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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Welcome to *Cornerstone Connections*.

—The Editors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. In each lesson students are provided with a reference to the volume from the Conflict of the Ages Series by Ellen White that corresponds with the week’s story. Students who choose to will be able to read the entire series in four years by following the reading plan.
### 2011

**1st Quarter**
1. Adam and Eve
2. The Serpent
3. Cain and Abel
4. Seth and Enoch
5. Noah
6. Tower People
7. Abraham
8. Isaac
9. Lot
10. Rebekah
11. Jacob and Esau
12. Jacob
13. Israel

**2nd Quarter**
1. Joseph
2. The Brothers
3. Moses
4. Egyptians
5. Fleeing Slaves
6. Unhappy Campers
7. Chosen Nation
8. Aaron
9. The Tabernacle
10. Miriam and Zipporah
11. Twelve Spies
12. Korah
13. The Bronze Serpent

**3rd Quarter**
1. The Borders Revisited
2. Balaam
3. Questionable Neighbors
4. Law Review
5. Moses’ Death
6. Crossing Jordan
7. Rahab
8. Blessings and Curses
9. Gibeonites
10. Canaan Divided
11. Last Words of Joshua
12. Annual Feasts
13. Early Judges

**4th Quarter**
1. Samson
2. Samuel
3. Eli
4. Philistines
5. First King
6. Saul’s Death
7. Anointed
8. Fugitive
9. Lunatic
10. Crowned King
11. Incumbent
12. Sinner
13. Absalom

### 2012

**1st Quarter**
1. God’s People
2. Solomon
3. Temple Builder
4. Proud Potentate
5. Repentant Author
6. Rehoboam
7. Jeroboam
8. Asa, Ahab, Jezebel
9. Elijah
10. Evangelist
11. Coward
12. The Sabbath
13. Jehoshaphat

**2nd Quarter**
1. Ahab
2. Elisha
3. Prophet
4. Naaman
5. Jonah
6. Hosea
7. Isaiah
8. Jehovah
9. Ahaz
10. Hezekiah
11. Assyria
12. Manasseh
13. Josiah

**3rd Quarter**
1. Jeremiah
2. Approaching Doom
3. Last King
4. Captives
5. Daniel
6. The Dream
7. Three Hebrews
8. Nebuchadnezzar
9. Belshazzar
10. Daniel
11. Daniel 7
12. Daniel 8, 9
13. Daniel 10-12

**4th Quarter**
1. Haggai/Zerubbabel
2. Zechariah
3. Temple Two
4. Esther
5. Queen
6. Ezra
7. Nehemiah
8. Builders
9. Plotters
10. Reformers
11. Jesus
12. Deliverer
13. Future Glory

### 2013

**1st Quarter**
1. Jesus
2. It’s Time
3. Mary
4. Simeon/Anna
5. The Wise Men
6. The Child Jesus
7. The Voice
8. Victory
9. Messiah Found
10. Marriage Feast
11. The Temple
12. Nicodemus
13. John the Baptist

**2nd Quarter**
1. Samaritan Woman
2. The Nobleman
3. The Lame Man
4. John the Baptist
5. The Anointed One
6. Peter
7. Capernaum
8. The Leper
9. Levi-Matthew
10. The Sabbath
11. The Disciples
12. The Centurion
13. The Demonic

**3rd Quarter**
1. Woman/Jairus
2. The Seventy
3. The Disciples
4. Misunderstandings
5. Broken Barriers
6. Jesus’ Ministry
7. Who Is Jesus?
8. Lawyer/Ruler
9. The Children
10. Lazarus’ Family
11. Zacchaeus
12. Mary
13. James and John

**4th Quarter**
1. The King Comes
2. The Pharisees
3. The End of Time
4. Servanthood
5. The Last Supper
6. Gethsemane
7. The Trial
8. Calvary
9. Resurrection
10. Mary Magdalene
11. The Emmaus Road
12. By the Sea
13. Jesus’ Ascension

### 2014

**1st Quarter**
1. The Mission
2. The Holy Spirit
3. The Lame Man
4. Ananias/Sapphira
5. God’s People
6. Stephen
7. Paul
8. Peter
9. Paul/Barnabas
10. Gentiles Included
11. Spreading Good News
12. The Thessalonians
13. The Ephesians

**2nd Quarter**
1. The Corinthians
2. Workers for Christ
3. Romans/Galatians
4. Last Journey
5. Adventures and Trials
6. Philemon
7. Colossians/Philippians
8. Final Arrest
9. Before Nero
10. John the Beloved
11. Patmos
12. The Revelation
13. Church Triumphant

**3rd Quarter**
1. First Believers
2. Seekers
3. Wycliffe
4. Luther
5. Zwingli
6. French Reformation
7. English Reformers
8. French Revolution
9. American Reformers
10. William Miller
11. Prophecy Fulfilled
12. The Sanctuary
13. God’s Law

**4th Quarter**
1. Renewal
2. Investigative Judgment
3. Origin of Evil
4. Snares
5. Great Deception
6. The Papacy
7. Spiritual Challenge
8. The Bible
9. Last Chance
10. Time of Trouble
11. Deliverance
12. The End
13. The Beginning
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| 2. Shut Door. Open Books? | Scripture Story: Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation 3:5; Zechariah 3. |
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| 3. The SINdrome | Scripture Story: Ezekiel 28; Isaiah 14; Genesis 3:15. |
| **Commentary:** | The Great Controversy, chapters 29, 30. |
| 4. Between Angels and Demons | Scripture Story: 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:12; James 4:7, 8. |
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| 5. The Deadly Lie | Scripture Story: Genesis 3:1-5; Psalm 146:4; Isaiah 38:18, 29; Revelation 16:13, 14. |
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| 8. Discovering Daily Disciplines | Scripture Story: Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 4:3; Psalm 119:11. |
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| 11. The End of the World as We Know It | Scripture Story: Daniel 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:7; 7; 14–17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 14:1-4. |
| **Commentary:** | The Great Controversy, chapter 40. |
| 12. Wiping the Slate Clean | Scripture Story: 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 10:1-3, 4-6. |
| **Commentary:** | The Great Controversy, chapter 41. |
| **Commentary:** | The Great Controversy, chapter 42. |
July

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

12—Natural Laws [p. 19]
One of the greatest crimes during the Dark Ages was that of owning a Bible. But God had a remnant then—and now—who value and guard His Word.

19—Guiding Light [p. 27]
Have you ever thought that God’s Word is merely a collection of irrelevant muck? A dull read? Think again!

26—Famous Faith [p. 35]
Even men such as Martin Luther, the great Reformer, struggled with their faith. No matter who we are, God has the ability to reform us into spiritual giants to accomplish His grand purposes.

August

2—Great Humility [p. 43]
God often chooses the humblest people to accomplish the most extraordinary things. This was true for the Reformers, and it’s still true for us today.

9—Everybody’s Doing It [p. 51]
Peer pressure is unavoidable. And it doesn’t stop after high school. But it can be positive if we decide what we want out of life and then hang around people who will help us get there.

16—Commitment Under Fire [p. 59]
Often our problems are so bad that we try to pretend they don’t exist. But acknowledging their existence and God’s power over them can make all the difference!

23—Can I Get a Witness? (Two Would Be Nice!) [p. 67]
A witness is someone who testifies to what they have seen and heard. Two witnesses give even greater clarity. What impact have the witnesses of God’s Word made in your life?

30—Lift Up Your Head [p. 75]
Walking with our heads down can make it so we can’t see clearly enough, and we could run into something! How much more important is it to lift our heads to see spiritual things?

September

6—X Marks Your Spot [p. 83]
Too few of us understand what it means to receive God’s spiritual gifts and talents. It isn’t a privilege. It’s a responsibility. But one that will bring us much fulfillment.

13—Final Warning! [p. 91]
The early Advent believers sold everything and waited in their homes and on hillsides for the coming of Jesus. What are we willing to do in order to give a final warning message to the world?

20—Cleaning Up [p. 99]
The ancient Jewish sanctuary service was messy—blood everywhere. But the hope that it offered ancient Israel is the same hope that it offers us today.

27—Standing, Standing . . . [p. 107]
The Sabbath has always been controversial. And if you are a Sabbathkeeper, then sometime in your life you’re bound to have this belief challenged. But what is the best defense?
a high price for faith

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

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

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

Offer the students two hypothetical situations:

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

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

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

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

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

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

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

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

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

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

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

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

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

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

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

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

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

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

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


III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

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

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

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

**flashlight**

“The mysterious providence which permits the righteous to suffer persecution at the hand of the wicked has been a cause of great perplexity to many who are weak in faith. Some are even ready to cast away their confidence in God. . . . God has given us sufficient evidence of His love, and we are not to doubt His goodness because we cannot understand the workings of His providence. . . . Jesus suffered for us more than any of His followers can be made to suffer through the cruelty of wicked men” (The Great Controversy, p. 47).

**keytext**

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”

(Matthew 24:45, 46, NIV)
What do you think?

Look at the list below and put each item in order of what is most important to you. Which would you be willing to die for?

- Theological doctrines
- Your personal faith
- Your family
- Your friends
- Your civil rights
- Your country
- Someone else’s rights
- Stopping the suffering of another person

Which things top your personal list and why? Which things would you not be willing to die for?


Did you know?

Persecution as it was known to the early Christians does not exist in North America today. We oftentimes think of ourselves as persecuted when someone disagrees with us or declines to give us a job if we aren’t able to work on Sabbath. (That’s more accurately described as religious discrimination.) But the kind of persecution that the early believers endured was different. They faced death—horrible, brutal deaths.

In other parts of the world, Christians still face persecution in its truest sense. They risk their lives and the lives of their families in order to worship God. They are willing to die in order to follow the law of God. Now that is devotion!

(To see what the Adventist Church is doing to fight religious discrimination and persecution, visit http://parl.gc.adventist.org.)

Into the Story

“As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?’

Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, “I am the Messiah,” and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith

and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

“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 all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, 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.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.’”

(Matthew 24:3-14, 30-39, NIV)
punch lines

“Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me” (Psalm 50:15, NIV).

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4, NIV).

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants” (Psalm 116:15, NIV).

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?” (Romans 8:35, NIV).

“No, I will not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown” (Revelation 2:10, NIV).

other

eyes

“Torture us, rack us, condemn us, crush us; your cruelty only proves our innocence. That is why God suffers us to suffer all this. But nothing whatever is accomplished by your cruelties, each more exquisite than the last. It is the bait that wins men for our school. We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed. That very obstinacy with which you taunt us is your teacher. For who beholds it and is not stirred to inquire what lies indeed within it?”

**Sabbath**

Revelation 2:10 says that those who are "faithful, even to the point of death" will receive a heavenly reward. What things in life are you willing to die for? Why would you be willing to die for them? Look at the list in the What Do You Think? section and be honest with yourself—would you be willing to die for any of these things?

There are many jobs in our society that have a very high risk factor. List three occupations in which people risk their lives. Beside each occupation, write how you feel about their sacrifice. Are they stupid, crazy, heroic?

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**Sunday**

In Matthew 24 Jesus' disciples asked Him what the signs of the last days would be. What Jesus told them was a double prophecy. On one level Jesus was warning them of the impending destruction of Jerusalem to happen in A.D. 70. It would be horrific, and Jesus wanted His people to be able to escape. Ellen White tells us that none of the Christians died in that siege because they had been watching for the signs Jesus gave. On another level Jesus was telling them a brief outline of Christianity and what events would happen before His coming—the actual question His disciples had been asking. Why do you think Jesus gave them information in this way? Do you think they could have handled Jesus' torture and death, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last days all at once? What do you think Jesus was about how God communicates with us?

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**Monday**

When we think about Jesus coming again, we wonder if we are ready. At the end of Matthew 24 Jesus tells a parable about a master who goes away and leaves a servant in charge of feeding the other servants. When the master returns, it will be good for the servant who is found doing just as he was told to do.

Identify three things that you believe God wants you to be doing right now in your life. They don't have to be anything monumental. The servant in the parable was left in charge of the menu plan! Now look at those three things. What is important about them? How dedicated are you to doing those things, even if it gets difficult?

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**Tuesday**

Look through a newspaper or an online news source today and note all the stories about suffering. What sorts of stories do you see? Why good people suffer is a question people have wrestled with since the beginning of time. For each story of suffering you find, think about how God might be working in the lives of the people experiencing such hard times. Refer back to yesterday's Key Text. What might God be asking you to do to care for the people around you?

