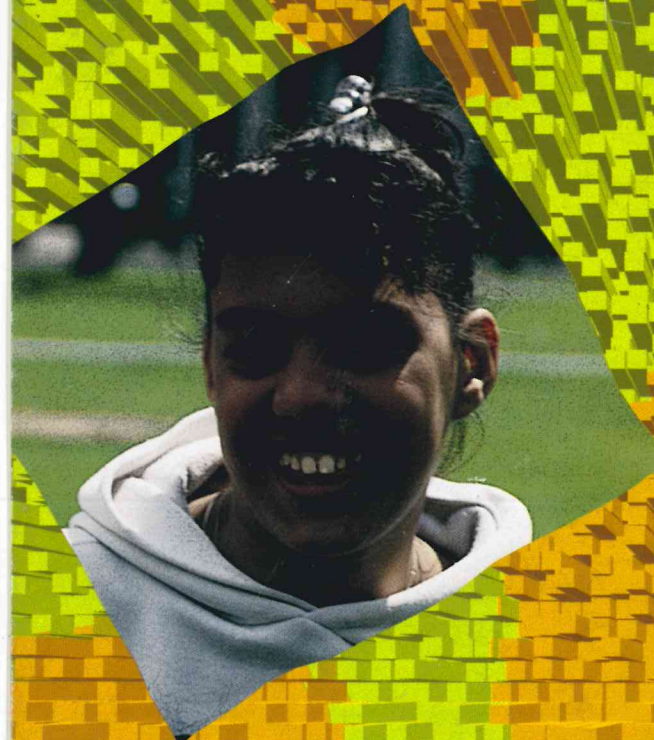


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- ◆ Sharing the Language of Faith
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- ◆ Family Book
- ◆ Youth Journal
- ◆ Study Bible: The New Student Bible  
(New Revised Standard Version)
- ◆ A Contemporary Translation of Luther's  
Small Catechism: Study Edition

# Bible 3: Into the World



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CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION

**A RESOURCE FOR LEADERS**

creative  confirmation

# Bible 3: Into the World

by Karen S. Matthias-Long  
Peter A. Sethre  
Julie B. Sevig  
Jon M. Temme

Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis

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**Creative Confirmation Series**  
*Bible 3: Into the World*

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# Introduction

## CREATIVE CONFIRMATION

Welcome to the Creative Confirmation Series. This series invites you to customize a confirmation program that meets the needs of your youth and your congregation. These flexible confirmation resources work together through active and experiential learning activities to emphasize basic Bible literacy, the Small Catechism, worship, and daily life in the Christian community.

**LEADER RESOURCES** Nine resource books are provided for pastors and leaders. *Bible 1, Bible 2, Bible 3,* and *Small Catechism* serve as the core of the program. The other five leader resources—*Worship, Community-Building Activities and Games, Sharing the Language of Faith, Mission/Service Projects,* and *Parent Conversations*—help you build a comprehensive confirmation program by providing related activities that nurture faith development in a community setting. The sessions are designed for a group of up to 12 middle school students.

**LEARNER RESOURCES** *Study Bible: The New Student Bible NRSV* (Augsburg Fortress code 30-10-999) and *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition* (Augsburg Fortress code 15-5305) are the primary student resources for Creative Confirmation sessions. In some sessions a reproducible page from the leader resource is used. The *Youth Journal* guides learner reflection on

many of the sessions in *Bible 1, Bible 2, Bible 3, Small Catechism, Worship,* and *Sharing the Language of Faith.* In session plans, look for the  symbol and page number that point to a *Youth Journal* activity.

**About Bible 3 ♦ Bible 3: Into the World** is one of the leader resources for Creative Confirmation. The stories in *Bible 3: Into the World* help youth and their leaders explore individual gifts, vocation, peace, justice, witness, and worship. This resource will help youth and their leaders:

- ♦ experience the message of God's Word through an active interaction with the biblical texts;
- ♦ gain a basic understanding of the salvation story in the Bible;
- ♦ relate the biblical texts to life experience in the community of faith and in the whole human community.

**USING THIS RESOURCE** Each of the 34 sessions in this book is designed to last about 20 minutes. Within a single learning period, churches can group more than one Bible session or combine a single Bible session with activities from the other resource books. If you are responsible for the entire class time, matching the symbol included in each session will guide you in selecting activities from the other resource books. (See key on contents/credits page.) If an activity does not have a symbol, it can be used in any session.



## Bible basics

# The world of the Old Testament

**FOCUS** Basic background knowledge of the land of Israel will help one understand the message of the Old Testament, both for that time and for today.

**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, "Old Testament Background Map" (Reproducible Page 1, found on page 38), "Middle East Today Map" (Reproducible Page 2, found on page 39), Bible atlases, paper, pencils/pens.

**BACKGROUND** Following the death of Moses, the Israelites move across the Jordan river into Canaan—the promised land. This ends a journey that began with Terah, Abram's father, moving from Ur and settling in Haran (Genesis 11:31). It also fulfills God's promise to Abram that his offspring would be given the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:7).

Canaan was not a large country, only about 125 miles from north to south, and about 50 miles from east to west. The land consists of rich farmland, desert, mountains, and foothills. It is located at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and extends east to the Jordan River. Many of the Israelites were farmers or nomadic people with herds of sheep, goats, or cattle.

In addition to the religious and agricultural significance, this strip of land was the only path of easy travel that connected the major population centers in this part of the world. Its military, economic, and political significance have made this land the center of turmoil and conflict throughout history.

Tensions also existed among the Israelites. During the period of united monarchy (1050-922 B.C.) under Saul, David, and Solomon, Jerusalem was the religious and political capital. The great temple was built there.

Beginning in 922 B.C. there were two kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was conquered by Assyria (721 B.C.). The Southern Kingdom (Judah) was conquered by Babylon (586 B.C.) and the people suffered through the exile.

Following the exile Canaan is known as Palestine and is ruled by Persia (538-330 B.C.) and the Hellenists (330-165 B.C.). From 165 to 63 B.C. the

Maccabees establish Israel as an independent kingdom. In 63 B.C. Palestine comes under Roman rule.

**WARM-UP** Distribute copies of "Old Testament Background Map" (Reproducible Page 1, found on page 38), and "The Middle East Today" (Reproducible Page 2, found on page 39). Ask the participants to identify places they recognize on the map of the Middle East. What do they know about these places? Compare the Old Testament map with the map of the Middle East.

Share information from the Background section.

**ACTIVITY** Using the maps on the Reproducible Pages 1 and 2, have the group work in pairs to locate the places mentioned in the following Old Testament passages. Assign each pair of participants one or two of the biblical texts. Have them note the places listed and find them on their maps.

- 1) Psalm 122 (Jerusalem)
- 2) 2 Samuel 5:3-5 (Hebron)
- 3) 2 Kings 23:29 (Megiddo)
- 4) 1 Samuel 1:3,9 (Shiloh)
- 5) 1 Samuel 16:1-4 (Bethlehem)
- 6) Joshua 3:14-17 (Jordan River)
- 7) Joshua 3:14-17 (Dead Sea)

Have each pair of participants point out their discoveries on their maps. Have the rest of the group mark their maps.

**RESPONSE** Invite each pair to look through a Bible atlas. Have each pair make a list of observations about the world of the Old Testament. Ask each pair to share some of their observations and state one thing that they would still like to discover about the Old Testament.



## Bible basics

# The world of the New Testament

**FOCUS** The focus of the New Testament world is larger than the world of the Old Testament, going beyond Palestine to Asia Minor, Greece, and even as far as Rome.

**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, "New Testament Background Map" (Reproducible Page 3, found on page 40), Bible atlases.

**BACKGROUND** The New Testament begins in Palestine and moves far beyond that as the gospel of Jesus Christ spread throughout that part of the world. Geographically, though the central story of Jesus takes place in Galilee and Judea, the message of the gospel was taken to the area north of Palestine (Lebanon and Syria today), to Asia Minor (modern Turkey), to Greece, and even as far west as Rome. The message was also spread to the south, to Egypt and Ethiopia.

The gospels tell the story of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, all of which took place in Galilee and Judea. After the resurrection, Jesus' disciples carried the message to "Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) beyond that place. Congregations were established in many places. Many of the epistles are written and addressed to these new congregations.

The world of the New Testament is a world influenced by Greek and Roman culture. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages were all present in this world. The presence of the Greek influence and the dominant Roman culture presented challenges to those who attempted to make the witness to Jesus as the Messiah intelligible to people who were not well versed in the Hebrew tradition.

**WARM-UP** Have each participant write a response to: "If I could go back to Jesus' time,

one thing I would like to know is . . ." Have each participant share his or her response with the group.

**ACTIVITY** Distribute copies of the New Testament Background Map. Have the group work in pairs to locate the places mentioned in the following New Testament passages. Assign each pair of participants one or two of the biblical texts. Have them note the places listed and find them on their maps. Ask for volunteers to read the passages and point out the places mentioned on the map.

- 1) Mark 11:15,27 John 12:12 Acts 1:12 (Jerusalem)
- 2) Luke 2:4-7 (Bethlehem)
- 3) John 12:1 (Bethany)
- 4) Acts 8:40 Acts 18:22 (Caesarea)
- 5) Acts 18:19,24 (Ephesus)
- 6) Acts 18:1 (Corinth)
- 7) Acts 16:11-12 (Philippi)
- 8) Acts 17:15,16 (Athens)
- 9) Acts 28:16 Romans 1:7 (Rome)
- 10) Acts 1:8 (Judea, Samaria)

Note how the New Testament world expands far beyond Palestine.

**RESPONSE** Invite each pair to look through a Bible atlas. Have each pair make a list of observations about the world of the New Testament. Ask each pair to share some of their observations and state one thing that they would still like to discover about the New Testament.



## Bible basics

# Which parts of the Bible are most important?

**FOCUS** Although all of the Bible is God's word, some portions are more important for the life of faith than others.

**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens.

**BACKGROUND** All of the Bible is God's word. However, those who read and study the Bible soon discover that some portions speak more clearly to their lives than others. One reason for this is the nature of the biblical texts. The Bible is a complicated collection of books and styles of writing. It was written over many years by many different people. Not all biblical passages yield their meaning or message instantly. For some texts, one must know about the historical background or the book or passage. In other texts, certain words may not be clearly understood. Other biblical passages give detailed information about things that do not seem to affect us today. Some passages speak more directly to our lives today.

That is not to say, however, that we should dispense with the more difficult parts of the Bible and read only the easier portions. Regular Bible reading will help one discover books and portions that become favorites because of their message to us and relevance for our lives. Some portions of the Bible that may be easiest for young people to appreciate and understand are the great narrative stories of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, the stories of Joseph, David, Elijah, and the gospels.

**WARM-UP** Ask the participants to think about Bible stories or verses they know. Go around the group and list the stories and verses they mention.

Now ask where they see or hear Bible stories or verses today. (This may be challenging, but

the group will probably get rolling after the first few. For example, nativity scenes at Christmas, Samson and Delilah in an underwear commercial, movies, TV movies, sermons, signs with verses at sporting events.)

**ACTIVITY** Divide the group into three teams (this number could be less for a small class). Give each team one of the sets of biblical passages listed below. Have them work as a team, read each passage together after they have found it in their Bibles, and then prioritize the list in terms of how each passage speaks to them right now, with the most meaningful as #1 and the least meaningful as #4.

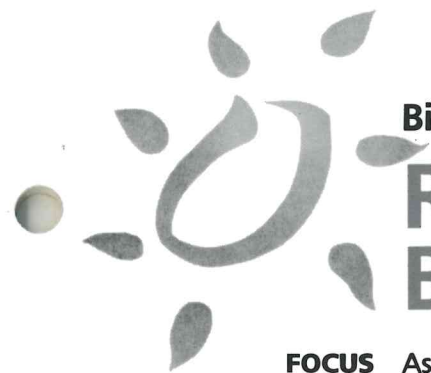
Group 1: Exodus 26:11-4  
Psalm 37:5  
Romans 13:8-10  
Genesis 25:7-10

Group 2: Genesis 1:27  
Ephesians 2:8-9  
Psalm 148:7-12  
Deuteronomy 1:6-8

Group 3: Isaiah 8:5-8  
Psalm 39:4-5  
Jeremiah 31:33-34  
1 Corinthians 1:18

Have each group report how and why they prioritized their passages, giving the main meaning of each passage.

**RESPONSE** Go around the group and ask each person to respond to the statement: "One question I will have about the Bible is . . ." Remind them that it is good to have questions.



## Bible basics

# Reading in the Bible today

**FOCUS** As we enter the world of the Bible, we find ourselves viewing our own world with new eyes.

**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, ten index cards, copies of "Ancient World View" (Reproducible Page 4, found on page 41).

**BACKGROUND** The world we live in continues to challenge the ways we read and attempt to understand the Bible. Geologists have determined that the earth is billions of years older than the Bible suggests. Paleontologists trace the development of life forms from simple cells all the way to dinosaurs that inhabited a primeval world unknown to the ancient Israelites. Having discovered long ago that the earth is not the center of all things, astronomers continue to probe the reaches of an expanding universe, one not bounded by the gates of heaven. Modern historians, unlike biblical writers, recount the past without reference to miraculous interventions by God, but understand history as the product of interactions among human beings and the world in which they live.

The fruits of modern research have been of tremendous benefit to people. We cannot and should not close our eyes to advances in medical technology, waiting for God to intervene directly in a case of illness. We must make full use of current research into our planet's climate, geological makeup, and the history of its peoples; to neglect these would be irresponsible. At the same time, we must also recognize that there are dimensions of life that transcend the usual categories of technology. When people engaged in scientific research ask questions about the *meaning* of what they see or about the *purpose* of life in this world, they often find themselves asking fundamentally religious questions. How then can the Bible speak meaningfully to people in such a context?

Some people have tried to make the Bible into a modern document by explaining its miracles and other events in terms of natural causes. Others are content to say that the Bible conveys certain religious truths or provides personal guidance for Christians, but says little about the world or its history. Yet when we read the Bible

on its own terms, without attempting to make it fit too quickly into our usual ways of thinking about things, we may find ourselves seeing things in new ways.

From *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible* by Craig R. Koester, copyright © 1991 Augsburg Fortress.

