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

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

**WHY THE BIBLE STORY APPROACH? (teacher introduction)**

There is a tendency to neglect God’s Word because the Bible seems so old and the issues of life today don’t seem to automatically connect with the ancient, inspired text. Trying to read through the Bible can leave young people in a fog. But the Bible was never meant to be read. It was meant to be studied, reflected on, and integrated into life. It wasn’t written to be analyzed as much as it was to be obeyed. It takes effort. If you simply want a story to entertain you, then the Bible isn’t for you.

The Bible is not a novel that grips you, but if you get a firm hold on the message of the Bible with a teachable heart and an eye that seeks God, you will find something more than entertaining. You will discover a message just for you. “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13, NIV). Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24, NIV).

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

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

Welcome to *Cornerstone Connections.*

—The Editors

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

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

www.cornerstoneconnections.net
what tools are provided for teaching the stories?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

❽ In each lesson students are provided with a reference to the volume from the Conflict of the Ages Series by Ellen White that corresponds with the week’s story. Students who choose to will be able to read the entire series in four years by following the reading plan.
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www.cornerstoneconnections.net
Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapter 1.
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CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
3RD QUARTER 2013

July

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

The thought of witnessing to our faith in God can often make us feel anxious and intimidated: What do I say? However, our witness can be merely one story away.

20—Days of Their Lives [p. 27]
Are you feeling physically weary and spiritually empty? As we follow Jesus’ example of rest, we have the prescription for living stress-free in a stressed-out world!

27—Misunderstood [p. 35]
Jesus’ followers didn’t always understand what He was trying to teach them. When we try to understand Jesus through the prism of selfish drives and ambitions, we can misunderstand Him, too. How can we accept Jesus for who He really is?

August

3—Pagan Faith [p. 43]
Is it possible for someone who doesn’t believe in God to have faith? The Phoenician woman is a perfect example of faith against all odds.

10—Move That Mountain [p. 51]
In spite of having face-to-face time with Jesus, the disciples still struggled with faith. But when they caught a glimpse of Jesus, the craziness of their lives became calm, and they were able to accomplish what seemed impossible.

17—Who Is Jesus? [p. 59]
Jesus was popular and well-liked by ordinary people. But He wasn’t the Messiah the religious leaders were expecting. What kind of Savior do we expect? Who do we say that He is?

24—A Tale of Two Seekers [p. 67]
A seeker of eternal life leaves Jesus’ presence sad because he discovers that what he loves most is not what he is seeking. But our story doesn’t have to end that way!

31—Rejuveniling Your Faith [p. 75]
When parents brought their children to Jesus for a prayer of blessing, His disciples tried to turn them away. But Jesus loved hanging out with children. Actually, He wants us all to learn lessons about faith from them.

September

7—Wake Up! [p. 83]
As Jesus was standing at the graveside of His friend Lazarus, Scripture tells us that He wept. Why? Was He sad? Did He miss His friend? Or was it more than that?

14—Out on a Limb for Jesus [p. 91]
Zacchaeus climbed a tree in order to see Jesus. But it takes more than merely seeing Jesus to be transformed. It was by being in Jesus’ presence that Zacchaeus was changed.

21—The Alabaster Disaster [p. 99]
For Simon, having Mary pour perfume on Jesus’ feet was scandalous. For those of us who, like Mary, feel the need for forgiveness, it represents an act of lavish love and grace.

28—Two Against One [p. 107]
In the great controversy between right and wrong, humility is locked up in a desperate battle against selfish ambition and pride. Does humility have a chance?
no man is an island

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:
- Sense a responsibility toward the lonely and grieving. *(Feel)*
- Choose to turn to God with their loneliness and be the answer to other people’s prayers. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

- Loneliness
- Death and resurrection*
- Faith

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

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

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

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

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

• **Underline** the characters in this story.
• Which characters seem to be lonely, abandoned, or desperate? Who realizes it?
• **Circle** the words that denote emotion.
• How does each person seem to be feeling?
• **Draw** a rectangle around Jesus’ actions.
• Besides working a miracle, what does Jesus give back to both Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood?
• What do these characters have in common?
• How do they differ?
• What do we learn about God through this story? **Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story:**
  - Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: What is the basic human need explored in this passage? How does it relate to this story?
  - Matthew 26:36-45: What were Jesus’ human needs in this passage? What are His spiritual needs? Who does He turn to in order to fulfill His needs?
  - Revelation 21:1-7: Jesus has the ultimate power over death. But He doesn’t always choose to raise the dead now. What is our ultimate hope? What does God promise us until then?

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

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

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

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.
Ask each student to name two lonely people that they know or come in contact with during the week.

Then ask the students to name two characteristics, strengths, or qualities in themselves that they can use to help relieve someone else’s loneliness. Share them with the group, and challenge them to use those ideas the following week.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Discussion Activities
Here are some stimulating ways to start discussions with teenagers:
- Draw on students’ personal experiences.
- Ask students to reflect on their own culture and attitudes.
- Give students a concrete decision to make with their peers.
- Keep the conversation peer-centered—plenty of pair or small group collaboration.
- Keep to fairly short discussion activities (15 minutes) until you know what they like, and they feel relaxed enough with you to talk freely.
- Avoid asking discussion questions around the class; this puts them in the spotlight and causes potential embarrassment in front of friends. You also risk dominating the talk.

(Taken from: www.britishcouncil.org/language assistant-teaching-tips-teenagers-talking.htm.)
Summary

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

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

*Fundamental Belief No. 26.*
no man is an island

flashlight

“Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. . . . Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls” (The Desire of Ages, p. 347).

keytext

“When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.’ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”

(Mark 5:27-29, NIV)
what do you think?

Every person is unique and different. Write down four things that make you uniquely "you."

_____________________________________

____________________________________

_____________________________________

_____________________________________

How are you different from every other person? Do you feel that these differences make you special? Do you feel that they cause you to be misunderstood? Do you enjoy being different, or do you wish you were like everyone else and “fit in”?

did you know?

God planned where you’d be born and where you’d live for His purpose. Your race and nationality are no accident. God left no detail to chance. He planned it all for His purpose. The Bible says, “From one man he made every nation, . . . and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” [Acts 17:26]. Nothing in your life is arbitrary. It’s all for a purpose.

“Most amazing, God decided how you would be born. Regardless of the circumstances of your birth or who your parents are, God had a plan in creating you. It doesn’t matter whether your parents were good, bad, or indifferent. God knew that those two individuals possessed exactly the right genetic makeup to create the custom "you" He had in mind. They had the DNA God wanted to make you.

“While there are illegitimate parents, there are no illegitimate children. Many children are unplanned by their parents, but they were not unplanned by God. God’s purpose took into account human error, and even sin” (The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren, p. 23).
to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.”

(Mark 5:21-43, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What has been the loneliest time of your life, and how did you deal with it?

Who in this story might have felt lonely and cut off from others? Why?

How might the synagogue ruler and the bleeding woman feel powerless in their particular situations?

What would be worse: the grief and loneliness from a loved one who passed away or the loneliness from a life lived completely alone, shunned by society? Explain.

What can we learn from this story about Jesus’ power over loneliness and grief?

other eyes

“The walls we build around us to keep out the sadness also keep out the joy.”—Jim Rohn, American entrepreneur, author, and motivational speaker.

“Hope is a higher heart frequency, and as you begin to reconnect with your heart, hope is waiting to show you new possibilities and arrest the downward spiral of grief and loneliness. Listening to the still small voice in your heart will make hope into a reality”—Sara Paddison, American author.

punch lines

“God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing” (Psalm 68:6, NIV).

“Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted” (Psalm 25:16, NIV).

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16, NIV).

“But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless” (Psalm 10:14, NIV).

“They will enter Zion with singing: everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isaiah 35:10, NIV).
Everybody is completely unique. Your thoughts, your experiences, your strengths and challenges are all your own. Look at these verses:

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27, NIV).

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13, NIV).

“This is what the Lord says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 44:2, NIV).

Why do you think that God created you the way He did? Think of the thing that frustrates you the most about yourself. Why do you think that God included that in the complete package?

The analogy is made of a semitruck going down the highway. If that truck hit you, would you be changed? An encounter with such a large vehicle could not leave you unchanged. How much more should be changed by an encounter with the God of the universe? The woman with the problem with bleeding believed that only brushing the hem of Jesus’ robe would heal her. What in your life needs to be healed by an encounter with Jesus?

Consider this quote: “Originality does not consist in saying what no one has ever said before, but in saying exactly what you think”—James Fitzjames Stephen.

Ellen White says that God wants our praise to be “marked by our own individuality.” You can say it the way you feel it. You can talk the way you talk. What can you thank God for today that is perfectly unique to you?

Sometimes our individuality can make us feel separate from other people and misunderstood. How do these verses apply to you?

Psalm 68:6

Luke 5:16

Consider these:

“The nights of crying your eyes out give way to days of laughter” (King David, Psalm 30:5, Message).

“Friendship multiplies the good of life and divides the evil. ’Tis the sole remedy against misfortune, the very ventilation of the soul” (Baltasar Gracian).

How can you be the answer to a lonely or grieving person’s prayer?

How can you, with the individuality that God created you with, connect with other people to help relieve their loneliness? Who in your life could be made happier if you took some notice of them?

The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapter 36.

A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, entitled Humble Hero, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How many “Beths” are in your youth group?

II. TARGET

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

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

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

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

Illustration
Share the following stories in your own words:
Every year thousands of Seventh-day Adventist young people volunteer to serve the poor, feed the hungry, love the orphans, and share the gospel of Jesus around the world. Often these volunteers willingly accept the harshest of circumstances—buggy beds, violent weather, cold showers, bland food, and miserably long and expensive flights—just to participate in a mission experience. Why would anyone trade the cushy comforts of home for the difficulties inherent in the mission field? Listen to an excerpt from just one of hundreds of online testimonies from Seventh-day Adventist young people:
My experience in Ghana was one of the most important experiences of my life. I knew that God took me out there for a reason, and I am thankful because I know what that reason was.

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

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

Out of the Story for Teachers
After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them. Split your class into three groups and designate to each group one of the following passages and assignments. (If your class is small, simply choose one of the following assignments.) After 15 minutes of working on the assignment, have each group share their final project with the rest of the class.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pastor John Ortberg offers insightful commentary on this central theme of Jesus’ teaching:
“Everybody has a kingdom, in a biblical sense. Your kingdom is that little sphere in which what you say, goes. Your kingdom is the range of your effective will. . . .

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.cornerstoneconnections.net
Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero)*, chapter 37.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, 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.
“All over the field of Christ’s labor there were souls awakened to their need, and hungering and thirsting for the truth. The time had come to send the tidings of His love to these longing hearts. To all these the disciples were to go as His representatives. The believers would thus be led to look upon them as divinely appointed teachers, and when the Saviour should be taken from them they would not be left without instructors” (The Desire of Ages, p. 351).
what do you think?

Circle the top three reasons why you think some Christian teenagers are hesitant to share Christ with their friends:

• They are afraid of rejection.
• They don’t see it as important.
• They think Christianity is boring.
• They feel embarrassed.
• They don’t want to offend anyone.
• They feel like hypocrites.
• They are too busy.
• They are too shy.
• They believe that evangelism is the work of pastors or evangelists.

Circle the top three ways you think represent the most effective means to share Christ with others.

• Hand out gospel tracts.
• Stand on a street corner and preach.
• Always carry a Bible.
• Live a good life.
• Talk to my friends about Jesus.
• Invite a friend to church.
• Show kindness to others.
• Wear clothes that display a Christian message.
• Hang out with nonreligious people.
• Bring a friend to a social activity where your church friends will be.

into the story

“When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: ‘Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them.’ So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.’

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: “The kingdom of heaven is near.” Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

“Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it.