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**Wednesday**

Thinking about what the early Christians endured is pretty unsettling. It isn’t typical human nature to face death on principle. Look at each of the Punch Line texts. Beside each one write down the hope that it offers. Where do you think the early Christians got their strength to face death for their faith? What could God’s presence with them have done to turn a horrific nightmare into a heroic stand?

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**Thursday**

We might not have to face death for our faith in Jesus, but we do face opposition. In what ways can you find courage from the experience of the early Christians to stand for what you believe in?

Pray today that God will not only show you what He wants you to do for Him but also give you the courage to do it!

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**Friday**

God is real! Do you think that the early Christians would have been willing to face death if they did not feel His presence with them in a very real way? What is your experience with God like? Is God an idea? an idea? a set of rules? If you don’t experience God in your life in a very real way, you are missing out on something exciting and empowering!

How real is God to you? How real do you want Him to be?

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**this week’s reading**

_The Great Controversy_ (or _Love Under Fire_), chapters 1, 2.

PREPARING TO TEACH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEACHING

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

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

If the students aren’t able to back up their answers with Scripture, ask them if they are sure about their answers, and why they are so sure. Do they know what
is in the Bible because they have read it themselves, or because they have been told what is in it?

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

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

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

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

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

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

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

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

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

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

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

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

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

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

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

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

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

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

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

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

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

In the Dark Ages, people did not have access to the Bible, yet they realized its value. If they tried to gain access to a Bible, they were persecuted and often
Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 3, 4.

1. Fundamental Belief No. 19.
2. Fundamental Belief No. 8.
natural laws

flashlight

“Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power. It was by the Word that even the Saviour of the world had resisted his attacks. At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, ‘It is written’” (The Great Controversy, p. 51).

keytext

"For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way."

(2 Thessalonians 2:7, NIV)
**what do you think?**

Answer these questions as quickly as you can:

1. Where is your Bible right now?

2. When did you last read your Bible?

3. What is your favorite Bible passage?

4. How much would you sell your Bible for if you were offered cash right now?

**did you know?**

Before the invention of the printing press, it took a skilled writer about 10 months to produce a copy of the Bible. Anyone who wanted a Bible must wait almost a year to receive their purchase. In today’s standards, the writer would be paid at the rate of any other skilled laborer, possibly $15-20 per hour. If that laborer worked five days a week, eight hours a day, that would make your Bible cost $24,000!

But wait . . . we aren’t considering the cost of keeping a business open. A business never charges you only the fee to pay the basic salary of the employee who is working on your Bible. The fee is much higher to compensate for electricity, taxes, office space, etc. When you get your car fixed, you don’t pay the $20/hr for the mechanic; you pay $50-$75/hr to cover all of the other costs as well. If we apply that to your Bible, it could cost as much as $96,000!


**INTO THE STORY**

“He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.”

“Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

“The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.”

(Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; Revelation 12:6, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

How do these passages describe the Dark Ages of European history?

When a religious organization sets itself up as having the same power as God Himself, what would that do to the people who were governed by it?

Why do you think God told us ahead of time that these things would happen?

What do you think is the “secret power of lawlessness”?

What are the “set times and laws” that this power would try to change?

Is it possible to have an organization that started out with pure intentions, became corrupt with power, but still has good, God-fearing people within it? Explain.

Who or what does the woman represent? How did God take care of her? How will He take care of us?

PUNCH LINES

“Don’t suppose for a moment that I have come to demolish the Scriptures—either God’s Law or the Prophets. I’m not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. God’s Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and the earth wears out, God’s Law will be alive and working” (Matthew 5:17, 18, Message).

“You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born. I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 24:22, NIV).

“Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety” (Leviticus 25:18, 19, NIV).

“By your words I can see where I’m going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path” (Psalm 119:105, Message).

OTHER EYES

“The bird has an honor that man does not have. Man lives in the traps of his abdicated laws and traditions; but the birds live according to the natural law of God who causes the earth to turn around the sun.”—Kahlil Gibran, 19th-20th-century novelist and poet.

“Power does not corrupt. Fear corrupts . . . perhaps the fear of a loss of power.”—John Steinbeck, 20th-century American novelist and winner of Nobel Prize for Literature.

“Our worst enemies here are not the ignorant and simple, however cruel; our worst enemies are the intelligent and corrupt.”—Graham Greene, 20th-century English novelist.
Sabbath

We are used to having free and easy access to the Bible. The Bible is used in literature, in poetry, in government, and even in comedy. Most of us have several Bibles in our homes. Bibles are given out for free by churches. Bible verses are displayed on billboards. Count how many Bibles you have in your home right now. Look at how many Bible versions you have available online. If you suddenly had no access to a Bible—not online, in your home, in the library, or in churches—would you miss it? Would you want one? Or would you not notice its absence? Psalm 119:105 says, “By your words I can see where I’m going, they throw a beam of light on my dark path” (Message). How might your Bible guide you today? (Remember, you have Notes pages in the back of your study guide to write longer answers.)

**Sunday**

It is said that absolute power corrupts absolutely. In the Dark Ages, the Catholic Church wielded absolute power over the population of Europe. Corrupt leaders were more interested in controlling people than they were in teaching them. Without access to the Bible, the people had no way of knowing the truth about God.

Next to these mistakes the common people made without the Bible to guide them, write down what these ideas would make them think about God.

1. God changed the Sabbath to a different day.
2. The church has complete authority equal to God’s, and can decide if you are saved or lost.
3. You must earn forgiveness either by paying money or by doing repetitive tasks.
4. The Bible is too complicated to be understood by regular people and must be read only by religious leaders.

Do you even **like** that kind of God?

**Monday**

The key text refers to the “secret power of lawlessness” that was already at work right after Jesus left earth to go to heaven. How has the idea that God’s law no longer matters been insinuated into our lives today? The idea that “rules were made to be broken” is a very dangerous one. Watch the news tonight. Make a list of every “broken rule” that you can see throughout the program. Look at them separately and see how innocent they look, and then consider the repercussions. What ways do you think you can assert your independence and unique perspective without going against the law of God?

**Tuesday**

Ellen White points out in Flashlight that Jesus used the Scriptures to fight off the temptations of the devil. Sometimes we think of the devil’s temptations as obvious, such as stealing something or killing someone. However, the devil is smarter than that. He comes at us with fear, despondency, loneliness, and rage. The Bible is not a book of rules; it’s a book of promises and hope, and the devil doesn’t want us to have access to its power.

Start a journal today, writing down every promise that you find in the Bible. Look back on it often. Memorize the verses that have special meaning to you. Next time you feel like the world is against you, pull out your Bible and your journal, and see what a difference God’s Word makes in difficult times!

**Wednesday**

A common belief out there is that after Jesus died on the cross God’s law no longer mattered. Look at the verses in Punch Lines. Does this seem to be the case? In fact, there are promises that our lives will be richer and happier for having followed God’s guidance.

Lines. Look up the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. Are there any of God’s laws that you think don’t matter? Why do you think they might still matter today? How would they improve our lives? If Jesus’ death really erased these laws, are we free to do all these things?

**Thursday**

How do you read your Bible? Do you just read a verse here or there? Do you take your parents’ or your teachers’ word on what the Bible is saying in the bigger picture? Here is a challenge: make it a point to read your Bible cover to cover and see for yourself what is in there! Once you see all of it, you’ll never be the same again. Guaranteed.

**Friday**

How does the Bible affect your life? How could it improve your life? If Christians in the Dark Ages would pay the equivalent of $100,000 in today’s currency for one copy of the Bible, what do you think is in there that is worth so much?

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**this week's reading**

*The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 3-4.*

*Love Under Fire is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, created by 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.* 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

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

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

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

In the words of Franky Schaeffer: “God has given us in written form a volume which spans all the human emotions, the ups, the downs, the diversity of individuals, the good with the bad, the ugly, the beautiful, the sinners, the righteous, the perverted, the saved, the lost, the poetry, the poets, the wisdom, the wise, the human stories, the reality of life, pregnant with meaning, a book in fact of truth, not pale, narrow, religious sayings. The Bible, the Word of God, is solid, human, verifiable, divine indeed.”3

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

• Bible/Holy Scriptures3
• Faith
• Adversity/trials

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

Illustration

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

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

“What part of the New Testament?”

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

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

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

**Jerome**—“In the presence of his judges Jerome kneeled down and prayed that the divine Spirit might control his thoughts and words, that he might speak nothing contrary to the truth or unworthy of his Master. To him that day was fulfilled the promise of God to the first disciples: ‘Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake. . . . But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.’ Matthew 10:18-20” (The Great Controversy, p. 112).
Sharing Context and Background
While Ellen White offers great commentary in The Great Controversy on these three Reformers, you may find it helpful in teaching about them to read brief summaries of each man. This simple, factual overview of each Reformer provides context and a point of reference to assist you in working through the broader narrative that Ellen White provides.

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

Wycliffe was also an early advocate for translation of the Bible in the common tongue. He completed his translation directly from the Vulgate into vernacular English in the year 1382, now known as the Wycliffe Bible. It is probable that he personally translated the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and it is possible he translated the entire New Testament, while his associates translated the Old Testament. Wycliffe’s Bible appears to have been completed by 1384, with additional updated versions being done by Wycliffe’s assistant John Purvey and others in 1388 and 1395.4

**John Huss . . .** [1369-1415] was a Czech Catholic priest, philosopher, Reformer, and master at Charles University in Prague. He is famous for having been burned at the stake for what the Roman Catholic Church considered to be his heretical views on ecclesiology. Huss was a key contributor to the Protestant movement whose teachings had a strong influence on the states of Europe, most immediately in the approval for the existence of a reformist Bohemian Church, and, more than a century later, on Martin Luther himself.5

**Jerome of Prague** (c. 1365-1416) was a Bohemian religious Reformer, born in Prague. He studied at the University of Oxford, in England, where he adopted the unorthodox doctrines of the English theologian John Wycliffe. On returning to Prague in 1407, he became an associate of the Bohemian religious Reformer John Huss and joined him in preaching against the abuses of the church hierarchy and the profligacy of the clergy. When Huss was denounced by the Council of Constance and arrested, Jerome hastened to Constance to defend him, but on learning that he, too, would be condemned, he tried to return to Prague. Arrested in Bavaria and returned to Constance, he recanted his views. Later he withdrew his recantation and was burned at the stake as a heretic.6

III. CLOSING

**Activity**
Break your group into smaller groups and have them brainstorm ways to get into the Bible. For exam-

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

Reenactment of History

One of the best ways of teaching history is by reenacting it. For example, rather than lecturing about a certain battle during the Civil War, a teacher may take the class to the place of combat for a reenactment of the conflict. This kind of learning tends to be more experiential, and thus more memorable.

The same teaching technique could be implemented in this lesson by reenacting the Council of Constance. Taking what Ellen White says about the council (see The Great Controversy, pp. 95, 104-112) and digging for additional details online, you can script a simple reenactment. Assign roles to your students and let them take the basic script and have fun with it. Chances are the students will remember this much better than if you simply lecture them about it.

Questions to consider:

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

Summary

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

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

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

1 “Bible Illiteracy Rampant in America: Many quote it, buy it and revere it, but few read it” by David Gibson, The Kansas City Star, 12/01/00.
3 Fundamental Belief No. 1.
4 Taken from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wycliffe.
5 Taken from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Huss.
6 Taken from www.history.com/encyclopedia.do?articleId=213191.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 5, 6.
flaslight

“The character of Wycliffe is a testimony to the educating, transforming power of the Holy Scriptures. It was the Bible that made him what he was. The effort to grasp the great truths of revelation imparts freshness and vigor to all the faculties. It expands the mind, sharpens the perceptions, and ripens the judgment. The study of the Bible will ennoble every thought, feeling, and aspiration as no other study can. It gives stability of purpose, patience, courage, and fortitude; it refines the character and sanctifies the soul” (The Great Controversy, p. 94).

keytext

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

(Psalm 119:105, NIV)
Choose a wall in the room. The far right-hand side of the wall represents the answer "One hundred percent absolutely, unequivocally YES!" The far left side of the wall represents the answer "One hundred percent absolutely, unequivocally NO!" Standing in the middle represents the answer "I am perfectly split on this one." Respond to the following statements by standing somewhere along the continuum of the wall to reflect your answer.