**WARM-UP** Ask the participants to draw a picture that depicts Earth and its relationship to the universe.

**ACTIVITY** The intent in this exercise is to help the participants see that the understanding of the world has changed since Bible times. Write each set of the Bible passages listed below on an index card (do not include the information in parentheses). Distribute one or more cards to small groups of participants. Explain that each set of passages describes part of the world. Have each group look up the assigned passages (using NRSV Bibles) and write the part of the world described on the card. Then distribute copies of "Ancient World View" (Reproducible Page 4, found on page 41). Have the group locate their parts of the world on the picture.

- 1) Psalm 103:19 and Revelation 4:2 (Throne of God)
- 2) Genesis 1:14-16 (The sun and heavenly bodies)
- 3) Genesis 7:11 and Psalm 78:23 (The "windows" of heaven)
- 4) Job 38:4 and Psalm 104:5 (The foundations of the earth)
- 5) Genesis 1:10 (The earth)
- 6) Genesis 7:11 and Genesis 8:2 (The fountains)
- 7) Genesis 1:7 (Waters above the firmament)
- 8) Genesis 1:7 (Waters below the earth)
- 9) Psalm 6:5 and Job 7:9-10 (Sheol [the pit])
- 10) Genesis 1:6-8 and Genesis 1:4 (The firmament [dome])

**RESPONSE** Share some of the information from the Background. Discuss the challenges of reading the Bible today.



## Session 1

# Genesis 1 ♦ God's world

**FOCUS** God's creative word transforms chaos into God's good world of light, life, and love.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, poster board, markers, video camera or tape recorder.

**BACKGROUND** Creation accounts abound in the Ancient Near East. Israel's neighbors held creation beliefs frequently built upon themes of conflict between feuding divinities. In these sagas the universe was created through chaos and destruction. By contrast, the Genesis 1 account emphasizes how God's word shapes chaos into life through orderly progression. God speaks and creation unfolds in a progression of increasing richness. Genesis 1 celebrates a powerful God who creates a life-sustaining world that is good in its origin, intent, and expression.

**WARM-UP** Prepare two large poster board signs marked "POOF!" and "STEP-BY-STEP." Secure a volunteer to read Genesis 1. Before it is read, tell the group: "As we hear Genesis 1, think about whether it sounds like God made the world in a magical or a logical way. If it sounds magical to you stand beside the sign marked 'POOF.' If it seems more logical stand beside 'STEP-BY-STEP.' You can change your mind and change your signs throughout the reading."

After the reading, discuss the participants' responses focusing particularly upon those who may have changed their minds/signs.

**ACTIVITY** Before the session, secure a video camera or tape recorder (have one recorder per group of ten participants) and blank audio- or

videotapes. Divide the participants into groups of ten or less and offer these instructions: "Many people are perplexed about God's role in the origin of life and creation of the universe. We can learn from the questions of others and from the responses our faith offers. Let's go out and see what questions others have about creation. Be roving reporters who ask people on the street two questions: 'How was the world created? Who created it?' Take turns in your group being the camera/sound crew and reporter. In fifteen minutes we'll come back and play your interviews."

If time and location permits, secure "on the street" interviews of passersby. If not, allow the participants to interview one another. When the group returns play the interviews without comment. Then ask: "Are some of their questions your questions too? How does it feel to hear others asking your questions? Can some questions be answered by Genesis 1?" (*Responses will vary but might indicate how creation is of God, through progression, for a purpose.*)

**RESPONSE** Discuss the following questions. If you could ask God one question about creation and the origin of life, what would it be?

If creation is a process, not a magic "poof," what might God be creating next in our world? What might God be creating next in me?



## Session 2

# Genesis 11:1-9 ♦ Confusion

**FOCUS** The desire to be god rather than God's creation reverses God's good world and brings chaos and destruction.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles.

**BACKGROUND** The quest to be like God drove Adam and Eve to disobey. That destructive desire, which lies at the center of sinful human nature, fuels the chaotic "group effort" of the people at Shinar.

This passage completes the Genesis "primeval history" narratives (Genesis 1–11) which are followed by the "ancestral history" (Genesis 12–50) events of the patriarchal history, beginning with Abraham and Sarah. In concluding the primeval cycle the Babel narrative functions as the mirror image of creation. Creation brought order out of chaos; human rebelliousness reverses that pattern and chaos returns.

**WARM-UP** Seat the group in a circle. Ask the participants to complete the statement, "If I were God, I would . . ." Keep the replies brief and the exercise moving quickly. Try to secure at least three replies from each participant.

Then ask the participants how it felt to think about what they would do if they were God. Was it a tempting notion? Do they think others have felt that and acted upon it? Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 11:1-9.

**ACTIVITY** Announce that you will be discussing this story in the form of a talk show. You will need to secure volunteers to role-play: the talk-show host, the "architect" for the project, several workers, a person who opposed the

idea, and God. Give volunteers time to think about their roles while you instruct the remainder of the group to be the audience. Invite the audience to participate with applause, cheers and boos, and encourage them to ask questions.

Seat the participants at the front of the room and give a microphone prop to the host. Then announce: "Ladies and gentlemen, today on the (*name of host*) Show we delve into the Babel controversy. Who designed it? What went wrong? What should be done now? We'll speak to the architect, builders, opponents, with a special guest appearance by God. Now, here's your host of the (*name of host*) Show: (*name of host*)!"

Keep the role play moving to enable all participants to speak, allowing time for audience questions.

**RESPONSE** What did the role play reveal about human nature, sin, and its consequences? (*Answers will vary. Highlight how the temptation to be our own gods results in chaos and the destruction of community.*)

How are you personally tempted to be like God? Do you think about that only, or do you sometimes act on that desire? If so, how? And how might God thwart your plans? (*Answers will vary. Help participants formulate their responses.*)



### Session 3

# Genesis 12:1-9 ♦ Called to be a blessing

**FOCUS** Calling Abraham and Sarah to follow, God establishes a covenant relationship of trust and promise that leads into God's future.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, bandanas, snacks, paper, pencils/pens, service of Baptism from your worship book.

**BACKGROUND** The concepts of call and covenant undergird this passage, and the unfolding of all of Israel's history beyond. The Old Testament (covenant) begins here! God calls Abraham and Sarah to follow in a relationship of trust built upon unconditional, enduring promises. God promises ongoing blessings to those who follow to new places and experiences of God's goodness. God calls people to leave the safety of one's own security to find joy and ultimate security in the plans and provision of God.

**WARM-UP** Start this session in the usual meeting place. When all have gathered say: "Hello; this is God! Today I'm calling you to move to a new place to look at me and my world in a new way. You'll not be able to see; you'll need to walk in trust. But it will be worth it. You will see my goodness much better if you look at it from a new place."

Cover the participants' eyes with bandanas and lead them by verbal directions to another meeting area where you have arranged snacks. Remove the bandanas.

**ACTIVITY** As participants snack, invite them to read silently Genesis 12:1-9. Then, briefly discuss how Abraham and Sarah's faithful following would have been exciting and frightening for them, and simply ludicrous to many others.

The faith and apparent folly of Abraham and Sarah's faith can be emphasized by asking the participants to write a letter that either Abraham or Sarah might have written to their family and friends. In their letters they must explain why they were leaving their settled and secure lives to follow a call and a promise from God.

Let the participants dream big! They should imagine Abraham and Sarah having to leave the security offered by family and friends. Allow time at the end of this activity for the participants to describe how they think Abraham and Sarah must have felt and to read their letters.

**RESPONSE** Baptism is both the beginning of our covenant relationship with God and our call from God. What is your call? (*Answers will vary.*) Invite the participants to look at the service of baptism for clues. (*Answers will vary but might include: to grow in grace, to witness one's faith, to lead by example.*) And what are the "terms" of God's covenant? Suggest to the participants that there are two sets of terms. God promises to be our God. And we promise to be God's people. What does this mean? (*Answers will vary. Encourage discussion.*)

Paul wrote that we must be "fools for Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:10). Certainly Abraham and Sarah looked like fools. How might friends view you as a committed follower of God? Why do we answer God's call to the Christian life? (*Responses might include the promise of meaning, blessing, hope, life eternal.*)

### Session 4

# Exodus 20:1-20 ♦ The Commandments

**FOCUS** To establish and enrich community, God provides commandments which curtail sin and encourage life-giving relationships with God and one another.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, copies of "1000 yeses for every no" (Reproducible Page 5, found on page 42), a cardboard or toy axe, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and markers.

**BACKGROUND** The Ten Commandments fall within the larger context of the Covenant Code (Exodus 20-23). The Ten Commandments proceed from the centering belief that God establishes community through a covenant confirmed in the rescue from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 20:2). The commandments are not mere "no-nos" from a God ready to punish. They function as road maps toward greater freedom and peace from a God ready to save and protect a people chosen to be a blessing through their actions individually and in community.

**WARM-UP** Have the participants sit in a circle and place an axe (cardboard, toy, or imaginary) at the center. Tell the participants: "There is one hard and fast rule about this axe: You may not use it to kill or harm human life. You are free to use it however you wish to protect or enhance life. We'll pass the axe around the circle. When it's passed to you, think of a life-enhancing use for this. Let's see how many we can come up with in five minutes."

Time this activity. On newsprint or a blackboard record each acceptable answer. (*Responses might include building a shelter, chopping wood for fuel, preparing food, trimming trees to produce more fruit, warding off attackers, chopping holes in ice to get fresh water.*)

**ACTIVITY** While seated in the circle read Exodus 20:1-20. Emphasize the essential introduction of Exodus 20:1-2. Does this change how we view the commandments? (*Not as terribly unfair rules we could never keep, but a means by which God protects human freedom and enriches the community God established.*)

Tell the participants: "We often emphasize the 'You shall not' part of the commandments. Even the two (Third and Fourth) that are stated positively can seem limiting. But hidden behind each commandment are many more 'You can's!' Think of the axe: when its destructive use is prohibited, a thousand positive uses emerge. So it is with human beings and community. God prohibits some destructive actions to enrich and encourage a thousand life-giving actions!"

Hand out copies of "1000 Yeses for Every No" (Reproducible Page 5, page 42). Have the participants work in small groups. Introduce the activity by saying: "There is a 'No' in every commandment. But there are also many things God would be pleased for us to do to preserve and protect life. Remember the axe? Use that as an example and apply that pattern to the commandments we just read from Exodus 20."

**RESPONSE** Ask each participant to identify one specific "Yes" of a commandment that will change, challenge, or strengthen a life-giving action in your life. Repeat this task for each commandment until you have identified ten personal "Yeses."



## Session 5

# Deuteronomy 8 ♦ Remembering God's gifts

**FOCUS** In times of prosperity God's people easily forget that true security and hope are rooted in a trust in God's care, protection, and goodness.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, copies of "A remembering acrostic" (Reproducible Page 6 found on page 43).

**BACKGROUND** Deuteronomy means "second giving of the law." It is the reaffirmation of the covenant between God and the people of God. This passage is set in the context of God preparing the people of Israel to enter the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. The people looked ahead to great prosperity, to the fulfillment of God's promises. But it is also a time of great risk. The people are reminded that they are to remain faithful to God. The people are encouraged to look back and remember how God's love was demonstrated in flesh-and-blood, life-saving moments of the wilderness journey. The promise of future blessing is made real when held with a creative, praise-rendering remembrance of past protection.

**WARM-UP** Ask the participants to take off their shoes and hold them as you read Deuteronomy 8. Then reread for emphasis verses 2-4. Begin a discussion by saying, "If your shoes could talk, what would they remember about where they have been and how God has protected them or made them happy? For example, what was the most exciting place your shoes have been? What was the most joyful place God took you in those shoes? Were you wearing those shoes at any time when God rescued you from danger or sorrow? Where do you think those shoes might end up taking you in the future? Pick one of those questions and for a moment, let your shoes do the talking!"


Beginning with volunteers, let the participants do their "shoe-talk." Encourage all to par-

ticipate but allow for those who wish to opt out of this activity. Conclude with your own contribution.

**ACTIVITY** Deuteronomy 8 reminds us of the power of memory to keep us from making the same mistakes over and over again. The people of God often forgot their part of the covenant. Distribute copies of "A Remembering Acrostic" (Reproducible Page 6, on page 43). Introduce this activity by defining an acrostic: an acrostic is a word game that uses the letters of one word as the "root" for other words or phrases, usually by writing the "root" word vertically, and forming new words horizontally. Mention that acrostics are as old as the Old Testament; Psalm 119 is an acrostic wisdom poem. *The Lutheran Book of Worship* (pp. 273-279) indicates this well in its translation. Acrostics were a "wisdom tool" or "teaching tool" designed to help people remember.

**RESPONSE** How is it that the more we look into the past the more we can look ahead to the future? (*One possible answer is: Examples of trust in the past give us courage to risk and trust and follow in the future.*)

Memory is a gift. Use the participants' remembering acrostics in bulletin inserts as gifts for the congregation the next few Sundays. Supply copies of "Reproducible Page 6" for the congregation that they might also participate. Perhaps you can even build a large "remembering" bulletin board on which the remembering acrostics of the congregation can be posted.

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 29.



## Session 6

# Isaiah 2:1-4 ♦ Swords into plowshares

**FOCUS** When God's kingdom breaks into this broken world, the tools of chaos and destruction are transformed into instruments of life and peace.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and markers, information about and addresses of organizations that work for peace.

**BACKGROUND** This portion of Isaiah (chapters 1-39) was likely composed when Judah's territorial and military might, fuelled by prosperity, was at its greatest (c. 750 B.C.). Then, as now, people were tempted to trust in their own self-sufficiency and might. In contrast, Isaiah offered a call to trust in God's power which transforms our symbols of security into means of further blessing and life.

**WARM-UP** Tell the participants: "Most of you are currently wearing an item that was developed initially for military use. But over time it has been transformed into something we use every day to make a simple task even easier. Do you know what it is?" Allow time for responses. Then say: "A button!"

Buttons were first developed for use on military uniforms, but they proved so convenient they replaced "hook and eye" closures for most clothing. That is a simple example of something made for war turned into something used for everyday life. Read Isaiah 2:1-4. Isaiah had a vision of what could be transformed by God's peace; swords and spears could become farm tools. What was meant for death can turn into life-producing implements when God's Kingdom comes.

**ACTIVITY** Identify a current arena of war in the world and ask the participants to generate a military equipment list for that conflict (tanks,


mortars, rifles, jets, barbed wire, rockets, etc). Write that list on the left-hand side of the chalkboard or newsprint. Then say: "If God's love, rather than human hatred, ruled in that situation, what might all that 'stuff' become?"

