 44.

7. Behind the Walls  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 45.

8. First Things First  
   Scripture Story: Joshua 8.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 46.

9. Oops!  
   Scripture Story: Joshua 9; 10.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 47.

10. Real Estate Section  
    Scripture Story: Joshua 10:40-43; 11; 14-22.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 48.

11. Line in the Sand  
    Scripture Story: Joshua 23; 24.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 49.

12. Famines and Feasts  
    Scripture Story: Leviticus 23.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 50, 51, and 52.

13. Knowing God (‘Will)  
    Scripture Story: Judges 6-8; 10.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 53.

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1. Fatal Attraction  
   Scripture Story: Judges 13-16.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 54.

2. Prayer Power  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 55 and 58.

3. Eli’s Bad, Bad Boys  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 2:12-36.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 56.

4. Turn It Around  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 3-7.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 57.

5. Trading Leaders  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 8-14.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 59 and 60.

6. So Long, Saul  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 15; 28; 31.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 61, 66, and 67.

7. Giant Faith  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 16; 17.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 62 and 63.

8. Green-eyed Monster  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 18-27.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 64 and 65.

9. A Sad End  
   Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 29; 30; 2 Samuel 1.  
   Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 68.

10. When Will I Be King?  
    Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 2-5:5.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 69.

11. The Golden Age of Israel  
    Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 5:6-25; 6; 7; 9; 10.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 70.

12. The Fall and Rise of David  
    Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 11; 12.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 71.

13. Fatal Fallout  
    Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 13-19; 24; 1 Kings 1; 1 Chronicles 21; 28; 29.  
    Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 72 and 73.
April

2—Life Is Hard . . . Work! [p. 11]
Joseph works faithfully, trusting God's control of his life, no matter in what circumstances he finds himself.

9—Could You Do It? [p. 19]
Joseph reconnects with his family, but it takes a willingness to forgive big offenses and trust that God was in control all along.

16—I See, I Hear, I Know [p. 27]
God's call to Moses reveals to us the compassion of God, His methods of salvation, and the humility required to be a servant of His.

23—Apply the Blood! [p. 35]
The story of the Passover is a revelation of the plan of salvation acted out in symbols. It ties forever the concepts of the blood of the Lamb and righteousness by faith.

30—Faith First? [p. 43]
God delivers His people from bondage, but they are not sure they want to trust the Unknown for the known. God continues to try to get through to them.

May

7—Unhappy Campers [p. 51]
The Israelites, like modern-day Christians, complained of discontent and boredom even in the face of supernatural outpourings of God's grace.

14—The Covenant of Love [p. 59]
The foundation of God's relationship with Israel begins with the reality of their deliverance. They enter into another chapter of humanity's covenant with God.

21—God Thinks Twice [p. 67]
Instead of reflecting on the way God has led them, the Israelites allow their minds to idle and become subject to disbelief. God tells Moses He's giving up on them.

28—Making Rooms for God [p. 75]
God asks for a sanctuary so that He can move right into the neighborhood with His people. The people respond to the opportunity to build it.

June

4—What About Me? [p. 83]
There are unique challenges to the role of leadership. There are also guidelines about how we are to respond to those in positions of leadership.

11—Get Over Yourself! [p. 91]
The 12 spies report that the land of Canaan is good and filled with abundance, but almost all of them doubt God can deliver it to them.

18—The “Wannabes” [p. 99]
In spite of God's miraculous interventions on behalf of the Israelites under the leadership of Moses, an undercurrent of jealousy proves disastrous.

25—Drama in the Desert [p. 107]
God's ultimate act of grace at the cross is foreshadowed by the serpent of bronze to whom the Israelites are to look for healing.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This part of the story of Joseph picks up with Joseph running Potiphar’s house. The story is so well known that detail is not necessary. However, it is important to note that Joseph always rose to the challenge of the work that was given to him. He succeeded among men because of his faithfulness to God.

After the incident with Potiphar’s wife, we see Joseph move into another function of his ministry. That is, he became a messenger of God’s interpretations of the dreams of those around him. This is important—Joseph never interpreted a dream; rather, he brought God’s interpretation to those dreaming. This point should not be lost on us! God did not give him the ability to decipher dreams. However, by continuing to be faithful, Joseph was able to be used by God with special insights into the dreams God was giving to others. Sometimes God does not gift us miraculously, but He does use those who are available to Him.

As we close this Scripture portion, we see God setting the stage for a later answer to prayer. What a great God we serve who sets in motion things that will answer prayers for us before we even pray!

Our part in all of this is significant. We are to be faithful in the mundane tasks set before us in order to: (1) demonstrate God’s character being worked out in us; (2) show God’s faithfulness in response to human faithfulness.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that God values faithfulness in everything, large or small. (Know)
- Feel the importance of doing our best for God. (Feel)
- Have the opportunity to respond to God’s leading in their lives. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Faithfulness (Character)
- Commitment (Courage)
- Hard Work (Adversity/Trials)

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

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.

On a whiteboard or large paper, have the students write down a list of the silliest and smallest jobs they have ever had to do. Have them create another list of the most boring jobs they have ever had to do. Once you have a good number of suggestions on each of the lists, have students vote on which job seems like the silliest, and which the most boring. Give prizes to those whose entries are chosen. Bring the winners to the front and have them answer the following questions:

1. Give one good thing that came out of this job.
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1. Give one good thing that came out of this job.
2. Would you ever do it again?
3. Do you think you glorified God by the way you did what was asked of you?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

I can’t believe I have to do this! Mark was angry at his dad for making him stand next to the car his dad was working on. He wouldn’t let Mark get his hands on the engine; in fact, he wouldn’t let Mark do much of anything but hand him the tools. Mark felt helpless, useless, and very angry that his dad didn’t think he could handle any more responsibility. In fact, Mark was so mad that he kept ignoring his dad’s requests for tools. It was frustrating for Mark’s dad to continue to ask Mark for a tool more than once. Also, when Mark’s dad had lifted the engine off the motor mounts and needed Mark’s muscles to help him move the engine, Mark was so angry he couldn’t hear his dad’s urgent calls.

When the engine was put back in and the car was running, Mark’s dad came to him and said these words: “Son, I was hoping that you could show me how responsible you could be in the little things that I give you to do. It seems that if a job is not to your liking, you don’t care about doing a good job. I was going to give you this car when we were done working on it. I had even set up a job for you in town and you could have used the car to get to your new job. However, after working with you, I’m not sure I am ready to allow you to represent me in the job. I guess I’ll keep the car a bit longer . . .”

Mark was devastated, but he learned a good lesson. Every job is important. If we are faithful in the little things, we can be trusted with the big things!

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Our story this week gives us the same sort of example as the story just told. Joseph was faithful in the smallest things, and those small things led to larger and larger things, even to ruling under the Pharaoh in Egypt. Joseph is a great example of how we are to deal with the work that comes our way in this world. Our faithfulness is a witness to the character of God, and what we do in little things, we will do in big things. God knows this about us. The story of Joseph continually reminds us that no matter what the situation is, we should honor God and His requirements of us.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

- What are the exciting parts of the story?
- What did you learn that was new to you?
- Underline the texts that you found particularly important.
- What were the important decisions that Joseph made in order to remain faithful to God?
- What would his other options have been?
- How do you think this story relates to your life?
- In what way does your life parallel Joseph’s?
- What are the pivotal decisions that you have had to make in order to remain faithful to God in your life?

Sharing Context and Background

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

Joseph’s story is an ageless tale. It has intrigue, betrayal, and all the things that make up a good story. It also has a main character who is continually beyond reproach. He is thrust into extraordinary circumstances and yet always seems to prevail. Even in the situation presented to him by Potiphar’s wife, we see Joseph as a man of integrity:

“Joseph suffered for his integrity, for his tempter revenged herself by accusing him of a foul crime, and causing him to be thrust into prison. Had Potiphar believed his wife’s charge against Joseph, the young Hebrew would have lost his life; but the modesty and uprightness that had uniformly characterized his conduct were proof of his innocence; and yet, to save the reputation of his master’s house, he was abandoned to disgrace and bondage” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 218).

After being thrown into prison, Joseph continues to be a man of integrity who again rises to prominence in the responsibilities given to him there. This reminds us of another man who understood the importance of making the best of any situation given to him. Philippians 4:13 tells us: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (NKJV). This is Paul’s response to the situation he found himself in.
Much like Joseph’s experience, Paul found himself in prison, and had to learn to serve his God from there. Joseph maintained his faithfulness in the responsibilities given to him, and therefore honored God. Paul did the same, and the result was the same.

In Philippians 4 Paul tells us that he knows the “secret” to being content. Perhaps Joseph knew this same secret. While Joseph lived much ahead of Paul’s time, they both were able to tap into the same secret of contentment; that is, complete faithfulness to and reliance on God.

There are many other examples of this in Scripture, but perhaps these two men, at least for a short time in prison, both understood that this whole thing called life is not about them, but rather about God. How often do we get caught up in the idea that we are the important focus of our lives, when the focus should be on faithfulness to God’s call in our lives? We too often let ego and pettiness get in the way of the larger picture. That picture is one of a God who is intimately involved in every aspect of our lives. And it continues to be a picture of a God looking to bless us with His gifts for us.

III. CLOSING

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

Give each student a card and have them put a job they have to do in the upcoming week on the card. It might be schoolwork or job-related. Have them put their names on the cards and hand them in. Let them know that next week you will take some time to go over the cards with them and ask how they did on the commitments they made before God. Pray with them that...
God will give all of us the courage to remain faithful in the little things, both to honor Him, and in order for Him to be able to give us the big things.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

This part of the story of Joseph can teach us so many things: how to take ownership of the small things God gives us to do, how to remain faithful in times of struggle, how to be responsible with the words God gives us. The list goes on and on. But most of all, Joseph shows us how to represent God in a world that does not know Him. By the successes that Joseph had in life, he gained the respect of his employers, his captains, and even his king. This was no accident or coincidence; God placed Joseph in those situations in order to gain credibility for the larger jobs God had for him, and Joseph never failed.

As well, this story shows us that God is in preparation for the prayers we will ask but have not yet asked. This part of the story foreshadows what is upcoming: the arrival of his brothers during the famine. God had all this in mind when He put Joseph into the situations he handled so well.

God puts us where He needs us to be in order to be able to answer prayers for others. What a wonderful God we serve!

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 20.

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

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.’” (Genesis 41:39, 40, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT

“God was glorified by the faithfulness of His servant. It was His purpose that in purity and uprightness the believer in God should appear in marked contrast to the worshipers of idols—that thus the light of heavenly grace might shine forth amid the darkness of heathenism” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 217).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Have you ever had to do something that you wouldn’t have chosen to do? Write down five things that you would never have done if someone hadn’t made you do it!

1. _________________________________________
2. _________________________________________
3. _________________________________________
4. _________________________________________
5. _________________________________________

Now answer these questions:
1. Which of these would you do again even though you didn’t want to do it originally?
2. Which of the above will you never do again?
3. Has anything good ever occurred out of a situation that at first seemed like a curse?
4. Do you work hard at something even if you don’t necessarily want to do it?

DID YOU KNOW?

• Pharaoh changed Joseph’s name to Zaphnath-paaneah when he promoted Joseph to vizier.
• The Joseph story is also retold in the Koran.
• Ancient Egypt was known for its architecture and grand monuments. It is possible that the Hebrews who came into Egypt during the time of Joseph were responsible for building many things we still see today.
• There are many books on interpreting dreams, and many people make their living by interpreting what dreams mean. The difference between what these people do and what Joseph did is simple—Joseph didn’t interpret the dreams; he simply gave people God’s interpretation of the dreams.

INTO THE STORY

“The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. . . . Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said,
‘Come to bed with me!’ But he refused. ‘With me in charge,’ he told her, ‘my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. . . . My master has withheld nothing from me except you. . . . How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?’"

“When his master heard the [false] story his wife told him, saying, ‘This is how your slave treated me,’ he burned with anger. Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.”

“After they had been in custody for some time, each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.”

“Then Joseph said to them, ‘Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.’

“Now the third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand, but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.”

“When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.”

“When Joseph heard this, he said to Pharaoh, ‘These are the dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.’"

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.’” (Genesis 39:2-8, 19, 20; 40:4, 5, 8, 20-22; 41:1-4, 25-27, 39, 40, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

- Where do you see God’s hand in this story?
- What is the difference between interpreting dreams and relaying God’s interpretation?
- What made Joseph succeed so often in the tasks he undertook?
- Did Joseph ever take the easy way out? Explain.
- How did God answer Jacob’s prayer for the safety of His people years ahead of the request?
- What do you think it is more important to do—to go where God leads us, even when it is unpleasant, or to understand what God is doing every moment of our lives?

PUNCH LINES

- “Do everything without complaining or arguing . . . in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing” (Philippians 2:14-16, NIV).
- “The Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything” (Deuteronomy 2:7, NIV).
• “All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty” (Proverbs 14:23, NIV).
• “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. . . . I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12, 13, NIV).
• “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV).

OTHER EYES
• “A free lunch is only found in mousetraps.”—John Capuzzi.
• “All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”—Martin Luther King, Jr., 20th-century U.S. clergyman.
• “Always give a hundred percent, and you’ll never have to second-guess yourself.”—Tommy John with Dan Valenti, My Twenty-six Years in Baseball.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

Look at your answers to the What Do You Think? exercise. Read the Scripture Story for this week (Genesis 39–41). What two things made Joseph continually stand out? One was his connection with God; the other was his willingness to live honestly and transparently. He was just not willing to change the truth in order to be safe. In this way, he lived recklessly. He lived by a code that compelled him to do his best no matter what the job. In every situation there were things he would rather not have done, but he did his best regardless.

Sunday

The Bible says that “the Lord was with Joseph and he prospered” (Genesis 39:2, NIV). What does this mean? Can you go through life saying that “the Lord is with you”? Why do you think Joseph prospered because of this? Whose will came first in his life—his own, his employer’s, or God’s?

Note that he was truly seeking what God wanted for him, and in return he was honored by those around him as being wise and hardworking. How would that approach make a difference in your life?

Monday

Read the Key Text again. How would you feel if someone said that to you? But notice to whom Pharaoh gave credit first. He seemed to understand where Joseph’s wisdom and discernment had come from.

What would cause people to see you as someone who is filled with the wisdom of God? How often do you take time to listen for what God wants you to do? How does God speak to you? Besides through His Word, it might be that He tries to communicate with you through circumstances; it might be through people in your life, or the leading of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever taken the time to find out?

Tuesday

What was Joseph’s role in the events happening to him? In the Flashlight section it says that “God was glorified by the __________ of His servant.” What does that mean? How did Joseph’s faithfulness affect how the Egyptians viewed God? What might your faithfulness do for those in your world? What are the people around you learning about God’s character from your faithfulness? How does Joseph’s life encourage you that it is possible to affect how others see God?

Wednesday

It is always good to dig deeper into the Word of God. By simply going to www.biblegateway.com and doing a search for the words you think are a theme for this week, you might come up with your own list of texts that relate to what this lesson is about.

Read the Punch Lines and focus on the last texts. What do they mean to you? Do you ever feel as if you are working in vain? Have you ever felt that you are trying to do what God is asking but can’t seem to get it right? Paul knew the secret to contentment—faithfulness anyway, through His grace. Why or why not?

Thursday

Faithfulness is a question of commitment. Are you committed to doing something regardless of how you feel? Are you willing to try something radical over the next few weeks? Commit to something you know is good for you (eating habits, exercise, etc.) and practice it for no less than a week. Once you have made it a week, try for two, and then try for more. It is a good idea to keep a journal for yourself in order to track
your successes. In three weeks you will have built a new habit.

It might not feel good all the time, but if you begin to associate pleasure with these activities that are good for you, instead of punishment, it will be easier. It’s also about making a commitment to something and staying faithful. Imagine how much better it will be to make a commitment to something eternal rather than only those temporary things of this world. See if practicing the small commitments can lead to even greater commitments in time!


**Friday**

What does the example of Joseph mean to you today? Is there a way to relate Joseph’s trials and tribulations to yours? Can his successes be yours? Where does the biblical story intersect with your life? Are you willing to enter into a similar type of relationship with God for the long haul? Can you be faithful even when you don’t feel like it? It won’t hurt to give it a try!

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This is the story of Joseph reconnecting with his family. It is a long portion of Scripture, with the crux coming in chapter 45. Joseph plays with his brothers a bit when they come to Egypt, and by doing so he learns that they are truly repentant for having sold him into slavery. Joseph then has a decision to make: should he forgive or should he punish? Punishment would be easy for him, given the power that has been placed upon his shoulders by Pharaoh. However, Joseph decides that punishment or revenge will never be as sweet as the forgiveness that God has shown him so many times.

Because Joseph has remained faithful to a forgiving God, he knows the responsibility of God’s children for forgiveness. He finds his brothers repentant, and wants to be in a relationship with them as soon as possible. He misses his family and his father in particular. He is not willing to allow his pride or lust for revenge to stop the reunion with his family.

As you teach today’s lesson, keep in mind that all of us have someone we should forgive, or someone who can forgive us for something we have done. Since we are all in this situation, the story of Joseph has universal appeal and application. What we gain from the lesson is an understanding that everyone can be as successful and strong of character as Joseph; it just takes hard work and an adherence to God’s plan.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that forgiveness, whether large or small, creates freedom for those involved. (Know)
- Feel the need to forgive and be forgiven. (Feel)
- Take the opportunity to examine where they can forgive or seek forgiveness in their own lives. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Spirituality
- Communication
- Guilt
- God (existence of a sovereign)

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

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.

If any of your students do not have siblings, have them fill out the activity about a good friend, or someone with whom they spend a good deal of time. Then ask the following questions:

1. Was it easy to come up with things you don’t like about the person?
2. Was it as easy to come up with things you do like about the person?
3. Do you find yourself spending most of your time...
being positive about the person or negative about them in your day-to-day life?

4. How well do you really know this person? (Living with someone and really getting to know someone are often two different things.)

**Additional Activities**

**Agree or Disagree**

- I have a brother or a sister.
- I love them all the time.
- I get along with them all the time.
- I like to hang out and do things with them.
- They never make me angry or upset.
- They never get into my stuff.

**Forgiveness**

It’s often hard to practice forgiveness, especially when it comes to family members. Think of one thing that your brother(s) or sister(s) have done that you have had a really hard time forgiving them for. Tell the story in a couple of sentences and then notice how long it took you to forgive them. In fact, you might have something that you need to forgive them for right now.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Illustration**

**Share this illustration in your own words:**

On Sunday, January 8, 1956, five young missionaries flew into the Amazon jungle. Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Peter Fleming, and Roger Youderian landed at a remote clearing to bring the gospel to the Auca Indians. The next day their bodies were found floating in the Curaray River, ambushed by the very people they had come to share Christ’s love. Back in Oak Park, Illinois, Dr. T. E. McCully was shaken by his son’s death. But he was also rooted in Christ’s love. A few days after their deaths, T. E. McCully prayed, “Lord, let me live long enough to see those fellows saved who killed our boy, that I may throw my arms around them and tell them I love them because they love my Christ.” When he rose, tears ran down his cheeks. In less than three years, Nate Saint’s sister, Rachel, and Jim Elliot’s widow, Elisabeth, began their ministry with the Aucas, and many Aucas came to the Lord. Nine years after the murder of the five missionaries, two of those who had killed Nate Saint and his companions baptized two of Nate’s children, Kathy and Stephen Saint. In June 1995, Stephen Saint was called by the Aucas to assist in developing their church leadership.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive hate, only love can do that.”—Martin Luther King, Jr.


(Taken from www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/topics/forgiven.htm)

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

Share the following in your own words:

It’s only through rootedness in Christ’s love that anyone can forgive—especially someone who murdered their loved one. And it was rootedness in Christ’s love that allowed Joseph to forgive his brothers for their treacherous act.

Are we rooted in Christ’s love? Have we embraced His love to the extent that we can risk loving others to this degree when even other Christians may not understand it? Will we take the time to get to know the hearts of those around us and become better equipped to love and to forgive when the time is right for both?

We cannot love our enemies. But Christ’s love living through us can.
**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

In groups, have students read some of the other highlights of Joseph’s story from Genesis 42 to 50. Then ask:

- Have you heard this story before?
- Was there anything in these verses that you didn’t know before?
- Could you have done what Joseph did?
- What did you think of Jacob’s reaction to the sons having to take Benjamin back to Egypt?
- Did you identify with any of the characters in the story? Which ones and why?
- Identify a section from these chapters that tells the whole theme of the story in just a few words.

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

This section of the story of Joseph is the payoff. We see Joseph playing with his brothers in order to learn their hearts. It may seem cruel, but it is necessary for him to understand who they are. It would have been simple for him never to reveal his identity. Pharaoh had given him an Egyptian name. And after decades people look different. However, Joseph was willing to reunite his family as he learned of his brothers’ dedication to their father, their brother Benjamin, and their God.

