



Baseline

Unit six will be the last unit of Baseline. Therefore, we are offering one Baseline CD free to churches that request it. If you purchase the other five printed units you will have enough lessons for two 10-month years.

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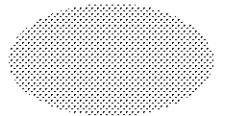
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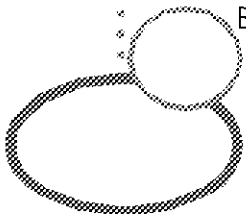
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Baseline is developed by the Foursquare National Christian Education Department.

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Baseline

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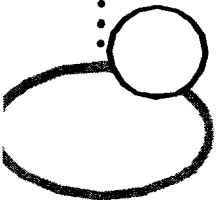
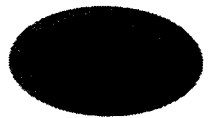
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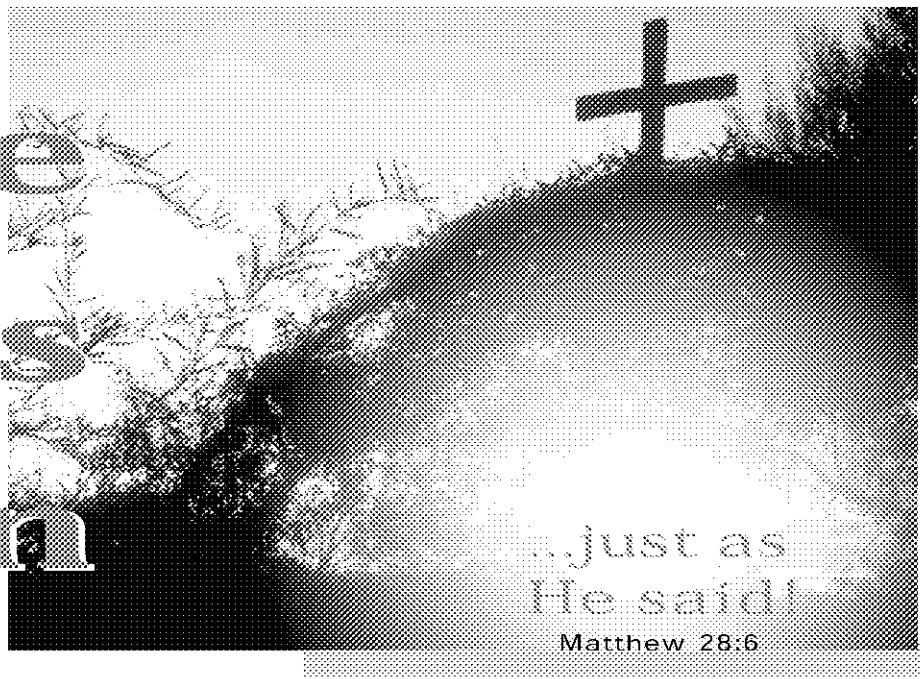
Earth Day
The Earth is the Lord's

Ground Hog Day

St. Patrick's Day



He is risen



...just as
He said!

Matthew 28:6

LESSON AIM

To explore Biblical reasons for believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
To understand what the resurrection means to us personally.

KEY VERSE

"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Matthew 28:6

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles/pens/paper

Photocopies of "Jerusalem Times" handout

Toothpicks, or safety pins, or craft sticks, etc. (10 for each student)

DECLARATION OF FAITH

Throughout the Word of God we are told time and again that Jesus Christ, who died and was buried, rose from the dead. This is never a supposition but, a direct statement of fact. "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to My gospel." (II Timothy 2:8) The writers of the four Gospels made no effort to explain the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They simply reported it **thereafter.**

GROUP INTERACTION

I Don't
Believe It!

Give everyone ten items such as toothpicks, safety pins, etc. Have the kids sit in a circle. When it is their turn, each kid will tell the rest of the group three things about himself. Think of unusual things that no one would know. Two things must be true, and one is false. Go around the circle and have someone else in the group volunteer to guess which is right. If they guess wrong, they give the describer a toothpick. If they guess right, the person describing themselves gives them a toothpick. The person with the most toothpicks, safety pins, etc. is the winner.

If your group is large, break into two separate groups. Transition into the lesson by explaining that sometimes it is hard for us to believe something even though it is true. Cite examples from the game to prove the point.



INSTRUCTION TIME

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central issue of Christianity. Many non-Christian people don't believe that Christ rose from the dead. But He did. The resurrection proves Christ's power over Satan. It also shows how far God would go to make a way of redemption for His children.

Have someone read Matthew 28:11-15. The chief priests gathered the soldiers and other religious leaders together to make up a story about the disciples. They bribed the guards and told them to say that they had fallen asleep and the disciples had stolen the body. So many people teach that the resurrection didn't happen. But it did. Let's look at some of the proof.

The tomb was empty. (Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:33; John 20:1-2) The Roman guards, the angels, the disciples and the women all testified to the fact that the tomb, where Jesus had been laid, was empty.

Some believed that Jesus' followers went to the wrong tomb. If this were true, then the Jewish authorities would have taken them to the "right" tomb to produce the body of Jesus. Also, it would have been hard to go to the wrong tomb. It was well known that Jesus was buried in a tomb carved from rock (Mark 15:46). This was a rich man's tomb and would have been easy to find.

Eye witness testimony. *Ask the group, "What is an eye witness testimony?"* Each of the four Gospels, written by different men, all had personal testimony, or the eye witness testimony of others, that Jesus' body was not in the tomb.

Minor details vary in the four Gospels regarding Jesus' resurrection. Some people claim these differences indicate the gospel writers made up the story. However, these disciples did not sit down and deliberately make up the story. Usually when a group of people want to lie, they memorize details so they all come up with the same answers. These people all saw Jesus alive, but in different places and at different times.

The Roman soldiers were an elite group. They were commanded to guard the tomb just so the body would not be stolen (Matthew 27:63-66). It would have been an embarrassment as well as a death penalty for them to allow someone to steal Jesus' body. The disciples couldn't have stolen the body with the soldiers guarding the tomb. The enemies of Jesus would have no reason to steal the body because they would want the proof of His death.

It is hard to imagine what the tomb really looked like. According to Roman tradition and scripture references, this would have been an elaborate tomb. Most graves were carved into dirt hillsides and then stones rolled in front of the entrance to keep out intruders and wild animals. But Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of this tomb, was both a very wealthy man and a respected government official. Because of his love for Jesus, he courageously approached Pilate and asked for the body so that he could properly bury it. (Matthew 27:57-60)





Jesus' tomb was carved out of a large rock. There would have been a stone slab or bench carved on the inside so that the body could be placed on it. The stone placed in front of the tomb would have been larger and more ornate than usual. It is believed to have weighed about two tons--double the weight of an elephant! The stone was rolled into a groove so that it could not be easily moved. It could have only been moved by several men using levers.



Tip

For this investigation, some of the scriptures have language that is difficult for a middle schooler to understand. try to find a couple of paraphrased or translations of the Bible that would help them understand what God is saying.

The angel's message. The women saw the stone had been moved and went inside the tomb. They were actually standing *in* the empty tomb when the angel told them Christ had risen from the dead (Mark 16: 5-6). The angel had to tell them not to be alarmed because Jesus' body wasn't there; He was risen from the dead. The angel then told the women to go and tell the disciples.

Jesus appears to His friends. In addition to the empty tomb, and the angel's message, many people saw Jesus. Jesus did not appear to His enemies. He didn't need to prove anything to them. Instead, He appeared to His disciples and those who loved Him.

Jesus did not take the form of a spirit. He had a physical body. He ate with the disciples; people touched Him; He talked to everyone who saw Him; His skin showed the scars and the nail prints. His physical appearance and conversations with them would have given them great confidence and courage to share the fact that Jesus was indeed the divine Son of God.

INVESTIGATION

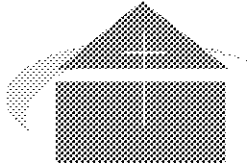
We have just discovered the evidence of the resurrection. But what does Christ's conquering death mean to us? Listed below are verses that speak about the importance of the resurrection. Break into groups and divide the following scriptures between the groups. Then have the students come together to share some thoughts from their discussion time. The second column are phrases to help you, the leader, guide the discussion.

Acts 2:23-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-5
1 Thessalonians 1:10
John 2:22
John 11:25
Romans 10:9
Colossians 3:1-2
1 Peter 1:3

What Paul said about Jesus' resurrection
The Gospel of Good News is the resurrection
His death delivered us from God's judgement
The disciples believed because of Jesus' resurrection
Jesus' death and resurrection gave eternal life
If we believe, we will be forgiven
He is alive; we need to focus on Him
We have hope because of the resurrection of Christ



TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



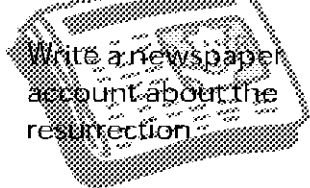
The death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most important event in Christianity. God revealed His great love for us by revealing Himself through Christ's actions. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 says, "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Some religions try to diminish the power of Christ by saying He didn't completely die on the cross. This simply is not true. He willingly gave up life (Matthew 27:50, Luke 23:18).

Jesus has the power to forgive sin from our lives because He has complete power over death and over Satan. Christ's resurrection from death gives us eternal life. He showed His ultimate power over Satan by conquering death. He can help us with anything in our lives. Christ's death is not the final word. But God's love, in allowing His Son to go through this, is the ultimate force - greater even than death.

Ask the kids to come up with an answer to the following questions:
What difference does Jesus' resurrection make to someone who:

- is afraid of death
- feels that life has no meaning
- is depressed about a problem
- is constantly doing the wrong thing

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES



Note: If your group is large, break the kids into groups of three or four and give each group one question to work on.

Have the group write a newspaper article about Jesus' resurrection. Break into groups and hand out photocopies of the "Jerusalem Times". Have the groups come up with a news report of what might have been written about Jesus' resurrection and appearance to His followers.

Break the group into two teams and have a Bible drill. The following scriptures relate to the eye witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. When they read the scripture, have the kids tell who the witnesses were:



Bible drill

Mark 16:9 (Mary Magdalene)

Matthew 28:8-10 (women at the tomb)

Luke 24:34 (Peter)

I Corinthians 15:3-6 (500 followers)

Mark 16:12-13 (followers from Emmaus)

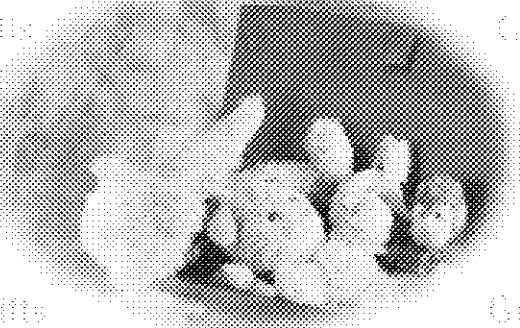
John 20:24-29 (Thomas)

John 20:29-25 (disciples)

Ministry

Romans 12:4

Gifts



LESSON AIM

To understand the definition of a ministry gift.
For each student to begin to explore their own gifts and discover ways to use them within the church.

KEY VERSE

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function."

Romans 12:4

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles / Pen / Pencils
Photocopies of "Ministry Gifts" (Master Provided)

DECLARATION OF FAITH

The spiritual gifts are supernatural capacities bestowed and made effectual by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts differ from natural talents for Christian service in that they are operative only by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual ministries are divinely appointed offices, the fulfillment of which depends upon a supernatural anointing. Spiritual operations are the powerful energies of the Holy Spirit by which the gifts and ministries are enabled to **function.**

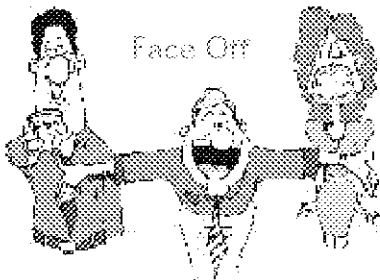


GROUP INTERACTION

The point of this group interaction is to show the group that there are many different ways that we can accomplish a single task. The body of Christ functions in the same way. All of the ministry gifts were created to be different, but they all function to serve and minister to others.

For this group interaction, you will need to divide your group into two teams.

- 1) Each team should pick one person to be their captain, or spokesperson.
- 2) Have the two team captains come to the front for a face-off. The group leader should then read one of the various categories.





3) Each captain should estimate how many things he thinks his team can come up with in a one minute time span that fit within the category heading. (For example, the category could be, "Ways to get from California to New York). The first captain could bid that he thinks his team can come up with ten ways in one minute.

4) The second leader then has a decision to make. He can either challenge Team 1 if he thinks they cannot reach the number they stated or raise the bid to a number that he thinks his team can reach. If he chooses to challenge, then Team 1 must try to collectively come up with ten ways to get from California to New York (ex. hop, walk, fly, crawl, etc).

5) If they successfully reach their goal, they receive a point. If they do not come up with the number they bid within the allotted time, then the opposing team gets a point for successfully challenging. The teams then move on to another category.

The teams can help their captain decide whether to challenge or bid. Caution the teams not to call out answers prematurely. Once a team has been challenged, the entire team works together to come up with the answers. The group leader should keep track of how many they come up with in order to score the points correctly. The use of a white board or flip chart would be good to avoid repeated answers and to keep score. After all categories have been played, the team with the most points wins.

Categories

- Ways to raise \$1,000
- Ways to obtain a sweater
- Ways to get to school
- Ways to wash a car
- Ways to say "thank you" (not different languages)

INSTRUCTION

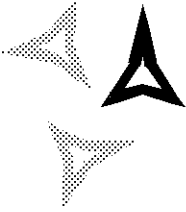
TIME

God created each person to be different and unique. As we walk in a Spirit-filled life, our basic characteristics become empowered by the Holy Spirit and we function in our unique gifting. Romans 12 lists seven categories of ministry gifts (prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading and mercy). Each believer functions in at least one of these gifts. Most people find, however, that they have one dominant trait with a mix of other less noticed gifts. This means that they tend to use one of the gifts more often than the others. For instance, someone may have the dominant gift of giving with a lesser degree of the gift of mercy. This person would find themselves often giving freely of their time, money, etc. Over time they would realize that often, their giving would be based on their compassion for others. Another person might have the dominant gift of teaching, but have giving as an accompanying gift. This person might teach others to give.

Tip:

Only five categories have been suggested for this activity, but feel free to add more categories if time allows.

Not Our Own



One thing that should be remembered is that no gift can be claimed as our own. They are *gifts*, areas that God has *allowed* us to excel in to serve *His* purposes. We are supposed to be wise stewards of those things which God has allowed us to use because of His life in us. These gifts are specifically given to us to use for ministry and serving others. If we are good stewards, He will continue to give us gifts and equip us for more ministry.

It is also important to not focus on one particular gift or ministry. God desires to work through us in many different ways at various times in our lives. As we grow and mature as Christians, the Holy Spirit will give us strengths in different areas at different times to equip us for the ministries where He has placed us.

Within The Body

The main purpose of the ministry gifts is to make a church body stronger and more effective in ministering to others. It is a joint effort where each one encourages and supports another. No one person is more important than anyone else. Each person may function within a different gift, but if he/she acts alone, then the entire church won't function properly. We have to work together!

The ministry gifts described in Romans 12 are everyday gifts -- we should use them daily. They are positioned in the church in order to meet needs and to minister to others. These needs tend to be personal needs both within and outside of the church body. Functioning in these gifts does not require a dramatic display of the power of the Holy Spirit. However, they are no less powerful and indeed are Holy Spirit-driven. These gifts show themselves as we go through a Spirit-filled day. For example, if a person with the gift of mercy sees someone hurt or crying, they would *automatically* respond with compassion; a person with the gift of giving would *freely* offer food to a hungry child. Remember, God gives different people different gifts at different times, so that we are ready to minister to anyone to whom He leads. Though a person may be stronger in a particular gift, every person has ALL the gifts available to him or her, depending on the need at that time. Let's take a closer look at what each of the gifts are:

WORD DEFINITIONS



PROPHECY - Prophecy is a vocal ministry which extends from a believer to another person. This gift is largely based on a person's faith and is used to edify, exhort and comfort others.

