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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

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

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

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

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

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

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

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

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

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

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

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Teaching From the Lesson

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 or the book Humble Hero. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Sin is serious to God and should also be serious to us. In His mercy, God gives us grace, but a time is coming when mercy will end and judgment will begin. In our story, God’s patience with pretense had run out for Israel. God had done all He could do to show Israel His love for them, including emptying heaven of His only Son. Israel rejected Jesus and the freedom He came to give. Israel would much rather serve God with their lips than with their lives.

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 63, 64, 65.

“In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probationary time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease” (The Desire of Ages, p. 587).

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.’” (Luke 19:41, 42, NIV)
The fig tree is peculiar because the fruit appears before the leaves do. When Jesus was hiking toward Jerusalem, He grew hungry. He saw a fig tree with lots of leaves on it. It wasn’t the season for figs, but lots of fig leaves was supposed to mean lots of figs. Jesus found that there were no figs on the tree at all, and He cursed it. Later the disciples found that the tree had died. Was Jesus mad at the tree? No. The figless tree served as a warning to people who try to look holy and pretend to bear good fruit in their actions, but they are just putting on a show for others. God wants us to keep it real and keep it right!

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.’

(Matthew 21:7-9; John 12:19; Luke 19:39-44; Matthew 21:12-19, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think the Pharisees were offended by what the people were doing?

What did Jesus say would happen to Jerusalem?

From whom does the Bible say God ordained praise? How can you praise God this week?

The same people who praised Jesus on Sunday yelled for Him to be crucified on Friday. How could this happen?

What was Jesus’ reaction to the fig tree? Why?

What character in the story do you most identify with? Why?

What does this passage teach us about God?

How can we use this information in our lives today?

PUNCH LINES

“**The Lord is not slack** concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, KJV).

“**Say to them:** ‘The Lord God says: As surely as I live, I do not want any who are wicked to die. I want them to stop doing evil and live. Stop! Stop your wicked ways! You don’t want to die, do you, people of Israel?’” (Ezekiel 33:11, NCV).

“**Your beauty should not** come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (1 Peter 3:3, 4, NIV).

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!” (Revelation 3:15, NIV).

“For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17, NIV).

**OTHER EYES**

“One great power of sin is that it blinds men so that they do not recognize its true character.” —Andrew Murray, 19th-century South African pastor and writer.

“No matter what we choose to call it, sin is sin, and God is not confused about it.” —Ed Young, Christian author and speaker.

“When we add Jesus but don’t subtract sin, we are not following God’s gospel.” —Patrick Morley, current U.S. Christian author.
Sabbath

In the What Do You Think? section you had to answer some pretty difficult questions. The last one deals with whether we are going to be real in our relationship with God. God is looking for wholehearted service and love, not just a show for our parents or church family.

Isaiah 29:13 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” (NIV). Jerusalem only appeared to follow God, but her heart was far from Him. What about you? Is your relationship with God real or does it only appear so for everybody else?

Sunday

Read the Into the Story section and then answer the questions in the Out of the Story section of your lesson. It includes a story about a fig tree. Jesus cursed it because it was not bearing fruit. Although it wasn’t time for fruit, since it was covered with leaves, that signified that it should have been covered with fruit, too. This tree was a hypocrite—appearing to be one thing while being something else.

This is an easy trap to fall into—appearing to be holy or Christian but not really being changed on the inside. To God, not serving Him but telling everyone you are is worse than not serving Him at all! He wants your service, but He wants all of it! What are some areas of your life that you need to invite God to fully take over?

Monday

Consider this week’s Key Text. In the story of Jesus’ great march to Jerusalem, He stopped on the side of the road. Can you imagine the surprise of everyone in Jesus’ grand procession when in the midst of their celebration He started crying? Those around Christ thought they were doing Him a favor, but Jesus was able to look past the outward festivities and see their inward falsities. Why do you think Jesus reacted this way?

Their sin broke God’s heart. Sin should break our hearts, too. Say a prayer today asking God to help you view sin the way He does.

Tuesday

In this week’s Flashlight Ellen White talks about the mercy God gives us as sinners. People often call God “the God of second chances,” but the record shows He gives a lot more than two chances. By the time Christ came, humanity had almost 2,000 years of chances. Jesus’ coming to earth as a last-ditch effort to save humanity was mercy at its best—but even that was rejected.

What would you do if people continued to reject your help and promise of deliverance? How do you think the story of Jerusalem is similar to our story? What does this reveal about how God will respond to sin in these last days?

Wednesday

Have you ever wondered, “If God is so loving, how can He destroy people?” In Isaiah 28:21 (NIV) the Bible characterizes the punishment for sin as a “strange work” for our merciful God. He does not delight in it, but judgment and consequences are both necessary to save humanity from complete destruction.

Read this week’s Punch Lines section. In the lines below, write out what these texts reveal about God.

Thursday

People often use the phrase “Keep it real.” This is not a new concept. God has been calling for this since the beginning of time. God presents choices and desperately desires for us to choose Him. He continually calls us to relationship and service with Him. Whatever choice we make, however, God wants us to be honest about it. God is calling for us to keep it real!

If things are not right between you and God, today is a great day to change that! God offers mercy and forgiveness for our sins and mistakes. Pray a prayer confessing your sins to God and ask for His power to keep you from falling.

Friday

God is calling us to have a real relationship with Him. God is also calling us to have a right relationship with Him. Take some time to evaluate your spiritual walk with Christ. Is it authentic? Is your service based on love for God or the desire to please other people? What can you do this week to “keep it real” with Christ and have a more authentic relationship with Him?

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URHF1rBozOs. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

- Conflict resolution
- Spirituality
- Hypocrisy

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

Look at each example and discuss why the behav-
Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

The Pharisees convinced the people that they must give their money to sacred causes. They would find ways to use the donated money for their own gain. Newspapers would speculate on whether they would see “the real McCoy” in the ring.

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

The term “the real McCoy” may have come about because of Kid McCoy. He bet on his own matches, and people suspected that he fixed them so he could win money. Newspapers would speculate on whether they would see “the real McCoy” in the ring.

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

“Thank you,” said his opponent, who wouldn’t have been able to hear the bell. “Very civil of you.” And when the man turned away, the Kid knocked him out with one blow, winning the match.
woman to say that the resurrection was absurd since, if all the brothers were raised from the dead, who would be the husband of the woman? Jesus pointed out that the Sadducees were ignorant of the Scriptures and that the resurrection was to a life without marriage as we know it on earth.

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

The Pharisees and the Sadducees were guilty of hypocrisy because they claimed to be God’s representatives while having hardened hearts that were not surrendered to their heavenly Father. They betrayed their evil motives by asking questions that were supposed to stump Jesus and show His illegitimacy. Instead, their challenges backfired and exposed the rottenness in their souls. The religious leaders’ influence over the Judean people arose from a religious culture in which many false ideas about God had become accepted. Jesus’ intent was not to wrestle earthly power from these men (they were all men, no women). He simply told the truth and let people choose whether to accept it or not.

III. CLOSING

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

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

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

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

Hypocrisy arises in many situations in life. There are times, as Jesus showed us in His debates with the Pharisees, in which a Christian’s responsibility is to stand up for what is right and for people who are not being treated fairly. As Jesus demonstrated, violence should never be an option—no matter how frustrated, angry, or justified we might feel.
"The first four of the Ten Commandments are summed up in the one great precept, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' The last six are included in the other, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Both these commandments are an expression of the principle of love. . . . When God has His rightful place on the throne of the heart, the right place will be given to our neighbor. We shall love him as ourselves. And only as we love God supremely is it possible to love our neighbor impartially" (The Desire of Ages, p. 607).

"Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."" (Matthew 22:37-40, NIV)
what do you think?

- Is it hypocritical to act “nicely” when you’d really rather not?
- Which matters more to God, our intentions or our actions?
- Is a certain level of insincerity necessary to smooth over conflicts or combustible situations?
- Jesus used some harsh-sounding words when He talked to the Pharisees. How do you reconcile His blunt words with our understanding of “Christian” attitude and behavior?
- How can an intelligent, well-thought-out answer bring glory to God?
- In what ways can each of us be hypocritical unintentionally?
- What hypocritical attitudes bother you the most?

did you know?

From Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech, “I Have a Dream,” delivered August 28, 1963: “But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: in the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.”

The Greatest Commandment

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Notices that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’

“The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.’

“Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, ‘Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn’t we?’

“But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. ‘Why are you trying to trap me?’ he asked. ‘Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.’ They brought the coin, and he asked them, ‘Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?’

“Caesar’s,’ they replied.

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.’

“And they were amazed at him.” . . .

(Mark 12:13-17, 28-34, 38-40, NIV)
When the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus, what did He quote from to answer them?

If the commandments are based on love, is love a feeling, an action, an attitude, or a combination of all three? Explain.

What principle can you derive from Jesus’ statement to “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s”?

For whom was Jesus showing love when He talked about the “teachers of the law”?

Jesus obviously didn’t believe that smoothing things over was always the right course of action. When is it proper to “say it like you see it”?

Compare Jesus’ direct language with the smooth, flattering words of the Pharisees trying to trap him. What does this tell us about the integrity of a Christian’s speech?

“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37, NIV).

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’” (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV).

“Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:17, 18, NIV).

“The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just. The law of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip” (Psalm 37:30, 31, NIV).

“To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue” (Proverbs 16:1, NIV).

“He who would do good to another must do it in the Minute Particulars. General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, and flatterer.” —William Blake, 19th-century English poet

“Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy.” —Warren W. Wiersbe, Christian pastor, author, and radio personality

“The greatest way to live with honor in this world is to be what we pretend to be.” —Socrates, 5th-century B.C. Greek philosopher.
Who can you stand up for today?  
Social power is what it is for them to have the 
He said something when they didn’t have the 
He didn’t leave them to fight their battle alone.  
Jesus stood up for the common people who 
being mistreated?  
silence mean consent when you hear someone 
When people are being put down or treated dif-
say something—stand up for what is right.  
It’s pretty simple. First, we must love God and 
It’s been said that one of the 
hat is in our hearts ends up coming out 
trick is to be right on the inside so that what 
hide that in our tones, even if we manage to say 
How can you put the law of God in your heart? 
Proverbs 16:1 says that the “reply of the 
someone being mistreated?  
Sunday  
Keeping the peace is important, but there 
other people if you don’t have it right with God?  
aren’t popular. This isn’t entirely honest, putting 
we trust God enough to be honest and straight-
tend so that you will look better?  
this week’s reading*  
The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 66, 67.  
*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlHF7BzoCs. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

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

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

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

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses. Or consider this alternative activity to introduce the topic:

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

Illustration

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

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

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

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

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

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

When Dave got close enough to take control, Bear bolted out the door toward the lemon tree. The dog’s house training was impeccable. After relieving himself, Bear guzzled from the water bowl, gulped some dry food, and then rushed back to report for duty.

The burglar had started his descent—until he saw Bear return. He bounced back to the top of the cabinet and stayed there sniveling until the police arrived.

They were amazed at Bear’s “welcome.” The burglar went to prison and had to eat food that wasn’t as good as Dog Chow pet food.

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Use the following discussion questions to follow up the story:

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

Questions to consider:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them. Split your class into three groups and assign each group one of the following passages (Bible passages that complement Mark 13) and assignments. After approximately 15 minutes of working on the assignment, have each group share their project with the rest of the class. (If your class is small, use one assignment.)

