

DISCOVERING
John

BIBLE STUDY AND QUIZZING FOR YOUTH

By Chris Wiley

Discovering John



Discovering John

Bible Study and Quizzing for Youth
By Chris Wiley

COPYRIGHT © 2010

This edition published by arrangement
With Nazarene Publishing House
All rights reserved

All Scripture references are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV®). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan publishing House. All rights reserved.

Contents

User's Guide for Discovering John	7
Guide to Discovery Groups	8
Outline of John	11
DISCOVERY GROUP SESSIONS	
1–WHY JESUS BECAME A MAN	12
2–THE GREAT DIVIDE.....	18
3–WORKING WITH GOD.....	24
4–THE BREAD AND THE BLOOD.....	31
5–WHAT WILL YOU CHOOSE?	37
6–TRUE OR FALSE?	43
7–THE GOOD SHEPHERD	48
8–LIFE AND DEATH.....	53
9–THE JOURNEY FROM ME TO WE.....	49
10–NO GREATER LOVE.....	65
11–WHO NEEDS CHURCH?	71
12–LIFT HIGH THE KING.....	77
13–THE FUTURE.....	84
Bible Quizzing Perspective.....	90
How to Organize a Bible Quizzing Ministry.....	90
Organizing a Quiz Competition Tournament	92
Rules for Bible Quizzing.....	95
Study Tips	100
Preannouncing Key.....	105
Memory Verse and Pre-jump Lists	105
Practice & Competition Questions	107
Sample Score Sheet	128

User's Guide for Discovering John

Discovering John is best used in a “Discovery Group” setting. A Discovery Group is a group of youth committed to growing in God’s Word, meeting regularly for a set period of time to study and share. The use of Discovery Groups is described in more detail in the next section of this guide. It also serves as a great group study workbook for youth involved in Bible quizzing.

Here are some guidelines to help facilitate your use of *Discovering John*:

- This study is divided into 13 Study sessions, and then the Bible quizzing. Each Group Study lesson is written to take approximately 45-60 minutes. This Bible study is meant to be only a part of a total session that includes you and your youth sharing insights from your personal study plus events and activities of the week and ending with prayer. A meeting of an hour to an hour and a half will provide adequate time for these components.
- Each Group Study session covers a specific section of John and also identifies a key verse for you and your participants to memorize.
- This leader’s guide gives you a complete session plan for the entire Bible study portion of your weekly meeting. Each session contains the following elements designed to assist you in your preparation and presentation.
- ✓ TEACHING AIMS and PERSPECTIVE—these will help you gain an understanding of the “main points” of the lesson.
- ✓ BIBLE BACKGROUND—this extensive section will provide you with additional information that will broaden your understanding of the passage being discussed.
- The actual group study time is designed to take place through the structure of the session activities. After you’ve prepared yourself through studying the Purpose, Perspective, and Bible Background, read through the session activities to develop an understanding of what to expect from the coming group study time. Make sure you understand exactly what is intended to happen through each activity; remember, also, that these activities are here to assist you. Feel free to adjust them as necessary to fit your group environment, resources, and/or time frame.
- Regarding the group activities, you will find specific instructions that actually say, “*Say, ...*” or are printed in ***bold italics***. This does not mean that you must quote this information word for word to your students. We’ve included this material only as a guide for you regarding what we recommend to be communicated to your group.
- Each session provides you with four activities; each one intended to bring your students into an encounter with the Scripture through a certain perspective. These activities are: Engage the Word, Explore the Word, Apply the Word, and Live the Word. The session activities are intended to give you strong teaching options without neglecting your own creativity. Adapt and tailor the

sessions to meet the individual needs and personalities of your group.

- Occasionally, you will find sections entitled “Terms/People to Know.” These brief sections will give word definitions, explanations about terms or people, etc. that will help your class members better understand the passage being studied.
- Students are encouraged to keep personal notebooks as they read and study during the next several weeks. During the group sessions, they will often be asked to reflect in writing. Encouraging each youth to have a “notebook-type” journal will keep you from having to provide blank notepaper each time.

The first place to start on your journey through John is with the Word itself. Read through John entirely before you begin your Bible studies. Then look through this leader’s guide and acquaint yourself with the contents.

OPENING THE TOOL CHEST

Reading is easy; understanding takes work. I trust you are ready to work because to understand John’s Gospel, you’ll be doing a lot of it. But if you work hard, you won’t regret it, for understanding John’s Gospel will greatly enrich your life and the lives of those youth you love.

One thing I’ve learned as a carpenter is that the right tools make all the difference. The same is true of mental work. Here are three mental tools that are invaluable in understanding the Gospel of John.

1. A CIRCLE

Think about a line. Some stories are like a line. They move along a straight path. Like a line they have beginning and ending points, and the point of the story is to get from the beginning to the end. Not too hard to understand.

Now think about circles. Some stories are like a circle; they move round and round. Unlike a line, a circular story ends right back where it began. These stories behave like homing pigeons. The point is to finish where you started.

The Gospel of John is more like a circle than a line. Like a merry-go-round, certain themes keep passing by. And like a giant carnival ride, the Gospel contains a stomach-in-the-throat descent (the Incarnation), a head-spinning ascent (the Resurrection), and in between a lot of ups and downs.

2. AN ANGLE

As you read John’s Gospel, look for irony. Don’t confuse this with sarcasm. They are alike yet very different. While sarcasm can be mean, irony, in the right hands, is more subtle and powerful. An ironic statement is one in which the literal meaning of the statement is nearly the opposite of what is intended. Composing irony takes a sharp wit and a brilliant mind. Understanding an ironic statement is like a revelation. Getting the point is an “Aha!” experience. This is why John uses it so much. The life of Jesus is filled with ironies.

3. A POINT

Finally, keep in mind that all writing is for a point. John’s purpose is recorded near the end of his Gospel: “These [things] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:31). This Gospel is not the blow-by-blow account of a casual bystander; it is a highly personal and selective rendering of Jesus’ life. This means that everything in the story is important, because John selected it for a reason. No part is meaningless.

So open your tool chest, and let’s get to work.

GUIDE

TO DISCOVERY GROUPS

An effective small-group Bible study ministry for youth in the local church begins with Discovery Groups. Discovery Groups are important in:

- communicating acceptance
- teaching by example
- building personal relationships
- modeling discipleship in a real-life setting

There are many ways to start a Discovery Group in your church. The best way is to invite all of your

youth to be involved. Use posters and promotional announcements beginning three or four weeks in advance to spread the word about the group. Contact personally those persons who you feel would especially benefit from the study. Also, make personal contact with those who you think will be involved in quizzing in the coming year, encouraging them to be involved in the group.

There are at least two ways to form a Discovery Group. One is to handpick those already strongly committed to becoming all God wants them to be. These hand-picked, highly motivated youth will usually respond more eagerly to discipling than others would. This approach to discipling is called for when a major purpose of the discipling is training for leadership, as in Jesus' training of the Twelve.

At the same time, every Christian needs to be disciplined. Every Christian needs to belong to a warm, accepting fellowship that calls out the best in him or her. In the loving fellowship, the halfhearted disciple can begin to catch a vision of his potential; she can taste the excitement of growth.

In many churches, all the youth will fit into a single small group. If you need more than one group, provide different groups for those with different levels of commitment. You may want to handpick a group for in-depth discipling, then provide other groups for those not yet ready for the intense commitment expected of the first group. Rather than dividing the youth arbitrarily, you may want to set specific conditions for membership in the more in-depth group. These conditions might include disciplines of attendance, spiritual journaling, Bible study, accountability, and so on.

Any Discovery Group member must have some level of commitment. An obvious minimum commitment is to attend the group regularly. To build mutual trust in the group, members have to get to know each other. If one group member drops in only occasionally, he will be a relative stranger to the rest of the group, at least at the level of sharing expected in the Discovery Group. The presence of a relative stranger will immediately reduce the trust level in the group, limiting the openness of sharing. Of course, some absences are inevitable. The needed commitment here is for each group member to make group attendance a very high, though not his highest, priority so that attendance is regular. A discussion of the

priority of group attendance can be helpful in the early weeks of the group.

What's the best time for a Discovery Group? Again, it depends upon your goals and the personality of your group. Should the youth in your group commit themselves to a weeknight meeting, then a Tuesday night, Thursday night, or Saturday afternoon meeting may be good.

For many youth groups, June is the best time to start a Discovery Group. For others, it is August. For still others, it is September or January or some other time. Let's take a look at the differences.

JUNE: Youth have a lot of leisure time during the summer. Beginning in June allows your youth to get into the habit of coming to the group meeting when there are not a lot of other obligations. It also allows you to go through the complete 13-week workbook before September. The obvious disadvantage is that many youth may be taken away by family vacations or summer jobs.

AUGUST: You may choose to start in August. If you do, having a retreat to launch the program is an excellent idea. The advantage of starting the group in either June or August is that many youth who get into the group may have never considered youth Bible quizzing. Their excitement about Bible study may motivate them to become involved in quizzing as well.

SEPTEMBER: Many youth are ready to "get back to work" when school begins. Beginning your Discovery Group then builds from that enthusiasm. If you start in September, you may want to have only one Bible quiz practice a week for a while, to keep from overloading those who are involved in quizzing.

How long should we continue the Discovery Group? As long as the youth involved can stay committed. There have been groups who continued year round. Once they finished the 13-week study from the "Discovering Series" workbooks, they worked chapter by chapter on other Bible books or started on a new "Discovering Series" workbook.

It is generally best to run the group for 13 weeks. After the study has finished, there may be other youth who want to be a part of the Discovery Group who did not sign up before. If so, arrange for a leader for them. Some of the youth in the original group may want to continue, while others may want to focus more on quizzing or other activities. If you can-

not continue to serve as leader, be sure another adult leader is there to carry on.

How do I facilitate the Discovery Group Bible study? To facilitate means to “make easy.” A small-group facilitator, then, is a person who makes it easy for the group to relate. He or she keeps the group moving, nudges it back on track when it starts to stray, encourages participation. In the Bible study segment of the Discovery Group session, the leader’s role is to help group members discover for themselves what the scripture means, how they can apply it to their lives, and then encourage them to follow through with obedience. The group leader’s role is not to be a resident authority who tells group members what the scripture means and how they are to apply it to their lives. He or she must resist the temptation to lecture. This LEADER’S GUIDE offers specific suggestions for each session to help the leader serve as an effective Bible study facilitator.

While the Discovery Group leader is not authoritarian, he or she is an authority. Their authority, though, is a spiritual authority, flowing out of the authenticity of her life. Youth follow her, not because she forces herself on them, but because of the kind of person she is.

Outline

- I. The Word (1:1-18)
 - A. The Word and creation (1:1-5)
 - B. The Witness (1:6-8)
 - C. The Word in the world (1:9-13)
 - D. The glory of the Word (1:14-18)
- II. The Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus (1:19-1:51)
 - A. The testimony of John (1:19-34)
 - B. Calling disciples (1:35-51)
- III. The Ministry of Jesus (2:1-12:50)
 - A. The first sign (2:1-12)
 - B. Cleansing of the temple (2:13-22)
 - C. Nicodemus and the Son (2:23-3:36)
 - D. Jesus and the Samaritans (4:1-42)
 - E. The second sign (4:43-54)
 - F. Life through Jesus (5:1-8:59)
 - 1. The bread of life (5:1-6:71)
 - 2. The water of life (7:1-52)
 - 3. The woman's life (7:53-8:11)
 - 4. The light of life (8:12-59)
 - G. The blind man healed (9:1-41)
 - H. Jesus the shepherd and Son (10:1-42)
 - I. Jesus the resurrection (11:1-54)
 - J. Jesus the king (11:55-12:50)
- IV. The Ministry of Jesus to his disciples (13:1-16:33)
 - A. The example (13:1-17)
 - B. The predictions (13:18-38)
 - C. The comfort (14:1-14)
 - D. The promise (14:15-31)
 - E. The true vine (15:1-15)
 - F. The warnings (15:18-16:4)
 - G. From grief to joy (16:5-33)
- V. The Prayer of Jesus (17:1-26)
 - A. For himself (17:1-5)
 - B. For his disciples (17:6-19)
 - C. For all believers (17:20-26)
- VI. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus (18:1-21:14)
 - A. The arrest, trial, and denial (18:1-40)
 - 1. Jesus arrested (18:1-11)
 - 2. The first denial (18:12-14)
 - 3. Questioned by the high priest (18:19-24)
 - 4. The second and third denial (18:25-27)
 - 5. Jesus before Pilate (18:28-40)
 - B. The crucifixion (19:1-7)
 - C. The burial (19:38-42)
 - D. The empty tomb (20:1-9)
 - E. The appearances (20:10-31)
 - 1. To Mary Magdalene (20:10-18)
 - 2. To his disciples (20:19-23)
 - 3. To Thomas (20:24-31)
 - 4. The breakfast (21:1-14)
- VII. Following Jesus (21:15-25)

Why Jesus Became a Man



STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 1:1—2:11

KEY VERSE

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand some of the meanings of the Incarnation.
2. Realize how central the Incarnation is to our Christian faith.
3. Affirm their faith in Jesus Christ—who came from the Father.

PERSPECTIVE

Gnosticism is alive and well and growing right here in our backyards. What’s gnosticism? It’s the ancient belief that physical matter is evil. Gnostics believed a cruel deity captured our spirits in tombs of flesh when he created the world, much like a mean child traps bugs in a jar. Salvation is getting out of the jar. And this is accomplished through acquiring gnosis. Gnosis literally means “knowledge” in the Greek language. The original gnostics believed this “knowledge” unscrewed the lid to the jar. It comes from a good deity who wants us to escape and join him in the realm of the spirit. Now you can’t get this gnosis just any old way. It comes in mysterious and unexplainable ways. It’s from the inside, just waiting to be discovered.

Sound kind of wacky? It should; it’s heresy – it’s false! But ideas much like these are floating around today—sometimes even in Christian circles. The names are different and the ways the ideas are expressed have changed, but it’s still gnosticism. Contemporary gnosticism expresses itself in at least two ways.

First is the conviction that we do not need any tradition, the church, or even the Bible to know what we need to know about God. All we need is ourselves; we’re religiously self-sufficient.

Second is the inability to make connections between spiritual life and the physical world. Rather than seeing the world as God’s creation, redeemed in Christ to serve Him, gnostics see the world as a place to escape from God, or worse, something we must escape from in order to know God. The result is a self-righteous self-centered faith without even good works to show for it. (At least the Pharisees tried to do good works;

gnostics can't even see what good works have to do with God!)

Gnosticism, unconscious or not, undermines the Christian faith, because without the Bible, the Spirit of God, and even the church, it is impossible to live like a Christian. Here's where John's Gospel comes to our rescue. John knew all about the virus of gnosticism; the Early Church was deeply infected with it. John's antidote is the doctrine of the Incarnation.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

At the time John wrote his Gospel, gnosticism was sweeping the church. "Christian" gnostics believed Jesus was the Son of God, but they believed that He was related to a different god than the Creator of the world. Consequently, they could not imagine Jesus with a body; He couldn't be real in the same way you and I are real. To the gnostics He was an image projected from heaven, kind of like a movie shown onto a screen. John uses a direct approach to set things straight. Verses 1-5 and 10-18 tell of Jesus' role in creation and outline His mission in the world. John shows that Jesus was the very means by which the world was created. And just in case some might say things changed between the time of creation and the coming of Jesus, John declares in the first phrase of verse 14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

We must indoctrinate our students with this truth. In case indoctrinate seems too strong a term, there is no neutral ground on this matter. Based upon the witness of Scripture, the Spirit of God, and the Church, we believe in the Incarnation.

John knows a bold assertion like the Incarnation requires some kind of authority to substantiate it, so he turns to John the Baptist for an endorsement. In verses 6-9 and 15-36, John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Christ. Throughout the Gospel, John takes care to record various sources of testimony regarding Jesus. In this way the Gospel is much like a legal treatise. As people catch a glimpse of Jesus' glory, John has them step forward to present their witness.

In verses 31-33, John the Baptist confesses his dependence upon the Holy Spirit for his knowledge of Jesus' identity. This is another theme woven throughout the fabric of the Gospel, the idea that Jesus' ultimate witness is God himself. This brings us to the

last story in this section, Jesus turning the water into wine.

John records seven "signs" (he never refers to them as "miracles") in his Gospel to confirm Christ's unique relationship to the Father. Compared to the next six signs, changing the water into wine (2:1-11) seems like a small beginning. But the value of a sign is its symbolic power and its dramatic effect.

Notice that John is careful to tell us what the jars were used for. Jesus has some men fill the jars with water and then draw some out for the master of the banquet. When the master drinks, he is astonished, not because he drinks wine—he expects to drink wine—but because the wine is so good.

The sign may be puzzling to us, but it was clear and simple to most of the Jews. The empty ceremonial washing jars represented the empty rites of the Jews. In contrast to washing water, wine is a festive drink. No wonder the master of the banquet declared, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

What does that mean? God has saved the best till last! "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (1:17). "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (2:11).

The Incarnation

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines the Incarnation as "the embodiment of God in the human form of Jesus." A very big idea for such a short sentence.

The root of the word is the Latin "carnal," meaning "meat" or "flesh." While the Incarnation says a lot about who God is, it also says a lot about flesh. God has honored the world by becoming a man; and by this act He has pronounced creation "good" a second time. This world, including our bodies, is important to God; and if we desire to fully follow Him, we must learn to share His opinion.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Mix and Match

This activity is intended to get the mental juices of your group members flowing. The goal is to help youth see how Christian language can be misused to reinforce irresponsible and, at times, downright selfish and sinful behavior. A series of statements are provided and the class members are to determine who might say them—Dr. Doom, Mr. Hedonist, or Ms. Faithful. Go through each statement as a group, one at a time. Have at least two or three volunteers share his or her answer to each question.

Meet these citizens: Dr. Doom, Mr. Hedonist, and Ms. Faithful. Each read the Bible, attend church, and call themselves a Christian. What makes them different is their understanding of how Christians should relate to the world.

Dr. Doom and Mr. Hedonist have something in common; they both believe the world is evil. What makes them different is how they work out that conviction.

Dr. Doom is a gloomy and kind of depressing person. He believes his bodily desires are evil, and he is known for his long fasts. He believes that true spirituality begins with denying his flesh.

Mr. Hedonist, while of the same opinion says, "What's the use fighting it?" He believes the world is evil and his body is good for nothing, but since he's stuck with both he might as well enjoy them. Someone who watches Mr. Hedonist for a week might consider him a hypocrite. But it's not that he is dishonest, it's just that he lives in two worlds, a physical one and a spiritual one, and they don't always relate to each other.

Ms. Faithful believes that the creation is good because God made it. She also believes that her body is part of the creation. And she believes that, as a person made in God's image, she must not only care for her own body, but for all of creation as well.

Based on their convictions, match the following statements with who you believe would say them. (Dr. Doom, Mr. Hedonist, or Ms. Faithful.)

— *"Hey, go ahead and abuse the earth. Jesus is coming back soon and it's all gonna burn anyhow"*

— *"It's a waste of time working to end hunger and suffering. It's a fallen world. What we should concentrate on is saving souls!"*

— *"I'm so excited! Our teen group is going to work with Shepherd Community. I think we can make a real difference."*

— *"You can't be honest and be a politician. That's why I don't vote for Christians. Morality gets in the way of getting things done in government! And besides, greed is good for the economy."*

— *"Hey, how do you like my new car?"*

— *"What does how I spend my free time have to do with God?"*

— *"My blood pressure is high, I'm overweight, I eat greasy foods, smoke, stay up late, and in general enjoy myself. But what's the difference? We all die some day anyway."*

(The most correct answers are: (1) Dr. Doom; (2) Dr. Doom; (3) Ms. Faithful; (4) Mr. Hedonist; (5) Mr. Hedonist; (6) Mr. Hedonist; (7) Mr. Hedonist.)

While a few of the statements are quite easy, others are a little vague. The vagueness is purposeful and intended to stimulate debate. The goal is to bring to light the gnostic dualism (spirit is good; matter is evil) many Christians unintentionally embrace. This is not intended to be an exercise in condemnation or finger-pointing, but a way of becoming conscious of a few of our non-Christian assumptions about the world.

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. GETTING THE BIG PICTURE

For as long as anyone can remember, people have been looking for a better way of life—a way of really living. We've tried a lot of crazy things. Some have tried witch doctors and astrologers. Recently we've turned to medical doctors, philosophers and self-help books, but it has often been pretty futile.

The gospel of John is an eyewitness account of the life and times of the only person in human history who not only beat death fair and square but who also really lived this life the way it is meant to be lived. By reading His story, we will learn His secret, and in the process, we will discover what it means to live a life that is full of grace and truth.

This study guide is intended to help you understand the story of God who sent His Son into the world as a man. It breaks the book down into thirteen segments. Through the personal and group discovery process, you will gain a much deeper insight into the life of Jesus.

Before you look at the parts, it's a good idea to look at the whole. Get acquainted with John's gospel, by skimming through the 21 chapters. As you skim, try to answer the following questions:

- *What miracles do you see throughout John's gospel?*
- *If you divided the gospel into two parts, where would you make the division and why?*
- *How many chapters describe the last night and day of Jesus' earthly life? Why is so much space given to just one day?*
- *Scholars often debate the reasons why the writer produced this gospel. Some say it was written for bringing in new converts to the church and others say that it was to strengthen those in the church already. What do you think? Look for a specific story or teaching of Jesus to support your thoughts.*

2. AGAINST THE GNOSTIC HERETICS (1:1-18)

Terms/People to Know

- *Jerusalem (John 1:19)–The capital and holy city of the Jewish nation. The name itself means “city of peace.” The city witnessed Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension.*
- *John the Baptist (John 1:29)–The immediate forerunner of Jesus, sent to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. He was related to Jesus, as John’s mother, Elizabeth, was a*

cousin of Mary the mother of Jesus. John was of direct priestly descent, with both his father, Zechariah, and mother being descendants of Aaron. John was beheaded by Herod (Antipas) the tetrarch, his head presented as a reward to Herod’s wife’s daughter for dancing at Herod’s birthday celebration.

Have a student or students read John 1:1-18 aloud to the class while the class members follow along in their Bibles.

To understand the gospel of John you must understand the heresy of gnosticism. Heresies, or false ideas, were spread by false teachers in the early church and came in many varieties. One of the more harmful heresies of early Christianity was gnosticism. Gnostics believed that physical matter was evil. Because of this conviction, Gnostic teachers said that Jesus could not have had a real body; what people saw of Him was merely an image projected from heaven. (You know, kind of like a movie shown onto a screen.) One of the purposes of John's gospel is to set this whole crazy matter straight.

- *Right in the first chapter John refutes or disproves Gnostic thought. Which verses attack the Gnostic notion that matter is evil?*

Like all heresies, gnosticism is a product of pride and laziness. It is overcome by humility and submission to the teaching about God by the church.

- *Why is gnosticism dangerous? Can you think of some ways gnosticism could lead to sin?*

3. CAN I GET A WITNESS (1:19-34)

Have a student or students read John 1:19-34 aloud to the class while the class members follow along in their Bibles.

How do you know what's true and what's false? You rely on authority and testimony. Here's an example. You probably believe the world is round. How do you know that? Did you actually go into outer space and take a look for yourself? No. You believed the testimony of people who have proven that the world is round.

But why do you trust these people? Maybe there's a big conspiracy; maybe it's all a big joke! Maybe your parents and teachers are laughing at you behind your back at this very minute! No, why should they go to all that trouble just to make you look dumb? You have no good reason not to believe them because they've told you the truth before. Why doubt them now? This is what is meant by authority and testimony. Sooner or later you've got to trust somebody.

- *John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Christ, but why should we believe him?*
- *How does the church witness to Jesus in the modern world?*
- *Why is it important to pray, question, research, and investigate in addition to seeking the council of others?*
- *How can you witness for Jesus today?*

4. AND THEY TELL TWO FRIENDS, AND SO ON! (1:35-51)

Terms/People to Know

- *Simon Peter (John 1:40)—Simon Peter was the most prominent of the core group of disciples, easily becoming the natural spokesman and leader for the group during and following Jesus' earthly ministry. Peter's purely human character (he's been described, for example as being impulsive, but unstable; self-confident, but fickle; daring, but cowardly) has encouraged many who read the Gospel accounts. Peter's later ministry took him to Rome, where he was killed under the Roman emperor Nero. (Some scholars record that Peter died by crucifixion but on an "upside-down" cross, as Peter claimed to be unworthy of dying in the same manner as his Lord.)*
- *Andrew (John 1:40)—Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. After John pointed Jesus out, Andrew became a follower of Jesus and was eager to bring others along, immediately sharing the news with his brother Simon Peter. According to tradition, Andrew was martyred in Achaia, crucified on*

an X-shaped cross (now known as St. Andrew's cross).

- *Philip (John 1:43)—Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee, the hometown of Andrew and Peter, and may have been an early disciple of John the Baptist. This Philip is not to be confused with the Philip described in Acts as the evangelist or deacon.*
- *Nazareth (John 1:46)—The hometown of Joseph and Mary. The town of Nazareth had acquired a rather unflattering reputation in terms of morals and religion; hence, John's recording of Nathanael's exclamation, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"*
- *Israel (John 1:49)—Politically, Israel refers to the Jewish nation as a whole. The term is also used as reference to God's chosen ones, the "people of Israel." It was also the new name God gave to Jacob (Gen. 32).*

Have a student or students read John 1:35-51 aloud to the class while the class members follow along in their Bibles.

How did you first hear about Jesus? Was it by the testimony of someone you know and trust? In this passage we see a chain of testimonies and gain an understanding of how the disciples of Jesus multiplied.