**When people read the Bible, they should—**
- believe and follow what it says.
- believe and follow what their pastor tells them it means.
- study carefully and then obey the teachings that are clear.
- interpret it however they wish.
- look for principles rather than rules.
- enjoy it as literature.
- enjoy it as history.

**did you know?**

A 2008 survey by the Barna Group asked 1,008 U.S. adults to list the books they considered holy. The Bible was listed by an impressive 84 percent. The Koran was listed by 4 percent; the Book of Mormon, 3 percent; the Torah, 2 percent. Other books that were listed by less than 1 percent of those surveyed included the Bhagavad, the Talmud, and the teachings of Buddha.

Of the 84 percent that listed the Bible as holy, consider these findings:
- Of those who do not claim to be Christians, 38 percent listed the Bible as holy.
- Men (78 percent) were less likely to list the Bible as holy than women (90 percent).
- Those under the age of 40 (77 percent) were less likely to list the Bible as holy compared to those who were older (93 percent), while 67 percent of those between the ages of 18-23 listed the Bible as holy.

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

"Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."

(Psalm 119:105; Matthew 10:17-22, NIV)
OUT OF THE STORY

Read Psalm 119:105 and then compare it with the following verses:
- Proverbs 30:5
- Luke 11:28
- 2 Timothy 3:15, 16
- Hebrews 4:12

What is the one major theme that emerges from the five texts?

What do these verses have to say to you personally?

How might you benefit by increasing the time you spend reading your Bible?

Read the entire chapter of Matthew 10. Reflect on the following questions:
How does the context of the story of Jesus sending out the 12 disciples illuminate verses 17-22?

Is this passage more relevant, less relevant, or equally relevant for followers of Jesus today? Explain.

How do the inevitable trials that Jesus warned us about impact a person’s faith?

punch lines

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:8, 9, NIV).

“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (Ephesians 6:13-18, NIV).

“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it” (Luke 11:28, NIV).

other eyes

“Don’t be afraid to invest in the best Bible you can afford—for that is what you are making: an investment. Find out for yourself why it answers every human need, why it supplies the faith and strength that keeps humanity marching forward.”—Billy Graham, evangelist.

“Jesus has many who love his kingdom in heaven, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share his feast, but few his fasting.”

—Thomas à Kempis, 15th-century medieval Catholic monk.
making it real

Sabbath
Review your ideas about the Bible in the What Do You Think? section. Expand the activity by using the same wall as a continuum to share your opinion on the following statements:
- Every word in the Bible is inspired
- The Bible contains a lot of good practical advice such as the golden rule
- The Bible is more about rules than relationships

Sunday
Use the video and/or camera feature of your cell phone to capture stories of church members that illustrate the Bible verses for this lesson. Use the following questions in your interview and then share these stories (along with pictures and/or videos, with the rest of your Sabbath School class:

- Psalm 119:105
  In what ways has the Bible been a light to your pathway in life?
  What is your favorite verse in the Bible and why?
  Other than "light," what metaphors would you use to describe the Bible?
- Matthew 10:17-22
  Have you ever been persecuted for your faith? If so, what happened?
  Have you ever felt "the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:20)? What happened?
  What has God taught you through the adversities and trials of life?

Monday
Review the Key Text and then consider this commentary on the passage from the Life Application Study Bible:

"To walk safely in the woods at night we need a light so we don’t trip over the roots or fall into holes. In this life, we walk through a dark forest of evil. But the Bible can be our light to show us the way ahead so we won’t stumble as we walk. It reveals the entangling roots of false values and philosophies. Study the Bible so you will be able to see your way clearly enough to stay on the right path."

Tuesday
Compare and contrast Ellen White’s statement in the Hashlight section with this quotation:

“In the Bible are found the only safe principles of action. It is a transcript of the will of God, an expression of divine wisdom. It opens to man’s understanding the great problems of life, and to all who heed its precepts it will prove an unerring guide, keeping them from wasting their lives in a distracted effort” (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 506).

Wednesday
Read the Punch Lines. Compile the commands included in the verses by writing the top 10 commandments found in Joshua 1:8; 9; Luke 11:28; and Ephesians 6:13-18.
1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________
6. ____________________________
7. ____________________________
8. ____________________________
9. ____________________________
10. ____________________________

Thursday
After reading chapters 5 and 6 of The Great Controversy, reflect on the main characters of the chapters. Ask yourself:
- What do I most admire about John Wycliffe? Why?
- What do I most admire about John Huss? Why?
- What do I most admire about Jerome? Why?
- What lessons do these three great Reformers have to teach me? (Remember: you have Notes pages in the back of your study guide to write longer answers.)

Friday
Reflect on the closing thoughts of chapter 6 in The Great Controversy.

"Steadfast to the gospel, the Bohemians waited through the night of their persecution, in the darkest hour of turning their eyes toward the horizon of men who watch for the morning. Their life was cast in evil days; but they remembered the worst that was uttered by Huss, and repeated by Jerome, that a century must revolve before the day should break. These were to the Taborites (Hussites) what the words of Joseph were to the tribes in the house of bondage: ‘Idol, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out’” (Ellen White, The Great Controversy, p. 119).

Pray over this question: “God, when I face trials and persecution, how can I have the resolve of a martyr?”

*For this week’s reading, see pages 34 and 35 of your Life Application Study Bible: The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 5, 6.

*Love Under Fire is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, 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#.UWH1Fr1RCoQ. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
famous faith

PREPARING TO TEACH

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

Martin Luther said, “Who died?”
She said, “God has.”
“God hasn’t died,” he said.
She replied, “Well, live like it and act like it.”

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

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

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

III. EXPLORE
• Christianity
• Conviction
• Salvation (experience of)
• Bible/Holy Scriptures
• Christian education

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

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

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

**Illustration**

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

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

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

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

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

And there you sit clutching your cheese sandwich.

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

**Bridge to the Story**

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

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

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

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

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

**John 15:19, 20**

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

**Romans 1:16, 17**

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

**Romans 3:21-31**

- Compare the New International Version (from Into the Story) with the King James Version below to write a definition of the word “propitiation.”

  *King James Version*: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).

  Definition of “propitiation”: ___________________
  ___________________
  ___________________

- Why does faith not nullify the law (verse 31)?
- Summarize Paul’s conclusion about righteousness and the law.


cornerstone connections

36
Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

Activity

Recreate a modern-day court scene that puts Martin Luther on trial. Have your students research the primary issues that the church had with Luther and then attempt to prosecute him. Minimally you should set up the following characters in the drama:

- Martin Luther (defendant)
- Defense attorney
- Prosecuting attorney
- Judge
- The rest of the class can serve on the jury.

Summary

Break the class into small groups and give each group a 3” x 5” card. On one side place one of the questions below. Have the groups agree on a one-sentence answer to write on the back side.

1. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about Christianity?
2. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about conviction?
3. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about salvation?
4. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about the Bible?
5. What does the story of Martin Luther teach us about Christian education?

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2 Fundamental Belief No. 10.
3 Fundamental Belief No. 1.
4 Parable adapted as it was told by Joseph Aldrich, former president of the neoevangelical, psychologized Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, Oregon.
5 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.
7 Adapted from sthweb.bu.edu/index.php?option=com_awiki&view=mediawiki&article=Martin_E._Marty&Itemid=176.
8 Adapted from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_von_Staupitz.
9 Adapted from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Tetzel.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Teaching History With a Box

David R. Wetzel suggests using a tissue box to teach history. With this approach students research historical events and share their findings with others in the class.

Have students glue their completed materials to the appropriate side of the tissue box. Allow students to be creative, while being historically correct.

For example, you can teach about the Diet of Worms by having your youth group work individually or in a group on tissue boxes in the following way:

- **Top**: Put a title and/or an artist’s rendering of the event.
- **Bottom**: Student name and resources used in research of the Diet of Worms.
- **Side 1**: A brief description, including facts about the Diet of Worms.
- **Side 2**: A visual arts representation of the historical event; such as a diagram, pictures, collage, etc.
- **Side 3**: Quotes from Ellen White about the Diet of Worms.
- **Side 4**: How the Diet of Worms has impacted Christian history.

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Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 7, 8.
famous faith

flashlight

“The fear of the Lord dwelt in the heart of Luther, enabling him to maintain his steadfastness of purpose and leading him to deep humility before God. He had an abiding sense of his dependence upon divine aid, and he did not fail to begin each day with prayer, while his heart was continually breathing a petition for guidance and support. ‘To pray well,’ he often said, ‘is the better half of study’” (The Great Controversy, p. 122).

key text

“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”

(Romans 1:17, NIV)

Scripture Story: Romans 1—3; John 15:19, 20
Commentary: The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 7, 8.
Conduct a survey asking respondents what percentage (0-100) of truth they would ascribe to each statement. Invite your friends to conduct the survey as well. Calculate the average for each answer. Compare and discuss your findings with your friends’ results.

**What percentage of truth would you give to each statement?**

- There is no absolute truth.
- We can get to heaven through an equal combination of faith and works.
- Christianity is a cause worth dying for.
- The Bible contains mistakes, but it is still the Word of God.
- People are better Christians today than they were in the past.

**did you know?**

When Martin Luther married, neither he nor his bride, Katherine von Bora, felt “in love.” Katherine was still getting over a broken engagement to a man she truly loved. Martin admitted, “I am not ‘in love’ or burning with desire.” Yet their love for one another and for others flourished throughout their 20-year marriage.

They regularly took in so many sick and dying people, their house had to be quarantined long after the plague of 1527 ended. In 1541 a transient woman came to their home. Martin and Katherine fed and housed her, only to discover she had lied and stolen. Even on his wedding night, Luther couldn’t refuse a person in need. At 11:00 p.m., after all the guests had left, radical Reformer Andreas Karlstadt knocked at the door. Largely because Luther fiercely opposed him, Karlstadt had fled town. But now, when Karlstadt was fleeing the Peasants’ War and needed shelter, Luther took him in.¹

**“If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.”**

“If I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”

“But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood— to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

“Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”

(John 15:19, 20; Romans 1:16, 17; 3:21-31, NIV)
**OUT OF THE STORY**

Why do you think the world hates Jesus and His followers? What does it mean to "belong" to Jesus?

What do these passages teach us about the Christian faith?

What do these passages teach us about the experience of salvation?

How do these passages inform us about the gospel?

What is it about the gospel that would make someone ashamed of it? How have you addressed that in your life?

What is the relationship between keeping the law and being saved?

The book of Romans was life-changing for Martin Luther. Why do you think this was the case? Are the concepts in Romans equally life-transforming for you? If so, why? If not, why not?

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**punch lines**

"See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness" (Habakkuk 2:4, NIV).

"For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people" (1 Peter 2:15, NIV).

"An honest witness tells the truth, but a false witness tells lies" (Proverbs 12:17, NIV).

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19, NIV).

"Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never look back! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never looked back, no matter what—exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your soul!" (Hebrews 12:1-3, Message).

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**other eyes**

“Certain it is that the reason there is so much shallow living—much talk but little obedience—is that so few are prepared to be, like the pine on the hilltop, alone in the wind for God.” —Amy Carmichael, 20th-century Irish missionary to India.

“The Lord is my Shepherd’ is written on many more tombstones than lives.” —Dallas Willard, U.S. philosopher and writer.
Sabbath

After doing the survey in the What Do You Think? section, meet with friends who also surveyed others and discuss the following questions:

- What was the most interesting response you got? Why?
- Which statement got the most diverse answers? Which one got the most similar responses? How would you explain the responses?
- Suppose you surveyed Martin Luther. What percentages do you think he would have given to each statement?
- How did the average percentages for each statement compare with your own answers?

Sunday

Read Romans 1–3 and reflect: How have I been set aside for the gospel? What does this mean for me today? (Remember, you have Notes pages in the back of your study guide to write longer answers.)

In what areas does my faith need to be strengthened? What can I do today to strengthen my faith?

If God were to ask me, "Why should I let you into heaven?" how would I respond?

How would I explain the true meaning of Christian faith to an unbeliever?

If I had to explain the gospel solely based on Romans 1–3, what would I say?

Monday

Review the Key Text and then consider this scenario imagined by Mark Buchanan:

Suppose that you just found out you have a rare and terminal illness. You sit down with your doctor.

"Is there no hope?" you ask.