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

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

Read Luke 21:5-38—Have this third group leave the classroom to interview people, asking the question: “When you think about the second coming of
Jesus, what do you look forward to the most? Why?” Provide them with pens and notepads or a recording device. This group will then share the responses they receive.

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

**The Setting.** Jesus shared this teaching on the Mount of Olives—the very place where Zechariah had predicted that the Messiah would stand when He came to establish His kingdom (see Zechariah 14:4). This was the ideal place for the disciples to ask Jesus when He would come in power and glory. Jesus spoke of events that would transpire before His coming, but He emphasized that His disciples should be less concerned about the date of His return and more concerned about living God’s way consistently. Thus, regardless of the time of the Second Coming, they would be ready.

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

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

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

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

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

**Why the Delay?** For an activity, bring copies of this week’s readings in The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero. Have students read and search the copies for reasons for the delay in Jesus’ coming. Here are some of the reasons Ellen White gives:

---

**Teaching From the Lesson**

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

- Are we living in the last days?
- Why are there so many confusing opinions about Christ’s return?
- Since the coming is so close, should we bother finishing school?
- Why didn’t Jesus tell us when He was returning?

- How has your belief in the Second Coming affected your life?

Summary

Conclude by addressing the two simple questions:

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

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

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 68, 69.

“Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, ‘This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.’ These signs have appeared. Now we know of a surety that the Lord’s coming is at hand. ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away,’ He says, ‘but My words shall not pass away’” (The Desire of Ages, p. 632).

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. . . . If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. . . . The Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

(Matthew 24:42-44, NIV)
what do you think?

T (true) or F (false)?

____ The second coming of Christ is one of the predominant themes in the Bible.
____ We should trash the earth since the world will end soon anyway.
____ Christians should thoroughly understand biblical prophecy.
____ If you don’t believe Jesus is coming again you cannot be a Seventh-day Adventist.
____ Events in the Middle East point to the soon return of Jesus.
____ Even if Jesus does not return in my lifetime I can experience heaven on earth.
____ The last days are scary times.

INTO THE STORY

"As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ‘Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?’"

"Jesus said to them: ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, “I am he,” and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.’ . . .

“At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.’

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.’

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.’

“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!”’

(Mark 13:3-37, NIV)
**OUT OF THE STORY**

What does this passage teach us about the second coming of Jesus?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

How does this passage inform our understanding of world issues?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What does it mean to “watch” for Jesus to come? Is this any different than “waiting” for Him to come? If so, how?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Contrast Mark’s account (Mark 13) of Jesus’ teaching on the Mount of Olives with the other Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 24 and Luke 21:5-38). In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? What does this comparison study tell you about . . .

Mark?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Matthew?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Luke?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**punch lines**

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV).

“In all history there has never been such a time of terror. It will be a time of trouble for my people Israel. Yet in the end they will be saved!” (Jeremiah 30:7, NLT).

“In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation” (1 Peter 5:10, NLT).

“As for me, I look to the Lord for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me” (Micah 7:7, NLT).

“For the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has a day of reckoning. He will punish the proud and mighty and bring down everything that is exalted” (Isaiah 2:12, NLT).

**other eyes**

“There’s something equally as important as coming to Christ. Are you in a saving relationship with Christ? If you are, then you’re ready for His coming right now!”—Morris Venden, retired S.D.A. pastor and author.

“The best way to prepare for the coming of Christ is never to forget the presence of Christ.”—William Barclay, 20th-century Scottish theologian.
Sabbath
Reflect on why you answered either true or false for each question in the What Do You Think? section. Go back to each question and think about somebody giving the opposite answer as you. What rationale might they use? Could you defend the opposite answer? Why or why not?

Sunday
Supplement the Scripture reading from Into the Story by reading the following passages listed under “READ.” Reflect on the thought question under the heading “THINK” and then put the passages into practice by doing the suggested activity under “ACT.”

READ:
• 1 Thessalonians 4:17
• Daniel 12:1-3
• Revelation 1:7; 6:14; 13:11-18
• 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
• 2 Peter 3:10, 11
• 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52
• 2 Thessalonians 2:8

THINK
• Is my faith in Jesus strong enough to carry me through the last days?
• How can I live today in order to be ready for the Second Coming?
• How would I explain to a friend to “watch and be ready” for Jesus’ second coming?

ACT
• Pray that you can stay connected to Jesus through every circumstance in life.
• Meet with some friends and talk about current events in light of what the Bible teaches about the Second Coming.
• Read the final chapters in The Great Controversy by Ellen G. White.

Monday
Read the Key Text and then consider the following story that illustrates the difference between watching and waiting.

A fishing vessel returned home after many days at sea. As they neared the shore, the sailors gazed eagerly toward the dock where a group of their loved ones had gathered. The skipper looked through his binoculars and identified some of them: “I see Bill’s Mary, and there is Tom’s Margaret and David’s Anne.”

One man became concerned because his wife was not there. Later, he left the boat with a heavy heart fearing something tragic had happened to her. He hurried to his cottage. As he opened the door, she ran to meet him, saying, “I have been waiting for you!”

He replied with a gentle rebuke, “Yes, but the other men’s wives were watching for them!”

Watching is not a spectator sport. As Oswald Chambers put it, “The only way to wait for the Second Coming is to watch that you do what you should do, so that when He comes is a matter of indifference. It is the attitude of a child, certain that God knows what He is about. When the Lord does come, it will be as natural as breathing.”

Tuesday
After reading the Flashlight section, consider another observation Ellen White wrote about the Second Coming:

“One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ’s second coming to complete the great work of redemption. To God’s pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in the ‘region and shadow of death,’ a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing. . . . The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures” (The Great Controversy, p. 299).

Wednesday
After each text included in the Punch Lines, write a simple summary. For example, after Jeremiah 30:7 you might write, “Salvation is sure!”

Thursday
If I knew Jesus was going to come tomorrow, how would I live today? Is that the way I will live today? Why or why not?

Friday
Try to imagine the second coming of Christ through each of the senses:

What will it sound like? Look like? Smell like? Feel like?


Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

this week’s reading*
The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 68, 69.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URlHFt8Oo. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

• Service
• Leadership
• Compassion

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

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

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The man was none other than George Washington.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

Servants held the low jobs in society. They dealt with the dirt and grime. They washed the smelly feet of their betters, using a bowl of water and their hands to remove the dust and grime. No one wanted to take the position of a servant. It was unthinkable! Respected members of society acted like respected members of society. They associated with people of similar ranking and always tried to impress their betters. No one wanted to be mistaken for a lower class than they occupied. It was insulting. It was demeaning.

This is why Jesus’ teaching was so radical. Jesus taught that social ranking didn’t matter. In God’s eyes, we are all equal. Jesus taught that serving was the most important aspect of life! This turned their entire social paradigm on its head. Jesus told the common people that they had value outside of the social struc-
Jesus called down the pompous rich for their hypocrisy and abuse of the poor. Jesus was indeed a radical.

III. CLOSING

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

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

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:
Jesus taught that a life of service was the key to entering His heavenly kingdom. Knowing theology or even scanning the Bible won’t save us. It is easy to get into a rut and think that we are OK with God because our family goes to church or because we read our Bibles from time to time. It takes more than that. We

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Responses to Silence
Being faced with a classroom full of silent students who will not participate can be a harrowing experience for any teacher. How do you get longer, more meaningful, and more frequent responses from your students? After they give you an initial response, try these tips:
1. Maintain a deliberate silence.
2. Make a declarative statement.
3. Make a reflective statement giving a sense of what the students said.
4. Declare perplexity over the response.
5. Invite elaboration.
6. Encourage other students to comment.
7. Give students time to think after they are questioned.

Teaching From the Lesson
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 or the book Humble Hero. 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.
must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is part of developing a personal relationship with God. Service helps us to put the world into God’s perspective. The most precious things to God are not the newest gadgets or the corporate climb. God cares about people. When we get that into its proper priority, we understand God better, too.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero*, chapters 70, 71.

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. . . . Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God” (The Desire of Ages, p. 638).

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

(Matthew 25:40, NIV)
**What do you think?**

"Rate each of these statements from 1 to 5."

1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree.

- When my church organizes a community project, I feel I need to help out.
  1 2 3 4 5
- People feel comfortable asking me to help them with things because I generally say yes.
  1 2 3 4 5
- When I agree to help out, it is normally because I feel pressured or guilted into doing it.
  1 2 3 4 5
- I think that people should help themselves and stop being a burden on those around them who do better than they do.
  1 2 3 4 5

**Did you know?**

Community service is often used in U.S. and Canadian courts of law as a special condition of probation. While punishment is part of the reason for this measure, giving the person less free time to enjoy, benefits exist for the convicted individual, the victim, and the community. Community service may help the offender to atone for their crime. It can be used as a substitute for financial compensation if the offender does not have the funds available. It also can contribute to the offender’s rehabilitation, instilling a work ethic and sense of pride in contributing to the community.

**Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'**

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

(Matthew 25:31-40, NIV)

"He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'"

"Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'"

"'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'"

"Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, my feet.'"

"'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'"

"Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'"

"'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'"

"Jesus answered, 'A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' . . ."

"'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.'"

(John 13:6-10, 13-15, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

What kind of service is Jesus telling us to perform?

______________________________________________________________________________________

Whom should we be serving?

______________________________________________________________________________________

What is the result of serving others, both in our lives now and in the life to come?

______________________________________________________________________________________

How is serving others perceived by the secular society? Does service always involve being seen as lowering ourselves?

______________________________________________________________________________________

Whom do you think it would be easiest to serve? Whom would be the hardest, and why?

______________________________________________________________________________________

What would be the modern equivalent of foot washing from Jesus’ day?

______________________________________________________________________________________

What kinds of service do we think are beneath us to perform?

______________________________________________________________________________________

PUNCH LINES

“If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?” (Matthew 5:46, NIV).

“He who seeks good finds goodwill” (Proverbs 11:27, NIV).

“Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land” (Ecclesiastes 11:2, NIV).

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13, NIV).

“For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27, NIV).

“Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time.”—Marian Wright Edelman, current American activist for children’s rights.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”—Mahatma Gandhi, 19th- and 20th-century political and spiritual leader.

“Everybody can be great . . . because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”—Martin Luther King, Jr., 20th-century clergyman and activist.
Which of “the least of these” will you come into contact with today? How can you be of service to people who are least valued in your school or your community?

_________________________________
_________________________________
_________________________________

**Tuesday**

Knowing what the Bible teaches isn’t enough. We can read our Bibles every day, but if we don’t put the Word into action, it is a waste of our time (see James 2:14-18). Although reading God’s Word is important, people who may never have had the opportunity to read the Bible will go to heaven because they listened to the Holy Spirit and did what they knew was right. The Holy Spirit will guide you, telling you what is right and what is not, as you personally spend time in Christ’s presence and with other believers. How can you make a point of listening closely to that inner voice today?

_________________________________
_________________________________
_________________________________

**Wednesday**

For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27, NIV). Position and prestige are important to people in the world. They are concerned about being “upwardly mobile” and looking successful. “The good life” is an expensive life. When we try to keep up with everyone else, all of our time can be used up pursuing the newest gadgets and clothes. But God wants us to see things differently. Jesus didn’t come to impress people with His social standing. Instead, He devoted Himself to the people whom no one else wanted to deal with. Which of your priorities might be standing in your way of serving others?