- *How did Andrew hear about Jesus?*
- *What did Andrew do when he believed?*
- *What did Philip do when he believed in Jesus?*
- *How did you first learn about Jesus? Do you believe that He is God's Son?*
- *If you truly believe that Jesus is God's Son, should you not be eager and excited to tell others also? If you aren't eager, what's keeping you?*
- *Research indicates that over 90% of Christians believe in Jesus because of the witness and lifestyle of a friend, relative, or neighbor. Does this mean we have more responsibility to witness to the people we know*

than to those we don't? Who do you know who needs to hear about Jesus?

*But don't I have the right to believe what I want to believe? The early church Fathers went to a great deal of trouble to help Christians understand who Jesus is and what God did for the world through Him. They labeled bad ideas and wrong teaching "heresy." Heresy comes from the Greek word *hairein* which means "to choose." Those who rejected the teaching of the early Fathers were called "heretics" because they chose their own way rather than submit to the authority of the church. What's wrong with that? Aside from splitting the church and confusing a lot of people, heresies, because they are the product of sloppy thinking, lead people into sin. Gnosticism, one of the more common heresies then and now, leads to sins of irresponsibility. Here's how it happens. When people believe matter is evil they abuse the environment, their communities, their homes, and even their own bodies. They fail to act as stewards of creation because they don't see any connection between the physical world and God.*

5. GLORY REVEALED! (2:1-11)

Have a student or students read John 2:1-11 aloud to the class while the class members follow along in their Bibles.

This miracle is not about wine; it's about Jesus. It is a sign intended to make a point. It is the initial revelation of the glory of Jesus—revealing who He is.

- *Read chapter one verses 1 through 5. How do you understand who Jesus is in light of this passage?*
- *This story is presented to us as the first public act of the ministry of Jesus. It is the beginning of the revelation of God's divine intervention. Why do you think that Jesus performed miracles?*
- *Disciples began to place their faith in Jesus as a result of this sign. How does God reveal himself to people today?*

APPLY THE WORD

Caretakers of the World

As Christians, our calling is to witness in the world.

- *How should our faith that God is Creator and Redeemer of the world influence our witness?*
- *What are some ways that sinful man abuses God's creation?*
- *What are ways Christians can respond with a faithful witness?*

Ask the students think about these issues, remind them that not only are their own bodies God's creation, but so are the bodies of their neighbors. And creation does not begin and end with human beings; it also includes the good earth and other forms of life on our planet that God created.

LIVE THE WORD

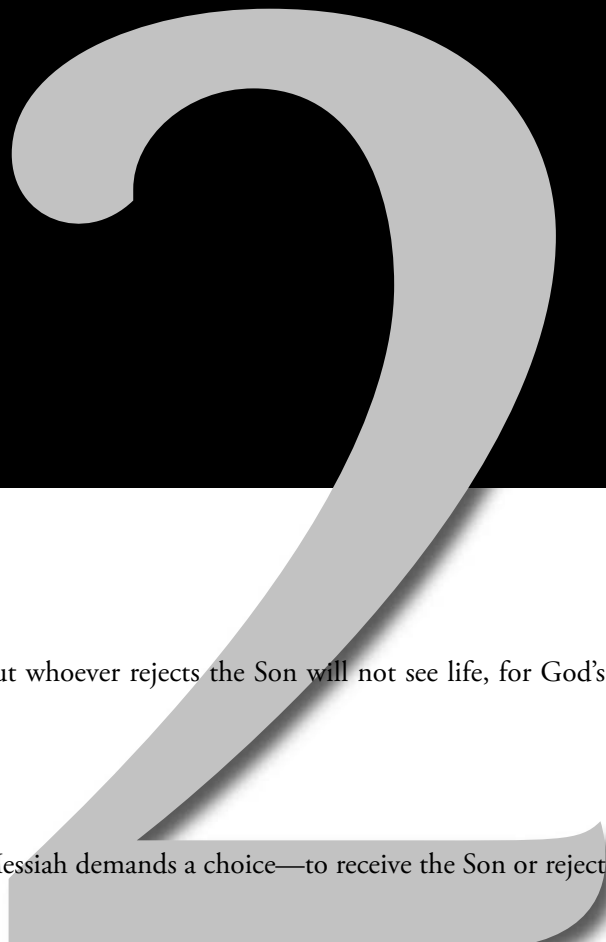
How Can I Live More Responsibly?

Now it's time for the youth to evaluate their own behavior. The goal of this lesson has been to help youth overcome the self-centered dualism of gnosticism. Confession is part of repentance.

- *If I truly believe that God created the world and then redeemed it through the presence of Jesus Christ, how should my life be different?*
- *How do we often fail to live up to the radical implications of the Christian gospel?*
- *What are some ways that we can change our attitudes and actions?*

End the class with prayer.

The Great Divide



STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 2:12—4:42

KEY VERSE

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him” (John 3:36).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that a genuine encounter with the Messiah demands a choice—to receive the Son or reject Him.
2. Sense that Christ alone is God’s Gift of salvation to us.
3. Affirm that God’s salvation is through Christ alone.

PERSPECTIVE

Many youth today have a difficult time accepting that actions have consequences; such a notion seems rigid and narrow. While this has been a human tendency from the time of Adam, our age has developed the philosophy and tools to make it even easier. Back in the days of the horse and buggy, escape from consequences might have been more trouble than it was worth. Today irresponsibility might be as simple as a plane ticket to anywhere else that is away from the problem. The flight from responsibility results in such activities among young people as living with their parents well into their 20’s, procrastination of vocational choice, an inability to finish what is begun, and an irrational fear of commitment.

Jesus was not the sort of person some youth would like to meet. He was eternal consequences on legs. Wherever He went, He created a crisis. He divided every room He walked into. He left no space for open options. People either believed in Him or wanted to kill Him. And the tools He used to cause this division were a pair of scissors called grace and truth (1:17).

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Jews had been looking forward to it with great relish for hundreds of years. They called it “The Day of the Lord,” and it was going to be a good day to be a Jew. The Messiah would come and set things straight. He would deliver and dispense justice. He would save the good and destroy the wicked. He would vindicate His name on the earth. And since the Jews were the people of God, they, of course, would be saved, and their enemies would be judged. Yes indeed, it would be a good day.

Jesus was quite a disappointment. His salvation was too open; He came to save everybody! Receiving Him was all that was necessary. He divided the world into two categories, those who received him and those who didn't. And it didn't matter if you were Jewish or not. It didn't even matter if you were a good person or not, because the offer of salvation had nothing to do with you and anything you had ever done. It had everything to do with Jesus. Jesus Christ is the mercy of God—but He is also the judgment of God. Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus cuts the world in two by speaking the truth and extending God's grace. Some believe and receive eternal life, while others condemn Jesus to their own condemnation.

Here's just a few of the ways Christ divided the world:

1. TWO TEMPLES (2:12-25)

The transition from the wedding banquet, where Jesus changed water to wine, to the Temple seems abrupt, but it is really a continuation of the same theme. Like the empty ceremonial washing jars, Jesus exposes the emptiness of Temple ritual. And as He presented a radical alternative at the banquet, He offers an alternative temple in himself (v. 20).

The Temple incident also serves as a platform for Jesus to predict His own death. By placing the prophecy this early in the Gospel account, and among the Jewish leaders at that, John establishes Jesus as the Master of his own fate.

2. TWO KINDS OF BIRTH (3:1-21)

The Temple incident raised questions with a Pharisee named Nicodemus. In verse 3 Jesus tells “Nick,” “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” In Jewish

thought, the kingdom of God is the goal of history. The Kingdom was the hope of God's shalom (peace) on earth, where everyone would have enough, and the justice of God would never be obstructed.

To say that entrance to that Kingdom required a second birth was another way of saying, “You can't get there from here.” Jesus explains: “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (vv. 5-6). Jesus is not condemning flesh; He's no gnostic. He is simply pointing out its powerlessness to bring God's salvation.

Verses 16-21 outline the proactive nature of God's salvation (it's His plan for us) and the reactive character of condemnation (it's what we receive only after rejecting Him).

3. TWO CHOICES (3:22-36)

In verses 22-30, the disciples of John the Baptist notify him that his career is about to be overshadowed. But rather than despair, the Baptist rejoices. In verses 31-36 he reiterates what Jesus said in verses 10-21. Verse 36 expresses it in the Baptist's straightforward style: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”

4. TWO KINDS OF WATER (4:1-42)

In chapter 4, Jesus hears that the Pharisees are on His trail, so He detours north to Samaria, a territory no self-respecting Pharisee would ever go to. He very purposefully heads to the town of Sychar and sits down upon the edge of Jacob's well. Up walks a Samaritan woman, and the next thing you know they're deep into a theological discussion.

An abbreviated form of Jesus' conversation is, “This water won't really help you, but I've got the water you need” (vv. 13-14). But what makes this conversation even more interesting is who He's talking to. Samaritans were considered unclean by the Jews. They had Jewish roots, but over the course of the centuries they had intermarried with Gentiles, making themselves the bottom of that society—half-breeds. Jesus extends God's salvation to these outcasts without hesitation. The high point in the conversation is Jesus' words on worship: “A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will

worship the Father in spirit and truth” (v. 23). The Samaritans’ response is refreshing. Unlike the Jews, these people actually want Jesus to stick around, for they recognize who He is. They confess, “We know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (v. 42).

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

What Needs Healing?

This activity is intended to help students diagnose their own lives and the world at large. As you prepare this session, be ready to help guide the sharing. Some students will not share very deeply, while other youth may want to share everything. Encourage each person to take a turn, but keep the setting safe and positive. Allow anyone who wishes to pass. One of the best ways to guide sharing is to be one of the first to share. The questions center around what needs to be healed in your students’ lives and world.

Salvation is a big word. Nine letters is not what makes it big, though. Its meaning is what makes it big. Salvation has the same Latin root as the word “salve.” Salve is a healing ointment. Salvation is the healing ointment of God. It is intended to heal everything which needs healing. It heals our broken relationship with our Creator, and from there, all other relationships. Let’s look at what needs healing in our world. Starting with you, what needs healing in your life? What needs healing in:

Your home?

Your school?

Your church?

Your city?

Your nation?

Your world?

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW

Jews believed that they were God’s favorite people. At that time, many believed that their people

knew everything on the whole matter of salvation. They believed God’s kingdom was a matter of being born in the right country, of worshipping in the right place, and having the right family. Jesus emphasizes that salvation is for the whole world. In the process, He reveals the problems with how the Jews believed and practiced. Let’s read John 2:12-4:42 and see if we can spot these flaws.

- ***How do Jesus’ actions in the temple reveal God’s displeasure with Jewish temple worship?***
- ***In chapter 3, Jesus sums up His purpose in the world with a very familiar verse. (John 3:16) Put this verse in your own words.***
- ***In the second portion of chapter 3, John the Baptist sums up Jesus’ mission in his own words. For what does he say Jesus is here?***
- ***In chapter 4, a Samaritan woman talks to Jesus about where true worshippers should meet. Jesus indicates that how you worship is more important than where. What does Jesus say about this?***

2. THE NEW (AND IMPROVED) TEMPLE (2:12-25)

Terms/People to Know

- ***The Temple (John 2:14)–In ancient Israel, the Temple was the unifying center for worship for the Jewish people. With the advent of the local synagogue in the time of Christ, the importance of the Temple in the everyday religious experience of the Jews was diminished. Nevertheless, the two are not interchangeable; references such as “the temple courts” (2:14) refer directly to the Temple, not to any particular local synagogue. The main purpose of the synagogue was not for public worship but for instruction in the Holy Scriptures.***

Have someone read aloud John 2:12-25.

There’s a reason the account of Jesus’ actions at the temple follow the miraculous sign at the wedding. As you can see in verse 12, some time passed between the incidents. But John places them back-to-back because the events interpret one another.

Jesus has revealed that he is divine and has authority through his first miracle. Now Jesus begins to reveal his purpose on earth: to rebuild the temple, to make right what the Jews have distorted, and to save the world so that all may live by the truth.

- *To what future events does Jesus refer in this story?*
- *When Jesus says He can raise the temple in three days, John is quick to tell us that Jesus was referring to His body. Since the Jews understood the temple to be the house of God (the residence of God's Spirit), what was the significance of Jesus calling His body a temple?*
- *Why is it important that Jesus predicted His death at the beginning of His ministry?*

3. DIVIDING THE WORLD (3:1-36)

Terms/People to Know

- *The Kingdom of God—When we think of a kingdom, we usually think of a piece of land. But this is a wrong starting point. A kingdom may appear on a map, but that doesn't mean the king's will is done there. Likewise, a man may be king and have no land. A kingdom, then, is where the king's will is done. God is King. All the world is His realm. And yet who obeys the King? The questions we must ask are not, "Where is the Kingdom?" or "When will the Kingdom come?" but "Am I a subject of the King?" and "How may I best serve Him?"*

Have someone read John 3:1-36 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

Jesus teaches Nicodemus that He has been sent into the world to save it and not just to perform miracles. But salvation depends upon how He is received. God does not save people who would refuse His offer. Those who truly believe in Him and live by the truth will be saved, but those who reject Him will be rejected.

- *People are born into kingdoms, and since the Jews knew they were God's chosen people, it was logical to assume being born a Jew was the same thing as being born into God's kingdom. That assumption is wrong.*

Jesus shares with Nicodemus that birth into God's kingdom happens a whole different way. Describe that way in your own words:

- *In verse 8, and again in verses 11-15, Jesus drops some hints about His origin and final destination. What are they?*
- *Life in the truth is available to all. Why will not all see this life?*

LIFTED UP (3:14-15)—“When you have lifted up the Son of Man . . .”

This is not the first or the last time we will hear Jesus say this. The first time was “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.” The phrase, “lifted up” was intended to bring to mind the story of Moses and the bronze snake (Numbers 21:4-9). Once, when the Israelites were plagued by snakes during their wilderness trek, Moses was instructed by God to make a bronze snake and place it on a pole so that the poisoned might look upon it and live. Jesus declares that He is like the bronze snake, and when He is lifted, those who look upon Him and believe will have eternal life. This metaphor reveals early on the narrative the power of the cross of Christ.

The Light of the World

In John's gospel, eternal life and salvation are two ways of saying the same thing. In John 3:17 it says, “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” The question remains, how does Jesus bring God's healing power into our world? According to John 3:16-21:

1. *What are the qualities of light that humans need?*
2. *Why do some people stay in the dark?*
3. *Why do others choose to enter into the light?*

Now let's read 1 John 1:5-10:

4. *According to verse 7, what happens when people walk in the light?*
5. *How does verse 9 help clarify the meaning of walking in the light?*

6. How does light heal the world?

4. JESUS, THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD (4:1-42)

Terms/People to Know

- **Judea (JEW-dee-a) (John 4:3)**—The southernmost portion of Palestine, which, under Roman rule, became annexed to the Roman province of Syria.
- **Samaritans (Sub-mhair-i-tons) (John 4:9)**—Samaritans inhabited Samaria—one of the three major divisions of Palestine. Samaritans were despised by the Jews for having intermarried with foreigners (Gentiles). Losing their racial purity in this manner was an unforgivable sin in Jewish opinion and, while this offense occurred hundreds of years earlier, the Jewish hatred of Samaritans was still very strong and highly evident in Jesus' time.

Read John 4:1-42.

After getting wind that the Pharisees are on His tail, Jesus detours north to Samaria. Samaritans were looked down upon by most Jews since they were part Jew and part Gentile. This made them worse than Gentiles in the minds of many Jews. By going among the Samaritans, Jesus communicated that God's love extends not only to the Samaritans but also to the whole world! Why is this still important today?

- **Most stories included in John have significance and a purpose. If it's mentioned, it's important. The writer of John goes to great lengths to tell us Jesus sat by Jacob's well. What's so important about that? (Hint: Jacob was the son of Isaac who was the son of Abraham. God changed Jacob's name to Israel late in Jacob's life. In other words, the whole Jewish nation was descended from Jacob.)**
- **Jesus talks to a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well about water. By speaking of the water of Jacob's well, Jesus referred to the spiritual content of Jewish teaching. Then by speaking of himself as water, He spoke of the spiritual life which comes from hearing and obeying**

His words. Keeping in mind that Samaritans were considered outcasts from Israel, how did Jesus' words offer the woman new hope?

- **Jesus' words concerning worship (vv. 21-24) should bring to mind the temple incident from chapter two. The temple was located in Jerusalem, and Jews believed this was where the true worshippers of God gathered. Why is Jesus' teaching on worship good news for Samaritans and Gentiles?**

5. HARVEST TIME (4:27-38)

Have someone read John 4:27-38 aloud to the class.

This is the only mention of this harvest image in the gospel of John. The idea of harvest does not refer to the gathering of the righteous at the end of the world but to the readiness for living water of those who have been seeking truth and growing in grace. Just as the woman misunderstood Jesus, the disciples do not grasp why Jesus had come—to finish the work of the one who sent Him.

- **Jesus tells His disciples to open their eyes and see the fields all around them (v. 35). Which fields do you suppose He was referring to?**
- **In your own words, how do Jesus' actions in chapters 2—4 demonstrate that God's salvation is for all the world.**

APPLY THE WORD

Leaving the Darkness Behind

Share the following image with your students:

Imagine a pitiful crowd of lepers cowering in a darkened cave. They are despised and rejected by society because of their rancid condition. Now imagine a spotlight is shot into the cave, startling the lepers and sending them running for cover. Then a voice calls out, saying, "Step into the light! The light is truth. In it is healing!" A murmur rises among the lepers, and a debate begins. Some say, "Don't believe the voice! It only mocks us and waits to kill us!" But others say, "We're tired of this dark

place; this is the first light we've seen since childhood." The latter step into the light, and initially their leprosy is exposed; but then the scars begin to fade and disappear.

- *How is this like life?*

Taking our medicine can be painful, but healing is worth the pain. But not everyone believes this. Jesus says in John 3:19, "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." Jesus can't help people who won't step into the light of truth.

- *What would you say to a friend who remains in the darkness of denial?*
- *How can you attempt to convince that person that living in the light is better?*

LIVE THE WORD

A Prayer for Healing

Ask your students to write out a prayer for healing that begins with them and extends to the world. Ask your students to share their prayers with the group. As a closing, take the best of their insights and pray for the healing of our world as a group.

Working with God

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 4:43—5:47

KEY VERSE

“Jesus said to them, ‘My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working’” (John 5:17).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that God is at work in the world through Jesus Christ.
2. Sense the redemptive nature of God’s work in Christ.
3. Commit themselves to joining the work of God.

PERSPECTIVE

An understanding of life must deal with work sooner or later because, whether we include God in our thinking or not, work is a given. Contemporary attitudes toward work are often lacking: work is either the primary purpose of life or something to endure during the week before really living during the weekend. We are expected to choose between workaholism and working for the weekend. The first is the gospel of success. The second is the faith of the guy who lives for Friday nights. Your youth, depending upon their socioeconomic status, family background, and many other factors, could fall into either category.

When life is nothing more than work and rest for its own sake, it is an empty cycle. It becomes self-serving humanism. The purpose of this lesson is to help students go beyond this humanistic view and understand that life is more than work and rest; it is knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent (John 17:3). When this view truly becomes our own, our work and our rest become part of a larger reality—and we can then join in the very work and rest of God himself.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Keeping the Sabbath was more important for the Jews than we can fully appreciate in our materialistic and individualistic culture. It was a sign to the world that the Jewish nation served the Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth. By adhering to a day of rest every seventh day, the Jews announced to the world that they identified with a Creator who made the world in six days and on the seventh rested from His labors.

Jewishness was inseparably linked to this observance, and breaking Sabbath tradition was a betrayal of nation and God.

Today, the cult of individualism encourages us to break tradition and to cut our ties with the past and with others. By doing so, we participate in a culturally sanctioned self-delusion; conforming to the expectations of the status quo, while believing we are bold and individualistic. As Robert Bellah and his colleagues in their book *Habits of the Heart* reveal, we belong to a tradition of antitraditionalists. Jewish culture, on the other hand, was forthright and honest in its expectations. True Jews kept the Sabbath and held other Jews accountable to the observance.

As with all religious practice, various traditions of interpretation emerged. One school of thought held that God lived in a perpetual Sabbath rest. Heaven, in this view, remained in an unending seventh day. God was finished, completely done, with all His labors, and He had nothing to do but sit around and take it easy. In this view, six days of work was something to be endured until the Sabbath, when Jews had the privilege of joining God on His easy chair.

You may see where this could lead. Work was denigrated, and an elite leisure class was established and “sanctified.” Not surprisingly, Pharisees tended to be rich people, or at least supported by wealthy benefactors. Because they didn’t have to work, they believed they were holier than common people who had to earn a living. Now you know why the Pharisees had so much time to follow and harass Jesus around the countryside. They had time in abundance, and they were proud of it, for God himself existed in a perpetual state of ease.

To these Jews, the Sabbath was a small taste of the kingdom of God. But like any overemphasis on leisure, it denigrated work, which, ironically, made rest more work than it was worth. Rather than a world in which the life of God was imitated in a pattern of work and rest, these Pharisees made work an object of scorn—and rest miserable. No wonder Jesus took such trouble to provoke these Sabbatarians. Into the uneasy silence of the Sabbath day Jesus boldly declared, “My Father is always at work to this very day, and I, too, am working” (5:17).

Other issues within our study passage that should be noticed are:

1. “A PROPHET HAS NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY” (4:43-54).

The healing of the royal official’s son is a transition from Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritans to His healing on the Sabbath in chapter 5. Jesus’ remark concerning the honor of a prophet implies that the royal official was a Gentile. And the story validates that Jesus had more honor among the Gentiles than among His own people. The story contains some interesting features, including Jesus’ apparently disapproving remark concerning signs and faith (v. 48), and the fact that the official took Jesus at His word (v. 50). But John uses the story primarily as an exclamation point to Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritans.

2. THE HEALING AT THE POOL (5:1-15)

If you have read anything about this story at all, you know most commentators are fascinated with the myth, popular in Palestine at that time, of an angel who periodically descended from heaven to stir healing powers into the waters of the pool. According to the story, the first one into the water was healed of any malady he suffered from. These writers believe the healing of the lame man is intended to illustrate that Jesus is an even greater healer than the pool. Other expositors focus on Jesus’ question, “Do you want to get well?” (v. 6). They emphasize that for healing to take place there must be a willingness on the part of the recipient. The most important thing to note is that this healing took place on the Sabbath, as is clear from the context.

Try to remember another time Jesus looked for someone to heal. Can’t? That’s because He never had to; the people always came to Him—except in this story. Here we see Jesus, on the Sabbath, looking, actually seeking, to heal somebody—anybody! He goes where He knows He will find some sick people, and He finds the toughest case He can.

Jesus was fully aware of what the Pharisees would think about healing on the Sabbath. But He did it anyway. In fact, He advertised it, commanding the old guy to carry his mat around. There is only one way we can interpret the evidence. Jesus was out to make a point.

3. "MY FATHER IS ALWAYS AT HIS WORK TO THIS VERY DAY" (5:16-47).

The healing should have spoken volumes to the Pharisees. Jesus spells it out for this group in verses 19 and 20, just in case they missed it. He tells them that He only does what He sees His Father doing. If His Father didn't do it, then He could not do it either. But His Father does in fact heal, and heal on the Sabbath at that, for He "is always at his work to this very day" (v. 17).

And what is the nature of this work? Verses 21-30 present it in outline form: it is raising the dead to life, and condemning those who do not believe in the Son of Man.

The rest of the chapter is given to the testimony regarding Jesus. First, Jesus quotes John the Baptist, but then, like a lawyer with an iron-tight case, He discounts the Baptist's testimony (vv. 33-35). Jesus then presents His Father as His primary witness in three forms: their work is the same (v. 36); the Father has given direct testimony (v. 37); and finally, the Scriptures, which they study but do not understand, testify as to who He is (vv. 38-40).

The Pharisees weren't dumb. They realized that a working God was a threat to their whole theological system. Such a God would embarrass them by making them retreat on everything they had believed and taught. The Kingdom Jesus heralded was not the lazy man's fantasy they anticipated, but a kingdom of working people serving a working God. This was just too much. No amount of evidence could make them recant a system that served them as well as theirs did.

At this point it is important to remember that we shouldn't spend our time criticizing the Pharisees, but rather we need to pause and wonder about ourselves. Does our theology and practice reflect God and His concerns, or does it merely serve us?

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Get a Job!

Christians are never to do anything just for money. That's the ideal anyway. Unfortunately many Christians do work just for money. Why? Probably

because no one has ever taken the time to teach them what Christians do work for. This is an important subject, because whether we work for money or for some higher good, we all must work in this world.

This activity is designed to get youth thinking about why they work. They are to provide a Christian rationale for a list of jobs, with an extra blank for youth to fill in their own or other jobs. It's quite possible that if our world evaluated every job by Christian standards, some jobs would not even exist, while other jobs we've never thought of would come into existence. For this reason, finding a Christian rationale for some jobs will take a bit of mental creativity. That will make the activity even more effective.

More youth have jobs these days than ever before. When I say that, I don't mean other generations of youth were lazy. In fact, they may have worked longer and harder than youth do these days. In the old days, life on the farm began early each day. Youth were expected to put in a couple of hours doing chores before school, and a few more when they got home after school. What I mean by jobs today is employment outside the home. Often youth today work just for money. They probably don't work fast food cooking hamburgers because they believe cooking burgers makes the world a better place. They cook hamburgers because they're paid to cook hamburgers.

But Christians should never do anything just for money. We work to glorify God and serve and change His world. Right? Below is a list of jobs youth often do for money. Think of how each of these jobs can be understood to glorify God and serve His creation.

