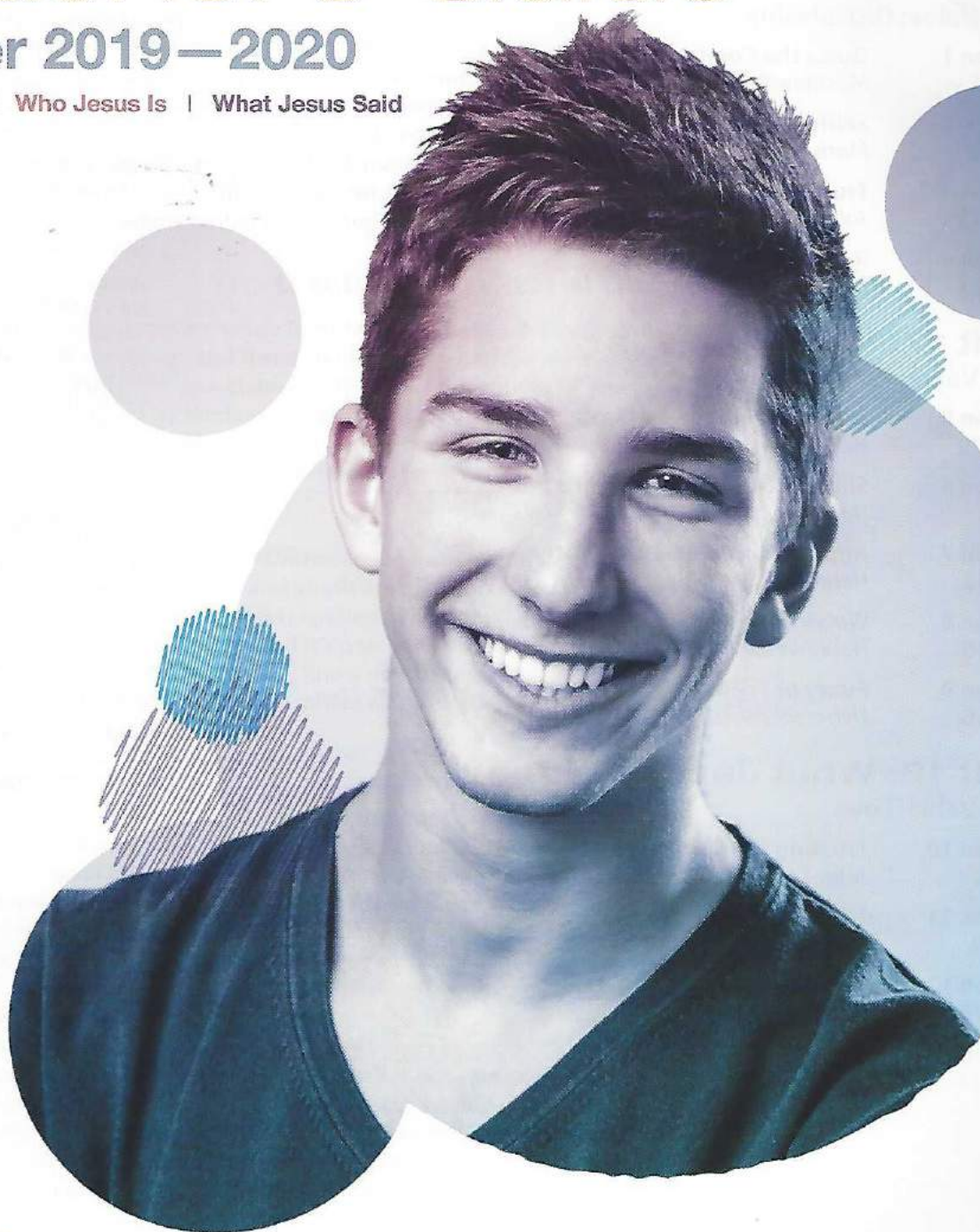


High School

Teacher's Guide

Winter 2019—2020

God's Plan | Who Jesus Is | What Jesus Said



WESLEY

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High School Teacher's Guide
for grades 9-12.

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Please Note:
Building Teachers can now be found online at
wphresources.org/bt

WESLEY

Connecting with Families



**JUST
FOR
YOU**

Family means something different in every household! One family might eat home-cooked meals, play games, and read books together, seldom watching television. Another family might eat together only at fast-food restaurants, rarely play board games or read books, but regularly watch selections from a streaming service. So what are some practical ways you can best connect with and support the many diverse kinds of families represented by the students in your class?

AWARENESS

Family configurations change from family to family. A family unit may be one parent (or caregiver) and three children; two grandparents and a grandchild; or two parents and one child. Get to know the families of your students. The challenges faced by families create many opportunities for you to minister to them. Pray for each student and his or her family. Ask God to make you aware of ways to connect with those families and become an agent of His grace to them.

EMPATHY

Difficult situations, such as divorce or separation and illness, are part of some family situations. Children and youth are often under stresses that they themselves don't recognize. Your extra patience, kindness, and nonjudgmental words are crucial for these students! If it's possible, record all parents' (or caregivers') names and contact information. Know how to contact a family to help a student stay connected when he or she misses class. Be sure to pray for families as they go through hard times.

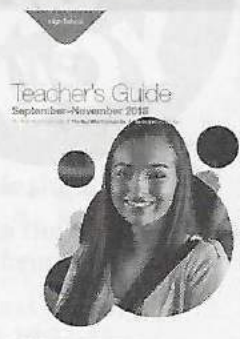
SENSITIVITY

As you talk about families, avoid assumptions about family life. Include references—without sounding negative—to those families whose members are composed of non-traditional members. Be sensitive to children and youth who live in a blended family, shared-custody, or foster situation. Help each student feel valued and loved regardless of his or her home circumstances. As you show acceptance, children and youth will see a picture of the way God loves them!

SUPPORT

Your impact doesn't end when students leave your classroom. As a teacher, you have unique opportunities to help families. Your support can begin with something as simple as a friendly conversation at the end of class, a text message, or a phone call. Letting families know you care—along with creating a safe place for adults as well as their children—is one more way you can support and love both the students you teach and their families.

Materials for Your High School Class



High School Teacher Guide

Each of the 13 lessons contains step-by-step instructions to help you prepare and teach, with Bible background, tips for teaching high schoolers, and a variety of activities to help your students learn and apply the Bible lesson. One per class.



Blueprint (One per student)

This magazine is the student component for your Wesley curriculum. It provides the weekly Bible studies and articles for your Bible lesson, and includes quizzes and fun pieces that appeal to high schoolers. The student book also contains "daily faith" devotionals for your students to engage their faith throughout the week.

Your Teacher Guide directs you to exactly which page to turn to for in-class use. You may keep a copy of *Blueprint* for each student in your class. If so, cut out the Bible study/Daily Faith devotionals for students to take home and use each week. Or you can make each student responsible for his own copy of *Blueprint*, allowing him to take it home to read and bring back each Sunday. If a teen forgets to bring her copy of *Blueprint* back to class, you can simply give her some scratch paper and have her look off of someone else's Bible study for that week.

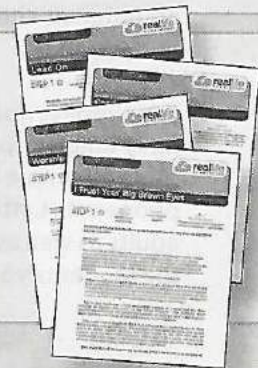
We recommend having an extra copy or two of *Blueprint* as classroom copies, which you can use for yourself, a student who has forgotten hers, or for any visitors to use.



Free! Downloadable Options for Steps 1 and 4

- The latest in pop culture.
- News that just happened.
- Relevant subjects from today's world that are rarely talked about in Sunday school!

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Online Teacher Training! Visit www.wphstore.com for more helpful resources.

Bring the Bible to Life for Teens

Use our proven, effective 4-step lesson plan.
Here's how it works:

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word



Scripture makes it clear that God puts priority on relationships.

We grow the most spiritually when we are in relationship with others. Or, as the youth ministry adage goes: You have to open the teen before you open the Book. Step 1 gives you and your students a chance to share about yourselves and your lives and encourages them to be active participants in your discussion. You'll make real-life connections between their lives and what the Bible says. These conversations will flow naturally into Step 2, your Bible lesson.

STEP 2

Studying God's Word



God reveals Himself to us through His written Word. In Step 2, you'll study God's story. You'll dive into a portion of God's Word and then review it together. You'll lead the lesson by asking

relevant questions so your students will not only understand what they've just read, but also realize how the story and its truths connect to their lives. Through this step, you'll be able to make sure your students engage in a fruitful discussion about the Bible at a meaningful level.

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word



God asks us to internalize His Word so we can grow in relationship with Him (Ps. 1:2; 119:97). Step 3 shifts your lesson from a discussion to a hands-on activity.

Different activity options allow you to choose the one that will meet your students at their levels—and their interests—so that the Bible study doesn't just go in one ear and out the other. By doing activities founded in the Bible lesson, your teens will actively work through the Bible story and interact with the text.

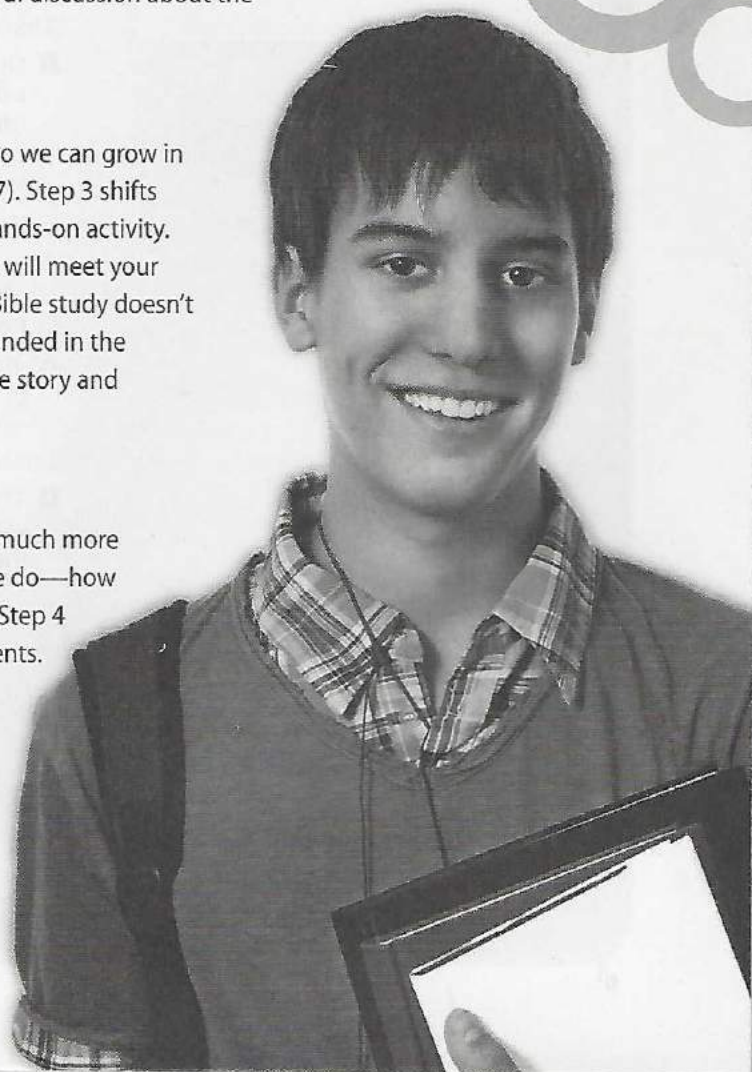
STEP 4

Applying God's Word



The Bible makes it clear that faith is much more than a list of beliefs. It's also what we do—how we live out what we say we believe. Step 4

is a way for you to encourage life application by your students. Together you'll recap what you've learned and help your teens carry the Sunday school lesson into the rest of their week. You'll be able to provide them with practical suggestions for ways to live out their faith in real life so they will be doers of the Word, not just hearers.



Supply List

Needed for Every Lesson

- ☐ *Blueprint*
- ☐ Bibles

Classroom Supplies

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Whiteboard markers
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tape

Lesson 1

- ☒ Magazines
- ☐ Poster board
- ☒ Small pieces of paper
- ☒ Balloons

Lesson 2

- ☒ Magazines
- ☒ Yarn
- ☒ Construction paper

Lesson 3

- ☒ Masking tape
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Poster board

Lesson 4

- ☐ Construction paper
- ☒ Magazines

Lesson 5

- ☒ Quarter sheets of construction paper (different colors) with the secret phrase taped to a wall
- ☐ Poster board

Lesson 6

- ☐ Poster board

Optional

- ☒ Marionette puppet

Lesson 7

- ☒ Three large sheets of paper with scenarios written on them

Lesson 8

- ☐ No additional materials needed

Lesson 9

- ☒ Blindfolds
- ☒ Empty matchboxes, buttons, yarn

Lesson 10

- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☒ Magazines
- ☐ Glue

Lesson 11

- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☒ An orange

Lesson 12

- ☐ Poster board
- ☒ Magazines
- ☐ Glue

Optional

- ☐ Copies of the two scenarios in Step 1

Lesson 13

- ☒ Name tags with "Blue Club" written on them
- ☒ Two blank name tags
- ☒ Paper bag
- ☒ Thin ropes or bandanas
- ☒ Yarn

☒ indicates items that require advance preparation

lesson 1

Bible Basis:

Matthew 9:9-17

Focus:

With Jesus Christ we can break out of our comfort zones.

Outta the Comfort Zone

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Identifying Comfort Zones: Students will read a *Blueprint* story about a girl who stepped out of her comfort zone.

- ☐ "Reflections from a Mission Trip" from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Whiteboard, markers

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Evaluating Comfort Zones: Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how Jesus challenged people's comfort zones.

- ☐ Bibles, pencils or pens, paper, copies of *Blueprint*

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Recognizing Comfort Zones: Teens will practice breaking out of their comfort zones.

- ☐ Scissors, tape, poster board, pencils or pens, paper
- ☒ Magazines

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Breaking Out of Comfort Zones: Teens will breaking out of their comfort zones to tell others about Jesus.

- ☒ Small pieces of paper
- ☐ Markers, pencils or pens
- ☒ Balloons
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

—Matthew 9:13b

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

Before calling Matthew, Jesus had arrived in Capernaum and healed a paralytic (see Mark 2:3-12). Because Peter's house was there, Capernaum had become Jesus' headquarters. Meanwhile, the tax collector Matthew (or Levi, as Mark and Luke call him) was at his usual post alongside the main road that passed through Capernaum. Matthew collected a customs tax from the Jewish people for the hated Roman government. Unpopular and disliked, Matthew had probably stooped to extortion and other corrupt practices in his job as a tax collector.

The religious elite of Jesus' day had become comfortable in turning their noses up at the common people. They were shocked when Jesus ate dinner with "sinners" and tax collectors. In the Pharisees' eyes, sinners included moral outcasts as well as people who didn't follow all of the ceremonial laws.

Jesus pointed out that the Pharisees' policy of separation from sinners was wrong. To help sinners, we must have mercy on them and go where they are. Perhaps during the dinner at Matthew's house or later, some of John the Baptist's disciples approached Jesus (Matt. 9:14). They wanted to know why Jesus' disciples did not fast when they and the Pharisees did. Fasting was just a part of the issue. Jesus' radical message couldn't be confined by the old forms. Jesus illustrated this truth with two short parables.

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Teacher Devo

COMFORT
ZONE

A youth pastor left a position at a large, established church to join the staff of a three-week-old church. Although the church didn't own a building and there wasn't a church vehicle, he had this to say about his experience: "What we do have is a group of people who are willing to do something radical. We left the comfort of our established churches to start something new!"

Read Matthew 9:9-17. Christ operated outside of the comfort zones of the religious leaders of His time. His treatment of women, the poor, the sick, and the young was completely foreign to most Jewish people then. Christ was not confined to comfort zones; He did what He knew was right, regardless of whether it seemed acceptable to others.

What are your comfort zones?

What kinds of things could you give up to better reach teens for Christ?

Pray for the courage to step out and be used by Christ in a new way this week.

CLASSROOM TIPS

High schoolers need to test old limits and eventually become independent. Within reasonable boundaries, they need some freedom to make their own choices. Your classroom can become a safe place for students to push the limits in order to grow in their faith, to move from the status quo to a radical commitment to Jesus Christ.

When a student gives an answer that is clearly wrong or inaccurate, ask a follow-up question such as "Can you explain your meaning?" or "That's an interesting point of view. What made you answer that way?" This will give the student a chance to clarify his or her answer and help you learn what he or she understands about the lesson.

LES. 1

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Teens typically do not like things that put them on the spot, embarrass them, or cause them to step out of their comfort zones. Teens have worked hard to earn a reputation and find a peer group that accepts them. It may be uncomfortable for some teens to hang out with different types of people; they may prefer to feel secure within their group.

Jesus is a great example of how we can break out of our comfort zones and reach out to various types of people. In Jesus' day, men didn't talk to women the way that He did, with respect and interest. Jews didn't associate with

Samaritans. Teachers of the Scriptures weren't seen with tax collectors. Yet Jesus did all of these things. He broke free from the comfort zones of His time and met people where they were, regardless of their backgrounds or the association that went with them.

Teens need to know that they can break out of their comfort zones—no matter what they are—with Christ's help. This may mean different things to different teens. Allow your teens to define what kinds of changes this might mean to them personally.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

With Christ we can break out of our comfort zones.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Have your high schoolers get into small groups and talk about their favorite hangout and why they like to go there.

Students will read a *Blueprint* story about a girl who stepped out of her comfort zone.

Materials:

- ☐ "Reflections from a Mission Trip" from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers

Hand each student his or her copy of *Blueprint*. Have students turn to pages 4 and 5 and read "Reflections from a Mission Trip" to themselves. When they have finished reading, discuss:

- 1 Do you think this girl was a good missionary? Explain. (Answers will vary.)
- 2 Have you ever been on a mission trip or another such activity where you felt out of place or outside of your comfort zone? Share about one such time. (Invite your teens to share.)
- 3 What kinds of situations make you uncomfortable? (Allow teens to share. List various situations on the whiteboard. Some examples might be walking into a party without knowing anyone, playing a sport or performing in front of a large crowd, or being made fun of by a teacher or group of students.)
- 4 What are some ways to overcome feelings of discomfort in these situations? (Write down the possible solutions next to the situations on the whiteboard. Some examples might be acting friendly at a party, taking a deep breath and saying a prayer before a stage event, and cracking a joke and laughing along with the teasing group.)

Now that teens have participated in these activities, invite them to brainstorm a definition for the phrase "comfort zone." Write some of the suggestions on the whiteboard and, after various teens have shared, have your class vote on the best definition provided.

Today we will study about how Christ can help us break out of our comfort zones and reach out to people who need Him.



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STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

Matthew 9:9-17



MORE BIBLE INFO

Wineskins were actually goatskins fashioned to hold wine. As grape juice fermented into wine, it expanded and stretched the wineskin. If a wineskin had already been stretched, it would burst when new wine was poured into it. In Matthew 9:16-17 Jesus used the analogy of wineskins to demonstrate how He could not be placed within the boundaries of the religious leaders.

Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how Jesus challenged people's comfort zones.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Divide your class into three groups. Pass out pens, paper, and instruct your teens to turn to page 7 of *Blueprint*. Read the Bible study introduction aloud to your class. Point out that the religious leaders' biggest complaint was that Christ challenged their comfort zones by not agreeing with their established perceptions of the Messiah. Share the following information with your teens:

To understand just how truly radical Jesus was, listen to this. In Jesus' day tax collectors and sinners were about as low as you could go on the social ladder. Tax collectors were local Jewish men who worked for the hated Roman government. Because they worked for Rome and often demanded unreasonable payment, tax collectors had a bad reputation and were generally hated and considered traitors.

The term "sinners" described adulterers, robbers, and other evil people and, according to the teachers of the law, anyone who refused to follow their interpretation of the law. Tax collectors were lumped together with "sinners."

Read the Lesson Scripture aloud. Then inform the group that they are going to complete the first five questions from different viewpoints.

Assign the first group to answer the questions from the viewpoint of the religious leaders of Christ's day. Assign the second group to answer from the viewpoint of the average Jewish people and "sinners" of Christ's day. Assign the third group to answer from the viewpoint of Christ Himself.

After the groups have completed the five questions, have each group share their answers and viewpoint before going on to the next question. Then, as a large group, discuss the final two questions in the Bible study. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 12 of this teacher's guide.)

To conclude this Step, have your class turn to page 8 of *Blueprint* and read this week's memory verse, Matthew 9:13, aloud.

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Matthew 9:13b

Invite your students to think for a few minutes about who Jesus might have been talking about when He said that He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Invite your students to think about who these "sinners" might be in today's world. Encourage them to also think about one person that they know who is perceived by the rest of society (friends, parents, teachers, etc.) as too "sinful" to associate with. Have your students think of one way they could reach out to this person.

Remind your students that they, too, are sinners, but because of Jesus' work on the cross, they can have their sins forgiven. Remind them that Jesus stepped out of His comfort zone (heaven) to reach out to them.

By saying to them that His mission was to save sinners. The religious leaders saw themselves as righteous and, therefore, without the need of a Savior. Jesus came for those who needed Him. The truth is that all need Him, but only those who recognize this are able to appreciate why He came.

The Pharisees saw Jesus as a threat to all that made them comfortable: their position, their power, their perception of God, and their perception of others.

People who are living their religious life by a list of rules and regulations instead of with Jesus Christ are only religious. Many people fall prey to this type of Christianity because having a checklist is easier than having to deal with the matters involved in a sincere relationship.

The message of Jesus could not be held in the neat little structure that the religious leaders had established. It was new and needed flexibility to grow and expand. What worked before was not sufficient for this new outpouring of God.

Jesus emphasized an individual's relationship with God; the Pharisees emphasized conforming to their standards and guidelines. Jesus emphasized grace; the Pharisees emphasized legalism.

Answers will vary.

Lesson 1 Bible Study

Jesus' way is different

Matthew 9:9-17

For centuries, the Jews eagerly waited for the promised Messiah prophesied by the prophets Micah and Isaiah. When Jesus did come and begin His ministry, the religious leaders of His day were shocked at His teachings.

The Pharisees criticized Jesus' teachings about the worth of people, the true nature of God, and the joy of worship as opposed to meaningless religious ritual. They were shocked that Jesus not only called Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him, but then also went to Matthew's house and ate with other tax collectors and sinners.

Read Matthew 9:9-13.

- How did Jesus answer the religious leaders?
- What do you think was the Pharisees' problem?

Read Matthew 9:11-13.