_________________________________
_________________________________
_________________________________

**Thursday**

Life is busy, and you have responsibilities. You might need to keep your grades up, earn money, or take care of family members. Life is not only busy, but it is demanding. There must be a balance between what you do for others and what you do to take care of your own needs. How can you serve others while you are busy going to school, working, and living your life? Must you dedicate time to community service, or are there less structured ways to serve others?

_________________________________
_________________________________
_________________________________

**Friday**

When you serve another person, how do you think you grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, and morally? What does service do to your heart?

_________________________________
_________________________________
_________________________________

---

**this week’s reading**

*The Desire of Ages* or *Humble Hero*, chapters 70, 71.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

- Humility
- Salvation
- The gospel

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.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 an even number of groups. Give them each paper and pens and ask them to write down the top 10 things that they think could bring someone to Christ. Afterward, have each group read aloud their top 10 things and then discuss them as a whole group together.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Commentary: The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 72, 73.
Key Text: John 13:33, 34.
It was said by Plutarch that once when Caesar was crossing the Alps, he and his band of men came across a small and desolate native village that had hardly any inhabitants. It looked like a morbid, miserable place. While his friends joked and laughed among themselves, saying, “No doubt here too one would find people pushing themselves forward to gain office, and here too there are struggles to get first place and jealous rivalries among the great men,” Caesar then replied to them in utter seriousness: “As far as I am concerned, I would rather be the first man here than the second in Rome.”

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

• What did Jesus mean when He said to His disciples: “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29, KJV)?
• What do you think made Judas choose to betray his Master? Or was Jesus ever truly his Master? In what way did he portray a greedy heart?
• What do you think was going through Jesus’ mind when He knew He was eating with someone who would soon betray Him?
• What kept Judas from truly surrendering to Christ?
• What is humility? Is there a counterfeit humility? Explain.
• Are there things that can keep us from displaying humility in our lives? If so, what are they? Are there different things for different people? Explain.

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

History of the Passover

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

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

The Israelites in the time of Exodus had been told to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and roast it without breaking any of its bones. They were then to apply the blood on the doorposts of their houses. This would protect them from the angel of death, who would pass through the land and kill every firstborn son in every home. This was the first step in the whole process by which God would save them from Egypt, and from the slavery they had suffered under for so long.
The fascinating thing about this was that the blood saved them; the angel of death would see the blood and “pass over” their house. This, of course, was a powerful symbol of salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus. They were protected by the blood.

Not that the blood of an animal itself would save them, but the blood was a symbol of the blood of Jesus, which would be shed for all humanity. That’s why, centuries later, the apostle Paul could write: “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7, KJV). In the Passover celebration we are given a type, a symbol of the plan of salvation. When God’s final judgment falls upon the world, those under the blood, those who by faith claim the salvation found in Jesus, will be spared.

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

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

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

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Increase Relevance
Some ways to make the lesson more relevant would be to: Focus on what personal spiritual lessons the students can take away from what you’re talking about. Ask what it means to be “under the blood on the door posts” today. How can we get under the blood?

Visit a local synagogue (if there is one in your area) and ask the rabbi to explain to the class his understanding of the meaning of the Passover.

Think about what changes the students could make to their lives as a result of what they have learned. Try to make the lesson as practical to their lives as possible. What have they learned that can improve how they live? How, then, can they make those changes in their own lives?

Teaching From the Lesson
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 or the book Humble Hero. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Have the students try to find as many verses that talk about pride or humility in a certain amount of time. Concordances are helpful. After they have done this, have them read out loud to the class what they’ve found in the Bible about this topic. Afterward, discuss it as a class. What does the Bible say about these topics? How can we get rid of these attitudes if we see them in ourselves? How can we, by looking at Christ’s example, learn important lessons about what it means to be humble, and how we can avoid pride?

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

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

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 72, 73.

flashlight

“Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages” (The Desire of Ages, p. 652).

keytext

“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. . . . Where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

(John 13:33-35, NIV)
On a scale of 1 to 10, list the things that you think can lead people to stray from God and to deny what He's done for them through Jesus (1—the most likely and 10—the least).

____ Pride
____ Lack of self-discipline
____ Tragedy
____ Lack of trust
____ Wanting to do their own thing
____ Fear that they aren't good enough
____ Indifference
____ Lack of care about eternal life
____ Unbelief
____ Anger

Passover is a Jewish and Samaritan festival. Its purpose is to remember God's act in sparing the Jews when He killed the firstborn of Egypt. The word translated “Passover” comes from a Hebrew word, pesach, meaning “to pass over,” which is what God did when the angel of death passed over every Jewish house that had the blood on their doorposts. It is followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, which recalls the Exodus from Egypt and the freeing of the Israelites from slavery. Passover starts on the 15th day of the month of Nisan, the full moon of that month, the first month on the Hebrew calendar’s festival year. The first and last days of this seven-day feast were observed as legal holidays or holy days. The people would also hold special prayer services as well as holiday meals. Jews were known to have observed the festival for eight days. Most still do. If you know some practicing Jews, they might invite you to their house for a Passover seder, the practice of celebrating the Passover.

“Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

“And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

“And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

“And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.

“And Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.”

(Matthew 26:20-29, KJV)
OUT OF THE STORY

What does Jesus mean when He says, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom”?

What do you think went through the disciples’ minds when they heard these words of Jesus?

What do you think possessed Judas to betray Jesus? How do greed and pride fit into this story?

How do you think Jesus felt knowing that He was eating in the midst of someone who would betray Him?

What do you think initially led Judas away from accepting Christ?

What do you think keeps people from coming to God with humility and full surrender?

Why do you think Jesus used the bread and wine to represent His body and blood?

OTHER EYES

“The knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation.”—Latin proverb.

“Salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies in the world.”—C. S. Lewis, 20th-century English novelist and essayist.

“Humility is the solid foundation of all virtues.”—Confucius, 6th- and 5th-century B.C. Chinese philosopher.

“Humility leads to strength and not to weakness. It is the highest form of self-respect to admit mistakes and to make amends for them.”—John J. McCloy, 20th-century American banker and government official.

punch lines

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12, NKJV).

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud” (Proverbs 16:18, 19, NIV).

“For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation” (Psalm 149:4, NIV).

“If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness” (2 Corinthians 11:30, NIV).

“The knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation.”—Latin proverb.

“Salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies in the world.”—C. S. Lewis, 20th-century English novelist and essayist.

“Humility is the solid foundation of all virtues.”—Confucius, 6th- and 5th-century B.C. Chinese philosopher.

“Humility leads to strength and not to weakness. It is the highest form of self-respect to admit mistakes and to make amends for them.”—John J. McCloy, 20th-century American banker and government official.
Sabbath
Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb for the world. He let the people kill Him in order to save all humanity. Do you think that Judas truly understood this? Why do you think he let money and power reign in his heart? Judas is a good example of what Matthew 6:24 is saying: “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (NIV). Judas never truly served Christ. He let money and greed rule over him. He never let himself be humble enough to accept Christ’s love and sacrifice. He simply threw it all away for some silver.

Write down in your journal a few things that can lead us away from salvation.

Sunday
Many times when people are led away from Christ, it’s because of their own selfishness or pride. Many don’t want to humble themselves and surrender fully to God. Others simply don’t want to change their way of life in order to follow Him.

To be humble is to understand our own weaknesses and need of God; to know that we are not perfect, that we are sinners, and that we need to learn and grow—and are willing to do just that.

What are some ways in which we can go about daily surrendering to God?

______________________________

______________________________

Monday
Today, page through your Bible looking for stories and prophecies that speak to these topics: salvation, humility, greed, sacrifice. Find at least one example of each. In your journal or notebook, write in your own words some parallels between those stories and today’s story about Judas. What do you think initially puts greed or pride into people’s hearts? What is it that steers them away from salvation? What do you think can bring a person back to accepting Jesus as their Savior?

______________________________

Tuesday
Salvation is a gift. We can accept it or reject it. Nobody, not even God, can force it on us. Humility is one of the first things that leads to salvation. If we have pride in our hearts, then we will try to be self-sufficient and have trouble relying on the Lord. Humility is also a gift. Yet we can make choices that will impact the presence of humility in our lives.

Write down on the lines below three ways in which we can increase humility in our lives.

______________________________

Wednesday
Why do you think the Passover is so important to the Jews today? Research online some different Passover traditions. Find three traditions that they still keep today and write them below.

______________________________

Thursday
Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12 (NIV) states it clearly: we are all God’s children if we receive Him and accept Him. It has nothing to do with anything that we ourselves could possibly do, but what Christ has done for us. Because of His sacrifice on our behalf, we can have eternal life. Jesus told His disciples that He was going to die, and He instituted the Lord’s Supper as a reminder of Himself and His death in our behalf. How seriously do you take the Lord’s Supper when it’s offered in your church?

______________________________

Friday
Jesus promised His second coming when He said: “I will not drink this again until I drink it with you in the kingdom.” We have assurance of knowing that Jesus died and will return. The Lord’s Supper is a way by which we can remember truly the depth of His sacrifice and come to understand salvation and what it means for us. Titus 2:11-13 states: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (NIV). God gave His Son out of grace. His Son humbled Himself and obeyed His Father. The best way to go is to accept that grace and humility, and remember the sacrifice that was made for us.

Texts credited to NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.U0HF7v8O0c. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Next to His death on Calvary, Jesus’ season of struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane is the second pivotal point in the history of our salvation. The drama of God’s plan to redeem humanity reaches a climax: Jesus must willingly choose to give His life as a ransom for many or He will fail. Some suggest that Jesus could have walked away and left humanity to perish. In the garden, He faced that excruciating choice.

Several powerful themes come through in this lesson. First, in the garden we get a strong sense of the horror of sin. Look at the way Jesus shrinks back from the pain. Even He can barely stand up under the weight of it. Jesus knows perfect love and has never known sin in Himself, and yet He will experience utter sin and depravity intimately. Can He face up to doing His Father’s will? It is likely that your students will understand both the temptation to go their own way and the anxiety of trusting God’s will over their own.

Finally, a spiritual fight of universal proportions takes place in the olive grove called Gethsemane. The name means “the olive press,” and it is no coincidence that Christ is squeezed to complete exhaustion by unimaginable agony.

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

• The will of God
• Jesus
• Suffering
• Temptations (dealing with them)

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The ocean is earth’s last little-known frontier. Scientists have shown us how most of the ocean that immediately surrounds land, about 60 meters (200 feet) deep, is filled with the beauty of rich marine life. But this is only about 1/20 of the total ocean on earth. Beyond this relatively shallow zone, much of the ocean drops to depths of as much as 3,500 to 6,000 meters (11,500–20,000 feet), in areas called abyssal plains. They make up more than 50 percent of the ocean floor. These are not the deepest places in the ocean, however. In some areas of the western Pacific Ocean, the sea floor drops away into elongated gashes, called trenches, with water depths of 10,000 to 11,000 meters (33,000–36,000 feet).

The deepest parts of the ocean are mostly unknown and unseen by human beings. While the shallow zones are visible as beautiful and alive, the deep, inaccessible parts are shrouded in darkness and mystery.