MINISTRY/SERVICE - Ministry, or service, involves the ability to find unmet needs and tasks and to adequately meet those needs.

TEACHING - Teaching is a gift that one person has to enable another person to learn. Within the church, this focuses on spiritual growth and the health of the church body.

EXHORTATION - Exhortation is the gift which encourages and directs others to holy living in a gentle, but sincere manner.

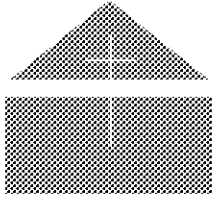
GIVING - Giving is the ability for one person to freely give of their own possessions with extreme generosity regardless of their own financial state.

LEADING - Leading is the ability to influence others toward a certain goal or result in accordance with God's purposes.

MERCY - Mercy is the ability to feel compassion for others who are suffering and to be moved to act within Christ's love to respond to that suffering.



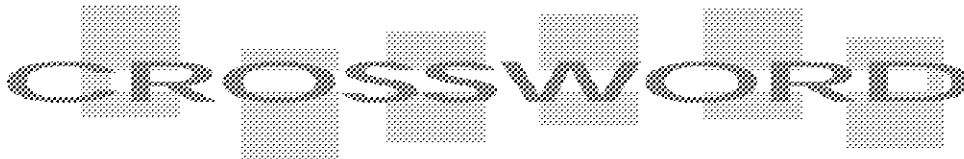
TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Give each student a piece of paper and have them jot down two or three positive adjectives to describe themselves. This may be difficult for some students. Be sure to watch for those struggling and try to guide them. This should be an uplifting activity rather than a discouraging or frustrating one.

Next, divide the kids into groups of three or four. Collect the papers, shuffle them and pass them out again. Have each student read the paper they are holding and as a group match the characteristics to a certain gift. Remember that ministry gifts are not just personality traits. God gives us gifts that work well with our personality. They are special abilities which the Holy Spirit enhances for serving others.

The students should then discuss how they can use their gift(s) in their youth group, church or community. At first this might be a difficult task, but with direction they will get the idea and it can be an exciting way to discover how God has gifted each person. It is important that the teacher has thoroughly discussed the idea that no one gift is more important than another.



ANSWER KEY

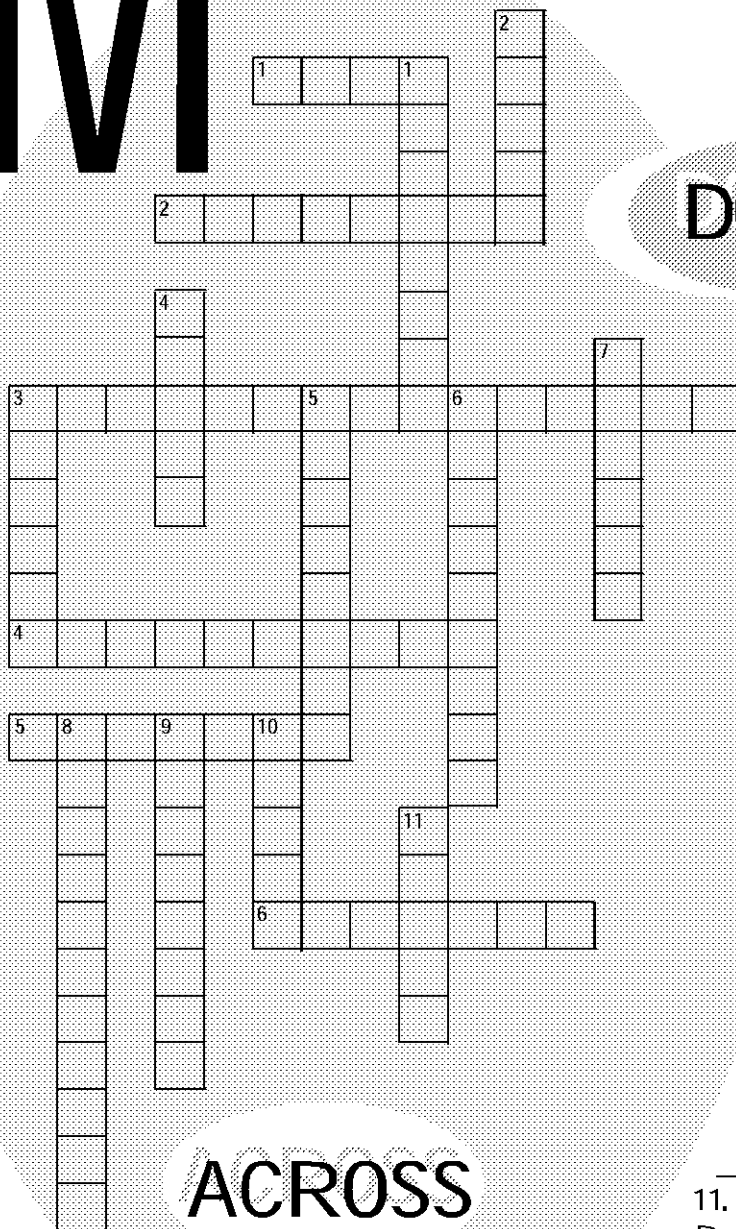
Across:

1. gift
2. prophecy
3. characteristics
4. Holy Spirit
5. leading
6. service

Down:

1. together
2. daily
3. church
4. mercy
5. teaching
6. important
7. giving
8. exhortation
9. dominant
10. needs
11. seven

Ministry Gifts



DOWN

1. To have an effective church, the gifts must work _____.
2. Believers should function in the ministry gifts on a _____ basis.
3. The working of the gifts should strengthen the _____.
4. The gift that is the ability to feel compassion for others who are suffering is _____.
5. The gift that one person has to enable another person to learn is _____.
6. No gift is more _____ than another gift.
7. The gift where one person has extreme generosity regardless of their own financial state is _____.
8. The gift which encourages and directs others to holy living is _____.
9. Most people have one _____ gift and a mix of other gifts.
10. Ministry gifts should be used to meet _____.
11. There are _____ ministry gifts mentioned in Romans 12:6-8.

ACROSS

1. All members of the body do not have the same _____.
2. The gift which includes a vocal ministry used to edify, exhort and comfort others is _____.
3. We can partially determine our own gifts by looking at our _____.
4. The gifts are empowered by the _____.
5. The gift that includes the ability to influence others toward a certain goal is _____.
6. The gift that involves the ability to find unmet need and to adequately meet those needs is _____.

Roadmap TO Blessing

LESSON AIM

To understand the practicality of blessing.
To recognize that salvation is the beginning of a blessed life.
To obey God's Word in order to receive other blessings from God.

KEY VERSE

"Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people."
Psalm 3:8

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles/paper/pencils
Copies of "Roadmap to Blessing" for each student
Copies of "Why Were They Blessed?" for each student
Enough pizza for each student to have at least one piece

GROUP INTERACTION

Roadmap
to Blessing

Order some pizza from a favorite pizza place. Make sure it arrives before the kids do. Put the pizza in a prominent place in the room and let the aroma fill the room. Place a barrier such as a row of chairs or a masking tape line on the floor to keep the kids from the pizza. As the kids arrive, tell them that anyone who stays out of the Pizza Zone (until you give permission) will be able to eat some of it a little later. Make several references to the pizza, the aroma and remind the kids to stay outside the Pizza Zone until you give permission.

Tell the kids that they have to follow the directions on the "Roadmap to Blessing" in order to eat some pizza. Photocopy these "roadmaps" and distribute one to each student. Tell them to put a check mark in the box beside each instruction as they complete it. Allow several minutes for the fun and chaos of following instructions and for eating their pizza.

After everyone has completed their roadmaps and eaten their pizza, instruct them to find a seat and begin to introduce the lesson.

INSTRUCTION**TIME**

A Unique Blessing

When we accept Jesus Christ, it is like the first step of our "Roadmap to Blessing." We cannot earn salvation. It is a free gift through Jesus Christ. It is also a unique blessing. Salvation is perhaps the only blessing of God that does not require us to do something to earn it. Before we can fully realize God's blessings, we must first receive His free gift of salvation. Once we have Jesus as Lord of our lives, a relationship of trust begins to develop between God and us. In this relationship, God blesses us in response to our willingness to obey His Word.

The Practicality of Blessing

Talk about the practicality of blessing. God sees His people in need and blesses us with a solution. The word, "bless" means to make happy or to bring comfort or joy to a person. God knows there is great power in the ability to bless. He loves to bless us with happiness, comfort, joy, and good things.

Blessing From God

James 1:17 reminds us that God is the great "giver" of anything that is good. It pleases God to bless His people. Ask the kids to share some of the ways God has blessed them. If they don't easily see God's blessing in their lives, help them identify ways God has moved on their behalf. For example, do they have life, strength, food, and friends? These are blessings. The Bible says that, "Every good gift ... is from above." Anything good that happens to a Christian ultimately comes from God. Allow several kids to suggest ideas of what taking care not to let one or two kids dominate the entire discussion.

The power
of any
spoken word,
good or bad,
can have a
lasting effect
on someone.

Spoken Blessing

When the Bible speaks of blessing, we notice a couple of interesting characteristics. First of all, blessing usually begins as a verbal expression. For example, Moses spoke the blessing of God upon the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 28:6, "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out." The blessing was eventually written down with the intention that future generations would read these words for years to come. A blessing is most effective when it is spoken aloud. When you complimented another person during the "roadmap" activity, you were speaking blessing to them, even though we often don't take our words too seriously.

Obedience Brings Blessing

Another interesting quality of blessing is the connection with obedience. Deuteronomy 28:2 says, "...all these blessings shall come upon you ... because you obey the voice of the Lord your God..." Most of

the blessings promised in the Bible are accompanied by the condition of obedience. Psalm 84:11-12 establishes the principle that we will be blessed with happiness if we put our trust in God. He is willing to bless us in practical ways. But we must first recognize who God is and be willing to devote our life to Him.

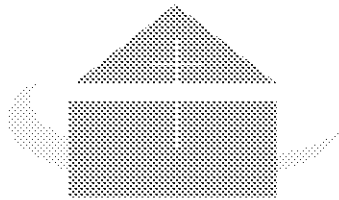
INVESTIGATION



To help establish God's principle that blessing accompanies obedience, direct the kids to complete the following investigation. Write the following names on the chalkboard: Abraham, David, and Deborah. Ask the kids what they remember about each of these Bible characters. Make a brief list of characteristics and events that relate to these people and how they obeyed God. Keep the discussion directed toward the events and issues that are on the handout you are about to distribute. For example, don't focus on the fact that David became King of Israel. Rather, talk about his experience with Goliath from 1 Samuel 17.

Distribute copies of the handout, "*Why Were They Blessed?*" Tell the kids to break into groups of no more than three people. Instruct each person in every group to choose one of the Bible characters as their own. Tell them to read about the Bible character by looking in their Bibles to find the details. Contemporary translations of the Bible, such as *The Promise* or *The Open Bible*, will work best for this investigation. Provide a few copies of one of these translations for the kids who otherwise would have to use a more cumbersome translation. After a few minutes of research, ask the groups to share why they think these people were blessed. Have them answer the questions at the top of the handout about all three Bible characters.

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



As the groups complete their discussion, begin to apply the importance of this lesson in the lives of these students. Ask the kids to answer these questions in their own hearts:

1. How has God blessed you this week?
2. Have you obeyed God's instructions for your life this week?
3. Does it seem difficult to obey God? Why?
4. What do you think would happen if you consistently obeyed God this week?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY

Picture
A Blessing



Provide the kids with drawing paper, crayons, markers, colored chalk, pastels, water colors or any other drawing supplies you may have. Instruct the kids to create a "still picture" from a movie, T.V. show or life experience where one person does something to bless another person. The kids may have to think hard about this. Help them look for the moments of blessing, however small they may be. After the kids complete their pictures, share them with the entire group and discuss what they have learned about God's blessing in their lives.

Roadmap to Blessing

Follow the instructions on this roadmap to receive the blessing of tasty, aromatic pizza! Remember, there are no shortcuts to true blessing. You must carefully obey all the instructions if you want to enjoy the pizza. Place a checkmark in the box after you complete each instruction.

1. Walk quietly three times around the inside of the classroom.
2. Make a weird face at a nearby adult.
3. Drink some water and hold it for a minute before swallowing.
4. Compliment someone in the group.
5. Climb over the row of chairs nearest the pizza.
6. Spin like a top.
7. Show your leader the roadmap with all items checked off.
8. Eat a piece of pizza with your friends.

How would the outcome of their lives have been different if these people did not obey God?

Make a list of blessings that happened in the lives of these or other people because they obeyed God.

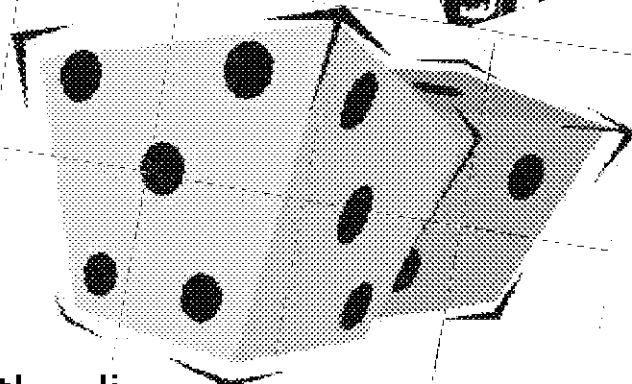
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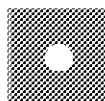
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BLESSED

SP

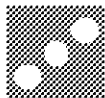


It wasn't the roll of the dice that caused these people to be blessed.



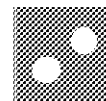
Abraham was given a choice by God. He was told to take his teenage son, Isaac, to the top of Mt. Moriah to offer him there as a sacrifice. God wasn't really interested in seeing the young boy killed. He just wanted to see if Abraham would obey even when obedience was so difficult.

- Read Genesis 22:2 to find out what God told Abraham to do.
- Read Genesis 22:9-13 to find out what Abraham did.
- Read Genesis 22:16-18 to find out the blessing that came from God because Abraham obeyed.



Sometimes, we obey by doing something we know is right even if we haven't been told to do it. David is an example of a teenage boy who didn't have to be told to obey. He just knew the right thing to do. The giant, Goliath, was a threat to the entire Jewish army and made fun of them and their God on a daily basis. Finally, equipped with only a slingshot, David decided to do battle against Goliath.

- Read 1 Samuel 17:44-47 to find out Goliath's challenge and David's response.
- Read 1 Samuel 17:48-50 to find out what David did that pleased God.
- Read Acts 13:21-23 to find out the blessing that came from God because David did the right thing.



Deborah was the fifth judge raised up by God to lead His people away from sin and idolatry. She was a brave and daring warrior as well as a wise judge. The enemy of Israel, a man named Sisera, had terrorized God's people for many years. Sisera commanded 100,000 soldiers and 900 chariots. Deborah and the commander of her army, Barak, had only 10,000 soldiers. They were greatly outnumbered, except, God was on their side. Because of a giant hailstorm, a flooded river, and the boldness of another daring woman, named Jael, the enemy was defeated. God used Deborah to deliver His people from their cruel enemies.

- Read Judges 4:4-7 to find out what God told Deborah to do.
- Read Judges 5:1-5 to discover how God delivered His people.
- Read Judges 5:31 to find out the blessing that resulted from Deborah's obedience to God.

sharing

GOD'S

blessing

Numbers 6:24-26

LESSON AIM

To understand how to share God's blessing with other people.

KEY VERSE

"The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you, The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

Numbers 6:24-26

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles/paper/pencils/dictionaries
Fortune Cookies purchased from a Chinese restaurant for each student
Ingredients and photocopies for Blessing Cookies
or Scripture Fortune Cookies (your choice)
Photocopies of "Reading Between the Lines" handout for each student

GROUP INTERACTION

Part 1: Examine what a fortune cookie says about the kids' future.
Give each student a fortune cookie. Tell them to open it and read the paper inside. Some of the "fortunes" may seem accurate and some will not apply at all. Some of the fortunes are so general they would apply to anyone. Would a person base their entire future on an encouragement inside a fortune cookie? Why or why not?