Ask the participant to suggest ideas for what each item could be if its purpose was not destruction and death but life and health. Encourage the group to be as creative and wild in their suggestions as possible. There is joy in thinking about instruments of war becoming tools for peace! (*For example, jet fighters might become crop dusters, rifles could be flower vases, etc.*)

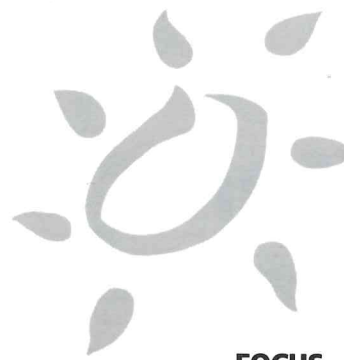
At the end ask, "How did it feel to turn 'swords into plowshares'?" (*Encourage responses that emphasize joy, delight, miracle.*)

**RESPONSE** Acquaint the group with organizations that work to turn destruction into peace and life in God's name. (*Examples might include Lutheran World Relief, Tools for Peace, Project Plowshares.*) Secure names and addresses for such organizations through the ELCA or synod. Ask volunteers to write to secure further information about these organizations and their work. Allow time in future sessions to report on responses.

Identify one aspect of your local community where there is strife or pain or anger (racism in schools, development vs. environmental concerns, etc.). If God's Kingdom ruled in that situation how would those painful moments be transformed? What can individuals do to hasten that day? Be as concrete as possible in developing an action plan to encourage change.

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 30.





## Session 7

# Isaiah 40:1-11 ♦ The messenger of good news

**FOCUS** God's chosen people, forgiven and restored by a gracious God, are called to be messengers of forgiveness and peace in God's name.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, current newspapers, video camera (if available).

**BACKGROUND** This chapter of Isaiah (along with chapters 41–55) emerged from a life-setting of devastation and deep sorrow. Chapters 40–55, commonly called Second Isaiah, originated during the time of exile. The people of Judah were held in exile in Babylon (587–538 B.C.). They felt as if God abandoned them to a life of slavery and sorrow. Such disaster was not undeserved. Foolish trust in their own might and self-righteousness had led God's people to forsake the warning of the prophets about impending doom. Alliances with "idolatrous" nations like Egypt, which also inferred acceptance of their gods also contributed to the fall of Judah. Afterwards, the prophets needed to bring a message of powerful hope, redemption, forgiveness, and restoration rooted in the love, mercy, and covenant faithfulness of God.

**WARM-UP** Prepare for this activity by bringing newspaper articles and photos about a particularly hopeless situation in the world (a war, a famine region, an environmental disaster). Invite the participants to discuss the following: What went wrong? Who is at fault? Where are there particularly clear signs of separation from God? And finally, what is God's response to such a scene of pain? This discussion will lead into the activity.

**ACTIVITY** Read Isaiah 40:1-11 and briefly discuss its setting. Compare it to the current setting you focused upon in the Warm-up.

Tell the group they have been commissioned by God to bring a message of hope to the current world situation. They can have 60 seconds of commercial air time to present their message. Have the group work cooperatively to script a "Good News from God" commercial including: text, visual images, music. Remember to keep the focus of hope that must be rooted in God's grace and forgiveness as in Isaiah 40. What message from God's Word can change that part of the world into a place of hope and promise?

If time permits, have the group film and dub this commercial. If a video camera is not available have the group present the commercial as a drama.

**RESPONSE** If your church has a TV and VCR play the commercial on a Sunday when the congregation gathers for study or fellowship (or present the commercial as a drama). Introduce the commercial by describing the activity assignment.

Having experienced a call to bring good news in tough times, reflect with these questions:

- ♦ Does it take courage to speak of hope in a setting where there is none?
- ♦ Do such prophets look like fools?
- ♦ Are there prophets still around today—people who bring good news of God despite hopelessness?



## Session 8

# Amos 5:14-24 ♦ Justice

**FOCUS** Faithless idolatry and injustice cannot be masked, much less absolved, by hollow religious ritual, nor life devoid of justice.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, a baseball, paper, pencils/pens, a list of organizations in your community or church that work for justice for use in the response section.

**BACKGROUND** Amos was a shepherd who spoke courageously against empty worship practices and encouraged God's people to participate in working for justice in the world. His ministry emerged at a time of rampant idolatry and injustice around 750 B.C. when Israel and Judah prospered economically and politically. Many trusted in their own resources, forsook God and sought to secure their own future. Amos' scathing words condemned the thin veneer of religiosity that covered the cancer of injustice. He called for true worship and trust in the God of justice. Sadly, Amos' setting bears remarkably uncomfortable parallels to late 20th-century North America.

**WARM-UP** Hold up a baseball and say: "This simple baseball is a symbol of the oppression and injustice we often take for granted. This piece of leather and fiber contains a few cents of raw material. Manufacturers pay impoverished women in the Caribbean less than a dollar an hour to sew these—barely enough money to maintain their malnourished existence.


This baseball—a few cents of raw material and a few pennies of labor are sent to North America where we pay millions of dollars each year to watch people play with them in stadiums which cost millions of dollars to build. Some of the players God blessed with athletic abilities are paid six million dollars a year to play with these baseballs made by oppressed women paid less than a dollar an hour.

That is injustice—a sign that we have misplaced our priorities, and fixed our vision more on human desires than on God's will. There are many other examples of people benefiting by taking advantage of others. Human beings have struggled against that sin of injustice for centuries. Let's read the words of the prophets Amos who lived at a time when injustice was also a problem."

**ACTIVITY** What would Amos say today? Among groups or individuals divide the following verses: Amos 5:18, 19-20, 21, 22, 23, 24. Study the images, words and themes from Amos' message and update them with equivalent situations in our world. For example: Amos 5:23 becomes: "Get rid of all that electronic babble about God; I will not listen to your elevator-music songs about God that have no connection with love and justice." Allow time for the updates to be reported out and discussed. Compile a final version of your Amos updates and make copies for the entire group.

**RESPONSE** Amos spoke strong words of anger. But he also spoke words of hope and love. Read Amos 9:14-15. Do these words make it easier to hear the angry words of Amos?

Distribute a list of organizations in your community or church that help people translate Amos' call for justice into action. Ask each participant to investigate one of the groups. Allow time during a future session for reports.

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 31.



## Session 9

# Jonah 1:1–4:11 ♦ God's love for sinners

**FOCUS** God's love brings hope to sinners and a holy "disruption" to believers as it changes our view of others and ourselves from sinners into repentant and forgiven saints of God.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles.

**BACKGROUND** The people of Israel were often attacked and persecuted. It is not surprising that suspicion and hatred of the stranger developed among them. They were tempted to believe that God's love was exclusive. To balance this myopic, mission-thwarting vision the book of Jonah offers a vivid example of how God loves all people, calling all to be messengers and agents of that love. Blending humor, drama, and wisdom the book of Jonah encourages celebration of God's love that embraces, rescues, and forgives all who turn toward God in trusting repentance.

**WARM-UP** Invite the participants to name a movie, TV show or book that has had an impact on their thought or action. Allow brief descriptions of the story but avoid lengthy rehearsals of plot. When all have responded suggest that of the many powerful biblical stories Jonah is one of the best.

**ACTIVITY** A good story, in and of itself, will communicate truths better than most other forms. With Jonah, one need only tell the story! Read the story in narrative form as numbers permit. Secure volunteers to read the parts of: the narrator, God, the captain, sailors, Jonah, the king of Nineveh.

Arrange the room to allow for movement and pantomime. Encourage those not reading

specific parts to cheer, applaud, and hiss in audience participation!

Before the reading, divide the participants, including those who have parts, into two groups. Ask the first group to listen to the story from the perspective of those who think God's love is just for God's chosen people. Ask the second to listen as those who believe God's love embraces all.

At the end of the reading, seat the group in their reflection groups and ask them to discuss the message of Jonah in light of their previously assigned perspective:

- ♦ Is the story of Jonah encouraging or infuriating?
- ♦ Was God too easy on Nineveh?
- ♦ Was God too harsh toward Jonah?
- ♦ Do you think Jonah himself needed to convert?

**RESPONSE** The story of Jonah, like every good story, prompts life-long questions:

- ♦ Where might God be calling you to be a messenger or agent of love?
- ♦ Do you feel tempted to run? If so, how?
- ♦ What is the message you would bring?
- ♦ How would you feel if your audience repented? Or if they ignored you?
- ♦ Can you think of one specific action you can take this next week to begin your mission in God's name? (*Answers will vary but should reflect personal issues and decisions.*)



## Session 10

# Psalm 103 ♦ Giving thanks

**FOCUS** Of God's many gifts we can be most thankful for the gift of forgiveness which daily restores our relationship with God and one another.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, a continuum as described in Warm-up, copies of "Reproducible Page 4" (found on page 41), copies of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

**BACKGROUND** The Psalms reflect a variety of human needs and hopes: cries for help, laments, hymns of praise, invitations to thanksgiving. The Psalms emerged from the daily worship life of the people, centered in temple worship. The Psalms are not "free-standing" poems, but hymns and prayers which accompanied ritual actions of petition, praise, and thanksgiving. Far from disembodied verse, the Psalms were spiritual songs fleshed out by the smells, sights, and sounds of daily worship.

**WARM-UP** On the floor of the room in which you meet, mark out a continuum scale with numbers 1-10 using a roll of paper or ten numbered sheets placed in a line across the room. Ask the participants to move to the number they feel best reflects their level of thanksgiving as you read through a list of items. On this continuum 1 = little, and 10 = immense. Emphasize that there are no "correct" values.

Ask: "How thankful are you for daily food? School? Friends? Family? Pets and creation? Forgiveness? Hope? Health? Shelter?"

Discuss those items on which there is greater diversity of opinion.

**ACTIVITY** Divide the group in half and read Psalm 103 antiphonally by whole verse. Ask the participants to identify the greatest cause for thanksgiving found in this Psalm (*God's forgiveness and healing—Psalm 103:3, 8-13, 17*).

Forgiveness and healing is always embodied in people and events. Working in pairs or in small groups, have everyone think of a time when they were in need of forgiveness and healing. A time when they were in the "pits" (Psalm 103:4). Explain that the "pit" or Sheol (Psalm 16:10) was the place that the dead lived. It was viewed as being under the earth (see Reproducible Page 4 on page 41) and was not the fiery hell that most youth might picture. It was a place where there was not much of you left. Does this image describe how the participants felt in the time they needed forgiveness and healing? How did receiving forgiveness and healing make them feel?

**RESPONSE** How does Psalm 103 relate to confession in general? (*It is both an invitation to confession and an assurance of God's readiness to forgive.*) Now look at the service "Individual Confession and Forgiveness" in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (pp.196-197) or in *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition* (pp.44-47). Where and how is Psalm 103 used in this service? (*As a response of thanksgiving to God's forgiveness.*) Do you know someone who would be comforted by this service?

Generally, congregations do not make much use of individual confession. If that is the case in your setting, speak with your pastor about how you might arrange for this service to be offered in your congregation on a more regular basis.

Identify one situation/person who needs a word of forgiveness this week and plan a time and place when you can offer that word.



## Session 11

# Matthew 5:1-12 ♦ The Beatitudes

**FOCUS** As God's children, we are sent into the world with a very different set of values than those values which society often embraces.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and markers.

**BACKGROUND** "Those folks have such a nice home; they've got great jobs and wonderful children. They've certainly been blessed!" From a societal perspective, being blessed or happy often points to one's wealth, fame, or accomplishments. Reading Matthew 5:1-12 then can come as quite a jolt. It's not wealth, fame or accomplishments that make a person happy or blessed. Instead, happiness is for those who are poor in spirit, mournful, meek, hungry and thirsty, merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers.

While earthly wealth is a finite thing, those who are poor in spirit can know that God's love is forever. Those who mourn in seeing the evil that exists in the world and who long to see God's kingdom come can know comfort in the fact that God overcomes evil. On the other hand, this is bad news to those who use power for selfish—and therefore evil—gains. Their power is temporary. God's power overcomes evil. Look at the remaining beatitudes through these lenses and you will discover what being blessed or happy is truly about! What truly makes us blessed has nothing to do with money or fame and has everything to do with living as God's faithful people here and now.


**WARM-UP** Tell the participants to take some time to reflect on the word "blessed." Give them a piece of paper on which they are to define the word. Tell them to think of a person they know who they feel fits their definition.

Take turns going around the circle sharing the responses to this exercise. Do not comment on anyone's response at this time. On a sheet of newsprint or chalkboard write down the name of the person and why that person is blessed. The list will be used later in the session.

**ACTIVITY** As preparation for this reading, ask a volunteer to read Matthew 5:1-2. Then divide the rest of the participants into two groups. For verses 3-12, tell one group to read the beginning of each verse beginning with the word "blessed" and stopping at the comma. Tell the second group to complete reading the verse (starting with the word "for" following the comma to the end of each verse).

Quickly help the youth brainstorm a list of "beatitudes" by which society lives. For example: "Blessed are those who have lots of money, for they can buy anything they want." Have them compare the biblical beatitudes with this list. Which will last longer: money or the kingdom of heaven? They may need help understanding what it means to be poor in spirit or mournful. How do the values expressed in the Bible provide a different perspective on what society values?

**RESPONSE** 1. Invite the participants to look at their definition of blessed again. How would they define "blessed" now?  
2. Ask the participants to quickly look over this passage again and to pick a beatitude that means something to them.  
3. Let everyone share this beatitude aloud with the rest of the group.

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 32.



## Session 12

# Matthew 6:1-15 ♦ The Lord's Prayer

**FOCUS** The Lord's Prayer calls us to action—to work with God to bring in God's kingdom, to make sure all have bread, to forgive, to avoid temptation.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, index cards.

**BACKGROUND** In the early verses of this passage the issue is not that we stop praying with others. The issue is that we mean what we say when we pray and not use prayer as some kind of cover that we use to make us into something we're not. In other words, prayer is not a one-way dialogue with God. Nor is it something to flaunt in front of people as if to say, "I'm a Christian all right!" Instead it is something that puts us in a two-way dialogue with God which ultimately pushes us to act and to respond.