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. And if anyone gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

(Luke 9:1-6; Matthew 10:5-8, 17-33, 40-42, NIV)

did you know?

Evangelism simply means telling people the gospel. We evangelize when we tell someone the gospel. It is not sharing opinions, telling stories, sharing our testimony, singing songs, etc. We may tell the gospel through various means such as these, but the main thing is the message, not the method.
“Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: ‘God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20, Message).

“After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Message of God: ‘Time’s up! God’s kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message’” (Mark 1:14, 15, Message).

“The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern” (Proverbs 29:7, NIV).

“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you’” (John 20:21, NIV).

“We must not mind insulting men, if by respecting them we offend God.” — St. John Chrysostom, 4th-century archbishop of Constantinople and Church Father.

“...I used to say that I believed it was important to tell people about Jesus, but I never did. [My friend] Andrew very kindly explained that if I do not introduce people to Jesus, then I don’t believe Jesus is an important person. It doesn’t matter what I say.” — Donald Miller, Blue Like Jazz (Nelson, 2003), p. 110.

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the passages from Into the Story then answer the following questions:


Can we “drive out all demons and . . . cure diseases” today? Why or why not?

How might Jesus’ advice to “shake the dust off your feet” apply to us today?

Have you ever felt rejected for sharing your faith? If so, reflect on whether or not they were rejecting you or Jesus. How did Jesus handle rejection?

- Matthew 10:5-42

Notice the message that the twelve were to proclaim: “The kingdom of heaven is near.” Compare this with the gospel that Jesus came to proclaim (see Mark 1:14, 15). How is this same message of good news (or the “gospel”) relevant today?

Does this warning of persecution for those who proclaim the gospel mean the same today as it did back then? Explain.

How might you share “a cup of cold water” with someone today?
Sabbath

A n old story tells of a woodsman who lived in the mountains of North Korea. While working in the forest one day, he was attacked by a huge tiger. The woodsman seized the tiger by the tail, and the tiger began turning around in circles, trying to get his teeth into the woodsman. A Buddhist monk, out for a walk, was attracted by the noise and sauntered over. The woodsman, upon seeing the monk, cried out, “Please take my ax there and kill this tiger before I am eaten alive.”

The monk, lowering his eyes and plausibly folding his hands, replied, “I am sorry, but I cannot kill the tiger. You see, I am a Buddhist and as a Buddhist all life is sacred to me, be it insect, human, or animal.”

The woodsman answered, “Fortunately, I am not blessed with your belief so would you please take my place at the tail of the tiger and let me kill the beast.”

The monk agreed and they exchanged places. The woodsman then walked over, picked up his ax, placed it on his shoulder, and nonchalantly strolled off into the forest. The Buddhist monk, very much alarmed, cried out, “Please, come back and kill this tiger as you promised or else I will be devoured.”

The woodsman’s parting reply was: “I was so impressed by your example that I have become a convert to your belief.”

The monk agreed and they exchanged places.

Monday

R ead the Key Text and reflect on the following questions:

- Why do you think Jesus empowered His disciples to perform miracles?
- To what end(s) did Jesus perform miracles in His ministry?
- Is it possible to access that same “power and authority” of Jesus today? If so, how?

Tuesday

Q uoted in the Flashlight section is this statement: “All over the field of Christ’s labor there were souls awakened to their need, and hungering and thirsting for the truth.” Spend time in prayer and ask God to reveal to you any friends or family members you may know who are “hungering and thirsting” for truth. Write their names on your prayer list.

Next, prayerfully consider how God might want to use you to share the gospel with the people on your list.

Wednesday

R ead the two passages in the Punch Lines section that come from The Message paraphrase. Now choose one of the remaining verses from Punch Lines and translate it into contemporary language similar to what Eugene Peterson did with The Message.

Thursday

C onsider this observation from Becky Pippert: "Christians and non-Christians have something in common. We’re both upright about evangelism. Christians are afraid of offending. Non-Christians are afraid of being assaulted!”

Would you agree or disagree with Becky? Why? What is your biggest fear in sharing your faith? What is the worst thing that could happen if you took a risk and told someone about Jesus? Is the risk worth it?

Friday

I n his award-winning book on evangelism, Just Walk Across the Room, Bill Hybels suggests that the single greatest gift Christ-followers can give to the people around them is an introduction to the God who created them, who loves them, and has a purpose for their lives. Hybels says: “This is what evangelism is—constantly looking for ways to give that gift to someone living far from God.”

To think about: How can I be more intentional about sharing that gift of life with those who are far from God?

Sunday

W ho is the best advertisement for Christianity that you know? What makes this person’s witness so compelling?
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

• Spiritual disciplines
• Entertainment and leisure
• Stress

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.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 key to this week’s activity is to get the students thinking about how they spend their leisure time.
Note that there may be activities they engage in that were not mentioned on the list. Ask them to share some of those, if time permits.

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

“I don’t get it,” he said.

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

Take a Sail. The place where Jesus and His disciples assembled to rest from their ministry labors was at the northeastern end of the Lake of Galilee. The area around the lake was lush and verdant. Jesus understood the rejuvenating powers of nature—after all, He created it. Sitting among the trees away from the...
crowds that buffeted them from day to day, Jesus could drop the hidden language of the parables and speak directly to His loved ones. We hear God differently when we are alone with Him than when we are engaged in the hustle and bustle of life. When our minds and hearts are quiet, God’s voice can become clear and positively deafening with time and practice. Ellen White notes that Jesus was constantly dogged by the machinations of the scribes and Pharisees. This getaway was as much a break for Jesus as it was for His disciples (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 361).

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

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

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

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### Tips for Top-notch Teaching

**The Finer Point**

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

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

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

### Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

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

Activity

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

Find a day planner and make copies of one day’s entry to distribute to the class (or you can ask those with Smart phones to access a day planner app). Ask class members to reflect on a day during the past week. Then ask the students to fill in the day planner sheet, detailing everything they did that day.

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

Summary

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

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 38, 39, 40.

*A special adaptation, Humble Hero, 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.
In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ Ps. 46:10. Here alone can true rest be found” (The Desire of Ages, p. 363).

“The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’”

(Mark 6:30, 31, NIV)
Imagine that you are getting ready for school one day when you receive the news that school is cancelled for the day. That’s right! There is no school and you are free to do whatever you like. Rank the following activities on a scale of 1 (Gotta do it) to 8 (Not interested) to see what you will do with your day off.

1. Play video games all day
2. Call a friend to go shopping
3. Pick up trash around your neighborhood
4. Text message some friends
5. Sleep
6. Check out your Facebook, MySpace, Bebo pages
7. Turn off all media (chill)
8. Surf the Internet
9. Do nothing
10. Read

Much of this week’s Sabbath School lesson takes place around a small Galilean seaside village called Bethsaida. Bethsaida literally means “House of the Fisherman,” and it had that name before Jesus, the Fisher of men, showed up. It was the birthplace of Peter, Andrew, and Philip, three of Jesus’ disciples, and all of whom were fishermen. It was near Bethsaida that Jesus and the disciples rested, where Jesus fed the 5,000, and where the disciples saw Jesus walk on water. Bethsaida was quite a place.

“When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

“As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.’

“Jesus replied, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’

“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,’ they answered.

“Bring them here to me,’ he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

“During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified.

“It’s a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear.

“But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.’

“Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’

“Come,’ he said.

“Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’

“Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’

“And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’”

(Matthew 14:13-33, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

These two stories are famous vignettes from the life of Jesus. Did you notice anything new in either story? Put an X by something new to you.

Notice the issue of time and place in these stories. Place a checkmark by parts of the story where you see shifts in time and place.

Focus on the attitudes of the characters in each story. What is the attitude of Jesus? the disciples? the crowds that follow them?

Underline the parts of each story where Jesus demonstrates His power. What can you learn from how Jesus uses His gifts?

Did Jesus take any breaks during these two episodes? If so, why?

punch lines

“My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest” (Isaiah 32:18, NIV).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5, 6, NIV).

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30, NIV).

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3, NIV).

“Stress is nothing more than a socially acceptable form of mental illness.”—Richard Carlson, 20th-century American actor and author.

“Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.”—Ovid, Roman poet, 43 B.C.-17 A.D.

“Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save.”—Will Rogers, 20th-century entertainer.
**Sabbath**

What activities were at the top of your list in the What Do You Think? activity? Take your Bible and turn to Matthew 14:18-23. After the feeding of the 5,000, what did Jesus tell the disciples to do? Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to leave Him, get on a boat, and travel across the Lake of Galilee?

What did Jesus do after the multitudes were gone and the crowds were dispersed?

Prayer is the most intimate way to connect with God. That is why disciples are encouraged to make it a part of their daily spiritual regimen. Prayer, Bible study, solitude, and other activities that help us to grow in our relationship with God are called spiritual disciplines.

**Sunday**

Read the account of the feeding of the 5,000 found in John 6:1-13. John gives much more detail about the conversation that took place between Jesus and the disciples as they prepared to minister.

Besides the obvious, what spiritual lesson did the people take away from the celebration that happened that day?

Through the spiritual discipline of fellowship, believers help to shelter each other from life’s stormy weather. That was one of the truths that Jesus modeled during the feeding of the 5,000.

**Monday**

This Sabbath’s Key Text is part of the backstory to the Into the Story passage. The disciples had just returned from a very successful evangelistic campaign. God used them to exercise demons, heal the sick, return sight to the blind, help the lame walk, and much more. It was an awesome display of God’s power.

But then Jesus said: “Come with me by yourself to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31, NIV). Why do you think Jesus called his disciples aside for some rest and relaxation? Did they need only physical rest?

Look up the meaning of the word “discipline” in a dictionary. One definition is the ability to behave in a controlled or calm way even in a stressful situation. Is it possible to be calm in a stressful situation if one never takes any time to be quiet? Explain.

When was the last time you abstained from all media so that you could hear from God?

**Tuesday**

This week’s Flashlight is extremely powerful. Let’s examine one aspect of the statement. The opening line says: “In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices...” In your own words, write what you think it means to have a life that is out of harmony with the rest of the world.

Based on what you’ve learned about Jesus so far this week, how was His life out of harmony with the norms of His day?

**Wednesday**

This week’s Punch Lines are filled with Scripture that you should commit to memory. Which one of them stands out to you?

God has promised to direct you and to show you “unsearchable things” (Jeremiah 33:3), mysteries that confound people who are disconnected from God. But to find out the deep things of God, you have to submit yourself to Him.

**Thursday**

Based on what you’ve learned this week about our need for rest and rejuvenation, what changes would you make to your weekly schedule? How much quiet time do you spend with God?

Why not take your daily planner and plan some time for you and God to hang out? Remember, spiritual disciplines don’t save us; they simply put us in the presence of God where He can transform us into His image.

**Friday**

Jesus lived a disciplined spiritual life, and prayer was at the top of His daily list of “to do’s.” He made time to commune with His Father, and that communion gave Him power and purpose. If you want to know what your purpose in life is and have the power to live it out, emulate Jesus. How can God help you live the disciplined life as one of His disciples?

**this week’s reading**

The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 38, 39, 40.

A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, entitled Humble Hero, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.
The objective of this activity is to get teens talking about some of the barriers to effective communication and understanding.

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

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Jews and their leaders were constantly pushing Jesus to show them signs and wonders before they would believe. They had seen numerous proofs that Jesus was indeed from God, but they refused to believe in Him because of what doing so would require of them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.cornerstoneconnections.net
people whose laws forbade them to use blood for food. This was a hard saying.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

Ask the students the following questions:

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

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

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

1 Fundamental Belief No. 9.
2 Fundamental Belief No. 1.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 41, 42.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.
misunderstood

flashlight

“The giver of the manna was standing among them. It was Christ Himself who had led the Hebrews through the wilderness, and had daily fed them with the bread from heaven. That food was a type of the real bread from heaven. The life-giving Spirit, flowing from the infinite fullness of God, is the true manna. Jesus said, ‘The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.’ John 6:33, RV Still thinking that it was temporal food to which Jesus referred, some of His hearers exclaimed, ‘Lord, evermore give us this bread.’ Jesus then spoke plainly: ‘I am the bread of life’” (The Desire of Ages, p. 386).

keytext

“They said, ‘Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, “I came down from heaven?”’”