- List some ways a person can be "religious" but miss out on true faith and a relationship with Jesus.

Read Matthew 9:14-17.

- On a separate piece of paper, illustrate Jesus' parable of the garment and the wineskins. What do you think is the main point of the parable?
- In what ways was Jesus' message different from what the Pharisees taught?
- In what ways is it different from what some people believe today about sin?
 - ... about trusting Christ?
 - ... about heaven?

Matthew 9:9-17.

As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

"On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: *I desire mercy, not sacrifice*.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Then Jesus' disciples came and asked Him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?"

Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while He is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."

"Do not sew a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students will look into the comfort zones people have and consider stretching their own.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on breaking out of their comfort zones. In the "Looking Out" activity your teens will make a collage that shows how a church might need to break out of its comfort zones. In "Looking Around" teens will roleplay various responses to people who stretch their comfort zones. In "Looking Back" students will brainstorm comfort zones that have been broken and changed over time.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Christ challenged the religious leaders of His day by confronting their comfort zones. He did not live within the boundaries they expected Him to; He instead did what God led Him to do. We must also confront comfort zones that keep us from living out our faith. To do this we must recognize our comfort zones and how they impact us. The following activities will lead us to recognize these comfort zones.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

LOOKING OUT

- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Paper
- ☒ Magazines

In this activity you will make a collage that shows how a church might be asked to break out of its comfort zones.

Leaf through a number of magazines. Use scissors to cut out pictures of individuals you think might not fit in if they were placed in a typical church setting today. Tape these pictures on a large piece of poster board. Discuss as a group:

- Why might some of these people make church people uncomfortable?

LOOKING AROUND

In this activity you will roleplay ways that teens respond to various people that stretch their comfort zones.

Use the following ideas to begin. Add your own ideas as time allows:

- an unmarried pregnant girl at a high school
- a homeless person on the street
- a student everyone dislikes and avoids because he is mean

Perform each roleplay three times. First roleplay the actions of a typical non-Christian teenager. Next, roleplay an inappropriate response that a Christian might have. Finally, roleplay a response that a Christian should have.

Discuss as a group:

- How do you think Jesus might have treated these people?

LOOKING BACK

- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Paper

In this activity you will brainstorm comfort zones in society that have been broken and changed over time.

Comfort zones may change with time. Sometimes things that were not accepted years ago are now accepted and vice versa. On a piece of paper, list things that weren't accepted in the past (for example, the scientific theory the earth revolves around the sun; racial equality issues; slavery; the place of women in society; voting or working rights; etc.). Next to your list, write down comfort zones that have been broken down over time in order to create change in these areas.

Discuss:

- How is the world a better place because these comfort zones have changed?

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

With Jesus Christ we can break out of our comfort zones.

Teens will apply what they've learned by symbolically breaking out of their comfort zones to tell others about Jesus.

Materials:

- ☐ Small pieces of paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☒ Balloons
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

When Jesus Christ ignored the comfort zones of the religious leaders of His day, He opened up inroads to people who had been alienated by those comfort zones. Jesus ate dinner with "sinners"; He socialized with tax collectors; He was even known to speak to prostitutes. All of these individuals had been ignored and ridiculed by the religious leaders.

Give each student a small piece of paper, a marker, a pencils or pen, and a balloon.

On the piece of paper, write the name of an unsaved person you know. Fold the piece of paper very small and put it inside your balloon. Blow up your balloon with the name inside and tie it.

Use the marker to write your comfort zones on the outside of the balloon. This may be "not associating with people different from yourself" or "not mixing faith and friends" or any other comfort zones you may have.

After this is completed, have your teens toss their balloons into the center of the room.

Have a volunteer read aloud this week's memory verse, Matthew 9:13b, from his or her Bible or page 8 of *Blueprint*.

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

The names inside the balloons represent individuals who need Jesus. The balloons represent comfort zones that may be keeping us from sharing Jesus' love for them. Let's now deflate these comfort zones.

Lead your youth to pop balloons by stepping on them.

Ask students to come up with a plan for how they will "pop" the comfort zones in their lives this week. Encourage them to go out of their way to "feel uncomfortable" this week in their relationships. This will be the best way for them to grow in this difficult area.

Close in a prayer of dedication asking for God's help in deflating comfort zones this week. Encourage your teens to be willing to step out this week and talk with people they wouldn't normally speak to, share the hope Jesus gives with their unsaved friends and family, and break out of any other comfort zones that they may encounter. Remind your class to read the "Daily Faith" devotions on page 8 of *Blueprint* throughout the coming week.

Seeing God throughout the Week Talk with students about ways they can break out of their comfort zones this week. What can your students do to help someone who is lost to turn to God?



Selfless Serving

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Being Great Is . . . : Students will create a mural and discuss greatness.

- ☐ Scissors, tape, poster board
- ☒ Magazines

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Acting Great: Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss God's definition of greatness.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Bowing Out: Your teens will practice what they've learned about serving others.

- ☐ Construction paper, markers, glue, tape, scissors, poster board
- ☒ Magazines, yarn
- ☐ "Jesus Had Righteous Chutzpah!" from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Serving Others: Students will apply what they've learned by committing to serve others this week.

- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ "Needs Are Out There" worksheet from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

—Mark 10:45

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

As Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem for the last time, everyone with Him had a sense that something big was about to happen. Jesus told the 12 disciples that He would be betrayed, condemned, mistreated, and killed—but afterward, He would rise from the dead.

The brothers James and John picked up more on Jesus' coming glory than on His coming suffering. Privately, they asked to have the positions of greatest honor among His supporters when He came into His glory.

James and John did not realize that those who share Christ's glory must also share His sufferings. These sufferings Jesus symbolized as drinking a cup and being baptized. In the Old Testament a cup of wine is a common symbol of God's wrath on sinners (Ps. 75:8). By referring to baptism, Jesus probably brought to the disciples' minds true symbolism of John the Baptist's baptism of repentance.

Able to see into the future, Jesus knew that James and John would suffer for His sake. But Jesus told them that, nevertheless, the assigning of honor is a prerogative of the Father.

All the disciples shared the sin of selfish ambition, so Jesus spoke to them all. The disciples needed a new model of greatness: Jesus Himself. Jesus is great because He came to serve others and gave His life as a ransom for many. The disciples, likewise, were to serve others.

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Teacher Devo



LES. 2

CLASSROOM TIPS

Jesus' definition of greatness as servanthood is as foreign to us as it was to His disciples centuries ago. Yet in God's upside-down kingdom, the last shall be first.

In Step 4, your students will complete a worksheet titled "Needs Are Out There," which helps them identify what they can do to help meet the needs of various people. Help your teens think of specific actions, such as shoveling somebody's sidewalk, rather than generic "be nice to everyone" kinds of answers.

Invite students to share about a time that they've helped someone else. This will keep the ideas fresh and realistic. It may also spur some new ideas in the minds of the teens who are completing the worksheet.

If teens do end up going out and serving others this week, make sure to have a time next week when teens can share about how they served and the impact that it made on someone else.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Many teenagers know about selfless love. They may not understand all that it takes or means, but they are beginning to form a picture of what true love should look like. Teens who date may have already experienced a selfish relationship where they felt used or manipulated. They may now know that the kind of dating relationship they want is one in which both people care about each other in an unselfish way.

During the teen years, youth may go back and forth between selfish and selfless love at dramatic levels. Service and community involvements vary greatly from teen to teen. Some teens may already spend hours serving others, while others are self-oriented and self-absorbed.

Let your teens know that God loves them for

who they are, not what they do. Jesus wants teens to serve Him and others out of a joyful and thankful heart, not because they have to. Being great in God's kingdom is about more than actions; it is about the condition of one's heart.

One way to get your teens thinking about serving others is for them to come up with the ideas themselves. Your teens will be more likely to follow through on the service ideas if they have had a part in creating them. A class field trip might be a fun way to incorporate the idea of serving others. Why not volunteer to spend a day with some elderly people who no longer can make it to your church for worship? What a selfless way to see the rewards service can bring.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Want to be great?
Serve others!

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Ask teens to pick one person and share with him or her the nicest thing anyone has ever done for them.

Students will create a mural and discuss greatness.

Materials:

- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Poster board
- ☒ Magazines

Begin class with this activity to get your students thinking about greatness. Hand out scissors and various types of magazines to your teens. Instruct them to cut out pictures of people they think are great. (Don't define what greatness is; allow teens to choose their ideas.)

After teens have finished cutting out pictures, have individual teens come up to the front of the room and tape their pictures on a large poster board. When the "mural of greatness" is completed, ask the following questions:

1. **What makes these people great?** (They are celebrities, athletes, politicians; they are famous, rich, smart, beautiful, talented; etc.)
2. **Are there any people here that you'd like to be like? Explain.** (Teens may wish to be like people who are rich, famous, smart, good looking, etc.)
3. **How would you define greatness?** (Allow various teens to share. Some may say that great people are rich; others may say that great people are famous; some teens might say that great people are the ones who have accomplished important things or made extraordinary use of their talents; others may name people who aren't in the limelight but are still considered great by their families or friends.)
4. **How might God define greatness?** (Allow various teens to share. Some students might bring up the fact that God looks on the inside, so what He sees as great won't always be the same as what humans see as great.)
5. **Are there any people taped to the mural who might not be great in God's eyes? Explain why you think God might not see them as great.** (Teens' opinions may vary. Note that greatness in God's eyes is not the same as greatness in humans' eyes. God looks inside while men and women look at the outside. To God, a person with few status symbols may be greater than a celebrity or world leader.)

Today we will study what Jesus said about being great. Jesus' idea of greatness is quite different from what we've just portrayed in this mural. Jesus knows that great people serve others. We'll learn more about how we can do this in this lesson.

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

Mark 10:32-45

MORE BIBLE INFO

In Isaiah 52:13—53:12 the prophet Isaiah gave a description of the coming Messiah and what He would go through. Based on this prophecy, the disciples should have known that God's means of saving the world would be through a sacrifice. The disciples, however, couldn't see beyond earthly greatness; they still yearned for their Messiah to be an earthly king. Then they would get in on all the perks attached to His position because they'd been attached to Him.

Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss God's definition of greatness.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens

Distribute pencils or pens and have students turn to page 11 of *Blueprint*. Divide your class into three groups. Read the short introductory paragraph to the study aloud. Then assign a teen to read the Lesson Scripture aloud, and assign a "scene" to each group. Share with your class:

Make up a drama of the events of your scene and title it. You will present your scene and title, with explanation, to the class.

Allow five minutes for groups to work up their skit and title. Then have groups take part in their presentation. Some possible titles for Scene I are "Jesus' Surprise Announcement," "At the End of the Road," or "Straight Talk about Death."

Some possible titles for Scene II are "Power Hungry," "Be Prepared to Suffer," or "Can You Take the Heat?" Some possible titles for Scene III are "True Greatness," "Great People Are Servants," or "The Servant Savior."

When the scenes are done, instruct groups to answer the final two questions on page 11. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 19 of this teacher's guide.) After groups have completed these two questions, have a volunteer read aloud this week's memory verse, Mark 10:45, from his or her Bible or page 12 of *Blueprint*.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

Discuss these questions with your teens:

- 1 **Why do you think Jesus so consistently emphasized the concept of service?** (Service doesn't come easy for many. It requires humbling oneself before God and others.)
- 2 **What does service do for the servant and for the one being served?** (Jesus said that those who serve are great. Those being served are helped and may be more open to receiving Jesus' love and forgiveness because of their contact with someone who seeks to show Jesus' love and compassion.)
- 3 **What is required of a servant?** (Answers will vary. Some possible requirements are helping others in need, humbling oneself, being willing to do "dirty" jobs, thinking of others' needs, etc.)
- 4 **What are the greatest obstacles to being a servant?** (Some possible obstacles are selfishness, wanting to be great, pride, unwillingness to be humble, etc.)

Jesus gave us the best possible example of what it means to serve, and nobody is greater than Him. Let's explore some ways that we can follow His example and serve others.



Lesson 2 Bible Study

who's the greatest

Mark 10:32-45

With Jesus leading the way, He and the disciples joined the crowd of people traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Read the following scenes from Mark 10:32-45 and come up with a title for each scene.

Scene I—Mark 10:32-34

Title: _____

On this particular Passover trip, Jesus had news for His disciples' ears only. Pulling the disciples out of the mainstream of traffic, Jesus told them what to expect once they arrived in Jerusalem.

► Read Mark 10:32-34 for Jesus' news, and then write a title for this scene.

Scene II—Mark 10:35-40

Title: _____

James and John may have missed the point Jesus was making. He talked about suffering and death; they wanted Jesus to do whatever they asked. When Jesus asked James and John what they wanted, they asked for the positions of prestige and power in God's kingdom.

► Read Mark 10:35-40 for Jesus' reply, and then write a title for this scene.

Scene III—Mark 10:41-45

Title: _____

The disciples already had one argument about who would be the greatest in God's kingdom. So naturally, James and John's request set off the other ten disciples. Who do those brothers think they are? Once again, Jesus had to explain why He came to earth.

► Read Mark 10:41-45 for Jesus' explanation, and write a title for this scene.

► Write a definition of greatness, based on verses 43 and 44.

► Why does this definition run counter to what most people think about being great?

Mark 10:32-45

"They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 'We are going up to Jerusalem,' he said, 'and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles. Who will mock him and spit on him; they will bind him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.'"

"Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.'"

"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

"They replied, 'Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.'"

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

"We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup, I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

"When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

Title will vary. Some suggestions are "Jesus' Surprise Announcement," "At the End of the Road," or "Straight Talk about Death"

Title will vary. Some suggestions are "Power Hungry," "Be Prepared to Suffer," or "Can You Take the Heat?"

Title will vary. Some suggestions are "True Greatness," "Servants Are Great," or "The Servant Savior."

Answer may be similar to this: Serving others is how you get to be great! Or, If you seek to serve, you'll become a great person.

Most great people in our society are served by others, not the other way around. Jesus said that to be great you must serve others. This was a new concept.

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

The group will explore how they can serve and why they do that.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on serving others. In the "Service Coupon" activity teens will create coupons for service to others. In "Righteous Chutzpah" students will read and discuss a *Blueprint* article. In "Community Needs" they will brainstorm ways that they could serve others in the community.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Serving others means that we have to bow out of the limelight. Serving others means that we give up recognition and personal gain in order to help someone else. Serving others means that we put self aside. The greatest example of a servant is Christ. The following activities will get you thinking more about how you can serve others. Remember if you want to be great, you need to serve others!

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

LES. 2

SERVICE COUPON

- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☒ Yarn
- ☒ Magazines

In this activity you will create a coupon redeemable for an act of service that you will perform for someone else.

Use construction paper, markers, glue, tape, magazine pictures, scissors, and yarn to create a service coupon that could be given to someone. Think especially of family members who could use a helping hand. It could read, "This coupon entitles holder to one free car wash" or "This coupon can be redeemed for one free dog wash." Give away your coupon this week, and when somebody wants to redeem it, perform the service with a smile.

RIGHTEOUS CHUTZPAH

- ☐ "Righteous Chutzpah" from *Blueprint*

You will read and discuss an article from *Blueprint*.

Turn to pages 8-10 of *Blueprint* and read "Righteous Chutzpah!" on your own. After you have finished reading it, get together with another person who also read this story and discuss the following:

- ➊ Describe "chutzpah" in your own words.
- ➋ Do people at your school or in your neighborhood think of Jesus as gutsy? Explain.
- ➌ How can you show righteous chutzpah this week?



COMMUNITY NEEDS

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Poster board

In this activity you will think about how teenagers could serve others in the community.

As a group, come up with a list of needs in your community that teens could be a part of meeting. Use markers to write these needs on a large sheet of poster board. Next, choose the need that everyone is most interested in. Come up with an action plan of how your group could meet this need. For example, if the need is hunger, your group could volunteer at a soup kitchen. If you have time, write action plans to meet as many of the needs as possible.

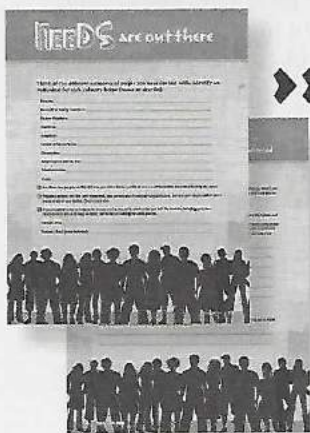
Schedule a time and place for your group to implement at least one of your action plans.

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Want to be great?
Serve others!



Students will apply what they've learned by committing to serve others this week.

Materials:

- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ "Needs Are Out There" worksheet from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Mark 10:45, this week's memory verse, from the Bible or page 12 of *Blueprint*.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

As Jesus was walking with His disciples, He may have been thinking about what was ahead. He was about to demonstrate the ultimate example of service by giving His life. The men who were traveling with Him had been with Him for over a year. Imagine Jesus' sadness when He realized that all they could think about was themselves.

Give each teen a pencil or pen and have them turn to the "Needs Are Out There" worksheet found on *Blueprint* pages 13-14. Have teens complete page 13 of their worksheets. The categories provided in the worksheet are friends, immediate family members, fellow Christians, relatives, neighbors, locker or lab partners, classmates, shopkeepers, clerks, troublemakers, and others. After adequate time, ask your teens:

- **Are there any people on this list who you know have a problem or a need? Underline them and identify the need.**
- **Pick one person you like and know well, one person who is only an acquaintance, and one person you either don't know at all or you dislike. Check each one.**

If you decided to try to help one person you've checked, what could you do? Be realistic, keeping your own limitations in mind. It may be hard, but write something for each person. Encourage students to complete page 14 of the worksheet now.

After sufficient time, invite teens to share some of the ways they want to serve at least one person whose name they wrote down on their worksheet. (Teens may or may not want to share the name of the person they want to serve.) Do not force anyone to volunteer if they don't want to. Encourage your teens to follow through on their commitments in the coming week.

Close the class session with a time of silent prayer as your high-school students pray for the people whose names they wrote down on their worksheets. Remind your class to read the "Daily Faith" devotions on page 12 of *Blueprint* throughout the week.

Before the teens leave the class, ask if anyone would like to volunteer to share his or her story of trusting Jesus next week.

Seeing God throughout the Week Remind students to serve others this week. Encourage them to be open to how God might be leading them.

Lesson 3

Bible Basis:

John 5:16-27

Focus:

We can believe Jesus is the Son of God.

True Acceptance

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Clarifying Perceptions: Students will discuss their views on Jesus.

- ☐ Whiteboard, markers
- ☐ "Jesus...for Real?" prophecies from *Blueprint*

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Viewing the Son: Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss Jesus' relationship with His Father.

- ☐ Bibles, pencils or pens, copies of *Blueprint*, markers, paper
- ☒ Masking tape

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Working with Salvation's Meaning: Teens will think of ways to believe Jesus is the Son of God.

- ☐ Paper, pencils or pens, poster board, markers, copies of *Blueprint*, construction paper, scissors, tape, Bibles

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Personalizing Salvation: Teens will either trust Jesus as their Savior or commit to share God's gift with someone.

- ☐ "Jesus...for Real?" prophecies from *Blueprint*
- ☐ White board, markers
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."

—John 5:24

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

Jesus challenged the comfort of the Jewish leaders once again with His claims about Himself. According to Jewish legalists, all work was forbidden on the Sabbath—even healing, except in emergencies. The religious leaders didn't classify this healing Jesus did as an emergency, but Jesus ignored their strict Sabbath interpretations and regulations. The phrase "was doing" in John 5:16 is a repeated action, indicating that this wasn't the only time Jesus healed on the Sabbath.

Jesus' justification for His actions was based on His relationship with His Father. The Jews didn't refer to God as "My Father," because it was too intimate a term. This added more fuel to their fire and they stepped up their efforts to kill Jesus, not only because He healed on the Sabbath, but also because He "call[ed] God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18).

Jesus' response to all this was to point to His dependence on the Father. In verse 20, Jesus stated that the Father loves the Son and reveals His plans and purposes, and the Son carries them out. And if the religious leaders and Pharisees condemned Him, they condemned the Father as well. Healing wasn't the greatest act the Father and Son performed together. They would raise the dead and judge the wicked. This was total heresy to the teachers of the law and religious leaders. Only God could raise the dead, and He didn't give this privilege to anyone else.

Teacher Devo



Many Christians vividly remember the day they asked Jesus into their heart. Participating in the salvation of others is an equally memorable event. Sharing the gift of Jesus Christ with others gives Christians great joy, not only because they may help lead that person to trust Jesus with his life, but also because they're reminded of their own conversion.

It is easy to get caught up in the busyness of the holiday season and forget that salvation is what it's all about. Read John 5:16-27. God desired to save humans. So great was His love that even the sacrifice of His only Son was not too much.

Take some time to reflect on what you most appreciate about God's gift of Jesus to you.

Pray that He will give you a passion for the people around you—that teens and others you encounter may find this special gift of Jesus as well.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Remind your students that they have already been given the greatest gift of all time. Jesus Christ left heaven and came to earth. He has given life eternal to all who put their trust in Him.

Do the Before-Class Option as an ice-breaker. This activity won't put students on the spot, and it will help them get to know each other better.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Eighty-five percent of all individuals who make a decision to accept Christ do so before the age of 18. That's good news for youth workers. However, the average age for conversion is nine. What might these statistics mean?

They might mean that teens are less likely to accept Christ now than they were as children—a life-altering decision like becoming a Christian is difficult for some teens to make. But don't be discouraged! The good news is that teens are more likely to make a decision to trust Jesus now than they will be in years to come. Their ideas are still being molded; they are searching for truth. Jesus can and will reach teens. The Holy Spirit doesn't care simply about statistics. He is busy at work in your teens' lives.

Also, teens are powerful evangelists. When teens share their faith, other teens listen! The Christians in your class are impacting the non-Christian teens they encounter on a daily basis.

Remind your students that they are making an impact for eternity each time they follow Jesus' example of sharing God's love and the hope of Jesus.

Your role as teacher is to present the truth of Jesus Christ. Although it may seem like some teens don't grasp it, seeds are being planted that may sprout later. Don't give up. Your life is impacting your teens. As they see Jesus in you, they will be more likely to accept the reality of Jesus as the Son of God. Be encouraged. You are making a lasting difference.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We can believe Jesus is the Son of God.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Have teens use markers to write on a whiteboard the best gift they ever received.

Students will express their views on Jesus.

Materials:

- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ "Jesus...for Real?" prophecies from *Blueprint*

Write the word *prophecy* on the whiteboard. Invite students to write on the board as many fulfilled prophecies from the Bible that they can remember. When students have finished, have them turn to pages 17 and 18 in *Blueprint* and call on volunteers to read the headers of the twelve prophecies.