The background of Egypt is always interesting in the account of Joseph’s life. It sets the stage for Moses and the Exodus later on, but here, the Egyptians are not seen negatively. Rather, they are seen as intelligent people,

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

*Don’t tell them; let them tell you!*

In teaching, we often think that it is the wisdom that we have that needs to be transferred. We often give young people answers to questions that they are not asking. It is important for us to walk them through the thinking process in order for them to understand the themes we are trying to share with them. By asking a great deal of questions and by allowing them to process their responses, they may find their way to the themes and lessons without much prompting from us as teachers. Give them much credit. The young people you are working with are wonderfully bright individuals who just need guidance to get to some of the bigger questions. Never be afraid to be flexible and personable with the students if you feel the discussion is going in a different direction than you had planned. Perhaps it is God leading them somewhere!

**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
willing to listen to someone of character (Joseph and his recounting of the dreams). As well, they seem benevolent in their dealings with the Hebrews, specifically Jacob and his family.

The theme of filial love, or brotherly love, is dealt with as well in this chapter. Joseph’s love for his brothers and family was overwhelming, despite his history with his brothers. Joseph had let God remove from his character any need to hold old grudges or to seek revenge.

Prophecy, it should be pointed out, is a theme in this story as well. God’s ability to see beyond the veil of time is showcased. In this week’s passages, we see dreams being verified. Even the earliest hints of greatness that Joseph was given a glimpse of in his boyhood dreams come to pass in these chapters. What a powerful God we serve, one who answers the prayers of Jacob when his son Joseph was yet a young, impulsive boy, willing to be truthful with the message God was giving him. Joseph never strayed from being that person of character, and his steadfastness served him well throughout his life.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Give your students a bit of quiet time (two to three minutes) to be alone and to review their lives to see where forgiveness could be given or sought. After this time, bring them together and pray for them as they seek forgiveness in their lives and work to be people of character. Point out that, in response to God’s abundant mercy to us, we can allow Him to make us into the type of person Joseph became, with forgiveness and integrity of character being our guiding principles.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

What part does forgiveness play in our lives? Especially when we deal with siblings and family members it seems hard to forgive, and to seek that forgiveness from those we love. Maybe it is because we become too familiar, or perhaps we are too selfish at times. We sometimes hold the largest grudges against those who are closest to us. Sometimes being a brother or sister is hard, and sometimes it is a joy. We have to get to the place where we focus on the good aspects in those around us, and release ourselves from being held back by not wanting to forgive or to seek forgiveness.

Joseph’s story is powerful in that not only was Joseph willing to forgive, but he was eager for a reunion with those who had treated him so poorly in the past. His willingness to love is a wonderful lesson for us. He wasn’t willing to look back and exact revenge, but rather looked forward, and in doing so was able to save his family from famine and even bring them to the foreign land he now called home.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 21.

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

KEY TEXT

“Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Come close to me.’ When they had done so, he said, ‘I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.’” (Genesis 45:4, 5, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT

“Joseph was satisfied. He had seen in his brothers the fruits of true repentance. Upon hearing Judah’s noble offer he gave orders that all but these men should withdraw; then, weeping aloud, he cried, ‘I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?’ His brothers stood motionless, dumb with fear and amazement... All their ill treatment of him passed before them” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 230).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Brothers and sisters can be the best and the worst things ever! Take a moment to list five things you don’t like about them, but only if you can then list six things you do like about them:

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________
5. __________________________________________

Things you like:

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________
5. __________________________________________
6. __________________________________________

DID YOU KNOW?

• The Bible says that Jacob (Israel) loved Joseph more than his other sons. No wonder they got upset with him!
• The Jewish rabbis wrote more about Joseph than any other patriarch in the Midrash (Jewish book of wisdom).
• Joseph was in slavery for 10 years. (And still he forgave his brothers! Could you?)
• Slavery was a common practice in ancient times. It was possible to put yourself into slavery if you owed too many people too much money!
• After Joseph, working on Pharaoh’s behalf, had taken all the money from the Egyptians, he then acquired their livestock, and then their land. Talk about power!

(Check out Joseph on the Hebrew Bible portion of Wikipedia.org.)

INTO THE STORY

“Then Joseph could no longer control himself
before all his attendants, and he cried out, ‘Have everyone leave my presence!’ So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers.”

“Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph! Is my father still living?’ But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

“Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Come close to me.’ When they had done so, he said, ‘I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. . . . Now hurry back to my father and say to him, “This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. . . . I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.”’”

“Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

“When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Tell your brothers, “Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.”’

“So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him, ‘Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt.’ Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. And Israel said, ‘I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.’” (Genesis 45:1, 3-11, 14-18, 25-28, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY
• What are the main themes throughout this story (i.e., forgiveness)?

• How much is too much to forgive? Can you imagine forgiving someone who had put you into prison for 10 years?

• How did God work in order for Jacob’s sons to be able to buy food during the famine?

• Joseph seemed to believe that God had put him in slavery in order to save his family later; do you agree or disagree? Why?

• Why did Jacob love Benjamin and Joseph more than his other sons?

• Would you want to exact revenge on the people who harmed you once you had power?

• Why does Jacob not want to send Benjamin back with his brothers to Egypt?

PUNCH LINES
• “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25, NIV).
• “A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense” (Proverbs 19:11, NIV).
• “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody” (Romans 12:17, NIV).
• “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9, NIV).
• “We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly” (1 Corinthians 4:12, 13, NIV).
• “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7, NIV).

OTHER EYES
• “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.”—Lewis B. Smedes, 20th-century Christian author, ethicist, and theologian.
• “Always forgive your enemies—nothing annoys them so much.”—Oscar Wilde, 19th-century English (Irish-born) poet, novelist, dramatist, and critic.
• “The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”—Mahatma Gandhi, 19th-20th-century Indian philosopher, internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath
Complete the What Do You Think? section. What do you like about your siblings? (If you don’t have siblings, substitute a close friend.) What behaviors are hard for you to be around? How many of those behaviors could be your fault?

Without a doubt, Joseph loved his brothers. They were not always happy with him, much of which had to do with the dreams he couldn’t seem to keep to himself. But don’t you imagine that there were times when they enjoyed him as well?

What happens when we let negative feelings overshadow positive thoughts about another person?

Sunday
Read Genesis 45 (Into the Story) and notice how Joseph feels when he is able to tell his brothers who he really is. What did he consider the reason they had sold him? How did he feel about all that had happened to him in the preceding years? Do you think you could be so forgiving of people who had done horrible things to you? Do you have the ability to forgive those around you for little things they do to you? Where does the ability to forgive come from?

Monday
The Key Text describes how powerful Joseph’s forgiveness was to his brothers. What does it tell us about Joseph’s belief in God’s plan for his life? What does it tell us about his brothers’ sense of guilt?

How do you think Joseph reacted to his own act of forgiveness? Forgiveness is a funny thing; it frees not only those who are forgiven but also those who forgive.

Try forgiving someone who has done something very wrong to you. What do you need to do first? What can you learn from the experience that gives you a better understanding of God’s forgiveness of us?

Tuesday

In the Flashlight section we see Joseph evaluating his brothers to see if they were truly repentant. What were the fruits of their true repentance? What specifically do you think softened Joseph’s heart? Can people look into your life, especially when you have made a huge mistake, and see that you are truly sorry for what you have done? When you are forgiven, do you change the way you live? Are you connected enough with God’s plan for your life that you can see the bigger picture and not get too upset by someone’s actions toward you? Read Philippians 4:12 and 13 to see how Paul related to God’s plan.

Wednesday

Read the Punch Lines section of this week’s lesson. Which of the verses relating to forgiveness speaks most strongly to you right now? Why do you think that is?

Which verse do you most wish you could share with someone whose actions annoy you? How do you think they would react?

Notice in Genesis 42:1 (NIV) the humor in Jacob’s comment to his hungry sons (“Why do you keep looking at each other?”). Remember that even though these stories about people in the Bible are ancient, the people were still very much like you and me.

With which character in Genesis 42 to 50 do you most identify? What traits of character do you see in that person that you have and would like to keep? to change? to develop? How might developing a sense of humor help you in strengthening your ability to forgive?

Thursday

Joseph had to wait decades before he could forgive his brothers for what they had done to him. Do you have
in your life someone who needs to be forgiven? What are you waiting for? How long are you going to wait to forgive or seek forgiveness? Do you think the longer you wait the easier it will get? If you were Joseph, do you think you would have been able to forgive after so much time? Perhaps this is the time for you to make some things right with some people in your life.

**Friday**

What does Joseph’s willingness to forgive teach us about these different things?

- His understanding of God
- His understanding of God’s plan in his life
- His love for his family
- His love specifically for his father
- His pride

Put yourself in his shoes (or sandals!) and think about what you would have done had you had a chance like Joseph had to have the attention of all his brothers at once. What would you have done after all the hardship you had gone through? Spend some time writing out your thoughts.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
The story of the call of Moses and God’s promise of deliverance reveals to us the compassion of God, God’s methods for salvation, and the humility required to be a servant of God. Beginning with the compassion of God, we see that God is a God who can see, hear, and know the pain of His people. Many times God’s people, even His heroes in the Bible, have cried out to Him, asking if He knows their troubles. But we have the assurance that God knows about everything that goes on. He even cares if a sparrow should fall from its nest (Matthew 10:29).

But God’s compassion does not only notice what is wrong; the pain in His own heart often forces Him to act. The ways in which God acts are not always easy to discern. His deliverance comes in many forms. Sometimes it may not be the way we want it, but we can be assured that God is always acting in our behalf. Moses tried to give the Jews deliverance by killing a man, but that was not God’s way. The only way we can help God is to do what He asks of us. But this requires humility. We are to trust God that His method of deliverance is best; we are to trust in His salvation.

II. TARGET
The students will:
- Understand the ways in which God delivers people. (Know)
- Trust in God as He does all He can to help them. (Feel)
- Talk with God as a God who knows their hearts. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
- Anger
- Humility
- Idolatry
- Politics
You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

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

Discuss with the students the reasons that they chose to answer the way they did. Also keep in mind to seek positive ways to intervene, ways in which the oppressor may be also “released.”

Below is an alternative thought and discussion starter.

Agree or Disagree
Ask the students if they agree or disagree with the following statement and why.
“Sometimes God cares; other times He does not. This is why sometimes He does miracles; other times He does not.”
students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Why do you think God had to lead Moses into the wilderness for 40 years before He could let him lead the Israelites out of Egypt?
- How do you think the Israelites felt while they had to wait for God to release them? Perhaps they suspected that God had forgotten about them.
- The Israelites had to endure many years of hardship before they were set free. Why do you think God sometimes lets people wait so long?
- Does this story remind you in any way of the Second Coming? Think about the similarities.
- When did God notice the Israelites? (While they were still slaves, obviously.) How do you think this applies to you and when God notices you?
- If you were a slave to a sin, does that mean God does not know or care about you until you stop sinning?
- Moses wanted to free the Israelites, so he killed an Egyptian. Is it ever right to break God’s law to get something that is good in the long run?
- Moses justified the killing of the Egyptian by the fact that the Israelites would be set free. Think of times in your life when you have tried to justify doing something bad to get something good.
- How do you think Moses felt when he ran away from Pharaoh? There is a saying that says a “bird that has had a broken pinion never flies as high again.” Think about how this applies to Moses and to you. Do you think God gives second chances to those who may have messed up the first time? How do you think the second chance compares to the first?
- The Jews were given a promise of deliverance by God, simply because He loved them.
- You have been given one too; how does that make you feel?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The story of Nelson Mandela and the way he led the non-White races to liberty in South Africa is very similar in many ways to the story of Moses and his deliverance of the Jews. Do you think God knew about the oppression of the people in South Africa and was also helping them? It’s reassuring to know that God is still active today. As you listen to the story think about what it would be like to experience God’s deliverance in such an awesome way.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

The story of Moses and the promise of deliverance for the Jews is filled with deep revelation about the character of God. It’s also a story rich with Christological types. For these reasons we can look to...
the example of God’s dealing with the Israelites to inform our own understandings and expectations of God’s dealings with us. The examples that serve our understanding best are: (1) the nature of our captivity, (2) God’s knowledge of our situations and the reason for His concern, and (3) the nature of God’s actions on our behalf.

1. The Israelites had been captive in Egypt for approximately 400 years. Unfortunately, a new ruler who did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8) began the slavery of his relatives and descendants. This story is similar to the story of humanity. Adam and Eve, who were once governors over the whole world, were free and happy under God’s governance. Unfortunately, there was a change in government, and this world fell under the rule of the devil. This is when the slavery of sin began. But God once again desires to release us from the slavery of the devil; that is why He sent His Son.

2. The revelation of God’s character in this week’s story is of a being intimately aware of the pain and suffering of men, women, and children. God’s concern is raised by the cry and groan of agony of the people of Israel at the hands of their oppressors. This pain on the part of the Israelites, and cruelty on the part of the Egyptians, engages God’s desire for justice. God’s desire to reorder unequal relationships is evident throughout the Bible. Consider Christ’s

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**Teaching From . . .**

*Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.*

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

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

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

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Shades of Gray**

Sometimes things aren’t black and white. To open up an avenue to talk about such issues with your students you can use a continuum exercise. It provides students the opportunity to express their leanings toward one side or another of the topic at hand. Here is an example that would work well in this lesson.

Write the three statements below on a board, along with the continuum numbers. Ask the students to choose a number for each item that best reflects their sentiments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement 1</th>
<th>Statement 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God controls everything.</td>
<td>We control everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God will fix everything right now.</td>
<td>God will fix things only at the Second Coming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God wants us to rely on Him.</td>
<td>God wants us to be self-sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use these continuums to discuss with your class the various attitudes toward God’s intervention in our world today.
teaching on riches gained through corruption, or His sermon on the mount, or His treatment of those considered unclean, or His teaching about the relationship husbands should have to their wives. The greatest cause of pain to God is the treatment of others as less valuable than oneself. The greatest cause for compassion in God is the sight of the oppressed. Our own sorrows today are all that are needed to compel God to have compassion on us. Our oppression at the hands of the devil is the reason He wants to deliver us.

3. The nature of God’s actions is the part of this story that is rich with Christological symbols. The deliverance of God’s people was to be done in a manner that would pour contempt on human pride; the deliverer was to go forth as a humble shepherd (see Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 251). This method of deliverance reveals what is required of us to be delivered; we are to walk humbly with God (see Micah 6:8). This humble walk contrasts deeply with the pride Moses displayed when he killed the Egyptian. We are also to trust God’s providence and His claims to be able to save all those who come to Him.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Ask your students to make a list of three people, including their name at the bottom of the list, for whom they want to pray for God’s deliverance this week. Then make another list of ways in which they can work with God to provide deliverance for the same people, themselves included.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

God makes three promises in this story—
1. I see, I hear, I know!
2. Surely I will be with you!
3. Surely I will bring you out of Egypt; I will deliver you!

In order to activate these three promises, God makes only one requirement of us—trust and obey.

God is just the same today as He was in the days of Moses, and His promises to us, each one of us, are just the same, too. Christ repeated every one of these promises to us. Let us live thankfully, prayerfully, and expectantly as we wait upon God for deliverance.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 22.

*A special adaptation of Patriarchs and Prophets has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
KEY TEXT
“The Lord said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.’” (Exodus 3:7, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT
“In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. . . .

“Infinite Wisdom called him who was to become the leader of his people to spend forty years in the humble work of a shepherd. The habits of caretaking, of self-forgetfulness and tender solicitude for his flock, thus developed, would prepare him to become the compassionate, longsuffering shepherd of Israel” (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 247, 248).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Sometimes people do bad things because they themselves have had bad things done to them. Keeping this in mind, in which of the following scenarios would you be most likely to comfort and/or deliver the victim from the oppressor if you had the power to stop what was happening? How would you intervene?

A 14-year-old is beating a 5-year-old.

A mother is being beaten by her husband.

An adult is verbally abusing a child.

A girl is being sold for prostitution.

A boy is being sold into slavery.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Israelites weren’t the only people God delivered from bondage. Amos 9:7 says that He also rescued the Cushites, the Philistines, and the Arameans. We are also in bondage—slavery to sin that the devil has captured us in. God loves us and wants to rescue us. He promised in Matthew 1:21 that Jesus will “save his people from their sins” (NIV). Some of this deliverance can happen right here on earth; the rest will happen in heaven. But God will deliver. Why does God bother to deliver people? Because He sees, He hears, and He knows what they are going through.

INTO THE STORY
“One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew,
one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, ‘Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?’

‘The man said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?’ Then Moses was afraid and thought, ‘What I did must have become known.’

“When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian.”

“During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.”

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. . . . God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ And Moses said, ‘Here I am.’ ‘Do not come any closer,’ God said. ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’ Then he said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.’ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ And God said, ‘I will be with you.’” (Exodus 2:11-15, 23-25; 3:1-12, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

- What parts of the story are key? (Underline them.)
- What aspects or details of the story are new to you? (Place an arrow beside them.)
- What words or phrases capture the various emotions of this story most? (Circle them.)
- What emotions, actions, or adjectives enrich this story? (Place a rectangle around them.)
- Highlight the promises God makes to the Israelites.
- In the story, identify the reason God cares about the Israelites.
- Draw an ear or an eye beside the statements God makes about hearing or seeing the Israelites.
- What does it mean to you to have a God who hears, sees, and knows what you are doing?
- Why do you think this story is included in the record of Scripture?
- List other major lessons that you see emerge in this story.
- If you were to capture this story in five words or less, what would you say?

PUNCH LINES

- “Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God. . . . He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord
lifts up those who are bowed down. . . . The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow” (Psalm 146:5-9, NIV).

- “The Lord Jesus Christ . . . who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age” (Galatians 1:3, 4, NIV).
- “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear” (Isaiah 59:1, NIV).
- “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4, NIV).
- “The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:18, NIV).

OTHER EYES

- “Compassion means that if I see my friend and my enemy in equal need, I shall help both equally. Justice demands that we seek and find the stranger, the broken, the prisoner and comfort them and offer them our help. Here lies the holy compassion of . . . God.”—Mechtild of Magdeburg, 13th-century German mystic and poetess.
- “God is not a deceiver, that He should offer support to us, and then, when we lean upon Him, should slip away from us.”—Augustine of Hippo, 4th-5th-century Italian doctor of the church.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

In the What Do You Think? section you were asked to choose one situation from the list in which you most wanted to intervene. As you completed the exercise, what did you feel? Did you imagine the situation and how angry or upset it made you feel? Why did you want to intervene? Can you think of any reasons that you wouldn’t intervene? Why did you pick the one you did? How could you intervene in a way that would bring healing to both the oppressor and the victim? Consider how God feels when He sees, hears, and knows about the terrible results of sin that are happening all the time. Do you think God wants to intervene? How do you think He does it? When do you think He does it?

Do you think God intervenes by Himself or does He use people? If so, can you think of someone He has used? Why do you think God used that specific person? Do you want to be used by God to help deliver someone? If so, pray to God about someone you know, whether they be at school, your home, your church, or in your neighborhood, and ask God what His will is for them and what you can do.

Sunday

Read the story of Moses in the Into the Story section of this week’s lesson and work through the questions in Out of the Story. What do you think are the central lessons to be learned?

As you read, did you notice God’s kindness? Is there some way in which you want to be delivered or helped by God—from a bad habit, or from someone who is treating you wrongly? If so, pray now for His help and claim the promises that He gave to Moses—“I will be with you; I will deliver you,” and remember, He hears, He sees, He knows.

Monday

Read the Key Text and think about what God means when He says He knows our sorrows. Have you ever wondered if God really knows what it feels like to be really sad? Or to be a victim? Or do you think that this text simply means God knows about our sorrows? Jesus is God; think about the times in Jesus’ life when He was on earth and would have felt sorrow. Take time in prayer to empathize with God.

Tuesday

Read the quote in the Flashlight section. It isn’t easy to trust in God sometimes, especially when we want to do things ourselves. In this week’s story Moses wanted to deliver the Israelites, but he got ahead of God. God had to humble Moses by teaching him to look after sheep in the desert for 40 years! Can you think of times when you have wanted to do something for yourself without asking God how He wanted to do it? How did it take humility to do it God’s way?

Read Paul’s comments about pride, boasting, and letting Christ save us in Ephesians 2:8, 9.

Wednesday

Read the Punch Lines for this week. Some of the
texts talk about God helping with hunger and prison, others talk about Him freeing us from sins, and another talks about God simply comforting those who mourn. God doesn’t always do the same thing for every person; He treats us as individuals. Which text speaks most to you at the moment? Why? Claim that text in prayer and find a way to live it today.

**Thursday**

Read chapter 22 in *Patriarchs and Prophets* and see if you can see any parallels between the story of redemption of the Israelites and the story of Jesus and your redemption. The first might be that both Moses and Jesus were to be like shepherds, or that Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness and Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness. Once you have finished, thank God that He is the same today as He was yesterday, and that He will always be a God who loves to redeem people.