(John 6:42, NIV)
The message below was sent by a company CEO to one of his managers. The manager was then to share the memo with the department chief, who then shared with the floor manager. The floor manager passed it on to the supervisor who then gave the message to the staff. Here’s the CEO’s original message:

"Today at 11 o’clock there will be a total eclipse of the sun. This is when the sun disappears behind the moon for two minutes. As this is something that cannot be seen every day, time will be allowed for employees to view the eclipse in the parking lot. . . . Safety goggles will be made available at a small cost."

Now here’s the message that the supervisor delivered to the staff.

"Some staff will go to the car park today to see the CEO disappear. It is a pity this doesn’t happen every day."

How did the CEO’s message get changed so much?

The ministry of Jesus got ever more dangerous once He began to reveal who He was—the Son of God, the Bread from heaven. As you’ll learn this week, the scribes and Pharisees looked for every opportunity to destroy Him. Their opposition became so fierce about a year before Jesus’ death that He was forced to flee to a region called Phoenicia, a place where there were few Jews. Jesus and the disciples kept a low profile there, but their time was not wasted. Jesus used the time in Phoenicia to acquaint His disciples with the needs of unbelievers. You see the results of Jesus’ efforts in the book of Acts!

The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

“When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, ’Rabbi, when did you get here?’”

“Jesus answered, ’I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.’”

“Then they asked him, ’What must we do to do the works God requires?’”

“Jesus answered, ’The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’”

“So they asked him, ’What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ’He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ . . .

“Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”

“Then Jesus declared, ’I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.’”

“At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, ’I am the bread that came down from heaven.’ They said, ’Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ’I came down from heaven’?”’"

(John 6:22-42, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

Go through this week’s Scripture story and put an X by parts of the story where there is potential for misunderstanding.

Who are the main characters in this drama? How are they reacting to Jesus? How is Jesus reacting to them?

Underline the verses that signal a turning point in the conversation that Jesus is having with the crowd gathered around Him. What caused the people to get upset at Jesus?

How did Jesus’ family history add to the problem that the people were having with what Jesus was saying?

What two lessons—there are more—can you take away from this biblical episode?

What new insight about Jesus did you learn from this reading?

punch lines

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11, 12, NIV).

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalms 119:165, KJV).

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6, KJV).

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:12, 13, NIV).

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26, NIV).

other eyes

“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate.”—Albert Schweitzer, 20th-century Alsatian medical missionary, musician, theologian.

“The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word ‘crisis.’ One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger—but recognize the opportunity.”—John F. Kennedy, 20th-century American president (1961-1963).
Sabbath
What did you think of the What Do You Think? activity? Sort of crazy, isn’t it? It’s amazing how words can get twisted once they begin to travel from person to person. This was something that Jesus experienced on numerous occasions.

Why was Jesus so misunderstood by the multitudes (Matthew 13:34, 35)?

Why do you think Jesus used parables instead of speaking plainly to the people?

Would people have understood Jesus if He had tried to explain His entire mission? Why or why not?

Sunday
After reading the Into the Story section, complete the Out of the Story exercise. Did you notice anything peculiar about the negative response of the people when Jesus declared that He was the Bread sent from heaven? Remember, this crowd had heard all about Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000 just a day or two before. That’s why they came to Him.

If they knew that Jesus had performed such an awesome miracle, why were they so offended when He said that He was sent from God?

Weren’t the miracles Jesus performed proof enough that He was not of this world? Why do people continue to doubt that Jesus was sent from God?

Monday
This Sabbath’s Key Text is essential to understanding why people back in Jesus’ time, and even people today, have problems accepting the deity or divine nature of Jesus. These people knew who Jesus’ mother and “father” were, or so they thought.

Read John 6:43, the verse that follows the Key Text. Why didn’t Jesus take this opportunity to explain His mysterious birth and miraculous parentage?

Tuesday
Feel the heat coming from this week’s Flashlight quotation by Ellen G. White. Can’t you see Jesus standing in the middle of a questioning crowd and declaring, “I am the bread of life”? That must have sent shockwaves around the universe.

Read Deuteronomy 8:3 and Jeremiah 15:16. What statement does Moses make about the Word of God in Deuteronomy 8:3?

What did Jeremiah do once he found God’s Word?

Jesus was the Word of God (John 1) made flesh, the Bread of life capable of removing all hunger. If the Jews had understood the Scriptures, they would have seen that Jesus was the living, breathing embodiment of the Word that captivated Moses and Jeremiah.

Wednesday
Read this week’s Punch Lines. Choose one or more to commit to memory today.

Psalm 119:165 states: “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (KJV).

How does one get to a spiritual point where nothing can offend them? Is this even possible? Explain.

Share one lesson you learned from this week’s Punch Lines about how to handle spiritual trials.

Thursday
Jesus charged that the scribes and Pharisees “honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Matthew 15:8, NIV).

Is your heart close to God? List two things you need to do to improve your walk with God.

1. _________________________

2. _________________________

What’s preventing you from doing those things? Why not whisper a prayer and ask God to change you right now?

Friday
Jesus urged His listeners to partake of Him, to eat His flesh and drink His blood. How does one do this? Is it possible?

When we study the life of Jesus in God’s Word and ask the Holy Spirit to bring the life of Jesus into our lives, isn’t this a form of eating His flesh and drinking His blood?

_________


this week’s reading*

The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 41, 42.

A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, entitled Humble Hero, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
I. SYNOPSIS

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

Make it clear to the students how prejudice is as rampant today as ever. Ask them to share any stories about experiencing prejudice in their lives, whether it be about race or even age or gender.

But don’t stop there. This offers an excellent opportunity to discuss not only our experiencing prejudice, but our responses.

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

• Faith
• Prejudice
• The gospel

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

After going over the What Do You Think? section, divide the students into groups. Have them take a pen and piece of paper and write down examples of prejudice that they have either witnessed, read, seen on television, or any other ways they have been exposed to it. Afterward, have each group read their examples and then discuss and compare the differences and similarities. (Note to Teacher: It will be up to you to keep the discussion “redemptive,” rather than digressing into a “gripe” session.)
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

Jesus’ Response:

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

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

III. CLOSING

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 43.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, 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.
“Christ knew this woman’s situation. He knew that she was longing to see Him, and He placed Himself in her path. By ministering to her sorrow, He could give a living representation of the lesson He designed to teach. For this He had brought His disciples into this region. He desired them to see the ignorance existing in cities and villages close to the land of Israel. The people who had been given every opportunity to understand the truth were without a knowledge of the needs of those around them. No effort was made to help souls in darkness. The partition wall which Jewish pride had erected shut even the disciples from sympathy with the heathen world. But these barriers were to be broken down” (The Desire of Ages, p. 400).

Scripture Story: Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.
Commentary: The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapter 43.
What do you think?

Many things in today’s society cause prejudice against others. Rate each item below 1 to 10 on how powerfully they cause prejudice, with 1 being the greatest cause and 10 being the least.

- Religion
- Race
- Location
- Culture
- Poverty
- Wealth
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Political preference

Did you know?

During the times when Jesus was preaching, prejudices were common, especially against non-Jews. Many places that Jesus walked overlooked the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, both containing heathen temples, palaces, markets, and shipping harbors. The Phoenician religion was based on the process and power of nature. They worshipped many different gods and had various amounts of pagan rituals and customs. A pantheon was presided over by the father of the gods, but a goddess was the main figure within this Phoenician pantheon.

These extreme religious differences fueled the anger of the Jews and sparked even more hatred and prejudice between the two groups. To be a Phoenician was to be considered lowly and beyond notice to many Jews.

Jesus left and went to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Suddenly a Canaanite woman from there came out shouting, ‘Lord and Son of David, have pity on me! My daughter is full of demons.’ Jesus did not say a word. But the woman kept following along and shouting, so his disciples came up and asked him to send her away. Jesus said, ‘I was sent only to the people of Israel! They are like a flock of lost sheep.’

‘The woman came closer. Then she knelt down and begged, ‘Please help me, Lord!’

‘Jesus replied, ‘It isn’t right to take food away from children and feed it to dogs.’ ‘Lord, that’s true,’ the woman said, ‘but even dogs get the crumbs that fall from their owner’s table.’ “Jesus answered, ‘Dear woman, you really do have a lot of faith, and you will be given what you want.’ At that moment her daughter was healed.”

(Matthew 15:21-28, CEV)
“It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed” (Deuteronomy 31:8, ESV).

“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).

“Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” (Colossians 3:11, NIV).

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them” (Psalm 145:18, 19, NIV).

“Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing” (Psalm 34:10, ESV).

“We are each burdened with prejudice; against the poor or the rich, the smart or the slow, the gaunt or the obese. It is natural to develop prejudices. It is noble to rise above them.”—Author unknown.

“All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.”—Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th-century American essayist.
Sabbath
This woman demonstrated a powerful amount of faith in Jesus. She was a heathen, and all Jews looked down upon her. However, rather than letting others’ opinions of her keep her from moving forward, she came to Jesus with a heart full of hope and faith in Him. In our lives there are many ways in which we let doubt reign in our hearts. Many people saw this woman as a sinner, but we can look to her as an example of how to demonstrate our faith.

We are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of Jesus, yet humbly ask Him for what we wish. Many times we assume our wishes are either too extravagant or too unimportant for God to worry about, but all we have to do is trust and hope in the Lord to do what He sees fit. How can I put my faith in God in the coming week for the little and the monumental things?

Sunday
In this lesson we learned how prejudice can affect us in many negative ways. It can eat us alive until we don’t try to see people for who they truly are, but we see a veil of all our bias and prejudices made into one ugly image. Jesus looked past this woman’s flaws and noticed her faith in Him. Below list a few ways in which we can demonstrate Christ’s unconditional love and look past others’ flaws:

1. _______________________________
2. _______________________________
3. _______________________________

Monday
Take your Bible and search it to find as many verses as you can on the topics of prejudice and faith. Try to find different stories or Bible quotes that involve those topics and then tie them together. There are many stories in the New Testament about faith. Compare each one to the other, pointing out similarities and differences between the main characters.

Tuesday
The Flashlight quote revealed how we can be blind to the needs of people around us because of our prejudices.

Try to identify areas in your life in which you might hold some prejudice against others. Often prejudices can be subconscious. Read through the Bible and ask God to help you identify areas of prejudice in your life so you can eliminate them, as well as ask Him to reveal to you the needs of those people against whom you’ve been biased.

Wednesday
Faith can be a difficult thing. It means going against the odds and putting your trust in something that you don’t fully understand. But faith should not be blind. This Phoenician woman knew that Jesus was a healer. She knew that He had the power to heal her daughter, even when others didn’t. Even when it looked as if she wouldn’t get her wish she still kept pleading with Jesus. The Bible says, “Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find.”

What areas of your life—whether physical, emotional, or spiritual—need the healing power of Jesus?

Thursday
Colossians 3:11 says: “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” (NIV). Also, Acts 10:34 says: “Now I am certain that God treats all people alike” (CEV). We are all equal in God’s eyes. If we are equal in His eyes, then why should we see others as beneath or above us? We should treat all with the same equality that Jesus demonstrated. He showed us that it didn’t matter who you are or where you are from; all people are entitled to His gift of hope and eternal life. Write down a few examples in a journal or notebook of what can help you break down the barriers of prejudice and show God’s love to all people.