The Job

1. Cooking hamburgers
 2. Baby-sitting/Daycare
 3. Mowing Lawns
 4. Waitress/Waiter
 5. Clerk in a Supermarket
 6. Other
- (your job if not listed)

Creative Way to Glorify God

1. Witness to the mustard salesman
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (JOHN 4:43–5:47)

The story begins with the incredible account of the Incarnation; Jesus, the word of God, comes into the world to reveal the Father to helpless humanity. After He calls His first disciples, and performs His first miraculous sign, Jesus confronts the corrupt Jewish leaders at the temple, the center of Jewish life. Here He predicts His death at their hands, and His resurrection from the dead by the power of God. After this, during a late night rendezvous, Jesus tells Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, that entrance into the kingdom of God is a matter of spiritual birth, not physical birth. Then, upon hearing that the Pharisees are after Him, Jesus heads to Samaria where He demonstrates the universal dimensions of salvation by extending it to the hated Samaritans.

Now Jesus is back in Jerusalem for another confrontation with the Jewish leadership. The hearts and minds of the people are at stake. Jesus attacks the religious status quo by defying official teaching by healing a man on the Sabbath. Those who witness the healing are forced to decide who speaks for God: the Jewish authorities or the maverick teacher from Galilee.

Have someone read John 4:43—5:47 and then as a class answer the following questions.

- *What do you think Jesus' attitude toward performing miracles was?*
- *Is there anything Jesus says or does which surprises you? Why?*
- *Write down three key thoughts regarding the Sabbath.*

2. HEALING THE ROYAL OFFICIAL'S SON (4:43-54)

Terms/People to Know

- *Capernaum (ka-PUR-nay-um) (John 4:46)—A town northwest of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus seems to have established Capernaum as his “headquarters” during his earthly ministry.*

Ask someone to read John 4:43-54

People in all places and at all times long for miracles. In one sense, this is a good thing. It indicates that people have a need to encounter the divine. On the other hand, this longing can go downhill quickly. It can be like people asking God to do tricks to the applause of the crowd.

Here we see Jesus putting miracles into perspective. He says, “Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders you will never believe” (v. 48). Then He proceeds to provide a miraculous sign. The message is fairly straightforward: signs help us believe but it is better if we can believe without them.

- *Jesus calls His miracles “signs.” Signs point to something; they are not an end in themselves. What are the signs Jesus intended to show us?*
- *Did the royal official's faith begin when he took Jesus at His word—or later when he heard news of the healing?*
- *Should people expect to see miracles everyday, or has the age of miracles come to an end? Or, is the truth somewhere in the middle?*
- *Have you ever seen a miracle? If so, what did you learn from it?*

3. HEALING ON THE SABBATH (5:1-15)

Ask someone to read John 5:1-15 aloud to the class.

Before hospitals and the advent of modern medicine, the sick and disabled, desperate for any hope of healing, would try just about anything. Occasionally, a tale or a legend would develop about this or that cure, and before you knew it, a stampede of sick people gathered to be healed. This was the case of the pool at Bethesda. According to legend, periodically an angel descended from heaven and stirred healing power into the waters of the pool. The first one in was to be healed. This is why so many sick people were waiting by the pool.

Only two healings recorded in the gospel of John were initiated by Jesus—this one, and the healing of a blind man in chapter 9. Both of these occurred on the Sabbath. It's hard to imagine that a healing could be scandalous, but both of these healings

were. According to Jewish law, no work was to be done on the Sabbath, and Jesus, being a good Jew, knew this. But He healed anyway.

- If Jesus knew what the Jewish leadership would say about healing on the Sabbath why did He do it?
- Jesus commands the lame man to “Pick up your mat and walk”(v.8). He knew this would advertise the healing. Why didn't He just heal the guy quietly and keep it a secret between friends?
- It is not uncommon for religious people to get caught up in rules. The Jewish leaders, in their zeal to keep the Sabbath, forgot why it was instituted in the first place. Can you think of ways Christians are at times guilty of the same thing?

4. WORK (5:16-30)

Ask someone to Read John 5:16-30 aloud to the class.

By healing on the Sabbath, Jesus created a crisis among the people. He defied the authority of the Jewish leaders and declared that He was God's spokesman. It's understandable why the Jewish leaders didn't like this idea (regardless of the miracle). It was a clear threat to their position. But this was the point: Jesus wanted the people to choose between God and the Jewish leaders. He wanted the people to believe in Him so that they might have life through Him.

- How does Jesus defend the healing in verses 17-20? What is the point of His argument?
- The fourth of the Ten Commandments requires Jews to keep the Sabbath day and do no work on it. (Check it out in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15.) In their practice of this commandment, the Jews missed the point somewhere. Where do you believe they went wrong?
- In verse 20, Jesus says, “For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.” He then goes on to explain what He means by “greater

things” in verses 21 through 30. What are the greater things?

- Throughout His discourse, Jesus again and again says that the authority He exercises is not His own. Whose authority is it, and how does He prove it?
- This section has shown us God at work. Based upon what you have read, what is the nature of God's work?

THE PLOT IS HATCHED! (5:18)

“For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him.” From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, forces were at work to kill Him. While this is not the first hint that Jesus would die, it is the first time we see the Jews at work to kill Him. Their intentions certainly did not catch Jesus by surprise. He understood the minds of men and knew what they were capable of. As early as chapter two, Jesus foretold that He would die at the hands of the Jews. In chapter five, the Jews begin to gather reasons for getting rid of Jesus. Not only was Jesus breaking the Sabbath but He is calling God His own Father. From this point on keep your eyes open for the unfolding conspiracy to kill Jesus. As you read, try to imagine what “life on the run” was like for Jesus, and attempt to understand why the Jews sought to kill Him. And finally, look for how Jesus used this very thing, His own murder, to glorify His Father.

5. TESTIMONY (5:31-47)

In verses 31 through 47, Jesus makes some very bold claims for himself. Someone once said that Jesus was either an egomaniac or He was who He claimed to be. For the people who heard His claims, believing in Jesus meant rejecting the Jewish leadership and following Him. Things haven't changed. Today believing in Jesus means rejecting the world, and making Him the center of our life.

- Ask someone to read John 5:31-47 aloud.
- What are the sources of testimony Jesus appeals to?
- Jesus gives reasons why the Jewish leaders reject this testimony. What were those reasons?

- *In verses 41 through 44, Jesus says that those who accept praise from men, but do not seek praise from God will never believe in Him. Can you think of some examples of people you know who do not believe in Jesus because they are more concerned about the opinion of people?*
- *Why do you believe in Jesus? What testimony did you hear that helped faith develop in your life?*

APPLY THE WORD

1. GOD'S RÉSUMÉ

This exercise could be a lot of fun if you can get your youth to use a little imagination. The twist is thinking of God from an angle your youth have not thought about before. Because God is a “working God,” He has job experience and lots of references. Youth in this exercise put together a résumé for God as if He were looking for work.

Have youth share their work. Or, as an option, turn this into a role play. Have one student play an interviewer at the unemployment office, and then have the other youth come forward and present their résumé to the interviewer. The purpose of the activity is to see work from God's perspective.

God is a “working man's” God. When we read the Bible we see Him getting down on His hands and knees and getting His hands into the need of the world. For the purposes of this exercise, imagine God is looking for work and He needs to write a resume. Use Genesis 1:1-2:3 and John 3:2-5:47 to provide some background on what God has done and what He is qualified to do. Use the following outline to guide you in writing God's resume.

Name: God

Address: Heaven

Age: (How old is God?)

Objective: (What kind of employment is God looking for?)

Experience: (What has He done that qualifies Him for such employment?)

Awards and Honors:

References:

Personal Accomplishments:

Strengths / Weaknesses:

2. WORKING WITH GOD

Students are asked to think about the classic question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” But they are asked to add an extra dynamic. Most youth make their choices based upon cultural expectations and status issues. After this, their own personal likes and dislikes come into play, and if they are exceptionally committed, they ask God's blessing on all the above. Because many youth are not aware that God works, they think that the only “God job” is the full-time ministry. As youth share, help them think hard about how their work relates to their Christian witness.

When you become a Christian, you join the family. That means you work because God works, and you rest because He rests. Jesus shows us what it means to work with God. It means we do what we see God doing. And how do we know what God is doing? By looking at Jesus.

As Christians, we believe God created the world. This means that there is no job that cannot be understood as a working-with-God job. (Except, of course, work which is blatantly sinful like dealing drugs, and, therefore, is not true work at all.) Martin Luther is reported to have said that a man can glorify God just as well by plowing a field as by singing hallelujah in church. What makes a job a “God job” is working to glorify God and serve His creation.

Imagine you have dreams and hopes for your vocation in life. You may want to be a business person, a lawyer, an engineer, a pilot, or a homemaker. Think of something you would like to do and think about it as a “God job.” How can it be done in a way which glorifies God and serves His creation?

LIVE THE WORD

Take a Break!

This activity focuses on the Sabbath day and its role in the church and the larger community. Most

of your youth probably cannot remember a time when stores were closed on Sundays and everybody stayed home and spent the day together. Youth are asked to record why rest is good and important for Christians, and reflect on why a common day of rest is a good thing for everybody.

The proverb says, "All work and no play makes you a dull boy." While God is a working God, He is also a God of rest. In the creation, He established a pattern of work and rest in which rest follows work as a time of celebration. Rest reflects on work, and prepares those who labor to work again. It is a time of joy.

At one time in many countries, it was illegal to work on Sunday. Everyone was forced to take the day off. Sadly, we've lost a common day of rest.

Why is rest good and important for Christians?

Why is a common day of rest a good thing for everybody?

Close with prayer.

The Bread and the Blood

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 6:1-71

KEY VERSE

“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that the sacrificial death of Jesus is our only means of eternal life.
2. Feel awe about what God has done for us through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.
3. More fully appreciate the sacraments of Communion and baptism—and the spiritual reality they point us to.

PERSPECTIVE

Ritual without heart is empty, and heart without ritual has no way to express itself. One great crime of the modern era is the degradation of ritual. Conventional wisdom says the heart is all that matters, and, like all lies, this idea contains some truth. Without heart, ritual is lifeless. But without ritual, we have no way of joining our heart with others. The contemporary victory of the heart, to the utter abandonment of ritual, has left the heart to itself, and thus, totally alone.

Today's egocentric individualism is a heresy; we need something beyond ourselves. Ritual nourishes us. It deepens and broadens us by bearing the riches of a shared tradition. By participating in it, we know who we are, because ritual tells us who we are.

Youth are probably in need of ritual more than any other segment of our society. Hungry for identity, they seek meaning wherever they can find it. At the same time, however, they are encouraged to break ties with the past. They are told to look within themselves to find themselves.

The two great sacraments of the Christian Church are Communion and baptism. By practicing them, we stand within a long tradition which extends all the way back to Jesus himself. Unfortunately, by emphasizing the heart at times to the exclusion of these rites, the modern church has weakened our connection to this tradition. Our Christianity is too often individualistic and shallow because we have no roots to deepen

and broaden us. And because we don't know who we are, we lack a unified corporate witness and discipline among our members. We need a renewed appreciation and practice of these sacraments.

This lesson is not about the sacraments per se, but it is about the substance of these rites, the meaning each is intended to convey.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

It is important to remember that the first two episodes in chapter 6, the feeding of the 5,000 and the walk on the water, are signs. They are much more than feeding hungry people and Jesus taking a shortcut to catch up with His disciples. They are meant to teach us about Jesus and His mission in the world.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:1-15)

Popular misreadings of this passage interpret the episode as a miracle of compassion—Jesus feeds people who had forgotten to pack their lunches. The message we're supposed to take from this is that we have a Savior who is moved by our physical needs. While the underlying premise is true, it misses the main point.

2. JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER (6:16-24)

It is tempting to interpret this episode as entirely unrelated to the preceding one. It is commonly seen as something Jesus performed for the sake of His disciples, an insiders' revelation intended to strengthen their faith. When it is read today, most people see it as a story of encouragement—about surviving tough times. If we will only let Him into the boat when the storms rage, everything will work out fine. Again, while this is all very true, it is not the primary point of the scripture.

3. MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL (6:25-71)

What do the two stories mean? The events that follow clear up much of the mystery. In verses 25-29, Jesus compares and contrasts himself with the manna that God provided to feed the Israelites while they were wandering in the wilderness. Because manna spoiled, He tells them, work for the bread that lasts. He then tells them that He is this new and improved heavenly Bread. Verses 32-42 deal with His origin in heaven and the difficulty the crowd has in

accepting this. Then, ironically, they grumble about this heavenly Bread, reminding us of another bunch of Israelites who also grumbled about heavenly bread (Exodus 16).

Verses 47-59 are filled with startling and graphic imagery. Here, Jesus describes in detail that His followers will actually consume His flesh and drink His blood. In verses 44-45 and 62-65, Jesus notes that only those whom the Father enables can believe this difficult teaching.

With these events in mind, let's return to the symbolism of the two preceding signs. First, recall the feeding of the 5,000. Remember Philip's remark concerning work? The Bread of Life is not ours to work for; we cannot produce it; it is the Gift of God. The work that God requires is the difficult work of believing in the One God has sent (v. 29). Recall the loaves and fishes? This is the Bread of Life, Jesus' flesh, given to us by God. The 12 baskets of leftovers might represent the 12 tribes of Israel, who reject the Son of Man, and the 12 apostles who allow "nothing" to "be wasted" and present the Bread of Life to others.

No fish remain because the walk on the water continues that theme. The fish point toward the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:39-41). As Jonah went beneath the waves three days, so Jesus will go beneath the surface of the earth and rise again in three days. The disciples set out at night and are separated from the crowd by a body of water. This symbolizes their separation from the crowd by their identification with the sacrificial death of Jesus. This depicts the rite of baptism, even as the feeding of the 5,000 depicts Communion. It is the water of baptism into Christ's atoning death that separates the followers of Jesus from the world. And once they have traveled three miles, symbolizing three days in the grave, they see Jesus coming to them on the water. And once He steps into the boat, they are immediately on the other side.

And so we have the elemental stuff from which the sacraments developed: Communion (the feeding of the 5,000) and baptism (Jesus' walk on the water). Each time we participate in these divinely ordained sacraments, we are nourished as we remember and as we participate.

Other Names for Communion

- Mass

- Eucharist
- The Lord's Supper
- Love Feast
- Breaking Bread
- Holy Communion

Baptism

The ritual of baptism is simple enough to understand. It is the public act by which a person is initiated into the church by identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus. But, as is the case with Communion, the ritual has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Debate surrounds the question, "Is baptism merely a public affirmation of faith, or is it a means of God's saving grace?"

Those who understand it as a vessel of saving virtue typically practice infant baptism. Some even baptize the dead by substitute. Those who understand baptism to simply be a public act that confirms saving faith reserve it for people who profess faith themselves.

As with Communion, those who believe the act itself contains power practice the rite more faithfully than those who do not.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Living on Death

This activity can take the form of a mental tour of a supermarket, or it could be made into a real field trip. Students are asked to "look" up and down aisles for any food that is living. They won't find any, because everything we eat is dead. The point of the activity, morbid or not, is a real one. We literally must kill and eat other living things to live.

This may be a morbid thing to do, but think about a visit to the supermarket—and imagine the store is filled with dead stuff. Go to the meat department and when you see the drumsticks say to yourself, "dead chicken legs." When you go to the vegetable department look at the ears of corn and say to yourself, "the dead seeds of a dead corn stalk." As you go through the store look for stuff to

eat that isn't dead and make a list. Your list will be very short. In fact, it will be blank because our bodies live on the death of other once living things. Today, we're going to look at how we are able to live because of the one who was alive who died so that we might have life.

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (JOHN 6:1-71)

Terms/People to Know

- *Sea of Galilee (Sea of Tiberias) (John 6:1)—Also known as "Sea of Kennereth" and "Sea of Gennesaret," the Sea of Galilee is located about 60 miles north of Jerusalem. Due to its location in a valley surrounded by mountains, the Sea of Galilee is known for its violent and unpredictable storms (see John 6:16-24).*
- *Galilee (GAL-i-lee) (John 6:1)—The northernmost of the three main provinces of Palestine—Samaria, Galilee and Judea. The area was very important to Jesus and his ministry as he grew up in Nazareth in Galilee, performed his first miracle in Cana of Galilee, and chose his disciples from the general area. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the majority of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.*

Jesus has set the forces in motion which will ultimately carry Him to His death. His destiny upon the cross has been alluded to twice, once by Jesus himself in the temple (2:20), and again by the writer of this gospel (5:18). But now we've turned a corner in the narrative. From this point on, Jesus gives repeated attention to His impending death. As strange as it may sound, the feeding of the 5,000 and the walk on the water are both signs which point to the cross. They are symbols which help us make sense of His death and give us a way of understanding how it can change our lives.

- *With the death of Jesus in mind, let's read these stories and the teaching which follows. Have someone read John 6:1-71 aloud to the class while everyone else follows along.*

- *Can you see anything in these verses which might point to Jesus and His death upon the cross?*
- *Is there anything in the Scripture which you find interesting or shocking?*
- *Does anything remind you of Communion?*
- *Does anything remind you of baptism?*

2. FEEDING THE 5,000 (6:1-15)

Have someone reread John 6:1-15 aloud.

A year has nearly passed since Jesus cleansed the temple. He is now in Galilee teaching huge crowds which have begun to follow Him. Since the feast of Passover is near, Jesus asks His disciples to get some food for the crowd. They are completely overwhelmed. What happens next is one of the best known and least understood miracles recorded in the Bible. Jesus feeds more than 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.

Since we will not fully understand the meaning of the miracle until later, let's spend some time highlighting and exploring some of the features of the story.

- *The time is the Passover. This is an important clue to understanding everything which follows. Passover was a time to remember the killing of the Egyptian first born. You can read in Exodus about how God sent an angel of death to kill all the first born in the land of Egypt since Pharaoh wouldn't free the Hebrew slaves. But the Hebrews were spared if they smeared the blood of a lamb on the door posts of their homes. That's how the death angel knew to pass over their homes. (Hence the name "Passover.") Christians call Jesus "the Lamb of God." How does the sacrifice of a Passover lamb point to the sacrifice of Jesus?*
- *Numbers are important in the Bible. They're full of symbolic significance. What are some of the numbers recorded in John 6:1-15. Any ideas on what the numbers might symbolize?*
- *Verses 14 and 15 show that the people were expecting and hoping for a messianic King.*

The people had come to believe that the Messiah was a leader who would free them from the oppressive leadership of Herod and the Romans. Why do you think Jesus snuck away by himself?

3. A STROLL ON THE LAKE (6:16-24)

Have someone read aloud John 6:16-24.

Here is another well known and greatly misunderstood miracle story. Remember, Jesus' miracles were signs which served to clarify His mission in the world.

- *Why do you think the disciples were afraid?*
- *What does Jesus show the disciples and us by walking on water?*

4. THE BREAD OF LIFE (6:25-59)

Have someone read aloud John 6:25-59.

Now that we've looked at the signs, Jesus helps us make sense of them. Jesus refers to himself as "the bread of God" and "the bread of Life." When Jesus gave the bread to the crowd, He was in fact giving himself to the crowd. This is why there was more than enough to go around, for Jesus will die for the whole world. Jesus insists that the disciples begin working for more than earthly food. He reveals that the work of God begins not by "doing" but by simply and truly believing in the one who was sent from God—the true bread of life from heaven.

- *In verse 26, why does Jesus say the crowd is looking for Him?*
- *Why is their reason for looking for Jesus a poor one?*
- *Jesus constructs an complex parallel between himself and manna; how is He like manna? (In case you're wondering what this manna business is all about, read Exodus 16. It's a great story! Manna was a bread-like substance that fell from the sky while the Israelites wandered in the wilderness after escaping Egypt. Each morning they gathered just enough for that day, believing that God would provide enough again the next day. Since manna had never been seen before (or*

since), it was an oddity. When the Jews first saw it they exclaimed, "Manna?" which is Hebrew for "What is it?" The name stuck. Jesus used the crowd's question about manna to explain that He is a new bread—a bread that brings eternal life—a life of grace and truth. Like manna, Jesus came down from heaven. Anyone who took this new bread would not die but live forever.)

- *Verses 37 and 44 seem to indicate that receiving the bread of life is not wholly our choice. Whose decision is it?*
- *Jesus' language in verses 51 through 58 is very graphic. The Jews take offense and ask, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" How would you answer that question?*
- *Verse 41 says that the Jews began to grumble about Jesus because He said, "I am the bread of life that came down from heaven." Can you think of another time when Jews grumbled about heavenly bread?*

5. SOME OF THE DISCIPLES DESERT JESUS (6:60-71)

Have someone read John 6:60-71 to the class.

How can God's own son take on flesh and blood and become a man? This teaching was hard for the Jews and even the disciples to accept. Jesus proposes that not only has he descended from heaven but that He will ascend to heaven as well. And although Jesus had performed many miracles before their eyes and was standing and talking to these followers, they still did not believe.

- *According to verse 60, what did many of the disciples do upon hearing Jesus' teaching?*
- *What does Peter say on behalf of the 12 to express their commitment to Jesus?*
- *Jesus presents the same challenge to us today. Do you want to leave too?*

APPLY THE WORD

The Great Communion Debate

This activity introduces students to a controversy that has raged within the church for centuries. It is

highly unlikely that your students have reflected on the nature of Communion; consequently the debate may seem a little silly to them. But it is a very serious debate, for if our salvation really does depend upon taking part in the means of grace, we better know whether or not Communion is mandatory.

Transubstantiation is the position of the Roman Catholic church. For Catholics, Communion is surrounded with great mystery and power. Only priests are authorized to give it, and it is believed that receiving the Eucharist is literally essential to know salvation in Christ. Many devout Catholics participate in this means of grace on a daily basis.

Consubstantiation was developed by the great Reformer Martin Luther. Luther was a strong believer in the sacrament of Communion. He wanted followers to receive grace through the sacrament, but he was not willing to make it essential for salvation. This weakened the observance among Lutherans and others who followed his lead.

Symbolic Memorial is the position held by the majority of Evangelicals, which includes the Church of the Nazarene. This is the belief that Communion serves as a reminder of what Christ has done, and is symbolic. Christians holding this position probably practice the sacrament least; but they must remember that the Lord has commanded that we remember Him through His table, and they must also remember that even if He is not present in the elements, He is present in the receiving of communion.

Jesus gave His body as a sacrifice so we might eat His flesh and drink His blood and live. These are Jesus' own words. But the big question is how do we do it?

Over time, three understandings have emerged that help Christians understand the relationship between Communion and the spiritual life we receive from Jesus. They're expressed in big words, so get ready!

1. TRANSUBSTANTIATION

This belief holds that when Christians celebrate the Lord's Supper, the "substance" beneath the appearance of the bread and wine miraculously transforms into the body and blood of Jesus. In this tradition the elements are called the "host" because they carry the very body and blood of Jesus. While the appearance of the elements is still the same, they actually are the body and blood of Jesus.

2. CONSUBSTANTIATION

While this view sounds a lot like transubstantiation, it is different. "Con" means "with." These Christians believe the spiritual body and blood of Jesus are "with" the elements. Again, the bread and wine look like bread and wine, but Jesus is within the elements. It's more than eating and drinking—it is the mutual abiding relationship of both the believer and Jesus within the sacrament.

3. SYMBOLIC

This view is very different from those above. Christians with this view celebrate communion, but for them, the bread is just bread and the wine is just wine. It is a memorial. The power of the celebration is the reminder it provides of God's grace in Christ. In this view, Jesus is received by the power of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, Jesus is present in the celebration, because Jesus is always present when believers gather in His name.

- *Which view, if any, have you been taught?*
- *What do you believe Communion really is?*
- *How would you describe communion to a friend?*

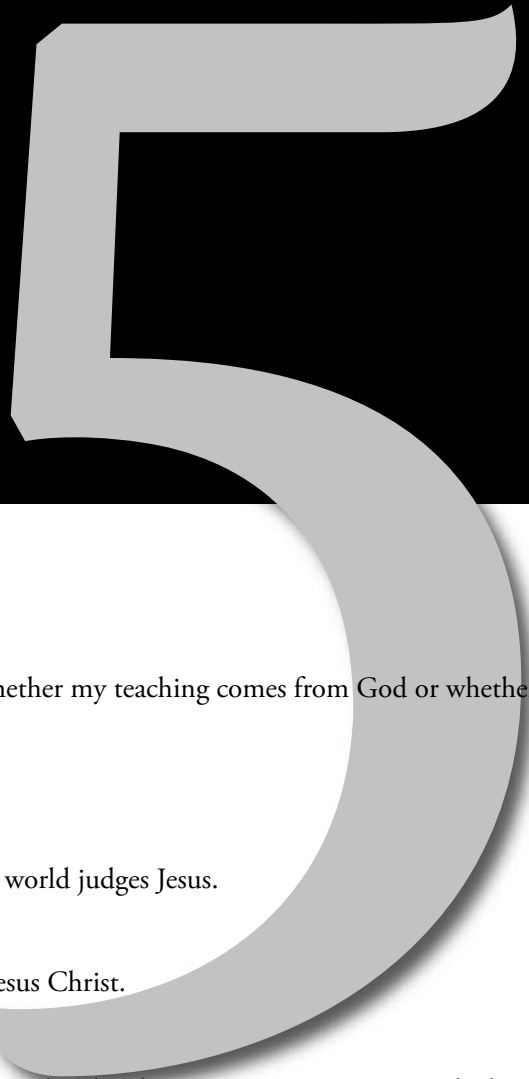
LIVE THE WORD

Celebrating Communion

To conclude this session, have your pastor come and share the church's teaching on Communion and help your students understand the place of the sacrament in your church. Then have him celebrate Communion with you.