There were hundreds of prophecies about the coming Savior. These pages list just 12 of them.

- ➊ Are any of these prophecies new to you? (Invite students to share.)
- ➋ If Jesus' only significance was in the form of a baby, how would that change the entire Gospel message? On the other hand, why is it striking that He was born as an innocent child instead of entering the scene as a powerful king? (Invite students to share their thoughts on this.)



These are twelve prophecies that were given to us so that we can believe Jesus is the Son of God. That's what today's lesson is all about. Let's read more about what we believe about Jesus and how we can know that Jesus is the Son of God.



Free! Downloadable
Options for Steps 1 and 4.
[resources.wesleyan.org/
real-life-downloaded](http://resources.wesleyan.org/real-life-downloaded)

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

John 5:16-27



MORE BIBLE INFO

The message of Jesus redemption is not unique to the New Testament. That message is in the prophecies of the Old Testament. God promised that through Abraham all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Isaiah foretold the suffering of the Messiah (Isa. 53).

In John, Jesus' identity is stressed. He is God (in 1:1). In John 10:33 His enemies said He made Himself God. In 20:28 Thomas worshiped Him as God.

Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss Jesus' relationship with His Father.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☒ Masking tape

A lot of people overlook the significance of Jesus' birth. It wasn't just a memorable event that took place on a starry night. Christ's birth is one of God's big events in His way of offering us eternal life.

Hand out pencils or pens and have teens turn to page 15 of *Blueprint*. Ask one teen to volunteer to read aloud the introduction. Have other teens take turns reading the Lesson Scripture aloud. Now lead your students to answer the six Bible study questions, discussing the answers together. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 26 of this teacher's guide.) As your class comes up with answers for each question, use a marker to write each answer on a single sheet of paper, and use masking tape to stick it to the wall. Tape these answers in the shape of the cross, but do so in such a way that the cross is not evident until after all sheets are taped to the wall.

The message of salvation hinges on the cross. Romans 6:23 says that we all deserve death because of our sin. Christ did not deserve death because He had no sin. He allowed Himself to die, painfully, for our sins. God wants us to believe what He did for us on the cross and receive Him.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud John 5:24, this week's memory verse, from the Bible or page 16 of *Blueprint*.

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."

John 5:24

It's natural for people to react in one way or another to Jesus' claim to being the Son of God. After all, most people don't go around claiming to be God's Son. Jesus not only claimed to be God, but He also backed up His claims with His actions.

Invite your students to share about a time that they talked about their belief in Jesus with an unbeliever. What did you say to explain your beliefs? How did you show that belief in God is possible or reasonable? Did you encourage belief and invite the person into it?

If you have teens that volunteered last week to share their testimonies, you may wish to take this opportunity to share your own testimony now to conclude Step 2. Your teens will share in Step 4. If you don't have any teens that volunteered to share, then wait and share your testimony in Step 4.

Jesus destroyed their comfort zone by making this claim. Instead of considering the possibility and listening to God, they closed their minds and rejected Jesus. Also, His claims went against everything essential they taught about God.

Jesus was in an intimate relationship with God. He was totally dependent upon God to act.

The Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He does. Both give life. The Father chooses not to judge but has the Son do so. (The Son who loves us and gave His life for us.)

God the Father, through the work of the Son, does.

Sketches will vary.

Allow individuals in your class to share. Responses might include the following: We can't gain eternal life on our own; we need someone else to die for us. God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to take our sin from us. By dying on the cross, Jesus took our sin and offers us eternal life. By trusting in Jesus and placing our faith in what He did for us, we have a relationship with Him and thus eternal life.

Lesson 3 Bible Study

born to die, born to live

John 5:16-27

It's a fact: people like birthdays. When it's someone's birthday, we throw a party, give presents, and eat cake. Birth is something everyone has in common.

Here's another fact: people don't like funerals. When someone dies, we mourn and comfort each other. Like birth, death is something everyone has in common. Jesus came as a baby. Christ wasn't just born; He also died and rose again. And there's more. Because Christ is the Son of God, He has made it possible for us to have eternal life too.

Read John 5:16-27.

- ▶ Why do you think the religious leaders were angry enough to kill Jesus because of His claim to be the Son of God? (vss. 15-18)
- ▶ Read John 5:19-21. What does this tell you about Jesus' relationship with God?
- ▶ List some things the Father does and some things the Son does (vss. 19-23).
- ▶ Who gives people eternal life (vss. 22-24)?
- ▶ Draw a simple sketch based on John 5:24.
- ▶ Now, in your own words, explain how someone can have eternal life.

John 5:16-27

"Go, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. "In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working. "For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

"Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does. "For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does, yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. "That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged, but has crossed over from death to life. "Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. "And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Teens will explore who Jesus is and solidify their belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on Jesus as the Son of God. In "Who Christ Is" teens will write speeches about Jesus. In the "What Christ Did" activity students will make a list of things that Christ did to pave the way for human salvation. In "Why Christ Did What He Did" teens will make memory verse bookmarks.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Knowing who Christ is, what He did, and why He did what He did for us helps us believe Jesus is the Son of God.

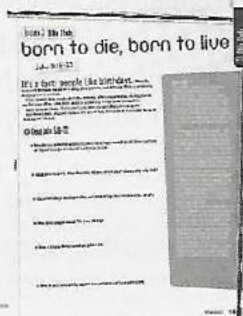
TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

WHO CHRIST IS

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Bibles or copies of *Blueprint*

In this activity you will write a speech about Jesus that could convince non-believers that Jesus is the Son of God.

Include facts about Jesus (He was born of a virgin; His life fulfilled Old Testament prophecies; etc.) and give reasons why non-believers can believe that Jesus is God's Son. You may use your Bible and/or page 15 of *Blueprint* to help you. If you have time, read your speech to a partner and listen to your partner's speech, and give reasons why non-believers can believe that Jesus is God (miracles, His words and actions, His death and resurrection, etc.).



WHAT CHRIST DID

- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

In this activity you will make a list of important actions in the Son of God's life on earth.

On a large sheet of poster board, use markers to list things Christ did that paved the way for humans to be saved. For example, He called God His Father; He promised eternal life; He honored the Father; etc. Use your Bible and the Lesson Scripture on page 15 of *Blueprint* to help with your list.

Now choose five things from the list that would be most important to share with a non-believer and circle them. Discuss:

- ▶ Why did you choose these five things?



WHY CHRIST DID WHAT HE DID

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tape

In this activity you will make a bookmark with this week's memory verse.

Turn in your Bible or to page 16 of *Blueprint* and read this week's memory verse, John 5:24. Then create a bookmark with the memory verse on it. Use construction paper, scissors, markers, and tape for your bookmark. Make a design or border on the bookmark that would symbolize "Why Christ died for humans." This could be a dove, a border of smiling faces, hands clasped together, etc. When you're finished, show your bookmark to the others in your group.



STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We can believe Jesus is the Son of God.



Teens will apply what they've learned by accepting Jesus as their Savior or committing to share God's gift with someone else.

Materials:

- ☐ "Jesus...for Real?" prophecies from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Introduce the teens who volunteered to share their testimonies and allow them to share at this time. If you didn't have any volunteers, take this time to share your own testimony now. After the time of sharing, say:

We can believe the facts about who Jesus is and what He did on the cross. However, a lot of people are skeptical of how a little baby in a manger could be the Savior of the world.

Have students turn again to pages 17 and 18 and look at "Jesus...for Real?" prophecies from *Blueprint*.

- ❶ Which of these prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus—simply by being born? (Numbers 1 and 2).

As Jesus grew up—and especially when He died—He accomplished the rest of these prophecies as well. But for now, we're focused on Jesus as the Son of God. As time permits, read a few prophecies and all details provided about that prophecy.

Next, write the following sentence on the whiteboard: "God I _____ Your Son's gift of eternal life."

Underneath the sentence write these three responses:

- A. have received
- B. want to receive
- C. need time to think about receiving

Think about receiving a gift—the gift of eternal life Jesus offers. This week's memory verse is from John 5:24. "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."

Jesus offers His gift of salvation for those here who haven't yet accepted it. Are you going to receive what He is offering? And for those who have already accepted this gift, who do you know who needs to hear about it?

Have a time of silent prayer in which teens can choose to accept God's gift or commit to share His gift with others. Be available after class to assist teens who may need to talk further. (The "Leading High Schoolers to Christ" section found on the inside back cover of this teacher's guide can help you talk with your teens who are interested in becoming Christians.)

Conclude class with a short prayer thanking God for sending Jesus Christ to earth on our behalf and for our assurance that Jesus is God's Son. Encourage your teens to read the "Daily Faith" devotions on page 16 of *Blueprint* during the week.



Seeing God throughout the Week Let students know that they need to take a stand on what they believe. Encourage students to study Jesus' claims and if they agree Jesus is God's Son, then ask how they can share this truth.

lesson 4

Bible Basis:

Luke 4:14-21; 8:1-3; 17:15-18;
18:35, 38, 40-43a; 23:39-43

Focus:

Jesus calls us to reach out to anyone in need.

Reaching Out

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Listing the Cliques: Students will discuss various cliques and their implications.

- ☐ Whiteboard, markers

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Witnessing Jesus' Outreach: Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how Jesus reached out to people in need.

- ☐ Bibles, pencils or pens, copies of *Blueprint*

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Building Bridges: Teens will practice what they've learned about reaching out to anyone in need.

- ☐ Paper, scissors, index cards, pencils or pens, markers, construction paper, tape
- ☒ Magazines
- ☐ "Empathy It's Bigger Than You Think!" from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Moving Outside Our Boundaries: Students will commit to reach out to others in need during the coming week.

- ☐ Pencils or pens, list from Step 1
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me to proclaim
good news to the poor. He has sent me
to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind."

—Luke 4:18

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

By the time of Christ, it was mistakenly believed that God's covenant was only for the Jews. Acts 10 showed God's intervention in Peter's life by revealing to Him that his perspective was too small: God was drawing to Himself not only Jews but also Gentiles. Though the New Testament church began to understand and reach out, the apostle Paul even had to rebuke the apostle Peter for actions that were too narrow (in Gal. 2).

In 1 Corinthians 1—3, Paul condemned cliques. In James 2, James addressed people who treated others with bias. According to a custom called "the freedom of the synagogue," the synagogue rulers could ask anyone they wished to read Scripture and give the sermon. Since Jesus had become well-known by this time, the synagogue rulers invited Him to lead the service. Jesus accepted the invitation. Although there was a set reading for the day from the Law, Jesus probably was able to choose His own reading from the prophets.

For the prophetic reading, Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2. Next, He delivered a sermon based on the passage. Luke recorded the beginning of the sermon: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). The people of Nazareth had heard what their hometown boy had been up to—preaching to crowds, healing the sick, and casting out demons—and wouldn't accept that He was God's chosen one, the promised Messiah, who brought salvation and healing, both spiritual and physical, to all people.

Teacher Devo



"I will bless you....All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:2-3). What a great picture of God's distribution plan! Like a warehouse that receives items to distribute to retail outlets, Christians are to send out what they receive from God. Sometimes, however, Christians receive God's blessings and fail to share them with others.

Read Luke 4:18-19. If it was Jesus' mission on earth "to proclaim good news to the poor. . . to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor," and we as Christians are to follow Jesus, shouldn't that be our mission as well?

Take time to consider the state of your warehouse. Do you enjoy the comfort of God's blessings only with Christian friends or by yourself? What are some ways that you could share your blessings with those who are not as blessed?

Pray that God would give you eyes to see what He has given you and then His heart to see and respond to those in need.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Acts 10:34-35 tells us that "God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." This is the example that we, too, should follow. As you teach this lesson, help your teens discover that God's love isn't restricted to any one group of people, and that they have a responsibility to share God's love without partiality.

The more students understand why the Gospel is good news, the more likely they will be to share it with others. Remind them that this is the greatest news they'll ever know! You can't keep good news a secret for very long.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Be aware that some teens in your class may feel uncomfortable talking about "cliques" and "groups" because those words have negative connotations.

Teens often join groups because they find power in numbers. Even within their own groups teens may spend years finding out exactly where they belong and how they relate to their peers.

Teens' need to form groups actually comes from a God-given desire to belong and have significance. Unfortunately, these kinds of groups can go awry when teens make poor decisions and join gangs or destructive peer groups. Whatever the cause for negative groupings—the deterioration of the family or something else—the good news is that Christians belong to a more significant group: God's family. Christians

can acknowledge the existence and power of groups and challenge others to reach beyond them.

Encourage your students to branch out and get to know others in the group. Remind them that they may be surprised to find that they have a great deal in common with some of the other teens that they don't know very well.

Help your students connect by playing mixing games and grouping different teens together in your class.

As you talk with your teens about cliques, try to respect everyone's opinion, even if you don't necessarily agree with them. Be aware that this could be a sensitive subject for some of your youth, but it may open communication among certain individuals.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Jesus calls us to reach out to anyone in need.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Invite your teens to check their knowledge of one another by guessing what each person likes to do on the weekends. Have them share their guesses and the correct answers with each other.

Students will discuss various cliques and their implications.

Materials:

- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers

To get students thinking about people different from themselves, engage them in the following brainstorming activity and discussion.

Today we're going to list different types of cliques or groups. Think about the various groups that exist in your school and other places you hang out.

Have teens call out different types of cliques or groups that exist in their world, such as athletes, very academic students, troublemakers. As they share, write these on a whiteboard. Have teens describe each group in a word or phrase. Write these descriptions of the groups next to the names of the groups. Discuss these questions with your class:

- **How do you feel around people who aren't in your group?** (*Allow various teens to share. Some may feel uncomfortable around people who aren't in their group; others may say they don't function within a clique but are friends with everyone.*)
- **What do you think teens could do to break down the number of cliques that exist?** (*Some examples are getting to know others, joining activities that allow for mixing, having a variety of friends, etc.*)
- **In what ways do these groups help teens?** (*Some teens may defend cliques by saying that they allow people who get along best to have a place to feel comfortable.*)
- **In what ways do these groups hurt teens?** (*Some teens may say that cliques keep them from getting to know potential friends.*)
- **As Christians, how should we react toward those who want to join in our groups?** (*We should be open to others. Christians should be friendly to everyone. This doesn't mean that we should become best friends with everyone because some people can bring us down; however, we can serve as good witnesses to others by including them and making them feel welcome.*)

Tape your list to a wall. You will be use it again in Step 4 of this lesson.

Jesus' community also had social groups. As a teen He might have completed this exercise describing groups such as "tax collectors," "lepers," "women," "scribes," and "Pharisees." Today we will study how Jesus calls us to reach out to people in a variety of groups, to anyone who is in need.

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

Luke 4:14-21; 8:1-3;
17:15-18; 18:35, 38, 40-
43a; 23:39-43

Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how Jesus reached out to people in need.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

The term *Good News* comes from two Old English words: God (good) and spell (news). The original word was "Godspell," from which we get our word Gospel. So when we talk about the Gospel, we really are talking about good news.

And it's good news for everyone, but occasionally Christians decide that some people are more worthy than others to hear the good news of Jesus—and nothing can be further from the truth, as we'll find out in today's Bible study.

Distribute pencils or pens and have students turn to page 19 of *Blueprint* and read the introductory paragraph aloud. Have a teen volunteer read the Lesson Scripture aloud. Now assign four teens the responsibility of roleplaying Mary (Luke 8:1-3), the leper (Luke 17:15-18), the blind man (Luke 18:35, 38, 40-43), and the criminal (Luke 23:39-43). (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 33 of this teacher's guide.)

Interview the four with this question and have them answer as their character:

- 1 **How did you know the Gospel was for you?** (Answers will vary. Suggested answers can be found on the following page.)

After all four characters have shared, discuss this question as a class:

- 2 **How do you know the Gospel is for everyone?** (Answers will vary.)

Have a volunteer read aloud Luke 4:18, this week's memory verse, from a Bible or page 20 of *Blueprint*.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind." Luke 4:18

- 3 **What example did Jesus set for us by His actions that fulfilled this Scripture?** (Jesus set an example of reaching out to anyone in need, regardless of social or economic status or any other factor.)

Jesus was born into a Jewish family and as a male was automatically part of a national social group. Yet, He crossed over social boundaries and cliques because He cared for all people and wanted them to have the message of the kingdom of God. Jesus was not concerned primarily with preserving or destroying social distinctions, only that His message of salvation reach everyone, which in turn often did make a huge difference in social relationships. Jesus wasn't into cliques; instead, Jesus reached out to everyone. Jesus calls on us to reach out to anyone in need.

MORE BIBLE INFO

The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) was offensive to Jews wanting to exclude Samaritans. The Samaritan was merciful to a neighbor because he had no boundaries to exclude anyone. Jesus may have placed His plot within that social context to show His fellow Jews that man-made boundaries "fencing out" other cultural groups were wrong and not what God's people do.



Answers will vary.

In male-dominated Jewish culture a woman's value was as someone's wife or daughter. For these women to be cured of evil spirits and diseases elevated their perceived worth. They experienced God's power working in them. They would probably say, "God's kingdom is for women, too!"

This man had two strikes against him: as a leper, he was contagious and ostracized; and as a Samaritan, he was considered a despicable half-breed, incapable of receiving God's promises to Israel. The leper might say, "God accepts me even if no one else does."

The blind man was used to having hundreds of people pass him by without a second thought. Jesus personally stopped to address him out of the entire street crowd. The man probably would say, "The Gospel helps people who can't help themselves."

Because the criminal was hanging on the cross, he could not make amends for his crime. After speaking with Jesus, he might say, "The Gospel is free for people who are powerless to make things right."

Jesus knew the Gospel was for everyone, because He knew what God had said and meant in Old Testament Scripture. The Good News was for the poor, the imprisoned, the blind, and the oppressed.

Lesson 4 Bible Study

extinct distinctions

Selections from Luke

In Bible times, the Pharisees and other religious leaders were convinced that status, nationality, and wealth were important distinctions in God's eyes. Christ came to change all that. His message of salvation was for everyone.

▶ Read Luke 4:14-21; 8:1-3; 17:15-18; 18:35, 38, 40-43a; 23:39-43.

Suppose the people described in these verses showed up in your Sunday school class today. You have the chance to ask each of them the same question. Here's the question:

▶ How do you know the Gospel is for everyone?

Write how each person might answer that question, based on the appropriate passages.

▶ The women (8:1-3)

▶ The man who had leprosy (17:15-18)

▶ The man who was blind (18:35, 38, 40-43)

▶ The criminal (23:39-43)

▶ Christ (look up 4:14-21, especially vs. 18)

Luke 4:14-21

"Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him."

"He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

"Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

Luke 8:1-3

"After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna, and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means."

Luke 17:15-18

"One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan."

"Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?'"

Luke 18:35, 38, 40-43a

"As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging."

"He called out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

"Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?'"

"Lord, I want to see," he replied.

"Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.'

"Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God."

Luke 23:39-43

"One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!'"

"But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.'

"Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'

"Jesus answered him: 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students will explore what it means to reach out to people.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on reaching out to anyone in need. In the "Reach-Out Game" activity teens will think about how to attract various types of people to Jesus Christ. In the "Reaching the Unreached" activity students will consider how to relate to teens from various groups. In "Empathy" teens will think about how they care for others.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Jesus gave us a model to follow when He related to all kinds of people from all walks of life. These activities will give opportunities for your students to reach out to others in the class

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

REACH-OUT GAME

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils or pens

Have each person in your group take an index card and pen. Without showing anyone, write on your card a description of a group, athletes, businesspeople, rich people, unpopular people. Don't restrict yourself to groups in a typical high school; think about groups of all ages. Have everyone who is playing the game place their index card facedown in a stack, and mix the cards up. Now take turns drawing a card and read aloud what's on it.

Tell how people generally react toward this group.

- What might show this type of person that Jesus cares about him or her?

Have the next person draw a card, and so on.

REACHING THE UNREACHED

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Tape
- ☒ Magazines

Draw and cut out a paper figure to represent a teen. Next, draw different sets of clothes for different cliques or cut these items out of magazines. Accessorize your paper figure with nose rings, band instruments, or letter jackets depending on the types of teens you choose. With your group, discuss:

- What do these accessories say about these people?
- How might you relate to each of the different groups represented by the clothing and accessories?

EMPATHY

- ☐ "Empathy It's Bigger Than You Think!" from *Blueprint*

Read "Empathy It's Bigger Than You Think!" on pages 21-23 of *Blueprint*.

Discuss:

- What struck you most about Terry Dobson?
- What advice from this article about empathy will you take with you?



STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Jesus calls us to reach out to anyone in need.

Students will apply what they've learned by committing to reach out to others in need during the coming week.

Materials:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ List from Step 1
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Jesus crossed social barriers. He set a model for reaching out to all people, regardless of their social status. Let's think about how we can follow Jesus' example and reach out to anyone in need, regardless of social status.

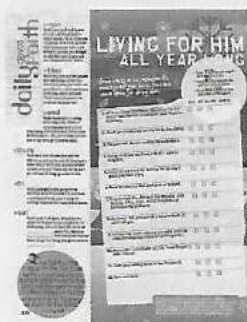
Distribute paper and pens and ask teens to create an individual action plan. Establish 10 minutes of quiet in the classroom. Refer to the lists from Step 1, and ask students to answer the following questions. You may want to write the questions on the board where everyone can see them.

- ▶ **Where am I on this list?** (*Teens can answer silently.*)
- ▶ **What do I want to communicate to other groups?** (*For example, "I care"; "We're equals"; or "You're important."*)
- ▶ **How can I reach out to others in practical ways?** (*For example, praying for them, saying "Hi," making room for someone, inviting someone to join my group, etc.*)
- ▶ **How can I be helpful and respectful at the same time?** (*For example, not forcing your help, being a good listener, looking people in the eye.*)
- ▶ **What is one thing that I will commit to doing this week?** (*Allow teens to think quietly about this.*)

When we reach across social boundaries to help others, we are saying by our actions that we care for them because God cares for them. This includes your best friend, a relative you don't see very often, someone in your neighborhood, someone who bugs you, someone who is very different from you at school, a wealthy person you've met, a physically challenged person, and someone from a different culture or social status. Reach out to these kinds of people because you are learning to care for them because of God's life in you.

Close class in prayer, thanking God for reaching out to people like you and your students and asking for His help as you and your students reach out to others in need during the coming week. Pray that God will open your eyes that you will see people's needs, regardless of their social status, and that God will show you how to reach out to them.

Remind your teens to read the "Daily Faith" devotions, found on page 20 of *Blueprint*, throughout the week.