Redemption of the Israelites ___________________

Jesus and my redemption ___________________

**Friday**

Have you, or someone you know, ever experienced God’s redemption? If so, talk to them about it, or write them a letter and ask them to tell you about it. If you have personally experienced God’s redemption, tell someone else about it. Let them know that God hears, sees, and knows what they are going through. Tell them what God has done for you and what He can do for them.

———

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of the Passover is a revelation of the plan of salvation acted out in symbols. It speaks to such topics as righteousness by faith and the blood of the Lamb. These two concepts form the basis for this week’s lesson. From the story and this lesson it is anticipated that the students will:

1. Graciously acknowledge the cost of the blood, that is, Christ’s life.
2. Understand that the blood becomes valuable to them only when, through obedience and loving acceptance, it is personally applied to their lives.
3. Know what the application of the blood to their lives will do, i.e., cleanse, forgive, and restore.

These three ideas will be illustrated from within the story by the sacrifice of the lamb, the necessity of the application of the blood, and God’s resulting action upon the demonstration of the blood on the doors. In this lesson it is possible to overstress the importance of the application of the blood. Although it is very necessary, please do not forget to emphasize the grace and love of God in His giving of the blood.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Realize what the blood of the Lamb will do in their lives. *(Know)*
- Experience gratitude toward God for His giving of His blood. *(Feel)*
- React by applying the blood of the Lamb to their lives. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

- Rebellion
- Great controversy*
- Festivals (biblical)

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

* Fundamental Belief No. 8.

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.*

This activity is designed to frustrate the young people. Hopefully, they will come to the realization that to possess anything without it being able to be used is useless. Make the connection between receiving useless gifts and ones that actually work, and use this to illustrate the necessity of receiving and applying Christ’s blood in their lives.

Illustration

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

This is the story of Chris, Norman, and Busiswe, three theology students from Helderberg College, South Africa, who went on a theology campout in 2003. The theology campout was to be held up on the west coast of South Africa, about 80 kilometers south of Elands Bay.
Elands Bay just happens to be one of the best surfing spots in the world. So when all the other theology students were packing Bibles and sleeping bags, Chris, an avid surfer, was packing and hiding his surfboard. On Sunday morning, when all the students were being led by a teacher in a devotional in the same hall where everyone also slept at night, Chris, Norman, and Busiswe decided it was time to make a run for it.

Norman and Busi sneaked out of the meeting and went and waited in Busi’s car with the engine running, while Chris had to sneak his board out from under his bed. Unfortunately, Chris wasn’t very sneaky, and the remaining 30 students saw Chris running for the door with a surfboard that had magically appeared under his arm. Chris jumped into the waiting car, and the trio sped off down the road.

About 50 meters down the road it dawned on them that they didn’t exactly know how to get to this amazing surf break. So they continued in the direction they had chosen until they came upon a petrol station. They inquired of the attendant, who gave them directions, but the attendant didn’t seem so sure of himself. With directions in hand and their spirits lifted, they drove in what they thought was the right direction, Chris at the wheel speeding as he eagerly anticipated surfing.

Things slowed down when the road they were on turned into gravel, and gradually got worse and worse, making the BMW they were in bounce and shake in a way BMW’s are not meant to. They had to make a decision whether or not it would be worth continuing on their way. So they decided they would check the surf. If it was flat, it wouldn’t be worth continuing the journey.

How do you check the surf on the coast of South Africa when you are on a dirt road in the middle of nowhere? Well, Norman’s cousin was a surfer who lived back in Cape Town, so he gave him a ring. Norman’s cousin referred him to about three other people, and after half an hour of phone calls they still had no idea if there was even going to be salt water at Elands. Sadly they turned back. Two hours later they finally returned to the camp and the scorn of their teachers just as lunch was finishing. As they were getting out of the car, Norman reached under his seat to get his wallet and pulled out a book. It was a book Chris had purchased a month or two before. It was entitled *Top Surf Spots in South Africa*. They opened up to the page on Elands Bay. There was a nice map with directions on how to get there that didn’t involve a dirt road. And there was also a phone number to ring for a report on what the surf was doing!

They were so annoyed with themselves. If they had only realized that they had a book filled with everything they needed to know, it would have changed everything!

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

*Bridge to the Story*

*Share the following in your own words:*

The three people in the story above would have benefited a lot if they had known about the map and used it! In the same way, the Israelites benefited, in fact were saved, because they were told about the blood of the lamb, and they used it! As you read the story about the Passover think about what you know about the blood of Christ shed for you, and what it can do for your salvation.

*Out of the Story for Teachers*

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

- What do you think it means to apply the blood of Christ to your door?
- What does the blood of Christ do? (See Punch Lines for texts concerning this.)
- How do you think it would have felt to sacrifice a perfect little lamb that had been living with you?
- How would you feel if you killed the lamb, then did not apply its blood?
- Even though the plague had not yet come, God’s people were to follow the directions God gave them—they obeyed by faith. In what ways does God instruct you to obey by faith?
- What would it look like today for God to lead you or me out of captivity and into the Promised Land?
- In the story the Israelites are told to eat the Passover with their clothes and shoes on, ready to leave. Why do you think God instructed them to do this and how does that apply to our rescue from slavery to sin today?
- In the story it says: “Then the people bowed down and worshiped” (Exodus 12:27, NIV). Why did they do this? They had received only a promise; nothing had happened yet! Have you ever...
bowed low and worshipped God for something He has promised you? If not why not?

• This story also instructs the people to tell their children why they keep the feast when the children ask. The answer they are to give is that they keep it because God freed them from slavery in Egypt. Have you ever asked anyone why they keep the ordinances of humility and the Lord’s Supper—the continuation of the Passover? (See the Did You Know? section.) What did they tell you?

Sharing Context and Background

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

The story of the institution of the Passover feast provides us with deep spiritual insight into the nature of salvation. Consider the following points:

1. The blood that saves comes only from the sacrificed lamb.
   
   The lamb’s blood on the doorposts in the story of the Passover is all that is required for the salvation of the Israelites. What must be understood is that there are no saving merits in the doorpost, or in the house, but only in the blood of the lamb. This teaches us the absolute necessity of receiving Christ’s blood for our salvation.

2. The saving blood must be applied to our lives.
   
   Once the lamb has been slain, we must act in faith and obey God’s directions about how we receive the saving grace of the blood. Once again, this is not to increase our merit. But, simply, to receive the benefits we must accept the gift.

3. The blood does something in our lives.
   
   The blood, once received into our lives, forgives, cleanses, and restores. See the Punch Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Agree or disagree

Sometimes it may be useful to ask the students whether they agree or disagree with a statement. This is just a simple exercise that will involve the student in the following conversation as they wish to discover what others thought. But when conducting this activity you must be cautious about requesting the students to make a public display of their opinion, in case they open themselves to ridicule. In many cases it would be enough to ask them the question without requesting a public demonstration of their answer. Here is a simple activity that relates to this lesson.

Agree or Disagree—

1. To be rich you need only to have a lot of money in your bank account.
2. To be truly rich you need to spend what you have in your bank account.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

   Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Lines for the biblical texts concerning this. It is only because God graciously gave us the blood that we have the ability to let it forgive, clean, and restore us.

Other Notes of Interest

Exodus 12:11—Passover

“The English translation ‘Passover’ does not do justice to the Hebrew terminology (pesah). That the verb has to do with protection can be seen in Isaiah 31:5, where it is parallel to shielding and delivering. The Lord is not portrayed as ‘passing over’ the door but as protecting the entrance from the slaughtering angel (see 12:23). The blood on the doorposts and lintel can now be seen as purifying the doorway in preparation for the Lord’s presence.”

Exodus 12:12-30—The Tenth Plague

“Egyptian kingship festival. There may be some echo here of the famous Egyptian Sed festival, which represented a renewal of royal authority. Its celebration was intended for all the gods to affirm the kingship of Pharaoh, while here, as a result of the plagues, all the gods must acknowledge the kingship of Yahweh—not a new enthronement, but a recognition of His ongoing power. In the Sed festival the king asserted his dominion of the land by going throughout the land (symbolically) as he desired. Pharaoh’s kingship is being mocked even as Yahweh’s is being asserted, for God goes throughout the land to establish His dominance by the plague.”

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

This story has three basic insights into salvation from which we can learn. These are the cost of the blood, what needs to happen to the blood, and what the blood does for those who apply it to their doors. For the closing activity, separate your class into three groups. In these three groups they will write a prayer in the form of a letter.

1. The first group should write a letter to God to thank Him for giving His own blood for our salvation.
2. The second group should write a letter accepting the blood of Christ in humility and repentance.
3. The third group should write a letter asking and thanking God for what His blood can and will do in their lives. (To see what the blood of Christ can do in your life, see the Punch Lines.)

Once this activity is finished, combine the letters and read the prayer. If possible make copies of this prayer and distribute them for the class.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

- God gave His blood in love and grace.
- We must apply His blood to our lives in thankfulness and repentance, because it will forgive, clean, and restore us.
- Receiving the blood of Christ will in turn make us more grace-filled people.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 23 and 24.

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

“Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. . . . The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.” (Exodus 12:7-13, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT

“Before obtaining freedom, the bondmen must show their faith in the great deliverance about to be accomplished. The token of blood must be placed upon their houses. . . . Had the Israelites disregarded in any particular the directions given them . . . they would not have been secure. . . . By obedience the people were to give evidence of their faith. So all who hope to be saved by the merits of the blood of Christ should realize that they themselves have something to do in securing their salvation. . . . Man is to be saved by faith, not by works; yet his faith must be shown by his works. . . . He must appreciate and use the helps that God has provided” (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 278, 279).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Of the following items, which would you prefer and why?

___ To have a billion dollars in your bank account but not have access to it.

___ To have a Ferrari without the keys to start it or a license to drive it.

___ To have all of Superman’s powers but not ever be able to work out how to use them.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem four days before the lamb was killed in the Temple as the Passover sacrifice for the sins of the people of Israel. Four days before the lamb was to be sacrificed, it was chosen. Therefore, Jesus entered Jerusalem on lamb selection day as the Lamb of God.

2. Friday was the day of the Passover celebration and the day that the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed. For the previous 1,200 years, the priest would blow the shofar (ram’s horn) at 3:00 p.m.—the moment the lamb was sacrificed, and all the people would pause to contemplate the sacrifice for sins on behalf of the people of Israel. On Friday at about 3:00, when
Jesus was being crucified. He said, “It is finished.”

3. The bones of the Passover lamb weren't to be broken, and the Gospel writer John makes it clear that neither were Christ's bones broken (John 19:33).

**INTO THE STORY**

“The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ‘This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

“The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. . . . This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.

“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals. . . . The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.’”

“Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, ‘Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

“Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, “What does this ceremony mean to you?” then tell them, “It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.”’

“Then the people bowed down and worshiped. The Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.” (Exodus 12:1-13, 21-28, NIV)

**OUT OF THE STORY**

- What parts of the story are key? (Underline them.)
- What aspects or details of the story are new to you? (Place an arrow beside them.)
- What words or phrases capture the various emotions of this story most? (Circle them.)
- What is the significance of blood? (See Gen. 9:4-6.)
- Why do you think the instruction to apply the blood is given so carefully?
- What emerges as the central lesson of this story? In other words, why do you think it is included in the record of Scripture?
- What other lessons can be gained from it?
- If you were to capture this story in five words or less, what would you say?
PUNCH LINES

• “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28, NIV).

• “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him?” (Romans 5:8, 9, NIV).

• “Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8, NIV).

• “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7, NIV).

• “And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore” (Hebrews 13:12, 13, NIV).

• “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” (Revelation 1:5, NIV).

OTHER EYES

• “We cannot exercise love unless we are experiencing grace.” —Jerry Bridges, current U.S. Bible teacher and author.

• “Real Christianity is a dynamic process that changes our lives.” —William Barclay, 20th-century Scottish theologian.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

In the What Do You Think? section you were asked to choose between having lots of something useless, or lots of something else that was equally as useless. Did it frustrate you? Did you think about how useless it would be to have any of those things but not be able to use them?

For something to be meaningful to you, you must be able to use it. The Israelites had to do something with the blood of the slain lamb to make it useful; they had to apply the blood to their door. What would have been the point of sacrificing the lamb without applying the blood to the door? It would have been useless.

In the same way, today, what is the point of claiming to believe in God’s grace, which has redeemed us through His blood and provides us the power to follow Him, if we don’t let it activate our lives? Think of ways in which you can connect with God’s grace and power. It may be by accepting God’s forgiveness, or by showing grace to someone you know.

Sunday

Read the story of Moses in the Into the Story section. Work through the study questions in Out of the Story. After that, circle in red all the parts of the story in which you can see symbols of Christ.

Also, on the following lines, write what you think this story can teach you about your salvation and the way in which Christ’s blood works for you. Don’t forget where the blood had to come from and what it cost!

Monday

The Key Text this week is filled with many symbols; one of the most interesting is the way in which the blood is to be applied to the door of the house. What do you think this door means? Consider what a door does, how it allows access, and also read Revelation 3:20. There it talks about each person having to open their door to the Lord. What, then, do you think it means to have the blood of the Lamb on your door? What changed for the Israelites when they had the blood of the lamb on their door? How do you think it makes a difference if you apply or don’t apply the blood to your door? Another symbol in the Key Text is that of the blood. Look through the Punch Lines for texts about what the blood does for those who have it on their door.

Tuesday

In the Flashlight section Ellen White reminds us that for the blood to do anything for us we must do with it what we have been told to do! The quote is really quite understandable. What is your reaction to it? When you consider that it was God’s love that gave you His own blood in such a gracious way, how
does that make you feel? Remember, God won’t ask you to do anything He hasn’t first done for you, He doesn’t know is best for you, or He can’t help you do.

How do you see yourself applying the blood to your doorposts?

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**Wednesday**

The *Punch Lines* for this week are all about the blood of Christ. In these verses there are different things that the blood does for us. *Circle* all the action words. Thank God in prayer for the way the blood works in your life. Thank Him for the grace He makes available to you.

**Thursday**

Eden Ahbez, an American songwriter, once said: “The greatest thing you’ll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return.” Christ gave His blood as a loving sacrifice for you to use, and all He desires is that you will love in return, both Him and everyone here on earth. To apply the blood of Christ to your door means to be loved and love in return. Today, how will you love? Whom will you love? And why will you love?

**Friday**

God has made full provision for us to be saved; we are headed for heaven when we turn, take His provision, and start moving in that direction. In this week’s lesson we have been looking at the blood God has graciously provided us for our salvation—the blood forgives, cleans, and restores. It is only by His blood that we are saved, but by His grace He has provided us His Word, and the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter. Talk with a parent, teacher, or friend and ask them what they appreciate most about the gifts God has given them for salvation.

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I. SYNOPSIS

The story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea captures the human story on a number of different levels. First, it tells the story of salvation. God comes to the rescue of His people and delivers them from bondage.

This is also a story of the human propensity to waffle back and forth between faith and doubt. God’s redemption of the Jewish slaves could not have been more dramatic. The Israelites witnessed firsthand the amazing power of God to split the Red Sea to accommodate their safe crossing. God led them by a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. That God was in this situation with His people was clear from the beginning. Nevertheless, in spite of God’s clear leading, the Israelites quickly slipped into doubting God and criticizing Moses and Aaron. How fickle the human spirit can be!

This story also informs our understanding of worship. The song of deliverance in Exodus 15 ranks as one of the most profound expressions of worship ever written. It really is the song of every human being, for we are all sinners in desperate need of God’s grace.

Finally, this story tells the human story of God’s undying love for His people. As God displayed patience with His people of old, so He continues to model the same longsuffering spirit toward His church. The story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea informs our understanding of our identity as a church. Today, we are His beloved bride He died to redeem.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Learn the story of salvation, i.e., God coming to the rescue of ungrateful, undeserving people. (Know)
• Sense the spirit of human rebellion and see the challenge that God faces in dealing with the human race. (Feel)
• Have an opportunity to decide whether or not to accept God’s provision of grace. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Faith
• Worship
• Salvation (experience of)*
• Identity (as a church)

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

* Fundamental Belief No. 10.

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.

Divide the class into five groups and assign one of the five scenarios in What Do You Think? to each group. Give them a few minutes to plan a coherent
II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Questions for consideration: Do miracles such as that produce faith? Or could it be that faith produces miracles? That is to suggest, when we step out in faith and act on the conviction that God will move a mountain, what often follows is what many would deem a “miracle.” But had we never acted on our faith, the miracle would not have occurred.

In the case of the Israelites, would God have parted the Red Sea had Moses never lifted the rod in his hand? Could it be that miracles such as the parting of the Red Sea come about because we trust God enough to take that leap of faith?

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

• What strikes you most about this story?
• How can you know God’s will? God led the Israelites out of Egypt by a cloud and a pillar of fire; consequently, it was easy for them to know the way God was leading. Do you ever wish God would make His will more obvious in your life? Although God does not usually reveal His will through clouds or fire, He is still just as interested in providing you with guidance. How does God make His will known today?
• How would you explain Exodus 14:4 in which God says, “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” (NIV)? Research the commentaries to see how some scholars have dealt with that sticky text.
• Reflect on Moses’ answer to the grumbling mobs in Exodus 14:13, 14. In light of this statement of faith, it should come as no surprise to find Moses in God’s Hall of Faith, as recorded in Hebrews 11. Compare the story in Exodus 14 with Moses’ legacy recorded in Hebrews 11:23-29. What would it look like today to have the faith of Moses? What risks would that involve for you?
• What are some common “armies of Pharaoh” argument, then ask each group to make a case that their scenario presents the greatest challenge to a teenager’s faith.

As an alternative, divide the students into pairs and ask them to share with each other the first person who comes to mind when they think about a person of faith. Guide their discussion by prompting them with the following questions:

• Why does this person epitomize faith?
• What experiences did this person have that strengthened their faith?
• What has this person taught you about trusting in God?
• Share one characteristic that person has that you aspire to emulate in your life.

After each partner has talked about their person of faith, they can then discuss the similarities between the people they described. Then ask the pairs to share the highlights of their discussion with the whole Sabbath School class.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The sixteenth-century scholar Erasmus related an incident during a sea voyage that stayed with him the rest of his life. His sailing vessel ran aground in a storm. As violent waves smashed against the ship and it began to break up, even the sailors panicked. The passengers were near hysteria. Most shouted for help to their patron saint, sang hymns, or pleaded loudly in prayer.

Erasmus noted one passenger, however, who acted very differently. “Of all of us,” Erasmus wrote, “the one who remained most composed was a young woman who was holding a baby whom she was nursing. She was the only one who did not shout, weep, or bargain with heaven. She did nothing but pray quietly to herself while clasping the baby tightly on her lap.”

This prayer, Erasmus realized, was just a continuation of her regular prayer life. She did not ask for any exceptional favors. She seemed to entrust herself to God.

As the ship began to sink, this young mother was placed on a plank, given a spar to use as an oar, and sent out into the waves. She had to hold her baby with one hand and attempt to row with the other. Few thought she would survive the pounding surf. But her faith and composure stood her in good stead. The woman and her child were the first to reach shore.

(Taken from www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/topics/faith.htm)
today that seek to prevent us from following God? How can we tap into God’s power in order to bury these armies that threaten to destroy us?

Shortly after the Israelites were delivered from Pharaoh, the Bible records: “Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. . . . So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, ‘What are we to drink?’” (Exodus 15:22-24, NIV).

Have you ever had a mountaintop experience with God that was followed by a valley of despair? Why do you suppose this often happens? How could the Israelites forget so quickly how God had been so faithful in leading them out of Egypt? Reading about Elijah’s experience on Mount Carmel and afterward in Scripture and Prophets and Kings might be helpful.

Sharing Context and Background

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

1. The method of leading the Jews by way of a cloud and fire struck a familiar chord in the ancient world. It was the common practice among the Persians and the Greeks to use fire and smoke as signals in their marches. According to one well-known papyrus, the commander of an Egyptian army is called “a flame in the darkness at the head of his soldiers.” Similarly, the Lord also used fire and clouds to manifest Himself as the leader and general of His army (see Exodus 15:3, 6). (Source: Barnes’ Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by Biblesoft.)

2. Discuss the following commentary by Ellen G. White: “The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, ‘Go forward.’ We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, ‘Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;’ but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 290).

3. Exodus 14:3 offers this interesting detail in the story: “Pharaoh will think, ‘The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert’” (NIV). Originally Moses intended to go to the Promised Land through the wilderness, but God redirected him toward the south. Hearing this news, Pharaoh knew that they were

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
completely “hemmed in,” since the waters of the Red Sea then extended to the Bitter Lakes. (In ancient times the Red Sea extended much farther north than it does today.) So Pharaoh assumed that Moses would have them trapped against the Red Sea. But God’s vision is much more encompassing than is humans’ vision. When we might not be able to see a way out of dire circumstances, God knows a million ways to deliver us.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Break the students up into small groups and have each group create a list entitled “Top Ten Ways to Build Faith.” Encourage each group to brainstorm specific ways that we can build our faith. Have each group then share their list with the entire Sabbath School class. After everyone has heard all the lists, have the entire group take the best suggestions from the different lists to put together a combined top ten list.