"Well," he says, "there is one thing. Without this one thing, it’s over. But with this one thing, you will be completely healed. But let me be utterly clear: It’s impossible for you to live without this one thing."

What would you say?

"Listen, Doc, you’re joking me. My favorite sitcom is starting in five minutes, and I wouldn’t miss it for anything."

Or, “Well, that’s interesting. But, Doctor, that’s your opinion. You are completely entitled to it, and I’m sure it makes you feel better for having expressed it. But I resent your attempt to impose it upon me. I really don’t need this kind of psychological blackmail, this medical fascism. Goodbye and good riddance.”

Or, “What? What is it? Tell me now! I have to know, and I won’t leave until I do!”

Of course, the only sane response is the last one.

If we are saved by faith, and if we live by faith, and if it is impossible to please God without faith, the only sane response is: What is it? What is this faith? You have to tell me! I have to know, and I’m not leaving until I do?

Tuesday

Compare and contrast Ellen White’s statement in the Flashlight section with this text: “See, the enemy is puzzled; his desires are not upright—but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness” (Habakkuk 2:4, NIV).

Wednesday

Choose one of the Punch Lines and incorporate it into a morning and evening prayer to use this week to begin and end your day.

Thursday

How can I experience salvation today?

Friday

How do you reconcile Romans 1:17 with Don Miller’s observation in Blue Like Jazz?

“The trouble with deep belief is that it costs something. And there is something inside me, some self-shamed cyst of a subtle thing, that doesn’t like the truth at all because it carries responsibility and if I actually believe these things I have to do something about them. I used to say that I believed I was important to tell people about Jesus, but I never did [My friend] Andrew very kindly explained that if I did not introduce people to Jesus, then I don’t believe Jesus is an important person. It doesn’t matter what I say.”

2. Donald Miller, Blue Like Jazz (Nelson, 2003, pp. 183–184.)
5. For more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-lit-ages-companion-books/#UH6f1b509a. 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

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

- Humility
- Natural world
- Courage

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process the key phrases with them (NIV):

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

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

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

James 4:6—“God opposes the proud”

The Life Application Bible offers this commentary:

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

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

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

“In those hours that come to all, when the heart is faint and temptation presses sore; when obstacles seem insurmountable, . . . where, then, can such courage and steadfastness be found as in that lesson which God has bidden us learn from the stars in their untroubled course?

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

The Bible warns: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18, NIV). But where does pride come from? Is God really that concerned about arrogance? After all, a haughty spirit persists only in criminals, rapists, and thieves, right? Not so fast.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So stay close to Jesus today. Talk to Him often. Worship Him always. Lean on Him in every moment. That is the only cure for “I” disease.

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

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

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

- What’s the first word that comes to mind when you hear the word “pride”?
- What’s the first word that comes to mind when you hear the word “humility”?
- What can you do this week to nurture a humble spirit?

Summary
Close by reflecting on the following statement from Ellen White:

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

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

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Tips for Top-notch Teaching

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

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 9, 10.

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

flashlight

“The heavenly teacher passed by the great men of the earth, the titled and wealthy, who were accustomed to receive praise and homage as leaders of the people. They were so proud and self-confident in their boasted superiority that they could not be molded to sympathize with their fellow men and to become colaborers with the humble Man of Nazareth. . . . The leading Reformers were men from humble life. . . . It is God's plan to employ humble instruments to accomplish great results” (The Great Controversy, p. 171).
Circle the names of the following individuals that you think are prideful. Discuss with your friends how you think their pride is shown.

- Regan mocks anyone who can’t understand algebra as well as he can.
- Elizabeth wants everything in her life to be perfect—and complains when nothing goes right.
- Rafael refuses to apply himself in school, ignoring advice from his parents, teachers, and pastor.
- Natalie ignores her friends whenever there is a cute guy around to flirt with.
- Your coach ignores the feedback that you and your teammates try to give him.
- Rachael displays her straight-A report card on the refrigerator door.
- Carly is always showing off her latest electronic gadget.

**do you think?**

**into the story**

“For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’.”

(Isaiah 57:15, NIV).

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”

(Isaiah 41:10, NIV).

“But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: ‘God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble’.”

(James 4:6, NIV).
punch lines

"Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure" (Psalm 101:5, NIV).

"The Lord preserves those who are true to him, but the proud he pays back in full" (Psalm 31:23, NIV).

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished" (Proverbs 16:5, NIV).

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18, NIV).

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5, KJV).

OUT OF THE STORY

Write a paraphrase of the Bible verses from Into the Story and combine the key points into one verse:

Read Proverbs 16:5, 18, 19; 27:2; and 29:23. What is the result of pride in your life? Do these texts point out pride in your life?

Fill in the blank and discover God’s strategy on how to be humble and happy:

1. Confess my
   Proverbs 28:13 (NIV): “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

2. Be honest in my
   Romans 12:3 (NIV): “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.”

3. Recognize the source of
   1 Corinthians 4:7 (TLB): “What are you so puffed up about? What do you have that God hasn’t given you? And if all you have is from God, why act as though you are so great, and as though you have accomplished something on your own?”

4. Serve others like
   Philippians 2:3-5 (NIV): “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”

5. Allow God to
   James 4:10 (TLB): “Then when you realize your worthlessness before the Lord, he will lift you up, encourage and help you.”

other eyes

“God pickles the proud and preserves the foolish.”—Author unknown.

“There is no room for God in the man who is full of himself.”—Jewish proverb.

“Lord, I don’t ask for a faith that would move yonder mountain. I can take enough dynamite and move it, if it needs movin’. I pray, Lord, for enough faith to move me.”—Author unknown.

“All courage, skill and faith are nothing, if they are not judged according to love.”—Ulrich Zwingli, in “Zwingli: Father of the Swiss Reformation,” Christian History, No. 4.
Sabbath
Rank the people in the What Do You Think? section. Explain your reasoning behind your ranking.

Sunday
 Review the texts from Into the Story. Circle the text that you think is . . .
the easiest to understand: Isaiah 57: 6 James 4: 6 Isaiah 41: 10
the most comforting: Isaiah 57: 6 James 4: 6 Isaiah 41: 10
the strongest indictment against pride: Isaiah 57: 6 James 4: 6 Isaiah 41: 10
Review the steps to a humble and happy life in Out of the Story.

Wednesday
List the advantages of living with a humble spirit next to the disadvantages of living with a prideful spirit.

Advantages of humility

Disadvantages of pride

Thursday
Reflect on this suggestion from Pastor Dwight Nelson: “Seek to become low and weak and nothing. Jump at the opportunity to serve someone else. You be the one to seek and help the driver with the flat tire. You give up your place in that checkout line for that impatient soul farther back. You be the one to miss your plane because the stranger at the gate is obviously sick and needs someone to get her to help. Do yourself what in the past you have delegated purely as a sign of your authority over a subordinate.”

Ask yourself: How can God create in me a spirit of humility?

Friday
Dwight Nelson writes: “The cross of Jesus is proof that humility is the shining pinnacle of God’s character.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? How can you reflect the humility of God’s character?

- Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humboldt_Zwingle
- Ibid. p. 34

Answers to this week’s reading*
The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 9, 10.

*Love Under Fire is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, 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#UHlF1tECOe. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
everybody’s doing it

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

- Friendship
- Peer pressure
- Church *

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

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

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

**Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

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

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

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

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

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

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

**Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

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

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

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

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

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

**Sharing Context and Background**

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

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

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

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

Josephus also describes Judas the Galilean:

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.
Ask the students to give advice for a hypothetical younger teen who is just entering high school. What advice would they give on how to be true to their own beliefs and not be pushed around? What wisdom have the students gleaned from their adolescence so far? Make a list of the answers at the front. Ask the students how successful they feel that they have been in staying true to their beliefs. Is there anything they would like to improve on in the future?

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

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

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

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

* Fundamental Belief No. 12.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 11, 12.
everybody’s doing it

flashlight

“The reformed princes had determined upon having a statement of their views in systematic form, with the evidence from the Scriptures, to present before the Diet; and the task of its preparation was committed to Luther, Melanchthon, and their associates. . . . The Reformers were solicitous that their cause should not be confounded with political questions; they felt that the Reformation should exercise no other influence than that which proceeds from the Word of God” (The Great Controversy, p. 206).

key text

“Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than human beings!’”

(Acts 5:29, NIV)
what
do you think?

Look at the situations below. For each one, decide whether it is appropriate to go with public opinion or with your personal belief.

- Most people you know think that a particular guy is creepy and possibly dangerous. You don’t really see it. He asks you to go out with him one evening.
- Everyone you know is against drinking. You don’t think having a drink now and then is so bad. Your friends are pulling away from you because of your differing opinion.
- You don’t really like a particular style of music, but all of your friends love it. They want you to go along to a concert.
- A group of fellow students are angrily badmouthing a teacher for giving them low grades. You like the teacher and think that they aren’t being fair; however, they seem to feel very strongly about their position. Do you say something?

into
the
story

“Just then someone showed up and said, ‘Did you know that the men you put in jail are back in the Temple teaching the people?’ The chief and his police went and got them, but they handled them gently, fearful that the people would riot and turn on them.

“Bringing them back, they stood them before the High Council. The Chief Priest said, ‘Didn’t we give you strict orders not to teach in Jesus’ name? And here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are trying your best to blame us for the death of this man.’

“Peter and the apostles answered, ‘It’s necessary to obey God rather than men. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, the One you killed by hanging him on a cross. God set him on high at his side, Prince and Savior, to give Israel the gift of a changed life and sins forgiven. And we are witnesses to these things. The Holy Spirit, whom God gives to those who obey him, corroborates every detail.’

“When they heard that, they were furious and wanted to kill them on the spot. But one of the council members stood up, a Pharisee by the name of Gamaliel, a teacher of God’s Law who was honored by everyone. He ordered the men taken out of the room for a short time, then said, ‘Fellow Israelites, be careful what you do to these men. Not long ago Theudas made something of a splash, claiming to be somebody, and got about four hundred men to join him. He was killed, his followers dispersed, and nothing came of it. A little later, at the time of the census, Judas the Galilean appeared and acquired a following. He also fizzled out and the people following him were scattered to the four winds.

“So I am telling you: Hands off these men! Let them alone. If this program or this work is merely human, it will fall apart, but if it is of God, there is nothing you can do about it—and you better not be found fighting against God!’

“That convinced them. They called the apostles back in. After giving them a thorough whipping, they warned them not to speak in Jesus’ name and sent them off. The apostles went out of the High Council overjoyed because they had been given the honor of being dishonored on account of the Name. Every day they were in the Temple and homes, teaching and preaching Christ Jesus, not letting up for a minute.”

(Acts 5:25-42, Message)
punch lines

“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’” (Genesis 2:18, NIV).

“When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: ‘Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?’” (Esther 4:12-14, 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).

“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me” (John 16:32, NIV).

“God sets the lonely in families” (Psalm 68:6, NIV).

other eyes

“There’s one advantage to being 102. There’s no peer pressure.”—Dennis Wolfberg, 20th-century American comedian.

“I don’t think I would have been able to stick with it and been proud of who I am and be feminine out on the court. I think I would have folded to the peer pressure if I didn’t have my mom to encourage me to be me and be proud of how tall I am.”—Lisa Leslie, American women’s basketball player.
Sabbath

Peer pressure isn’t always a bad thing! Peer pressure can make people do good things that they wouldn’t normally do as well as bad things. That is why God gave us a church. That’s not to say that we should pressure each other, but the very fact that people around us hold certain values, do certain things, or talk a certain way rubs off on us. Everyone wants to belong, and we subtly change our behavior and manners in order to do so.

Make a list of four things that you would not normally do if it weren’t for your church community or Christian friends encouraging you. How have these things affected your life for the better?

Sunday

In the into the Story section, Peter and the apostles are pressured to stop preaching about Jesus. Gamaliel stands up to the Sanhedrin (his peers) in support of Peter. He has an interesting argument. He cites other charismatic leaders who have had significant numbers of followers. Over time, the groups always fell apart. He claimed that if the leader were not of God, then the group did not have a chance! What groups are you a part of? Is God a part of your group bond? If not, do you think that your group will remain united in the long term? Why or why not?