Seeing God throughout the Week Encourage your students to see the needy people around them. Encourage students to make an effort to reach one person this week and help him or her.

lesson 5

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 1:1-10

Focus:

We can be confident that Jesus is God.

Jesus—He's the Real Deal!

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Nothing but the Truth: Students will participate in an activity and a discussion about truth.

- ☒ Quarter sheets of construction paper (different colors) with the secret phrase taped to a wall
- ☐ Markers
- ☒ Masking tape

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Inspecting the Truth: Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss the evidence for Jesus' deity.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Truth search: Your teens will practice what they've learned about being confident that Jesus is God.

- ☐ Bibles, markers, poster board, paper, pencils, construction paper, scissors

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Seeking the Truth: Teens will apply what they've learned by asking questions and seeking the truth this week.

- ☐ Posterboard, markers
- ☐ Bibles or copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom."

—Hebrews 1:8

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

The opening words of Hebrews 1 assume the basics—God exists and He has spoken. Jesus Christ is God's greatest communication to humankind. For hundreds of years, God had used prophets to give His messages to people. In the Old Testament, God spoke about justice through Amos and holiness through Isaiah; God used a voice to speak to Samuel and sent visions to Daniel. He also spoke through judges, nature, the law, and even poetry. God's Word, however, came supremely through Jesus. In Hebrews 1:2-4 the writer states seven ways to identify Jesus as the Son of God. The first four emphasize the nature of Christ: (1) Jesus existed with God at the beginning as Son and (2) Creator; (3) He exactly represents God's character; and (4) His word has God's power. The last three note Jesus' achievements: (5) because He was free from sin, Jesus was able to restore God and people to relationship; (6) having completed His work on earth, Jesus now sits beside the Father in the place of honor; (7) as God's Son, Jesus is greater than angels.

Many scholars think the letter's original readers were saying that, since the Law was delivered by angels (Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2), Old Testament revelation is superior to Christian revelation. To counter this view, the letter's writer pointed out that Christ is superior to the angels (1:4), using several Old Testament passages to do so. Jesus' "name," or title, is Son of God. Angels, on

—continued on next page

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Teacher Devo



Jesus validated people's need to know the truth: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Christians often struggle to accept both the human and divine natures of Jesus. Yet this struggle is essential in order to understand the true identity of Jesus Christ.

When do you understand Jesus's humanity the most? When you are sad or lonely? In times of prayer with God?

What situations help you understand the divine power of Jesus?

Pray for wisdom this week as you struggle to understand one of Jesus' most wondrous truths.

Understanding the Bible —cont'd

the other hand, are servants. They are called "ministering spirits" (vs. 14). Jesus sits in a place of authority; angels stand ready to accept an assignment. Jesus is the Creator; angels are created.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Confidence is something that some of your teens may possess in overabundance, while others may only dream of attaining it some day. Still others may portray a facade of confidence to cover up their true insecurity.

In today's lesson, help all your teens understand that there is one person who can give us all confidence, one person that we can all believe in. That person is, of course, Jesus Christ. No matter our insecurities or how we suspect that others perceive us, we can all know with confidence that Jesus is God, and that should make all the difference.

If you have teens in your group that are timid or shy, try to draw them out by asking them questions about their families, hobbies, sports, school activities, etc. It doesn't take much for teens to open up. They just need to know you care.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS...

Many teenagers see truth as relative; even religious truth may change for some teens. Some of your teens may accept Jesus as "a Son of God" but hesitate to trust Jesus as the only way to God. Many will have friends whose religious beliefs sound as important as their own. For many teens, discerning truth is difficult because their parents teach one thing, school another, and the church yet another.

In the next few years, teens' interest in religious ideas may increase. How important it is for your youth to understand the truth of Jesus and not get locked into false religions! Your teens

need to know that not everyone who preaches about Jesus is preaching truth. Many false doctrines exist, and your teens need to decipher what is from the Bible and what is of human origin.

Your teens also may hesitate to see beliefs other than Christianity as false. Remind them that God is a jealous God and He wants us to worship Him only.

In this session, help your youth evaluate the truth about Jesus' divinity (or deity) and gain confidence in the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We can be confident that Jesus is God.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Have your teens write one false statement and two true statements about themselves on a piece of paper. Then have them take turns sharing what they have written down. Allow other teens to guess which statements are false.

Students will participate in an activity and a discussion about truth.

Materials:

- ☒ Quarter sheets of construction paper (different colors) with the secret phrase taped to a wall
- ☐ Markers
- ☒ Masking tape

Use the following activity and discussion to get your teens thinking about truth and how it is pursued in a court of law.

Before class, use different colored construction paper for each letter and write with markers on quarter sheets the following phrase (one letter per sheet): N-O-T-H-I-N-G B-U-T T-H-E T-R-U-T-H. Use masking tape to tape this phrase (in order) to a wall with the letters face down so your teens can't see them.

Divide your youth into two teams, and have the teams try to guess the secret phrase. Have the teams take turns guessing letters of the alphabet. If a team guesses correctly, turn over all of the papers with that letter and have that team go again. If the first team doesn't guess a letter, let the next team go. Either team can guess the phrase at any time. After teens figure out the phrase, gather together and discuss the following questions:

- ▶ **What does this phrase mean?** (*Answers will vary.*)
- ▶ **Where might you hear the phrase used?** (*In a courtroom.*)
- ▶ **When you want to know the truth, what do you do?** (*Ask questions, research, consult books or computer resources, etc.*)
- ▶ **How do you decide if something is true?** (*Answers will vary.*)
- ▶ **Who do you talk to if you want to know the truth about something?** (*Answers will vary.*)

In today's session, we will look at several different facts that will help us determine the truth about Jesus.



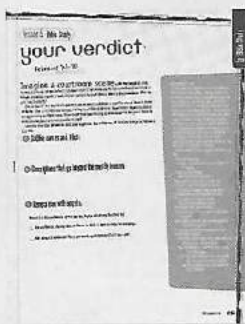
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STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 1:1-10



MORE BIBLE INFO

Jesus acknowledged His deity directly only a few times, at least as far as we can tell from the New Testament. He confirmed the fact for the Samaritan woman (John 4:25-26); He allowed His opponents to come to that conclusion without correcting them (5:18); and He affirmed Thomas's classic confession (20:28). The disciples, however, didn't always fully comprehend what He was saying (14:6-9).

Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss the evidence for Jesus' deity.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils and pens
- ☐ "Hebrews The Book of Better Things" from *Blueprint*

To better understand the Book of Hebrews, have students first turn to page 29 "Hebrews The Book of Better Things" in *Blueprint* and read it aloud. Have one student read the "Author Unknown" information, another the "Date of the Book" information, and another the six points in the "Brief Outline" section.

Next direct your youth to arrange their chairs into a courtroom setting (a few chairs up front facing an audience). Ask one teen to volunteer to be the prosecutor and have three others volunteer to be the defense team. Seat other teens as the jury. Direct your youth to "Your Verdict" on page 25 of *Blueprint* and read the introduction aloud.

Explain that the defense team will look for evidence in Hebrews 1:1-10, using their findings for "Godlike names and titles"; "Descriptions that go beyond the merely human"; and "Comparison with angels." (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 40 of this teacher's guide.)

Direct the prosecutor to think of reasons why people wouldn't believe in Christ. (For example, some people may feel that God is too big to limit Himself to one way to heaven or that a loving God wouldn't allow hell to exist, etc.) Instruct the jury to read the Lesson Scripture and write a preliminary decision about who Christ is on their copies of *Blueprint*.

Allow both the prosecutor and the defense team to share their views. After each side's arguments, lead the jury to determine a verdict. Gather together as a class and discuss the following:

- ▶ **What questions helped you determine your verdict?** (Answers will vary.)
- ▶ **How difficult was it to reach a verdict?** (Answers will vary.)
- ▶ **What verdict would your school friends give? Why?** (Answers will vary.)
- ▶ **How strong were the arguments in this passage for you personally?** (Answers will vary.)
- ▶ **What might make these arguments stronger for today's teenager?** (Answers will vary.)
- ▶ **What could you take from this passage that would help you convince a friend that Jesus is God?** (Answers will vary.)

We can be confident that Jesus is God. He gave us the information in the Bible and proved it by His life. We have the evidence to believe it!



Lesson 5 Bible Study

your verdict

Hebrews 1:1-10

Imagine a courtroom scene with the biggest trial in history ready to go before a judge—you! The evidence to be considered involves a tough question about a well-known person named Jesus. Here's the question: Who do you say Jesus is?

The writer of the Book of Hebrews wants you to deliver a verdict about Jesus' claim of deity. Like a courtroom lawyer, he lays out the evidence, layer upon layer, building an apparently airtight case. How clear and convincing is the evidence to you? Does he take you beyond any reasonable doubt?

Use the exercise below to find and organize the evidence of Christ's deity in Hebrews 1:1-10.

▶ **Godlike names and titles:**

▶ **Descriptions that go beyond the merely human:**

▶ **Comparison with angels:**

Based on the evidence given so far, my preliminary finding is:

- The evidence clearly shows Jesus is God. I bow to Him in worship.
- Not enough evidence for a personal commitment to Him—yet.

Heir of all things, Creator, radiance of God's glory, exact representation, powerful word, purifier, superior to angels.

God said, "You are my Son"; radiance of God's glory; is addressed by God as "God"; sits at right hand of God; angels worship Him; loved right living, hated wickedness; maker of foundations of heaven and earth.

Superior to angels; Jesus is the firstborn or heir of the whole creation; angels worship Jesus; angels come and go like flames of fire and wind, Jesus is forever; Jesus loved right living.

Hebrews 1:1-10

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels spirits, his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." He also says, "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands."

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We can be confident that Jesus is God.

Students will apply what they've learned by confidently asking questions and seeking truth.

Materials:

- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Bibles or copies of *Blueprint*

Ask the students to write the word TRUTH vertically on the paper and to create an acrostic. Encourage them to be artistic as they design their TRUTH poster. Then read John 14:6 from Bibles or page 26 of *Blueprint*.

▶ Who is saying these words? (Jesus)

That's pretty powerful. Jesus calls Himself the truth. Absolute truth. Let's talk together about the following statements:

- If I believe in the absolute truth that Christ is Lord, then I can know I was created for a purpose.
- If I believe Jesus is the Son of God, I will find fulfillment in following Christ.
- If I believe the absolute truth that Scripture is inspired, then some actions are right, others are wrong. I can form convictions based on this foundation of truth.
- If my faith is not built on the absolute truth that God is the ultimate Creator, life has no value or purpose, because life is an accident.

In John 14:6, Jesus was speaking to the disciples, guys who had seen miracles. Most of them were confident that Jesus was the Messiah, but some still were a little unsure.

▶ Are you surprised that the disciples had questions? Why or why not?

▶ Was Jesus angry with them because they asked questions? (No, He took time to answer their questions and share the truth.)

▶ Do you ever hesitate to ask questions about your faith? Why?

Asking questions is the first step to finding answers. If you don't know the answer to something, then you look for it. That's what the disciples were doing. They knew that they could trust Jesus to tell them the truth. Sometimes Christians let others supply the answers, like a cheat sheet. Their Bible gets dusty. Others pull it out only in emergency situations, like a first aid kit. But when you start reading your Bible and asking questions, it moves you in a new direction in your faith life.

Ask students to write John 14:6 on the bottom or back of their poster. End the class by inviting students to pray that their faith will be built on absolute truth.



Seeing God throughout the Week Ask students, "How confident are you that Jesus is God?" Encourage students to talk with a Christian friend or mentor this week who can help them with any doubts they may have and who will encourage their faith.

lesson 6

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 2:14-18; 5:1-3, 7-8

Focus:

Because Jesus was one of us,
He understands our needs.

Sharing Our Ups and Downs

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Being Real: Students will discuss humanity.

- ☐ Paper, pencils or pens
- ☒ (Optional) marionette puppet

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Sharing Our Suffering: Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss Christ's humanity.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, whiteboard, markers, pens, paper
- ☐ "Hebrews Old Testament Background" from *Blueprint*
- ☐ "He Was One of Us" from *Blueprint*

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Exploring the Implications: Students engage in activities that show Jesus understands our needs.

- ☐ Markers, whiteboard, pencils or pens, paper, poster board
- ☐ "In Every Way One of Us" from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Connecting with Jesus: Students will use their humanity to connect with Jesus.

- ☐ Paper, pencils or pens, markers, whiteboard
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

—Hebrews 2:18

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

The humanity of Jesus has repeatedly been challenged, especially by a heresy called Gnosticism [NÁHS-tih-sizz-uhm]. The ideas of Gnosticism plagued the early church and included the falsehood that all flesh is inherently evil. In short, Gnostics believed that the spirit is pure and immortal and that physical matter is evil. People, then, are trapped in their bodies and are freed only if they gain a special knowledge of the truth. When the early Christians proclaimed that God came as the human Jesus, Gnostics denied it. "How could something pure reside in a defiled body?" they asked. In response to the Good News, Gnostics denied the Incarnation and Jesus' sufferings. By God's grace, the early church was able to recognize, identify, and reclaim Jesus' humanity as revealed in Scripture. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14).

"Because [Jesus] himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Heb. 2:18). Yet by becoming human, Jesus had to endure temptation and suffering. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus wept and prayed for an alternative to the Cross. Nevertheless, He said, "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). He "learned obedience from what he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). And through His death, He achieved the purpose of His incarnation: to "break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil" (2:14) and "free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (vs. 15).

Teacher Devo



It's a simple statement: "Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well" (John 4:6). Relatively uneventful. Yet what a glimpse into who Jesus was! He became tired—just like us. He had needs like we do. He needed to sit down and rest for a while. He felt the need for a time of rest. Although Jesus was God, He experienced life without special privileges. He went to parties, wept, rejoiced, and struggled with temptations. He chose to live as a human, limited by time and space and experiencing daily life for over 30 years.

Do you ever feel tired, sick, or frustrated or experience something that you feel Jesus might not understand?

In prayer now, take time to invite Jesus into every corner of your life. Tell Him frankly what you are facing. He will understand.

CLASSROOM TIPS

In today's lesson you will touch on some very personal issues of sin, temptation, and human weakness. Understanding Jesus' identification with us as human beings is a key to growth in every Christian's life. Depending on the rapport you have with your students, you may or may not want to get very personal with them. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your preparation and in your class time.

As you dive into this topic, use it to encourage your students. Many of the teens in your group are going through struggles and trials that they can't even verbalize. Jesus understands what they face even if they don't. Some students may struggle with difficult family situations that they don't want classmates to know about. Jesus understands. Help them to see that the truth of Jesus' humanity is a great comfort for all believers.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Use this lesson to talk about Jesus' humanity. Whatever emotions your teens may be feeling, be it depression or anxiety about their futures, Jesus wants to be a part of them.

As you meet and talk with teens, model a relationship with Christ that is honest. Be yourself and allow for expressions of your own humanity. Encourage teens to share their feelings and struggles with you and with Jesus.

Try to steer away, however, from the concept that Jesus is just a "friend" or "buddy" who listens and supports. Jesus does call Christians "friends" and "brothers and sisters" (John 15:15; Heb. 2:11), but He is also the perfecter of one's faith. He does not idly listen and condone; He loves your teens enough to call them to higher living.

Some students may be confused by the idea of Jesus being one of us. Explain to them that, although Jesus is God, He also became human. That means that He experienced emotions, physical pain, suffering, temptations, etc. He is uniquely God in all of this because He did not sin, even as He experienced all of these things.

Teens need someone who understands them. Who better to understand them than Jesus Christ, the one who knows all things and can understand all things.

During this lesson you may want to give your students time to list temptations that they are facing in their lives and encourage them to give them over to Jesus.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Because Jesus was one of us, He understands our needs.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Use string to tie two friends

together at the waist, with about a foot and a half of space between them. Let them negotiate a few stunts (moving through a crowd, climbing over a table, etc.). Once this is mastered, tie three friends together.

Students will discuss humanity.

Materials:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☒ (Optional) marionette puppet

Get your students thinking about the importance of Jesus becoming human.

Distribute paper and pencils or pens. Give students two minutes to write on paper and share with a neighbor their completion of this statement "It's great to be alive because . . ."

You probably remember the story of the wooden puppet Pinocchio, who wanted to be a real boy. (If you have a marionette puppet, use it here as an illustration while teens discuss the questions below.)

- ▶ **Why do you think Pinocchio wanted to be real?** (So he could make friends with people; so he wouldn't have to be different; so he could love like a human; etc.)
- ▶ **What do you think Pinocchio was missing by being wooden?** (Answers will vary. Teens might say that he was missing out on all the experiences and emotions that come with being human.)
- ▶ **What would you like to tell Pinocchio about the downside of being human?** (It hurts sometimes; you have to take care of your body; you feel emotions; you become sick; etc.)

The Bible says that Jesus was human, but sometimes people think He may have skipped out on some of the hard stuff. People may think that because Jesus was God, He was impenetrable, like a superhero. Or people think He couldn't have felt like they do right now. Scripture teaches something very different. It teaches that Jesus was one of us. It says that He felt things similar to what we do, and He understands our needs and can feel our pain. We can come before Him with all our human needs, and He will understand.

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 2:14-18;
5:1-3, 7-8

Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss Christ's humanity.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ "Hebrews Old Testament Background" from *Blueprint*
- ☐ "He Was One of Us" from *Blueprint*

Today we will study Christ's human characteristics. During the next few weeks, we will focus on various aspects of Christ's identity. Have students turn to page 36 of *Blueprint* and invite volunteers to read, "Hebrews Old Testament Background."

Next have students turn to page 31 of *Blueprint*.

Go over the *Blueprint* answers together as a class. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 47 of this teacher's guide.) God's Son, Jesus, lives infinitely, but He spent over 30 years within the boundaries of time and space, a new expression. Jesus was able to be both God and human. He had flesh and blood, yet He was God.

Have a few teens volunteer to read the Lesson Scripture.

Divide the class into three groups and assign the three Hebrews passages and questions to these groups. Give each group pencils or pen and a piece of paper and have them make a list of their emotions this past week.

Discuss as a class:

❶ Can you imagine Jesus feeling these same things? Why or why not?

(Answers will vary. Most teens will be able to imagine Jesus feeling emotions like them, but some may struggle with their emotions related to sins they commit. Since Jesus didn't sin, they may argue that He can't fully understand them. Remind your teens that, although Jesus did not sin, He did face temptation and He bore our sins on the cross.)

Have students turn to "He Was One of Us" on page 32 of *Blueprint* and have a student volunteer to read the description of Jesus provided. Have another volunteer read this week's memory verse from page 32 of *Blueprint*.

"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted,
he is able to help those who are being tempted." Hebrews 2:18



MORE BIBLE INFO

What do we mean when we say Christ was sinless?

Do we mean that He never tripped over a rock or lost a game? No, Jesus may have experienced these things in His humanity, but He never gave in to the temptation to sin. Jesus was morally perfect, though human (Heb. 4:15).

Flesh and blood; death (2:14); made like them in every way (2:17); suffered and tempted (2:18); crying and tears (5:7).

By Jesus' death, He defeated the devil, who holds the power of death. By Satan's defeat, we are released from fear of death (2:14-15).

As a High Priest, Jesus had to become human to make atonement for our sins, to reconcile us with the Father. Because He has been human, He can be merciful and faithful, helping us who are tempted (2:17-18).

A high priest's role was to represent people in spiritual matters before God. It included offering sacrifices for his own sins and then others' (5:1-3).

Yes, He can, because He went through temptation and suffering too. Only Jesus didn't give in to temptation. Humans often give in to their weaknesses.

When tempted, we can turn to Jesus and ask for help. He knows about weakness because He "suffered when He was tempted" (2:18). He is able to help us learn obedience, as He did.

Jesus cried loudly and with tears as He prayed. Jesus also had a heavenly Father whom He obeyed.

If Jesus had been given preferential treatment, He could not have felt and experienced the full range of humanity. This would have disqualified Him as a perfect representative of humanity before God's throne.

Lesson 6 Bible Study

Jesus humanly speaking

Hebrews 2:14-18; 5:1-3, 7-8

One of the toughest Bible truths to understand is the two natures of Christ. How can Jesus be fully divine and fully human at the same time?

Here's an illustration to help you understand this mystery.

- Think of Jesus' divine nature as a line that goes on forever in both directions. Draw a line below, placing an arrow at both ends.

- Draw the line again, but this time put a loop in the middle.

The loop represents Jesus' human nature. The whole line remains His divine nature. The boundaries of the loop represent Jesus' limitations as a man; the infinite line represents Jesus' limitless divinity.

- Draw a loop around every word or phrase in today's text that describes some aspect of Jesus' humanity.

Consider what these passages say about Jesus' humanity:

HEBREWS 2:14-18

- What physical characteristics indicate that Jesus was human?
- What great human fear has Jesus freed us from? How?
- Why did Jesus have to be human?

HEBREWS 5:1-3

- What was a high priest's role? Why was it important?
- Jesus was not a sinner. Can He really say: "I know just how you feel"? Explain.
- How can knowing about Jesus' humanity help when you feel weak or face temptation?

HEBREWS 5:7-8

- What actions of Jesus indicate that, in His human nature, He had a heavenly Father just like we do?
- Why do you think Jesus wasn't given preferential treatment by God?

Hebrews 2:14-18; 5:1-3, 7-8

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

* Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God; to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered."

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students engage in activities that bring them closer to the humanity of Jesus so they better connect with Him.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on Jesus understanding our needs. In the "Jesus at 16" activity students will brainstorm how Jesus' teenage years were similar to and different from their own. In the "In Every Way" activity teens will read and discuss an article in *Blueprint*. In the "Think about It!" activity they will contemplate aspects of Jesus' humanity.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

For some reason, it is hard to imagine Jesus having the same human struggles that we do. We believe that He is God, making perfect moral decisions. But we forget that He was also human, that He got tired, angry, hurt, and rejected. The following activities will help us remember that Jesus was one of us and understands our needs.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

JESUS AT 16

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Poster board

In a small group, make a chart about Jesus. Use markers and poster board to make two columns, one for "different" and the other for the "same." Now think of ways that Jesus would have been different from a typical 16-year-old student today. For example, He didn't use in-line skates, watch TV, or hang out at the mall. Then list ways that Jesus might have been the same. For example, He had friends; He had parents who told Him what to do; He had schedules to abide by; etc.

Discuss this question:

- ➊ How do the things in the "Same" column help you connect with Jesus?

IN EVERY WAY

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ "In Every Way...One of Us" from *Blueprint*

Read "In Every Way...One of Us" on pages 33-34 of *Blueprint*. Then answer the following questions on a piece of paper.