Friday
Hebrews 10:23 says: “Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise” (NLT). We must hold tightly to the confession of our hope. Hope leads to trust, and trust leads to faith. We must never let go of the promise that God has given us. Write down three examples of how God has worked in your life when you had faith in Him.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________


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Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Understand that to grow in faith they have to be honest about their own spiritual condition. (Know)
• Desire to have a growing faith experience. (Feel)
• Determine their own action steps to grow in their own personal faith. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Faith development
• Self-honesty
• Why bother with faith?

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

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

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

Ask, “Which of these has to come first, before any

www.cornerstoneconnections.net
of the others can happen? Why?” Ask which has to come next (using each word). When the activity is finished post them in the final order. They will be used later in the lesson.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

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

The astronauts had to trust the scientists enough to keep communicating. When the scientists gave them the solutions, the astronauts had to trust in what they were told to do to fix the spacecraft.

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

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

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

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

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

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

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

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

- Distribute a sheet of paper and various colored markers to each student. Ask them to mindmap the following things:
  - The main characters in this story.
  - The actions of the characters in the story.
  - Something new that they learned about this story.

- Ask them to consider the following questions and add them to their mind maps:
  - Which of the father’s actions actually healed the son? (None of them. Jesus healed him.)
  - Which of these actions, if omitted, could have prevented his son’s healing? (Any one of them.)

- The disciples had been with Jesus for just over three years when this story took place. After having spent so much time with Him, how did they manage to fail in such a big way?

- What do you think the nine disciples who failed to heal the boy were feeling? What do you think the three disciples who had been with Jesus were thinking and feeling?

- The crowd wavered from attacking the disciples and making fun of them to believing Jesus could heal the boy. Have you ever experienced this wavering in your life? Add something on your mind map that would illustrate this incident in your life.

- How did this event help the father and son to grow in their faith? the crowd? the disciples? you?

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

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

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

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

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

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**Teaching From . . .**

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

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

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

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

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

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**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

*Motivating Your Students*

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

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

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

**III. CLOSING**

**Activity**

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

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

**Summary**

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

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

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

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

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

flashlight

“If Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.’ How many a sin-burdened soul has echoed that prayer. And to all, the pitying Saviour’s answer is, ‘If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.’ It is faith that connects us with heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. . . . Look not to self, but to Christ. . . . You can never perish while you do this—never” (The Desire of Ages, p. 429).

keytext

“Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how.”

(Matthew 16:24, Message)
what do you think?

Rank the following in the order that they occur in the life of a Christian.

Belief
Wisdom
Knowledge
Faith

Explain the reasons for the order you chose.

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did you know?

Disciples were by definition “apprentices,” to assume the role of their teachers. Jesus had already sent His disciples out, and they had healed the sick and driven out demons. Had they not seen enough to believe?

Ancient peoples thought of mountains as rooted far beneath the earth (Gundry 1982:353), so “moving mountains” was a typical Jewish teacher’s image for doing what was virtually impossible. With this illustration Jesus indicates that even we were casting out mountains rather than demons, we would only be scratching the surface of a life of faith. What could we do with faith greater than that of a tiny mustard seed? Like children who have only begun to walk, most of us have only begun our adventure of faith. (Taken from www.BibleGateway.com.)

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“When they came back down the mountain to the other disciples, they saw a huge crowd around them, and the religion scholars cross-examining them. As soon as the people in the crowd saw Jesus, admiring excitement stirred them. They ran and greeted him. He asked, ‘What’s going on? What’s all the commotion?’

“A man out of the crowd answered, ‘Teacher, I brought my mute son, made speechless by a demon, to you. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and goes stiff as a board. I told your disciples, hoping they could deliver him, but they couldn’t.’

“Jesus said, ‘What a generation! No sense of God! How many times do I have to go over these things? How much longer do I have to put up with this? Bring the boy here.’ They brought him. When the demon saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a seizure, causing him to writhe on the ground and foam at the mouth.

“He asked the boy’s father, ‘How long has this been going on?’ ‘Ever since he was a little boy. Many times it pitches him into fire or the river to do away with him. If you can do anything, do it. Have a heart and help us!’

“Jesus said, ‘If? There are no “ifs” among believers. Anything can happen.’

“No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the father cried, ‘Then I believe. Help me with my doubts!’

“Seeing that the crowd was forming fast, Jesus gave the vile spirit its marching orders: ‘Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you—Out of him, and stay out!’ Screaming, and with much thrashing about, it left. The boy was pale as a corpse, so people started saying, ‘He’s dead.’ But Jesus, taking his hand, raised him. The boy stood up.”

“Then the disciples came to Jesus in private. They asked, ‘Why couldn’t we drive out the demon?’

“He replied, ‘Because your faith is much too small. What I’m about to tell you is true. If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, it is enough. You can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there.” And it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.’”

(Mark 9:14-27; Message; Matthew 17:19-21, NIV)
punch lines

“So I turned my mind to understand, to investigate and to search out wisdom and the scheme of things and to understand the stupidity of wickedness and the madness of folly” (Ecclesiastes 7:25, NIV).

“Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline” (Proverbs 1:5-7, NIV).

“Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I’m about; see for yourself whether I’ve done anything wrong—then guide me on the road to eternal life” (Psalm 139:23, 24, Message).

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28, 29, NIV).

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”—Jim Elliott, 20th-century missionary to Ecuador.

“By faith you can move mountains; but the important thing is not to move the mountains, but to have the faith.”—Arthur Clutton-Brock, 19th-20th-century British essayist.

OUT OF THE STORY

What do you think Jesus meant when He said, “O unbelieving and perverse generation, . . . how long shall I stay with you?”

Why were the disciples not able to heal this boy after they had already been healing other people?

At what point did the father actually have the faith required for his son to be healed?

What role would the father’s faith have played if the demon-possessed boy had not been willing to be submissive to Jesus? How does this affect you today when your parents pray for you?

Why don’t we see more healing today?
Sabbath
In a small group of friends, share the answers you gave in the What Do You Think? section. Then read 1 Peter 1:3-8. Do these verses change the order in which you originally listed the items in What Do You Think? If so, what changes did you make and why?

Sunday
Think about the story of Jesus, the disciples, and the demon-possessed boy. Reflect on the following questions:

Jesus said, “This kind comes out only with prayer.” Certainly the disciples had been praying when they had cast out other demons before. But it wasn’t enough for this situation. How many demons have you cast out? What do you need to do to have enough understanding of and relationship with God to cast out demons or to move mountains?

Monday
The closer you are to getting your driver’s license, the harder it is to sit in the passenger’s seat. At this time in your life, Jesus wants you to have the faith to move mountains. Are you excited about moving mountains? Describe how this excitement, or lack of, shows your true spiritual condition and readiness for heaven.

Tuesday
Just give me the facts.” People always want to know the bottom line of what has to be done to achieve any worthy goal. What does Ellen White mean when she writes “You can never perish” when you cry out to Jesus? Does she mean perishing literally or spiritually? Knowing that you can never perish while you cry out to Jesus, what would crying out in your life look like today?

Wednesday
God already knows what is in your heart. You need to see what He sees by being honest with yourself about your spiritual condition.

Read the Punch Lines again. Make a list of three action steps you see you need to take based on your self-evaluation. What do these texts say to you today about where you are spiritually? How can you implement them in ways that will help you grow in your relationship with Jesus?

Thursday
Ellen White writes about how the crowd was beginning to turn on the disciples when they couldn’t heal the demon-possessed boy. The scribes who were in the crowd were encouraging this behavior. As soon as Jesus appeared, the crowd changed and they fell silent, waiting to see what Jesus would do. Compare this to Jesus and the crowds when He stood before Pilate. How quickly the crowd was ready to cry “Crucify Him!” What does this tell you about where they were in their faith experience? Did they have faith only as long as Jesus kept healing people and multiplying loaves of bread and fish? Have you fallen into this same kind of trap in your life believing in Jesus when everything goes well, but turning on Him in the hard times? Name two things you can do this week to help grow your faith for the hard times.

Friday
Mike Yaconelli writes: “How could anyone accuse me of being spiritual unless spirituality comes in unlimited shapes and sizes, unless spirituality looks like whatever you and I look like when we’re thinking about Jesus, when we are trying to find Jesus, when we are trying to figure out what real Christianity looks like in the real world?” (Messy Spirituality, p. 26).

“What spirituality looks like whatever you and I look like when we are thinking about Jesus, when we are trying to find Jesus, when we are trying to figure out what real Christianity looks like in the real world?”

What does your spirituality look like, and how are you going to reflect Jesus this week?

*this week’s reading*

The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 44, 45, 46, 47.

A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, entitled Humble Hero, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
who is Jesus?

I. SYNOPSIS
The Jews enjoyed a rich history full of oral tradition, the Scriptures, their weekly Sabbaths and annual feasts, and the Temple with all its ritual and worship to prepare them to recognize and receive their Messiah when He should come. So why was there all the whispering, confusion, and outright anger and rejection of Him, particularly by the religious leaders? It wasn’t as though most people weren’t impressed by His miracles or His teachings. Jesus was very popular and well liked by ordinary people. They were convinced for the most part that He was a prophet and healer. The problem with Jesus was that He went too far. Performing miracles and showing compassion, sounding authoritative about the Scriptures—that was sort of OK. But as we read through these chapters of John, what is very clear is that Jesus was claiming His deity. In doing so, both in His teaching and in the way He chose to perform His miracles, He was challenging the traditional ways in which the Jews had come to interpret the Scriptures. Bottom line: He wasn’t the Messiah they were expecting.

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

III. EXPLORE
• Festivals (biblical)
• Humiliation
• Jesus
• Compassion

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

Prepare and distribute scripts from John 8–10 in the form of a play. Assign parts: have someone read the part of Jesus, assign a narrator, some would be groups of people whispering, others would be the
and even compelling. If we lift Jesus up, He will draw all men unto Him.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

Ask:

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

Say:

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

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

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

Sharing Context and Background

Coming Full Circle

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

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

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Make It Personal

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

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

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
they journeyed in the wilderness. He gave them water from the rocks when the dry desert had nothing to offer them. He met their every need, sheltering them from wild animals, snakes, and scorpions, shielding them from the enemy nations and tribes. Jehovah was their great Provider. And as Jesus saw the sun lighting up the gold of the Temple walls, He pointed to it and said, “I am the light of the world.” These walls—just as the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites by night in the desert—had always pointed God’s people to the Messiah. There He was, pointing back at the walls and proclaiming that here He was, their long-awaited redemption!

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Summary

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

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

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

Ask: What picture do you have of Jesus? What picture of Jesus do others get from you?

Close with prayer.
who is Jesus?

Flashlight

“God is light; and in the words, ‘I am the light of the world,’ Christ declared His oneness with God, and His relation to the whole human family. It was He who at the beginning had caused ‘the light to shine out of darkness.’ 2 Cor. 4:6. He is the light of sun and moon and star. He was the spiritual light that in symbol and type and prophecy had shone upon Israel. . . . As the sunbeams penetrate to the remotest corners of the earth, so does the light of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon every soul” (The Desire of Ages, p. 464).
What do you think is the reason Jesus’ contemporaries had such a difficult time believing in Him as the Messiah?

- Lack of evidence
- Pride
- Jesus’ choice of friends
- Jesus’ background
- His incredible claims

It’s easy to be critical of the religious people who challenged and rejected Jesus. But remember, today we have the historical reality of Jesus’ life, sacrificial death, resurrection, and the witness of the first disciples and the early church. Yet many people can’t seem to believe that Jesus was/is God in the flesh. As you study the lesson, think about why this may be. What do you think of Jesus?