**WARM-UP** Give each person a piece of paper and the following instructions: "Pretend that you are going to help a group of people prepare a time capsule to be opened in 250 years. You have been chosen to write a prayer for this time capsule. What words will you write to give people 250 years from now a glimpse of the prayer life of people in this period of time?" Invite participants to work in pairs to write a prayer.

Allow some time for the participants to share their prayers aloud. Some may be silly. But, look for meanings even in the silliness. Did any of them suggest the Lord's Prayer? If they wrote original prayers, did any of those prayers have the some of the same themes as the Lord's Prayer?

**ACTIVITY** Ask a good reader to read Matthew 6:1-15 to the group. Ask the participants

to look again at verses 9-15. Point out the prayers we pray call us into action. What good is it, after all, to pray to God for help in losing weight and then eat a high-calorie meal? What action does the Lord's Prayer describe? (*We ask that God's kingdom come to us, that God's will might be done among us, make sure all have their physical, spiritual, and mental needs met, and forgive and do what we can to resist temptation.*)

Divide the group into small groups. Assign each group a different petition. Invite them to prepare a skit that shows how they can act out the assigned petition in their own lives. After they have acted out their skits, remind them that the Lord's Prayer is not only something to be prayed with words; it is also a way to live.

**RESPONSE** 1. Ask the participants to identify something new that they learned about prayer, or the Lord's Prayer.  
2. Invite the participants to share which of the Lord's Prayer petitions make them uncomfortable to say. Which petitions do they really long to see happen?  
3. Give each participant an index card. Invite each participant to write the Lord's Prayer on one side and a prayer of their own on the other side. When they fold this card, they can carry it around in their wallet or pocket. Suggest that the participants set a time each day for prayer. Then they can pull out the card and say the prayers written on it.



## Session 13

# Matthew 10 ♦ Sent out

**FOCUS** Followers of Jesus are called to make a witness to him, even when they must risk persecution. The Followers know that God is always with them and cares for them—no matter what.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, a sign marked "Agree," a sign marked "Disagree," paper, pencils/pens, newsprint and markers.

**BACKGROUND** Matthew 10 is known as the "Missionary sermon." As you study this chapter, be aware that there are two key parts to it. In the first part (Matthew 9:35 to 10:16) Jesus is giving his followers a mission and fully describes what they are to do. The second part starts with 10:17 and continues to the end of the chapter. In this section, Jesus tells his followers what they are expected to do and what they themselves can expect as they attempt to carry out the mission. Ministry isn't easy, in fact it can be downright challenging. But, there is assurance in knowing that God is always with us and cares for us.

**WARM-UP** Put a sign marked "Agree" on one wall and a sign marked "Disagree" on the opposite wall. Tell the participants to imagine that there is a line between the two walls. You will be reading a series of statements. The participants will choose a place to stand along the line based on how strongly they agree or disagree. Standing half-way between the two points indicates an "unsure" or "no opinion" response.

After you read each statement, tell the participants to look where others are standing. Ask if anyone wants to share why they chose to stand where they did.

Here are the statements:

- If following Jesus meant giving up my most prized possession, I would give up that possession.
- I would risk being made fun of by my friends to share with them how I feel about God.
- I would risk my life to be a follower of Jesus.
- I believe that God is with me always and so I have nothing to fear.

**ACTIVITY** Read Matthew 10:1-4 aloud. Then tell them to imagine that they are television correspondents for a major television network who have come to hear what Jesus has to say to his disciples about what it will mean for them to be missionaries. Give them each a sheet of paper and a pencil. As reporters they will need to take notes on important information to pass on to their television viewers. Tell them to jot down what they feel are key points. You will take on the role of Jesus and read Matthew 10:5b-42 (as though Jesus were at a press conference). Allow some time for questions from the reporters.

After you have acted out this scenario, see what the reporters have written about what Jesus had to say. Ask some follow-up questions of the participants: Do you think that Jesus is asking too much of the disciples? What does Matthew 10:22 mean to you? Matthew 10:28-31? Have you ever experienced rejection because of your faith? How much risk are you willing to take in order to be faithful?

**RESPONSE** Hang three sheets of newsprint in the room. On one sheet write the heading "Something I learned today about witnessing is. . . ." On a second sheet write, "For me, this Bible study means that I. . . ." On the third sheet write, "Someone I want to talk to about Jesus this week is. . . ." Invite the participants to respond to each of the open-ended statements. Ask them to record their responses on the newsprint. Keep the responses in view for a week or two to remind them of what it means to be sent out to share their faith in God with others.

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 33.



## Session 14

# Matthew 18:1-22 ♦ Living together

**FOCUS** Humility and forgiveness are key guidelines for living in community with others.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, newsprint and markers.

**BACKGROUND** The theme of this discourse has to do with how Jesus' followers are to relate to one another. One of the topics Jesus covers is humility. No one person stands out above the rest in a community of believers; all are necessary members with important gifts to share. Jesus also discusses what to do when a member of the community has "gone astray." Just like the parable of the lost sheep, we are to go after those who would stray from the community. Discipline is another topic for discussion. If someone wrongs us in some way, we need to approach them privately instead of making a public spectacle out of it all. If the private conversation fails, we are to go with one or two others. As a final step, take the matter before the church. Forgiveness is a fourth topic in this discourse. No Christian community can exist without it!

**WARM-UP** Invite the participants to pretend that they are going to move into a house together. Divide the group into working groups of about three people per group. Give each group a sheet of newsprint or paper. Tell the participants to brainstorm a list of guidelines or rules they feel would be necessary to live together harmoniously. Give them two minutes, then call the group together. Share the lists.

**ACTIVITY** Share with the group that this session will focus on some guidelines Jesus gave his followers for living together. Invite the participants to read Matthew 18:1-22 silently as you (or a volunteer) read it out loud. Ask the participants to notice how Christians are supposed to behave.

Point out that there are several issues Jesus raises related to how we are to live together with others in community. Humility (verses 1-5),

seeking those who are spiritually lost (verses 10-14), discipline (verses 15-20), and forgiveness (verses 21-22) are four topics that Jesus covers. The group will be interested in verses 6-9. Invite them to consider these verses in two sections. Verses 6-7 deal with not tempting any of Jesus' followers to stray. Verses 8-9 point out the danger of yielding to temptation.

How does Jesus' view of community differ from what happens in society? (*Answers will vary. Expect comments like: humility is out, each person for him or herself is in; maintaining the status quo in congregations is more important than taking risks to seek those who are lost; if someone has a gripe with another person, it is not dealt with privately—it's fodder for the tabloids; "I don't get mad, I get even" is more the motto than practicing forgiveness.*)

**RESPONSE** Do some role plays to help the participants see how they can apply Jesus' view of community in their lives. Make up some scenarios for youth to practice humility, caring for those who are lost, dealing with someone who has wronged them in some way, and practicing forgiveness. Try to use their real life experiences with these topics.

At the end of the role plays ask the following questions. What does Jesus say about living in Christian community? (*Answers will vary. This text would suggest: seek the lost, deal with conflicts privately—and with the support of one or two others if necessary, forgive.*) How would our world be different if we practiced these ways of getting along with one another on a daily basis? (*Many answers are acceptable. Encourage participants to explain their rationale.*)

Tell them to choose one among the following (be humble, seek the lost, deal with conflicts privately, forgive) to practice during the week.



Session 15

# Matthew 28:16-20 ♦ The Great Commission

**FOCUS** Jesus commands us to make disciples while assuring us of his constant presence as we go about doing that ministry.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils, markers, crayons.

**BACKGROUND** Matthew 28:16-20 is known as the great commission. In this brief (yet powerful) passage, Jesus points to his authority, gives his followers a job to do (making disciples, baptizing, teaching), and promises to always be with them. His first commission is to “go therefore.” In other words, “Don’t just sit around on top of this mountain; there’s work to be done!” As followers of Jesus we are directed to do the same.


**WARM-UP** Tell the participants that God is always with them. However, there are some times in our lives when our senses are more tuned into that fact. Instruct the participants to think about a time when they were aware of God’s presence. Instruct the participants to find a partner and to share their memory with that person. Give them a couple minutes to share. Gather the group together and ask if anyone would like to share their memory with the whole group. Let them know that in this session they will focus on Jesus’ command to go into the world.

**ACTIVITY** Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 28:16-20. After this passage has been read, tell the participants to relax and get comfortable. Tell them that you are going to read this passage again. Explain to the participants that this time they should imagine that they are the ones to whom Jesus is speaking. Tell them that they will have to use their imaginations so they need to sit quietly with their eyes closed.

When they have quieted down, tell them to imagine that they are sitting in a pew at church getting ready for worship. Say the following: “While you are preparing for worship, your attention is on a figure that is walking down the aisle. You realize that this person is Jesus. Then Jesus says these words to you. . . .” (then read verses 18b-20 aloud). Give them a minute or two of silence to reflect on the things Jesus has said. Then, direct the participants to open their eyes when they’re ready.

Ask the group some questions: What was that experience like? Does anyone want to describe what they imagined? How did it feel to hear Jesus talking to you? What words made an impact on you? Did any words inspire you? If so, which words? Did any words give you comfort? If so which ones? How can you “make disciples of all nations?” (*Some possible ways are through the ways they play, act, behave towards others, study, work, talk, and live their lives. They can also discuss their faith with others.*)

**RESPONSE** Ask the participants what directions Jesus gave the disciples. (*Make disciples, baptize, teach.*) Give them each a sheet of paper and pencil. Have markers and crayons available. On one side of the paper, tell them to list all the ways they can “make disciples.” On the back side of the paper, tell them to draw a picture of how they plan to live out Jesus’ command this week. Invite the participants to take their pictures home and hang them on a wall. The pictures can remind them of their goal for the week.

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 34.



Session 16

# Luke 22:7-27 ♦ The Lord’s Supper

**FOCUS** In the breaking of bread and drinking of wine, Jesus instructs us to “do this” in remembrance of him.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, markers or crayons, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint, construction paper crosses.

**BACKGROUND** A focus point for this lesson is on the words Jesus utters, “do this.” Look at all that Jesus is doing and saying in this passage. He gathers with others to share in a meal, serves others, eats, drinks, remembers, sits with sinners, gives his body and blood. We are to follow Christ’s example and lead lives of service to others.

**WARM-UP** Give each participant a piece of paper with the instructions to describe a meaningful or memorable meal they have experienced. They can either draw a picture or write about the experience. Allow volunteers to share their work. Explain to the group that the focus of this session will be on a well-known meal—the Lord’s Supper.

**ACTIVITY** Give a piece of paper and pencil to each participant. Ask for volunteers to take turns reading Luke 22:7-27. Instruct those who are not reading at a given moment to pay attention to the things Jesus is doing in this passage. Invite them to write down the things Jesus does. Ask them to also write down the things that Jesus implies he will do.

After the reading, have the participants share their list of words. Write all the words on a sheet of newsprint or chalkboard for all to see. Some words you might expect include: make plans, feeds, eats, remembers (the Passover), serves, sits with sinners, gives his life.

Ask the participants where they have heard the words “do this is remembrance of me.” (*Communion service.*) Invite the participants to

replace the words “do this” with the words on the list you’ve just compiled. Tell them to replace the word “me” with “Jesus.” Point to each word on the list so that the group can read in unison. They may say, “Eat in remembrance of Jesus,” “Give my life in remembrance of Jesus,” “Sit with sinners in remembrance of Jesus.” Continue until you have hit all the words on your list.

**RESPONSE** You will need to make one cross for each participant (out of construction paper) ahead of time. These crosses should be two to three inches tall.

Give each participant a sheet of paper and pencil. Invite the participants to write their responses to the following questions.

- ♦ What does the Lord’s Supper mean to you?
- ♦ When you read/heard this Bible passage, what verse or verses made the greatest impact on you?
- ♦ When you think about replacing the words “do this” with some action words, which things are you able to do in remembrance of Jesus? Which things will be harder for you to do?

Allow the participants to share their responses to these questions with a partner. While they are discussing the questions, distribute the construction paper crosses. Tell the participants to write down something they intend to do this week in remembrance of Jesus. Tell them to write this down on the cross you have just given them. Suggest that they carry the cross in their wallet or pocket so that they can be reminded of both what Jesus does for them and what they have decided to do this week.

## Session 17

# Luke 24:13-35 ♦ Known in the breaking of the bread

**FOCUS** It is not in the telling of the salvation story alone that makes Jesus known to others; it is also what is revealed through our actions.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles.

**BACKGROUND** This session's Bible passage is the story about two of Jesus' followers who are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus three days after Jesus' crucifixion. Even though they were told by the women that angels said Jesus was alive, they do not recognize him. Even though Jesus shares the whole salvation story with them, the travelers still don't catch on to what's happening. It is not until they ask this stranger to eat with them and he breaks bread that they recognize Jesus!

Though Jesus' teachings are important, we are not saved by them; we are saved by what he does. As witnesses to this faith in Christ Jesus, others will come to know Jesus not only by what we say, but what we do.

**WARM-UP** Remind participants of the great commission to make disciples of all nations. Ask them, then, what they would do if they were to discover a group of destitute people who had no knowledge of God. What would their first priority be—to feed the people or to tell them about God? Which is more important and why? For the moment, just listen to their responses.

**ACTIVITY** Invite the participants to read Luke 24:13-35 to themselves.

Then have the group reenact the story. Ask volunteers to play the parts of Jesus, Cleopas and Cleopas' companion. The person playing the part of Cleopas will read the dialog found in verses 18, 19b-24. Cleopas' companion will read the dialog found in verses 29b and 32. The rest of the group will play the part of the disciples and will read in unison verse 34b. The per-

son reading the part of Jesus will read all the verses in which Jesus speaks. You will narrate the story.

As actors prepare to reenact the story, tell them to listen to what the narrator is saying and to act that out as well. After you have acted this out, ask the participants for their response to this story. Tell them to consider how the companions finally recognized Jesus. Was it in what Jesus said or was it in what he did? What did the disciples remember in the breaking of the bread? Jesus spent a long time reciting scripture to the disciples on the road. How important was that, in connection with the breaking of the bread, in the disciples' recognition of Jesus? Does reading this story change their opinion on how to respond in the warm-up activity?

**RESPONSE** Help the participants remember the story by allowing them to put the story in their own words. Say, "We've read this Bible passage silently and have acted it out. Now tell this Bible story to me in your own words." Ask a volunteer to start telling the story. Let that person share a bit, then choose another person to continue the story where the first person stopped. Continue in this way until the entire story is told. Ask the participants what they feel is the key message of this event. Then read the key teaching point to them. Is this what the passage says to them?