Summary

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The story of God’s deliverance of Israel highlights the messy realities of faith. It seems everyone’s spiritual journey is comprised of mountaintops and valleys. In the case of Israel, no sooner did they experience God’s miraculous escort through the Red Sea than they started complaining about how God had abandoned them. They whined, “We should have stayed in Egypt rather than come to the desert to die.” Because their story often mirrors our own, this lesson offers an ideal opportunity to explore ways that we can keep our faith strong through both the flower gardens and the deserts.

This story also offers a wonderful metaphor of salvation. Just as God intervened for His children of old, He is eager to lead His children today. Deliverance comes at the hand of a gracious God—it is unearned, undeserved, and unmistakably the greatest story of the human race.

Finally, this story provides insights into worship. Just as Moses led God’s people in the song of deliverance after crossing the Red Sea, so our worship is in response to God’s provision for us. We worship our amazing God because, in Christ, He has provided a way of escape from sin and death. What else can we do but sing and shout His praises?

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 25.

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STUDENT LESSON

KEY TEXT
“Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.’” (Exodus 14:13, 14, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT
“Moses was greatly troubled that his people should manifest so little faith in God, notwithstanding they had repeatedly witnessed the manifestation of His power in their behalf. How could they charge upon him the dangers and difficulties of their situation, when he had followed the express command of God? True, there was no possibility of deliverance unless God Himself should interpose for their release; but having been brought into this position in obedience to the divine direction, Moses felt no fear of the consequences” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 284).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
In your opinion, which of the following scenarios would test your faith the most? Which one would test your faith the least? Explain why.
1. The financial officer of your Christian school has informed you that you need $5,000 in order to stay in school. You believe that God wants you to receive a Christian education, but you have no idea how to get the money to pay for it.
2. You struggle with a destructive addiction. Your friend says that if you “have more faith” God will deliver you from the habit.
3. You are convicted about the importance of having an hour of quiet time with God each day, but you are also behind in your schoolwork.
4. You are the victim of a malicious rumor at school. When you get a chance to get even, you wrestle with the tension of taking the matter into your own hands or trusting God to bring justice to the situation.
5. Your boyfriend/girlfriend is pressuring you to violate God’s boundaries in your physical relationship. If you stay true to your convictions, you’ll be making them unhappy and might even lose them.

DID YOU KNOW?
After God buried the Egyptians in the Red Sea the Israelites sang the song of deliverance (Exodus 15:1-18). Many scholars attribute this magnificent piece of poetry to Moses. For many generations to come, God’s people would sing this song. It is also associated with the final triumph of the church in the book of Revelation (e.g., compare Exodus 15:3 with Revelation 19:11). Some suggest that this is the oldest recorded song in the world.
INTO THE STORY

“When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, ‘What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!’ So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him.”

“As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, ‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn’t we say to you in Egypt, “Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians”? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!’

Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.’"

“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

“The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.”

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.’ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea.”

“But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. And when the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.” (Exodus 14:5, 6, 10-14, 21-23, 26, 27, 29-31, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

• If you were preparing to teach this story to first graders, what key spiritual lessons would you emphasize?

• Find a map of the ancient world and trace the path of the Israelites out of Egypt into the desert.

• What one word would you choose to describe the attitude of the following characters in the story?
  Pharaoh: ___________________________________
  Moses: ___________________________________
  The Israelites: _______________________________
  God: _______________________________________

• Circle any words or phrases in the text that capture the emotions in the story.

• From God’s perspective, what is the primary lesson that you believe He was trying to teach His people through this experience?

• “Israel had to learn from repeated experience that God was able to provide for them. God has preserved these examples in the Bible so that we can learn to trust him the first time. By focusing on God’s faithfulness in the past we can face crises with confidence rather than with fear and complaining.”—Life Application Bible, notes on Ex. 14:10, 11.

PUNCH LINES

• “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2:9, 10, NIV).

• “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that
the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2-4, NIV).

- “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance” (Psalm 32:7, NIV).
- “Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10, NIV).
- “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength, ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:28, 29, NIV).

OTHER EYES

- Faith is: “Believing in advance in something that will only seem logical when seen in reverse.”—Philip Yancey, current Christian author.
- “If you don’t live it, you don’t believe it.”—Paul Harvey, U.S. radio broadcaster.
- “Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.”—Samuel Johnson, 18th-century English lexicographer and author.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

Identify a “Red Sea” in your life. In what way is your faith being challenged by this obstacle? How is God asking you to step out in faith? Who might act as Moses for you and bring you the assurance of God’s leading? Think about your “Red Sea,” then memorize this text: “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today” (Exodus 14:13, NIV).

Sunday

Read the section Into the Story and answer the questions that follow in Out of the Story. With whom do you identify most in the story? Why?

Monday

Read the Punch Lines, then search your Bible (with the help of a concordance or commentary) and write down two more texts that illuminate each of the following topics that emerge from this story of the Israelites leaving Egypt:

**Faith:** ______________________________________
_____________________________________________

**Worship:** ____________________________________
_____________________________________________

**Salvation:** ___________________________________
_____________________________________________

**Our identity as a church:** ______________________
_____________________________________________

Tuesday

Put yourself in the place of one of the Israelites walking through the Red Sea on dry land. Imagine the experience through a variety of senses. What did it smell like? What did it feel like? What did it look like? What did it sound like? If possible, share your first-person narrative as a children’s story in Sabbath School or church.

Wednesday

Read the song of deliverance in Exodus 15. Think of an experience in which God has delivered you. Write your own song of deliverance, then read it to God as an act of worship.

Thursday

Shortly after the incredible miracle at the Red Sea the Israelites forgot about God’s intervention for them, and they started grumbling against Moses and Aaron.

In a small group of friends, discuss the following questions: Have you struggled with a spirit of complaint? Share a story about a time when you experienced God’s supernatural power. Did you find that in time the excitement of that miracle started to wear off? Why is it so easy to forget about God’s miraculous care and slide back into old familiar habits of sin? Can you think of other examples in the Bible in which people forgot about God’s leading in the past? How can we keep from faltering in our faith?
Discuss this statement by Ellen White: “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 1915, p. 196). In the Hawaiian culture there is a similar saying: “E moakaka ke ala o keia mua aku i ka wa i hala.” For fun, commit it to memory. Just remember what it means: “The path to the future is made clear through our knowledge and understanding of the past.”

**Friday**

Keep a journal for the next six months. Carefully document times when you sense God’s leading. In the future, when you find your faith is getting weak, read that journal and remind yourself of how God has been faithful in the past. This practice will bolster your confidence to march ahead in God’s power—even when it feels as if you’re walking into an ocean.

If you take that first step, keeping in mind how God has been trustworthy in the past, you will learn to radically trust God. Moreover, you will see God work miracles you never dreamed possible. But . . . you’ve got to take that first step. So think of an area in which God is inviting you to take a leap of faith . . . then jump!

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness connects with our story today in different ways. First, we find a lesson about contentment. God manifested Himself in dramatic ways to the Jews. Parting the Red Sea for their safe crossing, drowning Pharaoh’s army, leading them by a cloud during the day and fire at night, supplying them with quail and manna to eat, transforming a rock into an artesian well—these are a few of the miraculous ways that God provided for His chosen nation. Nevertheless, they complained that it wasn’t enough. Still today it is easy to grumble in the face of supernatural outpourings of grace from God. When will we learn simplicity? peace? contentment?

This is also a story about trust. Time and time again God showed Himself to be trustworthy. It’s hard to comprehend why the Israelites ever doubted God. After all, He always came through for them. Always! And yet, in spite of God’s faithfulness, doubt so often taints that childlike trust in the Father.

This story also touches on the issue of boredom. If we are not careful we too can become so self-absorbed that even the Creator and Sustainer of all life gets drowned out by our pettiness. We must recognize divine encounters as such and guard against becoming overly enamored with ourselves so that we are no longer amazed by the Almighty.

All in all, this story depicts God’s grace for His children. Just as God led His people in the ancient world, He longs to mold and guide His people today. This story challenges all of us—young and old alike—to trust God and follow His leading.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Understand that God is absolutely trustworthy. *(Know)*
• Be sensitized to the supernatural realities in ordinary life. *(Feel)*
• Be challenged to fully trust God with their lives. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

• Contentment/Peace
• Simplicity
• Boredom
• Trust
• The Sabbath*

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

*Fundamental Belief No. 20

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.
as common as a cold. They’re hot when things are cruising smoothly, but when turbulence hits they’re bad-mouthing God all through the storm.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:
Lance’s flavor of faith is nothing new. It’s at least as old as the children of Israel. When God was acting like God—pummeling the bad guys with plagues, splitting the Red Sea, renovating a rock into a water fountain, and so on—then they were game to trust. But when the perks dried up, so did their faith.

Trusting God is the same story today. There will be both miracles and misery. The key question is this: Will you trust God at all times?

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

• What jumps out at you in this story?
• Why do you suppose the Israelites were so fickle in their faith? Do you ever find yourself wavering in your trust of God?

Consider this text: “In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron” (Exodus 16:2, NIV). What do you make of the detail that “the whole community” participated in the pity party? What does this teach us about peer pressure?

“The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death’” (verse 3, NIV). Do you suppose the Israelites were overreacting a bit? Does the comment about dying in Egypt feel melodramatic to you? Explain your answer.

“But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, ‘Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?’” (Exodus 17:3, NIV). How is it possible for the Israelites to complain about their thirst so soon after God took care of their hunger by providing manna? Can you think of other examples from the Bible when people complained to God? (Jonah, Jeremiah, Elijah, etc.) Identify common threads that weave through all of the stories. (Or, if you have enough students, assign them to three groups to com-

Additional Activities
Circle what you believe to be the top three barriers to trusting God:
- Busyness
- Suffering
- Ignorance
- Anger
- Wealth
- Greed
- Technology
- Peer pressure
- Pride
- Atheists

Now list three more possible barriers to trusting God:

Complete the following statements:
Trusting God . . .
Looks like: ..............................................
Feels like: ...................................................
Sounds like: ..............................................

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:

It wasn’t that Lance didn’t trust in God. He did—so long as God behaved like God. That meant God needed to be a celestial Santa Claus and hand out heaps of health and happiness. He also expected God to keep his bank account flush with cash.

For a while there, Lance was a big believer. He aced his classes without studying (“I just trusted God and He gave me wisdom,” he’d say), got a new Mustang convertible for Christmas (“Dad’s dot-com company went public”), his acne was under control (“Lucky genes, I guess”), and he dated a girl that could stop a riot with her looks (“She’s no library upstairs—but what a staircase!”).

But then some bad breaks cracked Lance’s porcelain life. In one year his father’s business went belly-up, his girlfriend hooked up with the captain of the basketball team, and he fell asleep while driving and crunched his car into a telephone pole.

Suddenly God wasn’t behaving like Himself. At least that’s the way it appeared to Lance. How can I trust God, Lance wondered, if my life is as miserable as the next guy’s?

In the end, Lance’s faith was conditional: he’d play the part of being a Christian so long as God lived up to His end of the bargain. But when life turned sour, Lance bailed on God.

Unfortunately, lukewarm Christians like Lance are as common as a cold. They’re hot when things are cruising smoothly, but when turbulence hits they’re bad-mouthing God all through the storm.
Engage the students in a conversation about what it means to “trust Jesus” today. Explain that “trusting Jesus” simply means believing that Jesus was right about what He taught. If we trust Him, we then live according to His teachings. To make this idea practical, go through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) quizzing the young people on what it would mean in practical terms to trust Jesus in the areas of our lives that He talks about. For example, read Matthew 5:27-30, then ask what it means to trust Jesus when it comes to sexual purity; read Matthew 6:25-34 and ask what it means to trust Jesus with our worries; read Matthew 7:1-5 and discuss trusting Jesus in light of our penchant to judge others. In the end, help students to see that “trusting Jesus” means believing and behaving as if we think that Jesus knew what He was talking about. It’s that simple.

Sharing Context and Background

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

In Exodus 16:25-28 Moses tells the Israelites that they would not find manna on Sabbath. They could gather a double portion on Friday and it would “not stink or get maggots in it” (verse 24, NIV). Notice that Sabbath observance was part of the Jewish culture before God even gave them the Ten Commandments. Still today, God calls His chosen people to remember the Sabbath. Just as it was an issue of trust for the Israelites of old, it remains an issue of trust for God’s true followers today. How so? Jon Paulien suggests three reasons:

1. The Sabbath is the ideal response to what Jesus has done for us.

The Sabbath reminds us to rest from our endless struggle to be good enough, to stop sinning, to earn our...
way to heaven. And in our frenzy to be good enough, God whispers a gift of the Sabbath as a reminder to rest. The work is finished in Christ on the cross. Revel in the joy of just being with Him. Rest.

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:9-11).

2. The Sabbath is an ideal test of loyalty to God.

Even non-Christians believe you should not steal or kill or lie. Most everyone observes nine of the Ten Commandments. But only a few keep all the commandments—including the fourth commandment. Why is the command to “remember the Sabbath day” so important? It is important because it is a symbol of trusting God. It’s not logical. To rest on the Sabbath simply because God says so is an absurd notion to those who do not trust God. But because God is a personal friend in whom we can fully trust, we obey. And that’s all the logic His true followers need.

3. The Sabbath is the ideal symbol of following Jesus all the way.

Jesus kept the Sabbath. Thus He set an example for His followers.

One devout Christian woman who has impacted hundreds for the cause of Christ lives by a simple motto: “Yes, Lord!”

Such is the motto of God’s remnant. The prayer of those who fully trust in Christ will be: “If Jesus kept the Sabbath and He calls me to do the same, then, ‘Yes Lord!’”


III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 26.

*A special adaptation of Patriarchs and Prophets has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
KEY TEXT
“If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.” (Exodus 15:26, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT
“The Lord permitted difficulties to surround them, and their supply of food to be cut short, that their hearts might turn to Him who had hitherto been their Deliverer. If in their want they would call upon Him, He would still grant them manifest tokens of His love and care. He had promised that if they would obey His commandments, no disease should come upon them, and it was sinful unbelief on their part to anticipate that they or their children might die of hunger” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 292).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Fill in the following blanks; compare your answers with those of a friend and explain why you gave the answers you did.
In my opinion . . .
the most trustworthy politician alive is
the most trustworthy athlete is
the most trustworthy profession is
the most trustworthy person I know is

Write a working definition of trust. Trust is

DID YOU KNOW?
The word “manna” comes from the word manhu’, meaning “What is it?” Bible scholars speculate that the name “manna” may have come from the question. It is described as “thin flakes like frost” (Exodus 16:14, NIV). Each person was to take an omer, or roughly two liters or two quarts.
In the Mediterranean region there is a species of tamarisk that exudes a liquid that forms tiny white grains. The locals boil it down and use it like honey. It melts in the sun, but it can be stored for a considerable amount of time in a cool, dry place. It is similar to the description we have of manna; however, the Bible makes it clear that the manna was not a natural phenomenon but a special provision from God.
“In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.’

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.’

“That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, ‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was.

“Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: “Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.”’

“The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’

“Moses replied, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?’

“But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, ‘Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?’

“Then Moses cried out to the Lord, ‘What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.’

“The Lord answered Moses, . . . ‘I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.’ So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.”

“Moses’ father-in-law replied, ‘What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. . . . Select capable men from all the people . . . and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.’ . . . Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.” *(Exodus 16:2-4, 13-16; 17:1-6; 18:17-24, NIV)*

**OUT OF THE STORY**

- *Underline* places in the story that suggest a spirit of discontentment among the Israelites.

- How do you suppose God felt about the Israelites’ lack of trust during all of this drama? What picture of God is revealed in this story?

- The text records that the Israelites “tested the Lord” *(Exodus 17:7, NIV)*. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Compare this passage to Malachi 3:10 when God tells the Israelites, “Test me” *(NIV)*.

- The Israelites got very irritable when they were hungry and thirsty. When are you most susceptible to a grumbling spirit? Grade Moses on how he handled the situation as a leader. Do you think he could have done a better job dealing with it? If so, how? What leadership principle did Moses learn from his father-in-law?

- What’s the one big idea that emerges from this story?

- Underline places in the story that suggest a spirit of discontentment among the Israelites.

**PUNCH LINES**

- “I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” *(John 6:48-51, NIV)*.

- “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the
door will be opened” (Luke 11:9, 10, NIV).
• “But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Timothy 6:8, NIV).
• “See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12, NIV).
• “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19, NIV).

OTHER EYES
• “Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get.”—Anonymous.
• “A contented mind is a continual feast.”—American proverb.
• “The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.”—Dorothy Parker, 20th-century U.S. writer and poet.
• “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”—Corrie ten Boom, 20th-century Christian Holocaust survivor.

MAKING IT REAL
Sabbath
In the What Do You Think? section of this lesson you are asked to think about the idea of trust. Consider some of the following definitions for trust from The American Heritage Dictionary (http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entry/trust):
• Firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing.
• Custody; care.
• Something committed into the care of another; charge.
• One in which confidence is placed.
• Reliance on something in the future; hope.
• Reliance on the intention and ability of a purchaser to pay in the future; credit.
How do the nuances of each definition relate to the story of the Israelites in the wilderness? When God called upon them to trust Him, which definition do you think He had in mind? Why? Next, read Proverbs 3:5, 6. List seven practical ways that you can trust in the Lord with all your heart.
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Sunday
Read Exodus 15–18 to get the full story in context. What part of the story do you relate to the most? Why? Imagine yourself as one of the Israelites who went through this ordeal in the wilderness. In recounting the story for your grandkids, what would you tell them that God wanted to teach His children through this experience?

Monday
Commit the Key Text to memory. Reflect on a time in your past when this text would have been particularly relevant to you. Write the text on a card and place it in a prominent place so that in the future you can apply it. Think about these questions:
• What does it mean to “listen carefully to the voice of the Lord” if you cannot actually hear Him speak?
• What kinds of “diseases” might God protect me from if I “pay attention to his commands”?
• In what way does God long to heal you?

Tuesday
Ellen White offers this commentary on the story of the Israelites in the wilderness: “The Lord permitted difficulties to surround them, and their supply of food to be cut short, that their hearts might turn to Him.” Now apply this insight to your life. What is the hardest difficulty you have faced in your life? Did the experience draw you closer to God or away from Him? What spiritual lessons might you learn in hardship that you won’t be able to learn any other way?

Wednesday
Write a modern paraphrase of the texts in the Punch Lines section of the lesson. Personalize each one so that it reads as a personal note from God to you.

(Hebrews 3:12).
Thursday

It’s easy to be like the children of Israel and cave in to a grumbling spirit. Today, try to speak only words that are positive and energizing. Journal your thoughts about this process on the Notes pages in the back of your study guide. Before going to bed, reflect on how the day was different (assuming that it was).

Friday

What does this lesson teach you about contentment? Do you think that trusting God is the antidote for discontentment? If so, in what way? If not, why not?

I. SYNOPSIS

The Israelites were led from a life of bondage to a place where they could begin a new life with new possibilities. But the idea of being children of God was new too. The religion of Egypt had so corrupted the children of Abraham that they had no idea what it meant to serve the God called Jehovah. And much like an awkward introduction between two strangers, the relationship between God and Israel began with the wonder of what God was like and what He wanted from them.

The very foundation of God’s relationship with Israel was based on the reality of their deliverance. “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself” (Exodus 19:4, NIV). Free from the oppression of slavery and the influence of idolatry, the Israelites were chosen to enter into another chapter of humanity’s covenant with God (a legally binding relationship contracted between two parties)—to be a people with a purpose for the world. Ellen White claims that “God honored them by making them the guardians and keepers of His law, but it was to be held as a sacred trust for the whole world. The precepts of the Decalogue are adapted to all mankind, and they were given for the instruction and government of all” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 305).

In the same way that every healthy relationship has rules that shape the way two parties think and behave toward each other, so God and Israel entered a sacred covenant together. The Ten Commandments were a specific, timeless series of precepts clearly outlining the legally binding relationship contracted with God, which also affected their relationship to one another. The underlying principle of all the commandments was the plea to love God with all their “heart, soul, and strength.” Such a passionate approach to thinking and believing could potentially urge a self-absorbed, ignorant world back to their Creator. This lesson is the story of how those laws were communicated and their intent.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Think about the nature and purpose of God’s law. (Know)
• Sense God’s earnest desire for an intimate walk with people in the commands He gives. (Feel)
• Choose to live in harmony with the God who redeemed them from sin. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Great controversy
• Trustworthiness
• Law of God

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

1 Fundamental Belief No. 8.
2 Fundamental Belief No. 19.
Is it possible that getting the law of God into your heart as it states in Hebrews 10:16 and Jeremiah 31:33 occurs through a similar process to the one outlined in the illustration above? What came first, the pride, the joy, or the obedience?