Take this opportunity to talk as a group about the fortunes and what they mean. Do the kids feel as though their fortune fit their lives? Did someone else get a fortune they wanted? If some of the cookies included words of encouragement, were these words well received by the kids?

Part 2: Prepare a cookie to bless another person.
Choose one of the two "cookie" activities described on the "cookie" handout. Both activities focus on sharing God's blessing with another person. If you choose to have the kids make the cookies, you will need to structure your class to allow time for this. A supply list and recipe for the fortune cookie option is included on the handout. Be sure to have enough adult helpers to provide a safe and stress-free experience.





INVESTIGATION

Break into groups of three or four and provide each group with a dictionary, Bible, paper and pencils. Ask the kids to look up the word "bless" in the dictionary and compare the definitions with the Bible verses from Numbers 6:24-27. Ask them to choose the definition that best fits the Bible use of the word "bless." Here are a few observations to help direct discussion in the groups:

- bless means to want good things to happen to a person
- bless means to honor another person
- bless means to put another person first
- bless means to respect and show reverence
- bless means to treat someone with kindness

INSTRUCTION

TIME

God is the One Who Blesses People

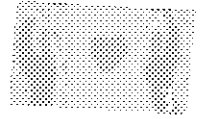
Sometimes people say, "God bless you," when another person sneezes. Scientists tell us that a sneeze actually causes the human heart to skip a beat for a split second, so sharing God's blessing is especially important after a sneeze! This is an interesting picture of life because if it were not for God's blessing, we could not even live.

At other times, Christians talk about people blessing God with our praise and worship. The Bible says that it is possible for human beings to do or say things that please God. As a result, God is honored, respected, and treated with kindness and reverence. We learn how to bless God by watching how He has blessed us. Once we understand how to receive God's blessing in our lives, we are told in the Bible to share God's blessing with other people.

Sharing God's Blessing With Others

During the Group Interaction, you prepared cookies to give to another person. Along with these cookies you inserted a Bible verse to give that person which will bring blessing and encouragement to their life. If you are sincere in giving them the Bible verse and the cookie, you will share God's blessing with them. Giving another person one of these cookies is just one way of blessing people. Giving a person the Word of God is the best thing we can share.

There is no better way to bless another person than to use the words of God Himself as a blessing. The Bible is full of verses that will bring positive results into a person's life. Numbers 6:24-27 is an example of passing the blessing of God to other people. Read these verses together, aloud from your Bibles. Notice that God's pattern for blessing His people involves one person repeating God's Word to another person.

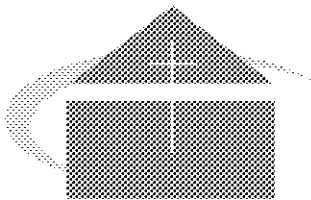


How to Share God's Blessing With Others

You can use Bible verses to bless others. The book of Psalms in the Old Testament is full of blessings and promises. Reading this book alone will give you a lifetime of blessings for yourselves and to share with others. As you read many New Testament books you will notice that they begin or end with blessings. Listening to your teacher, group leader or pastor as they share truth from the Bible is another good way to discover verses of blessing.

Sometimes we have to think carefully about the meaning of a Bible verse that we might want to share with someone. Go back to Numbers 6:24-26 and read these verses again. Look at the student hand-out called, "Reading Between the Lines." Pray that God will show you how you can use these verses to share His blessing with other people. Read each phrase separately. Then, think carefully about how that verse might be a blessing for someone. Write something you can do or say to another person which would share the blessing of that verse with them.

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Remember there is a very practical side of blessing. God meets a specific need for us when He blesses us. In much the same way, we can be practical when we bless another person. Read 1 Peter 3:8,9 aloud together. In these verses we recognize five specific things to do as we bless other people. Write these words on the chalkboard. Don't preach about these words. Rather, spend the concluding minutes helping the kids see that God wants to bless them with a godly life:

* unity * compassion * love * tender heart * courtesy

Finish this session with verse 9 which reminds us of the importance of not fighting with one another or making fun of each other. Instead Peter tells us, we should bless one another, "... knowing that we were called to inherit a blessing." Pray for each one that these words will become part of their behavior so that what they do will consistently match their words of blessing to others.

Reading Between the Lines

Read the Bible verses below and write down how you can pray for God to bless another person. An example is done for you.

The Lord bless you and keep you;

I can ask God to bless another person by protecting and caring for them.

The Lord make His face to shine upon you,

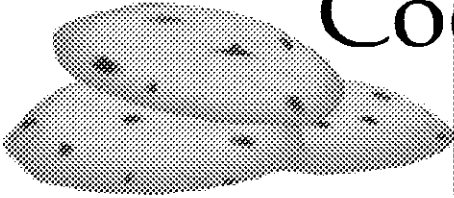
And be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,

And give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

Blessing Cookies



To make "Blessing Cookies," buy or bake enough cookies for each student to have three or four. Let the kids eat one themselves during the lesson and save the others to give as a blessing to someone else. Photocopy the Bible verses (right), and cut on the dotted line. Demonstrate for the kids how to use a gluestick to wrap the tab around a toothpick. Put the verse into a cookie before giving it to the person.

wrap around toothpick

I pray God will bless you and those around you with His love and care.
-- Numbers 6:24

wrap around toothpick

I pray God will be gracious to you, constantly watch over you and give you peace.
-- Numbers 6:26

wrap around toothpick

I pray God will bless you with His comfort, love and peace.
-- 2 Corinthians 13:11

Scripture "Fortune" Cookies

Follow the recipe below to make "fortune" cookies. Photocopy and cut the Scripture boxes below. Let the kids choose which verse they will use inside their cookies. Encourage the kids to give the Scripture Cookies to someone who needs to be encouraged.

Ingredients:
2 eggs
1/2 cup sugar
4 tablespoons water
1 cup sifted flour

This recipe will make 20 cookies

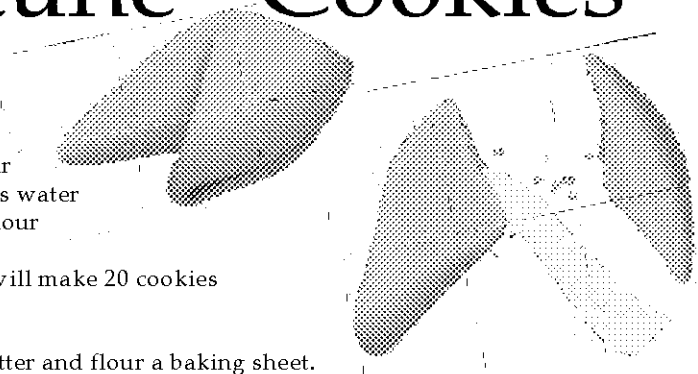
Instructions:

- Lightly butter and flour a baking sheet.
- Pre-heat oven to 350.
- With an electric mixer, beat eggs and gradually mix in sugar.
- Beat water in one tablespoon at a time.
- Use a spoon to fold in the flour; do not use mixer.
- Space tablespoon size cookies about 4-5 inches apart on sheet.
- Bake until lightly brown (about 3-4 minutes).
- Place warm cookies on paper plates for the students to shape.
- While cookies are still warm, have the students place the Scripture boxes in the center, fold the cookie in half, and then in half again, making the traditional "fortune cookie" shape.
- Leave the cookies alone until they cool, checking to be sure they retain their distinctive shape.
- When cool, send the cookies home with the students to give to someone who needs God's blessing and would enjoy the cookie.

I pray God will bless you and those around you with His love and care.
Numbers 6:24

I pray God will be gracious to you, constantly watch over you and give you peace.
Numbers 6:26

I pray God will comfort you with His comfort, love and peace.
2 Corinthians 13:11



A SERVANT OF ALL

Philippians 2:3-11

LESSON AIMS

To cause the students to think about how they treat other people
To expose selfishness and encourage students to think of the interests of others.

KEY VERSE

"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others"
Philippians 2:4

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles/Pencils/Paper
4 One-dollar bills
Masking tape to create a line splitting 2 people
Photocopies of work sheet, "Service Study" - enough for each student

DECLARATION OF FAITH

Jesus Christ is the only man who ever walked this earth who was completely devoid of selfishness. Everything He did was in the interest of others, either mankind or His heavenly Father. Though possessed with all power in heaven, in earth, and able to perform the greatest of miracles, Jesus never exercised that power on His own behalf. Every miracle He performed was for **someone else.**

GROUP INTERACTION



Have four one-dollar bills prepared before the game. Hold up two of the bills and ask for two volunteers who want an opportunity to earn 2 dollars. Have them come forward and place them on either side of a masking tape line, facing each other, and tell them whoever can get the other person to cross over onto their own side will get two dollars. They are not allowed to touch the other person, and may only speak to them. Give them a few minutes to talk and discuss. If after 3 minutes they cannot do it have them sit down and let two others try.

NOTE: There are different solutions to the game. But the ideal ending is that each person, or at least one of the two would sacrifice themselves for the other that one would win both dollars or that both would win by both crossing over into the other person's side. If no one discovers a solution, end the game.



Ask the kids if they realized the point of the game. If not, tell the students this game was designed to show our selfish nature. Every human being has the tendency to be selfish. We are always looking out for ourselves, looking to profit ourselves. We are concerned with our needs, our wants, our own well-being. That is why no one could win the game. The best solution would have been for both of you to cross the line so that the other person could receive 2 dollars.

INSTRUCTION

TIME

Serving One Another

Have a volunteer from the class read Philippians 2:3-8. Explain to the class that Paul wrote the book of Philippians to encourage unity in the body of Christ. But within these verses we see an important command about why we must be servants.

As we look at verse 3 notice two key phrases, *selfish ambition* and *vain conceit*. Selfish ambition happens when seeking your own self interest or advancement at the expense of other people.

Vain conceit means, "empty glory." This kind of "compliment" is meaningless because it is self generated.

Many times we act in this selfish manner. Consider the game we just played. Each of the two people tried their hardest to get the other person over to their side because they wanted to gain two dollars. *Ask the students:* How many times have they ever:

- Done their chores without expecting something in return, (i.e. allowance, extra spending money, time to play video games, or watch TV)?
- Helped out a friend without thinking or asking, "What's in it for me," or, "What will you do for me?"
- Shared something you own with someone else without expecting anything in return.

Often we act in this manner. But Paul clearly tells us that we must NOT act in selfish ambition. If we are not to act selfishly how then are we to act? Paul defines the desired behavior.

At the end of verse three and in verse four, Paul tells us how we should act. He says we should act in "lowliness of mind" (humility) and consider others better than us. Considering someone better than ourselves is not just how we think of them, but rather, how we actually treat them. Paul says to look to the interests of others, to meet their needs. We need to be people who are consistently looking at what is best for others, literally investing our lives in them. As Christians we are expected to be servants to each other, and to focus on other's needs.

Christ-like Attitudes:

Our attitudes need to be like Christ's. Jesus Christ has God's nature and is equal to His Father. But Paul says that Jesus did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped. This means that Jesus did not have to fight and seize the authority that was His as God. Instead, He laid down His rights and considered Himself of no reputation. Most leaders, kings, presidents, etc., fight for their position. They would do anything they could to maintain their power. Jesus didn't choose this path. Instead He gladly laid down His life and position (reputation) for our gain. He didn't come to earth with pride, selfishly announcing Himself as Christ, beckoning all people unto himself. Rather, He laid down His reputation to take the form of a bondservant (NKJV), or nature of a servant (NIV) and call all people unto God. To be in the form of a bondservant does not mean that He looked like a servant, but that the qualities of a servant were the qualities and characteristics that Jesus adopted. As the NIV reads, He took the nature of a servant.

Not only did Jesus take the nature of a servant, but He became human in likeness. He came in the appearance of a man. Paul is saying that Jesus was not only human but God as well. He was similar to us in that He was physically human. But He was unlike us in that He always maintained His spiritual equality with God.

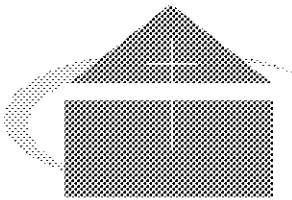
God Himself came to us like a man, and humbled Himself to become one of us. Not only did Jesus become a servant, but He served us by sacrificing Himself on the cross, by giving His own life.

Jesus set an example for all of mankind to follow. We are to have the same mind as Jesus Christ. As He was a servant, so should we be. To be a servant means that we are thinking about others before ourselves. This means that we are looking out for them and considering what is in their best interest. Servants also choose to do things for other people without desiring anything in return. This is how Christ wants us to live.



Pass out the activity sheets to each of your students and have them read the verses on the sheet and write out what it means to become a servant, and how they are going to begin being a better one. If writing a paragraph is too hard for some of your kids, put two or three kids in a group and have them discuss the verse and just write out a main point. Then they can share with the rest of the kids.

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Tell this story to your students,

A young boy in third grade just finished writing the last Valentine's card for the last kid in his class. He was so excited about Valentine's Day that he had spent the whole day writing out cards for kids in his class.

As a matter of fact, his excitement kept him awake that night. He assured himself that morning would come soon enough. His dreams that night were of receiving lots of Valentine's cards that next morning.

Morning struck and he jumped out of bed, raced to get ready for school, then grabbed his Valentine cards and ran to the car. When his mother dropped him off for school he was so excited that he forgot to give his mother a kiss good-bye. He ran as fast as he could into class and began dropping Valentines into each of his classmates' envelopes. As he passed his own he noticed there were none for him. "That's all right," he thought, "They probably just forgot. I'll check after lunch."

Lunch rolled by and to his surprise there were still no cards for him. After school, it was the same. Still he had no cards. He reluctantly took his envelope down from the wall.

His mother was waiting for him in the car outside of school and noticed her son walking slowly with his head down, looking at his feet. She also noticed that his envelope was empty. As he got into the car, he softly mumbled, "Not a single one, not a single one..." as he appeared to be counting on his fingers. Then he looked up at his mother with a smile on his face and said, "I didn't forget a single one!"

Being like Christ means that we care more about serving other people than we care about what other people should do for us. Too often we get caught up in ourselves, selfishly looking to satisfy our needs when we should be looking to satisfy others', following Jesus' example.



Using the verses listed below, and everything you have learned from the lesson on serving one another, write a paragraph on what it means to be a servant and what things you will begin doing to become a better one.

Philippians 2:4
“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also to the interests of others.”

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

1 Peter 2:16
“Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.”



2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Dealing with Grief

LESSON AIM

To help the child understand the process of grieving and how to deal with their emotions.

KEY VERSE

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles/paper/pencils
2-ply toilet paper, one roll for every two teams (Group Interaction)
Large size adhesive bandages (Alternate Activity)

GROUP INTERACTION

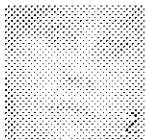
Toilet paper relay

Form two or four teams and make them stand in straight lines. Holding a roll of two-ply toilet paper, have the first two kids begin separating the plies. As the roll is passed down the line, the paper is unrolled, and the kids continue to separate the plies. The teams should pass the tissue down one of the lines without breaking it. The other team continues to help separate the plies. If it does break, kids should hold the ends together as they continue to pass it down the line. They can lay the separated plies on the floor but not overlap them as they keep unrolling the paper until it's gone (It's best to play in a long hallway; if this isn't possible, have kids zigzag tissue on the floor).

Points of caution:

You may need to allow a large space between players.

Remind the kids that this is a game of careful gentleness, not speed; you will unroll the paper for both teams at the same rate. The team with the straightest line and fewest breaks will win.



After declaring a winner, discuss the following:
When was the last time you used this much patience and care?

Sometimes we forget that we need to go through certain times of our lives slowly and gently. This is especially true when we deal with grief. If we don't allow ourselves to go through a time of grief carefully, it can cause broken heartedness in our lives. We may know of someone else going through a difficult time and we don't know how to respond to them in a careful or loving way, so we may act like we don't care or we just ignore the subject.