Monday

As children, we are told that obedience makes us good. We are supposed to obey our parents and other authority figures in order to gain praise and avoid discipline. Look up the word “obey” in a concordance. Look up some of the texts in your Bible. Who are we supposed to obey? When Peter was told to stop preaching, he declared that “We must obey God rather than men!” Have you ever had an experience where an authority figure was telling you to do something that you felt was wrong? How did you handle it? How do you wish you had handled it?

Tuesday

Ellen White tells the stories of the Protestant Reformers battling against the authority of the Catholic Church. In the Flashlight excerpt some reformed princes who had accepted the Protestant faith drew up a document describing their beliefs to be brought before the Diet (a committee of Catholic officials) to gain the right to worship as they believed they should. These were powerful men who could have mustered up armies to support their cause, but they didn’t. They refused to use violence, and they refused to get involved in political questions. They believed that the “Reformation should exercise no other influence than that which proceeds from the Word of God.” They respected the existing authorities as much as they could but, ultimately, they obeyed God. In what ways can you show your support of the authority figures you encounter? Get some practice. How would you respectfully disagree with an authority figure in your life?

Wednesday

Make a list of the social groups that you belong to. You might list groups such as your family, your school, your church, or your job. Out of these groups, place an “x” beside the ones that you choose to belong to. How important are these social groups to you? Which group is the most important to you?

God created us with the need to belong with other people. Take a look at the Punch Line texts. Is belonging to the family of God a comfort to you? Why or why not?

Thursday

Since peer pressure can work in a positive way as well as a negative way, have you ever considered using it for your benefit? What kind of person do you dream of becoming? Do you want to be smart? successful? known for your kindness and compassion? Do you want to be someone spectacular? God created you with huge potential, but the people with whom you choose to surround yourself will affect what you become. Whom do you choose to spend time with? Is their influence positive or negative for your life?

Friday

Going against popular opinion is never easy. Whose opinion matters the most to you in your life? Why? What do you gain by pleasing this person?

This week’s reading*

The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 11, 12.

*Love Under Fire is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, 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#.U1bf1F18C0s. 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**

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

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

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

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

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

**II. TARGET**

The students will:

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

**III. EXPLORE**

- Persecution
- Character building
- Faithfulness

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

**TEACHING**

**I. GETTING STARTED**

*Activity*

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

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

(b) King David asked God for permission to avenge those who persecuted him. *False* (see Psalm 31:15)
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

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

Interestingly enough, this verse is often misunderstood to mean either:

(a) God will make everything turn out the way I want it to, or
(b) God causes everything to work out to have a happy ending on earth.

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

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

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

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

(c) The prophet Jeremiah understood that others rebuked him for God’s glory. True (see Jeremiah 15:15)
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(f) Through a parable Christ explained that some believers would endure for a time, but when trouble comes, they fall away. True (see Mark 4:17)
Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

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

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

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

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Speaking the Truth in Love

(a) You can criticize a child’s behavior, but never criticize the child.
(b) There’s a difference between correcting the child and attacking the child. Never verbally put down your student.
(c) Be a “5-to-1” teacher. Every time you give your student a consequence for misbehavior, provide five opportunities for them to earn your praise or a reward.
Let each of them pick which one they like the best, then, using markers and card paper, encourage them to write the verse onto the paper and then decorate and trim it. Encourage students to keep these in their Bibles or in their bedrooms and to pray their verses whenever they are having a difficult time focusing on God amid their problems.

**Summary**

*Share the following story in your own words:*

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 13, 14.
commitment under fire

**flashlight**

“The rage of the persecutors was equaled by the faith of the martyrs. Not only men but delicate women and young maidens displayed unflinching courage. Wives would take their stand by their husband’s stake, and while he was enduring the fire they would whisper words of solace, or sing psalms to cheer him” (The Great Controversy, p. 240).

**keytext**

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV)
what
do you think?

Take the following true-false (T/F) quiz to test your knowledge about the persecution of Christians.

T / F Those who live godly lives in Christ Jesus can expect to be persecuted.
T / F King David asked God for permission to avenge those who persecuted him.
T / F The prophet Jeremiah understood that others rebuked him for God's glory.
T / F Jesus taught that whoever is persecuted for righteousness' sake is blessed.
T / F As a result of persecution, the gospel was spread.
T / F Through a parable Christ explained that some believers would endure for a time, but when trouble comes, they fall away.

into
the
story

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you."

(Romans 1:8-17, NIV)

did you
know?

Even today, there are still places all over the world where people are killed or imprisoned for declaring themselves as Christ's followers. To many of us who are privileged to live in countries that do not persecute Christians, we don't necessarily think about our freedom as much as we probably should. We're just used to it. Often when we think of persecution, we conjure up images of burning stakes, lions, and the Amphitheatre. But no matter how foreign it all sounds, it's as real now in some countries as it was centuries ago. Whether it's a Chinese man who chooses to convert from Islam, a North Korean who smuggles Bibles, or an African woman who takes care of her two nephews because their father and mother were martyred for their belief in Jesus Christ, Christians all over the world are jailed, murdered, and executed for their faith.

Visit the following Web sites for more information: www.opendoors.org and www.persecutedchurch.org

both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"
punch lines

“While he lived on earth, anticipating death, Jesus cried out in pain and wept in sorrow as he offered up priestly prayers to God. Because he honored God, God answered him. Though he was God’s Son, he learned trusting-obedience by what he suffered, just as we do. Then, having arrived at the full stature of his maturity and having been announced by God as high priest in the order of Melchizedek, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who believingly obey him” (Hebrews 5:7-10, Message).

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8, NIV).

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

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring” (2 Thessalonians 1:3, 4, NIV).

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28, NIV).

other eyes

“When life is rosy, we may slide by with knowing about Jesus, with imitating him and quoting him and speaking of him. But only in suffering will we know Jesus.” —Joni Eareckson Tada, Christian author and radio host.
Sabbath

Sometimes your most profound and intimate experiences of God will be discovered during your darkest hours. All through the Bible, we find characters who, in times of trouble, reach out to the Lord in special ways. This is seen, for example, in many of the psalms, where the author would cry out to the Lord seeking a deeper experience with Him during times of distress, pain, and suffering. Problems force us to look at God and depend on Him, instead of ourselves.

How has God used circumstances and trials in your life to bring growth and Christ-likeness?

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Sunday

Problems do not automatically make you a better person. Sadly, many people get better instead of better. The difference lies in the way they choose to respond to their problems, and our choices depend upon our walk with the Lord. If we make it a habit to be in communion with God daily, and if we make it a habit to think on Him, dwell on Him and praise Him for His goodness, we will be much more inclined in times of distress to run to the Lord and learn from Him.

Think of a problem you are facing right now and ask yourself “What does God want me to learn?”

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Monday

Notice how the Bible tells us to give thanks “in” all circumstances, not “for” all circumstances. This small difference in prepositions can make a big difference. No matter what problems you are facing, you can still be assured in His love, wisdom, care, power, and faithfulness. Think back on your past experiences; how did the problems get resolved? Can you see a way in which God was present through it all?

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Tuesday

How is God using the Bible, the power of the Holy Spirit, and circumstances in your life to help you reach out to your friends and family for Christ? In what ways are you feeling convicted to tell others about Jesus and what He has done for you and what He has promised to all who accept Him? How can you be more willing to reach out to those who don’t yet know the Lord?

---

Wednesday

As you read the passages listed in the Punch Lines section of this week’s lesson, which verse strikes you as particularly significant today? Why do you think this verse is especially relevant to you? What circumstances are you facing that should cause you to lean more on the Lord and less on self; in fact, anyone else?

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Thursday

How can your personal circumstances and life experiences be opportunities for you to serve God and others? That is, wherever you are, whatever situations arise, how can you be open to the leading of the Spirit to be a witness to others? Sometimes, even in the smallest and kindest acts, we can be a powerful witness for God. Think about even the “small” things you can do that could make a big impression on someone who might be searching for truth.

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Friday

God often allows certain struggles and hardships in our lives so that we can sympathize and minister to the same kind of needs in other people’s lives. In what ways has God comforted you that would enable you to comfort others? What have you been through and what have you learned in your trials that could help someone else going through something similar?

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this week’s reading*

The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 13, 14.


By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.
can i get a witness? (two would be nice!)

Commentary: The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapter 15.
Key Text: Revelation 11:3.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

• The Bible
• Persecution
• Atheism

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

Invite the students to share their responses to the ranking activity in the What Do You Think? section. Students may choose to say that openly defying God’s Word is ultimately wrong. A good follow-up question might be “Why?”—Why is denying the truth that the Bible is God’s Word so damaging? Some might say that to do so makes you ultimately harder to reach, while others might maintain that knowing God’s Word
Trotman chose to add his witness to the two witnesses John refers to in this prophecy. Prophecies in Revelation are timeless, so they are not always easy to understand. But take the time and energy to study this passage, which reveals some amazing truths about how God’s Word will ultimately prevail.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

More Questions for Teachers:

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

The setting of this passage is an interlude of sorts between the sixth and seventh trumpet in Rev-
Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Jigsaw

Sometimes what you teach is part of a puzzle of continual concepts that build the picture. When you have a large amount of material to cover, consider “jigsawing” the job out to the students. This means asking a student or group of students to read, study, and report on a part of the lesson they master. You might give each student or pair of students a verse in which they are required to look up the meaning of that in the commentary or other sources you provide. Invite them to become experts in that one portion and they will have to pay attention to the other parts as well. You might assign this ahead of time and use the time in class to report and put the puzzle together.

What are the forty and two months?

Jerry Moon demonstrates in detail the background of the day-for-a-year principle in an online article (www.sdanet.org/atissue/end/yearday.htm) that strengthens the two most popular passages that refer to a day equaling a year in Bible prophecy (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6).

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

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

If we do the math, 42 months = 1,260 days. Also, a time (a year) = 360 days. A times (two years) = 620 days. A half a time (half a year) = 180, which comes to a total of 1,260 days. And if you apply the prophetic day-for-a-year principle to this prophecy, then you have a time period of 1,260 years of persecution and repression of God’s Word and His people.

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

Stefanovic explains:

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the
inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that
goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapter 15.
can i get a witness? (two would be nice!)

"And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

(Revelation 11:3, NKJV)

flashlight

“The suppression of the Scriptures during the period of papal supremacy was foretold by the prophets; and the Revelator points also to the terrible results that were to accrue especially to France from the domination of the “man of sin”” (The Great Controversy, p. 266).}
Either/Or

Choose one of the positions given and explain why you think the statement is true.

Which is worse, openly opposing the Bible because you believe it is false or continually neglecting God's Word even though you know it is true and life-giving?

Which position did you take? Explain.

did you know?

Voltaire, an 18th-century French philosopher, once promised that he had surgically taken the Bible apart, which would result in the timely death of what Christians know to be the Holy Scriptures. It is possible that Voltaire truly believed he beat the Bible. But today it continues to speak—and Voltaire is still dead. In spite of the fact that throughout history many have sought to defame or disfigure the Bible out of existence, God's Word is now translated in more than 438 different languages.

“Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.’

“These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

“When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.”

(Revelation 11:1-14, NKJV)
punch lines

“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19, NIV).

“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good” (Psalm 14:1, NIV).

“Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord. Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes” (Proverbs 1:29-31, NIV).

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope” (Romans 15:4, NIV).

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever” (Isaiah 40:7, 8, NIV).

other eyes

“There are few people so stubborn in their atheism who when danger is pressing in will not acknowledge the divine power.” —Plato, 4th-century B.C. Greek philosopher.

“An atheist is someone who believes that what you see is all you get.” —Unknown.
Sabbath
Read and respond to the activity in the What Do You Think? section of this week’s lesson. Which position did you choose to defend—to defend or to be interested in what God says in His Word? Both sides are troubling, but which viewpoint seems harder to change?

In Psalm 14:1 the Bible says “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (NKJV). But Elijah said to the people on Mt. Carmel, “How long will you wander between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing” (1 Kings 18:21, NKJV). What do you say?

Sunday
As you read the Into the Story section and answer the questions in the Out of the Story section, you will not see another prophetic passage that requires a bit more study than a simple story in Scripture. This particular section is about a time in earth’s history in which God’s people are overshadowed for almost 1260 years by a power that deliberately resists God’s Word and even openly defy it. If you read chapter 15 in The Great Controversy you will find that the pieces of the prophetic puzzle fit tightly together. What do you think is the message God is trying to say to people today about the era in which atheism is popular?