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.

• Exodus 24:10 says Moses and others “saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself” (NIV). Hebrew tradition has it that the Ten Commandments were cut from the pavement of sapphire. Compare this verse with Numbers 15:38-40. Why do you think the tassels were supposed to have a blue cord? What color is a sapphire?
• A covenant is a legally binding relationship contracted between two parties. Where in this story do you see some elements of a covenant? Check the Punch Lines as well.
• Why do you think Moses was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights?
• Why do you think this story of God giving His law to people is significant today?
• When the children of Israel were given God’s law to live by, they had already been delivered from Egypt and liberated from their oppressors. How would you describe the relationship between salvation (being redeemed by God’s grace) and obeying His law?

Sharing Context and Background

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

Seeing the Face of God in the List

The law of God is often referred to as the “transcript of God’s character.” If you think of the character traits of people you know, you can also think of rules they live by. In many ways, God’s law, even in the form of a list of things to do and not do, outlines and sketches out what God is like.

Why is it so important that we “shall not murder”? Because God is the source of life, and He has deemed that life is sacred. We “don’t lie” because God is truth.
We are to remain faithful to our spouse because God is pure and faithful—always. In every command there is an enduring quality that conveys something about who God is. Examine the Ten Commandments in groups or pairs and look, not only at what God wants you to do or not do, but try to see what each command says about God’s character.

The Blue Stone, the Throne, and Christ

Hebrew tradition has it that the law of God was cut out as a solid piece of sapphire stone from a specific place on Mount Sinai. The Bible seems to support it as well:

In Exodus 24:10 the Bible says that Moses and others “saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself” (NIV). When the prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of the throne of God, there is a significant resemblance to what Moses saw on the mountain: “Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man” (Ezekiel 1:26, NIV). It may be that the law of God was cut from the very throne of God. Furthermore, the Israelites were commanded to remember to keep God’s law by wearing tassels on the hem of their garments with a blue cord woven in (Numbers 15:38-40).

Other passages identify a specific rock on the mountain that when struck provided water for the children of Israel (Exodus 17:6). In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul states that the Israelites “all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ” (verses 3, 4, NIV). Even the scene of God’s throne in heaven in the last chapter of the Bible makes a connection between God’s eternal throne and water flowing from it: “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Study Tools: Concordance

Teaching young people to use a concordance to research a topic, word, or theme is an example of higher-order thinking. A concordance is an index of every word used in Scripture and where it is found.

For example, if your young people want to continue this week’s study further, they can look up in a concordance the word “throne,” and they will find that “throne” is used at least 150 times in the Bible and where they can find each reference. Some passages might be irrelevant, but others might be illuminating. It is very exciting to see them make discoveries and search on their own initiative. When we empower them with the tools of study they can be “thinkers and not mere reflectors.”

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
There is an interesting connection between God’s law, His throne, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Have each student answer the following question on their own: If everyone in the world would fully keep one of the Ten Commandments, which command would make the greatest impact on the welfare of humanity? Have them write on a piece of paper the one they think would most change the world, and then have them pair up and compare notes. Ask the class to share which command they chose and why.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

In Egypt, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had forgotten who God was and who they were as well. When God delivered His children from their oppressors, they didn’t know who He was. The law was given to them both in a general way—Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength—and in the more specific “do’s and don’ts” of the Ten Commandments. These commandments were not given in order for them to earn their salvation but were given to enable them to more fully understand the One who saved them.

Every enduring relationship is framed by rules. God’s law was a portrait of His goodness and fairness. And in keeping God’s commands we get to know Him more fully. God’s command to be faithful, honest, selfless, content, respectful, and connected to God as Creator will only enrich your understanding of God. It was God’s plan that as people experienced these qualities in their own life, others in the world who did not know God would be drawn by the character of the children who lived in harmony with His law. What might happen in your world if you were to allow God’s law to be written in your heart and in your life?

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 27, 29, 32.

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

KEY TEXT

“This is what you are to . . . tell the people of Israel: “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.”’” (Exodus 19:3-5, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT

“The law was not spoken at this time exclusively for the benefit of the Hebrews. God honored them by making them the guardians and keepers of His law, but it was to be held as a sacred trust for the whole world. The precepts of the Decalogue are adapted to all mankind, and they were given for the instruction and government of all. Ten precepts, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, cover the duty of man to God and to his fellow man; and all based upon the great fundamental principle of love” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 305).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Rank the following Ten Commandments in order of the way they impact your daily life (1 being the most and 10 being the least).

___ “You shall have no other gods before me.”
___ “You shall not make for yourself an idol . . . [or] bow down to . . . or worship them.”
___ “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.”
___ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”
___ “Honor your father and your mother.”
___ “You shall not murder.”
___ “You shall not commit adultery.”
___ “You shall not steal.”
___ “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
___ “You shall not covet . . . anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exodus 20:3-17, NIV).

DID YOU KNOW?

When Moses and the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites, the Israelites were winning as long as Moses held his hands up. The Hebrew ki yad al kas yah literally says, “a hand was on the throne of the Lord.” Even though Moses had assistance (Aaron and Hur, and a couple of stones), his experience was described in the New Testament in Hebrews 4:16: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (NIV).

INTO THE STORY

“Then he said to Moses, ‘Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the others must
not come near. And the people may not come up with him.’

“When Moses went and told the people all the Lord’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, ‘Everything the Lord has said we will do.’ Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said.

“He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. . . . Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, ‘We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.’

“Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.’

“Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.’

“Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, ‘Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.’

“When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.” (Exodus 24, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY
• Circle the different characters mentioned in this story.

• Read the story and underline three to five key points in the story that are interesting to you.

• What part of this story do you wish you could see? Why?

• What are some questions you have about this story that don’t seem to be answered in the text?

• A covenant is a legally binding relationship contracted between two parties. Where in this story do you see some elements of a covenant? Check the Punch Lines and Key Text as well.

• Why do you think this story of God giving His law to people is significant today?

• When the children of Israel were given God’s law to live by, they had already been delivered from Egypt and liberated from their oppressors. How would you describe the relationship between salvation (being redeemed by God’s grace) and obeying His law?

PUNCH LINES
• “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40, NIV).
• “For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy.
that they might keep his precepts and observe his laws" (Psalm 105:42-45, NIV).

- "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds" (Hebrews 10:16, NIV; see Jeremiah 31:33).

- "Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have my law in your hearts: Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults... But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations" (Isaiah 51:7, 8, NIV).

OTHER EYES

- "We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed."—Brother Lawrence, 17th-century Carmelite lay brother.

- "I know the power obedience has of making things easy which seem impossible."—Teresa of Avila, 16th-century Spanish mystic, writer, and monastic reformer.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

Answer the What Do You Think? section of this lesson and consider how your choice is relevant to your life. Some might suggest that rules written 4,000 years ago might not have a place in the modern world today. Read Isaiah 51:7, 8 and rewrite this passage in your own words. What phrase or part of the passage speaks to you today?

Monday

Consider the message of the Key Text (Exodus 19:3-5). It is important to note that God first saved the Israelites from bondage and then offered the terms of His covenant with them (a legally binding relationship contracted between two parties) in the form of the Ten Commandments.

How would you explain to someone three to five years younger than you the relationship between being obedient to God’s law and embracing the salvation that comes to all by faith? What creative ways could you use to describe grace and obedience? What message do you think is easier to convey to a child—the notion that God’s grace is free, or the challenge to obey God faithfully with your behavior?

Tuesday

In the Flashlight section Ellen White extends the purpose of the commandments. She says that they are not only for those who believe in God, but also for those who may come to receive Him.

Read the quote and think of someone you know who models the character of God to you. In what specific ways do you see the marks of God in their life? What are some of the traits that endear them to others? When you consider that the bottom-line principle in God’s law is “love,” how will “loving people” be a testimony to unbelievers and seekers of God? Can you think of someone you know who has come to know God because of the loving kindness of someone else? Write that person a note or send them a message thanking them for their witness of love.

Wednesday

Read the passages listed in the Punch Lines and

Although the Ten Commandments may seem like “do’s and don’ts,” how does the law of God portray what He is like?
**Key Text** sections and underline or identify the phrase in each verse that captures your attention the most. Why? Continue to reflect on the passages about God’s law this week and ask God to give you an opportunity to share your insights with someone else.

**Thursday**

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 27, you will find a rich commentary on the law of God and the purpose He had for His people to bless the world. As you read, highlight the parts of your reading that convey a new insight to you.

**Friday**

It’s not hard to be overwhelmed by a list of rules to obey and miss the ultimate purpose for their existence. It seems clear that God gave the law to orient His children toward the abundant life of loving relationships and to detour them away from disappointment and destruction. But it is not enough to simply hear and know what God proclaims as the way to a fruitful life; we must find a way to integrate those principles into our lives. Read Hebrews 10:16 and Jeremiah 31:33, and reflect on how you might get God’s law in your mind and in your heart.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Israel’s journey to their promised life in the land of milk and honey is riddled with moments of disobedience and disbelief. Amid the many miracles of God’s guiding hand and tender care, tendencies toward sin and idolatry were hard to break. The lesson this week marks a pivotal point in the leadership of Moses and portrays how hard it is to break the habits of sin.

As Moses communed with God on the mountain, the signs of God’s continued presence had not left the people’s sight. Some thought that something must have happened to Moses. Patriarchs and Prophets claims that although “the cloud was still in view, it seemed to many in the camp that their leader had deserted them, or that he had been consumed by the devouring fire” (p. 315). Instead of reflecting on the ways God had led them in the past and resting on their belief in God, they allowed their minds to idle. The inactive belief in God’s promise bore the fruit of disbelief, and some of the Israelites pressed Aaron into making the golden calf and instituting a new festival of worship.

God informed Moses of the behavior of the Israelites and made the decision to obliterate them all and start over, making a great nation out of Moses. In fact, Moses would have been the new Abraham—the grandfather of a great nation. But Moses modeled selfless leadership and Christlike humility by suggesting another way. Moses pleaded with God to change His mind and to spare the people, even if it meant blotting his own name out of the book of life. The very prayer of Moses pushed God to relent and restore the people with another chance. Although the scene of this story is filled with disaster, it contains some powerful images of God’s grace and justice as well as our human propensities and the tender humility Moses demonstrated on behalf of his people.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Discover the way events expose the character of God, people, and leaders. (Know)
• Feel the jealous passion of God for a people who will love and obey Him. (Feel)
• Determine to align themselves on God’s side whether temptation is near or far away. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Worship
• Anger
• Idolatry
• Peer pressure

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

Share this illustration in your own words:

A group of researchers were studying the feeding patterns of tuna off the southern coast of Australia. A small wrinkle in the program occurred when a large great white shark jumped over an electric fence that surrounded the pen of fish in the water. Naturally, the shark initially feasted on a banquet of tuna fish for a season before the researchers even noticed it was in the area. What was amazing was the way the tuna found a way to avoid the hungry shark. The observers noticed how every time the shark would rise to the surface the tuna would huddle at the bottom, and when the shark would make its way to the bottom the tuna would swim to the top. Basically, the tuna learned to avoid being eaten by putting a safe distance between themselves and the shark at all times.

It makes sense to avoid temptation in a similar way. But how realistic is it to “avoid” temptation or always “run in the other direction” when the opportunity for dubious behavior arises? On the one hand, we need to avoid temptation by positioning ourselves far from it. On the other hand, we may not always be able to avoid circumstances that tempt us, so we need to believe so firmly in God’s Word and His leading that we can stand even when we have to face temptation head-on.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The tuna in the story above learned to avoid danger by distance, but what happens when temptation and sin are jumping, shouting, and dancing right before you, as it was when Moses remained on the mountain? Before they knew it, many were worshiping a golden calf claiming, “This is the god that brought us out of Egypt.” Consider how the Israelites responded and look for the lesson in this week’s Bible story.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

- As you read this passage, what words or phrases stand out as pivotal to the story?
- Who are the main characters mentioned, and how are their character and personality reflected in this event?
- What is shocking about God’s attitude and behavior in this story?
- What is unique about Moses and his attitude and behavior in this story? (You may have to read the rest of the story to get the whole picture.) What evidence do you see in this story of Moses’ reputation of being a man of great humility?
- Why do you think it is so easy for the Israelites to slip and fall into sinful behavior? How long do the miracles God performs on behalf of the Israelites last in securing their belief? Is this true for people today? What kind of patience should be extended toward people who are new to God’s family? Are the people who led Israel into sin in this story harshly treated? What evidence of God’s mercy is revealed in regard to them? Are they given a chance to explain or do what is right?
- Let’s read the rest of the story and list four or five key verses that capture its essence.
- What do you see as the message God has for you in this story?

Sharing Context and Background

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

This week’s story is filled with some amazing insights into the qualities of good leaders, and into the character of God’s grace mixed with His unwaivering insistence on loyalty. There are glimpses of the way our sinful habits tend to die hard and the way miracles don’t really deepen our belief the way we think they should. As you discuss this story with your class, consider the following snapshots that come out of it.

On Moses and Meekness

Moses has a reputation of being a man of meekness. Yet images of a staff-wielding, fire-breathing prophet of God who parted the Red Sea are also very real. Where do we see him as meek? Consider the way he reacts to God’s decision to give up on Israel and start over:

God disowns Israel—Before, God had referred to the Israelites as “My people” almost 20 times
Yet, when the Israelites rebel and make the golden calf, God disclaims them saying to Moses: “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt” (Exodus 32:7, NIV). God is completely fed up with them and says, “Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation” (verse 10, NIV). Now, Moses could have been flattered by such an opportunity—a chance to start over and become the new father of the Lord’s chosen people. But Moses pleads with God to spare the disobedient throng and even says, “But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (verse 32, NIV). Ultimately, Moses, in his selflessness, gets God to give them another chance. Have you considered the things that make great people great? Think about the Bible characters and what they really did to claim fame.

On Prayer

Another intriguing discussion concerns the nature of prayer and whether our prayers can really move God to do something other than what He would have done. Ellen White discusses this in The Great Controversy: “The same compassionate Savior lives today, and He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. The natural cooperates with the supernatural. It is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask” (p. 525; italics supplied).

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Dramatic Reading

Sometimes reading the Scripture can become redundant even if everyone is given a chance to read. Sometimes the flow of the story or details can be lost if the story is not read carefully or enthusiastically.

This week’s lesson (Exodus 32–34) is a riveting story with several characters speaking, saying some pretty amazing things. Photocopy the chapters and highlight the parts for readers to read. One part can be that of a narrator, another part—God, another—Moses, and so on. Have the students practice the reading once or twice outside or in the hallway before class so the reading can be fluid. You might ask the students in class to read the story quietly first and then read the story dramatically. This exercise can evoke more interest and therefore better listening, not to mention involve a handful of students in a creative way.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
pray? How does it change how often we should pray? How does it change what we should pray for?

III. CLOSING

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

Divide the students into groups of two or three for the following exercise. Ask each person to make a list of five to ten major events, starting with the Exodus, in which God had unmistakably proven His protection and care for Israel. Then, on the other side of the page, to make a similar list of ways they have seen God work in their life. Have them share their lists with the members of their group.

For debriefing ask the following question: In the heat of the moment, will your past experiences be enough to enable you to be faithful to God? If not, what else do you need in order to be able to resist the temptations that may come your way?

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

This story has so many rich lessons in it that it is hard to know which to apply to our life today. The Israelites were so quick to forget what God had done for them and slip mindlessly into sin. Do you ever forget to pay attention to what God has done for you? Do you ever forget to remember?

Furthermore, what a selfless person Moses was to stick his neck out for a bunch of people who seemed hopeless. Is it possible you have friends that seem hopeless? Do they need someone who will continue to pray for them, even when they are going in the wrong direction?

What about the way God draws a line in the sand and gives everyone a chance to repent and either confess their loyalty or stubbornly cling to their way? Maybe God is calling you to cross the line today.

Maybe you are being given an opportunity in this story to confess your need of God’s grace and commit to being loyal to God.

cornerstoneconnections
Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 28.

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

KEY TEXT

“The Lord said to Moses, . . . ‘they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.’ But Moses . . . said, ‘why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?’” (Exodus 32:9-11, NIV)

A or D: The best way to avoid falling into temptation is to be firm in your belief.

The above statements raise key issues that emerge in this week’s story. Which statement do you think should be discussed and studied the most? Why?

FLASHLIGHT

“The prosperity of God’s chosen people was dearer to [Moses] than personal honor, dearer than the privilege of becoming the father of a mighty nation. God was pleased with his faithfulness, his simplicity of heart, and his integrity, and He committed to him, as a faithful shepherd, the great charge of leading Israel to the Promised Land” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 319).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Indicate whether you agree (A) or disagree (D) with the following statements and explain why.

A or D: God never changes His mind.
A or D: Temptation begins with our tendency to be selfish and do our own thing.
A or D: God is right to punish people who are resolute in the choice to sin.
A or D: God’s anger and justice seem to contradict His compassion and love.

A or D: The children of Israel are often referred to as a “stiff-necked” people. In the original language the Hebrew word for “stiff-necked” means stubborn. This image comes from the example of a beast or work animal that simply will not submit to the rein or yoke. The stubborn animal adamantly resists bending its neck to pull the load. You can read samples of this description in Exodus 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deuteronomy 9:13.

DID YOU KNOW?

• There are several comical things that people have said recorded in Scripture. Where would Aaron’s remark in Exodus 32:23, 24 rank?

INTO THE STORY

“When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, ‘Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’
“Aaron answered them, ‘Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.’

“So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, ‘Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.’

“So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

“‘I have seen these people,’ the Lord said to Moses, ‘and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.’”

“But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. ‘O Lord,’ he said, ‘why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, “it was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth”? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people....’

“Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.” (Exodus 32:1-14, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

• As you read this passage, what words or phrases stand out as pivotal to the story?

• Who are the main characters mentioned and how is their character and personality reflected in this event?

• What is shocking about God’s attitude and behavior in this story?

• What is unique about Moses and his attitude and behavior in this story?

• Why do you think it was so easy for the Israelites to doubt God and slip into sinful behavior?

• What do you see as the message God has for you in this story?

PUNCH LINES

• “And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation’” (Exodus 34:6, 7, NIV).

• “Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’” (Luke 23:34, NIV).

• “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7, NIV).

• “But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers
served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15, NIV).

OTHER EYES

- “Religion is the fashionable substitute for belief.”—Oscar Wilde, 19th-century English (Irish-born) writer.
- “Unbelief in one thing springs from blind belief in another.”—Georg Lichtenberg, 18th-century German physics professor.
- “Compassion is the basis for all morality.”—Arthur Schopenhauer, 19th-century German philosopher.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

The What Do You Think? section of this week’s lesson contains statements for you to agree or disagree with. Which statements did you find were easy to respond to, and which ones required a little more thought before you were ready to answer? Which statement seems to connect with something you are going through lately in your personal life? In James 4:7 the Bible says, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (NIV). Reflect on how easy or difficult applying this passage might be for you in the circumstances you face.

Sunday

Read Into the Story and answer the study questions in Out of the Story. As you work through the passage you may notice several major themes that emerge—which one seems to be speaking to you today? How do you reconcile the anger of God with His compassion and mercy? This story conveys two sides of God’s character. How difficult is it for you to connect the two—seeing them as one whole? What other stories in the Bible portray God’s anger and judgment and at the same time reveal His grace and mercy?

Monday

The Key Text this week comes from Exodus 32:9-11. Read the verses several times and, if they’re available, try reading them in a few other translations as well. What do you think is meant by the word “stiff-necked”? In what way are you stubborn or hard to bend? God seems to be at the end of His patience with Israel. Which do you think was most offensive to God in this scenario?

- The fact that they would so easily lose focus in light of all that God had already done.
- The way that the Israelites gave credit to a golden calf for the things He had done for them.
- The way many of them stubbornly refused to repent when given a chance to receive mercy (read the rest of Exodus 32).

Tuesday

The Flashlight clip from Patriarchs and Prophets portrays the amazing leadership quality of Moses—genuine selflessness. Read the quote and think of someone you know who is a standard bearer of humility. What specific actions or qualities have you witnessed from their life that demonstrate a Moses-like attitude and behavior?

In the same way Moses interceded for the people, whom do you want to intercede for today? You might choose a friend or a family member, or someone you know in the community who is going in the wrong direction.

Wednesday

Among the Punch Lines there are a few passages that come from the story and some that relate to themes in the story. Read the verses (along with the Key Text) and identify the one verse that most speaks to your life today. Take some time to internalize these passages and ask God to open up an opportunity for you to engage in a conversation with another person about this story. It may be that you know someone who needs to make a decision about whether they will be on God’s side or stubbornly stick to their own way. Pray earnestly for them, and ask God to guide you in encouraging them to choose to be on the Lord’s side.