**did you know?**

Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and secular people all believe in Jesus. Whether it is that He is a prophet or religious leader in history among all the other prophets, or whether it’s that He was a good man who set a good example, or even that He is one god among a myriad of gods, almost everyone believes something about Jesus. Our global community has absorbed Jesus into its culture. So, as it turns out, all these centuries after Jesus’ life, things haven’t changed so much when it comes to all the different opinions people have about Jesus. Who do you say Jesus is? What you believe about Jesus makes all the difference in the world!

**INTO THE STORY**

“When the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, Jesus’ brothers said to him, ‘You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.’ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

“Therefore Jesus told them, ‘The right time for me has not yet come.’ . . .

“However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, ‘Where is that man?’ Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, ‘He is a good man.’ Others replied, ‘No, he deceives the people.’ But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

“Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, ‘How did this man get such learning without having studied?’

“At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, ‘Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.’

“Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, ‘Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.’ . . .

“Many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, ‘When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?’

“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’

“On hearing his words, some of the people said, ‘Surely this man is the Prophet.’

“Others said, ‘He is the Christ.’ Still others asked, ‘How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David’s family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?’ Thus the people were divided because of Jesus.”

(John 7:2-6, 10-15, 25-31, 37, 38, 40-43, NIV)
Read through John, 7 through 10 and list some of the things people were saying about Jesus.

What was the main reason the Jews had for doubting that Jesus was their Messiah? (John 7:27, 41-43, 52).

List Jesus’ answers to each of the questions raised about Him.

John’s Gospel stands out from the others because in it we can find the most about what Jesus says about Himself. How many of the “I am’s” of Jesus you can find? List them below. If you make the extra time you can include John 6 and 11 also to see more of the “I am’s”!

Why did the religious leaders become enraged with Jesus and want to kill Him? (John 8:58; 10:33).

“People often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice.” —C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity.
Sabbath
In the What Do You Think? section you had the opportunity to consider what people in Jesus’ day thought about Him and how that compares to today’s global culture. Do you know anyone who isn’t a Christian? Have you gotten an idea of what they think about Jesus? Do you have any Jewish friends, or Muslims, or Hindus, or Buddhists? Have you found that they all accept Jesus on some level? What will they not accept about Him?

Sunday
After reading the Into the Story section and answering the questions in the Out of the Story section, ask yourself this question: What systems were in place for Jewish people so that they should have been able to recognize Jesus as the Messiah?

Monday
Why were there so many differing opinions about Jesus—in His day and in ours? What are the barriers to having a clear view of Him?

Tuesday
In this week’s Flashlight Ellen White gives us deep insight into how meaningful Christ’s claim about Himself was. Jesus was calling Himself light—the source of all light. Go back to chapter 51 of The Desire of Ages, page 464, and read the complete quote and the context around it. List all the events this claim would have brought to mind to His Jewish listeners. Then read Revelation 21:22-24. Can you imagine that when Jesus said these words as He stood in the court of the Temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles that He saw way beyond earth’s history, and knew how fully and thoroughly He could meet every need of the human soul and give us more than we could ever begin to fathom? Also, while you are in Revelation 21, take a look at verse 6!

Wednesday
Read and think about this week’s Punch Lines.
As you read through all the claims made by Jesus in this week’s Punch Lines, what did you notice about Him that separates Him from all other religious gurus and prophets? Notice that Jesus doesn’t brag about being educated by human teachers. He has it on direct authority from God. What kind of challenges did that claim cause for Him?

Look at His other claims. Jesus didn’t say He would point people to the light; He said, “I am the light!” He wasn’t claiming to give us living water; He is the living water; He is the way; He is the gate by which we enter God’s kingdom. He is the shepherd who leads us!

In making His claims about Himself Jesus was using the name that God had taught Moses. The Hebrew word is Yahweh—it means I AM. When Moses asked God who he should tell Pharaoh had sent him, God said, “Tell Pharaoh, ‘I AM’ (or Yahweh) sent you.” Jesus was claiming THE NAME! Imagine if you were in the crowd hearing Jesus say this. Can you get a better grasp of why the religious leaders wanted to stone Him? How might you react? How quick are we to defend our traditions? Don’t you get unnerved when what you believe is challenged?

Thursday
Read the quotations in Other Eyes: Why is C. S. Lewis’ observation as important today as when he said it more than 50 years ago?

Friday
Unlike the other Gospel narratives, John’s Gospel gives us a picture of Jesus in the context of Jewish tradition and religious ritual. In doing so, he gives us the deepest spiritual insights into how Jesus is the fulfillment of all the symbolisms God had given to the Jews to teach them of His plan of redemption and restoration.

Through His Word and in the Sabbath and annual feasts, even in each item of the Temple, God used objects, events, and ritual to teach how He would save His people. Showing Jesus in that backdrop of everyday life and religious activity, John gave to the Jewish mind the idea that all those symbols are complete in Jesus. He’s the real thing! He’s the long-awaited Messiah who would save not just the Jews, but the Gentiles too!

Which of the sayings and miracles of Jesus in this lesson stood out most to you? Why? What insights have you gained?

PREPARING TO TEACH

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

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

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

III. EXPLORE
• Service
• Prejudice
• Money

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

Invite the students to share their responses to the ranking activity in the What Do You Think? section.

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

Read the two stories carefully and highlight their basic question for Jesus. What do they want from Him?

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

Commonalities

_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________


Differences

_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________

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

Extra Questions for Teachers:

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

The two encounters featured in this week’s lesson have a similar question but come from different settings. The first in our study is the encounter between Jesus and the expert in the law. To simply say “a lawyer” doesn’t accurately convey the gravity of this scene. He wasn’t “just a lawyer,” but an expert in the law of God. Other than the Author Himself, few would have known the law better than this man. Yet he inquired about the single most basic question about life: eternal life. It is important to note that the mood of this exchange is key to understanding the lawyer’s motives. The Bible says that he asked this question to “test” Jesus (Luke 10:25). One commentary describes the atmosphere the following way:
humanity has today, “How do I live forever?” Keeping the law is not the way, but treasuring anything more than eternity can disqualify you.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

The Power of Relationships

Showing relationships is a powerful activity in the learning process. Different ways can be used to demonstrate how things are related: (1) Compare and contrast. In this lesson there are two individuals who come to Christ with the same question. When you compare and contrast, the students think critically and carefully about the attributes of each story. (2) Cause and effect. Early in childhood development children learn how certain actions or events can cause an effect. Nebuchadnezzar’s stubborn pride and arrogance caused his seven-year season of humility as an animal. Looking to the snake on a stick in the desert caused some to be saved. As we wrestle with spiritual truths, we understand them more when we learn how to see them relationally.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

- Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Using tape or glue and strips of paper about six inches long, invite each student to make a chain. Say: “The chain represents our nature as humans. Think of specific aspects of your character—both good and bad—as links in a chain. There are some links that hold your faith together. Is there one link in this chain weaker than another? It is likely. If there is a point where we will be tested, it will probably focus on the area of our weakness. If it is the love of wealth or popularity, or even success, you can be sure that that link in the chain will be challenged.”

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 53, 54, 57.

*A special adaptation, Humble Hero, 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 Christ’s followers give back to the Lord His own, they are accumulating treasure which will be given to them when they shall hear the words, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord’” (The Desire of Ages, p. 523).

“‘You know the commandments: “Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, . . .”’ ‘Teacher,’ he declared, ‘all these I have kept since I was a boy.’ Jesus looked at him and loved him. ‘One thing you lack,’ he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor. . . . Then come, follow me.’”

(Mark 10:19-21, NIV)
Rank the following: which do you think is the hardest to give up for following Christ? (1-most difficult, 6-least difficult)

____ Popularity or public opinion
____ Money/wealth
____ Ideas and prejudices
____ Security of your future
____ Power and influence
____ Success and achievement

Which do you think is the most difficult to surrender to Christ? While different people can treasure different things, how does being aware that you might treasure something more than Christ affect your choices?

When Jesus gives you “the look.”

The rich young ruler came to Christ wanting to know how to achieve eternal life. What you may not know is that it is one of several places in the Gospels where Jesus gave someone “the look.” However, Mark is the only writer that says, “Jesus looked at him and loved him.” “The look” conveyed a loving appeal to follow. “The look” was a challenge to aim his heart beyond the world. “The look” conveyed grief as well, because Christ knew his heart was so deeply entangled with wealth that such a leap of faith was more than the ruler was willing to take. The word for “look” means to go beyond seeing something to perceiving it.

“On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ‘What is written in the Law?’ he replied. ‘How do you read it?’ He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ‘You have answered correctly,’ Jesus replied. ‘Do this and you will live.’

“But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’

“In reply Jesus said: ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. “Look after him,” he said, “and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.”

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?’ The expert in the law replied, ‘The one who had mercy on him.’

“Jesus told him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

“As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. ‘Teacher,’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ‘Why do you call me good?’ Jesus answered. ‘No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: “Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.”’

“Teacher,’ he declared, ‘all these I have kept since I was a boy.’

“Jesus looked at him and loved him. ‘One thing you lack,’ he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’

“At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, ‘How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!’”

(Luke 10:25-37; Mark 10:17-23, NIV)
“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21, 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).

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts” (Deuteronomy 6:5, 6, NIV).

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34, NIV).

“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7, NIV).

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:36, 37, NASB).

“One does not surrender a life in an instant. That which is lifelong can only be surrendered in a lifetime.”—Jim Elliot, 20th-century missionary to Ecuador.

“Wealth takes away the sharp edges of our moral sensitivities and allows a comfortable confusion about sin and virtue.”—Henri Nouwen, 20th-century writer.
**Sabbath**

Read and respond to the voting question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week’s lesson. As you think about the list of things that tend to get in the way of people making a full surrender to Christ, which elements have little or no pull on you? Why? Read Paul’s testimony in Philippians 3:1-10, and note his passion for following Christ alone. Look carefully at his list of things he can say about himself in Philippians 3:1-6. Is there anything on the list you ranked that would have a hold on Paul? Is it your desire to be able to say with Paul, “Nothing gets in the way of my relationship with God”? As you reflect on the areas you are compelled or influenced by, pray a specific prayer of surrender today. Also, consider what Jim Elliot is quoted saying in the *Other Eyes* section of this week’s lesson.

**Sunday**

Read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study. Which story speaks to you personally today? Which seems more dangerous: knowing you treasure worldly things but not having the courage to be willing to surrender them, or not knowing your heart is so entangled while thinking you are fine? For both seekers Jesus brings them to truth about their treasure (the lawyer—his prejudice, the ruler—his wealth) and urges them to surrender. If you were brought to such a place today, how would you respond? What do you think God is saying to you by these two encounters?

**Monday**

The *Key Text* this week comes from Mark 10:19-21, where Jesus peers into the soul of the ruler and sees everything.

What do you think Jesus saw in the ruler? Think of someone you know who genuinely wants to do the right thing or who desires to follow Christ but somehow can’t seem to do it. Pray for them today and perhaps send them a note or an e-mail encouraging them with the news that Jesus sees them and loves them.

**Tuesday**

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section and reflect on the things you do for a reward. List them out. It seems like everything we do has a reward, but not everything has the same reward. What is worth more to you than eternal life? Whom do you know who values heaven and eternal life more than anything else on earth? If you want to make their day, tell them in whatever way you think is best, “I want to thank you for the way you love eternal life more than anything else.” See what happens.

**Wednesday**

The *Punch Lines* in this week’s lesson pierce through the pleasantries of life and hit the core issue: What do we want most? What do we treasure? What are we willing to do, to give, to resist, to embrace to obtain our heart’s desire? If you were to order the *Punch Lines* in a Bible study for the rich young ruler, what order would you put them in, and why? If you were to do a Bible study for the expert in the law, how would you organize these verses to make the greatest impact? Why? Think of someone you know who reminds you of the lawyer or the ruler, or both, and dedicate time to pray for them today.