Ask the kids to think of some circumstances that may cause us to grieve (Death, long-term illness, you or your best friend moving away, changing schools, going to a foster home, divorce, etc.). Reassure them that it is normal and appropriate to grieve. Also point out that in 2 Corinthians 1:3 & 4, God wants to comfort us in our time of trial so that we can learn to comfort others. We grieve, we grow from our experience, we go on with life, we help others when they grieve.

It's OK to Grieve (2 Samuel 1:1-27).

David and his men were visibly shaken over Saul's death (vs 11, 12): "They mourned and wept and fasted all day." They showed genuine sorrow over the loss of King Saul, Jonathan, and the other soldiers of Israel who died that day. Though King Saul made many mistakes and sometimes treated David unfairly, David and the Israelites were not ashamed to grieve because they lost important people in their lives.

Some people consider expressing emotions outwardly as a sign of weakness. So those who wish to appear strong try to hide their grief. But grieving is a natural way to deal with our difficulties, doubts, confusion, anger, and sadness. Properly handling grief allows our emotions to heal.

There are many different circumstances in our lives that cause us to grieve. Death, illness, moving, changing schools, divorce, disobeying those who have authority over us, accidentally injuring another person—of these experiences can cause us to feel sad, angry, lonely, and uncertain. It is okay to go through all these emotions. The best thing to do is to talk about them, or express how you feel. The worst thing to do is to pretend like nothing has happened and try to ignore it. Grief from a crisis is not all bad! In fact, handled correctly, it can be God's way of preparing us to enter into a new phase of life. The reason why we are here is to help ourselves and others. (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

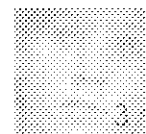
David dealt with his grief by writing a song (vs 17 - 27). "The Song Of The Bow" was to be taught to the people of Israel. The song remembered (eulogized) the good things about Saul and Jonathan.

INSTRUCTION

TIME

Perhaps a child you know is experiencing a time of difficulty. There are many books and Internet sites that can help you counsel these children. Some suggested subjects:

- helping Children
- understand Death,
- children and Grief,
- children and Depression.

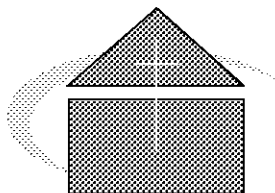


INVESTIGATION

Assign the following scriptures to some of the kids in your group. Ask them to read them aloud and let the class talk about how these words might help them through a difficult time. Allow time for response. This subject might make the kids feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to talk about their feelings. Perhaps have a person come and share how they made it through a difficult experience and let them lead the kids in this investigation.

Hebrews 13:5	(I will never leave you nor forsake you)
Revelation 21:3-4	(There will be no more sorrow or tears in heaven)
Romans 8:38,39	(Nothing can separate us from the love of God)
Psalms 3:5,6	(I will not be afraid of ten thousand people)
Psalms 4:1	(The Lord relieves our distress)
Philippians 4:6,7	(Don't worry, make your request known to God)

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



When a person experiences a crisis you probably will notice physical or emotional changes such as guilt, excessive crying, or fatigue. They may not feel like doing anything fun. They may have trouble sleeping or have thoughts of suicide. What can your kids do to help themselves and others deal with the grieving process?

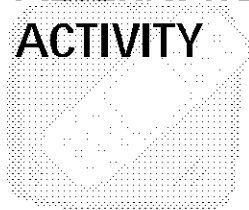
This is a good opportunity to let them share some experiences they have had with grief/crisis and how they felt at the time. There may be some who have not had an opportunity to talk about this. Don't force anyone to talk but give opportunity to those who want to share. If other kids have been through a difficult experience, how did they cope? What would they have liked other people to do?

Some experts recommend:

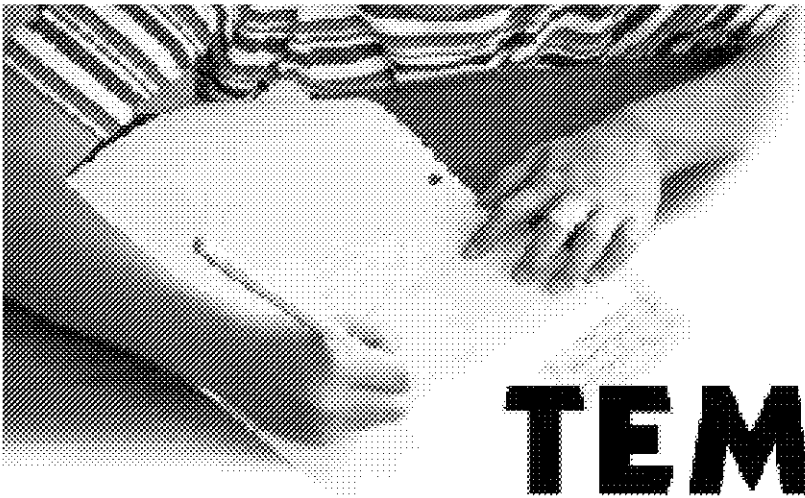
- Exercise (run, jump, roller blade, bicycle, or get involved in a sport)
- Encourage friendship. (Though people tend to withdraw, maintain contact with them. Call them, write them notes, encourage them).
- Recommend ways of releasing feelings such as crying, pounding on a pillow, writing a journal, singing, talking honestly to God.

Close in prayer, praying for each other and the difficulties they are experiencing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY



Using large sized adhesive bandages, ask the kids to look up a scripture in the Bible that has really helped them (or use the scriptures from the investigation). Have them write the scripture on the non-adhesive side of the bandage and place them in a box. Before everyone leaves have them pull out a bandage and take it home with them. They could place it on a mirror, door or refrigerator as a reminder of God's care and concern.



OR TO SIN NOT TO SIN

1 Corinthians 10:13

TEMPTATION

LESSON AIM

To understand that being tempted is not a sin, giving in to temptation is.
To realize that a person can overcome temptation.

KEY VERSE

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."
1 Corinthians 10:13

ITEMS NEEDED

Paper/pencils/Bibles
Stickers
Large bowl of M & M's
Video recorder
Volunteer spy
Photocopies of "Pressure Points"

Photocopies of a current calendar page w/one or more students names written on the top, making sure all students are covered (see Taking Home The Truth)

DECLARATION OF FAITH

Jesus, that He might be able to encourage His own during life's battles, endured temptation Himself. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet was without sin," (Hebrews 4:15) Jesus is able to aid those who are tempted.

GROUP INTERACTION



Before class begins, hide a video recorder in the room. Place it so it can tape the students for the opening activity. You will be playing it back later. If this is too labor intensive, ask a mature student in your class to help you in an experiment. Ask them to be a spy for the opening activity, but they can't let anyone know, not even their friends. You will also need to ask a staff member or adult to come and call you out of the classroom for just a couple of minutes.

As class begins, place a large bowl of M&M's (or some other tempting snack) on the table. Explain that they should not eat them now because they are for a snack later in the class. Have the adult volunteer come and pull you from the classroom. When you get back, ask if any of the children were tempted to eat the M & M's while you were out. Then find out if anyone did eat the M & M's. **Option:** You may have somebody planted to actually go and eat the M&M's while you are out of the room.



Temptation is something that we will always face. We are all tempted by different things. Play back the video or talk to the “spy.” Refer back to the M&M’s and ask the following questions:

- Why were the M&M’s so tempting? (they were hungry, the colors were enticing)
- Did any of you take some after someone else already had?

INSTRUCTION

TIME

Pass out pens and photocopies of the “Pressure Points”. Break into groups. Have each student rate the pressure from 1 to 10, according to how difficult each situation is to withstand. Ask them the following questions:

- How hard is it to resist these temptations?
- Is it possible to overcome temptation?
- How often have you overcome these temptations?

Temptation is enticement to sin. Words that are synonymous with enticement are: bait, lead on, trick, and trap. Temptation is never associated with anything that is good for people. In fact, temptation makes you think that if you give in to it, you will get pleasure from whatever is tempting. We are tempted because we have wrong desires (James 1:14). Temptation is not a sin. Giving into temptation is. We must resist temptation to avoid sin.

Resisting temptation always requires effort on our part. Look at Luke 2:39-46. The setting is the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. It was right before Jesus is going to be crucified. He and the disciples were going to spend time in prayer.

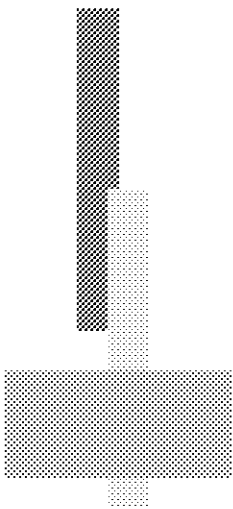
In verse 40, Jesus tells the disciples to “Pray that you enter not into temptation.” Then Jesus walked away from them (a short distance) to kneel down and pray. This was a tough time for Jesus. He knew what the future held. He knew He would be treated cruelly. God even sent angels to strengthen Him.

After a while, Jesus got up and went over to the disciples and found them asleep. Can you imagine how Jesus felt?

Moments later, the soldiers came to take Jesus away.

The disciples had truly committed their lives to Jesus. That is why they were called disciples. However, in this instance, the disciples were tired. The temptation to sleep was so strong that they didn’t pray with Jesus. It takes great effort to overcome temptation, but it is NOT impossible.

Temptation does not come from God. (James 1:13) He realizes our weaknesses and always wants to help us overcome temptation.



INVESTIGATION

(1 Corinthians 10:13)

- If the disciples knew how serious the situation was, do you think they would have fallen asleep?
- What were they focusing on?
- What were they NOT focusing on?
- What did they miss by not resisting temptation?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. God realizes we face temptation, but He also gives us the ability to overcome it. Now read James 1:12.

Ask the kids to brainstorm about ways that they might be blessed as a result of resisting temptation.

Have the students look up the following scriptures and ask them to list ways they can overcome temptation:

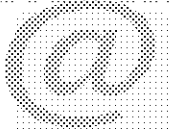
Ephesians 6:11	(put on the armor of God)
Mark 14:38	(watch and pray)
Galatians 6:1	(help someone else overcome temptation)
2 Timothy 2:22	(run, flee)
Proverbs 4:14	(avoid evil)
Psalms 119:9-11	(know God's Word)
James 4:7	(resist)

After reading the scriptures, ask the kids to write down ways they can resist temptations in their everyday lives. Examples:

- Substitute another activity in place of that temptation
- Read scripture
- Pray
- Call a trusted friend
- Talk to my pastor
- Don't hang around people who do wrong things

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY

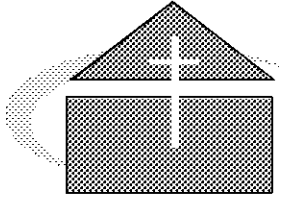
accountability



This activity deals with being accountable. Break into groups. At each table, mix up the word "accountable" using letter magnets, scrabble tiles, or letters written on paper. Allow the groups a few minutes to unscramble the letters. Explain that being accountable means to be responsible for your actions. It means to give an account for what you do. Ask them to think of a person to whom they wish to be accountable. The other person must promise confidentiality (unless it is a legal or safety issue, then they should seek advice from church leadership). Ask them to commit to one month of helping each other overcome temptation. Allow the groups to brainstorm about ways to do this. The point: as the kids overcome temptation, they become stronger in the Lord.



TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Cover others in prayer. You all know how hard it is to overcome temptation. It is important for you to pray for others that they won't give into temptation either. Explain that for the next month, they will secretly pray for someone else in the group.

Randomly pass out the calendar page and stickers that you have prepared. Make sure the kids don't get their own. Have a couple of blank calendar pages ready so you can add the names of new attendees or visitors. Encourage the kids to pray for these people EVERYDAY for a month. Have them place a sticker on each day they remember to pray for others. At the end of the month, plan a time for sharing victories (i.e. prayers answered, group unity developed, friendship bonds, strengthened).

PRESSURE POINTS

Rate the following temptations from 1-10 based on what you have the hardest time avoiding. 10 should be the most difficult.

Swearing

Listening to inappropriate music

Making fun of people

Watching inappropriate shows

Doing drugs

Drinking alcohol

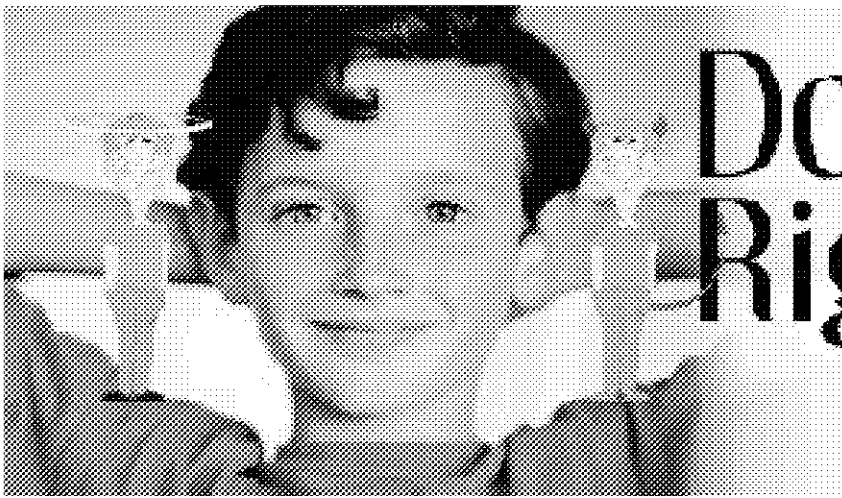
Hiding your Christian faith

Playing violent/evil computer/video games

Gossiping

Hanging around people who do wrong things





Doing The Right Thing

James 1:5

LESSON AIM

To learn how to respond rightly to others, even in difficult situations.
To understand that God blesses right choices.

KEY VERSE

"Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:4, NKJV)

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles/paper/pencils
masking tape
tarp or dropcloth
uncooked eggs

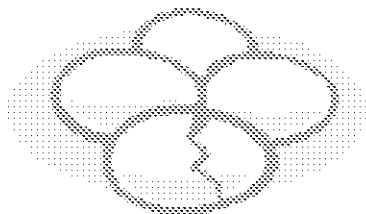
dictionaries
newspapers
straws

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that, having been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and having received the witness of the Holy Spirit at conversion, it is the will of God that we be sanctified daily and become partakers of his holiness. This sanctification involves growing constantly stronger in faith, power, prayer, love and service as well as seeking diligently the hidden life, where self decreases and Christ increases. As strong people having put on the whole armor of God, we march forth to new conquests in His name beneath His bloodstained banner, ever living a patient, sober, unselfish, godly life that will be a true reflection of the Christ **within.**

GROUP INTERACTION

Egg Crack-up



Pressure can have a strong impact on people. This activity will demonstrate that sometimes we can't protect ourselves from stressful situations. Divide into small teams of 3 to 5 students. Lay tarp or newspapers on the floor. Provide one uncooked egg, one sheet of newspaper, two straws, and six inches of masking tape. Ask the teams to create a protective shield around the egg using only these items. After a few minutes, ask them to stand on a step ladder or table and hold the egg over their head and let it drop to the floor. More than likely, the eggs will break. Lead them into discussion:

- What was the result?
- Was it frustrating to fail?
- Did you feel angry at the person who thought of the shield design?
- Are there times when we can't protect ourselves from hurtful actions of other people?
- How should we respond to people who hurt us?



INSTRUCTION TIME

Ask the kids to explain what they think the word *pressure* means. Are there different types of pressure, (i.e. emotional, physical, spiritual, and social)? Is it easy for us to be kind and calm when everything is going well? How do we respond when family or friends are not treating us fairly? Then ask students to think of people who have had to withstand a great deal of pressure. How did they handle it?

Let's look at the story of Esther in the Bible. Most of the kids have probably heard it. So let them tell you the plot. Here is a synopsis if you are unfamiliar with the story.