- ➊ How does it make you feel to know that Jesus was tempted like you are? Does it reassure you? Confuse you? Other?
- ➋ Why is Jesus the perfect one to help us with our temptations?
- ➌ Why are some shortcuts so tempting, like cheating, for example. Why is it worth it to resist these kinds of temptations?

Discuss your answers with the others in your group.



THINK ABOUT IT!

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Whiteboard

Jesus was God in flesh and blood for a time.

- ➊ Do you think Jesus might have been teased by others when He was a kid? Why or why not?
- ➋ Was He misunderstood as an adult? How?

As a group, make a list (using markers and a whiteboard) of five situations in which Jesus might have encountered His own humanity. Then write how Jesus might have reacted in those situations without sinning.

Discuss:

- ➌ What does the realization that Jesus experienced humanity in its fullest cause you to think about Him?

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Because Jesus was one of us, He understands our needs.

Students will connect with Jesus from their humanity.

Materials:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Refer once again to today's memory verse.

"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." Hebrews 2:18

When Jesus came as a baby, He did not escape the pain and joy that living on this earth brings. He experienced it all, except without sin. Recognizing His experience on this earth helps us to go to Him and lean on Him because He is a faithful and merciful listener.

Use a marker to write the following four sentences on the whiteboard.

1. Jesus, if You really were flesh and blood like me, then You'd understand . . .
2. Jesus, I know You shared my humanity, but . . .
3. Jesus, I'm really disappointed about . . .
4. Jesus, can You handle how I feel about . . .

Jesus lived on earth as a human. There is nothing that He can't handle. We can be totally honest with Him. Distribute paper and pens to each person and have them write a journal entry to God. Have your teens begin with one of the sentences above or construct their own as they write journal entries.

After a few minutes, discuss this question in regard to Jesus' humanity and their future.

What situation do you want to invite Christ into this week? (Answers will vary.)

Pray for your students, asking God to show Himself to them in ways they understand and connect. Remind them that they can talk to Jesus about anything they encounter, and ask Him to help with any of their problems and situations.

Remind your teens to read the "Daily Faith" devotions on page 32 of *Blueprint* during the week.



Seeing God throughout the Week Ask your students this question: "What needs do your friends and family have?" Encourage your students to ask for help from God when they are faced with struggles.

lesson 7

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-16; 7:23-26

Focus:

Because Jesus is on our side, we can approach God.

Approaching God Confidently

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Getting Out of Trouble: Students will discuss getting in trouble and the people best suited to help them out of trouble.

- ☒ Three large sheets of paper with scenarios written on them
- ☐ Tape

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Having Jesus on Our Side: Teens will complete the *Blueprint* Bible study and look at how they can approach God.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or paper, markers, whiteboard

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Using What We Have: Students will explore the gift of Jesus when we approach God.

- ☐ Bibles, paper, scissors, pencils or pens
- ☐ "Under Pressure" from *Blueprint*
- ☐ "Jesus Meets Your Needs" from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Praying Confidently: Your teens will make a plan to approach God confidently this week.

- ☐ Pencils or pens, index cards
- ☐ "Hebrews Purpose of the System" from *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

—Hebrews 4:16

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

God Himself established the priesthood in Israel "to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1). That is, the high priest came before God's throne to represent His people, offering sacrifices first for his own sins and then for those of the people.

The high priest's greatest privilege was to enter the Most Holy Place of the temple once annually, on the Day of Atonement, and make atonement for sin (Lev. 16:2, 34). The Most Holy Place is an earthly representation of heaven, where Christ now dwells forevermore (Heb. 4:14). The high priest would sprinkle blood before the atonement cover of the ark of the covenant (Lev. 16:14-15). The heavenly counterpart of the atonement cover is the "throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16), where the Lord sits. By sprinkling the blood, the high priest would ask God to forgive the Israelites' sins (Lev. 16:16). But because Jesus shed His own blood, He carries on a continual ministry of intercession for us with the Father (Heb. 7:25).

In Old Testament times, God appointed Aaron and his descendants to this office. In New Testament times, God appointed Jesus to replace the old system's high priest. The Book of Hebrews lays out a comparison between the old and new. The old covenant sacrifices were made annually, were transitory, were conducted on earth in a tent, dealt mainly with the breaking of God's law, and were transacted with animal blood. The new covenant in Christ was made once and for all time, is eternal, was transacted in a

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

—continued on next page

Teacher Devo



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me" (Mark 10:14).

The timelessness of such a beautiful invitation is for everyone. We can approach God anytime just as a child would. God invites you just as you are! Any time is a great time to spend with Jesus.

Instead of dirty clothes and a runny nose, you may have a soiled conscience or an inner life that feels out of control. Because Jesus dealt with your sin and intercedes for you today, you can approach God confidently. You don't have to be afraid to approach His throne. He always wants to spend time with you.

Is there any deed or attitude that you are afraid to bring before His throne?

Find some private time away from interruptions and talk to God about your fears.

Ask Him to help you trust in what Christ has done on the cross and is doing now as your intercessor.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Blueprint contains various pages on the Book of Hebrews. Use these background pages to add to your students' knowledge of the Book of Hebrews.

You may want to have your students take turns reading this information on Hebrews out loud or give ample time for students to read this Bible background silently on their own.

Understanding the Bible —cont'd

heavenly sanctuary, has power to cleanse sinners' consciences, and was transacted with Christ's own blood (Heb. 7—10). In daily living Christ intercedes for Christians before the Father. Since Jesus lived as a human, He understands the frailty and weaknesses of humans. And since He is also God's Son, He can represent the Father to believers (Heb. 4:15-16).

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Topics such as "priesthood" and "sacrifices" may feel remote to teens, even if they have been in church all their lives. What teens do understand instantly is the issue of fairness or justice. If someone wrongs them, they naturally feel that someone needs to pay. And if they have broken some rule or law, they automatically know that they are in trouble. This instinct toward justice is part of God's plan. He, too, says someone needs to accept the consequences when His laws are broken. One of your goals for your teens may be that they establish the

habit of going to God with everything. What prevents them? Guilt? Fear? Laziness? Lack of understanding?

For this lesson, try to equip your teens with the truth that they have someone who waits for them at the base of God's throne. This someone is Jesus, who can relate to their humanity and who can take care of their guilt. When they approach God, they are approaching not someone who is angry but someone who is waiting expectantly for them.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Because Jesus is on our side, we can approach God.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Have teens share with one person a time they remember being bullied and how they got out of that situation.



Free! Downloadable Options for Steps 1 and 4.
resources.wesleyan.org/real-life-downloaded

Students will discuss getting in trouble and the people best suited to help them out of trouble.

Materials:

- ☐ Tape
- ☒ Three large sheets of paper with scenarios written on them

Before class, write out the three scenarios given below, each on a separate large sheet of paper, and tape them to walls in different areas of the room.

Ask your teens: **Have you ever been in serious trouble and had to scramble to get out of it?** Around the room are three scenarios that could happen to teens. Go around and read them all. Then choose one that you would be interested in discussing and stand next to it.

I will let you know when time is up. Then I'll have you discuss the scenario and why you chose it. Give your students a few minutes to choose a scenario.

Scenario 1: A teen has been accused of participating in a cheating conspiracy at school.

Scenario 2: A teen climbed into a friend's window at 2:00 a.m. and is now charged with "breaking and entering."

Scenario 3: A teen is arrested for protesting an "injustice."

Have each group discuss and answer:

1. Who are the authorities in this scene and how easy will they be to talk with? (Answers could include police, angry parents, teachers, school administrators, etc.)
2. Who should this teen pick to represent his or her defense (parents, friends, lawyer, witness, etc.)? Why? How could this person help in this teen's defense?
3. From 1–10, rate the defender's understanding of the situation and the teen involved. Do the same with how much power you think the defender might have to fight for this teen's rights.

After your students have had a few minutes to discuss these questions, ask for a volunteer from each group to report their answers.

The best person to represent any of these teens for their defense would be someone who (1) has a lot of power and (2) knows and cares about this teen. Let's see what this has to do with our relationship with God.

Lesson 7 Bible Study

Jesus: our priest

Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-16; 7:23-26

Words that should be circled in the word search are:

prays for us (7:25)
 empathizes (4:15)
 merciful (4:16)
 a messenger (apostle) (3:1)
 experienced with temptation (4:15)
 eternal ministry (7:24)
 grace-giving (4:16)
 sinless (4:15)
 meets our need (4:16)
 set apart from sinners (7:26).

Possible ministry answers are:

the ministries of Savior (7:25)
 of identifying with humanity (4:15)
 of meeting our needs (4:16 and 7:26) and of intercession (7:25).

From the mixed-up jumble below, circle the words or phrases that you find supported by your reading of Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-16; 7:23-26. Each word or phrase is a possible description of a characteristic of Jesus' ministry as a priest. Next to your choices, jot the Scripture verse that talks about the word or phrase. Be careful—you won't find some of these descriptions in your Bible!

Characteristics of Jesus' Priestly Ministry:

many are like Him
 committed sin,
 received forgiveness
 full of blame
 SET APART FROM SINNERS
 ETERNAL MINISTRY
 will die someday
 MEETS OUR NEED
 prays for us
 grace-giving
 SINLESS
 EMPATHIZES
 USUALLY RELIABLE
 lives just below the heavens
 merciful
 prefers that we suffer
 not a permanent priesthood
 experienced with temptation
 ABLE TO SAVE TO A GREAT EXTENT
A Messenger (apostle)

Pick three of your circled choices. Tell how each of these three ministries of Jesus could meet a need in your life right now or in the future:

- Ministry: _____ Verse: _____
 Specific need this ministry could meet in my life: _____
- Ministry: _____ Verse: _____
 Specific need this ministry could meet in my life: _____
- Ministry: _____ Verse: _____
 Specific need this ministry could meet in my life: _____

Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-16; 7:23-26

Hebrews 3:1

"Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest."

Hebrews 4:14-16

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Hebrews 7:23-26

"Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

"Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens."

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students will explore the gift of Jesus when we approach God.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on approaching God. In "Under Pressure" teens will use a *Blueprint* page to help them discuss stressful situations in their lives. In "The Mystery of Christ" teens will list and discuss attributes of Christ's divinity and His humanity. In "Jesus Meets Your Needs" students will read a *Blueprint* page filled with verses and supplement these verses with additional Bible verses.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

The fact that Jesus is on our side when we approach God greatly affects our relationship with Him. We no longer need to live in fear; we can approach God at any time because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Check out these activities and see what a difference Jesus makes.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

UNDER PRESSURE

- ☐ "Under Pressure" from *Blueprint*

Have students read "Under Pressure" on page 40 of *Blueprint*. In your group discuss all five points provided. Discuss which point means the most to you. Talk about situations that make you feel "under pressure" and how you resolve your feelings or resolve stress in your life. Share how your faith in God helps you when you feel like you are boiling over from all that is expected of you. Provide practical advice and encouragement within your group.



THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

- ☐ Paper
☐ Scissors
☐ Pens

In this activity you will explore the significance of Jesus' divinity and His humanity.

That Jesus is both God and human is remarkable! Use scissors to cut out two mirror-image paper figures of Christ. On one side of the figure, list attributes of Christ's divinity (for example, holy, eternal, all-knowing). On the other side, list evidences of His humanity (for example, fatigue, thirst, temptation, sadness.)

Discuss:

- Why are both "sides" of Jesus important?

JESUS MEETS YOUR NEEDS

- ☐ Bibles
☐ Paper
☐ Pencils or pens
☐ "Jesus Meets Your Needs" from *Blueprint*

Turn to "Jesus Meets Your Needs" on page 39 of *Blueprint* and read the verses provided under the varied needs. Choose one of the topics provided, such as salvation or friendship, and supplement the verse provided with other verses from the Bible on the topic. Have each person in your group add their own topic and verses to create a group poster of how Jesus meets needs.



STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Because Jesus is on our side, we can approach God.

Your teens will apply this lesson about approaching God by making a plan to approach Him confidently this week.

Materials:

- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ "Hebrews Purpose of the System" from *Blueprint*

Have students turn to "Hebrews Purpose of the System" on page 38 of *Blueprint*.

Choose individuals to read aloud the two paragraphs provided. After both paragraphs have been read, discuss the following questions:

- **Why are sacrifices needed?** (*God demands it; blood must be shed for sin, etc.*)
- **How and why have things changed for us since Old Testament times?** (*We no longer need to make animal sacrifices for our sins. Jesus sacrificed Himself for all of our sins, so we can approach God directly and confidently. Have students refer to the last page of the "Hebrews" booklet.*)



We no longer need to approach God with a sacrifice. We can go to Him directly with our needs. He invites us to approach Him confidently. We need to respond! If you are afraid to approach God for some reason, be reassured that Jesus has made it possible for you to approach God without fear. He has taken care of everything. You just need to trust Him.

Distribute pencils or pens and index cards and ask your teens to identify a problem they are facing right now and write it down. After teens have done this, remind them that God wants to help with their problem.

Give teens five minutes to write down a plan for approaching God with their problem this week. They could plan to pray about their problem each morning, pray with another person this week, spend time searching the Bible, etc.

Close in prayer, thanking Jesus for making a way to go directly to God for our needs. Remind students as they leave today that they can go to God with any concern they may have. He is always willing to hear what they have to say.

Seeing God throughout the Week Invite students to contemplate how they approach God. Have students make a plan to spend time in prayer and Bible study this week.

lesson 8

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 9:11-15; 10:1-12

Focus:

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can be holy.

We've Been Made Holy

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Such Sacrifice: Students will discuss what it means to sacrifice something.

- ☐ Whiteboard, markers

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

The Gospel According to . . . : Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss the good news of Jesus' sacrifice.

- ☐ "Types of Offerings and Sacrifices" from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Getting the Message Right: Your teens will explore aspects of holiness.

- ☐ Markers, whiteboard, paper, pencils or pens
- ☐ "Hebrews A Day of Atonement" from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Applying God's Word


It's Been Done: Your teens will talk about ways people try to become holy and what it means that Christ's sacrifice has made them holy.

- ☐ Markers, whiteboard
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

—Hebrews 10:10b

 indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

At the birth of the Israelite nation, the Israelites came under a covenant, or agreement, with God. One important part of the covenant was the sacrificial system. Burning animals and bringing grains gave the people a tangible way to acknowledge their sin, recognize that sin has a cost, and ask for God's forgiveness. Of course, the sacrifices in themselves did not take away sin. In fact, they could do no good at all apart from the right spirit. For the birth of the Church, Jesus instituted a new covenant between God and all who trust in Jesus' sacrifice. And this new covenant includes a new way to deal with sin. Christ brought an end to the need for the old system of sacrifices. He offered one sacrifice that is effective for all time. Christ's death was the reality of which the old sacrifices were mere symbols.

This week's passages from Hebrews explore the differences between the old covenant's repeated sacrifices and the new covenant's once-for-all sacrifice. The letter's original Jewish-Christian readers would immediately have understood some references we may, at first, have difficulty with. For instance, the "greater and more perfect tabernacle" (Heb. 9:11) is heaven, to which the Israelite sanctuary bore a pale resemblance. The "blood of goats and calves" (vs. 12) was carried into the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary by the high priest (Lev. 16:11-17). The "ashes of a heifer" (Heb. 9:13), mixed with water, were sprinkled on unclean persons to purify them (Num. 19). Jesus' "new covenant" (Heb. 9:15) fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer. 31:31-34). The quote that the writer applied to Jesus (Heb. 10:5-7) is a version of Psalm 40:6-8.

Teacher Devo



Hebrews 10:9 demonstrates how Jesus turned “I am” into “your will.” It reads, “Then [Jesus] said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’” People in today’s world often insist on receiving their personal rights. How can a Christian steer his or her thinking from “I am” to “who I am when I do God’s will”? The answer can be found in verse 10, “We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

What makes you feel holy? A glorious sunset? A worship song that grips your heart? Bible study sessions with “Aha!” moments? Emotional prayer? Have you ever experienced a time when you felt holy simply because you know Jesus lives within you?

God has done His part by providing a way for each of us to be saved and made holy. Each of us must choose to accept these gifts. God will make you holy if you ask Him to and receive His holiness by faith.

CLASSROOM TIPS

If your students have been in church for many years, they probably have some idea what the word *holy* means. But don’t assume anything! This lesson would be a good time for you to review with them what the word means, literally and practically. The word *holy* literally means “set apart,” usually for some special purpose.

Your students will probably offer additional meanings such as good, perfect, devoted to God, and blessed. Talk with them about what it means for a person to be holy.

In today’s society the word *holy* is not used very often. One word often used to describe holiness is *purity*. Your teens will most likely be more familiar with this term. Help them see that because of Jesus’ sacrifice for them, they can be holy and pure in His sight, free of sin, when they repent and receive forgiveness.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Use Hebrews 10:9 to focus on several teenage traits that may challenge you as you teach. “I am”—Those two words reflect the self-centered nature of people—teenagers included. Young teens may be preoccupied with physical changes and out-of-control emotions. Older youth may be busy experiencing new thoughts, ideals, and values. Yet, in spite of teens’ tendency to be self-focused, youth occasionally do respond, “Here I am.”

“To do”—Doing is better than thinking for most teens. Younger teens exude energy that can be guided into positive activities. Even

older teens would rather be active than sit and reflect. Doing helps teens act in positive ways, especially when they are praised for their actions.

“Your will”—At an age that seeks independence from authorities, youth struggle with following the will of God. In the same way that they change clothes to fit their moods, teens may move toward and away from God’s will based on friendships and circumstances. Yet many teens desire structure and guidance and want to trust God with their fears.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can be holy.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Write the phrase "Cleanliness is next to godliness" on a whiteboard. As teens come into the room, have youth use markers to write on the whiteboard what they think this statement means.

Students will discuss what it means to sacrifice something.

Materials:

- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers

Get your students thinking about sacrifice with this discussion. Ask them the following questions, and have them stand up if the questions apply to them:

- ▶ How many of you play a team sport?
- ▶ How many of you play a musical instrument?
- ▶ How many of you have ever performed in a play?
- ▶ Who has performed in a voice or dance recital?
- ▶ Have any of you ever run a marathon? How about a race over 10 miles? A 5K?
- ▶ How many of you have learned a foreign language or sign language?

Now ask teens:

- ▶ What do all of these things have in common? (Write the various answers on the board. Some examples are hard work, endurance, commitment, practice, sacrifice.)
- ▶ What kinds of things have you personally sacrificed for a team or a personal achievement? (Allow your teens to share. Some sacrifices might be eating healthy, going to bed early, practicing for hours on end, rehearsing endlessly, planning and preparing, etc.)

As we have seen here, there are many elements involved in finding success in sports, playing a musical instrument, or learning a language. In order to do these things well, sacrifice is needed. You may have to give up free time, devote your energy to practice, and be willing to forgo eating junk food or staying up late.

Today we will look at what Jesus sacrificed for us. He gave up His very life so that we could be made holy.

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 9:11-15;
10:1-12



Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss the good news of Jesus' sacrifice.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ "Hebrews Types of Offerings and Sacrifices" from *Blueprint*

To provide background information on the Book of Hebrews, have students turn to page 43 of *Blueprint* and read "Hebrews Types of Offerings and Sacrifices." Next have students turn to page 41 of *Blueprint* to the Bible study. Divide your class into two teams and assign each team one of the first two areas under "Whose Gospel?" (favorite TV show/book/movie or best-loved professional athlete/coach/team). Have each group discuss among themselves some favorites and report their answers to the other group. (One fun way to do this would be for group members to act out hints and have the rest of the class try to guess what favorite person or show they are acting out.)

After teens have finished sharing, discuss the third section as a class. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 61 of this teacher's guide.)

Direct a teen to read Hebrews 9:11-15 aloud. Now allow your high schoolers to answer the final questions about Jesus on their own.

After your teens have finished writing their answers, ask these questions:

- ▶ **Why did the people make sacrifices to God?** (To obey the Law, to keep the covenant with God to be forgiven their sins, to be made clean before God.)
- ▶ **Rather than sacrifices, what did God really want most from the people?** (Obedience.)
- ▶ **How is Jesus Christ the High Priest of the heavenly tabernacle?** (He brought the sacrifice of Himself to God in heaven.)
- ▶ **Why was Jesus the ultimate sacrifice?** (He was perfect. He obeyed God's will and allowed Himself to experience a human death as the perfect sacrifice for sin.)
- ▶ **How could Jesus' sacrifice take away sin?** (He was perfect. His death fulfilled the payment for sin, and because He was perfect, without sin, and God's Son, His death was better than the sacrifice of a lamb or goat or bull.)

Some people are uncomfortable with the fact that Jesus did it all and they can't win their salvation. However, this is a wonderful truth that needs to be taken by faith. Jesus has made us holy because of His sacrifice, not anything we have done.

Help your teens rest in this assurance. We recognize our need and accept His answer to our need. Encourage them to thank God for sending Jesus Christ to earth. It is because of Jesus' finished work on the cross that we can be holy today. If time permits, have a short time of prayer with your group and open it up for teens to pray aloud or silently.

MORE BIBLE INFO

Jews offered sacrifices to worship and renew their relationship with God. According to Old Testament law, these sacrifices included: a sin offering—a way to approach God and acknowledge sin; a burnt offering—to cover sins and to show dedication in serving God; a meal offering—for praise and thanksgiving; and a fellowship offering—to share a close relationship with God.

Lesson 8 Bible Study

whose gospel?

Hebrews 9:11-15; 10:1-12

Do what feels right or makes me happy, find the perfect romantic relationship through trying out many, etc.

Excitement, inner peace, personal power, or after finding that perfect relationship, I'll live in blissful happiness for the rest of my life.

Win the most games, be the best player, never give up.

Fame and glory, lots of money, a chance to become a TV sports announcer, or have an establishment named after me when I retire.

Study hard, get good grades, turn in excellent work. A friend or counselor may say be all you can be, work hard, be a good person.

A scholarship, approval and esteem from family and friends, launch into a high-paying career, become popular, successful, envied.

I only have to trust that Jesus was the final sacrifice, sufficient to cover my sin, and ask Him to make me holy. He died to set me free from sin's power.

Sin no longer needs to control my life because Jesus took away my sins with His sacrifice and gave me the Holy Spirit to make me holy when I ask.

The word *gospel* means "good news" (about salvation). Many people believe they have good news for us about ways we can be "saved"—from loneliness, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, boredom, a loser mentality, etc. What kinds of gospels come to you almost every day? Pick two of the gospel messengers below and briefly describe their messages. Then compare those messages with the Gospel according to Jesus found in Hebrews.