Close your time in a prayer of thankfulness for the gift of Christ.

What Will You Choose?



STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 7:1—8:30

KEY VERSE

“If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own” (John 7:17).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that God has judged the world by how the world judges Jesus.
2. Sense the urgency in choosing to accept Jesus Christ.
3. Commit themselves to faith in and obedience toward Jesus Christ.

PERSPECTIVE

A youth approached me after I had delivered what I considered to be a stirring message. He asked me philosophical questions about the existence of God. I was impressed by his depth of thought, and I was challenged by his questions. But after about 20 minutes of discussion, I came to realize that the issue was not really God’s existence. The real issue was pride. I confronted my curious antagonist with the question, “If I answered all your questions and left you no room for doubt, would you believe God and obey Him?” He replied, “No.”

Objections to Jesus usually have less to do with the “absurdity” of His claims, and everything to do with personal obedience. Those who choose to do God’s will know where Jesus’ teaching comes from. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in *The Cost of Discipleship* (Macmillan, 1963), illuminates this for us:

Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes.

It is quite unbiblical to hold the first proposition without the second. We think we understand when we hear obedience is possible only where there is faith. Does not obedience follow faith as good fruit grows on a good tree? First faith, then obedience. If by that we mean that it is faith which justifies, and not the act of obedience, that’s all well and good. If, however, we make a chronological distinction between faith and obedience, and make obedience subsequent to faith, we are divorcing one from the

other—and then the practical question becomes, when must obedience begin? We must never lose sight of their essential unity. For faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience (p. 69).

Unbelief says more about people than it does about God. It reveals our disobedience. And it is this disobedience that is judged. This session builds on themes introduced in the second session. It is essentially about judgment.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A quick glance at the New Age movement, or other popular faiths, reveals that logical inconsistencies, or just plain silliness, rarely keeps people from believing what they want to believe. And conversely, irresistible proof hardly ever changes a stubborn mind.

Jesus' miracles and teaching don't seem to change minds as much as they seem to reveal what is already in those minds. They reveal the obedient by their faith and the sinful by their unbelief.

In chapter 7, verses 1-9, we see that Jesus' earthly family was not a perfect refuge from the world. Verse 17 shows that even Jesus' brothers did not live obedient lives. And verse 7 seems to contain a kind of indirect condemnation when Jesus says, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil."

The rest of chapter 7, and all of chapter 8, shows Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles. What do we see Jesus doing at the Feast? Dividing the people (7:43). The Day of the Lord had come.

The first thing He says is that those who choose to do God's will know the Source of His teaching (7:17). Then He defends His healing of the lame man on the Sabbath by appealing to the circumcision loophole in Mosaic law: What's the point? If an exception can be made for circumcision, a mere sign of adherence to the law, why not exempt a healing, which embodies the very spirit of the law?

In the remainder of chapter 7, we see that Jesus, the artful dodger, cleverly evades the bungling attempts by the authorities to trick him and get Him. Referring to His origin, He further divides the people: "I am not here on my own, but he who sent me

is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me" (vv. 28-29). Some believe (vv. 31, 40, and 41), while others just can't seem to get beyond their intellectual objections—"How can the Christ come from Galilee?" (v. 41).

In chapter 8, verses 12-30, Jesus speaks of testimony and judgment. Verse 12 seems to be a tactic to raise the anger of the Pharisees. In response to their objection, Jesus refers to the law, "The testimony of two men is valid" (v. 17). He points to himself as the first Witness and then calls on God the Father as His second Witness. Of course, He knew this would not satisfy them since the second Witness was impossible to prove.

Verses 15 and 16 seem to contain some contradictory ideas about judgment. First, Jesus says He doesn't judge, and then He says He does. What's going on here? Simple. Return to the idea of reactive judgment outlined in session 2, and you have the answer. Jesus doesn't judge; but when we judge Jesus, we, in fact, judge ourselves. It works like the children's limerick, "I am rubber, you are glue. / What you said bounced off me and stuck to you."

Jesus warns them that without faith in Him they will die in their sins. He then makes reference to the image of the bronze snake mentioned in chapter 3. This, Jesus declares, will be the sign that will force people to recognize that He is who He claims to be.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Speaking Up

Too many of your youth can relate to the story below. The social pressures Christian young people face in their schools are just as powerful and sometimes even more ruthless than those faced by Christians in the marketplace. While a great number of young people are taking a public stand for the Lord, many are not. In the current cultural war for the moral imagination of young people, many Christians who fight on the front lines do so without the mental preparation or the moral support the institutional church can provide. A group like your Discovery Group can provide the support your youth need. You may want to begin by simply having someone read-

ing the story aloud. Another approach may be to have your students act out the story. Once finished, simply open the floor with the question: Have you ever been in a situation like John's? You will be surprised at the response. Allow some time for sharing before going on to the next activity.

John loved going to Sunday School. His class was working through lessons on contemporary social issues. He loved the class because of the lively discussions week after week, and because his teacher, Ms. Clark, helped the class discover the answers themselves rather than simply telling them facts.

They usually had a balanced presentation of social issues. Name the issue and their class had read about it, discussed, and debated over it: homosexuality, abortion, family issues, whatever.

Today's class was going to be particularly difficult. The subject for discussion was the "Rights of Homosexuals to Adopt Children." The night, before John had talked with his uncle who was a homosexual and who had been trying to adopt. His uncle claimed to be a Christian and really wanted to have a family. John was confused and unsure of how to talk with his uncle. So he was eager to talk things out in class.

Ms. Clark spoke for awhile from Romans 1 about what is natural and what God intended for relationships. And she also talked of how homosexuals have been persecuted and tortured throughout history and why the church should be more accepting and loving. She emphasized that reconciliation would only come about through grace rather than guilt, understanding rather than ignorance, and love rather than contempt. Eventually, she opened the floor for discussion regarding adoption by homosexuals.

To John's surprise, some in the class began with jokes and started to make fun of homosexuals. John looked around the room and saw many people laughing. John's heart was racing. His palms were sweaty as he said to himself, "It's now or never." Slowly he raised his hand.

- *What would you say if you were John?*

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (7:1-8:30)

Like a great knife, Jesus has descended from heaven to divide the Jewish nation. By cleansing the temple and healing a man on the Sabbath, He exposed the fraud of the religious leaders. Because He exercised authority and power independent of, and in direct conflict with the authorities, He demonstrated that God was with Him. This has made him a fugitive on the run.

Now we see that the tension continues to build between Jesus and the Jewish leadership. Jesus knows that He is hated by His enemies and celebrated by those who believe in Him. And He even encourages this division, for by it, God is judging the nation and revealing the hearts of people.

Have some read John 7:1-8:30 aloud to the class.

- *Which of the following words do you believe best describes the mood of the passage: joy, conflict, peace, anger, salvation?*
- *Sum up in a couple of sentences the message Jesus presents to the Jews.*
- *If you have ever confronted a corrupt system of power, you know it takes enormous courage and determination to face it. Where did Jesus find the strength to do what He did?*
- *Have you ever found yourself in a situation where speaking truth made you very unpopular? If so, describe it and the lessons you learned by it.*

2. HE HATES ME (7:1-13)

Have someone read John 7:1-13 aloud to the class while everyone else follows along.

When Jesus said, "The world hates me," He wasn't feeling sorry for himself. He was simply stating a fact. He had plenty of reason to believe as He did—after all, the Jews were trying to kill Him.

- *Verse 5 shows us that even His own brothers did not believe in Him. Have you ever found yourself in the same position—despised for your faith in God and mocked by the members of your own family? How did you handle it?*
- *In verse 7, Jesus reveals why the world hates Him. Why do people hate to have their evil deeds exposed?*
- *Jesus secretly goes to the feast and overhears the opinions of the people concerning Him. Some like Him and some definitely do not. Why?*

3. THE MAN OF TRUTH (7:14-24)

Have someone read John 7:14-24 aloud to the class.

Jesus reveals himself at the feast and teaches openly. The crowd is astonished at His teaching because He was not trained at one of the rabbinical schools of the day. Jesus uses their astonishment to point out that His teaching is not from men, but from God. Then He provides a test to verify the truthfulness of His claims. In verse 17 He declares, "If anyone chooses to do God's will, He will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."

- *This means those who do not choose God's will cannot see the source of Jesus' teaching. Sin blinds their inner eye. When people fail to see the truth in Jesus, how can we help open their eyes?*
- *As we see in chapter 7, speaking the truth often makes one extremely unpopular. How about us? Are we prepared to follow the Man of truth—even if accepting His message means being hated by the world?*
- *Something is not necessarily truth simply because the majority believe it is. Jesus shows us that truth has nothing to do with popularity contests. Truth is truth, whether or not it is supported by the majority. How and where do Christians find the strength to do what is right when the whole world is against it?*

4. JESUS DIVIDES THE PEOPLE (7:25-52)

Terms/People to Know

- *Chief Priests (John 7:32)—In the New Testament, the "chief priests" were made up of the officiating high priest, any former high priests who were still living, and members of their families.*
- *Bethlehem (BETH-le-hem) (John 7:42)—Located approximately five miles south of Jerusalem, its name means "house of bread." This city was the hometown of King David and the site of his anointing as Israel's second king. Because of Joseph's lineage, Bethlehem was also the town to which Joseph had to report in order to register in the census instituted by the Roman emperor at the time, Caesar Augustus. Joseph and Mary traveled the approximately 70 miles from Nazareth, where they resided, to Bethlehem; it was while the couple was in Bethlehem that Jesus' birth occurred (Luke 2).*

Have someone read John 7:25-52 aloud to the class.

Here we see Jesus, the Man of truth, separating those who do God's will from those who do not. The people judge themselves by their judgment of Jesus. Some believe Him while others reject Him. And Jesus allows their judgments to stand—against themselves.

- *In verses 25 through 27 and 41 through 42, the Jews wonder how Jesus can be the Christ when He comes from Galilee. What is Jesus' response in verses 28 and 29?*
- *When the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest Him, Jesus explained, "I'm with you only for a short time and then I will go to the One who sent me." What did the Jews think He meant by this? What do you think He meant?*
- *On the first day of the feast, Jesus promised a blessing for those who believe in Him. What was the blessing?*

- *Verses 30 and 44 say that the Jews tried to arrest Jesus, but that they couldn't lay a hand on Him "because His time had not yet come." When the temple guards reported their failure to the priests in verses 45 and 46, the Pharisees declare, "Has any of the rulers or any of the Pharisees believed in Him?" Well, did any? (Look at verse 50.)*

5. JESUS' TESTIMONY (8:12-30)

Ask someone from the class to read John 8:12-30 aloud to the rest of the class.

Jesus tells the Jews that since He knows where He comes from and where He is going, and since they haven't got a clue, He is the light and they are still in the darkness of their sins. But a time is coming when they will see "the Son of Man lifted up" (v. 28) and they will know who He is.

- *What time is Jesus referring to?*
- *How will people finally recognize who He is?*

APPLY THE WORD

1. ACCOUNTABILITY

Sins of "commission" are those we commit when we know exactly what we are doing—and it's wrong. Sins of "omission" are those acts of righteousness that we should have done, but which we fail to do. Both are sinful, and we are accountable for both. In Ezekiel 3:18, God's warning to Ezekiel is recorded: "When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood" (3:18). By failing to warn the sinful of God's judgment, we are caught up in their condemnation. In order to remain faithful to God, we must speak out against the evils of our world. But this also reveals God's great love for the sinful. It is because God cares about the most arrogant and spiteful of sinners that He holds those who know His Word accountable for them.

Let's go back to the story we started the lesson with. It will take a lot of courage for John to speak the truth in class. But he must, because if he does-

n't, he will deny what he believes and may not then discover how his understanding is right (or wrong) based upon the community of Christians (his teacher and class) he is accountable to. Although John was searching for the truth, he knew from his relationship with his uncle that humiliation and crude jokes were not the answer. Searching for truth, asking questions, vocalizing our understanding and discovering who God is and how he wants us to love and live is what discipleship on the journey and reconciling the world is all about.

The teaching of Jesus came from God. It is proven true by seeking the will of God.

- *How do we know what teaching comes from-God today?*
- *On what issues should Christians take a stand?*
- *What's the most effective way to communicate to non-Christians?*

2. JESUS' EXAMPLE

In this activity students are asked to look to the scriptures to find in the example of Jesus how to speak truthfully in a world of lies. If time allows, divide the class into groups to answer the questions and then discuss as a complete group.

Jesus knew what it was like to take a stand for truth. He doesn't expect us to do anything He didn't do himself. And because we are His followers, we should follow His example. The following scriptures will help you see how Jesus understood the difficulty of speaking the truth. What do you learn from each one?

1. *Why do people hate Jesus? (7:1-12)*
2. *How can people know the truth? (7:16-17)*
3. *Jesus teaches that people speak for two reasons. What are they? (7:16-28)*
4. *What is the relationship between hatred and evil?*
5. *What is the connection between obedience and knowledge of what is truth?*
6. *How does the desire to conform to society lead us to compromise the truth?*

Guide your students into an understanding that Jesus exposed sin regardless of how people responded to Him; called people to obedience in spite of their intellectual objections; and committed himself to honoring His Father rather than honoring men.

LIVE THE WORD

A Covenant of Truth

Jesus received the strength He needed to tell the truth from His Heavenly Father. We also receive our strength from God, but that strength is often given to us through the fellowship of the church. Unfortunately, fellowship in many of our churches has been reduced to juice and snacks. It is certainly not the fellowship that characterized the Early Church. Our fellowship should be the fellowship of fellow truth-tellers and truth-livers. We should fellowship because the task God has given us individually and collectively is so enormous it is beyond the strength of any of us. We should pray for each other, hold one another accountable, confess our faults to one another, and spur each other on toward good works.

“Covenant” is a biblical concept that is helpful in understanding how our group can make fellowship possible for one another. A covenant is a promise between two parties that is intended to guide a relationship. I want us to write a covenant to God to be faithful in truth-telling and truth-living. This covenant should be a promise made by our group to each other, and as a whole to God, that we will work to encourage each other in the important work that Jesus has called each of us to.

Have your class work together to write out a covenant, and then have each person sign it. End with prayer.

True or False?

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 8:31—9:41

KEY VERSE

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that sin keeps people from seeing and practicing what is true.
2. Sense that true fulfillment only comes through practicing Jesus’ teaching.
3. Commit themselves to knowing and practicing what is true.

PERSPECTIVE

I recently had the privilege of hearing M. Scott Peck (author of the best-selling book *The Road Less Traveled*) speak at a church in my hometown of Boston. To a packed house of over 2,000, made up primarily of intellectuals, Peck taught that evil is a kind of “militant ignorance.” According to Peck, evil people resist any truth that brings about painful self-consciousness. Rather than accept truth, evil people seek to destroy it and, presumably, truth-tellers in the process. To evil people, truth is painful, and change is even more so. They believe the only relief possible is the elimination of truth.

Sinful youth are common, but it is rare to find genuinely evil ones as described above. By and large, youth are still open and flexible. Nonetheless, the lesson we should take from this insight by Peck—which, by the way, he arrived at through reflection on the scripture we are examining—is that evil always resists truth. The stories from our Scripture passage are a study in the psychology of evil. If while reading them, you and your students quickly condemn the Jews for their reaction to the truthful Jesus—beware! You are one step away from committing the same error. The most fruitful approach is to allow the stories to bring you to an awareness of your own resistance to the truth; to learn to pray with the Psalmist,

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (139:23-24).

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The essence of this scripture is, “You’re not what you think you are, and I’m more than you think I am.” The scripture we are studying follows some significant material on judgment, and it is clear that the theme is continued; but as we shall see in the next session, it is not exhausted.

Jesus’ argument in chapter 8, verses 31-47, consists of three interdependent propositions and a proof. The propositions are namely: you’re not free (vv. 31-34); Abraham’s not your father (vv. 35-40); and your father is the devil (vv. 41-47). And the proof? “You’re trying to kill me!” (vv. 37, 40, and 44, writer’s paraphrase). In verse 59 the Jews do Jesus the favor of verifying everything He claims by attempting to kill Him.

1. YOU’RE NOT FREE (8:31-34)

In the previous session, Jesus is shown dividing the Jews into two sides—those who believe in Him and those who don’t. But Jesus is not satisfied; He then proceeds to judge even those whom the scripture says believed in Him (v. 31). He does this by offering to liberate them.

The Jews put two and two together and realize Jesus has insulted them. “He thinks we’re slaves!” they conclude. This they adamantly deny while ignoring their servitude to the Roman Empire and their historical captivities in both Babylon and Egypt.

But the captivity that Jesus refers to is different than what the Jews should have freely confessed. It is the captivity of sin. In case the Jews try to deny their sinfulness, Jesus proceeds to push it into the open.

2. YOU’RE NOT ABRAHAM’S CHILDREN (8:35-40)

The Jews defend their liberty by citing their ancestry in Abraham. Today this seems like an odd defense, but to Jesus it was perfectly legitimate, though from His perspective, untrue. Jewish identity as the chosen people of God was based in God’s call to Abraham. And the Jews were indeed Abraham’s genetic descendants. But so were the Samaritans and the Edomites. Jesus declares that true children of Abraham do what Abraham did. And what did he do? He obeyed God. Therefore, while the Jews were

Abraham’s children in body, they were not his children in spirit. With this thought in mind, Jesus warns the Jews that they will someday be kicked out of the family, for they act as slaves, not sons (v. 35).

3. YOU’RE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL (8:41-59)

So whose children are the Jews? Jesus points to their plot to kill Him as a clue. Whose descendants kill God’s prophets? The devil’s. Case closed.

But why did the Jews want to kill Jesus? Notice the recurring reference to the truth of Jesus’ message and the Jews’ inability to bear it: verses 32, 37, 40, 43, 45, 51, and 55. And remember Jesus’ words to His brothers in the previous session: “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil” (7:7). By the end of the dialogue, we see the Jews seek to fulfill the wish of their father Satan by attempting to stone Jesus (v. 59), and in contrast, Jesus fully identifies with God by His “I am!” confession (v. 58).

4. THE HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND (9:1-41)

This healing is number six in the countdown of miraculous signs. John never cites a healing without using it to make a point. Signs are recorded to illustrate the nature of Jesus’ mission. This healing builds on material in chapter 8.

Let’s review some of the more important features of the story. The disciples ask, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (v. 2). Jesus responds, “Neither...this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life” (v. 3). The disciples look for someone to blame, and Jesus looks to bring glory to His Father.

Next, Jesus says something that sounds very familiar: “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me” (v. 4). Where have we heard this before? In chapter 5. And we hear it here for the same reason. It’s the Sabbath, and Jesus is about to heal somebody.

The Pharisees are all furious that Jesus heals because it happens on the Sabbath. The contrast of the blind man’s sight with the inability of the local people to recognize him is also interesting; now he can see and they can’t!

But what does it all mean? Jesus' words in verse 2 and in the concluding verses (35-41) show a connection between sin and blindness. Sin blinds people to the work of God. Those who claim to be without sin are doubly blind, while those who confess their sin are healed. Jesus opens the eyes of those who know they are blind and blinds those who claim to see. To the first, Jesus is the salvation of God; to the others, Jesus is God in judgment.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

The Age of Martyrs Is Not Over

This activity is designed to make students aware that people are still dying for their Christian faith all around the world. The purpose is threefold. First, the reality that people are still dying for their faith should help youth keep their own sufferings for Christ in perspective. While they may believe they are paying a great price for their faith, it is small in comparison to many who are paying the greatest price of all.

Second, they should not feel that those who are dying for Christ are just distant people who live in a world they cannot relate to. Encourage your youth to understand these people are their brothers and sisters in Christ, and it is their duty to support them.

Third, this activity should illustrate our Scripture passage: evil people still suppress truth and truth-tellers. The three questions help bring that out.

If you read the New Testament, you know that the early Christians suffered for their faith in Jesus. Both Peter and Paul died because of their preaching. For the next 400 years, Christians were persecuted throughout the Roman empire.

The age of martyrs is not over. It is believed that more Christians died for speaking the truth in the 20th century than in all 19 previous centuries combined, and the killing continues here in the 21st century. Most of the killing has occurred in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

- *Why do evil people and systems hate the truth so much?*
- *Can you think of examples of how evil can suppress truth?*

- *How would you respond if you were not allowed to follow the Truth?*

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (8:31—9:41)

Jesus, the man from above, has brought the Word of God below and has judged the world by seeking to save it. To those who believe in Him, He gives Eternal Life, but those who reject Him stand condemned. In this session, we see Jesus in the heat of a debate, discrediting the Jewish self-understanding that they were the stewards of God's word. First He tells them they are slaves, then He calls them illegitimate children. Later He says they have no spiritual understanding, but worst of all, He shows them that they serve the devil and not the One true God.

Have members of the class take turns in reading John 8:31—9:41 aloud.

- *Describe the mood Jesus appears to be in.*
- *Why do you suppose Jesus was so committed to undermining the authority of the Jewish religious leadership?*
- *Considering the miracles Jesus performed and the power of His teaching, why didn't the Jewish leaders accept Jesus as who He claimed to be?*

2. YOU'RE NOT FREE (8:31-34)

Ask someone to reread John 8:31-34.

When I was a youth, I had no understanding of real freedom. I thought freedom was doing whatever I wanted to do. Only later I came to understand that it is possible to be a slave to your passions. I didn't know that following passions are not what make persons free. True freedom is the freedom to know and believe in the truth.

- *In verses 31 and 32, Jesus provides a potent formula for freedom; what is it?*
- *The Jews believed freedom was a matter of genetics. Since they were descendants of a free man they believed they were free. Describe Jesus' response in verse 34.*

- *How does holding to Jesus' teachings make us free? In other words, by determining to know His words, how are we made free?*

3. YOU'RE NOT THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM (8:35-40)

Ask someone from your class to read John 8:35-40 aloud.

It seems odd today that the Jews should appeal to Abraham as proof of their freedom. But Jesus didn't think it was odd, He just didn't think it was true. Slavery was often a family affair in ancient times; slaves produced slaves. So Jews, never mind their slavery in Egypt, counted themselves free men. But Jesus was not talking about physical slavery, He was speaking of slavery to a wrong relationship.

Physical children resemble their parents and so do spiritual children. And with this argument, Jesus argues against the Jews' identification with Abraham (vv. 39 and 40). Abraham obeyed God, but they don't. That makes them slaves, not sons.

- *While Jesus' words are harsh, they are not cruel. Even as He condemns the Jews, He holds out hope. What is the hope Jesus gives to them?*
- *Jesus tells the Jews that their plans to kill Him prove what?*
- *Why are the Jews trying to kill Jesus?*

4. YOU'RE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL (8:41-58)

Ask someone from the class to read John 8:41-58 aloud to the class.

So who do the Jews resemble? Jesus confronts them with their actions: they reject truth and attempt murder. These actions certainly don't appear to be God-like. Whose behavior do they resemble?

- *In verse 47, Jesus declares, "He who belongs to God hears what God says." And the reverse of that must also be true, "He who belongs to the devil . . ." Finish the sentence.*
- *What does Jesus say which hints that He is one with the Father?*

- *What do verses 37, 40, 43, and 45 have in common?*

5. YOU CAN'T SEE (9:1-41)

This is the sixth of the seven miraculous signs of Jesus recorded in John's gospel. But while it is the sixth, it also seems to be a repeat of miracle number three, the healing of the lame man on the Sabbath back in Chapter 5. While the similarity is strong, and many issues are the same, the primary purpose of this story is to seal Jesus' case against the Jewish leadership, and demonstrate why they are unfit to lead the people of God.

Read John 9:1-41 aloud to the class, and while the passage is being read, have the class members write down every verse which refers to sight, seeing, or perceiving.

- *The investigation of the healing provides some good fun at the expense of the Pharisees. In what way does the investigation prove the Pharisees are blind?*
- *Why would this kind of blindness disqualify someone from spiritual leadership?*
- *Considering Jesus' words in verses 39 and 41, what is the key to spiritual sight?*

APPLY THE WORD

1. LIGHT OR DARK?

This simple activity is intended to help students take a stand on sin and truth. While the issues are fairly direct, do not allow students to merely apply the appropriate label—Light or Darkness. Instead go from issue to issue asking youth to provide their response and then to justify it. Push students to give support (scriptural and otherwise) to defend their positions. This approach can often encourage students to do the hard work of thinking their positions through. You can have each person mark their positions individually and then discuss as a group, or simply work through it as a group.

In the scriptures, Light is God's truth and Darkness is man's sinfulness. Light and life go together since God is the author of both and He cannot be divided against himself. This means sin, falsehood, and death all belong together for they

are not from God. Mark whether you believe each of the following deeds belongs to Darkness (D) or Light (L).

- ___ 1. *Caring for the poor*
- ___ 2. *Speaking negatively about people who aren't present*
- ___ 3. *Speaking the truth*
- ___ 4. *Loving your neighbor*
- ___ 5. *Telling dirty jokes*
- ___ 6. *Refusing to slander a person's character*
- ___ 7. *Wasting money on selfish purchases*
- ___ 8. *Reaching out to someone different than you (racial/language barriers)*
- ___ 9. *Killing people*
- ___ 10. *Stealing*
- ___ 11. *Honesty in all your ways*
- ___ 12. *Cloning human embryos for medical research*
- ___ 13. *Abusing your body through various drugs and toxic substances*
- ___ 14. *Cheating on taxes*
- ___ 15. *Honoring your parents*
- ___ 16. *Caring for God's creation*
- ___ 17. *Spending time with someone who is lonely*

2. FINDING HELP TO TELL THE TRUTH

This activity helps youth think about those people in their lives who provide support for them to live for God. Who are the significant others in their family, their church, their neighborhood, and even their school who help? Using the questions provided, discuss with your group how much we really do depend on others. You may want to pass out paper and have them write down their answers individually before discussing as a group.