1. King Ahasuerus (Ah-has-you-ee-rus) ruled over India and North Africa. It was considered a large kingdom and made Ahasuerus very powerful.
2. King Ahasuerus and Queen Vashti threw a big party to show off his wealth. The men were in one area and the queen threw a separate party for the women in another area.
3. By the seventh day of partying, the King had had too much to drink and wanted to show off his beautiful queen. She refused to come. This was a public embarrassment for him and made him very angry. So basically, she was fired. This meant she was put in a prison or sent away. Now the king needed another queen.
4. Mordecai was a Jew. The Jews were taken from their homes, and were brought to this country after a war. Mordecai raised his Jewish cousin named Esther. She had no parents and she didn't come from wealth, but she was beautiful. Mordecai encouraged Esther to apply for the job of queen.
5. The King fell for Esther and she became his favorite of all his wives. No one knew she was a Jew. She never asked for special gifts but just accepted what was chosen for her. The King was very happy with Esther and her attitude. She was very special to the King. Every day Mordecai stopped by the palace to check on Esther and made sure she was safe.
6. One day, Mordecai overheard a plot to kill the king and told Esther. She then told the King what Mordecai had said. The evil men were killed and the King Ahasuerus appointed his new "next-in-command," Haman. Haman loved the power and expected everyone to bow down to him, but Mordecai wouldn't do it. (It wasn't out of disobedience, because Mordecai respected the King. But Mordecai knew he should worship God and not the King's helper.)
7. This made Haman mad. One of his friends told him that Mordecai was a Jew. Haman told the King how bad Jews were and that they should be killed or they might take over the kingdom. The King trusted Haman and



gave him his signet ring which gave Haman authority to have the Jews killed.

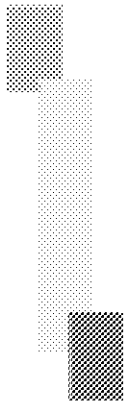
8. Mordecai explained to Esther, that even though she was Queen, being a Jew would ultimately bring about her death. If she told the King she was a Jew she could die. If she didn't say anything, many of her people would die. The responsibility was put on Esther's shoulders. Mordecai instructed Esther how to handle the situation. Esther proclaimed a fast among the Jewish people. She asked them to fast and pray so that she could approach the King about the problem.

9. Esther asked to see the King (this was risky because the custom was that a person could be put to death if the king had not called for them) however, this could mean her death if he wouldn't hold out his scepter toward her, she would be killed. Miraculously, the King allowed her to speak. She invited him and Haman to a banquet. As a result, Haman told everyone that he was the only man besides the King who would attend this banquet. Haman was told by his wife and friends to build a gallows by which to hang Mordecai.

10. During the next evening, the King couldn't sleep so he looked at some old journals that he had been keeping. He came across the incident where Mordecai had saved his life. He asked his servants what had been done to reward Mordecai, and they checked and said nothing. So the King called Haman into his chambers and asked Haman what should the King do to honor a respected subject. Haman thought the King was speaking of him so he said, "Let him wear the King's clothes, let him ride the King's horses, place the King's crown upon his head and parade him through the kingdom." The King then told Haman to do that for Mordecai. Haman was so upset that he turned his back on Mordecai and went home. He was deciding what to do with Mordecai when he was summoned to the Queen's banquet.

11. The King was extremely pleased by Esther's hospitality. Her banquet made the King look good in front of everyone. He told Esther that she could have anything--up to half the kingdom. She explained that her life and her friends' lives were in danger. She needed protection. The King wanted to know who her enemy was and she said, "Haman." She explained that she was a Jew and would be killed based on the orders Haman had given with the authority provided by the King's ring.

12. The King legally could not take back his order about killing the Jews. Instead he told the Jews that they could defend themselves and they did. Many thousands of men were killed because they tried to kill the Jews. Eventually things calmed down. Ahasuerus became a well-loved and highly recognized King. Esther was loved by the King and held in high honor. Mordecai became the King's second-in-command.

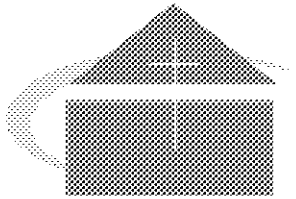




Points of discussion (Answers in italics):

- Why was Esther under extreme pressure to make the right decision? *If she told the King she was a Jew she could die, if she didn't say anything many of her people would die.*
- What does Mordecai say to Esther 4:14? What did he mean? *"Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*
- How did Esther and Mordecai do the right thing under pressure? *Fasting and prayer. Asking the Jewish people to seek God during the crisis.*
- What miracles did God work as a result of Esther and Mordecai doing the right thing? *Gave Esther favor with the King. Honored Mordecai. Saved them from their enemies.*

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Before she was made Queen, Esther was considered a very insignificant person in the kingdom. God used her in a miraculous way. Haman tried to bully the Jews, but Mordecai listened to God and advised Esther what to do. She realized she had a greater purpose, even if it meant her death. She prayed and God gave her direction.

- What kind of situations put pressure on you to do the right thing?
- "I think the school work will be too hard for me. Should I cheat?"
 - "Will I mess up in tryouts? Should I even try?"
 - "Will my grandma survive this illness?"
 - "I hope I don't get harassed today. How should I respond?"
 - "Will someone shoot at me today? How can I handle my fear?"
 - "Will my mom or dad hit me today? How should I respond?"
 - "Do I have to go home tonight? Why can't I live somewhere else?"

Tip:

Adults may think that children are not affected by pressure. But troubles at home and school can harm a child. While most stress can be a chance for personal growth, other stress can be life threatening. If you suspect physical, psychological, or sexual abuse in the child's home or school, notify your pastor.

Unhappy, common for children of all ages to feel pressured because they are overwhelmed or overpracticed. Children will improve or become stressed by adults' constant pressure. Parents are the direct or indirect cause of stress. Stress children. A recent survey reported by the American Psychological Association found that 70% of elementary school children reported they were pressured about getting into a particular home or activity. 70% reported about to help by an adult.

Help the kids realize that there are certain things through which they must have patience. There are other situations from which God wants to protect them. Just as Esther sought wise counsel, God wants us to do the same. Here are some realistic options.

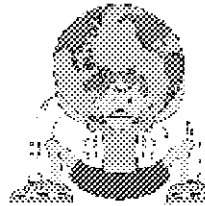
- Talk to God. He listens. He wants to help you grow through crisis. He helps us become stronger people. He can show you solutions to your situation. Just don't become hard and forget to be kind to others.
- Talk to an adult that you can trust and who can help.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY

Pass out photocopies of the following page. Ask the kids to look up the Scriptures. Then ask them to write down how that scripture would help them in a pressured situation. *Study the scriptures so you can help them understand what the verses mean.*

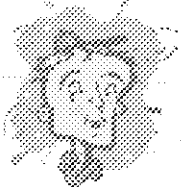
How can you handle pressure?

Look up the following Scriptures. Write down the Scriptural advice on how to handle pressure.



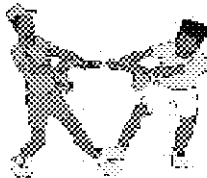
Psalm 3:1-7

Romans 8:28



Matthew 10:16-20

Philippians 1:27-28



what do you value?

Micah 6:8



LESSON AIMS

To define the meaning of the word, value.
To understand that personal values effect our choices.

KEY VERSE

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?
Micah 6:8

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles/Pencils/paper
Video clip of commercials (option 1)
Magazine or newspaper ads (option 2)
Copies of skit (master provided)

GROUP INTERACTION



These activities are designed to help students see “values” according to the world and media.

Option 1:

Make a video tape compiling commercial clips that define a value or quality the world admires (i.e. Drinking makes you have more fun, Wearing revealing clothing make you more attractive).

Option 2:

Clip magazine or newspaper ads or pictures of models that represent a value the world admires (if you have a large group, it may be necessary to photocopy them). Try to use ads that use very little text. Ask the students to write a dialogue, in a cartoon format, about what the person is thinking in the ad or what someone observing the ad may think.

Ask a volunteer to read his or her dialogue. Encourage discussion by asking these questions:

- What do you think this person values? Why?
- Based on their values, would you choose this person as a friend?
- What do you agree or disagree with?



INSTRUCTION

TIME

The American Heritage Dictionary defines values as important and enduring convictions, beliefs, and opinions that shape attitudes and motivate actions. In other words, what we value will affect how we behave.

Values are rules we live by. There are many things that affect our value/belief systems--what we believe. How do you determine what values you will follow?

taught in school	vs.	taught in church
television/internet	vs.	rules of our family
the words in music	vs.	what God's Word says
what friends do	vs.	what you know is right

Let's take a brief look at Lot. In Genesis 13 Lot was given a choice as to where he could live. He chose an area that was pleasing to the eye, but an area near the city of Sodom, a city well known for its sin. (vs.12, 13). He eventually moved into that city.

Lot suffered greatly for this decision. Genesis 14:12 tells us that Lot was taken prisoner by an enemy army because he lived in Sodom. Abraham rescued him. Yet in spite of the trouble his bad choice had caused, Lot returned to Sodom. In Chapter 19 we learn that Lot put his family in great danger by exposing them to the sinfulness of the people of Sodom. Lot and his family eventually had to run for their lives to escape the destruction of that city. **Lot's wife died because she valued what she left behind more than what God instructed her to do.** (verses 15-17 and 26).

What values would you risk your life for?

Read Romans 12 from a paraphrased version of the Bible (Open Bible). Ask the students to read the following verses. Using an overhead or whiteboard, ask them to give you a phrase that describes what they read. Examples are given below. You could also break the class into groups and assign one or more verses to each group and have them write down the phrase to share with the class later. We have paraphrased the paraphrase version to assist you in discussion.

Romans 12:2 -Don't copy the behavior of the world, but let God transform you by changing the way you think. THEN you will know what God wants you to do.

Listed below are some things God wants us to value.

- 12:9 Hate what (not who) is wrong
- 12:10 Love with genuine affection, don't pretend. Honor each other.
- 12:11 Don't be lazy in what you do, but serve the Lord with enthusiasm (no complaining).
- 12:12 Be glad for God's plan for your life. Be patient when you're having trouble.
- 12:13 When God's people are in need, be the first to help them.



INVESTIGATION

How can people establish a good value system. God's Word shows us. Break into groups and assign a scripture to each group. Or select certain people from the class to read the following scriptures. Then ask them to respond to the following question based on each scripture:

What are some ways we can improve or change our personal values?
How can our actions influence others?

Philippians 4:8,9

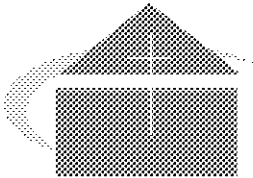
Micah 6:8

Philippians 2:3,4

Ephesians 5:11

(Consider inviting a mature and respected student to lead this discussion.)

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Coded Message

Pass out photocopies of the coded message page. Solve individually or as a group. Follow up with these discussion questions:

- How do the values of the world differ from God's values?
- Is it wrong to physically hurt an innocent person? How about copying an answer from another person's paper?
 - Do we accept the way things are simply because everyone else says it is okay?
 - Does anyone value God's standard enough to change the way we think and act?

Even at their age, the decisions the students make now will affect things they do later in life. For them to consider:

What kind of person do they want to be?

What would they want people to say about them?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Skit

Before the class begins, chose students to participate in the skit.

Pass out copies of the following skit. Allow about 10 minutes for participants to look it over and prepare their props.

Using the code to the left, fill in the blanks below. Then write the answers in the spaces. EX: The letter A = Z and Z = A

Code

A Z
B Y
C X
D W
E V
F U
G T
H S
I R
J Q
K P
L O
M N

Message

SLD ZIV BLF

WRUUVIVMG

UILN GSV DLIOW?

-----?

Values

How are you different from the world? We must decide what is important to us. Our values effect our lives and the lives of others.

Setting: School hallway near lockers.

Narrator: Tom is a Christian but you would never know it. He isn't a bad person but he never takes a stand for what he believes. Most of the time he does whatever the people around him do or say. He is really popular. In this skit, a situation will force Tom to make a decision. Tom's values will collide with his popularity.

Tammy is very popular. Everyone is nice to her because they are afraid of her. She makes fun of people if they don't see things her way. She has everything--cool clothes, lots of money, and a new Jeep.

Jake is not a popular guy. He is very nice but sometimes he says things that sound funny. People have labeled him as a loser. His clothes are not that nice and he doesn't have a lot of friends. He attends youth group at the same church as Tom, Sarah, Rachel and Jason.

Sarah, Rachel and Jason all hang out with Tom. They are popular and are Christians yet don't always walk the Christian walk. They are afraid of what people will think if they act too much like Christians.

Jake: Hey Tom, What's up?

Tom: Nothing much Jake, how about you?

Jake: Nothing. I had a blast miniature golfing last night with the youth group. I can't remember the last time I laughed so hard.

Tom: Yeah, that was pretty funny when I hit the ball so hard it bounced off the windmill and hit Pastor Ralph in the head! I felt really bad, but he knew it was an accident.

Jake: Are you kidding, it was hilarious!

Tammy walks up to Tom who is standing with Sarah, Rachel & Jason.

Tammy: Hi Tom! What did you do this weekend?

Tom: I went golfing with a few friends. How about you?

Tammy: Remember, I threw a party. You were invited, but I didn't see you there.

Tom: Oh Yeah! I had other plans.

Tammy: What plans are more important than a party at my house?

Tom struggles to think of something. Jake speaks up.

Jake: We went miniature golfing with our church. We had a great time!

Tom, Sarah, Jason and Rachel are mortified. They are embarrassed that they missed a party to go to a church function.

Tammy: *Looking at Tom, ignoring Jake.* Who's "we"?

Jake: Tom, Sarah, Rachel, Jason and me.

Tammy: First of all, I was not talking to you and second they wouldn't choose some cheesy youth group outing over hanging out with me. Tom doesn't have any friends that look like that.

Nodding up and down as though disgusted at Jake's appearance. Tom is silent. Sarah seems torn between saying something and staying out of it.

Tammy: Besides, why would he hang out with some loser from his youth group when he knows it could jeopardize his popularity? I don't even have the time to talk to some yahoo church guy dressed like you. When you start looking better then, you may speak to me. Until then this pow-wow is over!

Tammy is interrupted by Sarah. Jake is deeply hurt.

Sarah: What is your problem!? How dare you talk to him like that!

Tammy: Was I talking to you?

Sarah: *Sara interrupts Tammy.* When you talk to my friends like that you are talking to me!

Tammy: Since when is some loser guy your friend?

Jason: Tammy, leave them alone!

Tammy: No! If Sarah and Tom want to hang with this joker they can but I will not be anywhere near them. *She turns her back on them and begins to walk away.*

Tom: *With hesitation and confusion, pondering if he should say something. Then he speaks up.* I don't appreciate you talking down to my friends. I have known Jake forever! So what if he isn't like you or me. He's better! He doesn't care what people think of him and he is perfectly happy!

Tammy: You have made your choice. You obviously value church geeks more than me.

Tom: No, Tammy, I value people, and I know they deserve to be treated with respect!

Sarah: Tammy, did you ever notice when we hang out that you are the only one who teases people? Are you so insecure that you have to put others down to feel better about yourself?

Jason and Rachel nod their heads in agreement. Tammy is now angry and storms away.

Tammy: You are all pathetic! You deserve each other!

Tom: Jake, I'm sorry I didn't say anything sooner.

Jake: It's okay, Dude. She is hurting and feels she needs to do this to feel better. I know where I stand with Jesus. I don't care what other people think. I know where I am going and that's all that matters.

Sarah: You have such a cool outlook on life.

Jake: *Sarcastically* Why shouldn't I? I have more than most people! I can't let what people say bother me! Jesus was spit on and killed for us. If some girl wants to call me names it's okay because my Heavenly Father will deal with her. I can't let all the negative stuff bother me. It will just weigh me down.

Tom: Thanks, Jake, for showing us what a real Christian acts like. I hope Tammy will come around.

Jake: Maybe she will, maybe she won't. We will pray that the Lord will work on her heart. At least she knows where you stand!

They exit.