The gospel according to . . .

my favorite TV show/book/movie (choose one):

—what I have to do:

—what I'll get in return:

my best-loved professional athlete/coach/team:

—what I have to do:

—what I'll get in return:

my most influential teacher/counselor/friend at school:

—what I have to do:

—what I'll get in return:

Jesus (read Heb. 9:11-15; 10:1-12):

—what I have to do:

—what I'll get in return:

Hebrews 9:11-15

"But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

"The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

"For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Hebrews 10:1-12

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,

but a body you prepared for me;

"with burnt offerings and sin offerings

you were not pleased.

"Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written

about me in the scroll—

I have come to do your will, my God."

First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, "Here I am; I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

blueprint 41

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students will take their Bible study to explore holiness and their lives.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on Jesus' sacrifice. In "Day of Atonement" your teens will read and discuss information on the Book of Hebrews. In "Lots of Sacrifice" students will create a chart showing various sacrifices. In "Maximum Difference" they will discuss a case study.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Holiness comes from accepting Jesus' sacrifice. But how can a Christian live a holy life? It isn't always easy, but it is what we are called to do. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we are made holy.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

DAY OF ATONEMENT

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ "Hebrews A Day of Atonement" from *Blueprint*

Turn to page 44 of *Blueprint* and read "Hebrews A Day of Atonement" together. Write on a whiteboard your answers to these questions:

- Why did Old Testament Israelites need priests and sacrifices?
- What happened on the Day of Atonement?
- How does Jesus now atone for our sins?

Give several reasons why Christians today can approach God directly without a priest, offering, or sacrifice.

- What does it mean to be made holy?



LOTS OF SACRIFICE

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Whiteboard

In this activity you will create a sacrifice chart.

Use markers to write on a whiteboard these three headers: "Things Christians give up"; "Things Jesus gave up"; and "Things Christians gain because of Jesus' sacrifice." Under each header, fill in as many things as you can think of that fit the category. Make sure each person in your group has a chance to participate.

MAXIMUM DIFFERENCE

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

In this activity you will discuss a case study.

Choose one person in your group to read the following case study aloud:

Trisha is a non-Christian high-school student. She has begun to hang around with a group of Christians at school. One day Trisha asks the group why they are different from other teens she has met.

Discuss as a group:

- How might these students be different from others?
- What might be some reasons that this group is different?
- How do you think Christians should differ from non-Christians?

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can be holy.

Your teens will talk about ways people try to become holy and what it means that Christ's sacrifice has made them holy.

Materials:

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Jesus did what was needed for you to become holy. He sacrificed Himself on the cross. He rose again. It's finished. We no longer have to go through a priest or offer different types of sacrifices. We can be holy because of Jesus' sacrifice.

Ask your teens to think of ways that people might try to obtain holiness on their own instead of relying on Jesus' sacrifice. As your teens list these things, write them down on a whiteboard. Some examples of this might be any kind of action done to try to earn God's forgiveness, wanting to earn salvation by good works or kind deeds, etc. **Salvation by faith is the only way holiness is attained.**

Talk openly and honestly or individually consider the following:

- ▶ What does it mean for you to be holy?
- ▶ How does your life show this?
- ▶ Why do you think Jesus sacrificed Himself for you?
- ▶ Why can't you earn your salvation?

Our holiness will only come through Christ. None of us will get it on our own action. If you are not sure about your salvation, please see me. Let's talk. If you have salvation, remember Jesus' sacrifice can make us holy. Live and think that way.

Encourage your class to read the "Daily Faith" devotions, on page 42 of *Blueprint*, throughout the week.



Seeing God throughout the Week Have students think about a sin in their life that keeps them from feeling holy. Have students remember that Jesus made them holy when He took their sins upon Himself, died and rose again.

lesson 9

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 2:9-10; 12:1-3

Focus:

Focusing on Jesus gives us strength and courage.

Fuzzy or Focused

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Getting It in Focus: Teens will start thinking about focus through an activity and discussion.

- ☒ Blindfolds

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Focusing on the Race: Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how focusing on Jesus gives us strength and courage.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens
- ☐ "Hebrews The Tabernacle" from *Blueprint*

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Focusing on Life: Your teens will practice what they've learned about focusing on Jesus.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, paper, pens, markers, poster board, scissors, tape, construction paper, pencils or pens
- ☒ Empty matchboxes, buttons, yarn

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Focusing on Jesus without Distraction: Your students will make a plan to stay focused on Jesus this week.

- ☐ Paper, pencils or pens
- ☐ "Hebrews The Superiority of Christ's Priesthood" from *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

—Hebrews 12:1b-2a

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

Jesus, whose name means "the Lord saves," came to earth to save sinners by dying in their place. The writer of Hebrews said that Jesus occupied a place lower than the angels for a while (during His earthly life) so that He might "taste death for everyone" (Heb. 2:9). But after death He once again took a higher place than the angels and occupied His rightful, supreme place "at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:2).

Jesus' death was hard, not just physically, but also emotionally. Death by crucifixion made one accursed (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). Yet Jesus scorned the shame and endured the cross because He looked forward with joy to fulfilling His Father's will (Heb. 12:2).

The writer of Hebrews said, furthermore, that Jesus' suffering made Him "perfect" (2:10). By enduring the suffering of death, Jesus became perfect in the sense that he completed His mission perfectly.

Our salvation, won by Jesus Christ, is not the end of the Christian life but the beginning. The writer compared the Christian life to a footrace. Track events were popular in the Roman world. In chapter 11 we read about many heroes of the faith. These and other believers in heaven make up "a great cloud of witnesses" (12:1)—something like spectators or cheerleaders at our race of faith. Just as ancient athletes would compete while unclothed, so we should "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles." During the race, we should "run with perseverance." We should not let ourselves be distracted by anything, but should be "fixing our eyes on Jesus" (vs. 2) who is at the finish line. We should fight against fatigue by recalling Jesus' determination during His race of faith (vs. 3).

Teacher Devo



"Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Heb. 12:1). In Atlanta, Georgia, every Fourth of July, thousands of runners line up to run the 10K Peachtree Road Race. A first-time runner was once warned, "Whatever you do, don't fall down! You'll be trampled!"

If you take your eyes off Jesus during the race of life, you may fall, but He won't let you be trampled. Jesus will be there to catch you and help you get back on track.

What kinds of trials or temptations in your life cause you to stumble?

What can you do to help you stay focused on Jesus in those times?

It's so easy to lose our focus at times. Commit today to focus on Jesus. Don't run alone; ask for Jesus' help! He will provide you with the strength you need to win the race that He has set before you.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Be careful in today's lesson to offer your students realistic encouragement, avoiding worn-out clichés and overused platitudes.

Be open to being an instrument of God's encouragement by making yourself available and getting involved with your students personally in a mentoring relationship. Teens can experience Jesus as an encouraging friend if they experience

His followers as encouraging friends. Many teens today are discouraged. They feel that they can't do anything right and they are constantly harassed and tormented for the wrongs they do while the good things they accomplish aren't noticed. Take note to give encouragement to your teens today.

LES. 9

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Teens trying to stay focused on Jesus will face competition. Satan and worldly things are out to pull teens off track and onto the sidelines. As teens look for personal identity, they may be tempted to explore areas that are far from the straight path that Jesus has set for them.

Taking drugs, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, rebelling against authority, and lying are just a few of the temptations that your teens may face. The race of life set before many teens isn't an easy one. Many teens are rejected by their families, by peers at school—even by their

churches. Some teenagers feel alone much of the time. As you prepare this lesson, be aware of the difficulties your youth may face. Remind your youth of the courage it takes to participate and complete a race, a task, or a goal in life, and the strength that comes through being focused on Jesus.

God wants your teens to persevere. He will be there to carry them through life when they feel they can't go on. As your teens learn to focus on God, they will find strength and courage to finish the race that is set before them.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Focusing on Jesus gives us strength and courage.

Through an experience and discussion, students will explore what it means to focus on following someone.

Materials:

☐ Blindfolds

Begin the class with a "trust walk" by pairing students up with one another. Give one student in each pair a blindfold. Instruct the seeing person in each pair to lead the blindfolded student around the inside of building for about 5 minutes. When the pairs return to the classroom, they can remove their blindfolds.

- What feelings did you experience when you couldn't see and had to have someone lead you around?
- What were some of the obstacles you faced or fears you had when you were walking blindfolded?
- What was it like to trust another person to lead you?
- How long do you think it would take you to run a mile blindfolded?

Martin Kareithi, who is blind, can run a mile in less than six minutes.

Martin took up running with the help of some of his friends from the program Running Eyes for the Blind. In the program, seeing runners are connected to the visually-impaired runners by tethers like shoelaces or T-shirts that guide them around and over obstacles and other runners that get in their way.

- What personal challenges do you think Martin faced when learning how to run with the seeing runners?
- What are some tough situations or challenges you face in life that require perseverance and trust?
- Why do you think some people easily give up and quit, while others hang in there when life gets difficult?
- How is the difficulty of running a race similar to struggles we face in living the Christian life?
- Why do you think many people give up or are weak when it comes to applying God's will in their lives?

The Christian life is also like running a race that requires us to put our trust in Jesus to lead us down the right path. This race is not easy and requires us to have strength, courage, and perseverance. When we take our eyes off of Jesus and do not place our trust in Him, life often gets worse for us. However, when we stay focused on Him, we find strength for running the race and living the Christian life. Let's take a look at Hebrews for more on this race.



Free! Downloadable
Options for Steps 1 and 4.
[resources.wesleyan.org/
real-life-downloaded](http://resources.wesleyan.org/real-life-downloaded)

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

Hebrews 2:9-10; 12:1-3

MORE BIBLE INFO

The Old Testament heroes of Hebrews 11, having lived by faith, are witnesses to those who now run this race. Hebrews 12:1 uses the Greek word *marturon* [mar-TOOR-own], meaning "those who witness." It was later used as martyr is used today, for someone who has died because of witnessing about his or her faith.

Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how focusing on Jesus gives us strength and courage.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ "Hebrews The Tabernacle" from *Blueprint*

Turn to page 45 of *Blueprint* and read the introduction aloud to your class, then divide your teens into small groups of three or four. Direct groups to find words in the Hebrews 2:9-10 and 12:1-3 passages that could apply to running a marathon. (Some examples are: running with perseverance; fixing our eyes on Jesus; not growing weary and losing heart.) Have the teens in groups take turns sharing aloud the words that apply. After your teens have finished sharing their answers, have them remain in their groups and work through the Bible study questions together. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 68 of this teacher's guide.) Have your teens stop before they get to the "Margin Markings" section.

Come back together as a group and allow your students to work individually on the "Margin Markings" sections. Call on different ones to share their markings.

Discuss this question:

- 1 What do you think the "great cloud of witnesses" refers to? How is it an encouragement to keep going in the Christian life? (The cloud of witnesses probably refers to the "Heroes of the Faith" in the previous chapter. In a sense, Christians who have gone before us are watching and cheering us on as we try to be faithful to God through all our trials.)

Turn to "Hebrews The Tabernacle" on page 49 of *Blueprint* and assign a few teens to read aloud. Discuss as a class:

- 1 What was the tabernacle a symbol of? (It was a symbol of God's invisible presence dwelling among the people of Israel. It was built in obedience to God's command and according to God's directions.)
- 1 Who was Melchizedek? (Melchizedek was an obscure figure in the Old Testament. He was the king of Salem [later called Jerusalem]. He was also a priest of the most high God.)

Because of Jesus, we no longer need a tabernacle or priest. We can focus directly on God. Let's explore how focusing on Jesus can give us strength and courage.



Lesson 9 Bible Study

the pacesetter

Selections from Hebrews

Jesus returned to His original heavenly location and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God. He is crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death. As a result of His suffering, He tasted death for everyone.

Jesus has made it possible for the sons of God to share glory with Him through their faith in Him.

Yes, if you have exercised a personal trust in Jesus Christ as the resurrected Son of God.

God made the sinless Jesus complete, or "perfect" in the work He came to do, because Jesus was willing to become human and suffer.

Have you ever seen a discouraged team inspired to win by the performance of one player? Ever seen a good runner following behind an excellent runner, able to keep up by focusing on the pacesetter?

The author of Hebrews knew that living the Christian life can be just as grueling as running a marathon; occasionally we stumble and even fall. But he tells us to focus on the one in front of everybody, to "fix our eyes on Jesus"—the one who can lift us up, dust us off, and get us back in the race.

▶ READ HEBREWS 2:9-10.

▶ What eventually happened to Jesus as a result of His death?

▶ Who did Jesus bring to a special place? Does this include you?

▶ What did God use to make the sinless Jesus complete, or "perfect," in the work He came to do?

▶ READ HEBREWS 12:1-3.

Mark this passage of Scripture in the margins as indicated below. Be prepared to talk about the verses you marked and why you marked them that way.

Margin Markings:

▶ The most encouraging word or phrase: ↑ (upward arrow)
Why:

▶ The most challenging word or phrase: ! (exclamation point)
Why:

▶ The most difficult part to understand: ? (question mark)
Why:

Hebrews 2:9-10

"But we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."

"In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering."

Hebrews 12:1-3

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students explore ways that help them focus on Jesus.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities about focusing on Jesus for strength and courage. In "Discussing Race Strategy" teens will write a dialogue between coach Jesus and a Christian teen running the race of life. In "Race Course Design" they will design a race course of life's trials and successes. In "Matchbox Race Car" students will create race cars with slogans about focusing on Jesus.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Picture a race with you trying to get across the finish line. How do you do it? What obstacles do you face? Each activity offers a way to complete the race of life by staying focused on Jesus and drawing from His strength and courage.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

DISCUSSING RACE STRATEGY

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

If Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith, then He knows the best way to live the Christian life. Who better to coach us as we run the race! Based on today's Scripture (Heb. 2:9-10 and 12:1-3), found on page 45 of *Blueprint*, write a brief dialogue between Jesus the coach and a Christian teen who is getting ready to run the race of life.

- 1 What kinds of things would Jesus advise a Christian teen to do or to avoid in order to finish the race?
- 2 How might Jesus encourage you to keep going even when things get tough?



RACE COURSE DESIGN

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Large poster board

Use markers and a large poster board to create a race course that includes the realities of life. For example, "Temptation Hill" with things that tempt teens today (drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, nonmarital sex, cheating). Before plotting the course, identify some pitfalls (for example, you are cut from a sports tryout or your friend turns on you) as well as several positive things (for example, a shortcut because you prayed for a friend or unexpected good news about a family member). Finally, draw your race course.

- 2 How can focusing on Jesus help you successfully overcome the obstacles in life?

MATCHBOX RACE CAR

- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☒ Empty matchboxes
- ☒ Buttons
- ☒ Yarn

In this activity you will create a race car for the Christian life, including a slogan about your focus.

Use scissors and tape to create your own mini race car for life out of empty matchboxes, buttons, construction paper, and yarn.

Decorate your mini race car with a slogan about racing God's way by focusing on Jesus.

- 1 How can remembering this slogan help you persevere in the race of life?

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Focusing on Jesus gives us strength and courage.

Students will chart out the "obstacles" on their race course of life that might keep them from being focused on Jesus this week.

Materials:

- ☐ Paper for each student
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ "Hebrews The Superiority of Christ" from *Blueprint*

Have students turn to page 50 in *Blueprint* to "Hebrews The Superiority of Christ." Have volunteers read the nine ways Christ is a better High Priest. Then answer:

- 1 In what areas of your life do you need to keep focused on Jesus?
- 2 What can you do to make God a bigger part of your life in these areas?

When we keep our eyes focused on Jesus by practicing our faith and living disciplined Christian lives, we find the strength we need to finish the race of faith.

Give your students an 8 1/2 x 11 piece of paper, and ask them to draw two lines to symbolize a road that one might run a race on. Then instruct them to list at various points on the bottom line obstacles that might hinder them from running the race of faith. Then, on the upper line, instruct your students to list at various points specific activities that they can do to help keep their focus on Christ and live a disciplined Christian life. Allow students several minutes to complete their "roads" and then ask them to share their results with the class.

- 3 What are some of the obstacles that you face that keep you from living a disciplined Christian life and finishing the race of faith?
- 4 What are some specific activities that we can do as Christians that will help us to be successful in living as Christians and keep our eyes focused on Christ our High Priest?

Close the class by asking students to make commitments to specific activities that will help them to practice their faith and live a more disciplined and focused Christian life during the next week. Have them mark those activities as construction zones on their roads to repair the obstacles. Then, invite them to share what they want to do to help them in their race of faith.

Lead the class in prayer, ask for God's strength in their lives to resist the obstacles that might hinder them in the race of faith and to follow through on their new decisions.



Seeing God throughout the Week Remind students that focusing on Jesus gives them strength and courage. Invite students to think of simple ways they can focus on Jesus this week.

lesson 10

Bible Basis:

John 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:12-15

Focus:

We can count on the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Trusting the Spirit

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Counting on Others: Your students will participate in roleplays and discuss counting on others.

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Listening to Jesus' Promise: Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how the Holy Spirit guides us.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Recognizing the Spirit's Leading: Your teens will practice what they've learned about counting on the Holy Spirit to guide them.

- ☐ Poster board, markers, scissors, glue, construction paper, pencils or pens
- ☒ Magazines
- ☐ "A Time To..." from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Applying God's Word


Taking God's Spirit Seriously: Your students will apply what they've learned by completing a worksheet and discussing how they can count on the Holy Spirit to guide them.

- ☐ Paper, pencils or pens
- ☐ "The Holy Spirit and Me" worksheet from *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."

—John 16:13

 indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus had a long talk with His disciples (recorded in John 14–16). One of the main subjects of Jesus' talks was the Holy Spirit. Jesus wanted to comfort His disciples about His earthly departure. Jesus didn't want them to feel abandoned by God, but reassured of His power and presence through the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

In John 14:16, 26, Jesus called the Holy Spirit the "advocate" (some translations say "Comforter" or "Helper"). The Greek word *parakletos* [pah-RAH-klay-tahs] literally means "one called to the side of [another]." Historically, it has had a legal meaning—lawyer, one called to plead a cause. This suggests that the Holy Spirit acts on behalf of believers to the Father when they need forgiveness or help, and fills them with the power to live day by day for the Lord.

But the word *paraclete* [PAIR-uh-kleet] isn't just a legal term. It has the meaning that the word "counselor" has for us today. There is guidance that is continuous and constant. Jesus also promised that the Holy Spirit would teach the disciples "all things" (vs. 26) and guide them into "all the truth" (16:13). After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit helped them recall and understand Jesus' teachings.

While the disciples in the upper room (Acts 1:13; 2:1-2) were the first to receive Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit, it's also a promise for us. The Spirit abides with all believers, enables them to understand biblical truth, and helps them live godly lives.

Teacher Devo



If God asked you to be a good Christian and serve Christ faithfully but did not provide you with His Spirit, you would be terribly discouraged within a short time. But He has given you the Holy Spirit to strengthen, encourage, and guide you.

Indeed, at the Last Supper Jesus promised that the Father would give the "advocate to help [Christians] and be with [them] forever" (John 14:16).

How does having the Holy Spirit impact your life?

Have you ever ignored the leading of the Holy Spirit? What happened?

In prayer, thank God for the direction in your life that the Holy Spirit provides. Ask God to help you be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading this week.

CLASSROOM TIPS

In today's lesson your students will complete a worksheet called "The Holy Spirit and Me." This exercise will give students a chance to identify some of the questions they have about the Holy Spirit.

When discussing open-ended questions like this, it's important to accept any reasonable responses students give without labeling them right or wrong. If a student gives a far-out answer, reply with something like: "That's interesting. I wonder if you could explain how you came to that conclusion" or "I've never thought of it that way before. What makes you think that?" Hearing the thought process behind the response might help you know how to direct the lesson.

Keep in mind that teens are testing things at this time in their lives. Sometimes they will throw an off-the-wall comment out there just to see if anyone is listening. Be a part of your teens' lives by listening to them.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Most teens count on their parents or guardians to supply them with a place to live, clothes to wear, and food to eat. Meanwhile, many teens count on their friends for emotional support. Often they turn to several different people, depending on their needs. With instruction and encouragement students can learn to count on God's Spirit to provide them with daily guidance. We can help them understand the Holy Spirit by leading them and helping them to study God's Word and walk with Him through good times and bad.

Relate personal experiences of how the Holy Spirit has given you direction at critical times in your life. It would even be better if a couple of these experiences occurred when you were a teen.

Invite your students to share about their experiences. Have they ever felt a sense of "this is wrong" deep inside them? Have they ever opened the Bible and felt that the words they were reading were meant for the exact hardship they were facing? The Holy Spirit works in wondrous ways. Remind your teens of this.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We can count on the Holy Spirit to guide us.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Have teens take markers and list on poster board "People I count on" and "For what."

Your students will participate in roleplays and discuss counting on others.

Begin class today with this activity that shows what it means to count on someone.

Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the class to roleplay a teen who has just had a run-in with a teacher. (You may want to play the part of the teacher, or invite another teen to play this part.) Have another volunteer roleplay the first teen's best friend who is trying to bail them out.

Now roleplay the situation again, this time with a third student replacing the friend and roleplaying a parent. (This parent can be supportive or condemning—that's up to the teen roleplaying.)

Roleplay the situation yet a third time, now with a fourth student roleplaying another teacher. For your last time through the situation, choose another student to roleplay a church youth leader.

After the roleplays, have your students discuss these questions:

- ▶ **Who gave the best help to the troubled teen? How?** *(The answers will vary according to how the roles were played.)*
- ▶ **Who gave the troubled teen the least help? Why?** *(Answers will vary, depending on the roleplays.)*
- ▶ **Do you think it is important to receive help from a variety of people? Why or why not?** *(Different people can provide help that meets a need other people cannot do anything about.)*
- ▶ **Why is it important to have someone to count on?** *(Another person can encourage us and give us direction on how to respond in painful situations.)*
- ▶ **Who do you count on when you really need help? Does it depend on the situation?** *(Answers will vary.)*

We can count on some people for some things, but ultimately it is God who knows what is best for us. This lesson will show us why we can count on the Holy Spirit to guide us.

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

John 14:16-17, 25-26;
16:12-15



MORE BIBLE INFO

The Greek word for "Counselor" in John 14:16 is *parakletos* [pah-RAH-klay-tahs], which was traditionally translated "advocate." This term, however, means more than just one who comforts. Instead, Jesus was speaking more of an advocate, such as a defense attorney. The Holy Spirit champions our cause and encourages us just as a defense lawyer would do for a client in a courtroom.

Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss how the Holy Spirit guides us.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens

Jesus assured His disciples that they would not be lost and alone without Him. They could be certain that He would send the Holy Spirit to them once He returned to His heavenly Father. Jesus promised them that the Spirit of truth would always be with them.