If you were to compare the nature of the ocean floor at its different depths with all the depths and qualities of sin, what connections could you make? As Jesus came face to face with the choice to enter into the deepest part of sin—a place no person has ever imagined or conceived—was it like going into the deepest part of the ocean?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

Extra Questions for Teachers:

Agree or Disagree

- The hardest prayer anyone will ever pray is “Lord, not my will, but yours be done.” Why?

Agree or Disagree

- The emotional trauma and knowledge of becoming the Sinbearer was far more torturous than any physical trauma Jesus endured. Why?

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

The Temptation of the Garden

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

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Word Wrestling

The problem with language is that it often fails to capture fully what is taking place. Paraphrasing a verse or passage challenges students to pay close attention to the meanings of words—especially if you use the following rule: Rewrite this verse, but you cannot use any words currently in the passage, except for essentials such as: it, to, the, and, but, for, etc. Have students practice paraphrasing familiar passages such as John 3:16 or 1 John 1:9. As students do this, they use higher order thinking skills and must try to understand the meaning of the passage by wrestling with the meaning of key words.

Teaching From the Lesson

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 or the book Humble Hero. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
now if He will have Him; for He said, “I am the Son of God”’” (Matthew 27:40–43, NKJV).

The temptation had been the same in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew’s account of the dramatic time of prayer depicts Christ going back three times, saying, “‘Let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will’” (Matthew 26:39, NKJV).

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9, NKJV).
"[Christ] felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequences of man’s sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression" (The Desire of Ages, p. 686).

The choice

Scripture Story: Mark 14:32-42.
Commentary: The Desire of Ages, or Humble Hero, chapter 74.

keytext

“He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.’”

(Mark 14:35, 36, NKJV)
what do you think?

Rank the following moments according to what you think caused Christ the most agony.

- Enduring the scourging/beating.
- Hearing His own people cry “crucify Him.”
- Being betrayed and abandoned by His closest friends.
- Deciding to accept the cup of suffering and sin in Gethsemane.
- Experiencing the absence of God on Calvary.

All the events surrounding the passion of Christ were severely traumatic. Which do you think was the most traumatic for Christ? Why?

If you had to go through a traumatic experience, would you prefer to have it forced upon you or to face it knowing it was your choice?

did you know?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Luke, says of Christ, “And being in agony, prayed fervently...” The Greek word for agony means to be “engaged in combat.”

The word “agony” was used by the Greeks to denote “intense emotion,” and severe emotional and physical anguish. It is the same word they used for the arena in which battles would take place for entertainment. What was so entertaining to them was the intense life-and-death emotion that characterized the games. Clearly, what took place in the Garden of Gethsemane was a battle, filled with intense emotion.

(From Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’

“Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

“Then He came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’”

(Mark 14:32-42, NKJV)
After you read this story, make a list of things Jesus knew and didn’t know about the future.

How do you think the disciples reacted to hearing Jesus say, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death” in verse 34?

When had Christ ever spoken like this or conveyed such emotion?

Underline the phrases in this passage that indicate how much the decision to go forward to Calvary weighed on Christ.

Why did Jesus want the disciples to keep praying? Was it for them or Him that He longed for them to be praying?

How is Christ’s attitude in verses 41 and 42 different from the first part of the scene?

Why do you think the story of Gethsemane is such a pivotal story told in Scripture? What does this event reveal about Christ?

What do you think was “the cup” Christ referred to in His prayer to the Father?

“[Christ] who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (Hebrews 5:7, 8, NKJV).

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV).

“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men’” (Mark 8:31-33, NKJV).

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father” (John 10:17, 18, NIV).

“Our sense of sin is in proportion to our nearness to God.”—Thomas D. Bernard, 19th-century Christian writer.

“Temptation can cause us to succumb, sink, sin, or stand.”—William A. Ward, 20th-century Christian writer.
cornerstoneconnections

making it real

Sabbath

Read and respond to the voting question in the What Do You Think? section of this week’s lesson. Does it matter that Christ had the choice to go to Calvary or to walk away? Of all the painful experiences that faced Christ in the garden, the reality of our hopelessness pained him more. In a way, what happened after He made His choice was horrible, but by that time He had resolved to endure it. Read John 10:17, 18 and reflect on the fact that Christ was not the victim caught between a rock and a hard place, but a Savior willingly offering His life as a sacrifice. What do you think is the difference? __________________________________________________________________________

Sunday

Read the Into the Story section and use the questions in the Out of the Story section to guide your study. Up to this point in the life of Christ, He had been in control and deliberate about God’s plan. But in Gethsemane this attitude changed. Christ’s humanity shrank from the task and longed for another way, but finally accepted the hard part of the plan. What do you think are some of the key truths that emerge about Christ and you in the Garden of Gethsemane? In what way does a similar spiritual war occur in your life today? What message does Christ’s victory in the garden give to you as you make choices about your life? __________________________________________________________________________

Monday

The Key Text this week comes from Mark 14:35, 36, where Christ prayed perhaps the hardest prayer to pray: “Not what I will, but what You will.” In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to pray this prayer? What is it about God’s will that tends to make us hesitant to embrace it? Is there any question that God has our best in mind? Or, is it that God’s ways of accomplishing His will in our lives aren’t always what we would choose?

Take a few moments and identify three or four friends that you believe want to live fully for God. Pray a prayer of surrender to God’s will as the Savior did in the garden for yourself and for your friends.

Tuesday

Read the quote in the Flashlight section and imagine the worst of what sin can do. Consider the most repulsive of sin’s effects on this earth and on people, and reflect on what must have made Christ so sick and afraid. As hard as it is to wonder what Christ faced, as sinners we can never imagine what sin looks like from the perspective of One who “knew no sin.” Whom do you know that has a real hatred for sin and a deep sense of the love of God?

If Ellen White emphasizes anything in this chapter, it is the full exposure of both hatred of sin and love of God. Make a list in your journal of what you love about God’s love and a list of the things you hate about sin. Write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His will and His willingness to redeem you.

Wednesday

The Punch Lines in this week’s lesson touch on Christ’s choice to embrace God’s will and die for humanity. Read the list and identify two or three that really speak to you personally. Why do these passages connect with you today? If you were to order these verses to be read in a sequence like a Bible study, how would you organize them? Think of someone you know who might be encouraged or inspired by these passages and share them. Feel free to add any other verses you think would encourage or inspire.

Thursday

Gethsemane was about a choice. Clearly, the most important decision made on earth happened in that garden. It is likely that you have some pressing decisions to make in your life, but none more important than accepting Christ’s sacrifice for you. Sometime this week, go to a garden, or the closest thing to a garden, and make a stand to receive God’s grace and embrace His will for your life. You might want to take a few moments to journal or write about your experience in the garden and keep it in your Bible for future reference.

Friday

Two choices. Two gardens. Reflect on the choice made in Eden, which ushered in a world of sin for humanity. Also, reflect on the choice Christ made in the Garden of Gethsemane thousands of years later. A third choice still remains that opens the way to eternal life in a garden home in heaven. Adam and Eve made a choice. Christ made His choice. What will be your choice?

this week’s reading*

The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapter 74.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URlHF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
I. SYNOPSIS
The night Christ was betrayed, He endured six trials in which He was questioned, beaten, accused, and condemned to death. The Jewish portion of the trial was a gross betrayal of its legal system, and the Roman part of the trial an even sadder display of cowardice and corruption. The fact that the Jewish leaders would violate their own legal process is a testimony to their hatred of Christ. Trials typically have at least two purposes: to discover the truth and to establish justice. The truth about everyone was exposed in these trials. Jewish leaders were corrupt and hypocritical in the worst way. Pilate was revealed as a coward. Herod was a fool. The masses and the crowds were weak and mindless. The disciples had “quit school” and abandoned Christ. But Jesus stood tall, brave, and pure during these dreadful hours. The leaders thought they were getting justice by their schemes, but their depravity was exposed and the glory of Christ was unmistakable.
Perhaps one of the lessons in this story is how character is not only developed in trials but revealed by them. Students will benefit from being reminded that their inward person will be exposed by challenges, eventually. This may be a good opportunity to discuss how duplicitous we all can be, and how we all may desire truth in the inmost places but need to practice it in life. Another truth arising from this event is that Jesus let it happen. He was in complete control—from the betrayal in the garden to the nails at Calvary. Christ laid down His life purposefully. If we learn anything from this event it is that we don’t have to be left with a sad, negative view of humanity. Christ chose to redeem us because He believed we could live for greater purposes than ourselves.

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

III. EXPLORE
• Politics
• Humiliation
• Peer pressure
You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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

The ranking activity helps students prioritize their values and experiences. In this activity they must consider the attributes of each experience and then make a decision as to the order, according to their perceptions. Some students will feel betrayal more than others. There
government? Do you feel that it is too harsh or too lenient? Explain.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

may be young people who feel misunderstood, or are victims of hatred. Everyone will feel these emotions keenly, but differently. It is important to emphasize this dynamic. Another way to approach this activity is to have them choose a side on the following either/or exercise:

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

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

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

“I don’t know,” he said quietly.

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

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

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

What is your perception of the legal system of your cornerstoneconnections

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

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

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

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

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

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

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

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

---

**Teaching From the Lesson**

*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 or the book Humble Hero. 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.

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

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

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 75, 76, 77.

“Standing behind Pilate, in view of all in the court, Christ heard the abuse; but to all the false charges against Him He answered not a word. His whole bearing gave evidence of conscious innocence. He stood unmoved by the fury of the waves that beat about Him. It was as if the heavy surges of wrath, rising higher and higher, like the waves of the boisterous ocean, broke about Him, but did not touch Him. He stood silent, but His silence was eloquence. It was as a light shining from the inner to the outer man” (The Desire of Ages, p. 726).
what do you think?

Rank the following emotions from the most extreme to the least (1—most extreme, 5—the least):

- Feeling hated
- Feeling alone
- Feeling betrayed
- Feeling abandoned by friends
- Feeling hated

Describe the emotion you feel is most painful or extreme. Explain your answers.

did you know?

The Sanhedrin was a 71-member supreme court comprised of scribes, rabbis, Pharisees, priests, Sadducees, and elders presided over by the high priest. The constitution of the Sanhedrin held by law: it could not convene at night—only by daylight and only in the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple courts. Also, you could condemn someone to death based only upon the testimony of two witnesses—never by their own testimony. Furthermore, a death sentence was never to be carried out on the same day as the trial or during the Passover, in order to give time for the court to make sure they were not making a big mistake. These rules were always strictly adhered to—except for one case.

“In the story of Calvary, Pilate and the Sanhedrin were being sued by the Jewish leaders. They were trying to get around the rules by calling for the crucifixion of Jesus. But even the Jewish leaders could not agree on whom to accuse Jesus. In fact, they were so divided that they asked Pilate to release Jesus. Pilate, however, could not make up his mind and was willing to follow the law. Eventually, Pilate released Jesus. (Luke 23:1-25, NKJV)"

Things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. . . . Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, ‘You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him’ (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). And they all cried out at once, saying, ‘Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas’—who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him!’ Then he said to them the third time, ‘Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.’ But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.”

(Luke 23:1-25, NKJV)
punch lines

"Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.' . . So from that day on they planned together to kill Him" (John 11:47-53, NASB).