It takes great strength and courage to do what is right because it is so easy to do what is wrong. In order to do what is right, we need help. We're too

weak to do it on our own. We all need this kind of support. That's why Christian friends, people who believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, are so important. Who are your friends? Who are the people who support you and help you do what is right? (If you don't have such friends, you need to find them quick!) Who do you know that lives the Christian life and can help you to as well?

- *List the friends who help you live as a Christian.*
- *How do they support you?*
- *Do you have friends who tend to lower your standards and practice?*

LIVE THE WORD

Giving Help

In this final section of the session, students are challenged to move from being receivers to givers. They are asked to write a prayer for people whom God has called to tell and live the truth in our world. First they are told to pray for their friends, then for the leaders of their church, then for Christian leaders of our nation, and finally for Christians around the world who dare to speak the truth of Christ. Use their prayers and their concerns to compose a closing prayer for your entire group and their concerns.

Not only do you need help to tell the truth, others need your help. I would like each of us to write out prayers for the following people: Christian friends, Leaders in your church, Christian leaders in our nation, Christians around the world who are daring to speak the truth.

Close with prayer.

The Good Shepherd

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 10:1-42

KEY VERSE

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that we are called to obediently follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for us.
2. Desire to follow the Good Shepherd.
3. Commit themselves to be obedient followers of the Good Shepherd.

PERSPECTIVE

Many parts of the world have seen freedom triumph over obligation. Choice, rather than being a means to an end, has become the end. Freedom has been reduced to keeping your options open. This is a foolish impoverishment; we have forgotten why we wanted to be free in the first place.

While freedom of choice is central to our beliefs, Christian beliefs teach that God’s choice is what really matters. Christian faith is not even a matter of choosing Christ. Putting it that way sounds right, but it places the emphasis on the wrong point. The Bible teaches that rather than choosing God, God has chosen us in Christ.

Putting things this way makes people nervous. It’s a matter of control. With this kind of thinking, options are not the point; rather, faithful obedience is. And this is precisely the kind of change in heart and mind we must encourage in young people if we hope to see them live truly Christian lives in the world. It is a matter of control—Jesus must be Lord.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Chapter 10 is about the judgment of the shepherd. The image is pastoral, and to a Jew who knew his history, it brought to mind the great shepherd king David.

1. THE GOOD SHEPHERD (10:1-18)

Jesus gives us a word picture and then does something He rarely does; in verses 7-18, He interprets it for us. The elements of the story are a sheep pen, some thieves, a gate, some sheep, a watchman, a shepherd, the shepherd's voice, some trusting sheep, a hired hand, a wolf, and finally, more sheep. All of the imagery was common and should have been familiar to most of Jesus' listeners. It was not unusual for a community to have a common sheep pen. At the end of a day, all the sheep would be herded into the pen and a watchman, hired by the shepherds, would watch the sheep through the night. Each morning the shepherds would come and call their sheep, and the sheep, recognizing their master's voice, would happily trot to their master.

What's the meaning? The sheep pen is Israel. In this story, Jesus is both the Gate (v. 7) and the Good Shepherd (vv. 11-14). Those who listen to His voice are the obedient. Jesus calls His sheep, and they come out through the gate and follow Him. But where does the Good Shepherd take His sheep and what happens to those left behind?

Let's answer the second question first. In verses 1, 8, and 10, Jesus mentions thieves and robbers. These are false teachers who failed to come through the gate. From verse 7, we know that Jesus is the Gate; it is by Him that the Word of God comes to the sheep, and through Him the sheep come out of the pen. Even more deadly than the thieves is the wolf. The thieves and robbers came before Jesus, but the wolf comes after His sheep have been removed. This is God's judgment upon all those who do not follow the Good Shepherd. They are abandoned to the leaders of their own choosing. And what is the result? When the wolf comes, the hired hands run away, and the flock becomes lunch for the wolf.

Here Jesus' narrative takes an interesting turn; He informs His listeners of other sheep. He declares His intention to go and call these sheep as well (v. 16). If you are familiar with Mormon theology, you know the Latter-day Saints use this passage as a proof text for their belief that Jesus appeared to the "lost children of Israel" located on the American continent. While this is a tribute to the fertile imagination of Mormon founder Joseph Smith, it misses the point. Jesus is not speaking of geography, but heredity. The

first sheep pen is Israel; the other sheep are the Gentiles.

And so the Good Shepherd takes His sheep with Him as He goes from pen to pen calling out the obedient, those whom the Father has given Him. Here we see Jesus, who for as long as human history lasts, calls, saves, and judges wherever He goes. He is the kindly Shepherd King of the Old Testament, and the righteous Judge of Matthew 25.

The Good Shepherd: Dr Jekyll or Mr. Hyde?

To those who know Jesus, the thought that He is a Good Shepherd is comforting. But there is another side to the story.

In Matthew 25:31-46, the Shepherd appears as the righteous Judge who separates humanity as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Here we have the opportunity to see with a little more clarity the perspective of the goats.

Does the image tell of two kinds of shepherd or does it tell of two kinds of sheep? Jesus is the Light of God, and depending upon our deeds, we are either drawn to the light, or we are repulsed by it. Jesus is not Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde—we are.

2. THE DIVISION OF THE PEOPLE (10:19-42)

In verses 22-30, the Jews ask Jesus to come out and tell them plainly who He is; so He does, and they try to kill Him. (I must admit: if every time I revealed my identity people tried to kill me, I would be bit reluctant to do it.) But Jesus does not fear death; He is only waiting for the right time to give up His life (v. 18).

Jesus makes some interesting arguments in favor of His Sonship. Don't be fooled into thinking Jesus is saying that those in verse 35 and the One in verse 36 are the same; clearly they are not. In verse 35 they receive the Word, but the One in verse 36 is, in fact, the Word.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Who Are You Going to Trust?

There are a lot of belief systems woven throughout the fabric of our societies. Every faith in the

world sees your area as an open market for expansion. New Age thought is one of the most recent of religious innovations, and perhaps the most harmless, considering that it does not seem capable of developing institutions that can sustain it over the long haul. Through the media, school contacts, and door-to-door missionaries like the Mormons, youth are coming in to contact with many false and destructive faiths. Unless we provide some means of guidance, our youth are vulnerable to being converted by them.

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 aloud and answer the following questions as a class:

1. *Why is it important to trust in the Lord?*
2. *How should you trust in the Lord?*
3. *What's the difference between a blind trust and a trust based on faith and hope?*

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (10:1-42)

Jesus' public ministry is nearly at an end. He came to show and teach us how to live life to the full, but the Jews have condemned themselves because they do not believe. In the last session, we witnessed Jesus' judgment of the Jewish religious authorities as He systematically disproved their self-understanding that they are the stewards of God's word.

In chapter 10, Jesus illustrates His salvation through the imagery of a shepherd and his sheep. The Jewish golden era was ushered in by a shepherd named David. The Jews longed for another "David," a great king who would "restore the kingdom to Israel." But the kind of shepherd Jesus describes is not the shepherd they've been waiting for.

Read chapter 10 aloud, and while you are reading, have the class members write down some of their images of the Good Shepherd.

- *As we read about the Good Shepherd, how does the imagery help you understand what has happened up to this point in John's gospel?*
- *The image of the Good Shepherd also points toward some events which have yet to occur. Can you think of some?*

2. VOICES (10:1-6)

Have someone from the class read John 10:1-6 aloud to the class.

Jesus begins with an image that must have been familiar to His listeners. In those days, cities were much closer to farms than they usually are today. Everyone knew about shepherds because they were a common sight.

It was also common for teachers to use the shepherd and his work as a metaphor for religious instruction. While the imagery was just as warm and comforting for the Jews as it is for us, it held a greater power for them because of their hope of a shepherd king, who, like David, would establish God's kingdom on the earth.

Jesus' story contains a hint of judgment for the sheep that is entirely new. The popular vision celebrated happy sheep and doom for wolves. This rendering describes a selective shepherd and a feast for wolves.

- *Jesus explains that He has come to the sheep pen of Israel and has called out the names of His sheep. What is the one thing which separates Jesus' sheep from the sheep who do not belong to Him?*
- *Jesus describes those who came before Him as "thieves and robbers." Who do you think He was speaking of?*
- *Jesus says His sheep do not listen to a stranger's voice. How do the sheep tell the difference between the voice of the Shepherd and other voices?*

3. THE GOOD SHEPHERD (10:7-13)

Have someone read John 10:7-13 aloud to the class.

The difference between the Good Shepherd and the hired hands is the sacrifice the shepherd makes for the sheep. When the wolf comes, hired hands drop their staffs, run, and leave the sheep as easy meat. But the Good Shepherd gives his own life that the sheep may live.

- *When Jesus speaks of the Good Shepherd He is speaking of himself (v. 11), but who are the hired hands?*

- *Jesus speaks of a wolf who is coming. It is not a matter of "if", but "when." Jesus is removing His sheep from the pen and leaving those who are not His own to the care of the hired hands. And as we see from verses 12 and 13, it looks like they will be meat for the wolf. Why is Jesus leaving them behind?*
- *Jumping ahead to verse 17, Jesus says the reason the Father loves the Son is because He gives His life for the sheep. This is why the Father has taken His sheep from the hired hands and given them to the Good Shepherd. When Jesus speaks of laying down His life for the sheep, what is He talking about?*
- *Why do hired hands work with sheep?*
- *We call spiritual leaders "pastors" because they are supposed to be like Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Let's use this passage of scripture as a guide and write a job description for a pastor.*

4. OTHER SHEEP (10:14-21)

Ask someone to read John 10:14-21 aloud to the class.

- *Jesus refers to the universal dimensions of His mission when He says, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen" (v. 16). What "other sheep" is He speaking of?*
- *Here we see the missionary mandate of Jesus. His vision is to go to all the nations of the world, call out His sheep, and make them one flock. This is an enormous task because there are so many sheep pens.*

5. I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE (10:22-42)

Terms/People to Know

- *Jordan River (John 10:40)—The Jordan River is the only large flowing body of water in Palestine. Flowing from north to south, the river flows into the Sea of Galilee, from which it exits and continues until finally entering the Dead Sea.*

Ask someone to read John 10:22-42 aloud to the class.

Here we have the figurative language of the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep made concrete. Those who do not believe in Him are the unwanted sheep.

The Jews demand that Jesus tell them plainly if He is the Christ. He does so in verse 30 and because of this they promptly attempt to kill Him. (I'm not sure I'd be willing to tell people who I was if every time I did so they tried to kill me.) Jesus appeals to His miracles as a defense (v. 31), but the Jews reject this defense because they are not His sheep (v. 26).

- *In verses 27 and 28, Jesus makes two promises to those who follow Him. What are they?*
- *Throughout John's gospel, Jesus has emphasized His connection to the Father, but now He captures it succinctly with the phrase "I and the Father are one" (v. 30). Based upon your study of John up to this point, what does He mean by this?*
- *In verses 34 through 38, Jesus presents several arguments to defend His claims. What are they?*

ARE ALL OF US GODS?

"I have said you are gods"? (John 10:34). Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6 to defend His claim that He is God's Son. Jesus' argument runs, if God called them "gods" because they received the word of God, shouldn't this apply even more to "the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world"? This is a tricky scripture to interpret. What did Jesus mean? Are all of us "gods"? The clue to the mystery is the role of the word of God. To call those who were considered to be the people of God and who obey the word "gods" is a way to express that they, and now we, are children of God. By receiving the word of God they became god-like. Simple enough. So is Jesus saying He is just another obedient servant of the word, but not really God? Yes and no. Yes, He is obedient. But no, He does not just receive the word—He is the Word, He belongs to God, and He is God.

APPLY THE WORD

1. The Good Shepherd

This exercise requires students to develop character sketches describing the three types of religious leaders described by Jesus in His story of the Good Shepherd. The process is intended to help students understand three basic types of spiritual leaders. The first are those leaders who steal from the flock of God for their own ambitions. The second type are those leaders who are in it for the money. The final type is the good shepherd who lays down his life in order to save the lives of the sheep. This last type is the spiritual leader who receives God's authorization to lead His people. Use the questions with this exercise to help students understand the basic types of leader and help them understand that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the only One worthy of their absolute trust because He is the only One who has laid down His life for them. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 and have them work on the sketches together, and then bring all small groups together at the end to discuss their answers.

We live in a world where new religions seem to start every day. How do we know what is true? How do we know who to trust? Jesus called himself the "Good Shepherd" because He is trustworthy. Read His word picture of the Good Shepherd and answer the following questions to see who to trust and who not to trust.

Jesus speaks of three types of spiritual leaders. Read about them in the following verses and write a brief character sketch describing them:

"Thieves and robbers" (vv. 8 and 10)

"The hired hand" (vv. 12 and 13)

"The Good Shepherd" (vv. 7-18)

2. TRUSTING JESUS

This activity calls for your students to put the 23rd psalm into contemporary language. Its intent is to help your students visualize what it means to trust the Good Shepherd, Jesus. Have your students share their paraphrases and explain why they interpreted the psalm the way they did.

What does it mean to trust and follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd? Read Psalm 23. Now, paraphrase or reword this psalm into contemporary language.

Think about your life and translate this Psalm into your experience.

LIVE THE WORD

Interview a Modern Good Shepherd

Pastors carry on the work of Jesus in our world by calling His sheep out from the world and forming them into a flock. We should trust our pastors in a secondary sense even as we trust Jesus in a primary sense. Likewise, the pastor is supposed to lay down his life for the sheep even as Jesus has laid down His life.

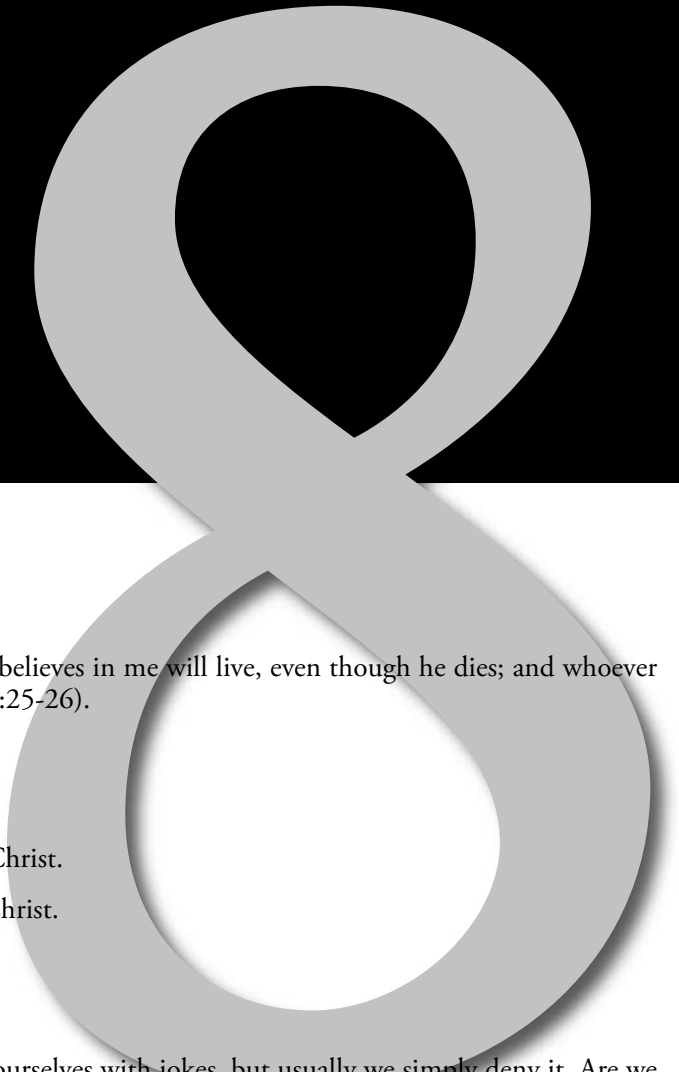
In this section, youth are instructed to interview your pastor. Invite him or her to this part of your group meeting

We call preachers and ministers "pastor," which literally means shepherd, because they fulfill the call of Jesus. They carry on the work of Jesus by gathering and leading the people of God. Because of this they have a unique perspective—they are called to see people as Jesus sees and loves them. Let's use the following questions to help us interview our pastor.

- 1. Pastor, in what way is your work like the work of a shepherd?*
- 2. We call Jesus the "Good Shepherd"; what does that mean for your ministry?*
- 3. What are the most difficult things you must do as a pastor?*
- 4. What is the most rewarding part of being a shepherd?*
- 5. If you could give advice to someone just starting out as a pastor, what would your advice be?*
- 6. Why did you become a pastor?*

If your pastor is able to attend, ask him or her to close with a prayer.

Life and Death



STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 11:1—12:50

KEY VERSE

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25-26).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that eternal life is only through Christ.
2. Sense the urgency of accepting life through Christ.
3. Commit or recommit their lives to Christ.

PERSPECTIVE

Death awaits us all. Sometimes we comfort ourselves with jokes, but usually we simply deny it. Are we in the church any different? Do we rely upon the resources of our faith that allow us to face death confidently? The promises of the Bible are not intended to protect us from the reality of death. They are given to us to provide the hope and faith we need to face it. Most of all, Scripture points us to the One who faced death and triumphed over it.

Often we fail to talk about death with youth because we fear the topic is too potent. With the rise in numbers of youth suicides, people who care about youth don't want to give youth any wrong ideas that they might follow up on. But with rising death rates among youth, whether due to suicide, alcohol related accidents, gang violence, or AIDS, death is on the minds of youth regardless—inhibitions and all. Youth want to talk about death and are willing to do so if the atmosphere is right. We must create an atmosphere in which youth know their fears are normal and their doubts are okay. And we need not feel intimidated about addressing this issue, because if there is any topic that Christianity has the final word on, it is death.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Beginning in chapter 1, light has been the principal metaphor used to describe the nature of Jesus' ministry. Periodically John reintroduces this word picture to remind us that Jesus is the illuminating power of

God. Those who witness His light and believe have no darkness in them, but those who love the darkness cannot bear His light because what it reveals is too horrible to endure. In the first case, the light of God bears witness to itself; in the second, the light illumines the darkness and reveals it for what it is. And this is the testimony of the light: light equals life and darkness equals death. Chapters 11 and 12 show the principal characters of John's narrative for who they essentially are. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and the Jewish leaders are dealers in death.

1. LIFE (11:1-44)

Chapter 11 begins as word is sent to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." Jesus responds, "This sickness will not end in death." Then He waits around for a couple of days until He is sure Lazarus is dead. Then He announces to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

Jesus arrives at the scene and is greeted by Martha. She timidly rebukes Him for His slow response to the crisis. But Jesus tells her Lazarus will rise again. Martha, like a good Jew, provides the orthodox response, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus, Master of the teachable moment, sees His chance to teach her. He tells her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." Then Mary shows up, bringing a crowd of people along with her, and the stage is set for Jesus' greatest miracle.

The description of the event is short and direct. In verses 43 and 44, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. While the miracle is impressive, it is not great simply because it was difficult to accomplish. All the miracles are difficult to accomplish. That's what makes them miraculous. The greatness of a miracle is not measured by its degree of difficulty, as though Jesus were some sort of Olympic high diver performing for an audience. The greatness of a miracle is measured by how fully it expresses the character and work of God.

2. DEATH (11:45-12:50)

True to form, some believe in Jesus, while others report what they've seen to the Jewish leaders. In chapter 11, verses 47 through 57, we see the opposi-

tion in conference. While their plan of action is predictable, there are some interesting features to note. For the first time we see what is really bothering the Pharisees (v. 48). They're afraid that Jesus will provoke a rebellion, and Rome will crush Israel beneath its boot. The common people may believe in divine retribution, but not the Sanhedrin. These guys are a savvy bunch. Like most politicians, they are skilled at arranging their own survival. They'd rather be the big fish in a small pond than gamble everything on a traveling rabbi from Galilee.

The second feature of interest is the prophecy of Caiaphas (vv. 49-52). It's a classic example of irony, because Caiaphas had absolutely no idea how true his words were.

In chapter 12, verses 1-11, Mary anoints Jesus for burial. Then follows the Triumphal Entry, which, considering the context seems almost a kind of parody. But it is not. For by the death of Jesus, the kingdom of God conquered the kingdom of this world (vv. 31-32). And by it the name of God is glorified, as the word from heaven testifies (v. 28).

In verses 20-50, Jesus concludes His public ministry. When some Greeks approach Him (v. 20), Jesus takes it as a sign that His time among the Jews is over. His final remarks begin with the hint that His followers will be required to follow the way He has set for them: "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be." He then warns His hearers that the light is about to be extinguished, and they had better hurry up and believe (vv. 35-36). After some comments by John concerning how even the unbelief of the Jews served to bear witness to God's truthfulness by the fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus summarizes His message (vv. 44-50).

Now we enter the intimate circle of Christ and His disciples and witness His ministry among them on the final evening of His earthly life.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Death

In this activity, your youth will be asked to reflect upon the death of someone in their lives. Admittedly this is a heavy topic, and it will probably be sobering. Begin your time together with some sharing about

death and its meaning in general terms, then move to the specific. Ask if there are students who would not mind sharing their own experience of loss through death. As young people share, have them briefly describe the circumstances surrounding the deaths they have experienced, and have them also share how these experiences have affected and changed their own understanding of life and death.

Psychologists tell us that it is impossible to imagine our own death. This is because it lies outside the sphere of our experience. But before we have lived very long in this world, we will know someone who dies. That someone may be distant, like an aunt who lives in another part of the country, or that someone may be close, like a friend or a parent. So whether we can imagine our own death or not, before long we all know that death is real, and deep in the back of our own minds we know, sooner or later, we too shall die.

- Remember a time when someone broke the news to you of a death? If you can, please describe your feelings to us and how you coped with it.
- How have these experiences affected and changed your own understanding of life and death?

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (11:1–12:50)

From the beginning, Jesus has promised eternal life to those who believe in Him. This is quite a promise, for it signifies new life in the present and a life after death as well. Death waits for us all, for we will all die sooner or later. It wasn't always this way, though. The story of the garden of Eden shows that death was not God's idea. It is the consequence of broken relationship with God.

The raising of Lazarus is the pivotal point in the gospel story. The tension between Jesus and the Jewish rulers has been building and the stakes have been getting higher and higher. The whole Jewish nation seems to be on the edge of their seats waiting for the next move. The raising of Lazarus forces the Jews to action. Jesus proves He can deliver on His promise by raising a man from the dead. And the

Jewish leaders? Well, let's just say they prove that they can kill.

- *Death will come to us all; what are some ways people deal with death?*
- *Different religions have different ideas about death and its meaning; what do Christians believe concerning death?*
- *Because of the rise of teen suicide, it seems as though more and more youth view death as better than life. Why?*

2. A BELOVED FRIEND (11:1-16)

Terms/People to Know

- *Thomas (John 11:16)—Known as Didymus (“twin”), Thomas is known both as a pillar of strength among the early disciples and for his initial doubt in believing that Christ had indeed risen from the dead.*

Have someone read John 11:1-16 aloud to the class.

The raising of Lazarus was the crowning sign of Jesus' ministry; it was proof that Jesus could deliver on His promises. It was not His greatest sign; and yet all His signs were beyond human power to do. Signs are not judged by their degree of difficulty as though Jesus were an Olympic athlete performing before a crowd. Signs are judged by how well they express the purpose and work of God. And none of Jesus' signs more plainly and forcefully expressed the mission of Jesus Christ than the raising of Lazarus. This is why it is the seventh sign, and why it has been saved for last.

- *Verse 5 tells us that Jesus loved Lazarus, but verse 6 states that Jesus waited “two more days” before He went to him. Why do you think Jesus waited?*
- *In verse 4 Jesus says, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.” This should sound familiar to you. When did Jesus say something like this before?*
- *Verses 14 and 15 reveal Jesus' purposes. What were they?*

3. KEEPING A PROMISE (11:17-44)

Ask someone from the class to read John 11:17-44 aloud to the class.

We all must trust somebody. We simply can't make it on our own. Trusting people means placing ourselves in their care. What makes a person trustworthy? Isn't it keeping promises? If someone makes a promise, only to break it, will we believe in them? Of course not. Throughout John's gospel, Jesus has been asking people to believe in Him and His promise of Eternal Life. The time has come for Jesus to show He has the power to do what He has promised to do.

- *Why does it make sense to trust your life to someone who has power over death?*
- *By reading the story you can see that this sign has all the elements of a major spectacle. Why did this sign have potential to be heard throughout the whole region?*
- *In verse 26, Jesus asks Martha for a confession of faith before He raises Lazarus. Why do you think He did this?*
- *Verse 35, the shortest verse in the Bible reads, "Jesus wept." Why did Jesus weep when He knew that in just moments He would raise Lazarus from the dead?*
- *Many people believe death is the end of the story of our lives. We see from this story that those who believe in Jesus look forward to Eternal Life. How should this reality influence us?*

4. THE DEATH SENTENCE (11:45-12:19)

Terms/People to Know

- *Sanhedrin (san-HEE-drin) (John 11:47)–The name given to the highest Jewish assembly for government affairs during the time of Christ; made up of the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law. During the Roman rule, the authority of the Sanhedrin was somewhat restricted.*
- *Daughter of Zion (John 12:15)–“Zion” itself had three meanings: 1) the city of Jerusalem as a whole, 2) the Jewish nation,*

3) heaven itself. Study of the Old Testament passage (Zech. 9:9) from which this is taken seems to support the first view, with “daughter of Zion” referring to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They were about to witness Jesus' triumphal entry into the city.