Thursday

Chapter 28 in Patriarchs and Prophets opens up another perspective into the idolatry that occurred at the base of Mount Sinai. As you read this chapter, look for the insights that color in the story for you. You will also read phrases that offer principles to live by that can be a source of encouragement and instruction.
Ellen White states one principle that is powerful this way: “God would have His servants prove their loyalty by faithfully rebuking transgression, however painful the act may be” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 323, 324). When have you witnessed a young person stand up for what was right even though others might have misunderstood or ridiculed them?

**Friday**

Read Exodus 34:6, 7. Rewrite this passage in your own words and try not to use any of the same words or phrases. Reflect on the fact that God is much bigger than our comfort zone, and yet still the God we can have close to us all the time.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Every time humanity stumbled in their faithfulness, God initiated reconciliation and provided a clear and effective way for recovery. God’s plan to restore the fallen human race is the central subject of the tabernacle the Israelites carried with them on their journey to the Promised Land. It is clear in Scripture that God’s greatest desire is to “dwell with us.” Given the unbelief and the deliberate disobedience of the Israelites, the tabernacle had to be constructed to house the presence of God.

The building of such a dwelling place would take time, resources, and great care, and would ultimately mirror a sanctuary that existed in heaven (Hebrews 9:23, 24). Every detail of the tabernacle was to be constructed with precision because every aspect of the structure was filled with meaning. This is why 15 chapters in the book of Exodus are devoted to the details of erecting a tabernacle. It is possible that when studying about the sanctuary there is so much information that the story of God’s heart to save His people can sometimes get lost.

This lesson introduces the story of the sanctuary, focusing on its ultimate purpose and how God’s people responded to the opportunity to build it. The content of this week’s study focuses on the overarching theme of God’s amazing initiative of grace in the form of the tabernacle. The central passage for this study begins with the building process and ends with a fast-forward to the point where God moves into His dwelling place. The outer court, the altar of burnt offering, the laver, the holy place, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense speak to God’s mindful plan to make all things new. The curtain that separates the holy place from the Most Holy Place stands between our sinfulness and God’s holiness with the awful reminder that we need a mediator to make things right with God. The very presence of God rested above the ark of the covenant and assumed His rightful place next to the tents of mankind. Patriarchs and Prophets unpacks the building process as well as conveying what each part symbolizes.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Understand the purpose and meaning of the tabernacle. (Know)
• Experience a deep appreciation for God’s initiative to deal with sin and to live with people. (Feel)
• Endeavor to develop a personal understanding of and experience with God’s plan of salvation. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Festivals (biblical)
• Sanctuary (Christ’s ministry in the heavenly)¹
• Christ’s life, death, and resurrection²

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

¹ Fundamental Belief No. 24.
² Fundamental Belief No. 9.
TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

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

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:

When the sun goes down in many neighborhoods, there are automatic sensors to turn the streetlights on. It is possible to not even notice when they turn on or off—they are always there. While visiting a retirement home one evening with a group of young people I met Damien. Damien would sit by a window in the lobby every evening at dusk, without fail. He would take his position in full view of an ordinary street that had no real beauty or points of interest—except a streetlight. He looked out the window and pointed, “Look, it’s almost time.” Sure enough, a few seconds later the streetlight came on automatically. He smiled fondly at the technological advance and mused about his fascination with the streetlight and how it reminded him of the way he grew up.

Damien went to school during the day and worked in a sawmill in the afternoon. After work, Damien would make his way home along the familiar country roads as the sun would go down and the sky would slowly begin to darken. His house was located beyond a small gatehouse occupied by his aunt and uncle, who would read and talk by the light of the fireplace. The light from the fireplace signaled that they were home and he was welcome. The light beaming from the window was enough to enable Damien to see the path to their door and to make his way home afterward. After visiting he would leave the warmth of the gatehouse and make his final trek home.

The light was always there. They were always home. He was always welcome.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

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

In the same way a lamp on a stand or a fire in the fireplace lights our way and lets us know that someone is home, the tabernacle was a clear, vivid indication that God was with His people. The many visual reminders were hard to miss—from pillars of fire and clouds that would house the presence of God to the Shekinah glory that filled the Most Holy Place. The story of the construction of the sanctuary is introduced in this week’s lesson. As you study the selected passages and work through the study questions, keep in mind God’s plan to be there for His people in their time of need.
purpose of the tabernacle. It is a pointing to, and an expression of, Christ's work on behalf of humanity. Even more, all its aspects are embodied in the person of Christ. Notice:

John 1:14 declares that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (NKJV). The very name Christ is given in Matthew 1:23 is Immanuel, which means “God with us.” Jesus continued this theme in the Gospel of Matthew when He says, “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20, NIV). When Jesus commands the disciples with the gospel commission, He urges them on, saying, “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20, NIV). And finally, the last book of the Bible conveys the same theme: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’” (Revelation 21:3, NIV). Again, the theme of the sanctuary message is about people being with God, a condition that was severed by sin’s effects.

A Better Perspective When Your World Is Falling Apart

I have often wondered, “How does the message of God’s sanctuary really help young people when they are down and discouraged or disillusioned about life?” Consider what Asaph said in Psalm 73:

In verse 1 Asaph claims, “Surely God is good to Israel” (NIV). It almost sounds as if Asaph is saying what should be said when you consider what comes next. The next 15 verses contain a scathing, even scary, description of his frustration with the way evil people prosper and good people get burned. Asaph says, “my feet . . . almost slipped” (verse 2, NIV). But when Asaph gathers all of his frustrations about what God is doing and what He is not doing, he finally gets some perspective. Where does he get it from? Verses 16, 17 say: “When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny” (NIV).

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
An understanding of the work of the sanctuary is relevant to all people, because in it we see God’s plan to deal with sin and make all things new.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Chapter 30 of Patriarchs and Prophets contains brief descriptions of the different elements of the sanctuary service. Divide the students into pairs and give them a section of the sanctuary descriptions to read about. There are approximately one to three paragraphs on each major aspect of the sanctuary. Instruct the groups to draw a picture of what is happening in their section of the sanctuary. One group might have the outer court and the altar and the laver. Challenge the students to be ready to describe what each part represents and how it points to Christ as you display their artwork to the rest of the class. They may not understand all of the symbolism, so be ready to say, “This tabernacle is going to show up several times in the coming weeks, and we will get to know it better as we move through the Old Testament.”

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The beauty and the complexity of the sanctuary system cause some people to dive into the details and drive some away. Often, the problem is that they don’t see the meaning and the purpose of building the sanctuary. It was necessary. The blatant sins of Israel caused a deep wall of separation between God and His people. But God wanted desperately to commune with them. So God devised a way for them to dwell together and to communicate His great plan of salvation to them. It was genius the way God sought to tie the most important work for their salvation to everyday life so they wouldn’t forget. Maybe that is what Christians today should find a way to do: Integrate the work of Calvary into every aspect of their life. It is necessary, and it is so easy to forget.

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Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 30.

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

KEY TEXT

“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.” (Exodus 25:8, 9, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT

“With deep emotion the people beheld the token that the work of their hands was accepted. There were no loud demonstrations of rejoicing. A solemn awe rested upon all. But the gladness of their hearts welled up in tears of joy, and they murmured low, earnest words of gratitude that God had condescended to abide with them” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 350).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The following is a list of truths about the plan of salvation that are taught by the ministry of the sanctuary. Rank them according to which speak to you personally (1 being the most, 5 being the least).

___ The cost of sin required the blood of an innocent sacrifice.

___ The sanctuary is meaningful because it shows how God made a way for us to dwell with Him.

___ Every Old Testament sacrifice pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

___ In the same way that the priest was a mediator for Israel, Christ is our mediator with God.

___ While the daily sacrifice offers forgiveness, the judgment (day of atonement) covers us and pronounces us “not guilty.”

___ The earthly sanctuary was a model of a heavenly sanctuary.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word “temple” is used 15 times in the book of Revelation. The Old Testament sanctuary was patterned after a heavenly sanctuary, which seems to be a theme in the last book of the Bible. In fact, the original purpose of the sanctuary was so God could “dwell” with His people. God’s ultimate purpose for the sanctuary emerges as the crowning event of Scripture. “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’” (Revelation 21:3, NIV). Maybe there is more to the sanctuary than just a bunch of symbols to remember!

INTO THE STORY

The Beginning of Building the Sanctuary

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and hides
of sea cows; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”

**The Talent for Building the Sanctuary**

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts. . . . Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you. . . . They are to make them just as I commanded you.’”

**The Completion of Building the Sanctuary**

“Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.” (Exodus 25:1-9; 31:1-11; 40:33-38, NIV)

**OUT OF THE STORY**

- What are some of the key words and phrases in this passage?
- What was the ultimate purpose for building the sanctuary?
- Why do you think God instructed individuals to give to the building of the sanctuary as their heart prompted them to give? (See Exodus 25:2.) What was the response of the Israelites? (See Exodus 35:29 and 36:6, 7.)
- Why do you think God was so specific with the instructions for building the sanctuary?
- Describe how you think the Israelites must have felt when the tabernacle was finished.
- Fifteen chapters in Exodus are devoted to the tabernacle and the services to be performed in it. Scan these chapters and see if you can identify any recurring themes that seem to be emphasized.
- If you were to choose one verse that captures the essence of the tabernacle, which would you choose and why?

**PUNCH LINES**

- “Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God” (Exodus 29:45, NIV).
- “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’” (Revelation 21:3, NIV).
- “Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord: ‘The Lord looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death’” (Psalm 102:18-20, NIV).
- “And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” (Mark 15:38, NIV)
bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split” (Matthew 27:50, 51, NIV).

• “The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man” (Hebrews 8:1, 2, NIV).

(See also: John 1:1-5, 14.)

OTHER EYES

• “The Christian religion rests on the assumption that this gulf between the human and the divine . . . can be bridged. More than that, it . . . has been bridged through a divinely appointed go-between, a Mediator.”—Walter F. Specht, 20th-century Adventist theologian.

• “Israel was thereby enabled to see that the throne of God—a throne of uprightness and unswerving justice—was also a throne of grace and mercy.”—Frank B. Holbrook, 20th-century Adventist theologian.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

Rank the statements of truth listed in the What Do You Think? section of this week’s lesson and explain your number one ranking and your number five ranking. What are some other truths or teachings about the sanctuary that are not in the list? Read Matthew 1:23 and John 1:1-5, 14 and compare these passages with God’s purpose for making a sanctuary. In what way and to what degree is the sanctuary connected to the person of Christ?


Monday

Read the Key Text in Exodus 25:8, 9 several times and take note of the key ideas that grow out of this passage. How do you respond to the notion that God desperately wants to commune with people who barely even know that He exists? Is this theme evident elsewhere in Scripture? Where? What does the image of a heavenly sanctuary look like in your mind? How is it similar to or the same as the earthly sanctuary and how might it be different?


Tuesday

The Flashlight quotation for this week is a beautiful description of the state of the heart of Israel when God moved into the sanctuary they had worked for months to build. Do you know someone who feels as keenly the presence of God with a heart of gratitude? How do they express their joy in their relationship with God?


Wednesday

In the Punch Lines section of this week’s lesson is a list of a few verses that convey different aspects of God’s plan of salvation as seen in the sanctuary service. If you had to pick one of the verses given, which one best captures the work of salvation from your perspective? What are some elements all of these verses have in common? If you had to give a Bible study to someone else on the meaning and purpose of the tabernacle, where would you begin and what would you focus on? Why?


Thursday

Chapter 30 in Patriarchs and Prophets walks the reader through the various parts of the tabernacle service in rich and clear detail. Read this chapter and highlight the parts of the chapter that bring you a new
understanding of the sanctuary. Take a moment to reflect on how important this theme is to understanding the gospel of grace. Consider the need to have bloodshed, a sacrifice, a mediator, cleansing, and, ultimately, judgment. How are all these ideas tied to Christ? How do they impact your relationship with Christ right now?

Friday

God has always had a plan for our redemption. When sin entered the landscape of human life, God had already made provision for the needs of those on earth. The sanctuary in the desert was patterned after God's system in heaven. It was not an afterthought or a quick-fix bandage for our situation. God had a plan to redeem and restore humanity that is the focus of the work that goes on in heaven.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-6, which sums up the whole plan. Take some time today to reflect on the work of the tabernacle and what it says about the One to whom it was pointing. The sanctuary simply makes no sense without Jesus, “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, NIV).

what about me?

Scripture Story: Numbers 11; 12; Leviticus 10:1-11.
Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 33 and 31.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This lesson focuses on Numbers 12—the story of Aaron and Miriam’s jealousy of Moses, their attack on Moses’ wife, Zipporah, and God’s subsequent defense of Moses and punishment of Miriam. Students are encouraged to think about the role of leaders and how they respond to those in positions of leadership, especially if they have feelings of jealousy or resentment.

The student lesson does not focus directly on the Numbers 11 story of the Israelites’ grumbling over manna and being given quail to eat. However, this story can be brought out in the Sabbath School class as useful background to Numbers 12. It vividly illustrates the pressures Moses faced as a leader and the challenges of his role. Leaders who are doing God’s work need our encouragement and support. A closer look at Miriam’s and Aaron’s roles among the children of Israel reminds us that each of us is called by God to a special work. Rather than envying those who are in “high-profile” positions, we should be trying to find out what role God has for us to play in His work.

A corollary story about leadership can also be referenced in this lesson. Nadab and Abihu were the next closest in command to Moses and Aaron. They had enjoyed special leadership. But jealousy of Moses was not their sin; they fell in Satan’s snare of lack of discipline and reverence—topics that correlate well with Numbers 11.

Although there are way too many topics referenced this week, you, as the teacher, can let the Spirit guide you to choose among them the emphasis your students most need at this time.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Learn why Aaron and Miriam complained about Moses, and how God responded. (Know)
• Empathize with the characters in the story and relate the characters’ feelings to their own real-life experiences as they deal with feelings of envy and jealousy. (Feel)
• Encourage those in leadership and seek their own role in God’s work. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Leadership
• Jealousy
• Purpose, knowing your
• Substance abuse
• Habits, good and bad

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

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 each person to tell about a time when they
have been jealous or envious of someone and explain how they dealt with it (if you have a large class, do this activity in small groups). What about the reverse? Has anyone been the target of someone else’s jealousy? How did they handle it?

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

There’s a famous story of two men who were confined to beds in a hospital room. Each day both lay on their backs with nothing to see except the four walls. One man’s bed was next to the window, and each day he was allowed to sit up for one hour. As he looked out the window, he described for the other man the sights he could see through that window.

At first the man in the other bed enjoyed hearing about the changing colors of leaves in the park below, the parades that passed on the street, the children playing in the playground. But after a while he began to resent his roommate. *Why should he get to look out the window while all I get to do is lie here and stare at the ceiling?* he wondered. Though the other man’s beautiful descriptions of the world outside continued, the man whose bed was away from the window no longer enjoyed listening. Envy and resentment consumed his thoughts.

One night the man by the window awoke coughing and choking. His coughing also woke the man in the next bed. He could see his neighbor vainly trying to reach for the call button to alert the nurse, but he was in such agony he couldn’t reach the button. The bitter, resentful man watched, his own button within easy reach. All he could think was, *If he dies, maybe I’ll get his bed.*

Sure enough, the man by the window died before he was able to call for help. The body was removed, and as soon as decently possible, the other man asked if he could be moved to the bed by the window. He struggled to sit up and look out at long last—only to find that the window faced a blank brick wall.

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

God’s people, the children of Israel, were wandering in the wilderness. They weren’t an easy bunch to lead. First they complained to their leader, Moses, that they never got anything to eat but the miraculous manna God supplied—and now they were tired of that. God responded by sending quail. And the Israelites ate so much of it they got sick! Moses was hardly finished dealing with that crisis when he faced an even worse problem—criticism and resentment within his own family. His brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, became jealous of Moses’ leadership position, and they made Moses’ wife the victim of their anger.

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

If we look at the story that precedes this one, in Numbers 11, what kind of pressure do you think Moses was under at this point? What challenges did he face in leading the Israelites? How do you think the different characters in the story felt as these events unfolded?

**Activity:** Assign four students, two male and two female, to role-play the parts of Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Zipporah. Interview each of them about how they were affected by these events. What do you think each person learned from the experience?

**Use the following as another teachable passage that deals with different leadership problems other than jealousy—Leviticus 10:1-11; Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 31.**

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

Since the Israelites had left Egypt, they had been nothing but trouble for Moses. They complained about being hungry and thirsty (Exodus 15; 16), and God responded by bringing water out of a rock and sending manna from heaven. Then they complained about the manna—they wanted a more exotic diet that included meat! God responded by sending quail (Numbers 11).

As soon as Moses’ back was turned, when he was up on Mount Sinai talking to God, the Israelites returned to the idolatry they had learned in Egypt, convincing Aaron to make them a golden calf to worship (Exodus 32). On many occasions they actually wished they were back in Egypt as slaves, rather than being free (Exodus 14:11, 12; 16:3; 17:3; Numbers 11:4-6; 14:1-3).
For Moses, a man who hadn’t wanted to be Israel’s leader in the first place, the stress of dealing with these people must have been intense. The discontent struck really close when it hit his own family. Yet it was at that moment that God chose to affirm Moses’ leadership (Numbers 12:5-9). Moses’ faithfulness and his ability to be humble and open to God’s leading were the qualities that set him apart from the rest of Israel and even from his own siblings. Moses wasn’t chosen because he was the smartest, the strongest, or the most articulate. He was chosen because he allowed God to lead, and as a result Moses was able to be a leader too.

The Lord sent Moses instructions to teach the people to observe and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-43). The final harvest of the year occurred in the autumn prior to the onset of the rainy season and marked the beginning of a new agricultural year (fifteenth day of the seventh month). At this time the last of the ripening grain and fruits was gathered and stored. The seven-day event was also known as the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16) and was symbolized by the construction of booths decorated with greenery for the harvesters. The festival was tied into Israelite tradition as a commemoration of the wilderness wanderings.—From Bible Background Commentary.

Whenever the harvesttime came around, the Israelites stopped to commemorate how God had always taken care of them, providing food for them to eat—even when they didn’t appreciate it.

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**Teaching From . . .**

*Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.*

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

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

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

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

Activity

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

Ask students to think again about the four main characters in this story: Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Zipporah. Whom do they relate to most? Are they most like Moses—doing what they feel is right and getting attacked for it? Do they relate to Aaron or Miriam—jealous of those who seem to have more gifts and more privileges? Or do they feel like Zipporah—an innocent bystander who gets attacked because of someone else’s jealousy and resentment?

Say: Whomever you relate to in this story, God cares about you. He has a special place for you in His work, and He will help you to find it.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Miriam and Aaron were jealous of the special gifts and position God had given Moses. In their envy and resentment, they lashed out not just at Moses himself but at his wife, Zipporah, criticizing her on the basis of her race. Neither Moses nor Zipporah responded; instead, God Himself told Aaron and Miriam that He had chosen Moses for a special task.

While we may not hear audible voices from heaven defending us, if we are Jesus’ followers, then we can know that He has chosen us and we are special to Him. We don’t need to defend ourselves against anyone else’s jealousy and resentment; nor do we need to be jealous of those who seem to have a better or more special role to play. Each of us is unique in God’s eyes, and He loves us each infinitely.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 33 and 31.

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KEY TEXT

“When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face.” (Numbers 12:6-8, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT

“Moses felt the importance of the great work committed to him as no other man had ever felt it. He realized his own weakness, and he made God his counselor. . . . Miriam and Aaron, blinded by jealousy and ambition, lost sight of this. . . . Regarding themselves as equally favored by God, they felt that they were entitled to the same position and authority” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 383).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Have you ever been jealous of someone else? Check off the situations that might make you jealous.

___ A classmate beats you in an election for student council president.
___ Your parents praise your sibling for an accomplishment while making no mention of anything you’ve done lately.
___ Your closest friend starts hanging around with a new friend and doesn’t seem to have time for you anymore.
___ You work with other students on a group project, but one person in the group gets all the credit and praise from the teacher, while the rest of you are ignored.
___ Your best friend is better-looking and more popular than you are.

DID YOU KNOW?

Moses’ wife, Zipporah, was a Midianite. She may have been very dark-skinned. She was, however, a descendant of Abraham by his wife Keturah, and a worshipper of the true God. Ellen White calls her timid and retiring in nature, gentle and affectionate, and greatly grieved at the sight of suffering.

When Zipporah’s father, Jethro, brought her to rejoin Moses in the wilderness, she could tell just how tired and overworked Moses was. She told her father she was worried about him, and Jethro advised Moses on a plan for the administration of the some 2 million unhappy campers.

INTO THE STORY

“Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. ‘Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?’ they asked. ‘Hasn’t he also spoken through us?’ And the Lord heard this.

“(Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

“At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and
Miriam, ‘Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you.’ So the three of them came out. Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, he said, ‘Listen to my words: When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?’”

“The anger of the Lord burned against them, and he left them.

“When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—leprous, like snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had leprosy; and he said to Moses, ‘Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother’s womb with its flesh half eaten away.’