HONOR YOUR Parents

Ephesians
6:2, 3



LESSON AIMS

To cause the students to think about how they should honor their parents or caregivers.

KEY VERSE

“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

Ephesians 6: 2-3

ITEMS NEEDED

Papers/Pencils/Bibles

List of popular television sitcoms on a board or overhead

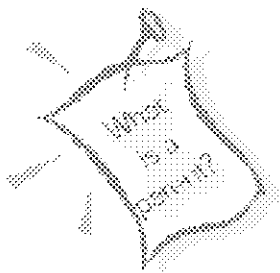
Comic books or newspapers

GROUP INTERACTION

Pass out paper and pencils. Form three or more small groups. Ask each group to make a list of ten characteristics of a parent or caregiver. Each group will approach this from a different perspective. One or two groups should base their list on television shows they watch. Another group(s) should base their list on what they see in other kids' parents or caregivers. The other group(s) base their list on a comic strip or comic book character.

After a few moments, ask them the following questions:

- How are parents portrayed through the television?
- How do we view other kids' parents?
- Which three characteristics would you pick if you were a parent?
- Which three would you not pick?
- Does being a parent seem easy or hard? Why?



INSTRUCTION**TIME**

When talking about honoring parents, be sensitive to two situations: the kids who are being raised in a “traditional family” setting and those who aren’t. Kids from a traditional family may be upset with their parents because of a disagreement they had. Kids from non-traditional families might live in a foster home, with another relative, or they may go back and forth between parents. Some of the kids may even live in a “Christian” home that is extremely dysfunctional. Help them understand that part of honoring their parents is trying to view their parents from a positive perspective. Stress that “honoring” is based on obedience to the Lord, not on agreeing with their parents.

Honor

Have someone read Ephesians 6:1-3. Ask them to explain the words obedience, honor and respect. It is important to realize that when either a parent or a child doesn’t obey God, healthy relationships are not possible. When one person acts in obedience or honors another person in a relationship, God helps the obedient person. He will lead them to right decisions and blessing in all of their relationships.

The verses in Ephesians deal with the child’s responsibility to have a good attitude and respect for their parents. This obedience is for THEIR benefit. 1 Peter 4:8 says, “Love covers a multitude of sins.” When we can truly love and honor our parent(s)/caregivers for their position, that love can help offset depression, fear, discouragement, anger and even hate that we might be experiencing. When we cannot love a parent or caregiver, it is difficult for us to overcome these destructive feelings.

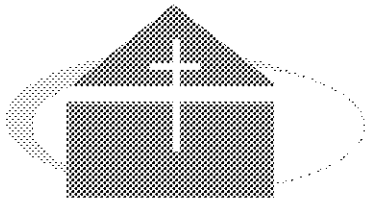
God Gave A Command

God gave us this commandment about honoring for a reason. Your part of the relationship is what is important in your life. The enemy wants us to feel defeated and hateful. Satan wants us to give in to those destructive feelings because such feelings will keep us from experiencing God’s love and perfect plan for our lives. But God wants us to know His love and to share this love with others, especially our parents.

No parent is perfect. While some of you may have parents who are loving and caring, you may occasionally get angry at them and wish you could trade them in for better parents. Others of you may have parents who are ill, abusive, complaining or unable to show their feelings. It is important for us to try to understand and cope with their feelings. Or perhaps the parents have been hurt by someone in their lives. Even when our earthly parents fail us, God wants us to know He loves us. He loves you so much He was willing to allow His Son to die for you. God gave all of Himself to us, we should give back to Him by showing our obedience.

Jesus was our perfect example. Jesus was the Divine Son of God, yet He had an earthly mother. He honored her. While He was dying on the Cross, He asked John to take care of His mother. (John 19:25-27)

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Ask the students if they know what honoring their parents means. Take a few minutes to brainstorm some practical ways of honoring parents. It is important that the kids understand that they can "honor" an adult without giving into or approving of wrong or sinful behavior. If a parent/caregiver asks them to do something that isn't right or something that would be disobedient to God, it is their responsibility to do what God wants. He will give you special grace because of your obedience to Him. If a parent/caregiver is abusive, they need help. Some of them may need to talk to someone for their own protection. Although being a victim is NEVER part of God's plan for anyone, help the kids discern between abuse and acceptable parental discipline. An excellent time to let our "honoring" shine is when we do not agree with a parental decision.

You may never be able to change your parents even if you try to do the right things. Only when a person listens to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and turns their life over to God can they change. But you can change your own life. By obeying this command, you can change your future. Obeying God by honoring your parent/caregiver is for YOUR well being. God is giving you this advice to help YOU, *"That it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."* Ephesians 6:3. Conclude this time by praying for the kids.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Free Advice

Pass out pencils and paper. Ask the kids if they have read or heard of advice columns. A few years ago a teenager wrote to Ann Landers asking how she could get her parents to stop telling her to "stop smoking, get off the phone, hang up your clothes, do your homework, and clean up your room." Ask the kids to write a response to the teenager. If time permits, have the kids share their answers with the group. Finally, read Ann Landers' response: "Stop smoking, get off the phone, do your homework, and clean up your room."

Do the kids agree with Ann's advice?
Why do kids not do what their parents ask?
What would God want us to do?

Word search

Make photocopies of the attached word search. Many of the words come from 1 Peter 4:8 and Ephesians 6:2-3. Discuss how these words apply to this teaching.

Wise Counsel

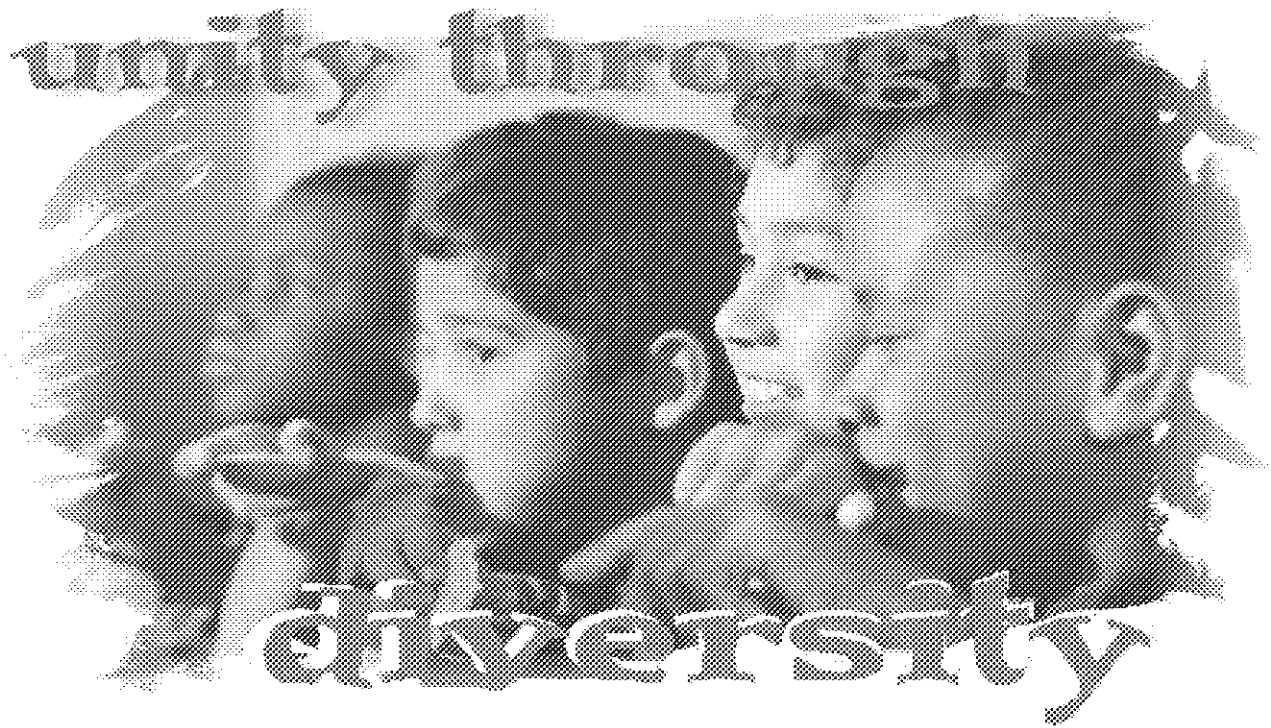
Some parents have serious problems and make life difficult for their children. Other parents mean well, but don't seem to understand how to deal with their children. This may cause anger in the child. Invite a counselor (or a trusted, reputable adult) to talk to your group about how they can deal with these problems and where they can get help.

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

P 1 P E T E R O C E G R
1 U M O T W E F R O N E
P A M U L F E H O N O R
E R O P L A V L O O L E
T E T R E T U D E R E H
W V H O N H I 1 O M V T
E O Y M R E H T O M I I
L L L I Y R A B U A L N
L V I S 1 P E T D D U O
S E V E E B I B L E E T
T N E M D N A M M O C H

**HONOR
1 PETER
BIBLE
LIVE LONG
LOVE
COMMANDMENT**

**PROMISE
WELL
FATHER
MOTHER
MULTITUDE**



LESSON AIMS

To know God has ordained a special place for everyone in the body of Christ.
To understand their part in a church family to offer loving service and support to others.

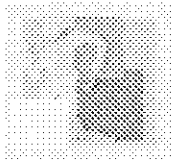
KEY VERSE

"But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body (of Christ) just as He has pleased." I Corinthians 12:18

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles
Pencils/pens/newprint or posterboard
Lots of newspapers or toilet paper rolls or balloons (alternate activity)
Copies of the "Where do I fit?" examination sheet for each student
crepe paper, yarn or rope (alternate activity)

GROUP INTERACTION



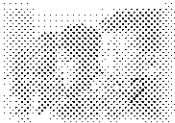
Bodies in motion

Break into a minimum of two groups of equal size. Each person in the group must become one of the following body parts: eyes, ears, mouth, brain, legs, and hands. Assign as many parts as you have people in each group. Give the groups a simple task to do such as walk across the room and pick up a Bible and read a verse.

The brain must tell the eyes to see the Bible, the legs to walk, the mouth to speak, etc. The groups cannot move or speak until the brain has given direction. The brain cannot give the next command until the body part is moving. They cannot go out of order.

This illustrates how difficult it is for the church body to function if everyone is not doing their part. Other parts of the body must work even harder if one part is unable or unwilling to function.

If you have a lot of kids and want to involve everyone, make your groups larger and assign additional body parts such as two eyes (2 people), arms, feet, etc.



INSTRUCTION

TIME

Many people believe that it isn't necessary to attend a church. However, the first church was started because the Holy Spirit brought people together and empowered them to share about Jesus. That is what the church is about—bringing people together to strengthen one another and using their talents and resources to serve others. People who have committed their lives to serving Jesus are called the Body of Christ. *Have the students turn to 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and select a volunteer to read verses 12-14.*

The Apostle Paul begins by talking about the human body. The human body is a fascinating thing. It is considered one body, but it has different parts. The church is like the human body. Churches all over the world that believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ are part of one body of believers. All of the believers of the world are considered "The Body of Christ." Each individual is an important part of that body.

Jesus Christ performed many miraculous things through his life, death, and resurrection. One of these was the unity he created in the church by crossing social boundaries. He reached out to people no one else would. In Jesus' times there was great segregation. Jews NEVER associated with Gentiles (other races than Jewish). And the rich NEVER associated with the poor. In Christ however, we find that all people are united to form one body of believers. It is one body consisting of MANY different individuals, personalities, ethnicities, and social classes. The one thing that unites them is our faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to be people who do not separate ourselves from those different than us. We need to accept all people, no matter their race, social class, popularity, talents, or abilities.

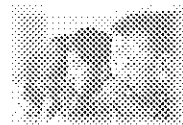
Have a volunteer read verses 15 and 16 aloud to the class. Tell the students that God has placed each one of them as a believer into the body of Christ for a very specific purpose. Many young people who attend church, or are involved in church are not satisfied with the talents and abilities God has given them. Some of you want to be like somebody else. God has a place and a purpose for you. Every person has a God-given purpose. Sometimes it is easier to see the talents of others before we recognize our own abilities.

Some people prefer to have jobs or ministries that get a lot of attention or praise. Many people think that being on the worship team is one of the most important jobs in a church and that being a greeter is not. *Ask the students what would happen if one Sunday everybody was asked to be on the worship team?*

- *Who would welcome people and make them feel comfortable in the church?*
- *Who would give food to those that need it?*
- *Who would preach the sermons?*
- *Who would pray for other people?*
- *Who would take care of the babies?*

Read verses 17-19 to the students with great emphasis. God has placed each of you exactly where He desired you to be in the body of Christ. And He has given each of you the exact talents and abilities that He wants you to have to cause unity and individuality in the body of Christ. Each person





Tip:

Get to know the kids in the group and help them to discover their spiritual gifts. What do they like to do? What type of limitations do they have (i.e. family responsibilities, insecurity, etc.). Help them learn to fulfill ministry in their environment. Could they pray with others over the phone? Could they start a Bible study at school?

has been gifted by God for an important task in the body of Christ. Where do you fit in the body of Christ?

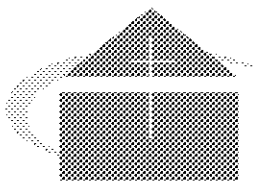
Have another volunteer read verses 17-18. Not only is each part placed by God, every part is necessary. Because we are human beings we struggle easily with pride. Far too often we believe that because we have the most desired position in the church, or in the youth group that we are the best. We tend to think that we don't need anyone else, that other people aren't important. But God's Word says that EVERY part is necessary. We need to encourage each other in everything that we do. Too often we put each other down, tease each other, and make each other feel very insignificant. This should not be.

People with well-known talents and abilities are not better than those with less noticeable talents and abilities. We should all encourage each other and stop being so discouraging to each other. God desires unity in us as well as in the church. God has made every person important in the Body of Christ. We have a responsibility to make everyone feel significant. Our ultimate goal is to bring unity to the Body of Christ.

Pass out the "Where do I fit?" self-examination sheet to each of the students and give them a few minutes to fill it out. Allow them to reflect on each question and encourage them to answer honestly. Have the students return the sheets to you when they have completed them.

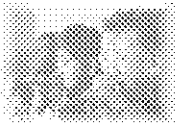
NOTE: These sheets are a resource not only for the student, but for the teacher and youth pastor as well. These sheets are not meant to be stored away in a file but are to be read by the group leader, C.E. Director, youth pastor or a teacher, so that he or she may begin allowing students to perform tasks or challenges according to their abilities and desires. Give your students a chance to get involved and you will see an increase in their excitement and eagerness to serve. Read what they wrote, pray for each one of them and begin to place them in areas of ministry.

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



Address the students concerning unity in the group. Discuss the following questions and write their answers on large sheets of posterboard, or newsprint, and hang them on the walls of the room.

- Do we treat new people with the same amount of consideration that we treat those we know well?
- Could major cliques cause division in a youth group?
- What are some practical ways that we can avoid being cliquish and begin loving each other and supporting each other as a group?
- How can we help other people find their place in our group as God brings new kids to us?



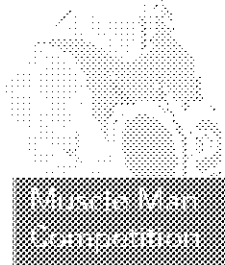
ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Barrier to entry

Before students arrive, tape a large piece of crepe paper, or yarn, or rope, etc. across the entry way about chest height. Everyone must make it over this force field or barrier. However, they cannot go under the barrier or touch it. Every student must make it over the barrier. Offer a special treat or incentive if everyone makes it over.

Give as few instructions as necessary. Then transition into the lesson by asking:

- Did anyone make it over alone?
- How did this activity make everyone work together?
- Why don't people work together more often?