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearer is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?" (Isaiah 53:7, 8, ESV).

"A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days. The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you" (Deuteronomy 19:15-19, NASB).

“Be more concerned with your character than with your reputation. Your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”—John Wooden, retired American basketball coach.
Read and respond to the voting question in the What Do You Think? section of this week’s lesson. The trials of Christ demonstrate the supreme hatred that the Jewish leaders felt for Christ, the ambivalence of leaders such as Pilate and Herod, as well as the absence of the disciples and the loyalty of people who previously adored Jesus.

What is the greatest tragedy of the trials: the injustice, or the loneliness, or something else? Explain. Read Isaiah 53 and examine the trials of Christ against the backdrop of the plan of redemption.

Read the Into the Story section and use the Out of the Story questions to guide your study. Take a moment to scan through the sequence of Christ’s six trials and indicate which encounter was the most frustrating for you to read. Do the trials tend to stir up anger as well as sympathy? As you answered the question in this week’s lesson, what do you think is the message God has for you in this story?

The Key Text in this week’s lesson conveys the conflict between what Pilate knew was right against the unbridled hatred of the Jewish leaders and the riotous crowd. Read the text and think of how you get torn between what is clearly right and what others want you to do that is wrong. Often, the everyday decisions we make are not as life-changing as Pilate’s, but they are complicated. What specific areas of your life do you feel torn between right and wrong? Like Pilate, we all hear voices that pull at us. These voices come from inside as well as outside from others. Whom do you know that stands for what is good and true, no matter what they face? Ask them about the voices they hear and the voices they choose to listen to.

Model their courage and make the decision ahead of time to stand.

Read the quote from The Desire of Ages in the Flashlight section and try to imagine the scene. Under high-pressure moments such as the trial, everyone’s colors are more clearly seen—including Christ’s. Try to picture Christ the way Ellen White portrays Him in this passage. Think of some biblical characters who have made their stand. Notice how as they choose to be true, no matter what the result, their character shines clear. For Christ, this had to do with letting what was on the inside become visible on the outside. What part of your inner character do you want the courage to show on the outside? Honesty? Kindness? Your devotion to God? Share with someone this week what is on the inside.

The Punch Lines in this week’s lesson feature large portions of Scripture that relate specifically to Christ’s trial or to the larger themes of truth and justice. Look for a couple of specific themes in the Punch Lines: identify a verse that speaks to you personally and offers understanding of what happened to Christ in a way you might not have thought of before. Which verse of all the Punch Lines challenges you the most? Why?

Clearly, Jesus is falsely accused and grossly mistreated. Christ is innocent, but humanity is guilty of sin. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:21, states: “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (NKJV). Write on a card or piece of paper the verdict: guilty or not guilty. Condemned to death or set free for eternity. Hell or heaven. Condemnation or vindication. Shame or glory. Make a list of similar phrases that describe what Christ experienced and what you experience as a result. You will notice that such a list reminds you of what matters most. Place this paper or card out in the open where you can see it every day.

What do you think is the most God-honoring response to the way Christ was mistreated during His trials? Worship? Gratitude? Surrender? Belief? Devotion? Praise? Reflect and write out a prayer to God using one or more of the responses you feel are most relevant to you today.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.


Texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

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

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

Or use this as an alternate activity:

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

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

Ever wonder if you’re good enough to be saved?

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

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teaching From the Lesson
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 or the book Humble Hero. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

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

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

Activity

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

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

Summary

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

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

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

1 Ellen White, That I May Know Him, p. 65.
2 See Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 2nd ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), pp. 121-132. This is SDA Fundamental Belief no. 9.
3 Ibid., pp. 347-370. This is SDA Fundamental Belief no. 24.
*The Saviour made no murmur of complaint. His face remained calm and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon His brow. There was no pitying hand to wipe the death dew from His face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay His human heart. While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!” (The Desire of Ages, p. 744).*
**Review how well you remember the details surrounding the cross by taking the following quiz:**

1. What was written on the cross of Jesus?
   a. Jesus is Lord
   b. Jesus is the Son of God
   c. Jesus saves
   d. This is Jesus, the King of the Jews

2. In fulfillment of another prophecy, which awful punishment was not inflicted on Jesus during His last 24 hours:
   a. Body scourged
   b. Purple robe draped over His cut and bleeding back
   c. Legs broken on the cross
   d. Side pierced with a spear

3. Simon, the man who carried the cross for Jesus, was from:
   a. Cyrene
   b. Jerusalem
   c. Rome
   d. Alexandria

4. When the centurion in charge of Jesus’ crucifixion heard what Jesus said from the cross and saw Him breathe His last, what did he conclude?
   a. “Truly, this was the Son of God.”
   b. “Truly, this was a good man.”
   c. “Truly, this man was not like the other criminals who were crucified today.”
   d. “Truly, God will avenge these murderers.”

*Answers: 1. d; 2. c; 3. a; 4. a.*

---

**As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!’

“From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’—which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

“When some of those standing there heard this, they said, ‘He’s calling Elijah.’ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, ‘Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.’

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

“At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.”

(Matthew 27:32-53, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

Why did darkness fall over the countryside and the city for three hours?

What did Jesus die from?

Why didn’t Jesus come down from the cross?

What is the significance of the curtain in the Temple being torn in two?

If you were the editor of the Jerusalem Herald, write the headline you would use to announce the story of the Crucifixion:

Imagine it is the day following Jesus’ death. Write an obituary for Him:

punch lines

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14, NIV).

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5, NIV).

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’” (Galatians 3:13, NIV).

other eyes

“This is a mystery, that Christ can be the obedient, glorious love of God and the full measure of our disobedience, both at once.” —Walter Wangerin, Jr., current American professor and author.

“When we preach atonement, it is atonement planned by love, provided by love, given by love, finished by love, necessitated because of love. When we preach the resurrection of Christ, we are preaching the miracle of love. When we preach the return of Christ, we are preaching the fulfillment of love.” —Billy Graham, current American evangelist.
Sabbath

E llen White says, “It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant; our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit” (The Desire of Ages, p. 83). How well do you know the story of the Crucifixion? Read it through again. (Matthew 27:32-53; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-37)

Sunday

A fter reviewing the Into the Story section, react to the observation of John Stott in The Cross of Christ:

“I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I turn to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken darkness.

“That is the God for me. He set aside His immortality to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death.”

How does the cross affect your belief in God? Could God have redeemed the human race without pain or suffering? Explain. What does the cross tell us about Jesus’ love?

Monday

C onsider the Key Text in the context of Mel Gibson’s comments about his film, The Passion of the Christ:

“It’s time to get back to a basic message, the message that was given... Christ spoke of faith, hope, love, and forgiveness. And these are things I think we need to be reminded of again. He forgave as He was tortured and killed. And we could do with a little of that behavior.”

Tuesday

R ead the Flashlight section and ask yourself these questions:

• How could Jesus remain calm on the cross? Was this human strength, divine strength, or a combination of both? Do we have access to this same power to be calm in dire circumstances?

• If you could have offered Jesus “words of sympathy” while He hung on the cross, what would you have said to Him?

• What “enemy” is God calling you to pray for?

Wednesday

R ead the Punch Line from Isaiah 53 in its full context by reading the entire chapter. Next, read Leviticus 16:1-34. What parallels do you notice between Jesus as our sacrifice and the ancient practice of sacrificing a lamb?

Thursday

I t would be good for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in thinking about the life of Christ. We should take it point by point and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. If we do, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be awakened, and we will be filled with His spirit. Beholding the beauty of His character, we will be ‘transformed into the same image from glory to glory.’ 2 Corinthians 3:18” (Ellen G. White, Humble Hero).

How can my thinking about the closing scenes of Christ’s life help me to love Him more and to be filled with His spirit?

Friday

H ow can I live under the influence of the cross today?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

This week’s reading*

The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 78, 79.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article?191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URuhHfXeBoO. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
Preparing to Teach

I. Synopsis

This week’s lesson focuses on the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and its ramifications for all time. Satan and his evil host engineered the dark events that led to the death of Christ. They exulted at the thought that the efficacy of Christ’s sinless life and perfect death would be rendered moot by the sheer power of the grave. But they were wrong.

While Satan saw in the grave his last, best hope for derailing God’s plan of redemption, Christ’s death left His followers just plain hopeless. Unfallen worlds were likewise transfixed by His death. They were horrified at the death of the One who had spoken them into existence. Had Satan succeeded in his plan to besmirch the character of God? All seemed lost that Friday afternoon at Calvary. But Sunday was on its way!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely indispensable to God’s plan of salvation. As you share this week’s lesson with your class, make the point that Christ’s death on the cross is inextricably linked to His resurrection from the dead. Christ’s sinless life met the demands of the law. His death paid the price for sin (Romans 3:23). But His resurrection and ascension meant that the Father had accepted His sacrifice on our behalf. Salvation was not assured until Jesus rose from the grave and returned to the Father.

Additionally, the resurrection of Christ is the linchpin on which hang all our hopes for eternity with God. Without it, as the apostle Paul notes in 1 Corinthians 15:14-17, all our preaching and pronouncements are in vain.

Teaching

I. Getting Started

Activity

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

The objective of this activity is to get students thinking about some of the attitudes and beliefs people generally have about death, based on how it is portrayed in the media.

After the students complete the exercise, ask them to share their responses with the class. More than likely, there will be a combination of answers that

II. Target

The students will:

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

III. Explore

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

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

Commentary: The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 80, 81.
Key Text: Matthew 28:2-4.
best explain our human fascination with death and what happens after death. The point to remember here is that Satan seeks to cloud our understanding about the state of the dead in part because He hopes to undermine our belief in the resurrection of Christ. If we can live on without the power of God, then we do not need the hope of Christ’s resurrection.

**Illustration**

Share this illustration in your own words:

A pastor in a local church recounted the following true story.

“I am not a connoisseur of great art, but from time to time a painting or picture will really speak a clear, strong message to me. Some time ago I saw a picture of an old burned-out mountain shack. All that remained was the chimney, . . . the charred debris of what had been that family’s sole possession. In front of this destroyed home stood an old grandfather-looking man dressed only in his underclothes with a small boy clutching a pair of patched overalls. It was evident that the child was crying. Beneath the picture were the words which the artist felt the old man was speaking to the boy. They were simple words, yet they presented a profound theology and philosophy of life. Those words were, ‘Hush child, God ain’t dead!’

“That vivid picture of that burned-out mountain shack, that old man, the weeping child, and those words ‘God ain’t dead’ keep returning to my mind. Instead of it being a reminder of the despair of life, it has come to be a reminder of hope! I need reminders that there is hope in this world. In the midst of all of life’s troubles and failures, I need mental pictures to remind me that all is not lost as long as God is alive and in control of His world” (When God Was Taken Captive, p. 24).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

**Bridge to the Story**

Share the following in your own words:

Everyone needs hope. Every time we hear the story of a rich person attempting suicide, we ought to be reminded that all the money in the world can’t buy us hope. If the rich are not safe from the ravages of our difficult world, how much more so the poor?

When life comes in like a flood, we humans can take comfort in the truth that “God ain’t dead!” How do we know this? In a word—Jesus. Jesus conquered the grave and there’s no stronger power on earth than death. That’s reason to rejoice, no matter what we lack.