Monday
The Key Text from this week’s lesson is found in Revelation 11:3 where God says: “And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days dressed in sackcloth” (NKJV). The “two witnesses” are the messages of the Old and New Testaments, and some would even add the two groups of people who testify in both eras (OT and NT) about God and His plan of salvation. Whom do you know who has a deep love for the Old Testament in a way that comes out of their life and their conversation? Think of another witness, or someone you know, who is a real fan of the New Testament. How does their devotion to God’s Word show up in their lives?

Tuesday
Read the quote from The Great Controversy, which summarizes the effect of ignoring or downplaying God’s message to people in Scripture. After reading the chapter in The Great Controversy, how do you see this kind of thinking and behavior showing up in today’s world? Even though God’s Word is spreading around the world, so is the sentiment that there is no God and people are on their own. What do you think is the best way to show evidence of God’s existence to the world?

Wednesday
As you read the passages listed in the Punch Lines section of this week’s lesson, which verse speaks most prominently to you today? Think of stories in the Bible that illustrate the sentiments in each verse. Are there people in your life who either do not believe in God or live as though God were not real? Pray for them today that their hearts might be softened or quickened to be open to what God longs to do in their life through His Word, as it says in Isaiah 50:4: “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (KJV).

Thursday
Think of the two types of people mentioned in this week’s lesson: the apathetic and the atheist. What acts of kindness or service to others will soften their hearts? What can you do this week for others that might demonstrate to the atheist that God does exist? You don’t know who is watching, so just be faithful. Also, how might your pass on for God’s Word awaken someone whose spiritual life is sleepy? Think about starting a Bible study/prayer small group or a service team and invite others to join you.

Friday
Think about how God has continually brought people through troubled seasons. God has allowed people world powers, and misguided institutions to have their way for a time, but He has never restricted the influence of individuals to share what He is like to the world. Reflect on those people who have withstood persecution and isolation for the cause of God. How can you be counted among their number?

this week’s reading*
The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapter 15.

*Love Under Fire is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, created by you 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-comparison-books-UUFt1Ed03s. 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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

- Service
- Second coming of Christ*
- Signs of the Second Coming

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

**Activity**

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

Invite the students to share their responses to the ranking activity in the What Do You Think? section. What do you think should be our primary motivation for “being ready” for Christ to return? Does it really matter? Does our motivation affect the way we live in light of the coming day of the Lord’s return?
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

Extra Questions for Teachers:

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Have students make signs (like road signs) for the

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Wisdom of Each Other

Students gain much from evaluating and responding thoughtfully to the things that other people have said. Especially when there is a chapter or topic where there are many quotable quotes that contribute bits of punchy wisdom, it is a prime opportunity to get students to think. Asking students to choose which statement or quote speaks to them invites them to think and make a choice as to what resonated with them. Inviting students to share with the class what grabbed their attention is an excellent way to get them to think and to contribute to the discussion.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- Other Eyes
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.
- Flashlight
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book The Great Controversy. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.
- Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Second Coming, but instead of the signs being about events, have them make signs that describe people. What will the people look like at the end? What will be their qualities? How will others perceive them? For example, a sign could look like a stop sign reading: “Stop—and rest” because the people at the end will be a commandment-keeping people according to Revelation 14:12. Or a speed limit sign that reads “70 X 7”—because God’s people are a forgiving, grace-oriented people. Have the students share their signs and their rationale.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

*Fundamental Belief No. 25.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 16, 17.
lift up your head

flashlight

“The doctrine of the Second Advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer’s power and bring them again to the lost Paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope” (The Great Controversy, p. 299).

key text

“And there will be signs in the sun in the moon, and in the stars . . . . Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Which do you think is the most powerful motivation for being...
punch lines

“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3, NKJV).

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5, KJV).

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. . . . But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:3, 4, 8, KJV).

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7, KJV).

“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (Revelation 22:12, 13, NIV).

OUT OF THE STORY

Underline some of the specific events Christ mentions that indicate that season in which we live.

Describe the mood you think the disciples felt as they listened to Jesus talk about what was to come.

How should those who are living for the second coming of Christ negotiate between what’s happening in the world and what Christ has called them to do?

To what degree do you think the disciples were certain they would see Jesus come in their lifetime? How should we answer the age-old question, “The signs are all around, but why is it that Christ still hasn’t come?”

Why do you think that the signs of the end tend to be negative in nature?

Based on this passage, what do you think should be our motivation to “be ready” for the second coming of Christ?

What do you think Jesus means by “lift up your heads” at the close of this passage?

other eyes

“Nowhere is salvation conceived of as a flight from history as in Greek thought; it is always the coming of God to man in history. Man does not ascend to God; God descends to man.”—George Eldon Ladd, 20th-century Baptist minister and professor of theology.
**Sabbath**

Read and respond to the activity in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week’s lesson. What motivates you to be mindful of Christ’s return? What are the kinds of things that distract you from the events that will frame the return of Christ?

Notice how Peter, close to his own death, refers to the importance of paying attention to how we should live for Christ’s coming: “But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him” (2 Peter 3:13, NIV).

According to Peter’s frame of mind in this passage, what do you think motivates him to “be ready”?

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**Sunday**

As you read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to prompt your study of the text, what emotions do you feel when you imagine and think seriously about the soon return of Christ and the end of the world as it is now? What do you think is the difference between “getting ready” and “being ready” for Christ to return? What do you think God is trying to say to you in this week’s passage?

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**Monday**

The Key Text from Luke reveals a solemn reality that “men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” This text seems to indicate that people will be aware that something is going wrong on earth and it will cause fear, but their fear will come too late, for Christ will be coming at that point. Knowing that something is wrong is not enough. We must know Christ. When believers hear of the events that cause others to be afraid, what should be their response?

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**Tuesday**

Read the quote from *The Great Controversy* in the *Flashlight* section of this lesson and reflect on the truth that the Second Coming is the “keynote” theme of Scripture. Reflect on what it would look like in our churches if the second coming of Christ were the “keynote theme” of all church life. . . . There is a saying that reads, “People can be so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good.” Does this saying apply to those who long for the coming of Christ? Whom do you know who lives with their feet firmly on earth but with their hearts and eyes directed toward heaven? What is their impact on others?

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**Wednesday**

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week’s lesson, which verse urges you to be ready? Which verse causes you to worry about friends who are lost? Why do you think this verse is particularly relevant to you today?

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**Thursday**

Talking to God and to others about the coming of the Lord heightens your awareness and your anticipation of that day. Every time you pray, take a few moments to talk to God about His return and see how it shapes your overall outlook that day. In your interaction with friends, practice talking with them about the Second Coming in a positive, hopeful way, and notice how it affects what you value throughout the day.

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**Friday**

Take some time to meditate on the events of Christ’s return as you imagine it occurring.

What will it look like?

What will it sound like?

What will it feel like?

It is likely that our mind’s eye will fall short of capturing the final event. However, we are called to be watchful for that day.

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*This week’s reading*

*The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 16, 17.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

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

III. EXPLORE

• Talents and gifts
• Character building
• Faithfulness

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. Use the following activity to further illustrate the importance of using the gifts that we have.

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

Scripture Story: 1 Corinthians 12:4-28.
Commentary: The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 18, 19, 20.
Key Text: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

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

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

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

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

What is a spiritual gift?

What it is not . . .

- A talent (something you just happen to be good at)
- An ability (a developed skill)
- A personality trait (whether environmental or genetic)

What it is . . .

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

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

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

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

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

There is a line in the Desiderata that says:

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

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

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on specific aspects of the story for your students.

Share it in your own words.
The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary states that the Corinthian believers were under the misguided notion that there were some gifts more important than others. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul takes them to task and explains that all gifts are from God, and are meant to benefit the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 12:11). Thus, no one can boast that they are more favored since all are primed toward the same goal.

The following is an elaboration of the meanings behind some of the gifts, as explained in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary:

- **Wisdom**—“A man possessed of this gift was not only wise, he was able also to explain his wisdom to others.” For a contrast between wisdom and knowledge, see Proverbs 1:2.
- **Knowledge**—An “ability to apprehend facts,” or in terms of the gospel, the ability to understand spiritual truth and arrange it in an orderly manner in order to facilitate explanation to others.
- **Faith**—This faith mentioned here is not simply the belief that all Christians have. It is a special manifestation of faith that enables the wielder to undertake exceptional tasks for the glory of God.
- **Healing**—See Mark 16:18; Acts 3:2-8; 14:8-10, etc.
- **Miracles**—This was “a special gift performed under divine direction.”
- **Prophecy**—“The power to speak authoritatively for God, or on God’s behalf, either by foretelling future events or by declaring God’s will for the present.” See Exodus 3:10, 14, 15; Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; 2 Samuel 23:2.
- **Discernment**—The ability “to distinguish between divine and counterfeit inspiration.”

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

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

Talk about specific things someone could do in...
the following areas to put their gifts to work. Come up with at least two ideas for each area.

1. Home
2. School
3. Youth group
4. Church (outside of youth group)
5. Work
6. Other (your choice)

Then pray when you are finished.

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 18, 19, 20.
x marks your spot

flashlight

"Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the advent movement appeared in different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and, tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Saviour's advent was near" (The Great Controversy, p. 357).

keytext

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."

(1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NIV)
what do you think?

Read the following definitions of “servanthood” and “stewardship.” Then decide if you agree or disagree. Explain why.

Servanthood is all about our heart toward God and our attitude toward ministry. According to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, using our spiritual gifts without love accomplishes nothing. Authentic devotion to serving, honoring, and worshipping Christ is essential for effective ministry.

Stewardship has to do with accountability. Once we identify and grow in our understanding of our spiritual gifts, we must be responsible in the way we use them. First Corinthians 12:1 reminds us that it is our duty to identify what our spiritual gifts are because we will be held accountable for how we use them (1 Peter 4:10; Matthew 25:14-30).

did you know?

Each of us is truly unique. Did you know that each of us has 100 trillion cells in our body? And for each of those cells, there is a DNA strand that holds 6 gigabytes of memory. So, each of us has the potential to house 600 trillion gigabytes of memory! Amazing! Also, DNA molecules can combine in an infinite number of ways. The number is 10 to the 2,400,000,000th power. There is no one like you! God made you special.

You have a God-given personal style and ministry passion. Understanding your unique gifts and style will enable you to thrive in your relationship with God and in your ministry.

INTO THE STORY

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink . . .”

(1 Corinthians 12:4-13, 27, 28, NIV)
punch lines

“Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back” (Luke 6:38, NLT).

“So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t” (Romans 12:5, 6, Message).

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10, NIV).

“You shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13, Message).

“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.” (Matthew 25:28, 29, NIV).

other eyes

“What you are is God’s gift to you; what you do with yourself is your gift to God.”—Danish proverb.

“You are the church—Christ’s body—and your presence in the church makes a difference. When you begin to serve faithfully according to God’s specific will for your life, you will experience personal fruitfulness and fulfillment.”— Bruce Bugbee, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts the Network Way.
Sabbath

Complete the What Do You Think? activity.
The words “servanthood” and “stewardship” are misunderstood by many people. For some, servanthood means to allow others to dictate how we live our lives. And for others, stewardship refers only to money.

How were the definitions for servanthood and stewardship similar to your current understanding? How were they different? How would you rewrite the definitions?

Servanthood:
Stewardship:

Sunday

Read the Into the Story section of this week’s lesson and answer the Out of the Story questions. The context in which the apostle was writing was that there were people in the church who thought that the spiritual gifts were superior to others’ gifts. They had become proud. That’s one reason he stressed love in 1 Corinthians 13. Without love, our gifts won’t make an eternal difference.

But what do you do if you don’t like the gifts you have? Or it seems as if everyone else has better ones? If we use our gifts out of a heart of love, can all giftedness—small or large—make a difference? Explain.

To take a spiritual gifts inventory go to http://www.leway.com/whats-what/SpiritualGifts_Survey.pdf. After you’ve filled your results, review them with a trusted family member or teacher. Ask him or her for feedback. Which ones that you discovered do they see manifested in your life? How might they see you using your gift in service? What guidance might they have for you in regard to the “next step”?

Monday

Read through the Key Text for this week. It reveals a pattern to us:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different gifts</th>
<th>Same Spirit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different service</td>
<td>Same Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different working</td>
<td>Same God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What does this tell us about the Spirit? About Jesus? About God?