Ask, "What does this mean for you as you go about your business every day? In what ways can you tell others about Jesus and what he has done for us? Through what actions can you reveal Jesus to other people?" Allow them time to share their responses. Ask, "How are you going to let others know about Jesus this week?" Let them share.

## Session 18

# Luke 24:36-52 ♦ Proclaiming repentance and forgiveness

**FOCUS** Proclaiming and practicing repentance and forgiveness are important aspects of a Christian lifestyle.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, scraps of paper, pencils/pens, Luther's Evening Prayer (Reproducible Page 7, found on page 44 or in *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition*, page 53 or *The Small Catechism in Contemporary English with LBW Texts*, inside the back cover).

**BACKGROUND** In this passage much happens involving sight. Jesus comes and the disciples think they are seeing a ghost. He instructs them to look and shows them his hands and feet. Later Jesus opens their minds to understanding. He says to them, "You are my witnesses. . . and see." In the middle of all these words having to do with seeing and understanding, Jesus says "repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed, in his name." We know Jesus through our own repentance and experiencing forgiveness. We can open the minds of others to "see" Jesus by demonstrating repentance and forgiveness in his name.

**WARM-UP** Give each participant a scrap piece of paper. Tell them to write something for which they are sorry on this slip of paper. When they've done this, instruct them to say a silent prayer asking for forgiveness. After a few seconds, say "Amen." Shout, "You are forgiven!" Invite the participants to tear up the pieces of scrap paper to emphasize this act of forgiveness. Now you are ready to plunge into the Bible study for this session.


**ACTIVITY** Ask volunteers to read the three paragraphs of Luke 24:36-53 aloud to the group. Tell them that you want them to put this passage into their own words. Divide the youth into three working groups. Assign one group to create a rap or a song for verses 36-43; another group, verses 44-49; and the last group, verses 50-53. Give them five minutes to do this. Then let each group to share their rap or song.

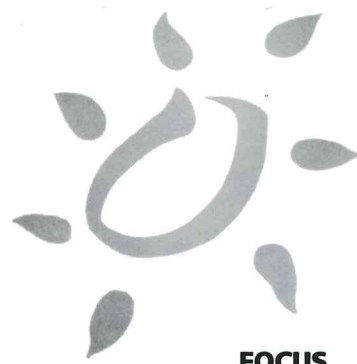
Point out all the places in this passage that mention seeing (either in terms of looking at or understanding something). Be sure to point out verse 48, "You are witnesses of these things." Witnessing has to do with seeing. Refer them to the command that Jesus says in verse 47. How does proclaiming repentance and forgiveness of sins make a witness or, in other words, help others "see" or "understand" Jesus?

**RESPONSE** Sometimes there is a lot of resistance to repenting. We try to make excuses for ourselves or shove the blame on someone else—often the victim of our wrong-doing. Refer to the Bible passage again. What is the role of those who follow Jesus? (*Proclaim repentance and forgiveness, be Jesus' witnesses.*) Jesus doesn't say, "Make excuses, or blame the other guy."

Invite the participants to close their eyes for a minute and think of a time when they heard someone say "I forgive you." Ask them what that did for their relationship with that person. Point out that repentance and forgiveness heal relationships and allow people to start with a clean slate (if no one has mentioned this already). Ask how that makes them feel. To whom do they need to apologize? Tell them to think of those people they need to forgive. Is there anyone they can forgive this week?

Finally, point out "Luther's Evening Prayer" (Reproducible Page 7, found on page 44 or in *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition*, page 53 or *The Small Catechism in Contemporary English with LBW Texts*, inside the back cover). Invite the participants to use this prayer before going to sleep each night in the coming week. Let them know that when they wake in the morning, they can be assured of God's forgiveness. That's what "waking up on the right side of the bed" is all about!

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 35.



## Session 19

# Acts 2:1-21 ♦ Pentecost

**FOCUS** The Holy Spirit empowers us to proclaim and hear the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, pieces of paper cut into the shape of flames, red and orange crayons or markers, an electric fan, paper, pencils/pens.

**BACKGROUND** Pentecost was originally the celebration of the wheat harvest commemorated seven weeks after the Passover. In Jewish tradition, it was understood that the Ten Commandments were given seven weeks after Passover. The giving of the law established a new community. On this day of Pentecost the spirit comes and once again a new community is established. With the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, in fulfillment of Jesus' promise, the idea of harvest takes on a new meaning as God's people become equipped through the Holy Spirit to proclaim Christ and convert others. The harvest is now people of all nationalities, races, languages, and cultures!

**WARM-UP** Before the meeting time, cut out pieces of paper in the shape of flames. Make the flames roughly 8" long. Distribute one "flame" to each person. Tell them that fire in the Old Testament was the symbol of God. Invite the participants to think about how they let others know about the mighty acts of God. Tell them to write or draw pictures of how they do this on the flame. (*Examples may include singing in the choir or helping at a food bank.*)

Next tell them to turn the flame over. On this side, tell them to think about the ways they learn about or hear of God's mighty acts. Invite them to write their name somewhere on the flame. Give them red and orange crayons to color these pieces of paper to look like flames. Then, collect them.

**ACTIVITY** You will need the flames which the participants made in the warm-up activity. You will also need a fan or two. Invite the par-

participants to imagine that they are the disciples. Tell them also to listen to what you are going to say. They will need to remember as much as they can for the activity that follows this study. Say, "It's now 50 days past Easter and you are all sitting quietly together. Suddenly there's a loud sound like a rush of wind." At this point, turn on the fans full blast. Read Acts 2:3 then toss the flames in the air over the heads of the participants. Take your time. Allow the participants to experience the sound and activity. Then read Acts 2:4.

Turn off the fans and continue reading Acts 2:5—2:21. Read this as dramatically as you can. If some of the participants are able to read dramatically, you may wish to divide the reading with them. When you have finished reading about the Pentecost event, ask the participants to tell you what happened. What does the Holy Spirit do? (*Answers will vary. Highlight responses like empowers people to proclaim and hear the acts of God in Jesus Christ.*) Which passages stand out for the participants?

**RESPONSE** Give each person a piece of paper. Tell them to write about the Pentecost event in one of the following ways: news article, poem, song, letter. Give them about five minutes for this. If they're not finished, they can work on this on their own later. Briefly let them share their work. Ask them what the Pentecost event means for them. How is the Holy Spirit active in their lives? (Point out that it is the Holy Spirit that enables them to hear the Word of God, was present at their Baptism, enables them to use their talents to minister to others).

Collect the flames that you have thrown into the air. Give each participant a flame that is not his or hers. Tell them that during the week they are to pray for the person whose flame they have. They should pray particularly for the Holy Spirit's continued guidance in that person's life.



## Session 20

# Acts 7 ♦ Stephen: The cost of discipleship

**FOCUS** Sometimes to believe and express one's faith in God through Jesus Christ means dealing with resistance and/or persecution.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, copies of "Martyrs of Yesterday and Today" (Reproducible Page 8, found on page 45), copies of "Stephen's Testimony" (Reproducible Page 9, found on page 46), paper, pencils/pens.

**BACKGROUND** Quite a bit of Acts 7 is Stephen's indictment of his listeners. He gives a history of what God has done for them since the time of Abraham. He reminds them that in spite of God's faithfulness, the people of Israel have often not been faithful. Stephen cites a number of times that they have been resistant to the Holy Spirit—complaining and disbelieving what God has done them.

Stephen makes a witness to the mighty acts of God. The Greek word for witness, interestingly enough, is martyr. Part of what it means to witness to the risen Christ is to be willing to suffer. Like Jesus, Stephen was charged with prophesying against the temple and the "faithful." Like Jesus, Stephen forgave his persecutors as he was dying.

What does this mean for us? They may risk losing friendships if they were to say, "No, I don't want to use those drugs" or "I don't want to have sex yet" because of their faith. That can be painful for them. Practicing Christians do suffer and are often martyred even today. (For further reflection, invite the participants to read "The Danger in Being a Christian" on page 993 of the *Study Bible: The New Student Bible NRSV.*)

**WARM-UP** Ask the participants to think of people they know who have spoken the truth and as a result were killed or imprisoned for expressing the truth. Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Oscar Romero are certainly well-known figures who suffered for having spoken the truth.

Ask the participants if they would be willing to suffer for expressing their faith. Tell them that in this Bible study they will be reading about one of the first martyrs of the Christian

faith—St. Stephen. Share with them the meaning of the word martyr (witness). Distribute copies of "Martyrs of Yesterday and Today" (Reproducible Page 8, found on page 45).

**ACTIVITY** Have the participants turn to Acts 7. Tell them that some of the priests in Jerusalem were falsely accusing Stephen of speaking against Moses and God. In Acts 7, Stephen is given his chance to respond. Tell them to look closely at what Stephen is saying to these priests. Distribute copies of "Stephen's Testimony" (Reproducible Page 9, found on page 46). Invite the participants to read Acts 7 and to complete the chart as they read.

When they have finished reading, ask the following questions. What is Stephen doing when he tells the story of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses? (*He is indicting his listeners; they are acting like their disbelieving ancestors; in his words, "you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors do."*) What has happened to the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah? (*The Israelites persecuted some and killed others.*) What other accusation does Stephen bring? (*Putting Jesus to death.*) What were the consequences of Stephen's testimony? (*They stoned him to death.*) What does Stephen say as he dies? (*He asks God to receive his spirit; he asks that this action not be held against the them; he forgives them.*)

**RESPONSE** Ask the participants what kind of qualities Stephen had. (*Answers will vary. Some may identify positive traits, others may think Stephen did not use good judgment. Emphasize responses such as: He was truthful, faithful, strong, able to face death.*) Ask them which of the qualities they think they have. Ask them, "What qualities does it take to be a practicing Christian today?" Make a list of these qualities for them to see.

Invite the participants to write a prayer asking God for strength for those times when they take risks on behalf of their faith.



Session 21

# Acts 8:26-39 ♦ The importance of a teacher: Philip and the Ethiopian

**FOCUS** Knowledge and faith grow when the student is eager to learn and the teacher is inspired to teach.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and markers, paper, pencils/pens.

**BACKGROUND** The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch is really rather absurd: God's spirit leads Philip down a deserted road at noon only to find an Ethiopian eager to learn about the good news of Jesus Christ. The story is about the prodding of the spirit, and about God's work happening in unexpected places with unexpected people. Luke's audience would be fascinated with the Ethiopian, a government official from a far off land. He is reading the scriptures in search of the truth, is willing to be instructed, and even asks to be baptized. The story shows what happens when an eager student and a sincere teacher get together. It reminds us to recognize and take advantage of our opportunities for ministry, or "teachable moments." God works through us when we're willing to obey the spirit, who sometimes leads us to odd people in surprising places.

**WARM-UP** Ask the participants to think of a teacher (or other adult) they've had—at church or school—who has inspired them to learn. Divide your group into groups of two or three. Ask them to come up with a list of qualities of a good teacher, and after a few minutes have each group take turns reporting some of the qualities they identified. Write them on the chalkboard or on newsprint. Remind the participants of how important and challenging teaching is, and also how important it is to be a good learner. Tell them that today they are going to hear the story of a good learner and a

motivating teacher. Set up the story by giving them the background in your own words.

**ACTIVITY** Ask for volunteers to play these parts: an angel, Philip, the Ethiopian, the Holy Spirit, and a narrator. To involve more participants, ask one to be the chariot and two to be the horses. Two more participants could make and hold signs that say "Gaza" and "Jerusalem" standing at each side of the stage area. Give the narrator time to skim through the story, Acts 8:26-39, especially looking for unfamiliar words. Actors may either pantomime the action and leave all dialog to the narrator, or after the narrator prompts them, they may say the words to one another.

**RESPONSE** Spend a few minutes talking about the story with the participants. Can someone retell it in their own words or give a summary? How can they relate the story to their own lives? Remind them of how Philip obeyed the spirit, and that it resulted in the Ethiopian learning about Christ. It is a reminder of what God, through us, can do.

Ask them to think again of a teacher who inspired them to, or now helps them, learn. Give them a piece of paper and something with which to write. Ask them to write a letter or note thanking that teacher. They may add details about what helped them learn or what they remember most from that class. If the participants can't think of a teacher, suggest that they write to their parent, a coach, or pastor. Urge them to send the letters.



Session 22

# Acts 9:1-31 ♦ The conversion of Saul

**FOCUS** Conversion is a turning-around to a new journey.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and markers.

**BACKGROUND** This passage is one of three written by Luke which detail the conversion or call of Saul. We know little of Saul's background, except that he was "enemy number one" of the Christian church. The story is in five scenes: Scene 1 (Acts 9:1-2)—Saul takes the initiative on a "search and destroy" operation against the church; Scene 2 (Acts 9:3-9)—In route from Jerusalem to Damascus, Saul falls to the earth when the voice of Jesus asks why he is persecuting him. Saul receives a call and vocation from Christ, and is never the same again; Scene 3 (Acts 9:10-16)—Saul, who once persecuted the disciples and is now blind and unable to take food, is helped along by one of those disciples—Ananias. God tells Ananias that Saul is God's "instrument"; Scene 4 (Acts 9:17-19a)—Ananias lays his hands on Saul, restoring his sight and calling for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit. "Brother Saul" begins his new journey with baptism and food; Scene 5 (Acts 9:19b-31)—Saul begins his new journey, boldly proclaiming Jesus as Messiah.

**WARM-UP** This introduction will take some thought and self-disclosure on your part. Think of an ill-mannered behavior you exhibited as a child or adult—something you no longer do. Perhaps it was a bad habit of leaving cupboard doors open, or as serious as smoking.

When you've told the group your "old behavior," ask them to think of one as well. Have them write it on a small piece of paper and keep it in their pocket for later.

Tell them this session's story is about a man named Saul, who changed his ways too. He was an enemy of the church who became a great follower of Christ, eventually writing several of the books of the New Testament. He became

known as the Apostle Paul, not so much because he changed his behavior, but because God changed him.

**ACTIVITY** Select four volunteers to read from the front of the room in a "readers' theater" format. Ask one of the four to be the narrator and the other three to read the lines spoken by Jesus, Saul, and Ananias. Before beginning, teach them the pronunciations of Damascus, Tarsus, and Ananias. Ask them to read Acts 9:1-31.