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

While the soldiers guarding the tomb were knocked senseless by the glory of the angel sent to

Teaching From the Lesson

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 or the book Humble Hero. 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.
wake Christ, and the women ran off with the good news, the Jewish leaders who instigated the death of Christ were tormented.

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

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

1See Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 2nd ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), pp. 387-402. This is SDA Fundamental Belief no. 26.

2Ibid., pp. 133-148. This is SDA Fundamental Belief no. 10.

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 80, 81.

resurrection power

flashlight

“When Jesus was laid in the grave, Satan triumphed. He dared to hope that the Saviour would not take up His life again. He claimed the Lord’s body, and set his guard about the tomb, seeking to hold Christ a prisoner. He was bitterly angry when his angels fled at the approach of the heavenly messenger. When he saw Christ come forth in triumph, he knew that his kingdom would have an end, and that he must finally die” (The Desire of Ages, p. 782).

keytext

“There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.”

(Matthew 28:2-4, NIV)
There’s something very engaging about stories of people who come back from the dead. Tabloid papers tell of Elvis sightings, while others purport to have photo “evidence” that everyone from Mother Teresa to the Prophet Muhammad is alive and well. The “death to life” theme is also the basis of numerous big-grossing horror movies and several superhero flicks.

Ever wonder why we humans are attracted to stories of people who come back from the dead? Which of the following reasons best explains our fascination? (Circle one.)

• Death is the one permanent state from which no one can escape.
• There has to be something that happens to people after death.
• Everyone loves a good resurrection story. It’s fun!
• We know that there’s no life after death. It’s just entertainment.
• We all want to live again after we die.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.”

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.” Then they remembered his words.

“Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.”

(Matthew 28:2-4; Luke 24:1-12, NIV)
Read through the narrative of Jesus’ resurrection closely. Try to see it with fresh eyes. Put an X by something that was new to you. What hadn’t you noticed before?

Why do you think the earth quaked when the angel came to open the tomb of Jesus? What does this tell you about the significance of Jesus’ resurrection?

Jesus foretold His resurrection. Why didn’t the disciples believe that Jesus had risen when they heard the news?

Many people claim to worship on the first day of the week (Sunday) because Jesus rose on that day. Is there anything in this week’s Out of the Story that tells us to worship on Sunday as a memorial of Jesus’ resurrection?

When the women came seeking Jesus, the angel asked, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” Think for a moment. Do people today look for the living among the dead through movies, music, the occult, etc.? Explain.

“Out of the Story

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies’ (John 11:25, NIV).

“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9, NIV).

“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.”—Martin Luther, 16th-century German priest, scholar, leader in the Protestant Reformation.

“How divinely full of glory and pleasure shall that hour be when all the millions of mankind that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God shall meet together and stand around Him, with every tongue and every heart full of joy and praise!”—Isaac Watts, 18th-century preacher, poet, hymn writer.
Sabbath

Now that you’ve completed the What Do You Think? activity, write a sentence below explaining why you chose the answer that you did.


Tuesday

This week’s Flashlight quotation from Ellen White opens a window into Satan’s devious machinations. Satan never would have tempted Jesus as powerfully as he did if he had not known that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Kill the Savior, and the world dies.

Jesus’ disciples grieved His death at Calvary, but they were not alone. All of heaven yearned to see Jesus raised back to life. And when the signal was given, the angel of God left heaven like a bolt of lightning!

Nature on the day that Jesus was crucified?


Thursday

What does Jesus’ resurrection mean to you? Do you ever think about it during the day? When was the last time that you got into a discussion about it?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:55. To believe in the Resurrection is to believe that God has power over life and death—over your life and over your death. If God is controlling your life, should you be afraid of anything?

List two fears that you would like to turn over to God right now.


Friday

The life that Jesus lived fulfilled the demands of God’s perfect law, the law that Adam and Eve broke when they sinned. The death that Christ died paid the price for Adam and Eve’s sin and the sins of the entire world (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Together they give us the assurance that we are saved. Together they are “the good news” of salvation.


Monday

This Sabbath’s Key Text is essential to understanding the significance of Jesus’ sacrifice for sin. Think about it. Did Matthew really need to record that the angel sent from heaven to open the tomb of Jesus caused an earthquake when he landed on earth? Wasn’t Jesus’ resurrection fireworks enough? What’s with the “special effects”?

Read Matthew 27:45-53. What happened in

Turn to Genesis 3:1-4. What do these verses—specifically verse 4—tell you about why many people are fascinated by the idea of life after death? What do you think Satan meant by “You will not surely die”?

Satan still uses this lie to convince men and women that there is life after death, that we won’t “surely” die. But what does the Bible say (Ecclesiastes 9:5)? Until God calls people back to life at Jesus’ return, the dead are dead.

In rising from the dead, Jesus broke Satan’s power over all created things—forever!

Notice how closely Romans 10:9 ties belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ to salvation. Can you be saved if you do not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead? Explain your answer.

Jesus’ resurrection is our hope for the future!


this week’s reading*

The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 80, 81.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.L9nFH78Z8s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

• Hope
• Gender identity
• Joy

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

- John’s Resurrection narrative is unique in several ways. For instance, John is the only person who mentions that Jesus’ burial cloth was folded neatly along with the strips of linen used to wrap Him. Luke mentions the strips of linen, but he omits the folding nugget. Why do you think John mentioned this? This detail should not be overlooked, especially by teenagers who hate to clean their rooms! It is also important because the Jewish leaders alleged that someone had stolen Jesus’ body. Thieves would not have stopped to fold clothes.

- Peter and John rushed to the tomb once Mary and the other women told the disciples that Jesus’ body was missing. Luke 24:12 makes clear that even after seeing the empty tomb and grave clothes, Peter left “wondering to himself what had happened” (NIV). The disciples did not understand Old Testament prophecies about Jesus’ resurrection, and they had forgotten His words.

- The first recorded words of Jesus after He had risen were: “Woman, why are you crying?” (John 20:13, NIV). Jesus knew why Mary was weeping. Why did He ask her this question? Might this question be linked to the hope that Jesus had spoken about before His crucifixion? Perhaps Jesus was asking a deeper question: Why are you weeping when I told you that I would rise again?

- The students were asked to share two lessons that they might take away from the Into the Story passage. One takeaway is the blessing that comes to those who seek earnestly after Christ. Another is the tender compassion that Jesus showed toward those who were brokenhearted at His death. Jesus was the first Comforter sent by God to earth.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Psalm 39:7; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Lamentations 3:24.

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. **Cosmic Conflict.** The resurrection of Jesus fits into an intergalactic struggle between God and Satan, and we must never forget this. Isaiah 14:12-15 gives a description of the thinking that led God to expel Satan and his followers from heaven. Revelation 12:12 describes Satan’s attitude when he was hurled out of heaven, and gives this frightful warning: “But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short” (The Desire of Ages, p. 790).

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

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

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

   b. Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples (John 20:1, 2).
   c. Mary, the mother of James, draws near and sees the angel (Matthew 28:1, 2). She goes back to meet the other women following behind with the spices.
   d. Meanwhile Peter and John arrive, look in, and depart (John 20:3-10).
   e. Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees two angels, then Jesus (John 20:11-18). The risen Christ bids her to tell the disciples (John 20:17, 18).
   f. Mary, mother of James, meanwhile returns with the women (Luke 24:1-4). They see the two angels (Luke 24:5; Mark 16:5). They also hear the angel’s message (Matthew 28:6-8). On their way to find the disciples, they are met by the risen Christ (Matthew 28:9, 10).

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

---

**Teaching From the Lesson**

*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 or the book Humble Hero. 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.*

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

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

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

**Summary**

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

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

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

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

---

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

**Unlock the Talk**

Getting teens to talk in Sabbath School—about the lesson, that is—can be tough. Many times teens haven’t formed opinions about the material, or worse yet, they don’t want to share them in a high-pressure environment. Here are a few ways to get your teens talking and sharing.

1. Look for opportunities to keep the conversation peer centered. Look for opportunities to have the teens break up into pairs or small groups where they can talk together and come up with responses.
2. Keep discussions fairly brief, unless the teens take hold of a topic and seek more interaction time.
3. Once students begin sharing, someone will likely say something wrong or slightly embarrassing, etc. Correct these errors in a general way. Avoid drawing attention to individual students, if possible.

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 82.

"Christ's first work on earth after His resurrection was to convince His disciples of His undiminished love and tender regard for them. To give them proof that He was their living Saviour, that He had broken the fetters of the tomb, and could no longer be held by the enemy death; to reveal that He had the same heart of love as when He was with them as their beloved Teacher, He appeared to them again and again. He would draw the bonds of love still closer around them. Go tell My brethren, He said, that they meet Me in Galilee" (The Desire of Ages, p. 793).

(*Jesus said, ‘Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”* (John 20:17, NIV))
Most of the time when people assemble lists of great Bible figures, few women are mentioned. Yet, women have played a variety of unique and important roles in God’s unfolding plan of salvation. Here are five great Bible heroines. Match each name with the clue that best matches each of them.

____ Deborah
____ Ruth
____ Abigail
____ Ruth
____ Mary

A. She bravely went before a king to save her people.
B. A prophetess and judge of Israel (Judges 4).
C. A faithful foreigner who served her mother-in-law.
D. Her common sense and quick thinking saved her family’s life (1 Samuel 25).
E. She was chosen to bear the Son of God (Luke 1).

What do you think?

What do you know?

Did you know that Mary Magdalene got her name from the town of Magdala where she lived? Magdala was a small fishing town located on the Sea of Galilee. The Scriptures record that Jesus visited Magdala once during His earthly ministry (Matthew 15:39). It was during this visit that Jesus delivered Mary of Magdala from demon possession. She never forgot how Jesus set her free and her devotion to Christ continued after His death.

“I early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!’”

“So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside.

He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

“Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

“They asked her, ‘Woman, why are you crying?’

“They have taken my Lord away,’ she said, ‘and I don’t know where they have put him.’ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

“‘Woman,’ he said, ‘why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?’ Thinking he was the gardener, she said, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.’

“Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’

“She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means Teacher).

“Jesus said, ‘Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, “I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”’

“Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: ‘I have seen the Lord!’ And she told them that he had said these things to her.”

(John 20:1-18, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

Go through this week’s Scripture story and put an X by parts of the story that are new to you. Look for something you had not caught or realized before.

The writer of this narrative is John. Did you notice how John referred to himself during this episode? Did you catch the fact that he made sure everyone knew that he “outran” Peter in getting to Jesus’ tomb. Why did he note this fact?

What is the attitude of the women who came to Jesus’ tomb? How was this an act of heroism, given the fact that a rabid mob had just crucified their Lord two days earlier?

Why did Mary Magdalene remain at the tomb weeping? What kind of relationship do you think she had with Jesus?

What do you think caused Mary not to recognize Jesus? How can that happen to us today?

What two lessons can you take away from this biblical episode?

punch lines

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love” (John 15:9, NIV).

“Pointing to his disciples, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:49, 50, NIV).

“For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5, NIV).

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5, NIV).

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him” (1 John 3:1, NIV).

other eyes

“God sends you joy, for sorrow will come fast enough.”—John Clarke, 20th-century American Supreme Court justice.