Tuesday

Read this week’s Flashlight quotation. Ellen White tells us that Christians in different countries, who had no contact with each other, were coming to the same conclusions about Christ’s second coming. Why? Because they were all studying the same book—God’s Word—and were being led by the same Spirit.

At different times, in different places, God imparts the wisdom necessary for that situation. Discernment is one of the spiritual gifts that God promises to give. Do some research to determine what it means to have the spiritual gift of discernment. How can that gift be used to serve others?

Wednesday

Read this week’s Punch Lines. There are several themes that you will find throughout these Scripture texts. Match the text with the theme.

Matthew 25:28, 29  Givers receive more than they give
Luke 6:38  Serving grace

Psalm 139:13  I’ve got to be me
1 Peter 4:10  God’s math sure is different than my math homework
Romans 12:6  God knew me before I knew me

Thursday

How would an understanding of your spiritual gifts influence your future—your choice of career, spouse, ministry?

Friday

What God-given ability or personal experience can I offer to my community? In what ways can I see myself passionately serving others—and loving it?

this week’s reading*

The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 18, 19, 20.

*Love Under Fire is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, 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-comparison-books#.UHhf1rBCQs. 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

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

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

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

III. EXPLORE

• Prophecies
• Remnant and its mission¹
• Church²

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

TEACHING

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


II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

1. **Why they set a date.** Why did the Advent movement believers fixate on October 22, 1844, as the day when Christ would come? How could they overlook Scriptures that clearly state that no one, not even Jesus, knows the exact date of Christ’s return (Matthew 24:36)? Ellen White comments: “Though no man knoweth the day nor the hour of His coming, we are instructed and required to know when it is near. We are further taught that to disregard His warning, and refuse or neglect to know when His advent is near, will be as fatal for us as it was for those who lived in the days of Noah not to know when the flood was coming” (The Great Controversy, p. 371). This was the spirit in which the Advent believers searched the Scriptures. They wanted to be keen on the time when Jesus would return, and so should we. They studied the prophecies of Daniel 7–9 and arrived at the October 1844 date. They were mistaken only in the event that would occur on that date.

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

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

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

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
claim a clear end-time message to a doomed planet. Seventh-day Adventists are a part of that remnant.

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

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

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

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

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 21, 22.
final warning!

flashlight

“In all my labors,” said Miller, “I never had the desire or thought to establish any separate interest from that of existing denominations, or to benefit one at the expense of another. I thought to benefit all. . . . My whole object was a desire to convert souls to God, to notify the world of a coming judgment, and to induce my fellow men to make that preparation of heart which will enable them to meet their God in peace” (The Great Controversy, p. 375).

key text

“And another angel followed, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ ”

(Revelation 14:8, NKJV)
Which of the following warnings are you MOST likely to believe and do something about? Place a 1 by the warning you’d most likely believe and so on until you get to the warning that you’re MOST likely to disregard.

1. The government issues a terrorist alert telling everyone to avoid using public transportation.
2. Officials at your school are advising students to get flu shots.
3. A friend tells you to get ready for Jesus’ soon return.
4. Your mom encourages you to wear your seat belt in the car.
5. Your math teacher warns all students to study hard for the math final exam.
6. A bully at your school threatens to hurt you after school.
7. Weather reports say that a hurricane is headed your way.
8. A radio preacher warns people to prepare for the end of the world in May 2011.

“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

Warning! Warning!

“Then I saw another mighty angel coming out of heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted up by his glory. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Who is like God?’”

(Matthew 25:1-3, Revelation 14:6-8, NKJV)

Did you know that on October 22, 1844, thousands of people across the United States gathered together awaiting the second coming of Jesus on that date? These believers, led by the preaching of a Baptist minister named William Miller and close study of the prophecies of Daniel and the book of Revelation, placed their faith where everyone could see it. They sold their possessions, renounced the world, and prepared to meet their God. They were wrong on the date of Jesus’ second coming, but their Spirit-led love for the Second Coming helped birth the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
punch lines

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew 24:44, NKJV).

“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14, NKJV).

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7, NKJV).

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14, NKJV).

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

OUT OF THE STORY

Circle the parts of the Scripture story that are new to you, the concepts you’ve never heard before.

The first part of the Scripture story for this week is a parable told by Jesus. Whom was Jesus speaking to?

The wise virgins prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. What did they do to prepare?

How are you preparing for the coming of our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ?

What can be learned from the foolish virgins?

Sum up the message of this parable in your own words. What was He trying to say?

The second part of the Scripture story gives two solemn warnings to the world by God’s angels. What is the message given by the second angel? What do you think that message means?

other eyes

“It may be that your whole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others”—Anonymous.

“History is a vast early warning system.”—Norman Cousins, 20th-century American essayist and editor.

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”—Martin Luther King, Jr., 20th-century American Baptist minister and civil rights leader.
Sabbath

Take a moment to complete the What Do You Think? activity. Each day we receive several warnings. Some are fairly harmless—nothing to lose a kidney over—but others are deathly serious. In this week’s lesson we will examine one of the final warnings that God is giving humanity before He returns, and how humanity has responded.

Read Matthew 26:64 What did Jesus say about His return to earth?

Now read Matthew 24:36 What did Jesus say about the time when He would return?

Why was Jesus so specific about His return?

Sunday

Read the into the Story section of this week's lesson and answer the Out of the Story questions.

If being prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom (i.e., Jesus Christ) is important enough for Jesus to share with His disciples, shouldn’t we take its message to the world?

Are you comfortable sharing this message with friends who are not Adventist?

Read and think about Romans 1:16, 17.

Monday

This week’s Key Text represents one of the most important messages ever sent by God to fallen humanity. It is part of the handful of core truths that define Seventh-day Adventist Christians. The first of the three angels’ messages is to fear God—that is, respect God and worship Him alone. The second message of warning—our focus this week—is Babylon is fallen.

While the disciple John was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos, Jesus revealed to Him events that would precede the end of the world and His second coming. One of the messages Jesus gave John is found in the second part of this week’s Scripture story—Revelation 14:6-8.

What warning is Jesus sending in verse 8?

In the Bible, the word “Babylon” is used to represent the world’s system of sin, corruption, and confusion. According to Revelation 14:8, why is the world’s system fallen?

Who do you think should warn the world of God’s judgment?

Will everyone accept God’s warning? Why not?

Wednesday

Read this week’s Punch Lines, all of which share important scriptural messages for those preparing to meet Jesus when He returns.

Briefly share what you would’ve done if you had been a follower of William Miller and lived through the Great Disappointment. Would you continue to believe in God? Explain.

Thursday

Based on what you’ve learned from this week’s Scripture story about preparing for the second coming of Jesus and sharing with the world God’s final warning to come out of Babylon, share one thing that you’d like to do to help the following people get ready to meet God.

1. Your family
2. Your best friend
3. Your neighbors

Friday

Does the fact that people might ridicule or belittle your beliefs prevent you from sharing them? If you really believed that Jesus was coming soon, what would you change about the way you live your life?

This week’s reading

The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 21, 22.

*Love Under Fire is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, 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-comparison-books#iURh7EqB0sY. 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

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

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

While the intricacies of this truth may be challenging for your teens to grasp, there is much here that they can understand. For instance, you might choose to emphasize that this cleansing of the sanctuary from sin is a work of judgment. Before Jesus cleanses the sanctuary and removes the sins of His people once and for all, He will examine our records and share with the universe who through repentance and faith in Christ is entitled to enter His eternal kingdom. You may also choose to focus on Jesus’ indispensable sacrifice of blood, the “coin of the realm” as it were, which washes away all sin.

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Know that the current work of Jesus in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary is the final work to be performed before Christ returns. (Know)
• Understand their need to search their hearts and ask God to show them what needs to be made right with Him. (Feel)
• Sense their responsibility to share the good news of salvation, and warn the world of God’s impending judgment. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

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

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Key Text: Daniel 8:14.
keep on sinning. Christ’s sacrifice is supposed to lead us to repentance, restoration, and love to God. Just as the ancient Jews who rejected Jesus and crucified Him were shut out of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, just as they lost their unique status as God’s chosen people, men and women today face a similar fate. Jesus’ current ministry in the Most Holy Place is a careful examination of the record of every human being. This reality should make us think carefully about the current condition of our hearts.

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

- The apostle Paul, believed to be the writer of Hebrews, goes to great lengths to show that the earthly sanctuary was a “copy” or “type” of the heavenly sanctuary. Here we see an essential truth, which is: God planned for the salvation of humanity. Make the point that humanity’s salvation was no afterthought. The plans for what happened on earth were first set in motion in heaven.
- Paul notes that Jesus’ sacrifice supersedes that of innocent animals, because Jesus was sinless. Not only does He contribute His innocent blood for the remission of sins; He also gives us His spotless life as a substitute for our sinfulness and then lives that life out in us through the Holy Spirit. It is this aspect of Christ’s ministry that makes the new covenant better than the old.
- What point about sin was the earthly sacrificial system designed to make in the mind of the sinner? Did it work? (It is serious; it is costly; it is messy.)
- Explore with your students what it means to maintain a healthy hatred for sin, and what it means to nourish one’s love for God and the sacrifice Christ made for us.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Leviticus 16; Daniel 7 and 8; Hebrews 9:22; Exodus 25; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Malachi 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.

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

2. Sanctuaries. When God gave Moses the command to make a sanctuary that He might dwell among His people (Exodus 25:8), Moses complied and a traveling structure was built. This sanctuary was replaced by another sanctuary once the children of Israel settled in Canaan. It was furnished like the first sanctuary and it had the same dimensions. During the time of Daniel it lay in ruins because of Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of Jerusalem, but it was not completely destroyed until the Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70. This was the only earthly sanctuary spoken of in the Bible and it represented the first covenant God made with His people.

What was that covenant? You can find it in Exodus 19:5-8. Israel broke its first covenant (Psalm 78:10, 11) through disobedience to God’s laws and forgetting God’s goodness. So God instituted a new, better covenant, one that would transform them from within by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-28). This new covenant also has a sanctuary, but, as Paul notes in Hebrews 7–9, its sanctuary is in heaven where Jesus is now mediating on our behalf.

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

4. Revelation 14. The messages of the angels of Revelation directly tie in with the work of Christ during the current investigative judgment underway in heaven. While Christ is examining the record of men and women, boys and girls, a final warning is to be given to the world. God’s end-time followers are called to deliver three distinct messages: 1. Respect God and worship Him who made all things. Intrinsic to this message is the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. 2. Babylon, the world’s corrupt system of

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

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

*Move Them Around*

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

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

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

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

I know that Jesus is currently examining the life record of every human being to reveal who through their dependence on Christ is worthy to be sealed. I want Jesus to know that . . .

________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________

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

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

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

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

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

*Fundamental Belief No. 24.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 23, 24.
cleaning up

flashlight

“In the typical service, when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary, and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest, and know what duties are required of us” (The Great Controversy, p. 431).

key text

“And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

(Daniel 8:14, NKJV)
Consider the following scenario carefully before responding.

Pretend that you were convicted of a very serious crime. Your guilty verdict means that you are subject to the death penalty, life imprisonment without parole, or some other remedy open to the judge’s discretion. On the day of sentencing, the judge asks your lawyer and the prosecutor to join him in his chambers for a discussion regarding the verdict.

Which of the following would you do while awaiting the sentencing for your crime? Place a checkmark below by the statement that best describes what you would do.

- Cry hysterically for your mother.
- Pray earnestly for God to have mercy on you and set you free.
- Sit calmly and wait for your lawyer to return and give you an update.
- Ask God to forgive you.

**did you know?**

In the ancient Jewish sacrificial system, sins were washed away by the shedding of blood. A sinner would bring an animal to the Temple, confess his or her sin on the head of the animal, the animal would then be killed, and its blood taken by the priest and sprinkled on the veil separating the holy place from the Most Holy Place. In doing this, the sinner’s sin would be transferred to the innocent animal, and then to the sanctuary itself. Jesus was the animal—lamb—slain for our sins.