**RESPONSE** When they have read the story, ask the group for reactions. What do they think of what happened? What's their opinion of surly Saul and apprehensive, but obedient Ananias?

Tell them the story is about "conversion," someone having an encounter with God and being changed by that experience. The conversion was not something Saul did, but was a gift from God—a miracle that made an enemy a brother. The experience was hardly typical for every Christian, but it is a reminder that our conversions—or life-changing experiences—are encounters with a gracious and loving God.

Invite them to tear up the pieces of paper in their pockets and deposit them into the trash can, reminding them of God's forgiveness and grace. Because Christ died on the cross, our sins are forgiven and each day we can start fresh.

God also provides us with encounters on our faith journeys. Ask them to think of ways God changes us. One of the participants may write them on the chalkboard or on newsprint: through the stories of the Bible; worship; people such as friends, teachers, or parents; music; sacrifice and service; the awesomeness of nature; the sacraments.



See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 36.





Session 23

# Galatians 2 ♦ The gospel for the Gentiles

**FOCUS** The unity of the church is built on the gospel of grace, and it is that grace that pushes us toward unity and service.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, copies of "Opposite-Same game" (Reproducible Page 10 found on page 47), newsprint and markers.

**BACKGROUND** This text details the crucial turning point of the gospel reaching not only the Jews, but the Gentiles as well. Paul begins by telling of his travels and colleagues, drives home his point about the gospel being for all people, rebukes Peter for his fickle behavior of refusing to eat with the Gentiles, and ends with a lesson in justification. Paul's theology emphasizes inclusivity rather than division, grace over law, and social action in the broadest sense. He preaches forgiveness, but also community. The death and resurrection of Christ unites us with other believers, and stirs us toward acts of justice. We experience freedom and joy in what God has done for us in Christ.

**WARM-UP** Distribute copies of the "Opposite-Same Game" (Reproducible Page 10, found on page 47) and pencils or pens to each participant. Give the participants five minutes to get signatures (first names only) of other participants who fit the descriptions listed. If possible, they should get a different signature for each description.

After five minutes, ask the participants what they discovered about their peers. What did they find out about differences? Similarities? Remind them that we, with people everywhere, have both similarities and differences. The text for this session reminds us that the Gospel produces a church where unity and diversity both exist. What unites us is the death and resurrection of Christ, and the grace that Jesus imparts.

**ACTIVITY** Introduce the text by giving some background in your own words. It will make the text more understandable if the partici-

pants know before reading these verses something of what Paul's theology was about, and the radical message he communicated to people who had known only law (Torah). The Jewish community had very strict laws about who was part of the community. These were based on the first five books of the Bible—the Torah (Law). Peter was simply following this tradition when Paul challenged him on the basis of new covenant based on Jesus as the Messiah.

Before class, write these verses on four slips of paper: Galatians 2:15-16; Galatians 2:17-18; Galatians 2:19-20; Galatians 2:21. Ask four volunteers to read these verses from Galatians 2 after drawing the slips from a hat. Help the volunteers with unfamiliar words.

When they have finished, remind them again of the freedom and joy of this message. Paul's ministry is based on the conviction that Gentiles (you and me) are claimed by Christ. Ask them what it means to live as one who has been crucified with Christ, as one in whom the crucified Christ lives. Hopefully, it means that we are joined with one another in grace, and in action. We risk our own security in being "for" others who may be very different, and in many ways the same, as we. Justification is not just a gift, it is a power and responsibility.

Give the groups (or small groups) a large piece of newsprint. Have someone print with a marker in large letters: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Invite the participants to trace their hands (or feet) on the paper and write their names in the hand (or foot) prints. Complete the poster by inviting the participants to write differences and similarities on the paper. Display the finished poster(s) in your area.



Session 24

# Galatians 3:23-29 ♦ No distinction

**FOCUS** The gospel makes no distinction—Christ is for everyone. All are equal in Christ.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, items of oversized clothing in bags, at least three versions of the Bible, large pieces of newsprint, markers.

**BACKGROUND** In many respects, this text is the climax of this epistle. In it, Paul continues his mission to unite Jews and Gentiles in Christ. No longer do the people of God look to the law as their identity, but to Christ. True freedom is found in the promise, not the law. The law no longer divides people (Jew and Gentile), and is no longer a threat (remembering its demands is to forget that Christ has changed all that). Instead, the law can be looked at as a forerunner to the Gospel, and something that still guides our life. It explains our roots and gives witness to a new age, in which Christ fulfills the promise to Abraham to expand the family. The very fact that we "put on Christ" has social implications. We can no longer treat other people differently because of their differences. Like Paul, we are called to be people of faith, unity, and action.

**WARM-UP** Before the session, put several items of oversized clothing in paper sacks (one sack for each four or five participants). Make sure the same number and variety of items are in each sack, such as hats, shirt, pants, socks, and shoes. Divide your group into relay teams and put a sack opposite each team.

Explain that each person must go to the bag, and put on the items in the order they pull them out. When they have finished, they are to take the clothes off, put them back in the bag, and return to tag the next member of their relay team. If your group is large or includes someone with a physical disability, you may have them go to the bag in pairs, one person

dressing and undressing the other. Continue until both (all) teams are finished.

Tell them they will be reading a segment of one of Paul's letters to the people of Galatia. In it, Paul tells them that because of their baptism, they have "clothed themselves with Christ."

**ACTIVITY** Invite the participants to be Bible detectives, looking for differences and similarities in this session's text. Obtain and distribute at least three versions of the Bible (New Revised Standard Version, King James Version, New International Version, Today's English Version). Ask for volunteers to read the text out loud. The readers, and the rest of the group, should look and listen for differences in wording. When they are finished, ask for their reactions to what they heard. Do they understand the radical statements Paul made? What does it mean to have "clothed yourselves with Christ"? How are we Abraham's offsprings and heirs?

Help them wrestle with Paul's statements by reminding them of the time in which he wrote (when divisions by virtue of Jew vs. Greek, slave vs. free, and male vs. female were more distinct). Ask them if they can remember the promise God made to Abraham that his descendants would be many (Genesis 12). Encourage them to think of different ways we are clothed, identified or changed, by Christ.

**RESPONSE** Give the group (or small groups) a large piece of newsprint on which one person will be traced. Invite the rest of the group to draw clothes on the person. Then, using Galatians 5:22-23 as a guide, tell them to write words (virtues, characteristics) on the clothes that would indicate a person is "clothed" with Christ. Hang it in your meeting area.

See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 37.

# Galatians 5:1-14 ♦

## Freedom for the neighbor

**FOCUS** Because of what Christ has done for us on the cross, we are free. No long slaves to the law, but recipients of grace, we live to fulfill a new law: love.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, copies of "Crossword Puzzles" (Reproducible Page 11, found on page 48).

**BACKGROUND** This section of scripture is Paul's reminder to the Galatians that they do not have to be circumcised or adhere to other ceremonial rites of Jewish law. Instead, the crucified Christ has already liberated them, and us. Paul writes as one who has himself discovered the gift of grace which can only be thankfully and joyfully received. What does matter, Paul says, is an active faith expressed in deeds of love. Paul tells the Galatians to "eagerly wait" for the future. The same Spirit which provides patience, also gives us a restlessness to love as we have first been loved. Paul minces no words in wondering what agitators have slowed the Galatians' progress of Christianity. But he moves on from his outburst to challenge the people of Galatia to follow the commandment which he says sums up the law, "love your neighbor as yourself." In both verses 1 and 13, Paul uses the word "freedom," a welcome message to people who know both the yoke of slavery and law. And instead of being slaves to the law, they are urged to be slaves to one another in showing neighborly love. They (and we) do so not out of obligation, but out of freedom.

**WARM-UP** Introduce this session's text by focusing the group on the feeling of freedom. Divide them into groups of at least three and, providing them with paper and pencil, ask them to come up with a list of things that make them feel free. For instance, they might feel free when: school dismisses for vacation, they in-line skate or ride their bike, family members aren't home and they have the place to themselves, they receive money as a gift or

from a job and they go to the store to spend it as they wish. When they've had a few minutes to think of some circumstances which cause them to feel free, ask them to pick one circumstance to act out for the other group(s). Challenge them to involve all small group members in their role play. To increase creativity and challenge, ask them to pantomime the situation and have the other groups guess the freeing activity.

**ACTIVITY** After reading the text and the background yourself, summarize for the group this session's scripture focus. Emphasize that this letter was to Gentiles (non-Jews, like us) who were confused by church leaders telling them to follow Jewish law, which required males to be circumcised. Paul reminded the people of Galatia that they did not have to "jump through hoops" to be saved, but that Christ has already freed them by his death and resurrection.

Ask for one or two volunteers to read this text to the rest of the group. You may want to explain in advance that circumcision is the Jewish ritual of cutting the foreskin of the penis. Tell them that a yoke is a wooden harness that connects oxen.

**RESPONSE** Allow them to work individually or in pairs on "Crossword Puzzles" (Reproducible Page 11, found on page 48). When they've finished, ask them for their answers and supply any they weren't able to find. (First puzzle: across—2. *circumcision*, 4. *law*, 5. *obliged*, 6. *yoke*; down—1. *fallen*, 2. *consumed*, 3. *slavery*, 5. *obey*; Second puzzle: across—1. *truth*, 5. *freedom*, 8. *love*, 9. *neighbor*, 10. *Paul*; down—2. *righteousness*, 3. *cross*, 4. *grace*, 6. *commandment*, 7. *hope*.)

# Romans 12:1-13 ♦

## Gifts for service

**FOCUS** As Christians, we are called to be in the world, but not of the world. In so doing, our lives are lived as a response to Christ's grace.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, newsprint, old magazines, glue, markers or crayons.

**BACKGROUND** In these verses from Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul encourages his readers to be shaped by Christ's lordship rather than the ways of the world. He begins by focusing on self and community, and moves to the Christian's place in the world. The power of grace not only transforms us as individuals, but also our relationships. The challenge, then, is to let that grace transform the world. Paul's analogy of the community of faith to the body emphasizes both unity and diversity. The church is not dependent on a few specially gifted individuals, but on everyone's contribution. And because all gifts come from God, none is better than another. Obviously, Paul's list includes many more than are listed. The "marks of the true Christian" beginning in verse nine provide structure for us, resulting in trust with one another. They are a response to God's love and grace, not a way to earn God's favor.

**WARM-UP** Work in groups of three or four. Give each group one of the following situations. If your group is large, give the same situation to more than one small group. After they've had a few minutes to discuss their situation, ask one person from each group to read their situation and outcome to the whole group. Ask them to remain in their groups for the text presentation.

Situation #1: It's Friday night and Stephen and his friends are going to a movie. They run into some other classmates, who say they know the person taking tickets, and that she lets them in the movie with an old ticket stub. What might a Christian who tries not to be influenced by the world do?

Situation #2: The school principal introduced Mari to a new girl at school named Jaime,

thinking Mari might be a good friend to her. Later, Mari and her friends see Jamie in the lunchroom and Mari's friends make fun of Jaime and laugh. Mari doesn't know what to do. What would be your group's advice?

Situation #3: While baby-sitting at a home, Tony notices an open bottle of wine in the refrigerator. A lot of Tony's friends say they've consumed alcohol before, and Tony's starting to wonder if he's the only one who hasn't. How can Tony deal with this pressure to do what others say they're doing?

**ACTIVITY** Explain to the group that this session's scripture is a portion from Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Rome. In it, Paul urges Christians to not "give in" to what the world often pressures them to do. Instead, he challenges the Romans (and us) to live in a way that changes the world. It is not that we have to, but that it is our response to a loving God who saves us by grace.

Give each of the groups a slip of paper on which you've written Romans 12:1-2, Romans 12:3-8, or Romans 12:9-13. Ask someone in each group to read those verses to their small group and briefly discuss what the verses are telling us about living as a Christian in the world, but not "of" the world.

**RESPONSE** Give each group a large piece of white paper, several old magazines, scissors, and glue. Tell them to make a group collage depicting their verses. For instance, the group with the first verses might find pictures of people taking care of themselves, learning, doing something which shows they don't conform to "worldly" standards. The second group might look for pictures of people using different gifts they've been given—the ones listed in Romans or gifts the group has identified. The third group could look for pictures portraying the marks of a Christian.



Session 27

# Ephesians 4:1-16 ♦ The body of Christ

**FOCUS** We are all given special gifts that enable us to contribute to building up the body of Christ, the church.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint, markers, paper.

**BACKGROUND** In these verses from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, gifts are emphasized as a way of building up the body of Christ. First, Paul mentions apostles, prophets, and evangelists—people who were witnesses to the risen Lord. Next are pastors and teachers, local congregational leaders sometimes known as church elders. Acts 20:28 says these elders are to be shepherds, overseers of the flock (the church). But Paul does not leave the ministry to these few. When he mentions "the saints" all people are included. "We all" are to grow in our own faith and use our gifts, building the church.

**WARM-UP** Divide your group into two smaller groups.

Give each small group a piece of paper and pencil. Ask them to list gifts people use to contribute to the growth and well-being of the church. If they need help getting started, give them some examples such as music or preaching. When each group has at least 10 gifts, ask them to underline those on their list that young people contribute to the church.

Hopefully, they will decide most, if not all, of the gifts can be contributed by them: playing instruments or singing, public speaking (leading worship and even preaching), ushering, being a good student, giving money, teaching and assisting teachers, church school office workers, preparing and serving food, and serving as acoytes, nursery workers, greeters, and committee members. Encourage them to also think ab-

stractly by identifying characteristics such as enthusiasm, energy, and caring skills.

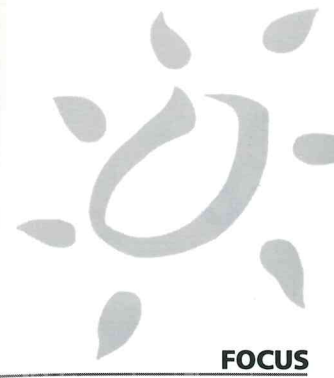
When each group has identified the gifts youth have to offer, ask each group to alternately offer one gift from their list while you list them on the chalkboard or on newsprint. If the other group offers one they listed, they must cross it off their list.

When they've had some fun with this "friendly competition," affirm them for their ideas and for recognizing the contributions they as young people can make to Christ's church.