“May your life be like arithmetic—joys added, sorrow subtracted, friends multiplied, love undivided.”—Anonymous.
Sabbath
How did you do matching up the biblical heroines with the clues describing their youth contributions in Scripture? For the record, the answers are: Deborah-B; Ruth-C; Abigail-D; Esther-A; Mary-E.

Read Luke 24:1-12. Who were the first people to arrive at Jesus’ tomb that fateful Sunday morning?
_________________________________, ____________________________________________

Peter and John came to the tomb. But where were all the men who had vowed never to leave Jesus’ side?

Sunday
After reading the Into the Story section, explore the passage by answering the Out of the Story questions. Jesus had many more followers than the 12 disciples we have all come to know. Some of His most devoted disciples were women, some of whom came to His tomb to care for His body.

Imagine that you were one of the women who saw Jesus’ empty tomb. What words would you use to describe the experience? Read John 20:1-17 once again and then share five words that would have best captured the moment for you. ____________, ____________, ____________, ____________, ____________.

Monday
This week’s Key Text is one of the most powerful texts in the Bible.

Who is Jesus talking to in this scripture?
______________________________________________

What is the main message that Jesus is communicating?
______________________________________________

The first human to see the resurrected Christ was a once demon-possessed woman. Not only that, but Jesus told her His future plans and then trusted her to deliver this news to His disciples. God gave to Mary Magdalene a privilege that no other human—male or female—could claim.

What’s the message here?
______________________________________________

Tuesday
This week’s Flashlight has a sense of urgency to it.

What did Jesus say to His disciples in John 16:22?
______________________________________________

How about Matthew 20:17-19?
______________________________________________

Jesus did everything He could to prepare His disciples for His death, but pointing them to the Resurrection. This was the hope that He was eager to communicate to Mary Magdalene, His disciples, and all of us today. Because Jesus conquered death, we need not fear it. We have hope!

Wednesday
Have you noticed the not-so-hidden theme in this week’s Punch Lines? The theme can be summed up in one word—love.

While reading this week’s Scripture story, did you notice anything peculiar? Where were Jesus’ family members?
What does John 19:25-27 tell us about how Jesus viewed His family?
______________________________________________

Jesus said in Matthew 12:49, 50 that those who do the will of His Father were His true family. The people who wept bitterly over the death of Jesus, and made their way to His tomb at the first opportunity, were those who had surrendered their lives to His Father’s will. They were His family.

Thursday
A teen guy posted the following message online:

“Dear God, life seems so rough right now, and I’m all but ready to give up on everything, including life. This period of pain has been going on for over a year, and it is affecting both me and my family. I pray that happiness can find me again, that the sun will come out, and that I can once again find reasons to love life. I don’t want to live like this anymore. Please help me.”

Based on what you learned this week, what would you say to encourage this guy?

Friday
One day Jesus will break through the heavens and return to earth to save all who have confessed and accepted Him as their Lord and Savior. That is the blessed hope that keeps God’s earthly family going. What are you doing to prepare for Jesus’ soon return?


this week’s reading*
The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapter 82.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

• Prophecy
• Doubt
• Coping with feelings

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.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 the students respond, you might note the trends and similarities of the responses as they share.

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

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

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

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

• Read the story and underline the phrases that you think are key to understanding the interchange between Jesus and the two disciples.
• How does the Bible describe their attitude? What do they do and say that reveals their emotional state?
• Why do you think they don’t immediately recognize Jesus? Is it because Jesus is concealing His identity, or are they so confused they don’t see who He is?
• When the disciples said, “We thought He was the one who would redeem Israel,” what other way could this happen other than Christ dying?
• What do you think changed in their understanding of Christ and His death when Jesus taught them from the Scriptures as they walked? What in particular do you think made their hearts burn?
• When Christ broke the bread, what images do you think went through their minds?
• What do you think is the message God has for you in this passage?

More Questions for Teachers

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

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Matthew 17:1-8; Revelation 1:1-3; John 21:4-8; Acts 9; Luke 16:19-31.

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

The town of Emmaus was about seven miles west of Jerusalem, which means the disciples were walking into the setting sun as they made their way home. It is hard to know how long they walked, but it took long enough to approach their destination as it became dark. Given that they were deep in discussion, it is likely that they were not pressed for time, but were pressed by a more important conundrum.

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

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

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

Teaching From the Lesson

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 or the book Humble Hero. 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.

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

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapter 83.

flashlight

“Christ never forces His company upon anyone. He interests Himself in those who need Him. Gladly will He enter the humblest home, and cheer the lowliest heart. But if men are too indifferent to think of the heavenly Guest, or ask Him to abide with them, He passes on. Thus many meet with great loss. They do not know Christ any more than did the disciples as He walked with them by the way” (The Desire of Ages, p. 800).

heartburn

“Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. . . . And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’” (Luke 24:30–32, NKJV)
**what do you think?**

**Agree or Disagree**

The disciples, having been eyewitnesses to Christ, had an easier time believing and being faithful than followers today. Explain.

What is more helpful for believing: a firsthand experience, or having the Bible and all of history to testify on Jesus' behalf? Do you ever think that if you could have been there and seen Jesus, your faith in Him would be stronger?


**did you know?**

Perhaps one of the greatest ironies is couched in the word the disciples used for their fellow traveler. The word **paroikeis**, typically translated “visitor,” means to inhabit a place as a stranger. Another way to say it is: “Is it possible that you are the only one who doesn’t have a clue about what is going on here?” But in truth, as you’ll read in the story for this week, Jesus was more at home with understanding than the two disciples.

**INTO THE STORY**

“Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

“And He said to them, ‘What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?’

“Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?’

“And He said to them, ‘What things?’

“So they said to Him, ‘The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.’

“Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

“Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, ‘Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.’ And He went in to stay with them.

“Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

“And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’”

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the story and underline the phrases that you think are key to understanding the interchange between Jesus and the two disciples.

How does the Bible describe their attitude? What do they do and say that reveals their emotional state?

Why do you think Jesus is not immediately recognized? Is it because Jesus is concealing His identity, or are they so confused that they don’t see who He is?

When the disciples said, “We thought He was the one who would redeem Israel,” what other way could this happen other than Christ dying?

What do you think changed in their understanding of Christ and His death when Jesus taught them from the Scriptures as they walked? What in particular do you think made their hearts burn?

When Christ broke the bread, what images do you think went through their minds? What do you think is the message God has for you in this passage?

punch lines

“And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33, NKJV).

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” (Matthew 16:21, NKJV).

“When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead’” (Matthew 17:8, 9, NKJV).

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9, NKJV).

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12, NKJV).

other eyes

“Our old history ends with the cross; our new history begins with the resurrection.” —Watchman Nee, 20th-century Chinese Christian church leader and author.

“Perhaps the transformation of the disciples of Jesus is the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection.” —John Stott, 20th-century British Christian clergyman and author.
Sunday
Read the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, found in Luke 16:19-31, and pay careful attention to the last few verses. Does the miraculous lessen our need for faith? Do you think it’s possible to believe in the Resurrection today with the same kind of faith and passion as believers did back then—perhaps even more? Explain.

Monday
The Key Text this week comes from Luke 24:30-32, emphasizing the way God’s word brings clarity to our minds and feels like a warm light burning within us.

When in your life has God’s Word illuminated your mind with clarity and warmed your heart with purpose? Think about some of the revelations you have witnessed in the Bible. If you had to choose three stories from Scripture that clarify God’s purpose and plan for your life, what three stories would you choose? Write them down and send them to a friend or someone you know who might be struggling. Share your story of going from confusion to clarity.

Tuesday
Read the quote in the Flashlight section and ruminate on the times in your life when you were “indifferent” to God’s voice and presence. How did you emerge from the fog of apathy? Think of someone you know who persistently tries to see Christ in everyday life. Invite them to share with you what they do to fight apathy from clouding their vision of Christ.

Wednesday
The Punch Lines in this week’s lesson capture how important the resurrection is to the Christian faith. Included in the listed verses are a couple that show how Christ clearly foretold the disciples of the Resurrection. How could they forget? Even the Pharisees remembered Christ’s promise to rise from the dead (Matthew 27:62-66). Which verse speaks to you personally?

Thursday
Take a several-mile hike this week—either by yourself or with a friend—not simply for exercise, but to deepen your understanding.

Simply talk about all the events of the life of Christ that are meaningful to you. Think and imagine the trial where the disciples recaptured the fire of their faith by listening to God’s Word. Bring your Bible and read from the last moments of Christ’s life. Take the time to get clear about who He is and what He longs to do in your heart. Confess the things that tend to get in the way of His leading in your life. Stay focused on this for several miles and see what emerges.

Friday
How does God reveal Himself to you? Think about the events in your life in which God has shown Himself to you in unmistakable ways. Did clarity come immediately or as part of a longer process? Imagine the experiences of others such as Saul/Paul or Thomas and how they got to a point where they were sure in their faith in Christ.

How is the Resurrection relevant today?

Pray for an opportunity to testify to this event with someone this week.

this week’s reading*
The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapter 83.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books/

UR/lHF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

- Love is . . .
- Unity in the body of Christ*  
- Forgiveness of self

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.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 own defense tactics that they use when they are uncomfortable, ill at ease, or under stress. How do they respond? Do they pull away from the group? Do they seek solace with other people? Do they get sarcastic or mouthy? Do they get quiet or tight-lipped?

www.cornerstoneconnections.net
affect us a great deal. We wish they wouldn’t bother us. But we aren’t as independent as we might like to think. We were created to need each other, and only when we care for each other are we truly secure and happy. Even the disciples had to learn that lesson, and Jesus took great pains to show them just how much they needed to be a united group.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

When Jesus rose from the dead and showed Himself to them, the disciples were overjoyed! However, this was an equally emotionally intense time for them. The shock of Jesus rising from the dead, the remembering of Jesus’ words that pointed to this, and the emotional jolt each time they saw Him, was taking its

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

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

“Mousetraps never hurt pigs,” said the pig.

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

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

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

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

Sometimes a mousetrap affects the whole farm!

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Like the animals in the mousetrap story, sometimes we don’t think that other people’s problems affect us a great deal. We wish they wouldn’t bother us. But we aren’t as independent as we might like to think. We were created to need each other, and only when we care for each other are we truly secure and happy. Even the disciples had to learn that lesson, and Jesus took great pains to show them just how much they needed to be a united group.
toll on them. They would gather together to encourage each other and remind each other of Jesus’ promises. But not everyone responded to this stressful time in the same way.

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

What makes them feel that they are part of the

Teaching From the Lesson

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 or the book Humble Hero. 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.
church? What makes them feel that they contribute and are appreciated? How would they like to make that happen?

**Summary**

* Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

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

---

* See *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 2nd ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), pp. 201-210. This is SDA Fundamental Belief no. 14.
Another lesson Christ had to give, relating especially to Peter. Peter’s denial of his Lord had been in shameful contrast to his former professions of loyalty. He had dishonored Christ, and had incurred the distrust of his brethren. They thought he would not be allowed to take his former position among them, and he himself felt that he had forfeited his trust. . . . The Saviour gave him opportunity to regain the confidence of his brethren, and, so far as possible, to remove the reproach he had brought upon the gospel” (The Desire of Ages, p. 811).

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’” (John 21:15, NIV)
what do you think?