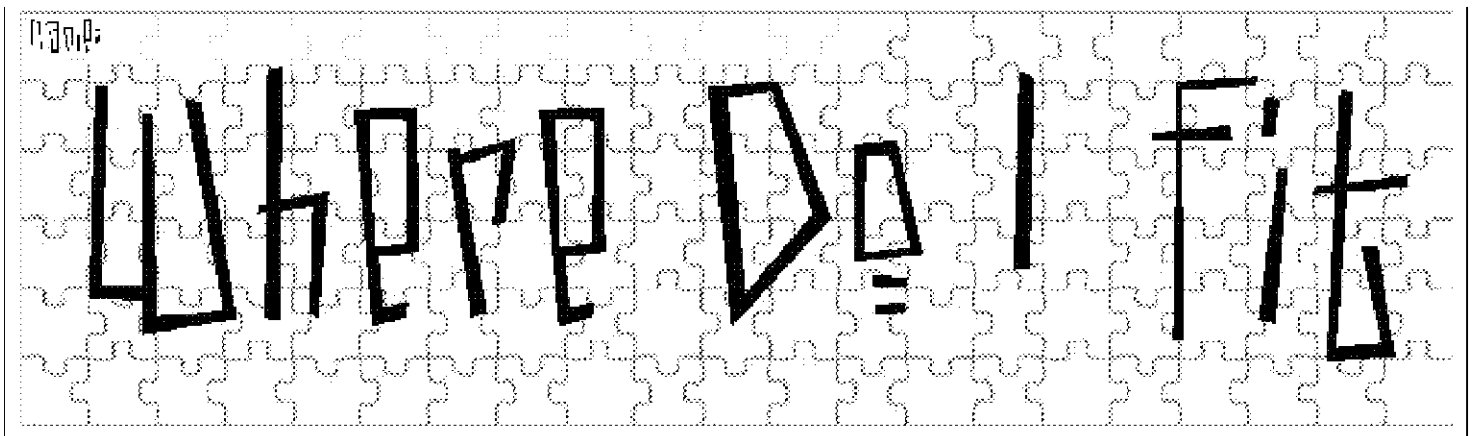


This will be a fun, "muscle-man competition" between students in your group. Divide the students equally into teams. Have them choose a male student to be the "muscle man." The rest of the team should take the newspaper or toilet paper and begin stuffing the shirt of the "muscle man." Give them a few minutes to do this. Gather the groups together and have all of your students choose the winner.

NOTE: This activity can also be done with balloons. Give the teams balloons. Have them blow them up and stuff in the clothing.

Discuss the following points:

- Why do people admire a strong, healthy body?
- Do you think it is more important to be physically strong or spiritually strong? Why?
- Many of you have heard the phrase "The Body of Christ." What is the "body of Christ?"
- Is it important to have strong, healthy people for ministry in the Body of Christ? What about people we perceive as weak?



This questionnaire is designed to help each person find his or her purpose in your group and in your church. Answer each of the following questions honestly.

1. What are your gifts, talents, abilities, or hobbies? (These are the things you spend a lot of time doing). List them below

2. Do you enjoy being around people, helping people, making them feel loved? Or do you prefer to be alone?

3. Do you prefer being in front of the crowd or behind the scenes?

4. Of all the areas of ministry you have seen here at church what would you like to do the most?

5. What would you like to do the least?

- Write your name at the top and give this page to your teacher so that he can learn a little more about you, and help you find your place in the youth group.

God is omnipresent



LESSON AIMS

To understand that God is "omnipresent"
To recognize that God is always with us regardless of the circumstances

KEY VERSE

"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"
Hebrews 13:5b,6

ITEMS NEEDED

Small chair
Three blindfolds
Two tape players and two music tapes
Optional: Pie-crust dough, cinnamon, sugar, butter and pans for baking

DECLARATION OF FAITH

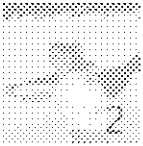
"There is no place where God is not at all times. His presence fills the universe. This thought gives us both comfort and warning. There is comfort in knowing that God's presence is always with us. We are never alone. We may feel lonely and at times discouraged, but He is always near."
(Genesis 28:15; Joshua 2:11; Psalm 139:7-10; Acts 7:48; Ephesians 1:23)

GROUP INTERACTION

Before students arrive place a chair in one corner of the room, a small chair in another corner and a chair with two tape players in the third corner.

Instruct the entire group that everyone is to remain absolutely silent except to follow directions. Blindfold three students. Take one blindfolded student and lead them to the seat in one corner.

Take the second student and seat them between the two tape players. Have different music playing loudly from each tape player so that it will be hard for the isolated student to clearly hear what is going on with the group.



Lead the third student to the last corner and have them stand on a small chair. Hold up signs for the rest of the group to “cough”, “clap”, “whistle”, “cheer”, “groan” etc. After a few minutes bring the blindfolded students back to the front, unblindfold them and interview them:

- How did they feel? (Confused, fearful, anxious, alone)
- What were they thinking about? (*What was going to happen to them?*

How long were they going to have to stay there? What was happening with the group?)

- Would they have felt differently if their best friend had been with them and not been blindfolded?

Tip:

As more children are being raised in single parent families or in homes where both parents work, loneliness becomes a major issue. Kids are turning to music, the internet, television, and friends to fill the emptiness in their lives. This lesson will focus on the fact that they are never alone regardless of their circumstances. Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal to your students the truth that God is always present.

It does make a difference when our best friend is with us. But they cannot be there twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. There are times when we feel really lonely. We can even feel that way when we are in a crowd of people. We are going to look at the friend that is always with us, in good times and bad, twenty four hours a day, and regardless of our circumstances. We want to look at the life of Joseph and see how God was with him wherever he went.

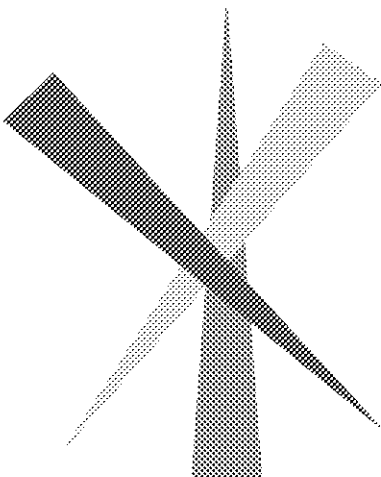
Divide your students into three groups. Give each group one of the passages of scripture. Have them read the passage and plan to act out the scene. Come back together and have each group present their “play”.

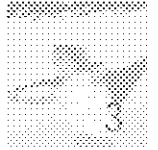
- Joseph is put in a pit by his brothers and then sold as a slave in Egypt. Genesis 37:16 - 28
- Joseph is falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife and put in prison. Genesis 39:7 - 20
- Joseph is put in prison and then is able to interpret the dreams of the butler and baker. However, the butler forgot him. Genesis 40:1-14, 20 - 23

Options:

1. Have someone that is an interesting story teller, share these scenes from the life of Joseph.
2. Have groups read the above passage from a contemporary version of the Bible and share the story with the rest of the class.

- How do you think Joseph felt when he was sitting in the bottom of the pit? (*Remind them that he would have felt sort of like the student that was blindfolded and sitting alone.*)
- How do you think Joseph felt when he was riding in the caravan to Egypt? (*Remind them that he would have felt sort of like the student that was blindfolded and standing on a chair - uncomfortable and wondering how long this was going to go on.*)
- How do you think Joseph felt when he arrived in Egypt? (*Remind them that he probably could not understand the language and would have felt confused like the person that had different music playing in his/her ears*)





INSTRUCTION

TIME

God is with me when I am alone

Joseph was probably uncomfortable sitting in the deep muddy pit and then walking or riding the long distance to Egypt. He was alone. He was away from friends and family. Not only was he away from his family but it was his half-brothers that had put him in the pit and then sold him as a slave! There were some major problems within this family. When he got to Egypt, he would probably not have even been able to understand the language they spoke. Look up Genesis 39:2,3. The Bible says that even when Joseph went through these uncomfortable experiences *"The Lord was with Joseph."* God is always with us. It does not make any difference where we go, God is there. We may feel alone but we are never really alone. When we go through hard times with our families, God is there. When we are separated from everything that is familiar to us, God is there.

God is with me when I face temptation

How do you think Joseph felt when he was falsely accused and incarcerated? Joseph stood up for what was right. He was then treated very unfairly by other people. Life is not always fair but God is always with us. He will give us the strength to stand up for what is right. Read Genesis 39:21, *"But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison."*

God is with me when my friends forsake me

Joseph interpreted the dreams for the butler and for the baker. He asked the butler to remember him and show kindness by talking to the Pharaoh about him when he got out of prison. He had treated the butler kindly. But when the butler got out of prison, he no longer needed Joseph and forgot about him. The butler did not remember Joseph within a week or two of his freedom; it was two long years before he remembered Joseph! How do you think Joseph felt during that time? (*angry, betrayed, lonely or do you think Joseph trusted God*) God was always with Joseph and was at work in his life. In the end, Joseph would become a leader in Egypt and would save his family from starvation.

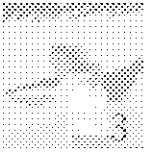
The word "omni" means *every*. Let the kids guess the meaning of the following words:

omnivore - *an animal that eats both animals and vegetables*

omnidirectional - *capable of transmitting or receiving signals in all directions like a tower that sends and receives signals for cellular phones*

omnipresent - *always present or capable of being everywhere at the same time*

God is the only one in the universe that is omnipresent. God is everywhere and not just a part of God but all of God is everywhere. One person can only be in one place at one time. If you are at home, you cannot be at school at the same time. Only God can be everywhere all the time. God is always with us. He fills the universe. He is constantly aware of what is happening in your life. You cannot run away from His presence or hide from Him.



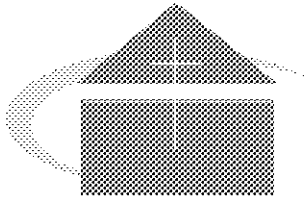
Discuss: How does this truth make you feel?

Comforted - I am never alone.

Encouraged - I always have God with me.

Nervous - God is watching even when I sin.

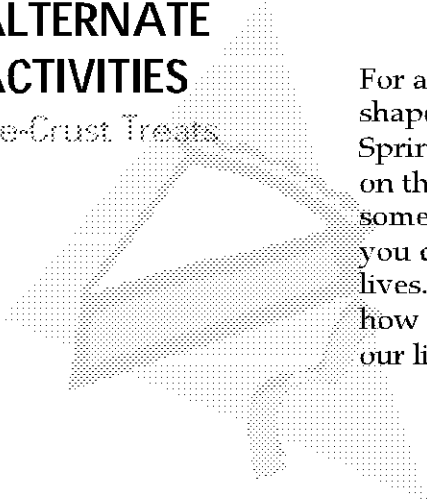
TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



It is easy to remember that God is with you when things are going well. However, when things go wrong or seem unfair, it is more difficult to remember that God is still with us. Family and friends may betray or forsake us but God will always be there! He said He will NEVER leave us or forsake us and His promises are always true. Think of a time or place when you feel lonely (first day at a new school, when parents are fighting, sitting in the dark, etc.). This week talk to God during the lonely times. Remember He is your BEST friend!!

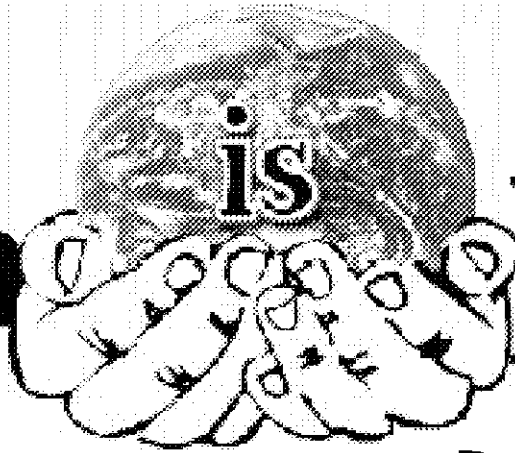
ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Pie-Crust Treats



For an edible object lesson, have teams compete to form a variety of shapes out of pie-crust dough. If possible, brush the crust with butter. Sprinkle the pie-crusts with cinnamon, and bake according to directions on the package. The shapes will come out different. Some may crack, some will puff up. Talk about how when you put them into the oven you did not know how they would come out. God has a plan for our lives. He is molding and shaping us. The difference is that God knows how things will come out. He is always with us and He has a plan for our lives.

The Earth is The Lord's



Can be used in relation to Earth Day, April 22

Psalm 24:1

LESSON AIM

To know God gave us His creation to enjoy.
To understand that God calls us to take care of His creation, and praise Him for it.

KEY VERSE

"The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell within."

Psalm 24:1

ITEMS NEEDED

Nature Cards:

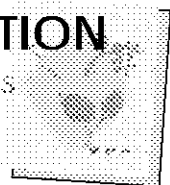
Leaves	small sticks	twigs	crayons
paint	paper	small fabric scraps	envelopes
blank note cards			

Terrariums:

small fish bowls or plastic soda bottles		
small pebbles	small plants	soil

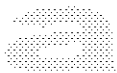
GROUP INTERACTION

Nature cards



Hand out the nature objects and fabric you collected. The kids can either place the object under a blank sheet of paper or note card and gently rub over them with a crayon or soft colored pencil. Make several cards and give them as gifts or keep them as stationary.

INSTRUCTION TIME



National Earth Day was proclaimed as a day people join together to celebrate the beauty of creation and to increase awareness of environmental responsibility and stewardship. Earth Day was the idea of Senator Gaylord Nelson. The first, nationally recognized Earth Day was April 22, 1970.



The idea of celebrating Earth Day seems harmless. But we must keep our thoughts and celebrating in perspective. When we celebrate or worship creation and do not mention the Creator, we have a problem. As Christians, we need to be aware of what Earth Day should mean to us. It means God created a beautiful earth for us to enjoy and to take care of. It also means we need to celebrate and praise God, the Creator, for giving us this beautiful earth. *"God created the Heavens and the Earth."* (Psalms 148:13).

God created a beautiful world so that we may have a place to live. He intended the earth to bear fruit. He provided trees and flowers which create oxygen for us to breathe. He created animals so that we might have food. He created so many beautiful things for us to enjoy. The Lord wants us to enjoy what He made for us. He also calls us to be responsible and take care of the many things He has given us.



"The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness..." Psalms 24:1. God is Creator and King of the earth. All earth's living creatures, including mankind, are subject to His rule. The Israelites were promised that if they obeyed God's will and kept His laws, the earth would produce fruitful harvests. If they were disobedient, however, their crops would fail and famine would come (Deuteronomy 28).

The Bible says in Romans 1:20 *"creation is to bring our thoughts toward God."* This means we need to thank Him and praise Him for the blessings He has given us through His creation.

There is a strong emphasis today to teach about the environment and ecology. We are aware that people before us didn't take very good care of God's earth. This is where we come in. We can make a difference. As Christians we don't worship the earth or the trees, we worship the God who created the earth and the trees. Taking care of the earth isn't just a trendy social issue. It is a God-given responsibility. Remember, as we are responsible to take care of the earth, we are responsible to thank God for His creation.



Break into groups and pass out Bibles and photocopies of the attached newsclipping about Julia Butterfly Hill, "Girl Sits in Tree." Have the kids read the story. Then look up the scripture references and discuss the following thoughts;

- Imagine if she had spent the last few years preaching the gospel to people instead of preaching her protest while living in a tree.
- Why would a person take such extreme action to save a tree?
- How does God want His creation to be used?

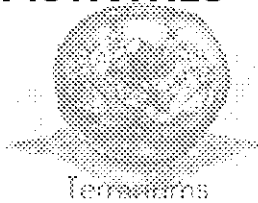
Romans 1:25
1 Timothy 4:1

1 John 5:21
Isaiah 45:5

We are called to be caretakers of God's earth. There are many ways we can be environmentally responsible. We can recycle cans or reuse grocery bags or even pick up stray trash. One way we can take care of God's creation is by getting involved. Adopt an area on or around your church premises. Plant some flowers or trees around the church. Clean up all the trash in that area. Then continue to keep that area litter free and clean.