“So Moses cried out to the Lord, ‘O God, please heal her!’

“The Lord replied to Moses, ‘If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back.’ So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back.” (Numbers 12:1-15, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY
- Who are the main characters in this story?
- Why do you think Aaron and Miriam were jealous of Moses?
- Why do you think Aaron and Miriam focused on Moses’ wife as a target when they felt angry?
- What qualities did Moses have that made him a good leader for Israel at this time?

PUNCH LINES
- “Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?” (Proverbs 27:4, NIV).
- “Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way” (Psalm 25:8, 9, NIV).
- “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones” (Proverbs 14:30, NIV).
- “Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple” (Job 5:2, NIV).
- “Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy” (Romans 13:13, NIV).

OTHER EYES
- “Few men have the natural strength to honor a friend’s success without envy.” —Aeschylus, 5th-century B.C. Greek playwright.
- “If you dig a hole for someone else, you’ll fall into it.” —Hungarian proverb.
- “Don’t look at the jar, but at what’s inside it.” —Hebrew proverb.
- “We plant seeds that will flower as results in our
lives, so best to remove the weeds of anger, avarice, envy and doubt, that peace and abundance may manifest for all.”—Dorothy Day, 20th-century U.S. journalist and social activist.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

In the What Do You Think? section, you were asked to think about your own experience with jealousy and envy. In Numbers 12:2 Aaron and Miriam wondered why God spoke only to Moses, not to them.

We don’t always understand why other people get privileges and opportunities we don’t get. But if a person is chosen by God to be a leader, at least part of the reason has to be that they leave themselves open to letting God lead in their lives. At this point in Aaron’s and Miriam’s lives, they were focused on their own feelings—feeling hurt, offended, and left out—and not on how they could serve the Lord.

Think about your own life right now. Are you open to letting God use you? If not, what’s standing in the way?

Sunday

Read Numbers 12, then read through and answer the Out of the Story study questions given in your lesson. Why do you think this story is in the Bible? As you read it, how do you feel about Moses? about Aaron and Miriam? How does this story make you feel about God?

Monday

In the Key Text for this week, God explains to Aaron and Miriam why He has chosen Moses for a special role. It’s because Moses has a special relationship with God—he is faithful and reliable, and God is able to speak to him more directly than He can to others. It’s kind of like God’s reference letter for Moses!

If God were writing a reference letter for you, or describing to others what He sees in you, what do you think God might say? Write it here:

Tuesday

In the Flashlight section Ellen White says that God was able to use Moses because Moses recognized his own weakness. How can recognizing your weakness make you a good leader?

Think about people you know of in different leadership roles. What kinds of weaknesses would they need to be aware of? For example, a teacher might tend to favor one student over another. She would need to be aware of that weakness so that she could be careful to treat everyone equally.

Think about your own life right now. Are you open to letting God use you? If not, what’s standing in the way?

Wednesday

The Bible verses in this week’s Punch Lines section talk about how destructive envy and jealousy can be. As you read through these verses, think about who is getting hurt. When you’re jealous of someone, is that feeling most destructive to them or to you?

Now read Numbers 12 again and think about what happened to Miriam. How could her punishment be seen as an illustration of the destructive power of jealousy?

Thursday

People in leadership positions are usually under a lot of stress, as Moses was. In that situation, they don’t need friends and family reacting like Aaron and Miriam did—with jealousy and resentment. Good leaders need our encouragement and support.

Think about a leader you admire—a teacher or pastor, one of your parents, or a friend your own age who is in a position of responsibility in school, at church, or on a sports team. Take a moment to call, e-mail, or write a note to that person telling them that you think they’re doing a good job!

Friday

One thing that Aaron and Miriam didn’t pause to think about when they criticized Moses was that they had special roles to play in God’s work too. Read Exo-
dus 15:19-21. What was Miriam’s role in Israel?

Read Exodus 4:13-15 and Exodus 28:1, 2. What special jobs was Aaron given?

What about you? Maybe you’ve been envious of other people’s gifts without recognizing your own.

What special role do you think God might want you to play in your church, your school, or your community?

I. SYNOPSIS
This lesson deals with the story of the 12 spies sent to explore the land of Canaan and bring back a report. They reported the land as being a good land, filled with abundance. But the KJV says that the men “brought up an evil report” of the land. What made it evil wasn’t what they said as much as how they said it. They were terrified by the strength of the inhabitants and their cities. And so ten of the spies doubted God’s ability to lead Israel into this land. Only two spies, Caleb and Joshua, encouraged the people to put their trust in God and move forward.

This story has a powerful lesson to teach about dealing with fear. Fear is a reality, and almost all young people experience it. But God understands our human tendency to fear. Maybe that’s why He has placed about 365 promises in Scripture to deal with fear, one for every day of the year! But fear doesn’t have to control our lives. Faith in God is based on seeing what God is able to do in our lives and the lives of others. The more we exercise faith, the less we are captive to fear.

II. TARGET
The students will:
- Learn that Caleb and Joshua trusted God to help Israel conquer the land of Canaan. (Know)
- Experience God’s power to help them cope with fear. (Feel)
- Trust God to help them through challenging situations. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
- Courage
- Fear
- Perseverance

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

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.

Use the following list of unusual phobias to open a discussion on fear.
Alliumphobia—Fear of garlic
Bibliophobia—Fear of books
Chiraptophobia—Fear of being touched
Ergophobia—Fear of work
Hippophobia—Fear of horses
Neophobia—Fear of anything new
Ranidaphobia—Fear of frogs
Triskaidekaphobia—Fear of the number 13

Ask each student to share something they’re afraid of and make up a name for that “phobia.” Allow lighthearted, silly responses if that’s what students feel
comfortable starting with. If someone shares a more serious fear, use that as an opportunity to shift the discussion to a more serious one on the topic of fear.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Two explorers were on a jungle safari when suddenly a ferocious lion jumped in front of them. “Keep calm,” the first explorer whispered. “Remember what we read in that book on wild animals? If you stand perfectly still and look the lion in the eye, he will turn and run.”

“Sure,” replied his companion. “You’ve read the book, and I’ve read the book. But has the lion read the book?”

Sometimes we know all the “good advice” for dealing with a frightening situation. But when the real thing hits, the advice can seem pretty distant and unreal! That’s what happened to the children of Israel in this week’s story. They knew that God had promised to give them the land of Canaan, but when they actually saw the land and the dangers it contained, faith melted and fear took over. Just “reading the book” wasn’t enough!

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

We all have fears. Some may be irrational; others are perfectly rational. It’s normal to be afraid of facing a new situation, or trying a task that may be difficult for you. Almost everyone feels fear when writing an exam, taking a driving test, performing in public, asking someone out on a date, starting a new job. We experience deeper fears, too: the fear of sickness and death, either for ourselves or someone we love; the fear of family breakup and change; the fear of loneliness and rejection.

God’s Word never promises that we won’t be afraid. It’s a scary world out there. But almost every time one of God’s angel messengers appears to someone in Scripture, they appear with the message: “Fear not! Don’t be afraid!” God doesn’t want us to be captives to fear. God empowers us to conquer fear and move forward in faith.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

Divide students into groups of four or five. If you have some who know their Bibles better than others, make sure they are distributed throughout the different groups. Ask each group to find an example of a Bible story in which God helps His people win a victory in an unexpected way. (Some sample answers might be: crossing the Red Sea, breaking down the walls of Jericho, etc.) Ask each small group to come back and share their story with the whole group. For each story, ask:

- What does this tell us about God’s power?
- How could experiencing, or hearing about, this event build your faith?
- Does God help His people in this way today?

After discussing all the stories, return to the story of the 12 spies. Point out that Caleb and Joshua had faith that God could work mighty miracles to defend His people because they knew He had done so in the past. Ask:

- Out of 12 spies, why do you think only two had this kind of faith in God’s power? What might have made Caleb and Joshua different?
- What kinds of frightening situations do we face in our lives that might make it hard to trust God?
- How can we build greater faith in God’s power in our own lives?

Sharing Context and Background

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

At the time that Moses sent the 12 spies into Canaan, the Israelites had already witnessed many mighty demonstrations of God’s power. They had seen:

- Their miraculous deliverance from slavery, accompanied by the 10 plagues on Egypt (Exodus 5–12).
- The parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 13–15).
- Manna provided for them to eat (Exodus 16).
- Water miraculously flowing from a rock (Exodus 17).
- The defeat of the Amalekites (Exodus 17).
- The Ten Commandments given directly from God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20).

How were people who had seen so many miracles so easily convinced to lose faith and give up? Because they allowed fear to be more powerful than faith. They focused on the threat that faced them—the fierce,
warlike people of Canaan with their fortified cities—rather than on the things God had done for them.

The same thing can happen to us as we focus on our problems instead of God’s power. Like the Israelites, we can draw on evidence of what God has done in the past to assure us that He’s always going to be there for us, no matter what the future holds!

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (Ellen G. White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, p. 196).

The Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines “faith” as an “allegiance” or “duty.” It also defines “trust” as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.” With these two separate words, we have a brief summary of exactly just how we are to put ourselves in the hands of our Creator. We are told numerous times in the Bible to never fear, but to put our hope, trust, and faith in the One who gave us life. Psalm 9:10 says plainly: “And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; for You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You” (NKJV).

“I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalm 34:4, NKJV).

The Israelites, no matter how many times rescued from calamity, seemed not to grasp these simple concepts or apply them to their lives. How can we apply these verses to our daily routines?

III. CLOSING

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

Distribute paper and pencils to each student. Ask each person to write down a situation they’re worried about or afraid of in their own lives. Then ask them to fold the paper without showing it to anyone, and hold on to it during prayer time. As you pray, ask God to demonstrate His power in dealing with each situation the students have written about. Ask Him to build the

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

- Punch Lines

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

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
students' faith so that they, like Caleb and Joshua, can trust Him in difficult situations.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

Fear is a reality we all face. It’s a normal, even healthy, reaction to frightening situations. But fear can put roadblocks in our way if we don’t learn to move past it. The most powerful weapon we have for conquering fear is trust in God. When we know that God cares for us and is able to help us, then we can take a step of faith even in a frightening situation.

The great thing about faith is that it can be as small as a tiny seed (Matthew 17:20). If we start to use it, it will grow. Even a little courage and faith can be enough to get us started in dealing with a frightening situation. When we see how God leads us, we’ll be empowered to go further and do more!

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapters 34 and 36.

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

KEY TEXT

“If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid. . . . Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us.” (Numbers 14:8, 9, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT

“Hope and courage gave place to cowardly despair, as the spies uttered the sentiments of their unbelieving hearts, which were filled with discouragement prompted by Satan. Their unbelief cast a gloomy shadow over the congregation, and the mighty power of God, so often manifested in behalf of the chosen nation, was forgotten. The people did not wait to reflect; they did not reason that He who had brought them thus far would certainly give them the land” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 388).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What scares you? Write “A” for Agree or “D” for Disagree next to each of the following statements:

A) I think of myself as a brave person.
D) I’m scared of lots of things.
A) I think I handle fear well.
A) Fear holds me back from doing some things I’d like to do.
A) I’m afraid of new or unfamiliar situations.
A) Trusting God helps me when I’m scared.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Israelite spies in this week’s lesson experienced normal fear in the face of a very real threat. But they didn’t have to remain at the mercy of fear. Fear is real, but so is God’s power to help us overcome it. Besides, they already had God’s promise to send terror and confusion among their enemies, to make them turn their backs and run, to send hornets to drive them out (Exodus 23:27, 28).

This was not cruel or unloving on the part of God. The Canaanites had learned about God while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived among them. God gave them 400 more years, while the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt, to turn away from their abominable ways and toward Him. When they would not, God had to evict them from the land of Canaan, which He had promised to Abraham’s descendants. They would not have been safe neighbors for His people.

INTO THE STORY

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.’

“So at the Lord’s command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran.”

“When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, ‘Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the peo-
ple who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad?’”

“They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses this account: ‘We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large.’”

“Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.’

“But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.’”

“That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, ‘If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!’

“Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, ‘The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.’” (Numbers 13:1, 2, 17-19, 26-28, 30, 31; 14:1, 2, 5-9, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY
• Why do you think God told Moses to send out an exploration party to look over the land of Canaan?
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________

• What impressed most of the explorers about Canaan? What were they afraid of?
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________

• How was Caleb and Joshua’s attitude to the new land different from the attitude of the other men?
  ___________________________________________________________

• Why do you think Caleb and Joshua reacted differently?
  ___________________________________________________________

• When you face fear in your life, are you more like Caleb and Joshua, or more like the other 10 spies?
  ___________________________________________________________

• What can you learn from this passage that might help you deal with frightening situations in your own life?
  ___________________________________________________________

PUNCH LINES
• “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10, NIV).

• “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6, NIV).

• “The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1, NIV).

• “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13, NIV).

• “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18, NIV).

• “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV).
OTHER EYES

- “The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it.” —Thucydides, 5th-century B.C. Greek historian.
- “The brave man is not he who feels no fear, / For that were stupid and irrational; / But he, whose noble soul its fears subdues.” —Joanna Baillie, 18th-19th-century Scottish poetess and dramatist.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath

The What Do You Think? section of the lesson asks some questions about fear. As you answer those questions, think about fear in your own life. Does fear hold you back? Does it push you forward? How do you cope with it?

Ask some of your family and friends what their worst fear is. Do you see some common threads? Do adults seem to fear different things than teenagers do?

What’s your worst fear?

Finish the sentences below:

When I’m afraid, I find it helps to _____________________.

I’d never be afraid if I knew that _____________________.

Even though I was afraid, I _____________________.

Sunday

Read the story of the 12 spies who went into Canaan (Numbers 13 and 14) and respond to the study questions given in your lesson. Why do you think this story is in the Bible? As you reflect on it, what do you think is the message God has for you today? What aspect of the story speaks to your life?

Monday

Read the Key Text for this week (Numbers 14:8, 9). Caleb and Joshua responded to the fears of the other spies by saying, “If God wants us in this land, then God will take care of all the obstacles.”

Think about a situation in your life that scares you. How could this same attitude help you? Rewrite the key text in your own words in a way that speaks directly to your situation:

Tuesday

Read the Flashlight section. When we allow fear and discouragement to overwhelm us, it’s often because we’ve forgotten God’s power and the great things He has done in the past. What experiences have you had in your life that you can look back on to give you faith and courage when times get tough?

If you don’t feel you’ve really experienced God’s power in your life, talk to some people—both adults and people your own age—who seem to have a strong faith in God. Ask what faith-building experiences they’ve had. How do those experiences help them when they face frightening situations?

Wednesday

All the Bible verses in the Punch Lines section of the lesson remind us that Christians don’t have to be controlled by fear. Choose one of those verses that you find most encouraging. Copy it out on a card or bookmark and decorate it with drawings or stickers. Keep it someplace where you’ll see it often and use it as a reminder that even though you may face difficult or challenging situations, you can have courage because God is always with you!

Thursday

The Israelites faced a real threat—a land filled with dangerous enemies. Yet 10 of the spies saw an obstacle, while two saw an opportunity. Caleb and Joshua didn’t deny that there were enemies to be conquered in Canaan. But because of their faith, they saw the situation through a different perspective.

What situations in your life frighten you? How could faith change your perspective? Think about a particular fear that bothers you. If you were seeing this situation in a “Caleb and Joshua” way, how would you look at it? Use the space below to write how your attitude would change if you looked at your fear differently:
Friday

As the quotes in the Other Eyes section remind us, there’s nothing wrong with being afraid. It can be a normal, healthy reaction to a threatening situation. The problem comes when we let fear paralyze us and keep us from doing the right thing. Courage means overcoming that kind of fear, doing what’s right even though we’re afraid.

According to the Bible, there’s a flip side to fear. Some kinds of fear are helpful. Numerous Bible texts tell us to “fear God” (in terms of having awe and respect for His power—see Psalm 111:10 and Revelation 14:7, for examples). We should also fear the consequences of sin (see Luke 12:4, 5; Proverbs 14:27). Sometimes a healthy fear can hold us back from doing risky, dangerous, or self-destructive things. Think about how fear can play a positive role in your life. How can you distinguish between a healthy fear that keeps you safe, and fear that holds you back from the things you should be doing? Ask for God’s guidance and discernment as you deal with fear in your life.

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Korah’s rebellion against Moses, and by extension God, is very instructive for Christians today. This episode has all the elements of a good movie: A reluctant leader attempting to lead more than 2 million people through a desert to a promised land; a mixed multitude of followers experiencing major withdrawal pangs from their former life; miraculous interventions courtesy of God Himself; an undercurrent of jealousy by several civic leaders in the group, culminating in Korah’s challenge. But this was no Hollywood creation.

Ellen White notes in “The Rebellion of Korah” (Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 35) that Korah’s rebellion was simply the culmination of a long series of complaints leveled against God by the children of Israel. The seeds of rebellion were sown in continued discontent and faultfinding with every directive given them by God through Moses. Because the people often detested the messages that Moses and Aaron gave them from God, plans were hatched to kill the messengers who were seen as no more divinely appointed than the people.

In his desire to replace Moses, Korah infected Dathan, Abiram, and 250 leaders of the people with his unholy ambition. He promised them positions in the Temple service that were not his to give—and he did all of this firmly believing that God was with him. In what could only be described as the most stunning display of God’s power, the earth literally opened up and swallowed the rebels, their families, and their goods. This awesome display should have been enough to convince all the people that God was with Moses and Aaron, yet the people angrily grilled them for killing God’s men.

God became so angry at this that He sent a plague that killed another 14,700 people before Aaron’s intercession stayed the hand of God. As is often the case, sin indulged by one often infects many. Our influence is a talent given by God for His glory.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that God is the only being qualified to set up leaders and that we are called to respect God’s leaders and their authority. (Know)
- Realize the importance of seeking God’s guidance before making decisions that affect others’ salvation. (Feel)
- Commit to being a positive force to spiritually build up their home, church, school, and community. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Authority/respect
- Confessions/repentance
- Leadership

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

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

The students were asked to rank from 1 to 10 which of the groups mentioned are those that people are most jealous of. Ask several of them to share their answers. Write the top three groups on the board; that is, the three groups that people are generally most jealous of.

Ask the students to explain why they ranked these groups so high on the jealousy scale. Then ask them whether or not this same kind of jealousy existed in Bible times, and if so, give some examples. In this activity, it may be helpful to note that jealousy played a major role in the murder of Jesus (John 11:45-48). Perhaps you can have students take turns reading this passage.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In a book entitled Down to Earth, John Lawrence tells the story of a city that dared God to show Himself and paid a terrible price. It seems that the city of Messina, Sicily, was home to many wicked, irreligious people.

On December 25, 1908, a newspaper published in Messina printed a parody against God, daring Him to make Himself known by sending an earthquake. Three days later, on December 28, the city and its surrounding district were devastated by a terrible quake that killed 84,000 people (Today in the Word, October 1997, p. 25).

Once you have shared this illustration with the students, ask the following question: After all the miraculous things that God had done for Israel to deliver them from the hands of the Egyptians—the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh, food provided in the desert, protection from enemies, shoes and clothing that never wore out—how could Korah and his followers believe that God had not given leadership of Israel to Moses and Aaron?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

At one time or another all Christians and followers of God tend to lose sight of His providential guidance, especially when He rebukes or chastises us. This was partially the problem with Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 princes. They were keeping a running record of all their trials and setbacks in the wilderness, and they had come to believe that theirs was a problem of faulty leadership—not disobedient followers. When God announced that only Caleb and Joshua would be entering the Promised Land because they were the only ones who trusted God to deliver the inhabitants of that land into their hands, Korah and many other Israelites then determined to oppose Moses and Aaron (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 396).

Into 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.

Using a chalkboard, make a list of the complaints that Israel made against God and Moses in the wilderness. Some answers may include:

1. “You brought us out here to kill us. It’s too hard out here.” (Numbers 11:1-3)
2. “We are tired of eating manna every day.” (Numbers 11:4-35)
3. Miriam and Aaron talk against Moses because they don’t like his wife. (Numbers 12:1-12)
4. “We are scared of those strong people in the Promised Land. We can’t beat them.” (Numbers 13:27-32)

You get the picture. Note that all these complaints were leveled against God prior to Korah’s open rebellion. There is a slippery slope here that bears revealing, one that is still claiming Christians today: 1. Constant complaining blinded the Israelites to God’s blessings; 2. Constant complaining infected more and more Israelites until it became an unceasing undercurrent; 3. Constant complaining led to open rebellion against God and brought on His judgments.

In each one of the instances mentioned above, God sent a specific punishment against the complainers. Ask the students to divide into groups. Give each group the passages above and ask them to read farther in their passage to find how God dealt with the people’s charges against Him. Have the groups share their answers.