Did you also know that in some cases sins were transferred to the priest himself? God commanded that the priests eat some of the sacrificial animals so that they would symbolically “bear the guilt of the congregation” (Leviticus 10:17, NKJV).

also went into a much better tent that wasn’t made by humans and that doesn’t belong to this world. Then Christ went once for all into the most holy place and freed us from sin forever. He did this by offering his own blood instead of the blood of goats and bulls. According to the Law of Moses, those people who become unclean are not fit to worship God. Yet they will be considered clean, if they are sprinkled with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a sacrificed calf. But Christ was sinless, and he offered himself as an eternal and spiritual sacrifice to God. That’s why his blood is much more powerful and makes our consciences clear. Now we can serve the living God and no longer do things that lead to death. Christ died to rescue those who had sinned and broken the old agreement. Now he brings his chosen ones a new agreement with its guarantee of God’s eternal blessings!

“Blood was also used to put the first agreement into effect. Moses told the people all that the Law said they must do. Then he used red wool and a hysop plant to sprinkle the people and the book of the Law with the blood of bulls and goats and with water. He told the people, ‘With this blood God makes his agreement with you.’ Moses also sprinkled blood on the tent and on everything else that was used in worship. The Law says that almost everything must be sprinkled with blood, and no sins can be forgiven unless blood is offered.

“These things are only copies of what is in heaven, and so they had to be made holy by these ceremonies. But the real things in heaven must be made holy by something better. This is why Christ did not go into a tent that had been made by humans and was only a copy of the real one. Instead, he went into heaven and is now there with God to help us.
Christ did not have to offer himself many times. He wasn’t like a high priest who goes into the most holy place each year to offer the blood of an animal."

(Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:11-15, 18-25, CEV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Mark the parts of this Bible passage that are new to you.

When you think of Jesus, do you ever picture Him as a High Priest, decked out in all the priestly garments? Why or why not?

Place a checkmark by those verses where you see the love of Jesus.

The author of Hebrews in chapters 8 and 9 tries to make the connection between the sanctuary service given to Moses and the Israelites and the sanctuary in heaven. Do you see that connection? Underline the verses where you see the author comparing the two.

According to the Scripture story, why is blood important to our salvation?

What does it mean to be free from sin?

Write two lessons that this week’s passage has taught you.
Lesson 1: ________________________________________________________________

Lesson 2: ________________________________________________________________

punch lines

“Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?” (Psalm 77:13, NKJV).

“But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24, 25, NKJV).

“This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you” (Leviticus 16:29, NKJV).

“Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:34, NKJV).

“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:9, 10, NKJV).

other eyes

“There is no man so good, who, were he to submit all his thoughts and actions to the laws, would not deserve hanging 10 times in his life.”—Michel de Montaigne, 16th-century French Renaissance scholar.

“I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior, for whose Kingdom it stands, one Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again, with life and liberty for all who believe.”—Dan Quayle, former vice president of the United States.
**Sabbath**

Did you complete the *What Do You Think?* activity? If not, go back and do so now.

The thought of facing a life sentence or God forbid, the death penalty, has reduced many people to utter depression. Even the most hardened criminals break down on death row.

Read Matthew 12:36-37 Do these verses scare you? If so explain why (Remember: you have Notes pages in the back of your study guide to write longer answers.)

Now read John 5:24. Does this verse give you more hope? Explain your answer.

Now read Romans 8:1 What powerful message does this verse give to you?

**Sunday**

Read the *Into the Story* section of this week’s lesson and respond to the *Out of the Story* questions. You probably noticed that the sacrificial system was a messy process—animals were being killed, blood spilled, and sprinkled. Why do you think God instituted such a gross system to cleanse people of sin?

If you had a pet that you loved dearly and something you did caused that pet to die, how would you feel?

Imagine that Jesus was that pet that died because of something you did. How would that make you feel?

Now read Isaiah 53:6 Jesus died for our sins, and every time we sin, His blood covers us. That is what He is doing in heaven for us right now.

**Monday**

Did you check out this week’s *Key Text?*

Think about what you learned about the earthly sanctuary yesterday. Blood was sprinkled on the inside of the sanctuary in a symbolic gesture transferring the person’s sin to the actual sanctuary itself. Can you imagine the sounds that were heard around the temple? Can you picture the sight of priests with blood spots on their clothing?

Once a year the high priest would petition God on behalf of the nation to clear all sins away from the sanctuary. (Read Leviticus 16:29, 30.) Now we understand what Daniel is talking about in this week’s *Key Text.* But there’s one catch to Daniel’s prophecy. The Temple that Daniel wrote about was lying in ruins at the time, so his prophecy pointed forward to a time when God would cleanse another. Based on this week’s Scripture story, where is this sanctuary located?

This work of cleansing is currently going on. What should we be doing while Jesus is revealing to heavenly intelligences those deemed worthy through Christ to be saved?

**Tuesday**

This week’s *Flashlight* quotation is a very serious one. Read it carefully. Do you understand what it is saying?

Read Matthew 22:1-14. Why was the king upset with the guest who came dressed in the wrong clothes?

The king had provided proper attire for the guests, but this guy chose to wear what he wanted to wear. When you go before a king, you don’t always get to do what you want to do.

During the Day of Atonement, the people of God had to be sure that they were “dressed” to meet their king; they had to have on the wedding garment of righteousness provided by God. They couldn’t just wear whatever they wanted to wear. Are you ready for your big moment? What will you wear?

**Wednesday**

Which of the *Punch Lines* catches your attention? Take a closer look at Psalm 77:13. What “way” do you think King David is talking about? What “way” do we learn about when we look at God’s sanctuary?

To better understand King David’s statement, read Psalm 77:7-11. King David wondered if God would cast him off forever. The answer? No. How did he know that? He looked at what happened in the sanctuary service. In that service God provided a way to remove sin, to get right with Him again, to be freed of guilt! This act of love touched David’s heart, and it should yours, too.

**Thursday**

Knowing all the details about the sanctuary and what Jesus is doing on our behalf in heaven? is good to know, but knowing Jesus is more important than simply knowing His roles.

Read John 15 and then ask yourself: How would my life be different if Jesus and I were really really close?

**Friday**

Do you fear the final judgment? Why not pray and ask God to show you how to make your life right with Him now.

In two sentences describe briefly how you would lock, load and live if you did not fear God’s final judgment.

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**Scripture quotations identified by CVE are from the Contemporary English Version. Copyright © American Bible Society, 1990, 1995. Used by permission.**

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Understand the importance of the Sabbath and realize how many people deny its validity. (Know)

• Have a strong sense of confidence and understanding of their beliefs. (Feel)

• Embrace the Sabbath as their own, and share it with others. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Sabbath

• Law of God

• Obedience

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

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

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

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

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

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

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

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

Out of the Story for Teachers

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

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

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

Sharing Context and Background

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

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

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

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

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

“There shall be no dispute, or lawsuit, . . . or horse-driving, or sweeping the floor of the house, or shaving, or washing, or bathing, . . . or adultery . . . or boiling food or swimming . . . or splitting wood . . . or going on a boat . . . or anything involving wrong.”
Quite an interesting list, wouldn’t you say!

In the Jewish tradition, the question is asked, “After the six days of creation—what did the universe lack? Menuha. Came the Sabbath, came menuha, and the universe was complete.”

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

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

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

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

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

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

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

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

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

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
From the Garden of Eden onward God’s Sabbath remains a weekly reminder that He is the Creator. When we look at the flowers, the trees, the birds, everything created, it all points us to God. Yet sometimes it’s so easy to forget. We get so caught up day by day in doing all the things that we do. Once a week, however, God gives us the Sabbath day, a day to remember Him as our Creator. This is so important, in fact, that He commands us to keep it, just as He commands us not to steal or kill or lie. That alone should tell us how important it is.

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

3 Ibid.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 25, 26.
**flashlight**

“It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel” (The Great Controversy, p. 438).

**key text**

“For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished”

(Matthew 5:18, NIV)
what do you think?

Write down the top seven reasons that you think people use to justify not keeping the Sabbath. Then, in your personal notebook jot down some of the main reasons why you love the Sabbath.

1. ______________________________________
2. ______________________________________
3. ______________________________________
4. ______________________________________
5. ______________________________________
6. ______________________________________
7. ______________________________________

did you know?

A Roman Catholic catechism states that the Bible never does away with the Sabbath and that, in fact, the Catholic Church itself changed the day from Saturday to Sunday in honor of Christ’s resurrection.

“You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctified,” says James Cardinal Gibbons (The Faith of Our Fathers, 1917 edition, pp. 72, 73). He is also quoted as saying, “The Catholic Church . . . by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday” (The Catholic Mirror, official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893).

The Papacy has claimed the authority which, it says, gives them the power to modify the law of God. They believe that the church, by the power God has invested in it, has the right to do these things, even to change the law of God Himself. Of course, no such power has been given any church to do that. God’s law is as holy and as sacred as Himself.
punch lines

“If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15, KJV).

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10, KJV).

“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:20-24, KJV).

“No man ever believes that the Bible ever means what it says: he is always convinced that it says what he means.”—George Bernard Shaw, 19th-20th-century British (Irish-born) author.

“How ironic that people are accused of legalism because they keep the Sabbath, when it is through keeping it that we first learned the futility of legalism. On Sabbath, we learn that we could cease from our own works and rest in Christ’s works.”—Clifford Goldstein, A Pause for Peace.

OUT OF THE STORY

Examine the first few verses of Matthew 5. To whom was Jesus speaking when He talked about the importance of God’s laws?

Why do you think Jesus spoke so strongly about keeping God’s laws?

What’s the difference between “abolish” and “fulfill”?

What does this passage tell us about the seriousness of our example?

In Isaiah 58:13 the Bible refers to the Sabbath as something that we should delight in. What does it mean to delight in the Sabbath? If you’re having a tough time coming up with an answer, look up the definition of delight in a dictionary.

Jesus makes the point that those who practice obeying God’s laws and teach others to do so will be called great in heaven. Can we effectively share the Sabbath truth if we ourselves do not practice it, or find no joy in it? Explain your answer.

If you were ever put into a situation in which you had the opportunity to defend God’s law and the fourth commandment, how would you do so?
**Sabbath**

Complete the What Do You Think? section. What are some of the reasons that people give for claiming that they no longer have to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy? Two passages referenced from Scripture are found in Galatians 4:10 and Colossians 2:16.

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Look up Leviticus 23:3. Notice the distinction between the ceremonial special days and sabbaths, and God's Sabbath that is part of the moral law. The law that Jesus said would never pass away was the moral law, the Ten Commandments. The ceremonial laws would be fulfilled in Him.

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**Sunday**

Read the Into the Story section and respond to the Out of the Story questions. Jesus specifically told us that no part of His law will ever be taken out of effect until it all be fulfilled. Many people think Jesus is saying that this means when He died on the cross it was fulfilled, and thus we are no longer under the Ten Commandments. Rather, they say, we are “liberated” to a higher and more spiritual law of Christ. But how does keeping the Sabbath reveal Christ? How does it remind us of our liberation from sin?

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**Monday**

The Key Text tells us that “not the least stroke of a pen” will disappear from the law until all is fulfilled. In the original language of the New Testament the word “lotsa” is used. This is the ninth letter of the Greek alphabet, and is equivalent to the “yod,” the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Jesus apparently wanted us to know that even the smallest letter of the law was important, and thus how much more so is the Sabbath.

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**Tuesday**

Read Matthew 12:10-12, Mark 3:1-6, and John 9:13-16. Notice that Jesus observed the Sabbath. It was His custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, just as we might go to church on Sabbath. If Jesus was planning to change the Sabbath day, why then did He keep it during His lifetime? What does Luke 4:16 tell you about how special the Sabbath was to Jesus?

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**Wednesday**

Read Genesis. 2:1-3. What did God do after He finished six days of “work”?

Every time we come aside to rest, we honor God as our Creator and Sustainer. According to Romans 1:18-23, what happens to people who reject the laws of God, who remove God from their lives?

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**Thursday**

What is it about the Sabbath that you think causes people to be so opposed to it? Is it a matter of not wanting another religious tradition? Is it a matter of people honestly believing the Bible did away with the Sabbath? Or a bit of both? What do you think?

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**Friday**

Do you ever find yourself seeing the Sabbath as an unwanted inconvenience? Have you ever caught yourself wishing that the sun would set so you can get on with doing your plans without feeling guilty? These thoughts have crossed many people’s minds.

In what ways can we truly come to appreciate and look forward to the Sabbath?

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**this week’s reading**

The Great Controversy (or Love Under Fire), chapters 25, 26.

*Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of The Great Controversy, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/91/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.UW8F16084e. By following the weekly reading plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.