Ask a class member to read John 11:45-12:19 aloud to the class.

By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus has fully revealed His continuity with His Father. Now the Jewish leadership reveals what is within them. The evil has been there all along, but it took Jesus' steady persistence to flush it out. And because Jesus has been their primary irritant, He will feel the brunt of their wrath.

- *In verse 48, the leaders reveal what is really bothering them. Why do they fear Jesus?*
- *Verses 49 through 52 record the prophesy of Caiaphas the high priest. Clearly Caiaphas did not know what he was really saying. The prophesy can be interpreted in two ways. What do you think Caiaphas meant and what do you think the prophesy really meant?*
- *What does Caiaphas' prophesy teach us about the sovereignty of God?*
- *Jesus waited for the Passover to allow the Jews to get at Him. (Remember the significance of the Passover from the feeding of the 5,000?) Mary anoints Jesus for burial in verse 3. How do we know this is what the anointing signified?*
- *Verse 8 is perhaps the most abused verse in the Bible. Often it is used by selfish Christians to get out of their responsibility to care for the poor. Why is this an abuse of this scripture? (The point of this passage is not that we can justify ignoring the poor. Yes, the poor will always be present—but that means we have an ongoing opportunity to minister to them. But Jesus will only die once. Consequently, since He has already died, we have no excuse. We have nothing to distract us from the holy work of giving to those less fortunate than ourselves.)*

5. JESUS CONCLUDES HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY (12:20-50)

Terms/People to Know

- *Isaiah (eye-ZAY-uh) (John 12:38)–This Old Testament prophet was active during the reign of four kings of Israel. Isaiah is known particularly for his message of redemption and is often noted for his emphasis on salvation (his name means “Salvation of Jehovah”) and the promised Messiah.*

Ask someone to read John 12:20-50 aloud for the class.

Jesus' public ministry has come to an end. In verse 23 he sums it up: “The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” He then tells His listeners that time is just about to run out: “You are going to have the light just a little while longer” (v. 35).

- *This is Botany class. In verse 24, Jesus says the death of one seed produces many seeds. When He says a seed “dies” He is speaking figuratively of planting a seed in the ground. When this happens, a plant emerges from the ground and that plant produces even more seeds. How is Jesus' death for us like the death of a seed?*
- *Jesus indicates that His death will glorify God (vv. 27-28). Remember glorify means “shine” or “radiate.” How will His death bring praise to God?*
- *Verses 47 and 48 explain Jesus' method of judgment. In your own words, explain what you think He means.*
- *Finally, Jesus explains one last time that His words are not His own. Whose are they and why should we believe them?*

APPLY THE WORD

1. GRIEF

Use this time with the group to discuss the role of grief in the Christian life. Talk about how Christians should grieve, and how grief can be part of our

ministry to others by identifying with their sufferings. Questions are provided below.

Jesus took death seriously. The whole goal of His ministry was to defeat death. And He knew His Father would enable Him to do that. Yet, just before He raised Lazarus from the dead, the writer tells us “Jesus wept” (11:35). I’m glad Jesus wept. Jesus, of all the people at the tomb, could have had a smile on His face since he knew what was about to happen. But He wept. And His tears were not just for show; they were real tears of real grief

1. *How does Jesus' grief help us understand our own grief? (Jesus' grief legitimizes grief and places it in perspective. Since Jesus grieved, we can grieve. His weeping teaches us that it is okay to weep for those we lose to death.)*
2. *Jesus comforted Martha and Mary. What should Christians do for those who grieve in light of this?*

2. HOPE

For Christians death and grief are not final. Life and joy are. Refer back to the story of Lazarus with your students, and challenge them to do some hard thinking about how the power of the Resurrection changes the way Christians live in the world.

The story of Jesus is a story of Hope. Throughout his gospel, John quotes Jesus again and again as He offers hope to those trapped in despair. Jesus does this by promising Eternal Life to all who believe in Him. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He proved He could deliver on His promise. With a Savior like this, we never have to despair because we know that no matter how bad it gets, hope will win! Let's do some hard thinking. How does the hope we have in Jesus help us when . . .

1. *. . . we lose someone we love?*
2. *. . . our world seems like it is falling apart?*
3. *. . . all the news we hear is bad news?*
4. *. . . our friends, family, and even other Christians become cynical and negative about everything?*

LIVE THE WORD

Joy

With our hope we have an irrepressible joy. It is a joy which, while respectful of death, knows death is not the end of the story. Our joy is not found in circumstances but in Jesus. It is important to realize that the joy of eternal life begins now and not after death. God fully intends for us to enjoy life and enjoy it to the fullest. We often live our lives in guilt, fear and legalism when God wants us to live the journey with joy, know we live and abide in His truth and grace.

- **List (or name) five things you have done that bring you joy that also bring God joy.**
- **Joy is contagious. List (or name) five people that you would like to infect with the joy that comes from the Lord and write a short prayer for each person.**

Sometimes joy can only find expression in song. Maybe that's why the angels always appear to be singing in heaven. To conclude our time together, let's sing a song of joy.

Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;

Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee, Opening to the sun above.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away.

Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee; Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays;

Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise.

Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flowery meadow, flashing sea,

Chanting bird and flowing fountain Call us to rejoice in Thee!

Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,

Wellspring of the joy of living, Ocean depth of happy rest!

Thou our Father, Christ our Brother—All who live in love are Thine.

Teach us how to love each other; Lift us to the joy divine!

Mortals join the mighty chorus Which the morning stars began.

Father love is reigning o'er us; Brother love binds man to man.

Ever singing, march we onward, Victors in the midst of strife.

Joyful music leads us sunward In the triumph song of life!

—HENRY VAN DYKE

Close with prayer.

The Journey from Me to We

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 13:1—14:31

KEY VERSE

“If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Discover that Jesus’ followers are to be a fellowship of servants.
2. Sense the importance of imitating Jesus’ service to others.
3. Commit themselves to unity within the Body of Christ and works of loving obedience.

PERSPECTIVE

Many people today live for themselves and understand their actions as their own personal affair—so “leave me alone.” This radical brand of individualism is opposed to the gospel. For in the gospel, the normal pronouns are not “I” and “me” but rather “you” and “we.”

We tend to define our own petty little worlds by our own petty little passions and persecute anyone who dares to tell us how to live unless they appeal to our own petty little interests. Our motto is “I just have to be me!” and our theme song is “I Did It My Way!” Jesus’ saying, “The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:25), sounds more like a threat than a promise to most of us.

The inability to speak in terms larger than the individual has severely damaged the expression of the gospel in the modern world. We’ve invented unbiblical language like “Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Savior?” Show me any place in the Scriptures where the word personal is inserted to qualify “Savior.” What’s wrong with adding a little word for the purpose of clarification? Aside from the fact that no one who takes the Scriptures seriously should lightly amend them, the word “personal” only obscures the meaning of salvation and does little to explain it. Salvation is bigger than me, it is bigger than even the Church, for Jesus is the fullness of God’s salvation, and according to Colossians 1:15-20, He has reconciled all things to God.

Your students must learn to think in big terms if they are to be biblically based Christians. Yes, salvation is something that fills the individual with the presence of God, but this is not the whole picture. When we enter into Christ, we no longer live for ourselves, we live for Him. Our lives are lost in His life, and He lives His life through us. Christian conversion is a conversion from “I” and “me” to “you” and “we.”

BIBLE BACKGROUND

John transports us from the public arena of chapter 12 to the privacy of Jesus’ inner circle in chapter 13. The transition is abrupt, but it is intended to be. John is a masterful storyteller. For the first time in the Gospel we leave the crowds behind. Now we are with Jesus in a secret place to enjoy a meal and some privileged instruction.

Jesus begins the meal with an object lesson. He washes His disciples’ feet. In this simple act, Jesus places His life and ministry in context. The disciples will not be able to interpret any word or act of Jesus as self-serving in light of this. But He doesn’t leave it there. He turns to His followers and asks, “Do you understand what I have done for you?” (v. 12). Because He is Lord and Teacher, by washing their feet He has taught them how to live. They must follow His example, for “no servant is greater than his master” (v. 16). In fact, Jesus makes service the measure of greatness.

Jesus turns from one messy job to another by exposing betrayal in the inner circle. From verse 18 through the end of the chapter, Jesus shows that He will be first betrayed by Judas and then denied by the rest of the disciples. The rest? Yes, for although Peter will deny Him with words, they all will deny Him with silence. In the end, the whole world rejected Him. Jesus died alone for the sins of the world.

Note some interesting features from the second half of chapter 13. First, Jesus provides a framework from which to interpret His betrayal; accepting Him means accepting God, which, of course, means the reverse is true (v. 20).

Second, the instrument Jesus uses to reveal His betrayer is bread. Remember, bread symbolizes His body. Jesus turns to Judas, hands him His body, and immediately Satan enters Judas. And what does Judas do with the body of Jesus? Just what Satan has de-

sired all along. At this point John tells us that it is night. The night of Judas is the contrast to the day of Jesus. Satan is finally permitted to act.

Now that Jesus has set the engine of His own death irreversibly in motion, He almost appears relieved. With Judas gone, He turns to His disciples and begins the work of transferring His ministry to them.

He tells them how they will reveal their discipleship to the world (vv. 34-35). It is not by speaking in tongues or other verbal expressions. It’s bigger than that. It’s by loving each other. This brings us to chapter 14. Here Jesus invites His disciples to join the communion He has known with the Father. To this point in the story, whenever Jesus has mentioned His ultimate destination, He has explained, “But you cannot follow me.” Now, for the first time, He tells His disciples that they will join Him.

Jesus is returning to the Father and is blazing a trail along which His disciples may follow. In verses 5 through 11, the “I and the Father are one” (10:30) cycle resurfaces. But now Jesus addresses His inner circle with the intention of drawing them into this cycle and making them part of it. He says in verses 12 through 14 that His work will continue through them as they pray to the Father in His name.

He then speaks in a whole new way. He introduces a new variable to the equation. There will be “another Counselor...the Spirit of truth” (vv. 16-17). The Spirit will bind the disciples to Jesus in His absence, and because they are linked to Jesus, they will be linked to the Father through Him. But this communion must be maintained by obedience to Jesus’ commands. Jesus is not speaking of a mystical union. Union with Him is something that is fully visible to the world through the continuance of His works, even as His union with His Father was visible through miracles. The work of the Spirit is not to make the disciples feel all warm and fuzzy on the inside, but to bring them into the fellowship of the Father and the Son by leading them into all truth (16:13). And as Jesus’ disciples express their love for Him through obedience, they will receive feedback from the Father (v. 21), the Son (v. 21), and the Holy Spirit (v. 26). The circle is complete, the disciples have moved from “I” and “me” to “you” and “we.”

“And it was night” (13:30)

Remember how Jesus told His disciples He had to work as long as it was day (5:17; 9:4-5; and 11:9-10)? Well, night has finally arrived. Jesus' public ministry is finished, and the light of day is sinking beneath the horizon of death. While it was day, Jesus, the Light of the World, spoke the Father's words and did the Father's work. And with this light came life—lame men walked, blind men saw and dead men were raised.

Now that it is night, those things that are at home in the dark will come out. Those who have been restrained by the light will no longer be restrained. We have seen what light can do; now it is time to see what darkness can do.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

How May I Serve You?

In this activity, your youth are asked to think of ways they can serve others. Begin your session by compiling their ideas. Jesus taught service to His disciples by washing their feet. There is nothing magical about foot washing; it was a practicality of the ancient world. Today we have many practicalities that are part of our common life. Because your students have been trained by television to receive, they may lack imagination in the service department. Here is a list of contemporary needs which may help them think about tangible ways to serve others: the feebleness of old age; poverty; the pain of the grief-stricken; the hunger of the unemployed; the anger of the oppressed; the helplessness of the disabled; the loneliness of the shut-in; the guilt of the imprisoned.

Not many of us will face the ordeal of dying for a friend, but we all must determine whether or not we will live for a friend. Living for others is called service. Jesus served His disciples by washing their feet, then He commanded them to do likewise. In this way they would follow the example of their master.

Footwashing today might seem irrelevant, but service is always relevant. Let's brainstorm on all the possible ways you can think of serving others.

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (13:1–14:31)

Jesus has left the crowds behind and is now giving His last moments to His disciples. It's like being in the eye of a storm; conflict lies behind and Jesus' final challenge lies ahead. Here, the atmosphere, while intimate, is charged with energy.

Every word is important and every action is filled with meaning. The disciples, while uncertain how to interpret it all, are on the edge of their seats waiting for the Lord to help them understand.

We are privileged eavesdroppers. What Jesus says to those who are with Him is intended for our ears, too. What applies to them applies to us. Let's read chapters 13-14 and answer the following questions:

- *If you knew you were to die tomorrow, wouldn't you want to spend your last evening with your closest friends discussing what is really important to you? This is what Jesus did. What are the things Jesus seemed to think important enough to discuss the last evening of His life?*
- *A leader's final commands are his most binding. Call out as many commands as you can find in this section. (list on board)*
- *Jesus makes some promises to His disciples which were doubly significant considering their timing. Call out as many promises as you can find. (list on board)*

2. FOOT WASHING (13:1-17)

Ask someone to read John 13:1-17 aloud for the class.

The evening begins with an act which stunned the disciples. It certainly must have turned everything upside down. Jesus washes their feet. In that act, He placed everything in perspective; every word He has spoken and every deed He has done must now be understood as a service. And He places a burden upon His followers, for as He says, "No servant is greater than his master." They must do the same for each other because to refuse is to reject His teaching.

- *Why do you think Jesus washes His disciples' feet? "Because they were dirty" is not an acceptable answer. Why did He want them to serve one another?*
- *At the very end of the lesson in verse 17, Jesus tells His disciples, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." What could that mean?*
- *How can serving people be a blessing to the servant?*

3. NIGHT (13:18-38)

Terms/People to Know

- *The disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:24)—Most scholars believe that the references throughout the Gospels to "the disciple whom Jesus loved" are referring to John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee. John is credited with writing five New Testament books—the fourth Gospel (John), three epistles (1 John, 2 John, 3 John), and Revelation. Tradition records that John was the only member of the original Twelve to die a natural death, though he did suffer at least one exile because of his beliefs (to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation).*

Ask someone to read John 13:18-38 aloud to the class.

Remember how Jesus kept telling His disciples that He had to work as long as it was day? (5:17, 9:4-5; 11:9-10). Notice that as soon as Judas leaves, the narrator says, "And it was night." It is night because, for a moment, evil is allowed to do its worst. During Jesus' public ministry it was day. Jesus, the light of the world, through His teaching and miraculous signs, spoke His Father's words and did His Father's work. And with His life came light and life. Lame men walked, blind men saw, and a dead man was raised. Now it is night and the darkness will bring what it contains.

- *Remember that often in John's gospel, bread symbolizes the body of Jesus. It is when Jesus gives Judas bread that Satan enters into him. For some reason Judas rejects Jesus and*

betrays Him. What are some reasons people reject the life of Jesus?

- *Jesus almost seems relieved that Judas is gone. He says at this point, "Now is the son of man glorified and God is glorified in him." The term glorified encompasses all that is about to happen: death, resurrection, and return to the Father. It is at this point that He gives an important command. What is it and why do you think he gives this command now?*
- *In verse 38 we see that Judas is not the only disciple to betray Jesus. Peter will deny him three times. Indeed all the disciples will desert Him; not one will speak up in His defense. Jesus stood completely alone; only His Father was with Him. His disciples are not the only ones to betray Jesus, though. Throughout the long history of the Christian church, betrayal has been the church's greatest enemy. How do Christians still betray the Lord today?*

4. CONTINUITY (14:1-11)

Ask someone to read John 14:1-11 aloud to the class.

From the beginning, Jesus emphasized His connectedness with His Father. The word He speaks is His Father's word (7:16), the works He does are His Father's works (5:19). All along He points to himself and declares that looking at Him is the same thing as looking at the Father. Apparently, Jesus did not choose the disciples by their intelligence because they still seem to have a difficult time understanding everything. Here He drives the point home like a carpenter driving a nail into a board.

- *We have seen that the Jewish leaders had become corrupt and had blocked the flow of God's Word to the people. Rather than seeking to glorify God, they sought to glorify themselves (7:18), and rather than serve God, they served the Devil (8:44). With this background, what is the significance of Jesus' words, "I am the way and the truth and the life"? (14:6).*

- *The word “way” would indicate that there is a “where.” Jesus is the way to where? Jesus answers the question in verses 2 through 4. All along, each time Jesus has mentioned His destination He has added, “Where I am going you cannot come” (7:34). But that now changes. Where is Jesus going and why may the disciples come where others may not?*
- *When I was young, I was taught that in heaven we each would have a mansion if we were faithful to Jesus. In my mind's eyes I saw large houses and gardens for everyone. But the more I thought about it, the less attractive it all seemed. After all, it gets kind of lonely living in a big house all by yourself. But here Jesus speaks of “many rooms.” Heaven is a single household with plenty of room in which we may live. Think about verses 2 through 4 and describe what you think life will be like for all of us in our Father's house.*

5. JOIN THE CIRCLE (14:12-31)

Ask someone to read John 14:12-31

While Jesus' connectedness with the Father has been the message of the first half of John's gospel, the invitation to join in that continuity is the message of the second half. The fellowship Jesus enjoys with His Father is not something we are only to observe and envy for all eternity—no! We are invited to join the party! Jesus hinted at this in 13:20, and spoke more plainly in 14:2-4, but now He reaches out to the disciples and to us and says “Join us!”

- *In 14:2-4 we learn that we can anticipate participation in Christ's exaltation—we will be part of that wonderful heavenly household. But before we go up we must realize that the kingdom of God begins here and now on earth. In 14:12 we see that we are to continue the work of Christ in the world after Jesus has gone. Based upon what you know of Jesus' relationship to His Father, what does “doing what I have been doing” mean?*
- *In verses 15 through 31, Jesus says loving Him means obeying His commands. Carry-*

ing out His work is done by obedience, and love is our motivation. But is that all we are equipped with? Who else will join us and how will He help us continue the work of Jesus?

APPLY THE WORD

1. WHO'S ON TOP?

We live in a fallen world. Our natural tendency is to dominate others and use them to serve us. Our world encourages this kind of sinful behavior by praising wealth and power. Sadly, this kind of domination even infects our closest and dearest relationships. Often, youth manipulate their families and friends in very subtle and crafty ways for personal advantage. This is the root of all interpersonal conflict. It is the root of the child and spouse abuse in our homes. Talk about “family values” is empty when we don't serve our families.

At this point in your session, you have the opportunity to do some probing to find out just how your students relate to others. They will be asked to make an inventory of their relationships, beginning with their families all the way to the world itself. The question asked in the inventory is, “Who's on top?” Have students share the results of their inventory, and have them think of ways they can be better servants.

We live in a world where greatness is measured by how many people serve you. You often hear the phrase “I'm number one.” Those with the most money and power have the most servants, and because of this, we think they're great. But in the kingdom of God everything is upside down. Jesus says greatness is measured by how many you serve. In this section do an inventory of your relationships and ask the question, who's on top? In other words, am I being served or am I serving? By those who are serving you, write down a way that you can serve them in return.

1. *Family:*
2. *Friends:*
3. *People from church:*
4. *People from school:*

5. *Your neighborhood:*

6. *Your city:*

7. *Your nation:*

8. *Your world:*

2. WHERE'S THE BLESSING?

In John 13:17, Jesus promises a blessing to all who serve. Students will be asked to interview someone in your church who has the reputation of a servant. To make this exercise simpler, you may want to have your students nominate several persons who they believe exemplify servanthood in your church. Invite one or more of those persons to come to your group meeting for an interview. There are some suggested questions below, but do not feel limited to them. Think of other questions. Above all, seek to uncover the blessing of service for your youth.

In every church there is someone who is known as a great servant. Here's a chance to find out whether or not Jesus' promise that service will be blessed is true. We're going to interview a servant(s). Possible questions you can ask them include how they started serving, why they serve, what lessons they've learned as a servant, what blessings they've received by serving, what kind of service that they would recommend for you, among others.

LIVE THE WORD

I Want to Be like Jesus

Conclude your class with a challenge. Thinking back to the first activity and the lesson passages, have your students brainstorm on a service project that your group can do the following week. Do it as a team so that you can hold each other accountable. Then do it.

Close with prayer.

No Greater Love

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 15:1—16:33

KEY VERSE

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

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand that as disciples they are connected to Jesus and His ministry in the world through the Holy Spirit.
2. Desire a closer relationship with Jesus.
3. Commit themselves to belonging totally to Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

PERSPECTIVE

We use the term “Christian” pretty loosely in our churches. This shouldn’t be. If we used each other’s names as carelessly as we do Christ’s, we would all be in jail for fraud.

To use another’s name, we must have their permission and only use it within the conditions they establish. Who has received Christ’s permission to use His name, and what are the conditions of use? In other words, who has the right to call himself “Christian”? Does having a wonderful, ecstatic, personal spiritual experience give us the authority to bear the name of Christ? There have been some leaders who have told us of their wonderful experiences with Jesus and then proceeded to embarrass the Church and damage her work horribly by their immorality.

The Church has been entrusted with the stewardship of Jesus’ name. It is her task to teach her members the conditions of use and hold them accountable. Being a Christian is not a private affair. It is a community endeavor, and it is the community of faith that authorizes us to bear the name Christian.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Jesus’ connectedness with His Father has been the unifying theme of John’s narrative. Because Jesus is one with His Father, He is Light and Life. And because of this, faith in Jesus leads us into life. In this session

we learn that Jesus promises to extend this connectedness with the Father to His disciples by means of the Holy Spirit.

1. LOVE (15:1-17)

As the washing of the disciples' feet (13:1-17) provides a framework within which to understand Jesus' ministry, so the word picture of the vine and the branches (vv. 1-17) provides a way to understand the nature of our connectedness with Jesus. It's a powerful image, as all Jesus' illustrations are. The key features of the picture include three nouns: a vine, a gardener, and some branches. We also see three verbs: pruning, fruit bearing, and the burning of fruitless branches. And finally we have a moral: "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (v. 8).

The moral helps us interpret it all. The Father is the Gardener and principal Actor. He has planted the Vine and owns it. It is for His purposes or glory that He tends it. Jesus is this "true vine." He has been planted in the world by His Father through the Incarnation. He is one with the Father's purposes and seeks to serve the Gardener. The image of the vine also has a secondary meaning. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus has consistently referred to himself as "life." Jesus has life coursing through Him, and this life is based on His connectedness with the Father. Last, there are branches, who receive life by remaining in the Vine. But this life is not to be understood as serving the branches. Rather, it is to be understood as serving the Gardener by producing "fruit." It is the on-going work of the Gardener to inspect and prune the branches, helping those that bear fruit to be ever more fruitful, and clipping away those branches that do not bear fruit.

Before moving on to Jesus' interpretation of the analogy, let's note some of the implied meanings here. First, there is the note of judgment. (I don't know what else a blazing bonfire could mean.) And this judgment is for disciples. These are people who are in the Vine! They have a personal relationship with Jesus. But it is a fruitless relationship. Like parasites, life goes into them, but for their own selfish appetites rather than the purposes of the Gardener. These are branches that probably felt good about their relationship to Jesus. After all, they got so much out of it!

Second, there are Jesus' words in verse 4: "No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." This sounds very familiar, much like John 5:19: "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." Here are the links of a chain. Jesus does what He sees His Father doing, and we do what we see Jesus do; thereby we do what the Father is doing.

Verses 9 and 10 bring up Jesus' connectedness with the Father and our connectedness with Jesus, and place it all within the framework of love. Love is what our obedience is all about. But love must be taught, because we don't know how to love apart from Jesus. This is why submission is essential to the divine plan.

Then a very interesting twist happens. Jesus raises the disciples to a new level of self-understanding and a new level of responsibility. "I no longer call you servants... Instead, I have called you friends" (v. 15). This gives the disciples a way of understanding Jesus' death that would be impossible for servants; for what master gives his life for his servants? Further, it helps them understand that they, if they are truly Jesus' friends, must give their lives for Him. And so Jesus completes the loop and fulfills the circular logic of the narrative. In love the Father extends himself by the Son, and the Son dies to produce disciples who, in love, extend themselves to the Father by giving their lives. Through Jesus, God reaches down to us, and through the Spirit He lifts us to himself. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

2. HATE (15:18-16:4)

Just in case we believe the world will cheer this action of love, Jesus points to himself and says, "Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (15:20). Our connectedness with Jesus is total. As we continue His work, we should expect to experience what He experienced; some will believe us, just as some believed Him; and some will hate us, as some hated Him. As Jesus divided the world, so we will divide the world. As we extend the love of God by giving our lives, some will give their lives to God in love and know eternal life, while others will reject God and hate us, bringing judgment upon themselves.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

In the Name of God

“A time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God” (16:2). Remember from an earlier session that it is characteristic of evil to attempt to destroy truth because of the painful self-consciousness it brings. Here we see another feature of human evil; its appeal to justice. Because evil is essentially a negation, a big zero, it needs truth to exist. It is a winding down or perversion of what is good. This means people who do evil, while inwardly aware that they are doing evil, always try to rationalize their behavior. The Nazis believed they were doing the world a favor by killing Jews, and someday, perhaps in the not-too-distant future, people will believe they are doing the same thing by killing Christians.

3. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (16:5-16)

Jesus explains that the Spirit will be given to the disciples so that He may “convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (v. 8). Rather than understand this in a mystical way, we should understand it concretely, even as we understand the Incarnation as a concrete event. It is the work of the Spirit among the disciples that will convict the world. This means the conviction of the Spirit is dependent upon the obedience of the Church. The Spirit convicts the world by guiding the disciples into the truth as it is found in Jesus. This means we can only expect the Spirit to affect hearts inasmuch as the Church is obedient to the Spirit’s voice. Forget about working around the Church; either God will work through our churches, or He will judge them.

4. JOY (16:17-33)

To conclude His instruction to the disciples, Jesus lets them know a painful period is coming to them. But He assures them it is transitory much as a woman’s labor pains are transitory. He is going away, but not for good. For a time they will not see Him, and this will be painful; but later they shall see Him, and this will bring them joy (v. 17).

Just Imagine

This exercise is intended to help students get outside of themselves and look at their lives from the outside in. As Christians, we represent Jesus in our world. Our bodies are not our own; we are directed by God’s Spirit, and by submitting to Him, we are empowered by the very life of God. We, in this sense, become Jesus in our world. This exercise is designed to help students think of themselves in this way.

Youth are asked to imagine themselves as someone famous, and living that famous person’s life in their world. Have your students share who they chose to be, and how they think becoming that person for a day would change their relationships.

Imagine, just for a moment, that you are someone famous. It could be anybody, someone in the entertainment industry or in sports or perhaps even politics like President of our country. Now imagine that you, in your new identity, live in your house and go to your school and attend church at your church.

- *Who are you?*
- *How do you act around your friends and family and how do these people respond to you?*
- *How does your best friend treat you and how do you treat your best friend?*
- *How about your mother?*
- *How about your pastor?*
- *Your teachers at school?*
- *Now apply this activity to living the Christian life. How would truly having Jesus’ identity inside of you change the way you look at yourself and relate to others?*

EXPLORE THE WORD

OVERVIEW (15:1–16:33)

We are in the eye of a storm. Outside, the raging winds wait for Jesus to take His next step. But for now Jesus is engaged in the important work of transferring His ministry to His disciples.

“Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (12:24). Jesus is preparing His disciples to become the seeds of His ongoing ministry. It’s all part of the divine plan. His death, rather than being an end, will be a new beginning, a birth of something new into the world. “A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come. But when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world” (16:21).

We are allowed to eavesdrop on this intimate circle because as believers in Jesus we are part of the conspiracy. We, too, are seeds produced by the death of the one kernel of wheat. What does it mean to continue the ministry of Jesus in the world?

Ask someone to read John 15:1–16:33 aloud to the class.

- *Do you see any themes which carry over from the previous session?*
- *Are any new themes introduced?*

2. LOVE (15:1-17)

Ask someone to reread John 15:1–17 aloud to the class.

In chapter 14, Jesus invited His disciples to join the circle of His fellowship with the Father by means of the Holy Spirit. He tells them that when they receive the Spirit, “you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me, and I am in you” (14:20). The intimacy and closeness of it all seems very attractive. But warm feelings are not the purpose. In chapter 15, Jesus uses a powerful figure of speech to help His followers understand the meaning of it all. This section sums up the purpose of our “remaining in the vine.”

- *What happens to those branches which do not bear fruit?*

- *Jesus speaks of the Father “pruning” branches which do bear fruit (v. 2b). What do you think this means?*
- *What is fruit? What acts or words result in glory for the Father? (Hint: Look at verses 9-14 for Jesus’ own explanation.)*
- *In verse 15, Jesus elevates the status of the disciples from “servants” to “friends.” What is the difference between a servant and a friend according to Jesus?*

3. TESTIMONY IN THE FACE OF HATE (15:18-16:4)

Ask someone to read John 15:18-16:4 aloud to the class.

The connectedness of the disciples with Jesus and His work is complete. It will include both the unpleasant as well as the pleasant parts. In verse 20, Jesus says, “Remember the words I spoke to you: No servant is greater than his master.” He warns His disciples that if they are faithful, the world will hate them for the same reason it hated Him. He urges his disciples to continue to testify about himself. The disciples however are not alone, for a Counselor is coming, the Spirit of truth that will prepare the hearts and lives of those to whom the disciples are sent.

- *Those whom the world hates do not stand alone. If the world hates the disciples, who else does it hate in the process?*
- *Because evil is evil, it needs truth and life to sustain it. It is a parasite. It must lie to prop itself up, and every lie needs a bit of truth to make it believable. Jesus tells His disciples, “a time is coming when any one who kills you will think he is offering a service to God” (16:2). How did the Jewish leaders believe they were offering a service to God by killing Jesus?*
- *Can you think of other times and places that great evil was done in the name of God?*
- *Prevenient grace, or God’s work in men’s hearts before Christians arrive on the scene, is always at work. Whom does God send to do this work of grace (vs. 26)?*

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT (16:5-16)

Ask someone to read John 16:5-16

The One who binds us to Jesus and makes us part of His work is the Holy Spirit. In 14:26, Jesus tells us that the Spirit will testify to us so we may testify to the world. Now Jesus helps us understand the ministry of the Spirit in greater depth.

- *Jesus tells us He will send the Spirit to the disciples (v. 7) so that what may happen?*
- *Verses 13 through 15 speak of what the Spirit will do among the disciples. What will He do and how will His work help the disciples continue Jesus' work?*

5. JOY (16:17-33)

Ask someone to read John 16:17-33 aloud to the class. You might want to divide the class into small groups for this activity.

Jesus begins to prepare the disciples for the trial they will soon be facing. The disciples are confused and unsure of what Jesus means. Let's paraphrase (put in your own words) Jesus' words of comfort found in the following verses:

- *vv. 20-22*
- *vv. 23-27*
- *v. 28*
- *v. 33*

While what the disciples (not to mention Jesus) are about to experience is painful, the pain will be short lived and the end result will bring them joy. Using what you have read and written, explain why the sacrifice of Jesus, on our behalf, should bring us joy.

APPLY THE WORD

1. IN JESUS' NAME

Help your students explore the Study Scripture for insights into what some of the rights and responsibilities of Christians are, and discuss how taking these seriously should influence a Christian life. Questions are provided below to help begin the discussion.

Jesus tells His disciples that they are an extension of His life in the world. That's what the vine and the branches imagery is all about. Jesus' disciples live in the name of Jesus, doing His work and speaking His words to the glory of His father.

When we become Christians, we receive a new identity. Our old life is gone, and we receive the new life of God. And the life we receive is the life of Jesus Christ. This is an awesome personal transformation, and we spend our whole lives growing into it. With this change comes certain rights as well as certain responsibilities.

- *When you live in Jesus' name, what are your rights?*
- *When you live in Jesus' name, what are your responsibilities?*

2. NO GREATER LOVE

The following story is reported to be a true story. The power of the story lies in its reflection of the life of Christ and His sacrifice for us all. Have a student read the story aloud for the group, and then discuss the following questions.

Before you read this story, think about the kind of friend Jesus was to those He loved while on earth.

A little missionary orphanage hadn't hurt anybody, but in war, that doesn't matter. The missionaries and a few of the children were killed instantly in the attack, but many others lay wounded and dying.

People from the Vietnamese village radioed for help and reached some friendly military forces. An navy doctor and a nurse were sent to help. When they arrived, they surveyed the scene and determined that a little girl would die without an immediate blood transfusion. The doctor and nurse checked their own blood but neither had the right type. Several of the orphan children did, however.

The doctor spoke a little Vietnamese and the nurse a little French. Using both languages plus some impromptu sign language, they tried to explain to the children that unless they could replace some of the girl's lost blood, she would die. They asked the children if anyone would be willing to give blood to help.

The children sat in wide-eyed silence. After several moments, a small hand slowly and waveringly went up, dropped back down, and then went up again.

“Oh, thank you,” the nurse said in French. “What’s your name?”

“Heng,” the little boy replied.

She quickly placed Heng on a bed and swabbed his arm with alcohol and inserted a needle in his vein. Through this ordeal Heng lay still and silent.

After a minute, he let out a shuddering sob, quickly covering his face with his free hand. “Is it hurting, Heng?” the doctor asked. Heng shook his head, but after a few moments another sob escaped. The doctor asked him again if the needle hurt, but Heng shook his head. But his sobs gave way to steady, silent crying, his eyes screwed tight and his fist in his mouth to stifle his sobs. The doctor and nurse were concerned. Something was very wrong. At this point a Vietnamese nurse arrived and seeing Heng’s distress, quickly spoke to him in Vietnamese. Listening to his answer she calmed him with a soothing voice. After a moment Heng stopped crying and looked at the Vietnamese nurse. When she nodded, a look of great relief spread over his face.

Turning to the doctor and other nurse, the nurse said, “He thought he was dying. He misunderstood what you wanted. He thought you wanted all of his blood so the little girl could live.”

“But why would he be willing to do that?” asked the first nurse.

The Vietnamese nurse repeated the question to the little boy, who answered simply, “She’s my friend.”

- *How did Heng live out the example of Jesus?*
- *What are ways that we can give our own lives for the Lord and each other?*

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

After reading, ask youth if they would be willing to commit themselves to this motto. Before closing with prayer, here is another saying you can read to your class from the folk artist Rev. Howard Finster: “Dying daily is a greater sacrifice than dying dead.”

LIVE THE WORD

Motto

Conclude your time by reading Galatians 2:20 together aloud and claiming it as a motto for your group to live by.

Who Needs Church?

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 17:1-26

KEY VERSE

“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:22-23).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand the role of the Church in revealing Jesus to the world.
2. Sense their need to be part of the Church of Jesus Christ.
3. Commit themselves to participation in the Church of Jesus Christ.

PERSPECTIVE

No one would know who Jesus is if it was not for the Church. An overstatement? Think about it. Who commits time to remember what Jesus did? The Church. Who makes an effort to remind others of what Jesus did? The Church. Who taught you and loved you and gave you a place in the work of remembering and telling the story of Jesus? The Church. Look at any high school history book, and you will discover that the world has forgotten Jesus. If it were not for the Church, Jesus would simply be a footnote in history. No other human organization spends time and energy remembering Jesus.

This means that the Church is the most important institution in the world. Do you really believe that?

Talk about going against the flow! No idea is more unpopular and detestable to the world than this one. For in our world, and even in our churches, people have a difficult time believing the Church is significant. This is not necessarily because the Church has failed, although it is undeniable that the Church is not everything it should be. It is primarily because people don't know what is important and therefore can't recognize an important thing when they see it. Youth are a picture of our culture. And since our culture has no use for the Church, many youth do not either. We must teach them the importance of the Church, because they are not fully converted to Christ until they love and participate in His Church.

Jesus knew the importance of the Church, and He prayed for it. He didn't ask the Father to make the Church wealthy or powerful in the usual ways we think about wealth and power. He asked the Father to make the Church one. This session is about that prayer and what it means.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Some people wonder whether Jesus even started the Church or not. After all, He never really said He came to bring the Church to the world; He said He came to bring the kingdom of God. And anyone can see the Church isn't always the Kingdom. According to this line of thought, the Church sort of developed by accident, almost as an after thought, or worse, as a perversion of the gospel by people who desired power and control over others.

While Jesus never really said He came to start the Church, it is very clear that He intentionally formed a group of disciples, and He called them not only to love Him but to love each other as well. Asking the question, "Did Jesus start the Church?" is a bit misleading, for to Jesus, Israel was the Church. They were the chosen people, the people of God. The word church is not even a Jewish word; it's Greek. Church was a word Greek Christians used to describe what it meant to live as God's chosen people among people who did not believe. So this brings us back to Jesus and the Church. Did He start it?

Yes, if by yes we understand that Jesus ministered among God's chosen people, calling the true Israel to live in the light of His teaching and work.

The 17th chapter of John is Jesus' prayer for the Church. In fact, we might even understand the Church as the answer to Jesus' prayer. For the heart of the prayer is that His disciples, and even those who would believe their message in the years to come, would live together in the unity of love.

The prayer easily breaks down into three sections. The first section, verses 1-5, is Jesus' prayer for himself. The second section, verses 6-19, is Jesus' prayer for His disciples. And the final section, verses 20-26, is Jesus' prayer for those who would believe through the message of His disciples.

1. JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF (17:1-5)

John helps us eavesdrop on Jesus' prayer. What we hear helps us see how Jesus understood His mis-

sion and what He expected of those who believed in Him. The first part of the prayer reveals a reciprocal glorification between the Father and the Son. Jesus exclaims, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (v. 4). Earlier He had said, "The time has come. Glorify your Son" (v. 1). What is this glorification all about? Basically it is exaltation. Jesus exalted His Father by revealing Him to the world. Now Jesus is praying that the Father will exalt Him by revealing His true identity to the world. And how will this occur? First through the Crucifixion (a curious start), then through the Resurrection, and ultimately through ascent to the Father. This should remind you of Jesus' periodic references to being "lifted up" (3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34). Being "lifted up" refers to both being lifted upon a cross and being lifted into heaven. It was all the same for Jesus. The two lifting ups could not be separated for Him because "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). For Jesus, the way down was the way up. Without the Cross there could be no ascent to heaven.

2. JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES (17:6-19)

Verses 6-10 continue the theme of glory. The disciples have seen the glory of God in Christ and have believed Jesus' words. They are unique and of special concern to God because they have been entrusted with God's glory in Jesus Christ.

In verses 11 through 15 Jesus prays that the Father will protect His glory. His greatest fear, seen in verse 11, is that once He is gone, the sheep will be startled and scattered by the wolf of chapter 10. He doesn't want them to be isolated and vulnerable. As He, the Good Shepherd, protected them, He asks the Father to protect them so that the memory of God's glory in Christ will not fade from the world.

Jesus then prays that the Father will sanctify the disciples. In other words, He wants the Father to set them apart and make them holy (vv. 16-19). This setting apart will create a barrier between them and the world and protect them. But this separation is not one of physical distance or detachment. They remain in the world. Their separation is of spirit and is accomplished by obedience to God's Word. Oddly this obedience sends them back into the world (v. 18). Jesus' disciples follow His pattern of engage-

ment. Here we see the paradox of Christian faith; Jesus' disciples are at once in the world and yet not of it. Physically they are here and live here, but in spirit they are set apart to God and live by the Spirit.

3. JESUS PRAYS FOR THOSE WHO WOULD BELIEVE THROUGH THE MESSAGE OF HIS DISCIPLES (17:20-26)

Jesus then prays for all who will believe the preaching of the disciples. What is the substance of the prayer? "That all of them may be one" (v. 21). The theme of unity is continued and extended to Jesus' followers for all time. (If only we would value our unity as much as Jesus did!)

In verses 21 through 23, beginning with His own unity with the Father, Jesus draws His disciples into the loop. Initially, the revelation of the Father to the world relied upon Jesus. In Jesus, the world saw the light of God. Now that Jesus is departing, a new vessel must be established that will continue the work of revelation. That vessel is the community of disciples. And the key to this ministry is unity. Take note that Jesus did not isolate the believers from each other and say that through a personal, private relationship with Him they could personally and privately continue His ministry alone and without each other. Nothing could be further from His vision. And yet this is precisely what many Christians believe! Jesus' vision for the Church, and the key to the success of the Church in the world, is, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (v. 23).

A final thought before concluding this session. Notice the difference in Jesus' tone regarding the world between verses 6-12 and 20-23. In the first passage, the mood is clearly disapproving. It is a condemnation based upon the world's rejection of the Son. But the feel of verses 20-23 is definitely upbeat and hopeful. Could it be that Jesus' change of mood is a reflection of the world's change of mind? Could it mean that rejection in the first century does not necessarily mean a rejection for all time? Might it potentially mean that the Church will be successful in its mission and win the world through unity and love? It would be wonderful if it did.

No Salvation Outside the Church?

Participation in the Church is essential for salvation. It is the Church that bears the message of salvation through Jesus. Without the Church, there would be no Bible, no discipline, ... no Christians.

In recent times, the Church has been viewed as an option. This heresy is rooted in a misunderstanding of how God's salvation is mediated to the world. The knowledge of God in Christ is not immediately accessible to people outside the Church. No one can ascend a mountain and through looking within themselves arrive at the conclusion, "Jesus is the Way!" The knowledge of God in Christ is something that comes to us from outside ourselves. Paul says, "How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:14).

The Church is the vessel entrusted with the works and words of Jesus. And since there is no other name by which we can be saved, there is no salvation outside of her ministry.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

No Salvation Outside the Church

This exercise, which you might want to do in small groups, helps students understand the critical importance of the Church by directing them to Jesus' instructions regarding the work of bringing glory to God. Have students share their findings from the Study Scripture and use them as an introduction to the other activities for this Discovery Group session.

Many countries are anti-institutional institutions. Does that sound like a contradiction? It is. Countries are full of them. Many national cultures are cultures of rugged individualism, and in this culture, institutions are considered oppressive. But institutions are inescapable, for without them we would have no contact with each other, and without each other we would die. Institutions are also identity forming. By them we understand ourselves as children, students, men and women, husbands and wives, employees, bosses, citizens, voters, and even Haitians, or Cubans, or another nationality,

as the case may be. The Christian Church is an institution that helps people understand themselves as Christians. Without the Church there would be no Christians.

The Church is the most important institution in the world because it has been entrusted with the message of Jesus Christ. It is the mission of the church to remember and experience God's glory and let it shine in the world. Without the church, no one would know about Jesus because people don't learn about Jesus by looking inside themselves. They learn about Jesus by looking inside the church and learning about how God has revealed himself throughout history.

Jesus told His disciples that His glory will shine in the world as they do certain things. In your small group, look up the following verses and describe what these things are.

13:34-35

16:5-15

17:20-26

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (JOHN 17:1-26)

This is a critical point in the story of Jesus. For three years He has given himself to His disciples. He has revealed the Father to them in a way never seen before, and now He's about to leave them. Unless the disciples remember what they have witnessed, and unless they in turn witness to others, the light of Jesus will fade and be lost from the world.

Jesus wants His work to continue. Remember, He has sheep in other pens to call out. (See Chapter 10.) Without His disciples to continue His work, how will they be gathered into one fold?

In a relay race, the passing of the baton is the most critical moment. If the baton is dropped, the race is lost. Jesus is entrusting His work to this ragged group of disciples. You can almost sense His anxiety. But He is not trusting them alone, for He knows what is in the hearts of men. He is entrusting both His work and His disciples to the Father. Chapter 17 is His prayer for them and for us.

Ask a class member or members to read John Chapter 17 aloud to the class.

- *If you knew you were going to die within the next 24 hours, you'd probably spend a lot of time in prayer. What would you pray for?*
- *Contrast what you would pray for with what Jesus prayed for. In what ways are your prayers the same and in what ways do they differ?*
- *What does His prayer tell you about Jesus' priorities?*

2. GLORIFY ME (17:1-5)

Ask someone to read 17:1-5 aloud to the class.

Notice, Jesus is praying in the presence of His disciples. He wants them, and us, to hear His prayer. He begins the prayer with a sort of review, a kind of mission statement which reads, "you granted (me) authority over all people that (I) might give eternal life to those you have given (me)." Jesus then goes on to define what Eternal Life is in verse 3.

- *Summarize "eternal life" in your own words.*
- *Eternal Life is impossible without knowing God, and knowing God is impossible without knowing Jesus Christ. This is why Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (14:6). How has Jesus given us the knowledge of God?*
- *Glorify means to "shine" or "radiate." Jesus reminds the Father that He has brought Him glory. How has the work of Jesus brought glory to the Father?*
- *Now Jesus asks His Father to lift Him up. How do you think the Father will accomplish this?*

3. "I HAVE REVEALED YOU" (17:6-10)

Ask someone to read John 17:6-10 aloud to the class.

Here we see just what Jesus has entrusted to His disciples. Remember the Good Shepherd metaphor in chapter 10? Here we see it again. He has called

out those who have chosen to do God's will (7:17) and has revealed the Father to them (v. 6). It is this revelation which must be preserved in the world.

- *Jesus reminds the Father that the disciples, although they have been entrusted to Jesus, belong to the Father. Which verses communicate this thought?*
- *Earlier you imagined the Father glorifying the Son. Now notice in verse 10 that Jesus has received glory through His disciples. How do the followers of Jesus glorify the Son?*

4. PROTECT THEM (17:11-19)

Ask someone to read John 17:11-19

Now Jesus entrusts the disciples to the Father's care. He received them from the Father (v. 6), as a Good Shepherd. He protected them while He was in the world (v. 10). Now He is returning them to the Father's care (v. 11).

- *Why is Jesus so concerned for the welfare of His followers?*
- *Jesus asks the Father to protect them in two ways. What are they? (Hint: see verse 11 and verse 17.)*
- *Jesus asks the Father to sanctify His disciples. "Sanctify" means "to separate" or "set apart." It's easy to see how separation from the world can protect you from the world. But Jesus says, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world" (v. 15). He then goes on to say, "I have sent them into the world" (v. 18). The separation from the world is not a physical separation, but a spiritual one. How is this spiritual separation accomplished? (Hint: see verse 17.)*
- *Why is our protection in the world spiritual and not physical?*

SANCTIFIED IN THE NAME OF JESUS (17:11-19)

In the preceding chapters Jesus tells His disciples to "ask in my name" (14:13, 15:16, and 16:23-24). Now He asks the "Holy Father" to protect them by the power of the same name. It's difficult for us to understand what this means but it is

clear that Jesus is calling for unity in this name. In ancient times, it was common for people to ask in the name of others. If someone of power and prominence entrusted their name to you, by the power of their name you had the authority to act on their behalf and enjoy the privileges they enjoyed. Jesus entrusted His name, which was also His Father's name, to the disciples. By His name, Jesus prays that His disciples will be set apart, and yet stay in the world by that same name, enjoying the Father's protection, truth and sanctification.

5. "THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE" (17:20-26)

Ask someone to read John 17:20-26 aloud to the class.

- *Jesus prays for people like you and me. Jesus' concern is that something happens among us so that the world may believe His Father sent Him. What is that something? (See verse 23.)*
- *In chapter 10, Jesus says that the unity of His flock is a big concern of His and again in chapter 13 He says, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (13:35). The message here seems to be that the unity of Jesus' followers is the key to revealing the glory of God to the world. How does the Church seem to be doing in this area?*
- *When you think of your own local church, what can you do to make it a place of love and unity?*
- *What are some of the things that keep the church from being the kind of place Jesus wants it to be?*

APPLY THE WORD

1. DOING CHURCH

This exercise calls for another interview of your pastor concerning the work of the church. Following is a list of questions intended to help students understand the various ministries of the church and how they further the vision of Jesus. When your youth meet with the pastor, have them each ask ques-

tions in turn. You might want to have the questions copied and then distributed to the class so that they can ask the questions. Do not feel you must stick to these questions. If the students have other questions, encourage them to ask. Remember, though, the goal of the exercise is to bring the students to an understanding of how the work of the church furthers the vision of Jesus.

At our church, the people of God are to work to make Jesus' vision a reality. The different things that happen on a Sunday and throughout the week are designed to make it happen. We have a list of certain practices most churches have in common. With what we've learned about Jesus' vision for the church in mind, let's ask our Pastor how these various ministries of the church are designed to make Jesus' vision a reality.

Worship

- 1. What is the purpose of the worship service?*
- 2. How does worship promote love for God and love for people?*
- 3. What advice would you give for experiencing worship most fully?*

Sunday School

- 1. What is the purpose of Sunday School?*
- 2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our Sunday School?*
- 3. What is your vision for the Sunday School of our Church?*

Fellowship

- 1. What is the purpose of the fellowship of our Church?*
- 2. How can the youth make our fellowship more effective?*
- 3. What are we doing through our fellowship to help the hurting and lonely of our community?*

Outreach

- 1. What is the purpose of the outreach of our Church?*
- 2. How do we reach out to those inside and outside our church?*

3. How can I get more involved in the outreach of the church?

2. KNOCKING DOWN THE WALLS

At the top of the Lord's list of desires for His followers is unity. Unfortunately, we have not done very well in the unity department. Many things divide the Church at many levels. In our local fellowships, personal complaints separate people, and at societal levels we are separated by class, race, and denomination. We need healing badly. In this exercise youth are asked to think of ways to overcome these barriers. Have your group share their insights. Make sure you avoid criticizing the leadership of your local church in the process. That won't help anything. While you're at it, you may desire to discuss those issues that divide your youth group, not in order to blame anyone, but in order to begin a healing process.

Because unity is so important to the witness of the church, our enemies work overtime to divide us. Following is a list of personal and social barriers which keep the church from bearing a unified witness for Jesus in our world. Prayerfully think of ways you, our youth group, or our church can overcome these barriers.

Personal walls

- 1. Unforgiving spirit*
- 2. Gossip*
- 3. Selfishness*
- 4. Egotism*
- 5. Others?*

Social barriers

- 1. Racism*
- 2. Denominationalism*
- 3. Economics*
- 4. Others?*

LIVE THE WORD

Praying with Jesus

The session's Study Scripture is a written prayer. It is the prayer of Jesus for His Church. Conclude this session with a time of prayer for the Church. Pray for healing for your local fellowship and for the Church around the world.

Lift High the King

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 18:1—19:42

KEY VERSE

“You are a king, then!’ said Pilate. Jesus answered, ‘You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me’” (John 18:37).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand various aspects of Jesus’ incredible sacrifice for our sins.
2. Feel appreciation for what Jesus did for us through His trial and crucifixion.
3. Express thanksgiving to Jesus for taking our condemnation upon himself.

PERSPECTIVE

Justice ... everybody seems to want it. But if we really understood it, would we still desire it? The justice we crave always seems to work in our favor, at least in our own minds. But if universal justice were distributed, would any of us escape untouched? I doubt it.