**ACTIVITY** Tell the participants that this session's scripture will emphasize the importance of everyone's contribution in building the church, which is often called the body of Christ. Tell them body builders do not work just one part of their bodies when lifting weights. If they're able, they work on both upper and lower torso, which move because their brain (the head) signals them to do so. So it is with the body of Christ. Christ is the head, and we move in response to his love, grace, and gifts.

Give each person a piece of paper and several markers. Tell them that after you read to them from Paul's letter to the Ephesians (4:1-16), they will draw a picture of themselves contributing in some way to the church.

**RESPONSE** When they're finished, invite each person to share their picture with another person. Collect the pictures and post them in the room. They need not put their names on the pictures.



Session 28

# Hebrews 11:1-16, 12:1-2 ♦ A cloud of witnesses

**FOCUS** With a crowd of witnesses cheering us on and Jesus at our side, we run the race of faith.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint, markers, paper.

**BACKGROUND** These texts from Hebrews 11 and 12 are filled with powerful reminders of our heritage and our faith. The writer of Hebrews says our Christian faith is a hope that has turned to certainty. That certainty changes us, so much so that it dictates our conduct. Hope leads us to believe that it is better to stake everything on God than to trust the rewards of the world. It causes us to trust The Spirit rather than the senses, those things we can see and touch. And hope reminds us to value the future over the past, that in the long run truth will prevail. The writer gives us examples of people who have operated by faith: Noah, who trusted God's promise when the world mocked his ark project; Abraham, who exhibited both an adventuresome spirit and incredible patience in the search for a promised land; and of pregnant Sarah, who showed us to believe the outrageousness of an heir promised to an old couple. These and others before us lived in hope and died in expectation. The first two verses of Hebrews 12 are among the most moving passages of the New Testament. They are a coach's ultimate pep talk, reminding us that we are winners. Like an Olympic athlete finishing a race before a crowd of people from all countries and centuries, we run the path Jesus prepared. For Jesus, who accepted the cross on our behalf, waits at the finish line to welcome us home.

**WARM-UP** Divide your group into two teams. Ask each team to, alternately, give the name of a Bible character from either the Old or New Testament. List the names on the chalk-


board or on newsprint. Play about five minutes, or until a team can't think of another character.

**ACTIVITY** Tell them that this session will help us recall those people who have influenced our faith. They may be people from the Bible who we read about, or people who we have personally known.

Using the same groups or new ones, give each team the name of a character from the Bible to pantomime for the other team. Use Noah, Abraham and Sarah, and Jesus, but feel free to add other familiar characters. Be prepared to help them in case they don't know the stories behind the characters (Noah and the ark, Genesis 6-8; God's promise of a child to Abraham and Sarah, Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7).

When they've finished, ask for three volunteers to read these verses from Hebrews—11:1-3, 11:13-16, 12:1-2.

**RESPONSE** Provide each of the participants with paper. Also have a variety of markers available. Ask the participants to draw their own faith story. If they have trouble getting started, suggest to them some possibilities: a "family tree" depicting an outdoor scene with the names or pictures of witnesses of faith in the branches; an athletic race. Encourage their creativity, and urge them to include people not related to them who have also influenced their faith—teachers, pastors, youth workers, neighbors. If possible, spend extra time on this project or continue it another week. Ask for volunteers willing to tell about their projects. Display them in the room or invite them to take them home. (For further reflection, invite the participants to read "What Is True Faith" on page 1113 of the *Study Bible: The New Student Bible NRSV*.)

 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 38.



Session 29

# 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 ♦ A reason to hope

**FOCUS** Sin and death no longer have power because of the victory Christ gives us through his death and resurrection.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and markers.

**BACKGROUND** Often used for funerals, this portion of Paul's letter to the church at Corinth reminds us of the promise of our resurrection and the imperishable nature of the risen body. Keep in mind that Paul is writing about something mysterious to all people—life after death. He uses the analogy of the seed, telling us that we also will rise and be changed. Our present bodies are fit for this life, and God will do us the same favor for heaven. And while the bodies we now inhabit change, grow old, and break, our future bodies will last forever. Middle schoolers may seem to consider themselves immortal, but they know about imperfect and changing bodies. And, many are fascinated with the topic of death. This text is a good reminder that while we now know weakness and imperfection, we will one day know perfection and peace. We fear death because it is unknown and we are nagged by the fear of not being good enough to deserve this new life. But with a powerful boast, Paul says, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:57). And as Paul so often does, he ends with a challenge. Knowing that the outcome is one of victory, we are to remain steadfast and solid, because our work is not in vain.

**WARM-UP** Divide the group so that they are in pairs and ask them to tell one another about experiences they've had with death—a pet, a grandparent or other relative, classmate or teacher. It is likely that although they are young, they have known someone who has

died. Invite volunteers to share their story with the whole group. Be prepared to deal with a wide range of difficult questions. Speak honestly about our struggle and fear of the mystery of death. Also be direct about God's promise of eternal life.

**ACTIVITY** Share some background on this scripture, and explain to them some of the difficult words (e.g. perishable and imperishable, mortal and immortality). Powerful language of opposites fills this text. Write the opposites listed below on the chalkboard or on newsprint, and invite the participants to find others while you read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. Suggest that the participants underline the opposites in their Bibles as a way to study the text:

- ♦ earthly body/heavenly body
- ♦ perishable/imperishable
- ♦ dishonored/glorious
- ♦ weakness/powerful

After you have read the text, ask the participants for other opposites they noticed (*Possible answers include: seed/plant, sun/moon, Adam/Christ, sown/raised, dust/heaven, mortal/immortal, death/victory*).

**RESPONSE** Write the word *victory* (vertically) on the chalkboard or on newsprint and invite the participants to think of other positive words from this text that could intersect with the letters in victory. For instance: immoVable Imperishable Changed Trumpet labOr gloRy mysterY.



Session 30

# Revelation 21:1-5 ♦ A new heaven and a new earth

**FOCUS** God will make all things new and is preparing a dwelling place for us where there will be no suffering or sadness.



**PREPARATION** You will need Bibles, paper, pencils/pens, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint, colorful markers.

**BACKGROUND** John has seen a vision of eternity, where joy will replace sorrow. The temporary will be replaced by the eternal. John calls it the new Jerusalem, the holy city the Jews dreamed of re-creating. This fulfills the promise in Isaiah 65:17, "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." The passage infers that all of creation will be totally reunited with God.

This new heaven and earth are described like the camera's scanning at the start of a movie. Landscapes make way for more detailed pictures, focusing on God dwelling intimately among God's people. And the words of comfort from God, which are "trustworthy and true," come as a welcome promise to people desperately needing such hope.

**WARM-UP** Invite the participants to think about what heaven will be like. How will it be different than life on earth? Encourage them to think of some of the difficulties and feelings they would like to do without. After all, John's vision and God's promise is one of a place where there will be no tears, death, or pain. Encourage the participants to think as much with their hearts (and intuition) as with their minds in considering what heaven will be, and be without. This age group knows about inner turmoil and heartache.


Provide them with paper and pencils, and urge them to write some earthly struggles from which they'd like to be relieved (e.g. loneliness, fear, poverty, jealousy, emptiness, war, confusion, pressure, abuse, stress). Tell them not to write their names on the paper.

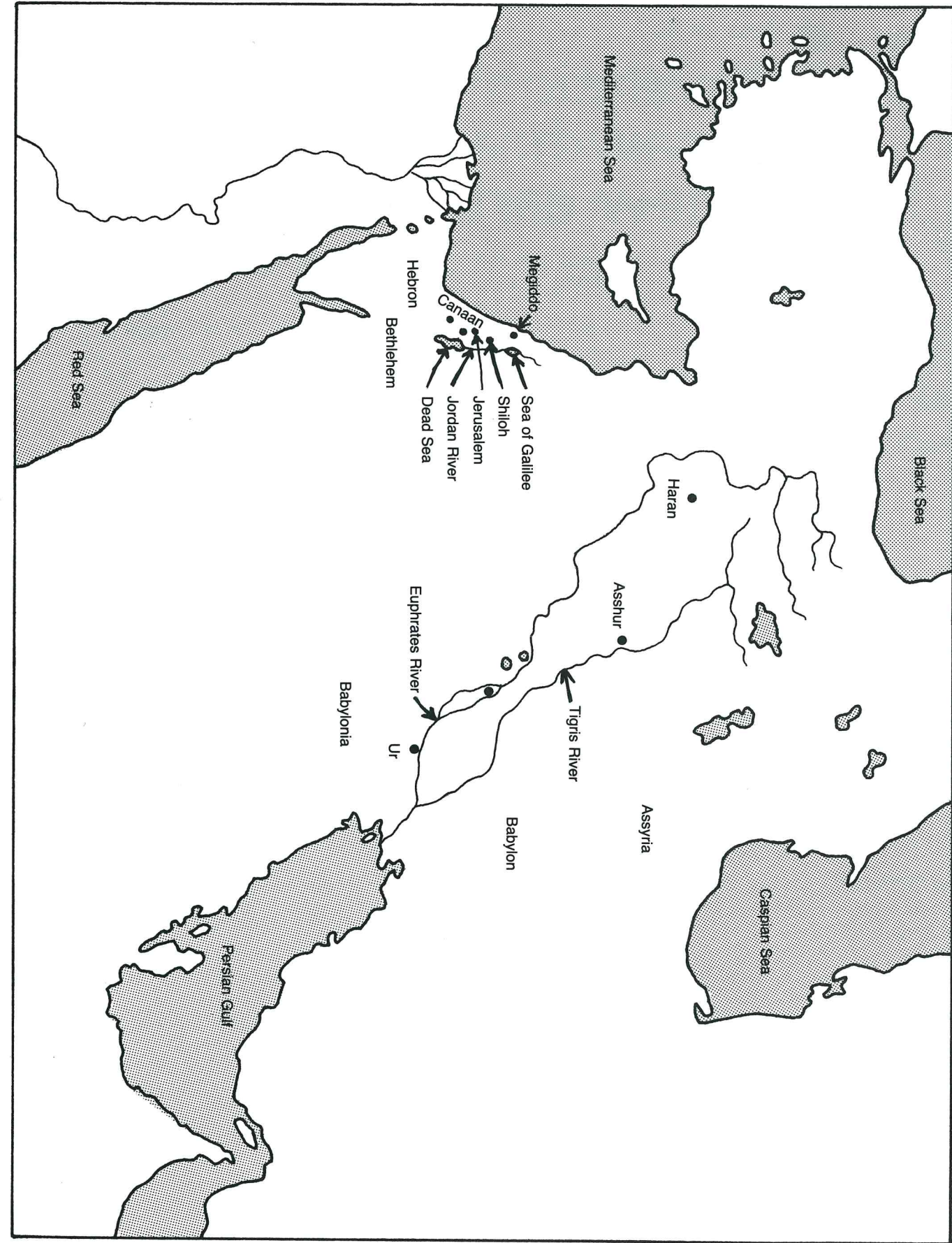
Collect them and list them on the chalkboard or on newsprint. Just seeing that someone else suggested the same struggle may be a comfort. Affirm their honest, heartfelt answers with empathy and seriousness.

**ACTIVITY** Give the participants some background on this text, written by a person named John. Once you or volunteers have read the text aloud, ask them to turn to the Old Testament for a comparison study. Isaiah 65:17-25 and 66:22 also talk about the new heaven and new earth. This is a good opportunity to discuss the many Old Testament references in New Testament stories and letters. The writers of the New Testament were, after all, scholars of the Old Testament, especially the Torah.

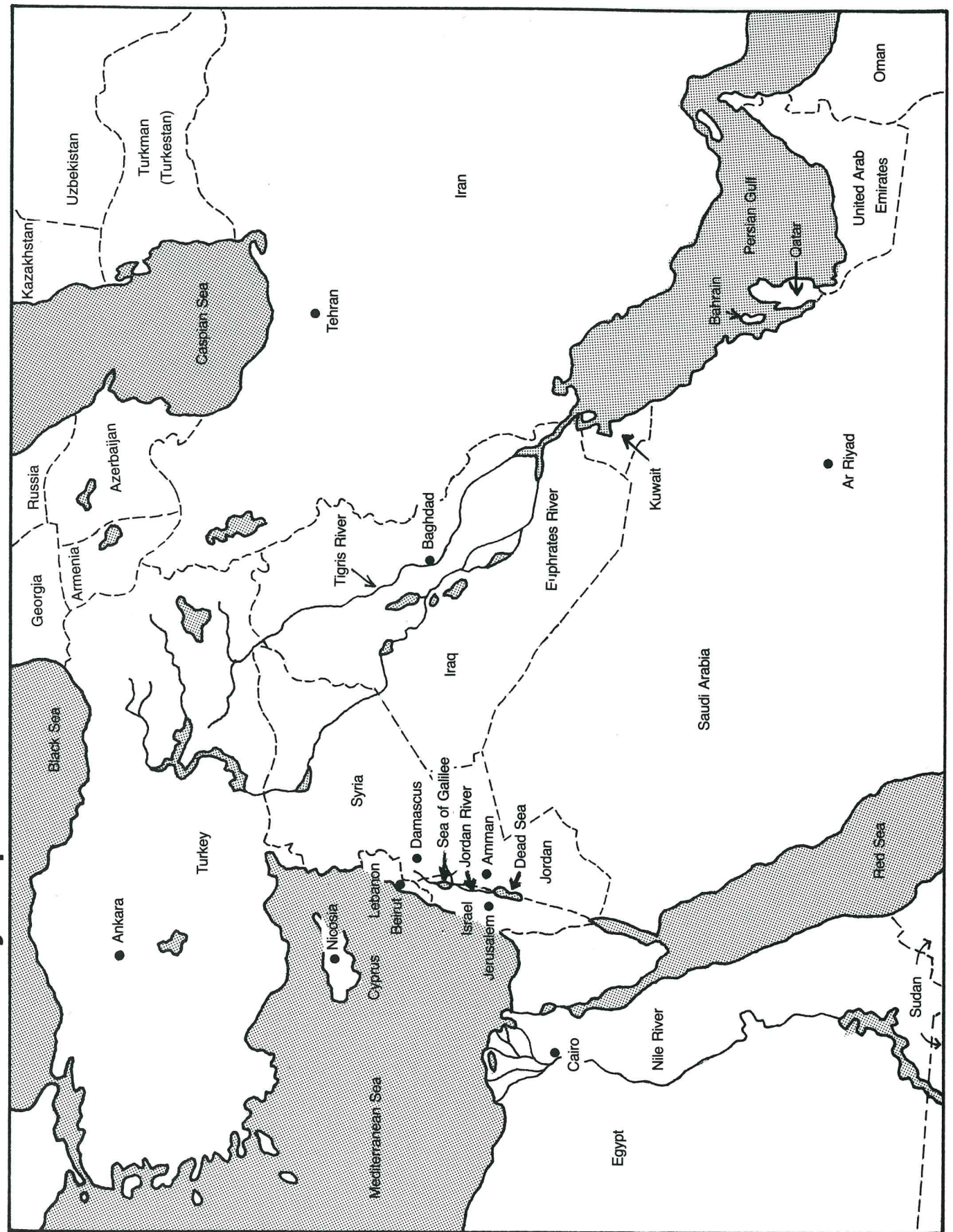
**RESPONSE** Provide the group with a long piece of white newsprint or butcher paper and a collection of colorful markers. Tell them they are going to draw a mural depicting the story they've just heard. They may either work as a team by dividing up parts of the text, or they may each claim a section of paper on which to draw their own interpretation of heaven.