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. Ellen White highlights the fact that Korah was a cousin of Moses (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 395). Few facts in this story are more challenging than this one. Korah was a relative of Moses, albeit a somewhat distant one. On the face of it, familial ties alone should have given him pause as he plotted the overthrow of Moses and Aaron. His quest to be number one in the hierarchy of Israel made him willing to step on anyone he had to in order to have his way. For Korah, familial ties meant nothing. Perhaps Jesus captured it best when He said: “They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law” (Luke 12:53, NIV). The unregenerate heart recognizes no family ties.

2. “Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council” (Numbers 16:1, 2, NIV). It is quite striking that Korah’s rebellion was led by the “best and brightest” leaders Israel had to offer. While there was unrest among the common people, the folks who fomented the takeover were those most honored and admired in the society. It is always Satan’s goal to lead the most gifted and talented astray. In so doing, he is able to exert his evil influence over the masses who look up to them. Ask the students to name some gifted people who are popular and admired, but who also exert an evil influence.

3. “Close to the tents of Korah and the Kohathites, on the south side of the tabernacle, was the encampment of the tribe of Reuben, the tents of Dathan and Abiram, two princes of this tribe, being near that of Korah” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 395). The lessons in this story are so many that one can scarcely get by the first page of Ellen White’s chapter on Korah’s rebellion. The quote above makes the point that it is dangerous to live in close proximity to those who are doing evil. Because Dathan and Abiram lived near to Korah, they often conversed with him, and he stirred their inner designs on Aaron’s priesthood. God through the wise man of Proverbs counsels us: “A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3).

4. Korah was a Levite. That fact alone ought to give us pause. To the Levites God had entrusted the care of the sanctuary, particularly after they refused to participate in the building and worshipping of the golden calf (Exodus 32:25-29). Korah had an exalted position. He was a descendant of Kohath, son of Levi.

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Kohathites were the descendants from whom came the priests and those who cared for the sanctuary of Israel. Aaron was from this lineage, and from his descendants came the priests. Korah was a part of the Kohathites who cared for the sanctuary.

While his position was already exalted, he craved more. He aspired to the dignity of the priesthood. He wanted Aaron’s job. This was the same spirit that manifested itself in Satan as he tried to overthrow God in heaven, and it is the same spirit that makes many in the church dissatisfied with the place God has given them (see Isaiah 14:12-14).

### III. CLOSING

#### Activity

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

Invite an adult or young adult member of the church to share a brief testimony about the power of a positive influence on others. After this testimony, ask this person to pray a prayer of commitment asking God to help everyone be a force for good wherever they go and in all their activities.

#### Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Each of us is given one life to live here on earth. What we do with our lives will determine our destiny. Korah and his crew made a fateful decision, one that cost them everything. God had sent them warnings and rebukes, but none were heeded. They had already opened the door to Satan’s control.

Witness these comments by God’s servant: “It is by sinful indulgence that men give Satan access to their minds, and they go from one stage of wickedness to another. The rejection of light darkens the mind and hardens the heart, so that it is easier for them to take the next step in sin and to reject still clearer light, until at last their habits of wrongdoing become fixed. Sin ceases to appear sinful to them” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 404).

God wants us to respect Him and those He places in authority. Leaders are not perfect; they will make mistakes. When we disagree with them, we must first take our complaints to God. We must seek His guidance as to how to address the matter. Here, Matthew 18 is very helpful. It is never wise to play God, especially when we have not consulted Him.

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Picture of Influence**

In many of these lessons there are numerous themes that warrant illumination. While it is impossible to discuss all of them thoroughly, or even touch on some, an activity can be introduced that will help the students at least open their minds to themes that you might not have time to cover thoroughly in discussion.

In this lesson, for instance, for the generation of teens you are teaching, you need to address the power of influence, both negative and positive.

Post pictures of influential people. Ask students to identify what they think is the secret to each person’s mass appeal. Why does each of these people command attention, and why do people follow or imitate them? Finally ask: What is the secret of the Christian’s influence? How should we use that influence?

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Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 35.

*A special adaptation of Patriarchs and Prophets has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.*
“When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. Then he said to Korah and all his followers: ‘In the morning the Lord will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him.’” (Numbers 16:4, 5, NIV)

“Incense. A mixture of fragrant substances, such as gum resins and spices, used in connection with religious worship. The incense prescribed for use in the tabernacle was made with a special recipe. It was forbidden to use a mixture made according to this recipe for other purposes (Exodus 30:34-38). The incense was burned morning and evening upon a special altar that stood in the holy place of the sanctuary in front of the curtain that separated it from the Most Holy Place.

• Censer. A vessel for the burning of incense. Censers having the form of a hollow hand have been excavated. The censers used in the tabernacle were of bronze, but the ones used later in the Temple were of gold.

INTO THE STORY

“Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of
Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, ‘You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord’s assembly?’

“When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. Then he said to Korah and all his followers: ‘In the morning the Lord will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him. You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers and tomorrow put fire and incense in them before the Lord. The man the Lord chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!’

“Moses also said to Korah, ‘Now listen, you Levites! Isn’t it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the Lord’s tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too. It is against the Lord that you and all your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?’

“Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they said, ‘We will not come!’

“Moses said to Korah, ‘You and all your followers are to appear before the Lord tomorrow—you and they and Aaron. Each man is to take his censer and put incense in it . . . and present it before the Lord.’ . . . So each man took his censer, put fire and incense in it, and stood with Moses and Aaron at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. When Korah had gathered all his followers . . . , the glory of the Lord appeared to the entire assembly.” (Numbers 16:1-12, 16-19, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

• What part of the story was most startling?

• **Underline** all the key parts of this week’s story.

• **Circle** two emotional speeches given by characters in the story.

• After reading this story, what would you say is the main point?

• What do you think it means to be holy? What did you learn about God from this story?

• What lesson will you apply to your life this week?

• For the rest of the story read Numbers 16:23-35.

PUNCH LINES

• “All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you. . . . You said in your heart, . . . ‘I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit” (Isaiah 14:11-15, NIV).

• “To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” (Proverbs 21:3, NIV).

• “Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble” (1 Peter 3:8, NIV).

• “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.’ He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’” (Matthew 18:1-4, NIV).

• “This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength,
but you would have none of it’” (Isaiah 30:15, NIV).

OTHER EYES
- “A person starts to live when he can live outside himself.”—Albert Einstein, U.S. (German-born) theoretical physicist, regarded as the greatest scientist of the 20th century.
- “He that hath promised pardon on our repentance hath not promised life till we repent.”—Francis Quarles, 17th-century British poet.

MAKING IT REAL

Sabbath
How did you rank the items on the jealousy scale in the What Do You Think? section of the lesson? Jealousy has a tendency to make people do weird things. Which group would you say people are most jealous of? List three ways that people express their jealousy of others.

Sunday
Read the Into the Story section. Few stories in the Bible offer us a glimpse at an all-out, naked rebellion. This one does. When Korah and the 250 princes confronted Moses, what did they say about Moses? How did Moses react? Why was Moses so distraught at their charge?

Have you ever been falsely accused for doing what God asked of you?

Monday
It is clear from this week’s Key Text that a big showdown is about to happen. Korah and his followers have been “called out” by Moses. Read the Key Text again to see if you notice anything strange. Did you see it?

Who did Moses say would settle this dispute? Moses had the authority to raise an army and destroy Korah and his followers. Why do you think he didn’t do this? How are Moses’ actions similar to the grace God gave Lucifer when he led a rebellion in heaven?

Tuesday
In this week’s Flashlight quote, Ellen White lights up a major problem faced by Israel and by many of us today. Israel forgot who was leading them. It wasn’t Moses; it was God. But there was another reason that many of the Israelites tried to overthrow Moses. To find out what that reason was, read Numbers 14:20-25.

As you can tell, God is quite upset at the fact that the Israelites did not believe that He could help them defeat the strong nations that inhabited Canaan, the land He had promised to them. After all of God’s miracles on their behalf, this is how the Israelites had repaid God—they refused to believe in Him. Ellen White notes that it was this rejection of them by God that led them to level their anger at Moses (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 397, 398). Do you ever find fault with people who deliver difficult messages from God, messages you don’t like?

Wednesday
This week’s Punch Lines have rich food for thought. For instance, God says through His servant Isaiah: “In repentance and rest is your salvation” (Isaiah 30:15, NIV). In your own words, explain what this brief statement means to you.

Repentance means much more than just feeling sorry for what you’ve done. It also means being willing to turn away from what you’ve done to hurt God. God even promises to give us power to make the change stick. A frightening scene took place the day after Korah confronted Moses. What happened? (Read Numbers 16:23-35.)

Thursday
Sadly, the story of Korah’s rebellion did not end with his death and the deaths of Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 princes. Read Numbers 16:41. How did the people react to what happened the day before? How did God respond to them (verses 43-45)? What did Moses tell Aaron to do (verses 46-48)? How many people were killed by the plague God sent on the Israelites?

What does this lesson teach you about the effect that one person’s actions might have on other people? Korah’s influence led to the death of close to 15,000 people.
Friday

One of the truly startling parts of this story is contributed by Ellen White in the last part of chapter 35 of Patriarchs and Prophets. Read the whole chapter.

“God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. . . .

“God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit’s work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. . . . The transgressor has cut himself off from God. . . . There is no reserved power by which God can work to convict and convert the sinner” (pp. 404, 405).

May God bless you as you seek to serve Him. Have a terrific Sabbath!

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The Israelites’ trek through the wilderness took on a different shape following Korah’s rebellion. God was still smarting from this sad episode, but the thing that grieved His heart most was the constant desire of His people to return to Egypt, a place where they had been enslaved and had worked like animals. That they could choose such a fate over the freedom He offered them through faith in His care was like a slap in the face to God.

In the aftermath of the rebellion, the Passover feast had been suspended, circumcision had been stopped, and all of these pronouncements came from God. Yet if one were to conclude that after seeing how much they hurt God, the Israelites would put away their disobedience, they would be mistaken. Not only do the Israelites continue to complain, but their griping seems to affect Moses and Aaron, both of whom got very angry. When God told Moses to speak to the rock and out of it would flow water to quench the people’s thirst, Moses struck the rock in open disobedience of God, an act that cost Aaron and himself their opportunity to enter the Promised Land.

But the story doesn’t stop there. The people’s lack of faith in God when the king of Edom denied them passage through his territory meant that they had to take a circuitous route to the Promised Land, one that they didn’t want to take.

During the long journey they began again to complain about God’s failure to provide for them, and this time God allowed poisonous snakes to come among them and kill them. But in an act of ultimate grace that foreshadowed the cross, God had Moses make a bronze snake and put it on a pole, declaring that all who looked at this snake would live. There was no power in the snake on the pole. However, when faith in God looked at the snake, healing power flowed from God—and when faith looks at Jesus Christ today, this power flows from God to the humblest believer. Praise God!

II. TARGET

The students will:

• See that disobedience hurts the heart of God. (Know)

• Experience a desire to trust God even when times get difficult. (Feel)

• Ask God to show them how to use the gift of faith He has placed within them. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Anger
• Grace
• Selfishness
• Calvary

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? sec-
On the road of life, disappointments will come, but success is usually right beyond the splats of our lives. Of the estimated two million people who left Egypt for Canaan, only two made it in to the Promised Land—the two that persevered on the journey past all the splats.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

God knows that we have needs. Jesus said to His disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” (Matthew 6:25, 26, NIV).

The great debate in the Christian life is the same as it was when Israel was headed home: Will we trust God to get us there, provide for our needs along the way, and prove Himself to us? Or will we curse God and charge Him falsely? That’s the decision of the Christian life, and it is one of faith.

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.

Debrief by asking students to share their responses with the class. After they have done this, have them explore the topic of God’s amazing grace. Divide the class into groups of two. Assign each group a scripture from each column. Have the groups look up both scriptures and share what each says about humanity’s need of a Savior, and what God did to help us.

Our Need
Romans 5:12
Isaiah 64:6
Romans 3:23
1 John 1:8

God’s Provision
Isaiah 53:12
Hebrews 2:9
Luke 19:10
Hebrews 7:25

Make the point that in the wilderness the Israelites
experienced God’s grace much more than they did His chastisement. It is never God’s will that we should perish, but that all of us would repent and return to Him (2 Peter 3:9).

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

1. “Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank” (Numbers 20:11, NIV). For the act of striking the rock Moses was denied entry into the Promised Land. That’s quite a punishment for one act of disobedience. Many wonder why God was so harsh with Moses, given that Moses had endured so much at the hands of a stubborn people. Surely God could have cut him some slack.

   Besides the obvious point that Moses was leader of the people and more was required of him, Moses displayed a certain lack of faith in God at a crucial moment. “More than this,” writes Ellen White, “Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 418).

2. One of the tests of a true leader is what they do when they make a mistake, when they mess up. Moses made no effort to hide his sentence from the people. He told the people how he had pleaded for forgiveness. While God did forgive him of the sin, He did not excuse him from punishment. Moses told the people: “But because of you the Lord was angry with me and would not listen to me. ‘That is enough,’ the Lord said. ‘Do not speak to me anymore about this matter’” (Deuteronomy 3:26, NIV).

3. In Numbers 20:14-21 the Edomites are seen complicating Israel’s march to the Promised Land. They refused to allow the Israelites passage through their territory. What is strange about this story is the fact that the Edomites were descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, from whom the Israelites were descended. These two groups had much in common. They were brothers, but old hurts die hard. It was Jacob who stole his brother’s blessing, and defrauded him of his birthright. While Esau forgave him, his descendants never forgot. There was an uneasy peace between these two groups, but Ellen White notes that had the Israelites not complained in the desert, God would have made a way for them to pass through Edom to Canaan, which was a stone’s throw away (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 38, sixth and seventh paragraphs).

4. Too much of a good thing? Consider this passage: “In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. . . . He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
had done. He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it” (2 Kings 18:1-4, NIV).

What was Israel doing still worshipping the snake Moses made for them in the wilderness? They still did not get the fact that the power to heal resided in God. Instead, they made an idol of His provision. Do we do the same thing?

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

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

Select a favorite song, one that deals with placing one’s trust in God. Play that song for the class to close your study time together, then ask a volunteer to pray, asking God to help everyone place complete faith in Him.

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

There are those who claim that there is no grace in the Old Testament. It is the record of stubborn people being beaten down by an angry God. This week’s lesson declares unequivocally that is not so.

By all rights, God could have wiped out all the Israelites in the wilderness and no one could have argued with Him, for the penalty for sin is death (see Romans 6:23). He even offered to do it, but Moses pleaded with Him several times, and God cushioned His punishment against His people. When they were hungry, He fed them. When they were thirsty, He gave them drink.

When they refused to obey Him, He sent plagues among them, but in each instance God stopped the plagues from utterly decimating Israel. He even fore-shadowed Calvary and the act of love that Jesus would perform for the sins of the world. That is the power of God’s amazing grace.

It is this grace that leads us to repentance, that should lead us to place our complete trust in Him, for He cares for us (see 1 Peter 5:7).

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Covenant Love**

One resource that you have as a youth teacher is the Christian lives and experience of older members of your church. They can be asked to share experiences from their past, or be interviewed by the students.

In the study of this lesson there is a distinct possibility that the students may get so caught up in the crazy actions of the Israelites and God’s responses to them that they miss the breakdown that is occurring in the relationship between God and His people.

Bring a married couple to class to share what they do to keep their relationship strong and Christlike. Have them also share how they get through difficult times.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 37 and 38.

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STUDENT LESSON

KEY TEXT
“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’” (Numbers 21:8, NIV)

FLASHLIGHT
“The wilderness wandering was not only ordained as a judgment upon the rebels and murmurers, but it was to serve as a discipline for the rising generation, preparatory to their entrance into the Promised Land. Moses declared to them, ‘As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee,’ ‘to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no’” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 407).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Traveling has several big hassles associated with it. If you’re flying on an airplane, boarding a train, or riding on a bus, all faraway trips require some preparation. List five things you must do before embarking on any trip. One is provided for you.

1. Pack everything you’ll need for the trip.
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________
5. __________________________________________

DID YOU KNOW?
It is difficult to pinpoint how many Israelites there were who walked through the wilderness toward the promised land of Canaan. The Bible records that there were 600,000 males above the age of 20 (Exodus 12:37; Numbers 2:32). If you used this number as a starting point making allowances for women and children, the total number of Israelites could easily exceed two million people. How much food do you think it required to feed two million people every day? Yet God did it every day for 40 years. What an awesome God we serve!

INTO THE STORY
Complaints
“In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.

“Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarreled with Moses and said, ‘If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord! Why did you bring the Lord’s community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!’”

Detours
“Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: ‘This is what your brother Israel says:
You know about all the hardships that have come upon us. Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our fathers, but when we cried out to the Lord, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt.

“Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king’s highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory.’

“But Edom answered: ‘You may not pass through here; if you try, we will march out and attack you with the sword.’”

God’s Punishment and Grace

“They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!’ Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. . . .

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’” (Numbers 20:1-5, 14-18; 21:4-8, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

• What parts of this week’s story were new to you? (Underline them.)

• What characters in the story are most interesting to you? Why?

• What complaint from the Israelites are you most likely to make?

• Draw a rectangle around the most emotional words and phrases.

• What lesson or lessons did God want to teach His people?

• What new thing did you learn about God from reading these Bible passages?

• What lesson can you apply to your life this week, based on your reading?

PUNCH LINES

• “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones” (Proverbs 17:22, NIV).
• “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5, NIV).
• “Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me” (Psalm 31:3, NIV).
• “Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9, NIV).
• “Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll are they not in your record?” (Psalm 56:8, NIV).
• “But godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6, NIV).

OTHER EYES

• “Praise the bridge that carried you over.”—George Colman (“The Younger”), 18th-19th-century English dramatist and actor.
• “I was angry with my friend: / I told my wrath, my wrath did end. / I was angry with my foe; / I told it not, my wrath did grow.”—William Blake, 18th-19th-century English artist and poet.
**MAKING IT REAL**

**Sabbath**

Complete the *What Do You Think?* section of this week’s lesson if you have not already done so. What were some of the preparations you listed that have to be made before any trip? Here are a few: You have to be sure that you know the directions to your eventual destination, or be sure you’re with someone who does; you must have all necessary identification on you at all times; you must arrive at the station or airport allowing sufficient time to check in, purchase tickets, navigate delays, etc.

Were the Israelites able to make any preparations for their trip through the wilderness? When they left Egypt, what did they pack (Exodus 12:31-36)? Were they anticipating a long journey?

**Sunday**

Read carefully the *Into the Story* section of this week’s lesson. Notice that there are three distinct episodes related here. What does each of stories tell us about the difficulties the Israelites faced in the wilderness? Were they justified in being angry with Moses and with God? Explain your answer below.

What special comforts might the Israelites have had in Egypt as slaves? Why would they long to go back? Do you sometimes forget where God has brought you from?

**Monday**

The *Key Text* for this week’s Bible study has to be one of the strangest verses in the Bible. God tells Moses to make a bronze snake, wrap it around a pole, and anyone who looks on it will live. Why did God urge Moses to do this, instead of curing all the people with a word from His mouth?

How much faith do you think it took for dying Israelites to look at a snake on a pole for healing? What was God trying to teach the Israelites about His power and their willingness to trust Him?

**Tuesday**

The *Flashlight* quotation for this week tells us that there was a method to God’s punishment of the Israelites in the desert. To see a great example of this, read Numbers 20:6-11. When the Israelites were complaining about thirst in the desert, what did God tell Moses to do? What did Moses do?

How did God respond to Moses’ disobedience (verse 12)? Was God’s punishment too hard on Moses and Aaron? Moses allowed his anger to control him, and he disobeyed God. How would the people have viewed God if He had allowed Moses and Aaron to go unpunished? God forgave Moses and even allowed him to see the Promised Land, though he could not go in.

**Wednesday**

Which of the *Punch Lines* texts caught your attention? Paul counseled Timothy that Godliness, or God-likeness, with contentment is great gain. Rewrite this scripture in your own words explaining what you think it means. What does it mean to be contented?

King David, the writer of many psalms, longed for God’s leadership because he knew that God was his rock and fortress, or his safety. Why was it so difficult for the Israelites to claim God as their rock and fortress? When do you tend to complain about the direction in which God is leading you? What about your friends? Do they do the same? How can you change this habit?

**Thursday**

One of the most difficult parts of the journey faced by the Israelites was the trip they took around Edom, a nation that refused to let them pass through their territory. Take a moment to read the sixth and seventh paragraphs of chapter 38 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Edom lay a short distance from the Promised Land. It was God’s will that Israel should go through this territory, but something prevented them from going through Edom, and it wasn’t Edom’s king who denied them passage. Are you doing something that might be preventing you from achieving the blessing God has for you?
**Friday**

Israel’s journey in the wilderness to the Promised Land should have taken a few days, but it took them 40 years. Can you identify some things that delayed them from receiving their blessing? (For instance, their constant complaining and disbelief in God.)

Write a short prayer to God. Identify anything in your life that is preventing God from living in you and working His will through you. Close by asking God for strength to trust His leading even when the way seems difficult.

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