Divide your class into groups of four or five students each, distribute pencils or pens, and have teens turn to page 51 of *Blueprint*. Read aloud the Lesson Scripture. Ask teens to discuss the first and second questions then the fifth and sixth questions in their groups. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 75.) If time permits, have groups answer the third and fourth questions. Regroup as a class to share answers, and then discuss the following questions in depth:

1. According to Jesus, how does the Holy Spirit come to us? Why is this a blessing? (The Holy Spirit is given to us when we give our lives to Jesus. God gives us the Holy Spirit to live within us, so we don't have to search for Him. We can learn to recognize His voice.)
2. How does the Spirit help us understand what Jesus taught? (The Holy Spirit brings God's truth to light for us. For example, when we are being persecuted for being Christians, the Holy Spirit reminds us that Christ is being glorified. The Holy Spirit can also bring to our mind Scriptures and can help us understand those Scriptures.)
3. Why can we trust that whatever the Holy Spirit tells us is from God? How can we be sure that the Spirit is communicating to us? (Jesus assured His followers of this truth [John 16:13]. Whatever He says will be consistent with God's Word. What is not consistent is not from the Spirit.)
4. How does the Holy Spirit guide us? (There are many ways the Holy Spirit can work in our lives. We sense the Holy Spirit's guidance through our consciences, an idea or still small voice in our mind, reading the Bible, prayer, and listening to other Christians. Also believers have been promised the Holy Spirit. Even if we don't always sense how He is working in our lives, we should have faith that He is working and revealing things to us, helping us to know what God wants us to be doing. Remember, He never guides us in anything different from Scripture.)
5. What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to be our Counselor or Comforter? (Allow students to voice their ideas, then share with them some of the information from *Understanding the Bible*.)

Having the Holy Spirit in your life gives you power to live as God desires. You can count on the Holy Spirit to guide you every day.

The Holy Spirit is the Counselor, or helper and guide. The Holy Spirit will stay with the believer forever (from John 14:16). The Holy Spirit is a personal being. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit with the personal pronoun "he." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Nonbelievers don't have the Holy Spirit because He lives in the believer (from John 14:17). The Holy Spirit is sent in Jesus Christ's name. The Holy Spirit acts as a counselor and teaches the believer all things. The Holy Spirit reminded the apostles of everything that Jesus Christ taught and acts similarly for us as we study the Bible, helping us build on what we've already learned (from John 14:25-26). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and guided the apostles into all truth about what the Church needed. He also guides our understanding of the truths in the Bible. The Holy Spirit does not speak on His own authority. The Holy Spirit showed the apostles the things to come, which we now read in the New Testament (from John 16:12-13).

The answers will vary according to the teens' needs.

Possible answers for titles are:
The Comforter; The Teacher; The Spirit's Work in Me.

Possible answers for titles are: The Spirit's Work in the World; The Giver of Truth.

Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the Passover the evening before His crucifixion. After being with His disciples for about three years, He was about to leave them. He wanted them to know that He would not leave them alone, which would give them hope.

Lesson 10 Bible Study

another helping

Selections from John

The Holy what? Oh, the Holy Spirit. Uh, would you mind explaining who that is? And what exactly does this Holy Spirit do? What would you say to a person who had questions about the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead? On the other hand, maybe you're asking some of these questions yourself.

Read John 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:12-15.

- Make a list of eight facts you can learn about the Holy Spirit from these passages. Explain these facts so a young child could understand them.

Read through your list.

- Decide which of these facts about the Holy Spirit means the most to you. Number them in that order.

What title would you give to John 14:16-17, 25-26?

- Why did you choose this title?

Read John 16:12-15.

- What title would you give to this section? Why did you choose this title?

Take a quick glance through John 13.

- What events were taking place, or about to take place, when Jesus told His disciples about the Holy Spirit? Why do you think Jesus chose the time He did to tell the news of the Holy Spirit's coming?

What does the Holy Spirit do in the life of a Christian that makes the Christian, who is following God, different from a good, moral non-Christian?

John 14:16-17, 25-26

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 16:12-15

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 'All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'"

blueprint 51

10 Bible Study

LES. 10

The Holy Spirit gives Christians the power to be like Jesus, which would be impossible for anyone who tried to do it on his or her own (see Gal. 5:22-23).

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students consider the Spirit's work in people's lives.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities related to the Holy Spirit's guidance. In the "Banner of the Holy Spirit" activity teens will create banners expressing how they respond to the Holy Spirit's guidance. In "A Time To..." teens will complete a Blueprint page. In the "The Holy Spirit Is Like . . ." activity teens will create symbols showing what the Holy Spirit is like to them.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Just as the beginning exercise showed how you can count on different people, the following activities will help you see how you can count on the Holy Spirit. In fact, God's Spirit is always there for you when you need direction for your life.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

LES. 10

BANNER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue
- ☒ Magazines

In this activity you will create a banner that expresses how you respond to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Turn to page 51 in *Blueprint* and read aloud John 14:17. Take markers and design a banner on a piece of poster board with the words "I _____ the Spirit of truth." Fill in the blanks. For example, you can write "trust in" or "depend on." Decorate your banners with magazine pictures or artwork that agree with the words of this banner. When you're finished, show your banner to the others in your group.



A TIME TO...

- ☐ "A Time To..." from *Blueprint*

Turn to page 52 of *Blueprint* and read "A Time To..." to yourself. Fill in the Bible Passage, Time to Think, Prayer Requests and Time to Pray sections. Take some time alone to complete.



THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LIKE . . .

- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

In this activity you will create a symbol that represents how you experience the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Think of something that could symbolize what you think the Holy Spirit is like. For example, a traffic light, the North Star, a compass, etc. Use construction paper, markers, pens, and scissors to create a visual expression of the symbol you chose. When you're finished, show your symbol to the others in the group, and explain the significance of the symbol that you chose. Discuss:

- ➊ How would you like to become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance?

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We can count on the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Your students will apply what they've learned by completing a worksheet and discussing how they can count on the Holy Spirit to guide them.

Materials:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ "The Holy Spirit and Me" worksheet from *Blueprint*

Hand out pencils or pens and have students turn to pages 53-54 of *Blueprint*. Have your students answer the worksheet questions to "The Holy Spirit and Me" on their own. You may want to discuss some or all of these questions as a group. Be sensitive to students who do not wish to share; do not force anyone to answer aloud if they are not comfortable doing so. The questions on this worksheet are as follows:



- **Who is the Holy Spirit?** (*The Holy Spirit is God, yet He acts as a guide and Counselor for Christians as they live their lives.*)
- **How does the Holy Spirit communicate with people?** (*He communicates by helping Christians understand God's Word and instructing Christians in the way they should go. He does this through prayer, Bible reading, and our consciences, ideas, sometimes dreams, or still small voice in your mind.*)
- **Why should I let the Holy Spirit control my life?** (*By letting the Holy Spirit control your life He will guide you in the way that God wants you to go. He knows what is best for you and will never let you down.*)
- **Will the Holy Spirit make me do strange things?** (*He will only direct you in the way God wants you to go. That won't be strange—though some unbelievers at times might think so.*)
- **One thing that I don't understand about the Holy Spirit is . . .** (*Teens may be afraid that He will ask them to do things that they won't be able to do or will feel uncomfortable doing.*)
- **One way I know the Holy Spirit is at work in my life is . . .** (*Teens may say that the Holy Spirit helps them understand the Bible or helps them be more patient, peaceful, self-controlled, etc. See Gal. 5:22-23.*)

Be sure to allow students to ask any other questions they may have about the Holy Spirit at this time. If appropriate, let other students try to answer their classmates' questions. Correct any misunderstandings yourself.

Give a piece of paper to each student. Invite your teens to ask the Holy Spirit to come and direct them. They should expect to have a stronger idea or impression when reading the Bible, praying, or trying to make a difficult decision.

Seeing God throughout the Week Encourage students to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them this week. Invite students to talk about what this might look like in their lives.

lesson 11

Bible Basis:

John 15:1-8

Focus:

Stay rooted in Christ.

Sticking with Christ

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Being Properly Rooted: Your students will create family trees to begin thinking about their roots.

- ☐ Paper, markers

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Connecting with the Vine: Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss staying rooted in Christ.

- ☐ Bibles, pencils or pens, copies of *Blueprint*

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Remaining in Christ: Your teens will practice what they've learned about staying rooted in Christ.

- ☐ Poster board, markers, paper, pencils or pens, construction paper, scissors, whiteboard, markers, Bible
- ☐ "Staying Close" from *Blueprint*
- ☒ An orange

STEP 4 Applying God's Word


Sticking to Our Lord: Your teens will apply what they've learned by making a commitment to stay rooted in Christ.

- ☐ Bibles or copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

Remain in me, as I also remain in you.
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it
must remain in the vine. Neither can you
bear fruit unless you remain in me.

—John 15:4

 indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

Jesus often used fruit to illustrate a truth in His preaching. For example, in distinguishing between good and false prophets, Jesus said, "By their fruit you will recognize them. . . . Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit" (Matt. 7:16-17). Jesus told the parable of the vine and the branches because He wanted to teach His disciples something about spiritual productivity. Some people who have contact with Jesus Christ do not put their complete trust in Him and, therefore, do not become spiritually productive. (Judas is a good example.) Using imagery from the common occupation of grape growing, Jesus called these people branches that do not bear fruit. They are cut down and allowed to wither, then thrown into the fire.

Others who have contact with Jesus trust in Him and become spiritually productive. The faithful disciples were of the second type of branch, ones that bore fruit. They were branches on the vine of Christ, drawing life from Him. Even so, they were in need of pruning (cutting away unproductive twigs) before they could become even more fruitful. God is constantly active in the lives of believers, cutting away those things that get in the way of service to Him.

The central requirement for bearing fruit is remaining in Christ—staying close to Him and continually seeking His will. If we make our relationship with Him our top priority, fruit will follow. What, exactly, is the fruit we are to bear? The fruit of God's Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23: "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Teacher Devo



Jesus said to His disciples, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). It is futile to try to accomplish anything for God apart from Jesus and His Spirit. Therefore, Christians need to live by Paul's words: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13). Take a few minutes to ask yourself these questions:

What would my life be like apart from Jesus?

How is my life richer when I abide in Christ?

In prayer, ask God to show you how you can be even more rooted in Christ.

CLASSROOM TIPS

You will find several tips in this lesson about having daily devotions and quiet time. Keep in mind, however, that these tips are merely the means to an end. The goal is a closer and deeper relationship with Jesus.

If your students start having daily devotions just to say they did it, their motivation will likely wane quickly. Remind your students of the goal they are pursuing. If their motivation is relational, they will be much more likely to enjoy their quiet times and continue the habit for years to come.

Developing habits such as daily prayer and quiet time during the teenage years is very important. As your teens grow up, some of the things they do now as teens will become a part of their lives. On the flip side, if teens depart from prayer and quiet time now, thinking it is something that can wait until they are adults, they are fooling themselves. They may think they are busy now, but the reality is that busyness never really goes away. Spiritual things must be priorities now and later.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Most teens would like to have one special friend they could feel close to and confide in. When they do have this friend, they like to spend a lot of time either hanging out with that person, talking or texting him or her, or sending messages back and forth. It makes teens feel great to have this kind of bond.

Teens have a tendency to imitate their special friends both in behavior and attitudes. Friends can be a good influence, or not so good.

Your teens need to know that Jesus is the best friend to them.

Instill in your teens a desire to develop a strong friendship with Jesus. Not only will Jesus never let them down, but He will give them the strength and direction they need to grow.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Stay rooted in Christ.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Have teens take markers and draw their favorite fruit on a poster board.

Students will create and explore their spiritual family tree.

Materials:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Markers

Have the students create a family tree, adding the names of parents and grandparents and great-grandparents. Ask them to write the profession of each beside their names.

▶ **How many of you have repeated professions in your family tree?**

Name one personality trait that is prominent in your family tree. Families create legacies. There can be good and bad legacies. Each family tree is full of history.

▶ **Does your family tree determine what you will accomplish in life? Does it determine who you are? Why or why not?**

Have your students turn over their paper and create a spiritual family tree. At the bottom, as the roots, they will write God, then Jesus, then grandparents or parents who are believers, and then the student's name. Don't limit it to just biological family; anyone who has contributed to the student's spiritual life can be included.

Some of you will have a rich spiritual legacy. You have generations who are Christians. For those of you who didn't have that spiritual legacy, you still have the same rich heritage! The deepest root of a spiritual family tree is God, and you connect to Him directly.

▶ **What is one character trait you hope to pass down to the next generation?**

▶ **What is one spiritual heritage you hope that your child or grandchildren will one day remember about you?**

This lesson will show us why we need to be rooted in Christ and will show us how we can be rooted deeply in Him every day. With our roots down deep, storms won't cause us to fall down. Staying rooted in Christ is something we must consciously strive to do each day. As we are rooted in Him, we'll slowly see ourselves grow in our spiritual walk with Jesus.



Free! Downloadable
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STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

John 15:1-8



MORE BIBLE INFO

"I am the true vine" (John 15:1) is one of Christ's many "I am" statements (see 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9-11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). These "I am" statements are unique to John's Gospel. In these proclamations Jesus declares Himself to be God by echoing God's words: "I am who I am" (Exod. 3:14). God is the one who is always present, and His existence depends upon no one outside of Himself.

Teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss staying rooted in Christ.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Explain to your students. Jesus used many metaphors to explain how important He is to us. He said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35), "the light of the world" (8:12), and "the good shepherd" (10:14). As "the true vine" (15:1). Jesus gives us nourishment so we can grow and bear fruit. Apart from Him we cannot produce spiritual fruit.

Divide your class into groups of four or five students each, distribute pencils or pens and have students turn to page 55 of *Blueprint* and read the Lesson Scripture to themselves. Then have them complete the nine-point outline. The outline should look like this:

- I. (15:1) The Vine and its Gardener
- II. (15:2-5) Staying fruitful
 - A. (15:2) Two types of branches
 - B. (15:3) The healthy branch
 - C. (15:4) Staying healthy
 - D. (15:5) The Vine's importance
- III. (15:6) The unhealthy branch
- IV. (15:7) The rewards for those who remain
- V. (15:8) The Gardener's glory

After teens have completed the outline, have them discuss all the questions on page 55 in their small groups. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 82 of this teacher's guide.) After teens have finished, bring them together to review their answers. Then discuss the following questions:

- ▶ **How are Jesus' words an encouragement to us?** (*His words assure us that He is actively involved in our lives.*)
- ▶ **Since we are all connected to the same vine (Christ), how should that affect our relationships with one another?** (*It should tell us that we are not to compete with one another but work together as a team to glorify Christ.*)

The only way a branch can stay alive and bear fruit is if it stays connected to the vine. The same thing is true for Christians. If we stay connected to our vine, Jesus Christ, we will stay alive and fruitful; without Him we will wither and die.

What happens when plants are pulled up from the ground? Well, they die. They can't survive on their own without their roots firmly planted in the ground. It's the same with us. We can't do it alone.

Let's explore how we can stay rooted in Christ.

Lesson 11 Bible Study

vine and branches

John 15:1-8

Write an outline of John 15:1-8, using the following sections as a guide. Look over the verses in parentheses, decide what they say, and then think of a title for the verses and write it in the blank.

I Am the Vine (John 15:1-8)

I. (15:1)

II. (15:2-5)

A. (15:2)

B. (15:3)

C. (15:4)

D. (15:5)

III. (15:6)

IV. (15:7)

V. (15:8)

► What are the functions of a vine and a branch? Why is this a good analogy for the relationship between Christ and a Christian?

► What do you think Christ is talking about when He uses the word *fruit*?

► Based on this passage, give at least two ways a Christian "plant" can remain united to Christ.

► A gardener prunes a branch by trimming it so that more of the nourishment will go into the fruit and not into a large branch. How does God "prune" His people?

► Christ talks about unfruitful branches that are thrown out. These eventually dry up and are burned. Explain this part of the analogy.

The vine provides nourishment to the rest of the plant, while the branch produces fruit. We cannot live or be fruitful without being nourished by Christ.

It can either mean the development of Christian traits in our character, such as love, joy, and peace, or the furthering of the kingdom of God through evangelism, discipleship, or love.

We must be obedient to Christ's teachings, and we must produce fruit for Him.

God cuts away the sins and selfishness in our lives.

People who do not truly have Christ as their Lord and Savior (like Judas) will not be saved and will not enjoy eternal fellowship with Him.

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, so I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students take their learning from Scripture to consider more on the *how* and *why* of staying connected to Christ.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on staying rooted in Christ. In the "Staying Close" activity they will read and discuss an article in *Blueprint*. In the "Linked to Jesus" activity your teens will create artwork using words related to staying rooted in Christ. In the "Fruit Toss" activity students will play a game to help them learn this week's memory verse.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

Why do we need to remain in Christ? The following activities will help us see that we cannot truly live unless we draw life from Christ. When we do, we will have not only everlasting life but also fruitful lives.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

STAYING CLOSE

- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ "Staying Close" from *Blueprint*

In this activity you will read and discuss an article in *Blueprint* about staying close to Christ.

Read "Staying Close" on page 57 of *Blueprint*. Then list on poster board ways that teens can stay close to Jesus as given in this article. Feel free to add your own ideas as well. If time permits, discuss the following questions:

- Why is it important to make these suggestions a habit? How can Christians help other Christians stay close to Jesus?



LINKED TO JESUS

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Scissors

In this activity you will create a piece of artwork using words related to being rooted in Christ.

Jot down on a piece of paper words that relate to being rooted in or linked to Jesus. Then write these words creatively on a piece of construction paper and use scissors to cut this paper in the shape of a vine, tree branch, or grape. Be creative with the design, camouflaging words into your design when possible. When you're finished, share your creation with others in your group.

FRUIT TOSS

- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Bible
- ☒ An orange

In this activity you will play a game to help you learn this week's memory verse.

Write John 15:4 on the board. (You may wish to refer to the words of this week's memory verse during the game.)

Face each other and form a circle. Pass an orange around the circle and read or quote aloud John 15:4. Each time the word "remain" is said, the person holding the orange will toss it to the person across from him or her. Pass the orange around and say the verse aloud three times. Speed up the verse and the orange passing each time.

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Stay rooted in Christ.



Your teens will apply what they've learned by making a commitment to stay rooted in Christ.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles or copies of *Blueprint*

Talk with your teens about how to connect our spiritual roots to Christ.

- ▶ **How do we connect with someone?** (*We spend time, we communicate, we ask questions and tell them about ourselves.*)
- ▶ **How do we connect with Christ?** (*Come here and study the Bible together, read and study the Bible on our own, do the Daily Faith devos, remember Him even if we are busy or don't feel like it, etc.*)

Talk together to make a classwide commitment to all aim to do at least one thing each day of the coming week to stay rooted in Christ. Some students may choose devotionals. The "Daily Faith" devotionals are found on page 56 of *Blueprint*. Others may want to read this week's Scripture passage, John 15:1-7 each day. Others may have their own plan, and that's fine too.

Close in prayer, asking God to help teens stay rooted in Christ, especially when they are tempted to do things that would displease Him.

Seeing God throughout the Week Encourage students to think of how they can stay rooted in Christ this week. Invite students to share their action plan.

lesson 12

Bible Basis:

John 16:1-3, 20-22, 32-33

Focus:

Following Jesus isn't always easy.

You Against the World

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Writing Your Battle Plan: Students will talk about their action plans in difficult situations.

- ☐ (Optional) copies of the two scenarios in Step 1

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Learning the Ways of the Kingdom: Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint*.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Finding Out Who's on Your Side: Your teens will practice what they've learned about following Jesus.

- ☐ Scissors, glue, poster board, paper, pens
- ☒ Magazines

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Standing Up to the Enemy: Students will complete a page.

- ☐ "Tough Questions" from *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

—1 John 2:15


UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

At the time when the Roman Empire controlled Judea, many people lived in fear. Roman soldiers had killed people for even minor offenses. Practicing Christianity and refusing to worship the gods of Rome or Caesar was a serious crime. Many Jewish people even turned against Christians, believing that the Christian faith was blasphemous to God.

Jesus knew the animosity of the Jews toward anyone who believed the Gospel (John 16:1-3; see also 15:18-27). So He warned the disciples to expect to be kicked out of the synagogue permanently, with all the religious and social isolation that would entail.

In light of that coming adversity, Jesus warned His disciples that they would soon be enemies of the world. Though their motivations were good—wanting to share Jesus' love with others—they would soon be hated because of their faith.

However, Jesus' promise of future joy was even more powerful than His warnings of danger. He told the disciples that He would return and bring great rejoicing. So while His death on the cross might have kept the disciples from preaching in Jesus' name, His resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit overcame that fear—the fear of the world—and inspired them to share the Good News, no matter what the personal costs.

 indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Teacher Devo



Jesus reminded Christians that they are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14). So why is it that so many Christians hide their faith? Rather than taking a stand for beliefs, Christians often avoid trouble by compromising their beliefs or ignoring difficult situations. Far too many Christians are so concerned about others' reactions that they keep the good news of God's love to themselves.

Take a moment to reflect on how you stand up for your faith. How can you set a better example for your friends who don't believe?

How might your students be standing up for their faith? or backing down when confronted with the ways of the world?

Thank God for His direction and love. Invite Him to show you new ways to reflect His love to the world.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Remind your students that they don't have to "go it" alone. They have their families, friends, teachers, and most of all, Jesus Christ to help them when the going gets tough. Often teens can't see past the hardship. It's easy for them to get wrapped up in their struggles. Help them see that there are people in place for them to call on for help.

If you are ready and willing to be consistent, show yourself as one of their "go-to-people." You can ask about their real lives, listen well, accept the students though you may not always know what they are up to or approve what they do. Look for opportunities to encourage and challenge them, and most importantly, show love to them.

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Many high-school students gain much of their self-esteem from the evaluations of their peers—and unfortunately the comments with greatest impact are the unfavorable ones. Nearly all teens want to be liked. So learning to contradict the "in" crowd makes most teens feel uncomfortable.

As you discuss ways to stand firm, recognize that though your teens may know that being open about their beliefs is right, it's difficult for them to put that knowledge into practice. Help them see ways they can practice standing firm, like being diligent about their schoolwork or being respectful to others. Explain how they can gradually work up to sharing their opinions about bigger issues, like drinking, smoking, cursing, non-marital sex, and doing drugs.

Even if teens don't seem to agree with your message, remember that God has given them—and you—the power to stand up to the harshest criticism. Christians are part of a winning team! So whether your students see it clearly now or not, they are part of the crowd that's truly "in"—those who can call on the power of God.