**Thursday**

Make a list of your assets—the things you own. It doesn’t have to be a specific list, but a general category of “my stuff.” Make a list of things you want to acquire before you die. Make a list of things you want to achieve before you die. Make a list of experiences you want to have before you die. Make a list of things you want others to say about you when you die. (You can use the Notes section of this guide.)

Not to be morbid, but examine this list. Surely it contains noble attributes. But would you trade any or all of those things for eternal life with Christ? The easy answer is “no.” But the real answer is to be played out in your life as you live each day. Today, make a priority list of five things to do today, but make sure you include the one thing you would never trade anything for.

**Friday**

Reflect on experiences in your life when you were torn between two good things. How do you make decisions in the here and now about noble things to achieve? By what reference point do you look at the things you want or choose to do? Take time to ruminite on a biblical character who had to make big decisions that were monumental to the ultimate outcome of their life. As you look at their story consider how your story resonates with the great challenge for all who choose to follow Christ—the challenge to make Him first and best above all.


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**this week’s reading**

*The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 53, 54, 57.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
rejuveniling your faith

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

- Discipleship
- Growth
- Faith

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

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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


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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

*Share the following in your own words:*

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

More Questions for Teachers:

- What specific issues do young adults face that require self-reliance? How do you achieve the skill of self-sufficiency without losing your childlike dependence on God? Think of specific scenarios in which this might be challenging. Developing healthiness, learning to make wise decisions on your own, working to pay for things your parents used to pay for.
- What does it look like to be childlike and spiritually mature at the same time? Ask for examples from people they know, and even examples of people in Scripture that demonstrate this trait.
- Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Mark 5; Luke 7:11-17; John 6:1-14; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 9:14-29.

Sharing Context and Background

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

The story of Jesus blessing the children rests in a broader context of a discussion on “who is the greatest?” It is important to keep in mind that the notions the disciples held about “the kingdom” and “the Messiah” shaped the way they thought about themselves.
In short, they were thinking far too often about themselves. So, before the children even showed up to be blessed by Jesus, the Savior was already dealing with an ongoing discussion of discipleship greatness. Notice the setting in Matthew 18:1-6:

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

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Divide into groups of two or three and, drawing

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Powerful Paradox

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

In short, they were thinking far too often about themselves. So, before the children even showed up to be blessed by Jesus, the Savior was already dealing with an ongoing discussion of discipleship greatness. Notice the setting in Matthew 18:1-6:

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III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Divide into groups of two or three and, drawing

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

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

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 55, 56.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero* *, 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.*
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flashlight

“It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received. The little children may be Christians, having an experience in accordance with their years” (The Desire of Ages, p. 515).

Commentary: The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 55, 56.

“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’”

(Mark 10:13, 14, NIV)
Which do you think is more difficult: For a child to feel self-reliant or an adult to become dependent?

Make a list of three qualities of a child that adults should never outgrow:
1. _______________________________________
2. _____________________________________
3. ____________________________________

Which of these qualities would you desire the most? Why?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

In what way can believers in Christ be childlike but not childish? Explain the difference.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

It seems as if humans are rarely happy with their age. Kids want to grow and be “big people,” and grown-ups envy the energy and life of youth. Have you ever noticed that the root of the word “juvenile” comes from the same word that we get the word “rejuvenate”? The noun form is “rejuvenescence,” which conveys the notion of renewing youth. The oldest record of this term goes all the way back to the early 1600s. But long before such words were invented, Jesus valued the concept of “becoming like a child.”

“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

(Mark 10:13-16, NIV)

“Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, ‘Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.”

(Matthew 19:13-15, NASB)

“And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for them, saying, ‘Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.’”

(Luke 18:15-17, NASB)
OUT OF THE STORY

Compare the three perspectives of the same event and note how the stories are different and how they are similar.

Why do you think people were bringing their children to Jesus? What are some attributes of Jesus that endear Him to parents?

How did the disciples respond to this attention? Why do you think they responded the way they did?

Mark’s Gospel says that Jesus became “indignant” when the disciples rebuked the people. What does this say to you about how Jesus related to common people?

How does a child receive the kingdom of heaven differently than someone who is older? What are some attributes of children and their approach to faith that adults tend to struggle with?

Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What is the message God has in it for you today?

punch lines

“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward” (Matthew 10:42, NIV).

“Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity” (1 Timothy 4:12, NLT).

“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’” (Matthew 18:1-3, NIV).

“Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4, NASB).

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6, NASB).

“People who do not like children are swine, dunces, and blockheads, not worthy to be called men and women, because they despise the blessing of God, the Creator and Author of marriage.”—Martin Luther, 16th-century German theologian.

“Now, as always, God discloses himself to ‘babes’ and hides himself in thick darkness from the wise and prudent. We must simplify our approach to him. . . . We must put away all effort to impress, and come with the guileless candor of childhood.”—A. W. Tozer, 20th-century American author and preacher.

other eyes

“People who do not like children are swine, dunces, and blockheads, not worthy to be called men and women, because they despise the blessing of God, the Creator and Author of marriage.”—Martin Luther, 16th-century German theologian.
Sabbath
Read and respond to the voting question in the What Do You Think? section of this week’s lesson. As you reflect on the many encounters between Jesus and people, think about the way such people received the Savior. Did those who came to Christ in simplicity, humility, and with utter dependence on His mercy fall away or struggle? Consider how people such as Nicodemus and the rich young ruler were confounded by the nature of Christ’s kingdom while the “childlike” seemed to “get it.” In John 1:10-13 the Bible says: “He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God” (NLT). What would be different about your life if you started each day by “believing” and “receiving” Christ as a child would?

Sunday
Read the Into the Story section and use the questions in the Out of the Story section to guide your study. The three perspectives on the story of Jesus blessing the children are very similar. What phrase or portion of this passage speaks personally to you today? What do you think is the central message God has for you in this story?

Monday
The Key Text this week comes from Mark 10:13-15. I see two lessons that emerge from this text: (1) Don’t get in the way of a child coming to Jesus, and (2) the way to His kingdom is with a childlike spirit. What other lessons emerge? Think of a child in your sphere of influence that you can pray for and perhaps help get to know Christ better.

Tuesday
Read the quote from The Desire of Ages in the Flashlight section and think of an adult you know who truly believes that children are “most susceptible” to the kingdom of God. Think of Sabbath School teachers, youth leaders, and people who celebrate the wonder of childhood. What words would you use to describe their leadership and their impact in your church?

Wednesday
The Punch Lines in this week’s lesson underscore the value of children and youth in Scripture. Read through each passage and note the verse that is speaking to you today. What stories from the Bible illustrate these verses? Place names or events from Scripture that convey the childlike qualities Christ is calling for in His followers. For example: when David decided to attack Goliath it was not because he felt grown-up but because he trusted that his God was big. His childlike trust in God is what compelled such grown-up courage.

Thursday
Take time to intentionally observe children today. Watch the way they learn, play, interact, and relate to the people around them. Consider how they deal with problems or challenges that seem too big for them. Think of three children in your church and write them a note of encouragement, affirming a quality about them that is inspiring. Be as specific as you can with your note of affirmation. You can decide whether you share these words anonymously or not, but make a clear path to Jesus for the children you know and maybe you will discover what Jesus meant by the phrase “the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (NIV).

Friday
Reflect on an event or experience in your life when you had to depend on someone else with complete and simple trust. What are some of the emotions you felt? How does childlike trust make you a mature believer in Christ?


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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

• Death
• Resurrection
• Hope

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

More Questions for Teachers:

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


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When Jesus finally arrived in Bethany He was met by Mary and Martha—weeping bitterly. The Greek word for this is embrimaomai—which isn’t just crying, but an outburst of anger added to it. All the elements of the story began to funnel into one chief moment: the growing unpopularity of Jesus because He was teaching things that were difficult to hear. The continual desire to have Him prove who He was. The sin and

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

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

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

When Jesus finally arrived in Bethany He was met by Mary and Martha—weeping bitterly. The Greek word for this is embrimaomai—which isn’t just crying, but an outburst of anger added to it. All the elements of the story began to funnel into one chief moment: the growing unpopularity of Jesus because He was teaching things that were difficult to hear. The continual desire to have Him prove who He was. The sin and

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 58, 59.

*A special adaptation, Humble Hero, 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.
“Christ did not weep for Lazarus; for He was about to call him from the grave. He wept because many of those now mourning for Lazarus would soon plan the death of Him who was the resurrection and the life” (The Desire of Ages, p. 533).
Voting: Agree or Disagree

- Raising someone from the dead is far more powerful a miracle than feeding 5,000 people or healing someone from leprosy.
- The miraculous signs Jesus did grew out of His compassion for broken people more than His desire to prove to people He was the Son of God.

Indicate why you voted “agree” or “disagree.”

____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

When Mary and Martha were weeping for their dead brother, Lazarus, it was more like a wild wailing. In fact, did you know that in that day they paid people to make a horrible noise of wailing and weeping at funerals just to emphasize the sadness of death? When Jesus wept, the word is not the same word for wailing, but for a deep, quiet grief that words can’t really capture.

"On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. . . . When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

"'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died. . . .'

"Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

"Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

"'Yes, Lord,' she told him, 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.'

"And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. 'The Teacher is here,' she said, 'and is asking for you.' When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. . . .

"When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' he asked.

"'Come and see, Lord,' they replied.

"Jesus wept.

"Then the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' . . .

"Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 'Take away the stone,' he said . . .

"So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'

"When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

"Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'"

(John 11:17-44, NIV)
“Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about those Christians who have died so you will not be sad, as others who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and that he rose again. So, because of him, God will raise with Jesus those who have died. What we tell you now is the Lord’s own message. We who are living when the Lord comes again will not go before those who have already died. The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. And those who have died believing in Christ will rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16, NCV).

“Still, I know that God lives—the One who gives me back my life—and eventually he’ll take his stand on earth. And I’ll see him—even though I get skinned alive!—see God myself, with my very own eyes. Oh, how I long for that day!” (Job 19:25-27, Message).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man” (John 5:25-27, NASB).

“Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.”—Augustine, 4th-century theologian.

“The world is not lacking in wonders, but in a sense of wonder.”—G. K. Chesterton, 20th-century English writer.
Sabbath
Read and respond to the voting question in the What Do You Think? section of this week’s lesson. Looking at the miraculous things Jesus did, some things today seem more miraculous than others. Mending a broken hand or opening blind eyes is common practice for doctors, but most of medicine’s power today is an attempt to delay the inevitable—death. Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and reflect on how Christ has done at Calvary what medicine could never do.

Sunday
Read the Into the Story section and use the questions in the Out of the Story section to guide your study. This week’s lesson is filled with various characters, emotions, and events that are relevant to all people today. With so many parts of the raising of Lazarus story to choose from, which scene compels you the most? Why? When you read this story, what do you think God is trying to say to you about your life?

Monday
The Key Text this week is short; in fact, the shortest. But don’t let the size of the verse trick you into not grasping its full meaning. Why did Jesus weep? Look at the Did You Know? section as well and examine what you think troubled Jesus to tears more: the apparent effect death had over His friends, or the stubborn shortsighted minds that were planning to kill Him. Perhaps this day you could look at your life through the lens of what makes Jesus weep. When people are mistreated—Jesus weeps. When people don’t—won’t—look at the big picture of the plan of salvation—Jesus weeps. When people are confused about the future and no one is there to say, “God has made a way”—Jesus weeps. While this verse may be easy to remember, try not to forget its meaning.

Tuesday
Read the quote from The Desire of Ages in the Flashlight section that describes what really caused Jesus to come to tears. Whom do you know who is bent against God, for one reason or another. Whom can you think of who resists God’s presence in their life? Begin to pray for them that the compassionate Savior may soften their heart. This takes time, so keep at it and perhaps keep a journal of your prayers. But know that Jesus cares more for their stubborn condition than anyone else and longs to see them restored to hope.