Answer the following questions giving your most honest answer:
1. Where do you feel the most loved and accepted?
2. What makes you feel loved and accepted? What can a person do to show that they care for you in a way that is meaningful to you?
3. Is it possible to love others without first loving yourself?
4. Is it possible to love someone if you are holding a grudge?
5. Is it possible to love yourself if you haven’t forgiven yourself for your shortcomings?
6. What is your strongest defense reflex when you are feeling insecure or unaccepted?
7. At what times do you find yourself using those words or actions?

did you know?

According to a study done by the American Psychiatric Nurses Association, the lack of a sense of belonging has been associated with loneliness, emotional distress, psychological disturbance, and mental illness. They wanted to discover if a sense of belonging could actually work as a buffer against clinical depression in people who were at high risk for depression based on their family history, etc. The result? Yes! A sense of belonging makes a huge difference!

Jesus Reinstates Peter

“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

“Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’

“Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me?’

“Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me? Son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’

“Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep. I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.’ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, ‘Follow me!’

“Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, ‘Lord, who is going to betray you?’) When Peter saw him, he asked, ‘Lord, what about him?’
“Jesus answered, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.’”

(John 21:3-8, 15-22, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was Jesus trying to do when He questioned Peter about his love for Him?

__________________________________________________________

How did Peter seem to feel about this questioning?

__________________________________________________________

What would Peter’s public insistence of his love for Jesus do for those who were listening, especially after Peter denied Jesus three times when He was arrested?

__________________________________________________________

Was Jesus’ forgiveness of Peter enough to allow Peter to go on with the work Jesus had given them to preach the gospel? What more was needed, both from Peter and from the other disciples?

__________________________________________________________

Have we really accepted God’s forgiveness if we refuse to forgive ourselves?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

punch lines

“Two are better than one, because they have good return for their work: if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, NIV).

“Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:18, NIV).

“Jesus said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace’” (Luke 7:50, NIV).

“Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap” (Ecclesiastes 11:4, NIV).

“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7, NIV).

other eyes

“People can be more forgiving than you can imagine. But you have to forgive yourself. Let go of what's bitter and move on.”—Bill Cosby, comedian and educator

“One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organizations do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team. The first requisite is life, always.”—A. W. Tozer, 20th-century American Protestant pastor, author, editor.
**Sabbath**

Answer the What Do You Think? questions. John 20:19-29 tells the story of Thomas’ disbelief in Jesus’ resurrection. He chose not to believe, but even though he put up a strong defense against believing, despite all the first-person accounts around him, Jesus gave Thomas the proof he had been insisting he have before choosing to believe with the other disciples. Instead of judging Thomas’ stubbornness, look at what he might have been feeling to cause him to pull away from the group and separate himself beliefwise. How do we do the same thing, and why?

**Tuesday**

Ellen White tells us that Jesus was giving Peter a chance to make up for his past mistakes. Jesus had forgiven Peter, but Peter still needed to be reinstated with the other disciples. We make our own share of mistakes, too. Life is a learning experience, and we aren’t always going to get it right on the first try. Is Jesus’ forgiveness always enough, or do we sometimes have to take an extra step (with Jesus’ help) to make up with the people we have let down? In what ways might we be able to regain trust in broken relationships? What opportunities do you see to mend fences with people you might have hurt in the past?

**Friday**

The most frustrating and challenging aspect of life is the maintenance of relationships. Self-help books abound, exploring how to build and maintain relationships with everyone from your family members to your coworkers to random people you meet who might be important to you later. It’s not always easy! Relationships, however, are also the most satisfying part of life. It isn’t possible to have solid, strong relationships if you haven’t taken care of things inside yourself.

How can God help you to be complete within so that you can have satisfying relationships with other people?

**Monday**

In John 21:15 Jesus tells Peter what he must do—“Feed My lambs.” This was not only his direction for the ministry—to nurture the new believers who needed gentle care and guidance—but also instructions about how to become united with the believers once more. Peter would be united when he worked side by side with his brothers. By working together, they would be united in their goal, and there would be ample opportunity to build trust once more. The same advice holds for us. How can you contribute to the call to feed the lambs?

**Wednesday**

Ecclesiastes 11:4 tells us that if we are focused on things that might scare us or make us anxious, we won’t get anything useful done. This is also true about our past mistakes. If we can’t forgive ourselves, we will never be able to move forward and be the people God intends us to be. Refusing to forgive ourselves also affects our relationships. Relationships matter, and it is God’s will that we have happy, functional relationships to fulfill our lives. “Two are better than one” and “a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” For what do you need to forgive yourself? How can receiving this forgiveness allow you to move forward?

**Thursday**

Relationships are the only things outside of ourselves that we will be able to take with us to heaven. People are the true treasures of life, and we should not take them too lightly. How can you become more closely united with your family, friends, and church? How can you contribute to these relationships in such a way that you can make them happier for having known you? If unity is this important to God, how important should it be to us?

**Sunday**

Answer the Out of the Story questions. Peter had fallen in the eyes of the other disciples and the other believers. He had been the loudest talker, but when the test came, Peter had denied Jesus three times in His time of need. Jesus used His questioning of Peter to give him a chance to publicly declare his love for his Master, and to help build a bridge for Peter to become fully accepted by the other 11 once more. Why was it Jesus’ deliberate intention that Peter be united with the group again? What could unity do for both Peter and the others?

---

**this week’s reading**

*The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero*, chapters 84, 85.

*Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlHF1bOCo0. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

Matthew 28:16-20

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


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

Acts 1:9-12

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

This emphasis was well suited to the Greek audi-
ence that Luke was addressing. The Greeks put a high
value on being an example and improving oneself, and
were often engaged in conversations about perfection.
The Greeks, however, struggled to reconcile the spiri-
tual importance of the physical world. They believed
the spiritual was more important than the physical.
To help them understand the God-man who perfectly
combined the physical and the spiritual worlds, Luke
emphasized that Jesus was not a phantom spirit but a

Teaching From the Lesson

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
  or the book Humble Hero. 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.
“God, how can I fulfill the Great Commission this week?” Allow enough time for students to wait in silence for impressions from God. You can discuss the experience in the larger group if you wish; or simply have students leave when they are done.

Summary

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


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

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Have each student spend time alone in prayer. The prayer should focus around the simple question:

real live human being who addressed both the physical and the spiritual needs of the people He came to serve.

Acts 1:9-12—After 40 days with His disciples (Acts 1:3), Jesus returned to heaven. The two men, or angels, made it clear that Jesus would return the same way in which He left—visibly and in bodily form. We know He is coming again; there is no reason to be caught unaware (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

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 86, 87

**flashlight**

“Christ had sojourned in the world for thirty-three years; He had endured its scorn, insult, and mockery; He had been rejected and crucified. Now, when about to ascend to His throne of glory—as He reviews the ingratitude of the people He came to save—will He not withdraw from them His sympathy and love? Will not His affections be centered upon that realm where He is appreciated, and where sinless angels wait to do His bidding? No; His promise to those loved ones whom He leaves on earth is, ‘I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world’” (The Desire of Ages, p. 830).

**keytext**

“They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus . . . will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’”

(Acts 1:9-11, NIV)
**what do you think?**

**Are you a good follower? Or do you tend to be more of a leader?** Rank yourself from 1 (“That’s not me at all”) to 10 (“That is totally me”) after the following statements:

- I lean on God for everything.
- My friends tell me I’m really good at following directions.
- If I sense God is calling me to do something I do it without hesitation.
- I ask my parents or other adults for advice.
- I believe that God makes His will known through His Spirit.
- I’m content to be a support person on a team.
- I prefer one-on-one mentoring to being in front of a big crowd of people.
- I believe the kingdom of God gets built through personal relationships—one friend at a time.
- I never worry about anything.
- I prefer singing in a choir rather than singing a solo.

**did you know?**

According to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Web site on friendship evangelism, polls suggest that approximately 90 percent of converts come to faith because they were invited by a “relative, friend, or neighbor.”

“After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

“They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’”

(Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12, NIV)

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

“When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.”

(Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12, NIV)
punch lines

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10, NIV).

“‘You are my witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he’” (Isaiah 43:10, NIV).

“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world” (1 John 5:3, 4, 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).

“‘You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance” (Psalm 32:7, NIV).

“The wire is you and me; the current is God. We have the power to let the current pass through us, use us, and produce the Light of the world—Jesus.”—Mother Teresa, 20th-century Roman Catholic nun and humanitarian.

“It’s possible to be a follower of Jesus without being a disciple; to be a camp-follower without being a soldier of the king; to be a hanger-on in some great work without pulling one’s weight. . . . It is one of the supreme handicaps of the church that in the church there are so many distant followers of Jesus and so few real disciples.”—William Barclay, 20th-century Scottish theologian.
Sabbath
Add up your points from the What Do You Think? section to discover your “Follower Quotient.” Use this key:

0-20 points = You are a leader, not a follower.
21-40 points = You tend to lead rather than follow.
41-60 points = You are comfortable leading or following.
61-80 points = You lean toward following.
81-100 points = You are a gifted team player, supporter, and follower.

Compare your score with the score of friends in your Sabbath School class. Discuss the following questions:

How might you sense God calling you to help build the kingdom of God as a leader? as a follower?

Do you tend to be an earth shaker or a stargazer? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Explain.

Review the instructions that Jesus gave to His followers at His ascension. How can you make His calling personal and follow those directions today?

Sunday
Read the sections Into the Story and Out of the Story. Next, ponder the following statement from author Dorothy Sayers: “I believe it to be a grave mistake to present Christianity as something charming and popular with no offense in it.” If we are to accept the challenge that Jesus gave His followers as He ascended to heaven, would our message be charming? popular? offensive? Why or why not?

monday
Compare the Key Text with this quotation from Ellen White: “God is not partial. All who are made partakers of His salvation here, and who hope to share the glories of the kingdom hereafter, must gather with Christ. Each must feel that he is responsible for his own case, and for the influence he exerts over others” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 179).

Ask yourself:
- What influence do I exert over others?
- What does it mean to “gather with Christ”?
- Do I understand that I am responsible for my own case? What does that look like in my life?

Tuesday
Read this week’s Flashlight. Escape to a quiet place and reflect on God’s love for you.

Wednesday
Read the verses in Punch Lines. Dig deeper into God’s Word by reading these additional texts:
- Matthew 5:14-16
- Mark 1:17
- Acts 1:8
- 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Thursday
At Jesus’ ascension, the two men dressed in white asked the disciples, “Why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky?” (Acts 1:11, The Message). In other words, “Are you going to be a stargazer or an earth shaker?” Jesus asks you that same question today. How will you answer?

Friday
Ellen White writes: “When Christ ascended to heaven, the sense of His presence was still with His followers. It was a personal presence, full of love and light. Jesus, the Saviour, who had walked and talked and prayed with them, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, had, while the message of peace was still upon His lips, been taken up from them into heaven, and the tones of His voice had come back to them, as the cloud of angels received Him—‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’ Matthew 28:20. . . . They knew that He had ascended to heaven to prepare places for them, and that He would come again and take them to Himself” (Steps to Christ, pp. 73, 74).

Do you enjoy the sense of Christ’s personal presence? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

this week’s reading*
The Desire of Ages or Humble Hero, chapters 86, 87.

*Humble Hero is a special adaptation of The Desire of Ages, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#LRF1800s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.