It's true, following Jesus isn't always easy . . . but it is always rewarding. The peace and joy of a relationship with Jesus plus the other rewards of heaven. Some rewards will be seen on earth as well. As your students follow Jesus Christ, their peers will notice. Their actions will bring fruit for the Kingdom in the long run and the help and comfort of Jesus' Spirit.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Following Jesus
isn't always easy

Students discuss their action plans for difficult situations.

Materials:

- ☐ (Optional) copies of the two scenarios

When your students arrive, split them into two groups. Assign students to one of these two groups: (1) Music Lovers or (2) Movie Lovers. Each group can have a different number of teens. The important thing is that each student is in the group which best represents him/her.

Instruct each group to take a moment to share what their favorite song/movie is with each other. If you have a small class, you could have each student share with the entire class.

After they have shared, present each group with one of the following scenarios.

They are to discuss how they would handle these situations within their group. Read aloud or give a copy of the scenario to each group.

Music Lovers Scenario:

You're at a friend's birthday party. After the cake has been eaten and the presents opened, everyone plops down on the couch to play some games. Your friend turns on some music. The second or third tune that comes on is one with a lot of suggestive lyrics. A couple people jump up and dance.

They're encouraging everyone to get up and join in. What do you do? Do you join in? Do you decide not to? If you decide not to dance, why are you choosing not to? Is it worth being teased or looking dumb? What would you do?

Movie Lovers Scenario:

It's Friday night and you're hanging out with a bunch of your friends. You're all bored out of your minds. Someone suggests seeing a movie. One of your friends suggests a movie that is rated R because of sexual content and violence.

The rest of the group decides to go watch the movie. What do you do? Do you join them in watching the movie? Do you decide not to? If you decide not to watch the movie, why are you choosing not to? Is it worth being teased or looking dumb? What would you do?

After the groups have had a few minutes to discuss what they would do, ask each group to share with the rest of the class what they decided. This need not be a joint decision. The groups do not have to come up with a single answer. And, you should not criticize or condemn them for any particular viewpoint. The point of these scenarios is threefold: (1) to help you discover how discerning your teens are regarding their consumption of media, (2) to give you an opportunity to gently share the truth found in Philippians 4:8 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 regarding what we are to be filling our minds with and how we are to take every thought captive, and (3) to force many of your teens to recognize how difficult it can be to follow Jesus in their everyday lives. The point here is to generate discussion!

Enjoy it!

Today, we're going to talk about how tough it can be to follow Jesus.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Following Jesus
isn't always easy

Students discuss their action plans for difficult situations.

Materials:

□ (Optional) copies of the two scenarios

When your students arrive, split them into two groups. Assign students to one of these two groups: (1) Music Lovers or (2) Movie Lovers. Each group can have a different number of teens. The important thing is that each student is in the group which best represents him/her.

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Enjoy it!

Today, we're going to talk about how tough it can be to follow Jesus.

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

John 16:1-3, 20-22,
32-33

MORE BIBLE INFO

God gave us specific directions about how to act like a part of His kingdom when He created the Ten Commandments. Though Jesus' death on the cross signified freedom from the laws of the Old Testament, the moral principles behind those laws (loving God and others) still apply today—to practice a lifestyle that shows Christians are distinct from the rest of the world and keeps them from its ways.

LES. 12

Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint*.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens

Distribute pencils or pens and have teens turn to page 59 of *Blueprint*. Invite one teen to read the Lesson Scripture aloud. Invite the class to share answers to the questions as part of a discussion. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 89 of this teacher's guide.)

This week's Bible verse is from 1 John 2:15.

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them."

Have your teens discuss this verse. Does this mean they can't love anyone or anything, like their belongings, family members, or friends? How might they summarize the key points of this verse? What kinds of things shouldn't they love?

Have students discuss:

- **Where does Jesus tell us to look for the focus of our lives now?** (*Not in the world, a time that is coming.*)
- **Does Jesus know it is rough following Him here and now?** (*Yes, He experienced the same; He knew we would; He knows we do.*)
- **What does Jesus promise that our pain will turn into?** (*Joy.*)
- **How does this make you feel as you face hardship and trials?** (*Answers will vary.*)

No one said following Jesus would be easy. If anything, it is going to be difficult. The reward for following Jesus, however, is eternal. It's hard to see the benefits all the time while we are on earth. But Jesus promised to give us His Spirit to help us and encourage us now so when we get to heaven we'll be glad that we followed Jesus in the difficult times as well as the good.

When you're getting ready for a battle, it's best to know who your enemy will be before the fighting begins. The world that opposes God is the enemy. The Kingdom is of God.



Lesson 12 Bible Study

great expectations

John 16:1-3, 20-22, 32-33

12 Bible Study

He wanted them to be prepared for the hard times that would follow with realistic expectations of how others would react to them.

Evil with "justification" is always more dangerous than senseless evil because the perpetrators believe they are doing the "right" thing.

He expects us to be sad and hurt when faced with pain, but He promises that pain will turn to joy.

Just after His arrest, the disciples left Him and went their separate ways.

His Father was always with Him.

Christians will have trouble in the world. But Jesus tells us to be brave because He is in control.

Jesus was never one to mince words.

He let people know exactly what they were in for when they "signed up" to follow Him. People in the world are accountable to Him, and many hate Him for it. So if you're going to associate with Christ, you're going to catch some of the "shrapnel" of the hatred fired at Him. Take a look at what Jesus wanted His followers to expect.

Read John 16:1-3.

- Why did Jesus tell His disciples these things? What kind of expectations did He want His disciples to have?

- Hitler thought he was doing God a service by trying to eliminate the Jewish people. Why is evil done for religious reasons especially dangerous?

Read John 16:20-22.

- What kind of emotional responses does Jesus expect us to have to opposition?

Read John 16:32-33.

- When did the scattering that Jesus describes here actually take place?
- What would comfort Jesus in His loneliness?
- What's inevitable for the Christian who follows Jesus? What resources will be available for the Christian when the inevitable arrives?

John 16:1-3, 20-22, 32-33

"All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.

"Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

"A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come, but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you. Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

"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.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

LES. 12

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students will interact with each other to help them follow Jesus no matter what happens.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on following Jesus even when it isn't easy. In "Worldly Wise" teens will make a collage of worldly temptations and discuss how Jesus can help in those situations. In "Following the Leader" they will create a skit showing how followers of Jesus can be faced with trouble. In "Letter to the Lord" your students will write a letter to Jesus about the good and the bad things in the world.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

It's always easier to fight in the battle if you know who's on your side. As Christians we have to face the world every day. Knowing who can help us makes us stronger and better prepared to face the trouble that lies ahead.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

WORLDLY WISE

- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Magazines

In this activity you will create a collage of worldly temptations and discuss how we can deal with these situations.

Cut out pictures from magazines of worldly things that could cause Christians to stumble. Paste these pictures on poster board to make a "World's Eye View" poster. After the poster is finished, go around the group and answer this question:

- Who can we ask for help with these problems?
- What does it take to ask for help?

FOLLOWING THE LEADER

In this activity you will create and pantomime a skit showing some difficulties of following Jesus. In your skit, show how a follower of Jesus is faced with trouble. Remember to use this week's lesson focus in your skit, "Following Jesus isn't always easy."

Think about these questions as you decide what actions to show:

- What kinds of troubles could this person encounter?
- How might he or she react to these situations?
- How could this person solve the problems?
- Where might this person go for help?

LETTER TO THE LORD

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

In this activity you will write a letter to Jesus about the good and bad things in the world today.

Write a letter to Jesus telling Him all the troubles you see in the world. How would you like for Jesus to help you in dealing with these things? Then tell Him about some of the good things you've observed, and thank Him for those things.

Think about these questions and talk about them with others in your group:

- Do the good things outweigh the bad?
- How can good things be used to help counteract the bad?
- How can a Christian be "in" the world without being "of" it?

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

Following Jesus isn't always easy

Students will discuss modern day martyrs and how to apply those martyrs' lessons into their own lives.

Materials:

- "Tough Questions" from *Blueprint*

Today we've talked a lot about how tough it can be to follow Jesus. Living as God calls us to live can be very challenging.

Have students turn to the bottom of page 60 of *Blueprint* and read the introduction paragraph under the "Tough Questions" header. Have students write their own answers to the three questions posed on the worksheet. Finally discuss:

- ① **What are the benefits to walking with Jesus?** (An amazing life filled with love, compassion, forgiveness, and peace.)

Let's spend the last part of today's class period praying. We'll start by praying for Christians who are given a hard time for their faith, and we'll end by asking God to help us deal with difficulties when we face a world that oppresses us.

Close the class in prayer, asking for courage for those who are facing opposition and for wisdom when the same kind of trouble comes your way.



Seeing God throughout the Week Following Jesus isn't always easy. Have students consider how they might find encouragement in each other when they feel upset or disappointed this week.

lesson 13

Bible Basis:

John 17:1-6, 20-23

Focus:

We are all in this together.

The God Squad

STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Joining the Club: Your students will participate in an activity and discuss belonging to a group.

- ☒ Name tags with "Blue Club" written on them, two blank name tags, paper bag

STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Finding Common Ground: Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss being one as Christians.

- ☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens

STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Teaming Up: Your teens will practice what they've learned about being in this Christian life together.

- ☐ Paper, pencils or pens, scissors
- ☒ Thin ropes or bandanas
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ "In All Things, Charity" from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Discovering Strength in Numbers: Your students will apply what they've learned by committing to accept other Christians in unity.

- ☒ Yarn (one piece per teen)
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."

—John 17:20b-21a

UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

Just before His arrest, Jesus gave final instructions to His disciples. Though the disciples didn't understand much of what was being said to them at that time, the truth was eventually revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, and they followed Jesus' direction. When Jesus explained His desire for unity within the community of believers, He used His unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit as an example. He continually referred to that relationship as a model upon which to base relationships between believers. This connoted a much deeper commitment than Christians felt they had to each other, but Jesus explained that Christians can achieve this level of caring through Him.

John 17 also contains the longest recorded prayer of Jesus, sometimes called the High Priestly Prayer. The high priest would offer sacrifices and intercede with God on behalf of himself and the entire nation. Similarly, before offering His life as a sacrifice, Jesus interceded with the Father on behalf of Himself and all His followers.

Jesus' first request was for Himself: He wanted to be glorified (vss. 1-5). He had all but accomplished His mission of seeking and saving sinners. For this, Jesus had spent more than 30 years sharing the hardships of human life. He yearned to return to heaven and enjoy once again the pure presence of God. This would be glory indeed.

Jesus' request was not selfish; He wanted to glorify the Father with His own glorification. Jesus had already brought glory to the Father by His obedience to His mission. He would bring still more glory to the Father through His obedience to the point of death and His resurrection.

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Teacher Devo



Being excluded or left alone is something most people experience—and dread repeating. For many people, families are a place to find concern and love in tough times. But often people overlook the best place to find the sense of belonging so greatly desired: God's family. As His child you have a built-in kinship with others who love Him.

Just as you are promised unconditional love by your membership in God's family, so you are called to give it. Jesus said, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). In order to manifest God's kingdom on earth, Christians must receive God's love and then follow His most important command—to care for one another.

How can you show the kind of love for others that God gives you this week?

Thank God for His tremendous love and ask Him to give you new opportunities to share it with others.

CLASSROOM TIPS

One way to reinforce the focus of today's lesson is by making sure that the students in your class are not allowed to ostracize any class members when you are meeting together. Do not tolerate cliques or exclusiveness in your meeting room. One way to do this is to divide your students into groups yourself when they do group projects. Try to use arbitrary means like the following: students with last names starting between A-M are on one team, N-Z on the other; students with birthdays in January-March are on one team, etc. Be creative, and you will come up with many other methods of grouping your students that do not let anyone feel left out.

If you do find teens that are regularly left out, why not set them up for success by having them lead part of the study one day, or invite them to share something about themselves in front of the group. Most likely the other teens just haven't had a chance to get to know these teens.

LES. 13

WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS...

Belonging is something most teens strive for. Their desire to fit in should help them to understand and appreciate this lesson well. Drawing on their own experiences of being included or excluded can help to make the lesson more personal and effective. Be sure to positively reinforce all answers given in group discussions, even if they're not necessarily what you were looking for. Ask leading questions, using the students' responses to direct discussion. This action will help show by example that diversity is beneficial and will eventually lead to unity.

However, careful distinctions must be made in explaining the differences between accepting someone's differences and accepting the sinful aspects of their lifestyles. Often teens are tempted by friends to do something wrong just to fit in. They need to understand that, while they can love others in spite of their sins, they should not condone the sins or participate in them.

Most of all, the idea of being in this together should make teens feel reassured. They don't have to be lone Christians. They have a support group that they can count on. Remind them of this great truth.

STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We are all in this together.

BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Invite teens to jot down on paper ideas for clubs they would like to become a part of.

Your students will participate in an activity and discuss belonging to a group.

Materials:

- ☐ Name tags with "Blue Club" written on them, two blank name tags, paper bag

Begin class with this activity about belonging.

Ask your students to define what it means to be a part of a group. Invite teens to share examples from their personal lives about belonging to clubs, groups of friends, or organizations in which they had a common goal. Ask your teens:

- **How does it make you feel to be a part of a group?** (*Secure, happy, cared for.*)

Have a paper bag of name tags with "Blue Club" written on them. Include two blank name tags in the bag. Ask your teens to reach into the bag and pull out a tag and put it on. Make sure that at least one or two teens have blank name tags on.

Then say: **Most of us are a part of the Blue Club now. We belong together and are a part of a group. A few of you aren't part of this group because your name tags don't match the rest of us.**

Ask your teens with the Blue Club tags:

- **What things does our group have in common?** (*Each is a member, "Blue Club" name tags, etc.*)

Ask the teens without matching name tags:

- **How does it make you feel to be excluded or different from the group?** (*Answers will vary.*)

Have all the students take off their name tags. Now we're all part of the same group. Being part of a group can make us feel cared for. Being excluded can give us a sense of hurt or loneliness. One group we can always be a part of is God's family. But just because we are a group doesn't guarantee we'll act like one. Today's story is about a group fighting against itself.



Free! Downloadable
Options for Steps 1 and 4.
[resources.wesleyan.org/
real-life-downloaded](http://resources.wesleyan.org/real-life-downloaded)

STEP 2

Studying God's Word

Bible Basis:

John 17:1-6, 20-23

Your teens will complete the Bible study in *Blueprint* and discuss being one as Christians.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens

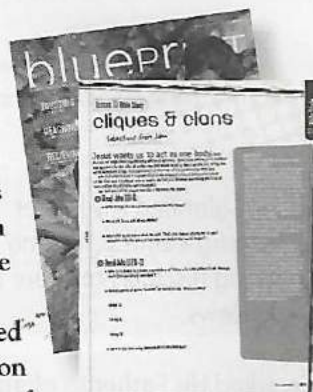
Have teens turn to page 61 of *Blueprint* and read aloud the introduction. It is provided below for your convenience.

Jesus wants us to act as one body, even though we might hold significantly different opinions on many subjects. Christ isn't calling us to sacrifice our opinions for the sake of unity—He just wants us all to focus on the one thing, the most important thing Christians have in common—their relationship with God.

Today's Scripture text is a prayer that Jesus prayed just hours before the ordeal of His trial and crucifixion was to begin. He had just finished describing the kind of persecution His disciples were to expect.

The first part of His prayer was like a report to His Father. Next, read the John 17:1-6 Lesson Scripture as a class and discuss the first three questions as a group. Then read John 17:20-23 in unison and answer the two questions under this section. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 96 of this teacher's guide.)

Being "one" with other Christians simply means that Christians should be "of one mind" in their purpose of demonstrating God's love in the world. We don't have to give up our individuality. God calls us to be united. Cliques and clans are not His way.



LES. 13

MORE BIBLE INFO

The time of Jesus was filled with religious confusion. There were many different interpretations of Scripture and many people who were believers in God but not in Jesus. Therefore, Jesus' message of unity was even more important, encouraging the disciples—and Christians today—to reach out to others no matter what their differences.

Ephesians 4:6 also teaches the importance of a Spirit-inspired unity (including diversity).

Lesson 13 Bible Study

cliques & clans

Selections from John

Jesus wants us to act as one body, even though we might hold significantly different opinions. Christ isn't calling us to sacrifice our opinions for the sake of unity—He just wants us all to focus on the one thing, the most important thing, Christians have in common—their relationship with God.

Today's Scripture text is a prayer that Jesus prayed just hours before the ordeal of His trial and crucifixion was to begin. He had just finished describing the kind of persecution His disciples were to expect.

The first part of His prayer was like a report to His Father.

▶ Read John 17:1-6.

▶ What things had Jesus accomplished for His Father?

▶ What did Jesus ask of His Father?

▶ What did Jesus mean when He said, "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began"?

▶ Read John 17:20-23

▶ Who is included in Christ's description of "those who will believe in me through their [the apostles'] message"?

▶ Christ speaks of three "unities" in verses 21-23. What are they?

Unity 1:

Unity 2:

Unity 3:

▶ How is the last unity dependent on the first two?

He had glorified His Father by leading a sinless life and choosing disciples to share the Good News.

He asked His Father to glorify Him so that He might glorify God.

He asked God to return Him to His rightful place at God's side in heaven.

Everyone who trusts Jesus.

Unity 1: unity of believers with the Father and Son

Unity 2: unity of believers among themselves

Unity 3: unity of believers as a witness to the world

Christians need to trust Jesus and His love for them and learn to love one another in order to show the world God's love for all humanity.

John 17:1-6

After Jesus said this, He looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word."

John 17:20-23

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and that you loved them even as you have loved me."

STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students will find out more about working together.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on working together. In the "A Leg Up" activity they will participate in three-legged races and discuss working together. In the "Needing Each Other" activity they will write poems about Christians working together. In the "Puzzling Practice" activity teens will create, assemble, and discuss a puzzle.

Many things can be accomplished easier and faster when done by groups working together. Today we'll look at ways we can work together and accomplish much.

TIP You may wish to set up for Step 4 while teens do Step 3.

LEG. 13

A LEG UP

☒ Thin ropes or bandanas

In this activity you will work together.

Pair up with someone else in your group. Participate in a three-legged race by tying your left ankle to your partner's left ankle using a thin rope or bandana. When all pairs are ready, race across the room and back.

Now try it again, only this time tie your left ankle to your partner's right ankle. Then discuss these questions:

- Which way was easier?
- Why do you think it was?
- How does this activity relate to working together as Christians?

NEEDING EACH OTHER

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ "In All Things, Charity" from *Blueprint*

Turn to page 62 of *Blueprint* and read the motto "In All Things, Charity." In this activity you will write a poem about Christians working together.

Take a piece of paper and a pencil or pen and write a poem about Christians working together. Ideas can include the importance of the group, teamwork, working together, or any other idea about unity. Use your Bible to add a verse to your poem.

When you are finished, share your poem with someone else in your group. If you prefer, you may work with one or more others to write your poem.



PUZZLING PRACTICE

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Scissors

In this activity you will work together to create and assemble a puzzle.

Pass around a sheet of paper and have each person in your group cut off a piece in a unique shape. Mix all the pieces together and take turns trying to assemble the puzzle. Then discuss these questions in your group:

- Which of these ways is easiest for you to hear the Holy Spirit? Why?
- How would you like to become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance?

STEP 4

Applying God's Word

Lesson Focus:

We are all in this together.

Your students will apply what they've learned by committing to accept other Christians in unity.

Materials:

- ☒ Yarn (one piece per teen)
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*

Explain to your students: Nothing is more harmful to the cause of the Gospel than disunity and fighting among Christians. Today's memory verse states that clearly. Our unity as Christians is a witness to the world that Jesus is who He said He was—the Son of God. We can infer from this that if we are not united, the world will reject the message we teach.

Invite students to share about times where problems among Christians caused their non-Christian friends to question Christianity or see hypocrisy in them. How did they feel as observers of this kind of display of disunity? Have they ever been a part of the problem? What happened?

Jesus prayed: "That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21).

Next, using a piece of yarn, show how you can pull it apart into smaller strands. Explain: Though individually we are smaller and weaker, together we are strong. In order to develop that strength, we need to learn to accept one another's differences, concentrating on the fact that we are all one in Christ. We are easily separated and broken when we stand alone, but together—with the power of Christ strengthening us—we can conquer the world.

Give each student a piece of yarn and invite them to braid or twist their piece together with others in the class to form a thicker, stronger strand. As they wind their yarn with others' pieces, ask them to consider how they can help to achieve unity among the group and with Christ.

Close in a prayer of unity, asking God to help your teens work together as a team. Ask Him to help them overlook each other's differences in order to achieve the unity He desires. Have your students join hands and pray that they might be united as a class so that those who see them will know that what they believe is true.

Remind your students to read the "Daily Faith" devotions, found on page 62 of *Blueprint* during the week.



Seeing God throughout the Week Help students remember that they are in this Christian life together. Let students think of practical ways they will encourage each other this week.

Leading High Schoolers To Christ

You should be ready to respond whenever the Holy Spirit leads a student to make a commitment to Christ. Listen to students' questions or objections and try to answer them simply and honestly. When a student is receptive, explain from the Bible the steps to becoming a Christian:

- ➊ **God wants everyone to enjoy the best life possible.** He wants all of us to lead full, rich lives and experience His love (John 10:10; Jer. 31:3).
- ➋ **But everybody has rebelled against God and lived sinfully.** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
- ➌ **This separates us forever from God.** Furthermore, we deserve to pay a penalty because we sinned (Rom. 6:23).
- ➍ **Only God could solve the problem.** And He did! He loved us so much He sent His Son, Jesus, to die the death that each of us deserves (John 3:16-17).
- ➎ **But you are not forced to accept God's solution.** To apply Jesus' payment for sin to your life, you must personally commit yourself in belief to Him.
- ➏ **You can have forgiveness.** If you declare openly that Jesus is who He claims to be and believe that God raised Him from the dead, God has promised you eternal life (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 1 John 5:11).
- ➐ **As you study the Bible and talk with God through prayer, you will grow closer to Him and enjoy the full life He intended** (John 10:10).

Coming Up This Spring

Final Days of Jesus

Your teens will study lessons from Luke, Mark, John, 1 Corinthians, and Colossians about faith in Jesus.

VALUE: Forgiveness

Jesus Conquers Death

Your teens will study Luke, 1 Corinthians, and the Pauline epistles about Jesus conquering sin.

VALUE: Joy

How Believers Live

High schoolers will learn about life as a believer through Acts and both letters to the Corinthians.

VALUE: Appreciation