Wednesday
The Punch Lines in this week’s lesson are a beautiful string of pearls that show the beauty of God’s grace and the power of His compassion. If you had to choose one verse from the Punch Lines that you could share with someone who is grieving over the loss of a loved one, which verse would you choose? Why?

Thursday
Take a walk by the cemetery. Read the obituaries in the paper. Watch the news. Notice how death is a real part of our life, and how we fight to avoid it. Although we struggle, we believe that Christ’s work on Calvary and His victorious resurrection take the sting out of death. Find a practical way to keep this promise before you today. Write a verse out and leave it where you can see it.

Friday
As heart-wrenching as the Lazarus story is, even though Lazarus was raised to life, it was only long enough to see His Savior die on Calvary. Imagine how Lazarus must have felt as Jesus was being crucified. What was he thinking? What do you think Mary, Martha, and Lazarus will say in heaven about the seasons of grief they experienced?

this week’s reading*
The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 58, 59.
A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, entitled Humble Hero, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

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

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.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.
much willpower we can muster up, these cookies will not go away.

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

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


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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

Digging in:
Verse 1: The text tells us that Jesus “was passing through” Jericho. Do you think this was coincidental or a divine appointment? Explain your answer.
Verse 2: Do you think Jesus knew the “dirt” on Zacchaeus (i.e., that he was a deceitful tax collector)?
Verse 3: In your opinion, what was it about Jesus that attracted Zacchaeus to go to such lengths to see Him?
Verse 4: What insights into the character and personality of Zacchaeus do we get from this part of the story where he climbed a tree to catch a glimpse of Christ?
Verse 5: What do you make of the emphatic statement of Jesus when He said, “I must stay at your house”?
Verse 6: How can we welcome Jesus “gladly” in our lives today?
Verse 7: Why do you suppose the people responded differently to Jesus’ acceptance of Zacchaeus than they did to His healing of the blind man in Luke 18:43?
Verse 8: Based on this verse alone, what word do you think best describes the personality of Zacchaeus? (A) Extremist; (B) Impetuous; (C) Generous; (D) Sympathetic.
Verse 9: What does Jesus mean by the word “salvation”?
Verse 10: Compare this verse with the three parables in Luke 15.

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

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

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

  “All this combined to make Jericho one of the greatest taxation centers in Palestine.”

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

- **The Central Theme:** The real story here in Luke 19 is one of transformation. It reminds us that it is possible to be changed into the character of Christ. Zacchaeus demonstrated that he had been transformed from the inside out. He pronounced that he would give half his possessions to the poor. Furthermore, he would use the other half of his funds to make restitution for the money he gained by gouging taxpayers.

  In setting things right Zacchaeus went beyond his legal obligation. Only if the robbery was a violent and calculated act would the thief need to pay four times the amount stolen (see Exodus 22:1). In the case of an ordinary robbery and the original goods could not be returned, then double the value had to be repaid (see Exodus 22:4). If voluntary confession and restitution was offered, then only the original value plus one fifth of the goods had to be repaid (see Leviticus 6:5; Numbers 5:7). Zacchaeus decided to do far above and beyond the demands of the law. He was a changed man.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

*Making the Story Come Alive*

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

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

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

**III. CLOSING**

**Activity**

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

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

**Summary**

*Share the following story in your own words:*

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

2 Fundamental Belief No. 10.
It is when Christ is received as a personal Savior that salvation comes to the soul. Zacchaeus had received Jesus, not merely as a passing guest in his home, but as One to abide in the soul temple. The scribes and Pharisees accused him as a sinner, they murmured against Christ for becoming his guest, but the Lord recognized him as a son of Abraham. For ‘they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.’ Gal. 3:7” (The Desire of Ages, p. 556).

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’

“Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, . . . ’”

(Luke 19:8, 9, NIV)
what do you think?

Make a check mark by the things below that you believe are essential for a person to have salvation.

- Attending church every Sabbath
- Confessing sins
- Getting baptized
- Repenting of sins
- Treating others as you wish to be treated
- Reading the Bible and praying every day
- Accepting Christ as your personal Savior
- Participating in Communion
- Volunteering to help “the least of these”
- Being a part of a Christian family
- Witnessing to others about Jesus
- Dressing like a Christian
- Living without sin
- Being born again
- Giving money to the church
- Believing in Jesus

did you know?

In Jesus’ day, the Jews hated tax collectors for the following reasons:

1. Tax collectors overcharged and could keep the extra money. This was how they got paid. Like most tax collectors in his day, Zacchaeus got very rich by ripping off his own people.

2. Taxes were so high that some people were forced to sell their children into slavery just to pay their taxes.

3. Tax collectors worked for the Romans; thus, their money paid for Roman soldiers and Roman governors. Most Jews hated the Romans who occupied their land, and did not appreciate paying taxes to them. They especially despised Jewish tax collectors such as Zacchaeus, who was a Jew and who had sold out to the Romans for personal profit.

INTO THE STORY

“Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

“When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

“All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’

“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’

“Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.’”

punch lines

“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Corinthians 7:1, NIV).

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah” (Psalm 32:5, NIV).

“But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself” (Psalm 49:15, NIV).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NIV).

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36, NIV).

“I saw a sign on a strip of highway once that I would like to have copied on my gravestone. It said, ‘End of construction. Thank you for your patience.’” —Ruth Bell Graham, poet, writer, and wife of evangelist Billy Graham.

“We serve a God who created our humanity, weeps at the fall of our humanity, became our humanity, and is redeeming our humanity.” —Glenn Stanton, writer, family formation researcher.

“They who are conscious of their own sins have no eyes for the sins of their neighbors.” —Abbot Moses, 10th-century monk.

OUT OF THE STORY

Read verses 1-4. Notice all the details that enrich the setting for this story. For example, note how the text tells us that Zacchaeus was a short man; he climbed a sycamore-fig tree, etc. List other details that strike you:

Read verses 5, 6. When Jesus arrived in Jericho He looked up and saw Zacchaeus. But He saw much more than a man. As Duncan Buchanan puts it, He saw “a human being, unloved, unloving, bruised and hurt by the circumstances of life, unsuited to his wealth, . . . unacceptable to those around him, unacceptable to himself.”

Read verse 7. Notice the reputation of Zacchaeus as a “known sinner.” How do you feel when you sin? After the initial buzz of the excitement wears off and you’re alone in your guilt and shame, how do you really feel? Zacchaeus was a “known sinner.” In other words, not only did he have to wrestle privately with his faults, but publicly he was cursed with a reputation of corruption. Assuming that sin strips a person of a healthy sense of self-esteem, what does this suggest about Zacchaeus’s self-esteem?

Read verse 8. Reflect on this statement: Authentic spiritual transformation occurs only by being in the presence of Christ.

Read verses 9, 10. What insight does this give us into the character of God?
Reflect on this statement: “As the floor is swept every day, so is the soul cleansed every day by confession.” Would you agree or disagree? Explain.

Think about the radical life transformation of Zacchaeus. He was a different man by simply being in the presence of Jesus. Think of the process of transformation like this: if you want to smell like a caribou (then you need counseling, but besides that), there’s only one way to do it—you need to get up next to a caribou.

Similarly, if you want to be transformed into the character of Christ, or as the apostle Paul puts it, have “the aroma of Christ” (see 2 Corinthians 2:15, NIV), then there’s only one way to do it: get up next to Christ. You can try to be good and emit the fragrance of righteousness—burn your secular CDs, eat tree bark and tofu, never miss church—but your best efforts will still stink like a soiled sock. Remember Isaiah’s words? “All our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6, NIV).

If you want to radiate the aroma of Jesus and enjoy victory over sin, you must engage in the activity that will produce that smell. For aroma is the inevitable result of activity. So what activities put you into the presence of Christ so that you can be transformed into His likeness?

Consider the Key Text in the context of Ellen White’s commentary:

“Zacchaeus had been overwhelmed, amazed, and silenced at the love and condescension of Christ in stooping to him, so unworthy. Now love and loyalty to his newfound Master unseal his lips. He will make public his confession and his repentance.

“... Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

“... And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.’

“When the rich young ruler had turned away from Jesus, the disciples had marveled at their Master’s saying, ‘How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!’ They had exclaimed one to another, ‘Who then can be saved?’ Now they had a demonstration of the truth of Christ’s words, ‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.’ Mark 10:24, 26; Luke 18:27. They saw how, through the grace of God, a rich man could enter into the kingdom’ (The Desire of Ages, p. 555).

Read the Flashlight section and ask yourself these questions:

- Is Jesus a “passing guest” or a long-term tenant in the residence of my “soul temple”?
- How is what others think of me different from how God thinks of me? Which opinion (the opinion of others or the opinion of God) is more important to me? Why?
- What would it mean for me to be considered a part of “they which are of faith”?

Read some additional Punch Lines (in parentheses) and rate yourself on each item with a percentage (0% being “None,” 100% being “Yup, that’s me all the time!”).

- I seek God first in everything I do. (Matthew 6:33)
- Following Christ is my highest desire. (Matthew 16:24)
- I love the Lord with all my being. (Matthew 22:37)
- I love my neighbor as myself. (Matthew 22:39)
- I am a living sacrifice to God. (Romans 12:1, 2)

The story of Zacchaeus reminds us that the best way (and really, the only way) to overcome sins such as greed, dishonesty, and so on, is to hang out with Jesus. What would hanging out with Jesus look like in my life? How can I continually live in the presence of Jesus?


PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

Another direction you could take this study is to delve into the virtue of humility. The humility of Mary juxtaposed against the arrogance of the Pharisees makes for an interesting case study into a topic dear to God’s heart. “I hate pride and arrogance,”¹ the Lord declares. A nuance on this topic could spotlight the humiliation that Mary surely felt at the hands of pious, holy men and how Jesus slammed their pompous “righteousness.”

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

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

II. TARGET

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

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

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Commentary: The Desire of Ages, chapter 62.
Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration
To get the full impact of this story it is helpful to understand the social etiquette in the ancient world. A fun way to introduce the topic of etiquette is to give the following quiz and have the young people vote and discuss it:

1. At a formal dinner, when should one start eating the main course?
   a. After the hostess is served.
   b. After the hostess lifts her fork.
   c. After three or four people are served.
   d. ASAP, with urgency and passion.
   (Answer: According to etiquette guru, Emily Post, the answer is C.)

2. What does one do at a formal dinner if one is still hungry after the main course?
   a. Request a second helping.
   b. Ask in a plaintive voice, “Is that all there is?”
   c. Yell, “Look out the window!” and take food from your neighbor’s plate while they’re distracted.
   d. Call Domino’s Pizza.
   (Answer: You should know the answer without Emily Post on this one!)

3. What is the correct response if one’s cell phone goes off in church?
   a. Quickly slide it forward and point disgustedly at the person in front of you.
   b. Shout, “Hallelujah” until it stops ringing (charismatics only).
   c. Give a larger than usual offering.
   d. Answer the phone, yell “My baby!” and run out of the room. (This works well only if you have small children.)

II. TEACHING THE STORY

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

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

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

Have your group stand if the following detail is included in your Gospel (the group that should be standing is in parentheses):
• The woman anointing Jesus is identified as Mary (John).
• The Pharisee hosting the party is identified as Simon (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).
• Mentions that it was an “alabaster flask”
(Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

The Story

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

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

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

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

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
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 The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapter 62.

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Teaching Gratitude

Jennifer Wolf at www.about.com shares these tips on how to teach gratitude and appreciation:

1. Keep a gratitude journal. Write down five things each day for which you’re grateful.
2. Express your thanks out loud. It’s helpful to have each person in your youth group share something verbally that they appreciate.
3. Write a letter of thanks. Don’t keep your gratitude to yourself! When you feel thankful for certain people in your life, be bold enough to put it in a letter.
4. Be grateful for the challenging times, too. Share with your youth group some of the challenging times you’ve gone through in life that you are grateful for now.
5. Make it a habit. Learning to be truly grateful can change your life. One way to continue a new “attitude of gratitude” is to create a habit around your thankfulness.