We are called to be caretakers of God's earth. But we are also called to be caretakers for one another. Volunteer to clean up a disabled person's yard. Have a church work day and try to recycle and reuse the items that were going to be thrown out. Perhaps give them to a charity group such as the Disabled Veterans or Salvation Army (make sure items are in decent condition before giving them away) or start a clothing pantry for the homeless. Our care in these areas will show the love of Christ to others.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES



Create your own terrarium. The container can be a small fish bowl, wide-based vase, wide mouth jars with holes in the lids or some other container that could be used for a terrarium. Collect potting soil, crushed charcoal, and small pebbles to fill the bottom half of the bottle. Plant a few small ferns or slow-growing plants in the soil. Chopsticks or pencils will help maneuver plants and dirt. Now you have created your own terrarium. Water sparingly. As you take care of your "creation," let the Lord remind you to take care of His as well.



Give the kids a list of items to find indoors or outdoors. Taking from the garbage cans is not allowed! Points are awarded for each item and there is no limit for the amount of items retrieved. Bonus points may be awarded for the most unique items found.

Sample items would be:

- candy wrappers
- something wet
- something orange
- something made from wood
- gum wrapper
- aluminum cans
- plastic spoon
- paper cup
- something with a strong smell
- bottle

GIRL SITS IN TREE, TO SAVE TREE'S LIFE

Since December 10th 1997 Julia Butterfly Hill has been living in a 1000 year old redwood in Humboldt County in Northern California. She has climbed 180 feet up to protest the cutting down of the ancient redwoods.

"Butterfly" as she is called, is an environmentalist willing to die for her beloved tree. She named the tree "Luna," because she believes the tree first spoke to her on a full moon. Butterfly talks, sings, and climbs all around Luna. This tree is "Butterfly's" god! The tree is her life, Hill explains, "I will die trying to save this tree." Butterfly has waged wars against the people trying to cut the tree down. They have turned fire hoses on her, they have put helicopters right above the

tree to try to blow her out. She has broken the law by trespassing on Pacific Lumber property, and wasted 2 years of her life for a tree. She says "I gave my word to this tree (Luna), the forest and to all the people, that my feet would not touch the ground until I had done everything in my power to make the world aware of this problem."

- Imagine if Hill had spent the last few years preaching the gospel to people instead of preaching her protest while living in a tree.
- Why would a person take such extreme action to save a tree?
- Is this how God wants His creation to be used?

Look up the following scriptures and find out what God's word says about worshipping creation:

Romans 1:25

1 John 5:21

1 Timothy 4:1

Isaiah 45:5

I am a Marmota
Monax, but you can call
me Woody!

Ground Hog Day-- What's the big deal?

Genesis 8:22



LESSON AIMS

To make students aware that any holiday can become a day of Christian celebration.

KEY VERSE

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease."
Genesis 8:22

ITEMS NEEDED

Bible/Pencils/Paper
Flashlight
Wax paper
An available freezer

Chocolate chips (to be melted)
Bananas
Popsicle sticks
Cookie sheet or pans for bananas

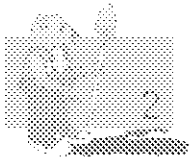
Items for Alternate Activities (optional)

GROUP INTERACTION

Make frozen bananas (groundhogs). Melt a package of chocolate chips in the microwave or in a double boiler. Have kids write their names on the sticks. Then have them peel bananas, and poke the stick either lengthwise or crosswise through the banana. Dip the banana in the chocolate and place it on the wax paper. Place them on a cookie sheet or pan and place in freezer for 30 minutes.

INSTRUCTION TIME

What does Groundhog Day have to do with Christians? Christians, like groundhogs, should be excited for spring. Spring is a season of growth and beauty. Baby groundhogs, born between March and May are a part of that springtime newness. New life for Christians means spending eternity in heaven a new and beautiful place for us.



Groundhog day is an American tradition. On February 2nd the faithful groundhog comes out of its hole after winter hibernation. If he sees his shadow, tradition says winter will last six more weeks. If he doesn't see his shadow, spring is on it's way. However, this is not factual. The groundhog is actually afraid of his shadow and goes back in the hole when he sees it.

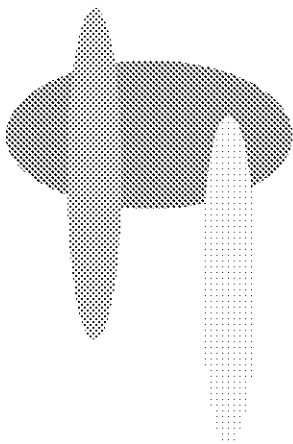
The groundhog is also known as a woodchuck. Groundhogs are a mammal from the squirrel family and are properly named *Marmota Monax*. Groundhogs live in open woods, and brushy, rocky ravine areas. Groundhogs dwell in burrows. These holes that the animals dig can be up to a foot deep. During hibernation, the groundhog's body temperature changes from 99 degrees to about 40 degrees. His heart beat changes from 80 beats a minute to about five beats a minute and his respiration drops from 16 breaths per minute to about four breaths.

When European settlers made their way into America they brought their tradition of Candlemas Day, a day when pastors would bless candles and distribute them to the congregation. This date was considered to be a winter milestone. It was the mark of the middle of winter. The Groundhog tradition came about when German settlers in Pennsylvania believed their European hedgehog could forecast winter's end. In their new country, they looked for hedgehogs everywhere. When they couldn't find one, they settled for a woodchuck/groundhog.

People always look for warnings when change is going to happen. They like to be prepared and make decisions about their lives. Genesis 8:22 speaks of our unchanging God. We don't need to worry. Just as we can look for the signs of change through seedtime and harvest, seasons and day and night, we can count on our God to always be the same and help us through changes in our lives.

Whether the Groundhog sees its shadow is based on the weather, we can always depend on our heavenly father to be faithful to us. He is the same in the good and bad times, in sorrow and joy. Jesus promised us He would be by our side, wrapping us in His arms of love.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES



Ground Hog Relay Race

You will need: 2 plastic spoons, two plastic beach pails, two bags or a large container (i.e. wading pool) of sand and prizes for the winning team. Break into two teams. Place the sand at one end of the room or outside area. Give the plastic spoon and bucket to the first person in line. Blow a whistle or say "go." Timing the teams for about 10 - 15 seconds each, have the first person in each line run to the sand and start filling their bucket. When their time is up blow your whistle or yell stop. They run back to the line with their spoons and buckets and hand them to the next person in line. When each person has had a turn, compare the sand in the buckets. The team with the most sand wins. Note: the teams only get one spoon, if it breaks, they'll have to use the broken spoon.

Flashlight Tag

With the lights off, one person will be given the flashlight. Everyone will mingle quietly around the room in the dark. You will stop the activity at random by yelling, "Freeze!" When everyone is still, "frozen" ask whoever is "it" to flash the light quickly toward the ceiling. Everyone must stay "frozen" until you shout, "Go!" Then people try to find the person with the flashlight (who is sneaking around the room).

If the person with the flashlight is caught, he or she must shine the light and announce that the hunt is over. Retrieve the flashlight and start a new hunt by handing it to someone else while the group mingles in the dark. After a few rounds, turn on the room lights. Lead a discussion on this subject: The groundhog has to leave its comfortable borrow to know if the season will change.

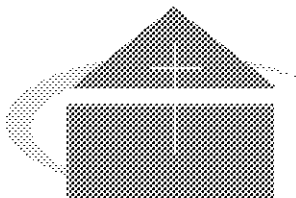
- How can Christians learn to deal with changes in their own lives?

Groundhog Skit/Quiz

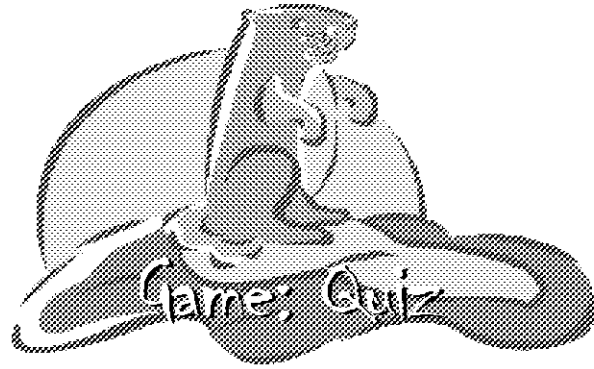
Make photocopies of the attached skit and ask two of your class "hams" to perform the skit. Encourage the rest of the class to complete the quiz during this time as the quiz is based on the lesson and skit. Offer a prize for the most correct answers.

Answers to quiz:

1. D
2. False
3. False
4. C
5. False
6. False
7. A

**TAKING HOME
THE TRUTH**

Discuss why as Christians, we should recognize ways to celebrate God's goodness no matter what day it is. (i.e. praising God, telling someone else about something good that happened, making someone else feel good.)



1. Is the groundhog from the same family as the:
a. beaver b. dog c. raccoon d. woodchuck

2. The ground hog does not like to hibernate during winter. Instead, it goes west.
True False

3. According to the legend, when a groundhog see his shadow, winter will shortly be over.
True False

4. Groundhog day is also known as what day?
a. End of Winter Day b. First day of Spring
c. Candlemans Day d. G-day

5. Groundhog Day is celebrated on February 1st.
True False

6. A groundhog/woodchuck does not like wood.
True False

7. Is the groundhog a:
a. mammal b. reptile c. bird d. amphibian

Skit
"Out of the Hole!"

Scene: Two ground hogs are in their burrow discussing what will happen on Ground Hog Day. Play it up as much as possible. The rest of the class can do their quiz in the process.

Woody: Hey Marmalade, what's up? Are you going outside today?
Marmota monax: My proper name is Marmota Monax and I am a mammal and part of the squirrel family--not an orange preserve! If you cannot address me by my proper name, I will not respond to your constant badgering.

Woody: Look, Marmota, I know it has been a rough winter for you but I am so excited about going up the hole today. If I see my shadow, I'm going to bask in the sunlight, work on tanning my beautiful coat and grab something to eat!

Marmota: I like staying in my little hole and not having anyone bother me. I do not want to be in the lime light every "Ground hog Day" They make our breed a joke!

Woody: Who cares if we are called woodchucks or groundhogs. That is what we are. Don't deny your heritage. Just go with it, buddy. Hey, Marmota.

Marmota: Yes, Woody?

Woody: How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

Marmota: About 700 pounds according to the Cornell University Journal. Why?

Woody: Oh, Marmota, lighten up! Spring is almost here and we have so many cool things to look forward too. Just thank the Lord for the wonderful time of hibernation He gave us and climb out of the hole and give the people what they want!!

Marmota: Okay! I will try to look at the brighter side of things. Besides, I guess with spring comes my freedom.

Woody: Your freedom?

Marmota: Yeah! I don't have to stay in a hole with you any longer!

St. Patrick's Day

LESSON AIMS

For students to understand that God wants to use them to reach their world

For students to know that God wants to use them in all circumstances both good and bad.

KEY VERSE

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

ITEMS NEEDED

A variety of baked goods, or store-bought snacks that are green

Lime punch or green soda

Photocopies of the "A Holiday For Me" worksheet

Pens or pencils

GROUP INTERACTION

Green Eggs and Ham

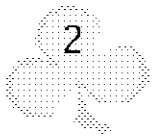
Plan to have snack foods available to the students before class and allow them to mingle and talk together for a little while. Prepare a variety of green foods and snacks. Use green food-coloring to make green cookies or green cupcakes. Make lime punch, serve celery sticks and broccoli with a green dip - use food coloring in ranch dressing. Make a spinach pizza, serve pickles, or pistachio ice cream.

INSTRUCTION

TIME

The Life of St. Patrick

On March 17 many in the world will celebrate a holiday called St. Patrick's Day. It is an Irish holiday and is titled so, for the adventurous life of a young teen named, Maewyn Succat (May-win Succat). Maewyn later became known as St. Patrick. St. Patrick wasn't born in Ireland but in Scotland, in the year 387. During his teenage years, he was taken captive by an Irish marauder and was sold as a slave to an Irish, pagan, priest (Ireland was filled with a pagan religion called, Druidism). There, St. Patrick tended his masters sheep for six years



During those six years as a slave St. Patrick learned how to speak the Celtic tongue, which is the Irish language. God had a plan for this. Also during his time as a sheepherder St. Patrick prayed daily, hourly, and as often as he could and he saw his relationship with God blossom. St. Patrick's master was a cruel one, and so one day St. Patrick fled to his home in Scotland. There he devoted his life to serving God in the ministry.

Once back home in Scotland he joined a monastery and was placed under the guidance of a Christian priest named St. Germain. Soon St. Patrick became a priest himself and joined in many missionary journeys. During his 18 years in Scotland his heart began to long for Ireland. St. Germain took this to heart and sent St. Patrick to Rome to work with the Pope. Shortly before the Pope's death, the Pope gave St. Patrick his title, changing his name from Maewyn to St. Patrick, and sent him on a missionary journey of bringing Christianity to Ireland.

Once in Ireland St. Patrick was faced with opposition from the Druids. The pagan religion of Druidism had taken over nearly all of Ireland, but St. Patrick was prepared. Because he knew the Celtic language, St. Patrick was able to begin communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It took him several years to destroy paganism. He survived numerous death threats and on more than 12 occasions was he and his companions were taken captive and carried off as thieves.

St. Patrick died in Ireland on March 17, 460 AD. Until he died he spent his time visiting and watching over churches that he had founded in all the provinces of Ireland. And despite constant threats to his life he traveled widely, baptizing, confirming, preaching, and building churches, schools, and monasteries. He succeeded in converting almost the entire population of Ireland. We celebrate St. Patrick's day on the day of his death, March 17, 460 A.D.

Some of you might find yourselves struggling at home or at school. Nobody likes you, everyone teases you, some of you might have parents that aren't taking care of you, neglecting you. But just as God was with St. Patrick his whole life, God is with you. Just as St. Patrick performed every task God gave him, even in the midst of persecution, you too can perform every task that God has for you. He wants to use you to cause this world, this nation, and specifically, this state, to believe in him.

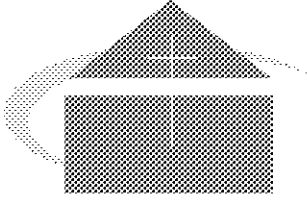


Have the students turn to Jeremiah 29:11. Choose a volunteer to read it. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future."

Even in difficult times and places, God can and will use you if you persist in obedience to Him. St. Patrick persisted in his tasks and he almost led the whole country of Ireland to relationship with the Lord. He had to deal with druidism, a major false religion at that time. They came against him, but God knew the plans He had for them. St. Patrick was

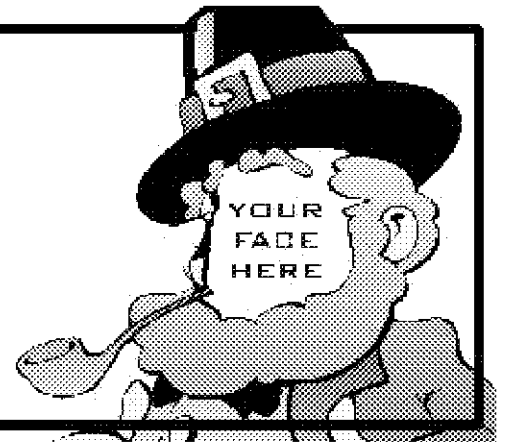
able to do all he did because He depended on God, and allowed God to use him, even in the midst of scary circumstances. God wants to use you to change the places you live, to lead people to salvation by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Are you willing to let him?

TAKING HOME THE TRUTH



St. Patrick was just a young teenager when God grabbed hold of his life and began a process that changed the lives of many people. God could do the same in your life. *Pass out the "It's My Holiday" worksheet to the kids and give them a few minutes to fill it out. After they are finished have them read their sheets to the class.*

A Holiday FOR Me!



1. If a holiday was about to be created for you, what would you want it to be?
2. How would you want people to observe it?
3. What kind of influence do you want to have on this world while your alive.
4. What kind of influence do you want to have on this earth after you die?
5. Write down the names of three people you want to introduce to Jesus Christ this year and begin praying for them.