When they have had time to work on their mural, have them explain their contributions to you and the group. Display the mural in your room or in the church for all to see.

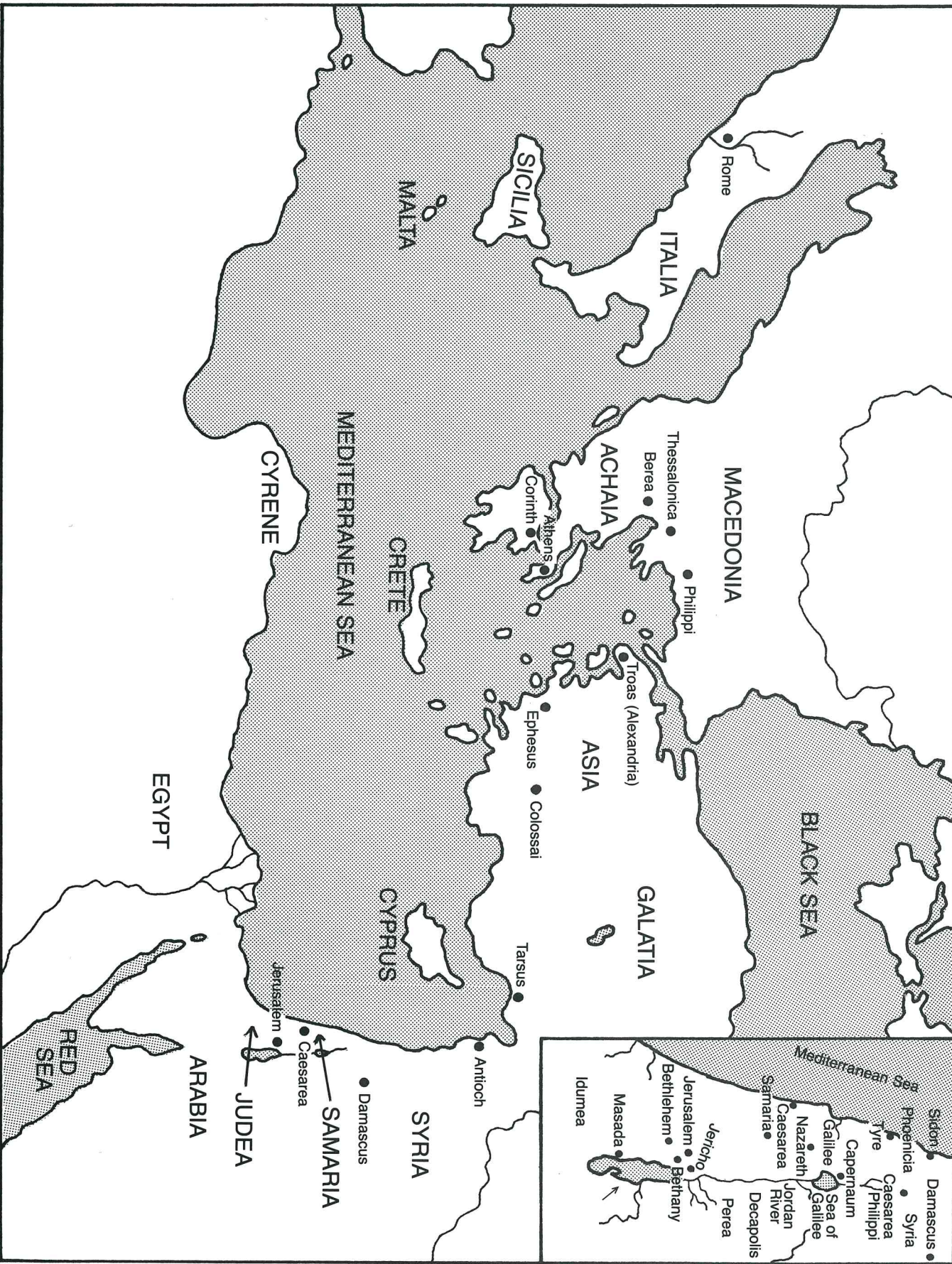
 See corresponding activity in the *Youth Journal*, page 39.



Old Testament background map

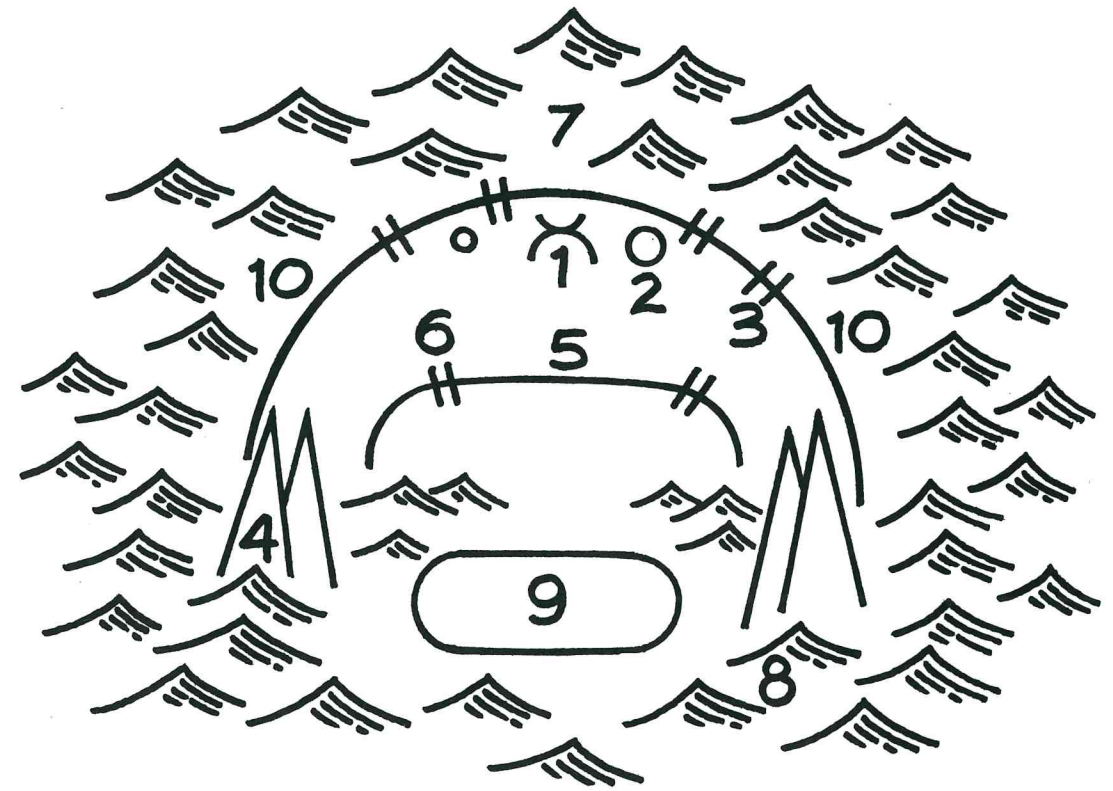


Middle East today map



New Testament background map

## Ancient world view



- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The throne of God               | 6. The fountains                  |
| 2. The sun and the heavenly bodies | 7. The waters above the firmament |
| 3. The 'windows' of heaven         | 8. The waters below the earth     |
| 4. The foundations of the earth    | 9. Sheol                          |
| 5. The earth                       | 10. The firmament                 |



## 1000 yeses for every no!

Verse	Commandment	You shall not	Yes, you can
2-5	1	Have other gods	_____
7	2	Use God's name in vain	_____
8-11	3	Forget sabbath	_____
12	4	Dishonor parents	_____
13	5	Commit murder	_____
14	6	Commit adultery	_____
15	7	Steal	_____
16	8	Bear false witness	_____
17	9	Covet neighbor's property	_____
17	10	Covet neighbor's family	_____



## A remembering acrostic



Each time we remember how God has guided, protected, prospered or taught us in the past we look ahead to how we can trust God in the future.

Use the first letters of the word REMEMBER to give two replies to each letter. What event could the people of Israel give thanks for in their past? And what can you personally thank God for? (An example, "E": Israel's *eating* manna in the desert; free *elections* in my country.)

### Israel

R \_\_\_\_\_  
 E \_\_\_\_\_  
 M \_\_\_\_\_  
 E \_\_\_\_\_  
 M \_\_\_\_\_  
 B \_\_\_\_\_  
 E \_\_\_\_\_  
 R \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Life

R \_\_\_\_\_  
 E \_\_\_\_\_  
 M \_\_\_\_\_  
 E \_\_\_\_\_  
 M \_\_\_\_\_  
 B \_\_\_\_\_  
 E \_\_\_\_\_  
 R \_\_\_\_\_





## Luther's evening prayer



Directions: The following prayer is attributed to Martin Luther. This is a good prayer to say before you go to sleep at night. Try memorizing it. As you say this prayer, be aware of what you are praying for. You are forgiven! God does protect you!

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have this day so graciously protected us. We beg you to forgive us all our sins and the wrong which we have done. By your great mercy defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night. Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels have charge of us, that the wicked one have no power over us. Amen.



## Martyrs of yesterday and today



**Vibia Perpetua**

A martyr is a person who suffers death as a result of witnessing to his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Stephen is considered to be the first martyr for the Christian faith. His witness to Jesus Christ made people uncomfortable. People didn't know how to deal with his faith, so they stoned him to death. Below is a list of just a few of the many Christian martyrs. Check your church or local library for books on these and other martyrs of the faith. What things would you be willing to give up for your faith in Christ?

**St. James, the Apostle**—was the first apostle to die a martyr. He was put to death by Herod Agrippa I. You can read about it in Acts 12:2.

**Polycarp**—was a bishop in an area now known as Turkey. He was a disciple of St. John the Apostle. He was condemned to death and burned alive at the age of 86 in A.D. 156 because he was a Christian.



**Martin Luther King Jr.**

**Vibia Perpetua**—was a Christian noblewoman from Africa. The government did not allow anyone to be converted to Christianity. Even though her father begged her to give up her faith, Vibia refused, was imprisoned with other Christian women in her household and all were put to death in A.D. 202.

**Erik, King of Sweden**—was known for helping people who were poor. Because of his faith, he was killed by a non-Christian prince from Denmark on Ascension Day in the year 1160.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**—was a German Lutheran pastor who lived during the days of the Nazi regime. He worked to overthrow Hitler and was hung by the Nazis on April 5, 1943. He is also known for such books as *Cost of Discipleship*.

**Martin Luther King Jr.**—was a pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. He is known for his nonviolent protests against segregation. In 1964 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He was killed in 1968.





# Stephen's testimony

Directions: Complete this chart as you read Acts 7.

Verse(s)	Key Person in Passage	What He Does	God's Action	People's Response
2-8				
9-16				
17-43				

Complete the following information.

1. In verse 52, who does Stephen say the Israelites persecute and kill?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in verses 54-60?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Opposite-same game



Get the signature of someone who . . .

Likes a sport you don't like

\_\_\_\_\_

Has a different number of family members than you

\_\_\_\_\_

Uses another brand of toothpaste

\_\_\_\_\_

Doesn't listen to the same kind of music

\_\_\_\_\_

Wears a different shoe size

\_\_\_\_\_

Lives in your neighborhood

\_\_\_\_\_

Likes the same TV show as you do

\_\_\_\_\_

Has the same favorite color

\_\_\_\_\_

Has the same color hair as you do

\_\_\_\_\_

Has recently seen the same movie as you have

\_\_\_\_\_

Understands that God sent Jesus to die for us, uniting us forever with God

\_\_\_\_\_

*(You may sign your own name on this line if you wish.)*





# Crossword puzzles

Source: Galatians 5:1-15

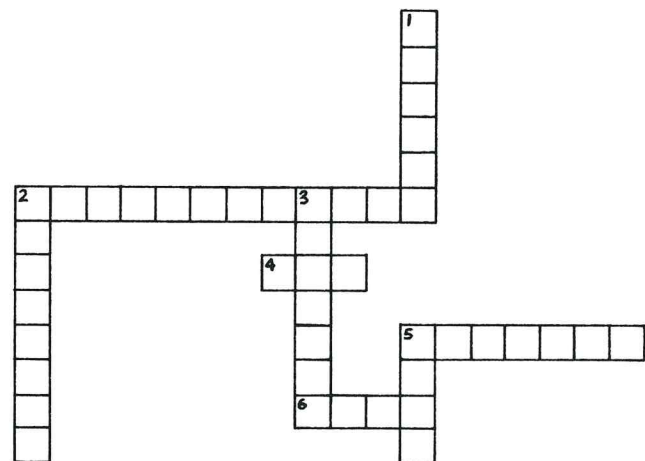


### Across

- 2. Jewish ritual
- 4. rules of conduct
- 5. having to do something
- 6. animal harness

### Down

- 1. being in a lower position
- 2. wasted, used up
- 3. having to work for another
- 5. follow rules



### Across

- 1. a fact
- 5. liberty
- 8. regard with affection
- 9. (not just) one who lives near us
- 10. established and wrote letters to many early Christian congregations

### Down

- 2. virtue, right or just action
- 3. instrument of death; symbol of life to Christians
- 4. undeserved love or favor
- 6. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 7. confident, trust for the future