Summary

Share the following story in your own words:

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

Questions to consider:

- Do you tend to view life from the bronze medal platform or the silver medal platform?
- How can we cultivate hearts of gratitude?

1 Proverbs 8:13, NIV.
3 Kenneth Bailey, Through Peasant Eyes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).
4 Mark Batterson, In a Pit With a Lion on a Snowy Day (Multnomah Publishers, 2006), p. 68.
flashlight

“Christ delighted in the earnest desire of Mary to do the will of her Lord. He accepted the wealth of pure affection which His disciples did not, would not, understand. The desire that Mary had to do this service for her Lord was of more value to Christ than all the precious ointment in the world, because it expressed her appreciation of the world’s Redeemer. It was the love of Christ that constrained her. The matchless excellence of the character of Christ filled her soul. That ointment was a symbol of the heart of the giver. It was the outward demonstration of a love fed by heavenly streams until it overflowed” (The Desire of Ages, p. 564).

keytext

“When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and ... began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.”

(Luke 7:37, 38, NIV)
what do you think?

Personalize the following prayer of thankfulness by filling in the blanks:

Dear God,
I worship You because You are __________________. I know that You created me in my mother's womb. You knit me together and nobody else in the universe has my unique __________________________. Thank You for the blessings You shower upon me. Thank You for ____________________________. Thank You for ______________________. When I think about what an awesome God You are, all I can say is ______________________.

I am grateful. I love You.
Your child, _____________________.

INTO THE STORY

“Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

“When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.’

“Jesus answered him, ‘Simon, I have something to tell you.’

“Tell me, teacher,’ he said.

‘Two men owed money to a certain money-lender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?’

“Simon replied, ‘I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.’

“You have judged correctly,’ Jesus said.

“Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.’

“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’

“The other guests began to say among themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’

“Jesus said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’

(Luke 7:36-50, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

What does this story teach us about the importance of humiliation?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

What does this story teach us about thanksgiving?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

What does this story teach us about gender identity?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

What does this story teach us about the gospel?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

Contrast this story from Luke’s perspective (Luke 7:36-50) with Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-11, and John 11:55-57; 12:1-11. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? What does this comparison study tell you about each author?

Write one word to describe the following characters in the story:

Jesus: _________________

The Pharisees: _________________

Mary: _________________

Judas: _________________

punch lines

“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men’” (Isaiah 29:13, NIV).

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

“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.” “She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy” (Proverbs 31:10, 20, NIV).

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” (Colossians 4:2, NIV).

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV).

“The life of thankfulness—biblically speaking—is lived in view of the hard things of existence. As the life of thanksgiving deepens, we discover that the more mature prayers of thanksgiving are not those offered for the obvious blessings, but those spoken in gratitude for obstacles overcome, for insights gained, for lessons learned, . . . for opportunities to serve others.” —Fleming Rutledge, The Bible and The New York Times (Eerdmans, 1999).

“What women these Christians have!”—Libanius, 4th-century pagan philosopher.

other eyes
Her feelings of insignificance didn’t stop her:

“I don’t belong there. Those people can offer Jesus more.”

Nothing stopped this woman from showing her love and gratitude in thanks for the new life He offered her. Giving Jesus our best doesn’t always mean material goods. I believe what pleased Jesus more than the gift of perfume was the giver’s heart of love (Whitwer, “Giving Jesus Our Best”).

Do you always give your best to Jesus? Or does He get the leftovers of your time, talents, and resources? How can you follow Mary’s example and demonstrate outrageous love toward the Savior?

“It’s only a small bottle of perfume.”

Read through the story again and underline all the times in the story that you think would have been awkward.

With that in mind, consider this story: The ornament on my desk this morning caught me by surprise. It wasn’t the usual leftover bulletin. Or a piece of junk mail. Or a tattered Insight that someone forgot to take home on Sabbath. No, my Monday morning surprise was a half-eaten graham cracker.

Pasted to the morsel was a Post-it from the head deacon: “Pastor Karl, This graham cracker was given by a 3-year-old boy for offering today. When I passed him the plate, he dug through his pockets and frowned. Then he looked around the seat—only to discover that he didn’t have any money to give. He reached into his bag, took this out, and proudly announced, “I give this to Jesus!”

Read the passage from Into the Story and reflect on the following questions: (You can use the Notes section in the back of this study guide to write your answers.)

• What do you think was Mary’s motivation in doing what she did?
• What was the motivation of the Pharisees in scorning this woman?
• Why do you suppose Jesus told the parable of the grateful debtor (Luke 7:41, 42) before chastising Simon?
• Read Luke 7:44-48. After Jesus made these statements, how do you think Simon felt? How do you think Mary felt?
• Read through the story again and underline all the times in the story that you think would have been awkward.

Monday

Memorize the Key Text and then consider this commentary from Glynnis Whitwer:

This lovely child of God offered her absolute best to Jesus, in spite of the fears and doubts she might have had.

• Her fear didn’t stop her: “What will they think of me? They know who I am.”
• Her shame didn’t stop her: “I’m not worthy to approach Jesus.”
• Her feelings of insignificance didn’t stop her:

Thursday

With whom do you identify the most in this story? Why?

Friday

Ellen White offers this insight into the story of Mary: “Christ values acts of heartfelt courtesy. . . . He did not refuse the simplest flower plucked by the hand of a child, and offered to Him in love. . . . In the Scriptures, Mary’s anointing of Jesus is mentioned as distinguishing her from the other Marys. Acts of love and reverence for Jesus are an evidence of faith in Him as the Son of God” (The Desire of Ages, p. 564).

Given that “acts of love and reverence for Jesus are an evidence of faith in Him,” what have I done lately that demonstrates my faith in Jesus?

Wednesday

Write one word over each of the Punch Lines that summarizes the virtue that it teaches. For example, on Isaiah 29:13 you could write “authenticity” or “sincerity.”

Tuesday

Read this week’s Flashlight. Note that Ellen White points out that “the desire that Mary had to do this service for her Lord was of more value to Christ than all the precious ointment in the world.” In other words, what matters to Jesus is not the size of the gift, but the heart of the giver.

This week’s reading*

The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapter 62.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

- Pride
- Selfish ambition
- Humility

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

Give each student in your class a piece of plain paper to respond to the statements in the What Do You Think? section. After all the students have finished the exercise, divide the class into small groups with
their responses at hand. On a whiteboard, write each group’s response. For example, “Group A, B, etc.” Let each group discuss their answers.

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words.*

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

**Bridge to the Story**

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

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

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

_circle_ the main characters in these Bible passages.

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

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Is there any part of the story that you don’t understand? Underline the words and phrases that may be new to you. Is there any new thing you have learned about God from these stories? Explain.

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

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

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**Sharing Content and Background**

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

1. **Ambition**

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

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

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

2. Pride

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

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

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

3. Humility

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

One-Sentence Summary

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

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
and he succeeds where many of the learned and intellectually wise would fail” (The Desire of Ages, p. 436).

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

III. CLOSING

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

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 48, 60.

*A special adaptation, Humble Hero, 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.*
The simplicity, the self-forgetfulness, and the confiding love of a little child are the attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness. . . . His kingdom is not characterized by earthly dignity and display. At the feet of Jesus all these distinctions are forgotten. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, meet together, with no thought of caste or worldly preeminence [but] as blood-bought souls, alike dependent upon One who has redeemed them to God” (The Desire of Ages, p. 437).

Commentary: The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 48, 60.

two against one

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV)
True or False

____ Before honor and wealth comes humility. (true/false)
____ Corruptions, pride, and arrogance lead to worldly wealth. (true/false)
____ Humility leads to worldly poverty. (true/false)
____ A humble person is a servant to all. (true/false)
____ All humble people are great people. (true/false)

Explain the reasons for your answers.

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The following are definitions of pride, ambition, and humility, according to the New Choice English Dictionary (Peter Haddock Publishing, UK [1999], Geddes & Grosset, David Dale House, New Lanark ML11 9DJ, Scotland).

- Pride—A feeling of self-worth or esteem; excessive self-esteem; conceit; a sense of one’s own importance
- Ambition—Desire for power, wealth, and success
- Humility—The state of having a low estimation of one’s abilities; modest; unpretentious; service

“After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, ‘Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?’

‘Yes, he does,’ he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak.

“What do you think, Simon?’ he asked. ‘From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?’

“From others,’ Peter answered.

“Then the sons are exempt,’ Jesus said to him.”

(Matthew 17:24-26, NIV)

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’

(Matthew 20:20-28, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

What does the story of James and John (Zebedee’s sons) teach us about ambitions?

__________________________________________________________

Based on Christ’s reaction toward their mother’s request, what is the best antidote for ambition?

__________________________________________________________

How would you define the following in your own words?

1. Indignant

__________________________________________________________

2. Slave

__________________________________________________________

3. Ransom

__________________________________________________________

If you were to pick between pride, ambition, and humility, which one would you choose and why?

__________________________________________________________

“He who boasts of his accomplishments will heap up ridicule.”—Philippine proverb.


“If there is one thing that will make a man wise, it is to see how little he knows of what he knows.” —Confucius.

“Humility does not mean thinking of yourself less than other people. Nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself at all.”—William Temple, 17th-century British politician.

“To be simple is to be great.”—Ralph Waldo Emerson, 18th-century philosopher, essayist, speaker, writer, and poet.
Sabbath

In the What Do You Think? section you were challenged to discuss whether the written statements are true or false. From your own understanding of pride, ambition, and humility, which statements do you find most applicable in your case? In the wider circle of your community, is there one individual with whom you can share what you have learned from the discussion based on these statements?

Sunday

Read the commentary on The Desire of Ages, chapter 48, and think about how Ellen White shares deep insights on humility and selfish ambition. Reflect on these questions:

Is there a situation in which I have shown selfish ambition against the will of my parents, peers, workmates, or teachers? What must I do to help those who are bound by the chains of pride and ambition?

The following is a quote from The Desire of Ages, chapter 60: “The plan and ground of salvation is love. In the kingdom of Christ those are greatest who follow the example He has given, and act as shepherds of His flock” (p. 550).

Read 1 John 3:11, 16 and connect it to this quote. Then reflect on the qualities of a good shepherd, asking God to help you to be one.

Monday

The Key Text for this week is 2 Corinthians 10:5, in which Paul defends his ministry by arresting every proud obstacle that is raised “against the knowledge of God” (NIV). Write this verse in your own words. Think about how you, as a young person, can help perpetuate Paul’s statement in the present society, keeping in mind that humility is the best antidote for pride and ambition.

Tuesday

The Flashlight passage from The Desire of Ages contains guidelines and deep insights on how to achieve greatness in this life and beyond.

Review chapters 48 and 60 and list the virtues and vices that are cited therein. From your list, identify the virtues and vices that speak to you personally—and think of the steps you can take to improve the development of the virtues and to suppress the growth of the vices in you as a person.

Thursday

Speaking of any bad habit that may lead to sin, Ellen White writes: “Our Lord is put to shame by those who claim to serve Him, but who misrepresent His character; and multitudes are deceived, and led into false paths” (The Desire of Ages, p. 439).

Based on the context of the lesson this week, how can you as a young Christian in the Adventist faith help in combating pride and arrogance in your society? What does God require of you when you go about this exercise? When you misrepresent Christ in any way, how does that impact on the larger picture of your society?

Friday

It is pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men into angels.” Consider this statement and ask yourself:

How often have I been proud this week? How can I humble myself before God and allow Him to change my heart into that of an angel in my society?

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Visit www.cornerstoneconnections.net for this week’s reading.*

The Desire of Ages (or Humble Hero), chapters 48, 60.

* A special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, entitled Humble Hero, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.