There is a lot of injustice in the world, and the powerful have more opportunity to inflict it than the weak. But this does not automatically make the weak good and the powerful evil. It only means powerful people have more opportunities than weak people. What is the solution to this inequity? In our day, we have attempted to spread the power more evenly, so that instead of few people with opportunity to do great evil, lots of people have the opportunity to do evil in small amounts. In other words, we have made injustice an equal opportunity affair. Brilliant. This is the best our world seems to be capable of. Some people call this justice; others call it sad.

The Crucifixion shows us that God does not desire mere justice; grace is what God really desires. What does this mean? The Church has been reflecting on it for nearly 2,000 years and hasn’t exhausted the implications, let alone put them into practice. You will notice that the primary teaching aim of this session is to acquaint students with the passion of Jesus. With a subject this potent, how could we expect to do more?

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The record of the Crucifixion itself is very short. It reads: “Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him” (19:17-18).

There’s no record of any screams or any graphic description of the gory ritual, just the simple, terse record. And yet the entire Gospel has been building to this moment and event. The whole Gospel has provided us with a framework to interpret this event. Therefore we can say the whole story is about the Crucifixion. Here are a few of the details leading up to Jesus’ death:

1. THE ARREST IN THE GARDEN (18:1-11)

After His prayer, Jesus takes His disciples to a place where He knows Judas will be able to find Him. Previously, Jesus evaded the authorities; now He helps the process along. Jesus is not trying to hide; He is taking the initiative. From the beginning He has provoked this confrontation. When they come for him, Jesus goes out to His accusers and reveals himself (vv. 4-8).

Arresting God—In chapter 18, verse 6 and again in verse 8 the pronoun “he” is not present in the original Greek. Why did the translators include it? For the power of the response is lost in the translation. Without the pronoun it reads, “I AM.” This reminds us of 6:20; 8:28, 54; and ultimately of God’s self-designation to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). What is the theological implication of this? They have come to arrest God.

2. THE CALL FOR WITNESSES (18:12-27)

To appreciate what happens next requires some knowledge of Jewish law. According to Jewish law, a man could not testify on his own behalf, nor could he be condemned without two incriminating testimonies. Jesus’ call for witnesses is a call for a fair trial. He is denied this, for the prosecution presents no witnesses. But there are two witnesses who could testify in His favor. They’re standing in the courtyard. At that very moment they’re both disowning Him; one (John) by his silence and the other (Peter) with his words. Peter made a good confession in the privacy of the Upper Room, and he could even use a sword in the heat of a battle, but making a public confession was something he did not have the

courage to do. In the end, Jesus was utterly alone (16:32).

3. THE KINGDOM OF TRUTH AND THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD (18:28-19:16)

While all of the Gospel of John is an exercise in irony, the episode with Pilate is the climax. In verse 28 we see the Jews carefully avoiding ceremonial defilement in God’s honor while falsely condemning the Son of God as a blasphemer. We see a weak and cynical judge who in despair of the truth sentences the Truth to death.

How the Jews hand Jesus over to Pilate is interesting. It is the worst kind of politics. Pilate asks for a simple charge against Jesus, and the Jews respond, “Trust us, this guy is a criminal.” So Pilate, realizing this whole thing will mean work for him, tells the Jews to judge their own by their own laws. To this they basically reply, “We want you to kill him for us.” Ah! Pilate realizes that this is messy business, and the Jews want to keep their hands clean.

Pilate, who has a better understanding of Jewish politics than most people, understands the whole situation; he’s seen it before. This guy is a messianic-like prophet, and the Sanhedrin wants him killed. So Pilate uses the controversy to his best advantage. He asks, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus moves from questioned to questioner. He in turn asks Pilate, “Where did you get that idea?” In verse 35, Pilate asks a couple of more questions; but rather than answer them, Jesus returns to Pilate’s first question and says, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place” (v. 36).

Jesus confesses He is a king; then He goes on to say, “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (v. 37). That means He is the King of the kingdom of truth, and His subjects are those who hear His Word and obey Him. Now let’s go back to verse 36. In light of verse 37, we see that Jesus is telling Pilate that He has no subjects in this world because no one is on the side of truth. Is this a condemnation of the world? Yes. Does this mean human government is fundamentally evil? Of course not. Notice the word “now” in verse 36. The kingdom is from another place now. Does this mean truth will never be known

in our world? No. It merely means that it did not exist then. But someday the kingdoms of this world will be the kingdom of Christ (Revelation 11:15).

What became of the King of truth? Pilate, pragmatic and secular, has no use for Him. The soldiers beat Him and mock Him. They have no need for truth when violence is so effective. And finally, the Jews reject Him because truth was a threat to their system.

Verses 12-16 provided the Early Church with the resources needed to withstand the state. Like all human governments, the Roman government demanded compliance. And like all human governments, given the chance, it demanded the worship of its subjects. But Christians, while good citizens, have never understood the state as absolute, nor compromised the truth even when the government demands such compromise in the guise of “the common good,” “national interests,” or even “human rights.”

Pilate provides the crowning irony in verses 19 and 20. The sign he has nailed to the Cross is clearly a mockery. Perhaps he is mocking Jesus, but more likely he is mocking the Jewish leadership. And perhaps he is sending a message to other “messiahs” that this is the end of that particular aspiration. What makes it ironic, of course, is that it is true. And further, by writing in the major languages of the ancient world, he proclaimed it to the world. But the greatest irony is that in the very act of crucifying Jesus, Pilate fulfills Jesus’ prayer and “lifts Him up” for all men to see.

The remainder of chapter 19 is intended to help readers understand Jesus’ death as the fulfillment of prophecy and to testify that Jesus did, in fact, die and was buried, lest anyone claim it was a hoax.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

The Blood of Jesus

We are to the climax of the Gospel, and the story is filled with intensity. This is what everything has been leading up to. The first portion of the Discovery Group activity contains a historical incident that mirrors the basic outline of the Gospel message. By

reading this story, students should see the parallels, making the Gospel’s meaning even clearer. Begin the Discovery Group with a reading of this story, and open the floor for discussion with the question, “How is the story of Jesus parallel to this one?”

In the 16th century, King Philip II of Spain, a Roman Catholic, ruled over Holland. He hated the Dutch Protestants and had thousands of them tortured, maimed, imprisoned, and exiled for the slightest crimes. When they finally rose up in defiance, he decided to get tough and sent a Spanish army to crush the insurrection.

The city of Rotterdam fought valiantly for a while but was finally swept over by a victorious Spanish army. The conquerors went from house to house, finding the hiding citizens and killing them in the streets. Men, women, children, the aged, it didn’t matter. King Philip wanted the Dutch punished for their rebellion. In one house, though, a group of families huddled together, fear gripping their hearts as the Spanish approached.

Suddenly a young man had an idea. He took a young goat belonging to the household, killed it, then with a broom swept its blood beneath the door of the house. Waiting breathlessly, they heard the booted feet of the Spanish soldiers stop at the door. Soon the Spaniards were battering the door. Then they heard one of them say, “Look at the blood! Well, men, looks like our work has already been done. Come away!” Their footsteps faded as they went to do their killing elsewhere. The household had been saved by the blood of a goat.

- ***How is the story of Jesus, “the Lamb of God,” similar to this one?***

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (JOHN 18:1-19:42)

Everything in the gospel of John has been building to this moment. How ironic . . . Jesus, a man who deserved life and praise was given death and shame by the very people He came to save. Viewed from one side it seems like the ultimate disappointment—a tragedy in a tragic world, an ending where the bad guys live happily ever after. But viewed from the other side, the heavenly side, it is hope and victory. Jesus submits to the whole process

without resistance because it has been His mission to die from the beginning. He does not seek justice; justice would ruin everything. He desires to die as a just man in an unjust way. This is the only way the plan will work. For the salvation He brings is a salvation by grace. By dying unjustly as a just man, He makes a way for all who know they are unjust to live. As we read the events surrounding our Lord's death, keep track of how he was unjustly treated.

Have class members read John 18:1-19:42 aloud to the class.

- *How was Jesus rejected by those who had the power to save His life?*
- *No doubt you've heard the story of Jesus' crucifixion many times before. Have you internalized its meaning? He died for us all. How has His death made a difference in your life?*

2. WHO WILL BE A WITNESS FOR MY LORD? (18:1-27)

Have a class member read John 18:1-27 aloud to the class.

It is night and they are coming for Jesus. Jesus has been evading capture for three years, but the time has come to die, and He is going to make it easy for His persecutors to find Him. In verse 2, we see that Jesus went where He knew Judas could find Him. When the mob approaches, He steps out and surrenders himself to them.

- *Jesus' treatment by the Jews is worth some attention. When the mob called for Him in verse 5, Jesus answered, "I am." If you have the NIV, it reads "I am he." But the original Greek did not use the pronoun "he." It simply reads "I am." Why is this important? (Have your class look up Exodus 3:13-14 and John 8:58-59 and try and figure it out for themselves.) (They have arrested God.)*
- *By identifying himself with God, Jesus lets the Jews know they are not simply condemning a man named Jesus. Who are they ultimately condemning?*
- *According to Jewish law, a man could not be condemned without two incriminating wit-*

nesses. Jesus asks the high priest to produce His witnesses in verse 20. The high priest produces none. But there were two witnesses near who could have vindicated Jesus. Who were they?

- *Why did Peter and the beloved disciple (John) remain silent when they could have spoken up?*
- *The trial of Jesus continues today. Jesus presents himself to the world for judgment as long as this world shall last. The world condemns Him without proof, but Jesus has many witnesses who could vindicate Him. The question to each of us is "Have you been a witness for the Lord this week?" Who can you be a witness to in the coming days?*

3. THE KING OF TRUTH (18:28–19:16)

Terms/People to Know

- *Barabbas (ba-RAB-bas) (John 18:40)—The criminal chosen by the Jews to be released instead of Jesus for the Feast of the Passover. The custom mentioned here—of Pilate's releasing a prisoner during the Feast—is otherwise unknown.*
- *Feast of the Passover (John 18:28)—Also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Passover was the first—and traditionally the most important—of the annual Jewish feasts. The feast commemorated God's deliverance of the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage and His establishment of the Jewish nation.*
- *Pilate (John 18:29)—Pilate, or Pontius Pilate ("Pontius" was his family name), was the Roman governor responsible for Palestine during the crucifixion of Christ. Pilate endured a tenuous and bloody relationship with the Jewish people, and especially with the religious leadership of the day. While he was first and foremost a Roman and participated in his share of oppression and coercion of the people, Pilate could also accurately measure the emotions of the crowd and was highly sensitive to his political fortunes. Pilate will always be known*

for his cowardice in condemning to death a man he personally believed to be innocent, simply to preserve his own political well-being.

- *Caesar (SEE-zar) (John 19:12)—Caesar was the family name of a prominent Roman family dating back to the 3rd century B.C. The term “Caesar” eventually became a title that each successive Roman emperor took for himself. Augustus Caesar was reigning at the birth of Jesus, and his successor, Tiberius Caesar, was the ruler in power during the majority of Jesus’ life and ministry.*

Ask someone to read John 18:28-19:16 aloud to the class.

Because dealing with Jesus was so controversial, the Jews didn't want to kill Jesus themselves. So, they went to Pilate for a favor. When Pilate asks them for a charge, the Jews respond, “Trust us, Jesus is a criminal” (v. 30). Pilate, being an shrewd politician, sees that something is going on and tells the Jews to judge Jesus for themselves. Since the Jews want to keep their hands clean, they give Pilate a strong nudge, “We want you to kill Him for us” (v. 31). So Pilate is stuck with the problem of finding a way to kill an innocent man. He begins with a hunch. Political revolutionaries were common in Palestine; he had one in jail that very moment (v. 40). If he could charge Jesus with political subversion he could have Him killed.

- *Pilate asks Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” (v. 33). Jesus' answer must have surprised and, in a way, disappointed Pilate. Why?*
- *According to verse 37, Jesus is a king, but a different kind of king then what Pilate is thinking. Jesus’ intention was never to establish a new government. So, of what is Jesus the king?*
- *What does Pilate's response in verse 38 tells us about him?*
- *Apparently Pilate saw the “King of the Jews” ploy as the best way to dispose of Jesus. By tagging Jesus as a revolutionary, he had the ability to vindicate himself and trick the*

Jews into giving up their own nationalistic aspirations. Pilate was a cunning politician. How did he use the title “King of the Jews” to justify sending Jesus to the cross?

- *What does the Sanhedrin's treatment of Jesus tell us about their attitude toward truth?*
- *Pilate's final moments with Jesus must have been an eye opener for him. Jesus places everything in perspective when He says, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above” (19:11). How does this help us understand the crucifixion?*

4. THE CRUCIFIXION (19:17-27)

Terms/People to Know

- *Casting lots (John 19:24)—This was a customary method of decision-making in the Jesus’ day. It was a random way of selecting, categorizing, or dividing people or items, like drawing coloured pebbles from a bag, etc. Since victims were crucified naked, their possessions, including their clothing, often became the property of the soldiers who performed the crucifixion.*
- *Mary Magdalene (John 19:25)—This Mary is the woman from whom Jesus cast seven demons. No real evidence exists—although tradition has often held it to be true—that Mary Magdalene was also the sinful woman who anointed Jesus’ feet in Luke 7.*

Ask someone to read John 19:17-27 aloud to the class.

Considering that the whole gospel story is intended to bring us to this point, the account of the crucifixion itself is surprisingly short. It is enough for us to know that Jesus died on a cross in fulfillment of prophesy. But there's irony—two opposite ways of looking at the same thing. From early in His ministry Jesus has spoken of being “lifted up.” And at last He is on a cross.

- *How can the cross at one moment be understood in two ways?*

APPLY THE WORD

- *Another element of irony in this passage is the sign nailed to the cross by Pilate. It read, “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS” (v. 19). What do you think this sign meant for Pilate? And for Jesus’ disciples?*

5. DEATH AND BURIAL (19:28-42)

Terms/People to Know

- *Joseph of Arimathea (air-i-ma-THEE-a) (John 19:38)–This man was a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin. He had not participated in the Sanhedrin’s effort to crucify Jesus, but was a righteous man who was a “secret” disciple of Jesus. After the crucifixion, he got permission to take Jesus’ body down from the cross and put it in a tomb that he had originally intended to be his own.*
- *Preparation Day (John 19:42)–For the Jews, the Friday of each week was the day of preparation for the coming Sabbath. The day of preparation for the Sabbath of Passover week was especially significant.*

Ask someone from the class to read John 19:28-42 aloud to the class.

At this point in the narrative the author wants us to know two things. First, Jesus died according to prophecy, and second, Jesus did in fact die. It was difficult for Jews to open their minds to a crucified Messiah. It seemed to contradict everything they had longed and hoped for. So, showing Jews that the very scriptures they believed in told of a suffering Messiah was very important.

- *What are the particular elements of the story that are noted as fulfilled prophecy?*
- *After the Christian movement gained momentum and had produced many followers of Jesus among the Jews, detractors of the church began to claim that Jesus had never really died at all; the whole thing was an enormous hoax or trick. How did the author prove that Jesus did in fact die?*

1. LEARNING HOW TO DIE

This exercise asks students to identify with Jesus, not by imagining themselves physically dying, but by looking at their own struggles to obey. Each time a Christian says “no” to their own will and “yes” to God’s will, they die a very real death. This is the kind of death Christians are called to die daily. Ask students to share with the group their struggles to obey. Through this process, hopefully, students will come to understand each other’s weaknesses and learn to pray and support one another in the hard work of faithful obedience.

Jesus was ready to die because He had had plenty of practice. Every time He said “yes” to His Father and “no” to himself, He died a death that prepared Him for His final death. Jesus’ death atones for our sins, but it also sets an example for us. Are you struggling to obey God? I want you to take a minute and write about some of your struggles to obey, and think of ways Jesus’ example can give you the strength you need to follow Him.

Debrief the sharing with the question: *Why is dying the secret of living?*

2. MARTYRDOM

This activity draws a connection between the trial of obedience and our difficulty with witnessing. The link is the word martyr. For many people, martyrdom is synonymous with death, but the word literally means “witness.” Many Christians can identify with this association because they feel like they’re about to die every time they witness. Fear of death is normal, and so is fear of witnessing. (After all, who likes to take an unpopular stand?) But fear of witnessing can be overcome. This activity helps youth isolate several sources of fear and brainstorm ways to overcome them. Have your students think of ways they can overcome their fears and witness for Jesus in our world.

Martyr comes from the Greek word, “Martus,” which means “to witness.” It’s interesting to note that witnessing came to be understood as synonymous with dying for what you believe. The reason neither Peter nor the “beloved disciple” witnessed for Jesus on the night of His trial is because they

were afraid to die. Being afraid to witness is still often a matter of fear.

Being afraid to die is normal and so is being afraid to witness. Let's talk about some of the more common reasons people fear witnessing, and look at different ways we can overcome these fears.

- 1. Inadequate knowledge of the Bible*
- 2. Bad experiences witnessing in the past*
- 3. Possibility of rejection*
- 4. Social disapproval*
- 5. Lack of an up-to-date experience with God*

LIVE THE WORD

Gratitude

What can we do for Jesus in return for the sacrifice He made for us? There is only one—and that is to live our whole life as an expression of gratitude. Students will be asked to write prayers of gratitude to Jesus. Have your students share their prayers with the group, and then close your time with a time of silence and reflection upon what Christ has done through His death.

For those who believe in Jesus, the whole Christian life is a life of thanksgiving to God. We give our lives to God because Jesus gave His life for us. Let's each take a moment to write a prayer of thankfulness to God for the sacrifice of Jesus. List as many reasons as you can that you are thankful for this gift of life.

Have class members share their prayers with the class during the closing prayer time.

The Future

STUDY SCRIPTURE

John 20: 1—21:25

KEY VERSE

“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (John 20:21-22).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand different ways that the resurrection of Jesus changed the world.
2. Feel gratitude for the changes that the Resurrection brings.
3. Commit themselves to living in light of the resurrection of Jesus.

PERSPECTIVE

The future does not belong to science fiction. It belongs to the kingdom of truth, the kingdom of our God. How can we be certain? Because of The Resurrection. God has given us a hope and a future in Jesus Christ. The best days do not lie behind us; they are before us. One reason youth abandon the faith is because they fail to hear a message of hope at church. We tend to be negative about the days we live in, and to grieve over bygone glories. By always looking backward in this way, the church reluctantly backs into tomorrow. How can we expect young people to cherish a faith that only seems to deny where they will be spending the majority of their lives?

The triumph of the Resurrection over death and decay is a universal triumph. Yes, those of us with faith look forward to a personal resurrection—and participation in the renewal of all things. The message of Revelation is not the message of destruction that so many commentators seem to relish, but the message that the work of Christ produces a new heaven and new earth of which the resurrection of Jesus is the firstfruits.

This is the end of the Gospel and how the world will end—death and decay, along with everything else that is false, will die, and the kingdom of truth will rise up and cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The dawn of the first day of the week is the first light since darkness fell when Judas left Jesus to betray Him to the Jews (13:30). Evil has done its worst in chapters 18 and 19, but the miracle of the Resurrection reverses this work, not only for Jesus, but also for the creation itself and for whoever believes in Him.

John is careful to record several eyewitness accounts so that our faith might not rest upon the testimony of a single person. First there is the account of the empty tomb with Mary Magdalene, the disciple whom Jesus loved (John), and Simon Peter, recorded in verses 1 through 8 of chapter 20. Then Jesus appears to His disciples three times in chapter 20.

1. THE APPEARANCE TO MARY MAGDALENE (20:10-18)

While it is possible to overstate its value, the appearance of Jesus to a woman first of all is important to note. In the ancient world, the testimony of a woman was considered unreliable. In case we start judging against patriarchy and its imagined evils, we should remember that women in the ancient world were uneducated and had little exposure to public life. Taking their testimony too seriously simply made no sense because they had little knowledge of the law. Add to this the false belief that developed in the absence of education that the testimony of a woman could even be dangerous. Of course, this resulted in the devaluation of women in Jewish culture. This is precisely why Jesus' appearance to Mary is so significant. Since this event, the status of women has grown because the resurrected Lord of glory himself entrusted His first appearance to a woman. But while this is important, it is not the main point.

Two features of the account stand out. The first is Mary's inability to recognize Jesus initially. The moment of recognition occurs when Jesus speaks Mary's name. Is this reminiscent of the Good Shepherd imagery in chapter 10? Could this mean that we cannot recognize the risen Savior until He calls us by name?

The second item of interest is Jesus' command not to hold Him (v. 17). How should we interpret this? Was Jesus radioactive? Probably a more mundane explanation will suffice. Could He simply have

been telling her that she must not hold on to Him because He must leave her to be with the Father?

2. THE APPEARANCE TO THE DISCIPLES (20:19-23)

Notice the manner of Jesus' appearance (v. 19). It is sudden, immediate, and unexplainable. While this is the same man, something Jesus seeks to prove by allowing the disciples to examine His hands and side (v. 20), He has also changed. But more startling than this are His words (vv. 21-23). Jesus passes His ministry on to the disciples. The loop is completed. In verse 21, He commissions His disciples even as He was commissioned. Then He gives them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them. What is the significance of breathing? In Greek, the same word is used for wind, breath, and spirit. So by giving them the Spirit by means of breathing, He is showing them that it is His own spirit He is giving them. But most startling of all are His words in verse 23. It sounds as if we have been given the power to forgive. What are we to make of these words? We must interpret them in light of His mission. It is because Jesus came not to condemn the world but to save it that His disciples have authority to extend the same grace to the world. Verse 23 is not a license to withhold grace; it is a commission to give it.

3. THE APPEARANCE TO THOMAS (20:24-29)

Poor Thomas, he will forever be labeled Doubting Thomas for this episode. Perhaps he did have a more pessimistic personality, as we can conclude from some of his other exclamations (11:16). But the story is not so much intended to scold Thomas as it is to bless those who do not have the privilege of examining Jesus' hands and side for themselves.

4. THE MIRACULOUS CATCH (21:1-14)

The stories recorded in chapter 21 tie up some loose ends. The first is the story of the miraculous catch of fish (vv. 1-14), and the second is the reinstatement of Peter (vv. 15-23).

It's not unusual to fish, and it's consistent with what we know about Peter and some of the other disciples to see them fishing. But fishing at night after the Resurrection results in them catching nothing. However when morning comes, a man on the beach

instructs them to try the right side of the boat—and presto! They catch more than a boatload of fish. Now Peter recognizes who it is, and he puts on his clothes, a strange thing to do considering what comes next. He jumps in the water and swims to shore.

What are we to make of this? Well, fishing throughout the Gospels means evangelism. So symbolically we can conclude, now that the night is over, the time of futility is over, and the time of gathering has begun. The Resurrection is the reason it is day and the reason the time of futility is past.

5. THE REINSTATEMENT OF PETER (21:15-23)

This is a rich passage and a fitting conclusion to the Gospel because it so aptly demonstrates the healing power of grace. Here we see the mirror image of Peter's denial the night of Jesus' trial before the high priest. Some things are the same: there is a fire, Peter is present as is the beloved disciple, and Jesus is there. Some things are different, though: then it was night, now it is day; then Peter denied Jesus three times, now he affirms Him three times. And finally the implications are reversed. Then Jesus was hurt, now Peter is hurt; then Jesus died, now it will be Peter's turn to die. And through this process Peter is taken from great shame to great honor; he is entrusted with Jesus' flock and with continuing his call.

The Gospel ends with some speculation regarding the long life of the beloved disciple John (who apparently was still living at the time of the Gospel's writing) and with the wonderful affirmation that this is not an exhaustive record of the life of the Savior—for such a book would never end.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

It's a Whole New World

The goal of this series of session activities is to nurture faith in God for the future of our world. This faith is not wishful thinking or a naïveté about mankind and its potential, but a hope based upon a historical fact, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To begin this Discovery Group, ask students to look into the future and predict what they believe it

will hold. Usually the popular myths about the future are shallow, utopian, or dark doom. But typically people's understanding of the future is not shaped by God's Word as much as their own insecurities and fantasies. Take note of your students' responses for later reference.

Because Jesus rose from the dead, life wins! This means that the world has hope. Ever since Adam, death has had its way, but now its days are numbered. Some day death will die and all creation will be released from decay. This means Christians are people of hope. We are fundamentally optimistic about the future.

- *What do you believe the future holds?*
- *How much are your views shaped by God's Word?*

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. OVERVIEW (20:1–21:25)

The night has passed and the dawn has come! There has been no light since Judas left Jesus and the disciples in chapter 13. From then until resurrection morning, darkness reigned and evil did its worst. But night is passed and the pain and grief of Jesus' trial and crucifixion are over. From now on, light will increase and grow.

How can we know for certain? Why the resurrection of course! It is the first fruit of the renewal of all things. As Jesus died for all, He was raised for all, and the power of that event will fill the universe.

Have several class members read John 20:1 – 21:25 aloud to the class.

- *How does reading chapters 20 and 21 make you feel?*
- *Our world seems obsessed with gloom and doom predictions or with giddy and naive visions of a technological wonderland in the future. But we are Christians. When we look ahead, we don't predict tomorrow by the headlines of the newspaper or by whether or not our candidate is elected President. We view it through the window of scripture. What kind of today and tomorrow does the resurrection promise us?*

2. THE EARLY APPEARANCES (20:1-31)

John records four appearances of Jesus for us after the resurrection. By reading other portions of the New Testament, we know this is not all. But these episodes are recorded because each one bears its own message. Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene (v. 10-18). The fact that He appeared first to a woman is highly significant. In the ancient world the testimony of a woman was not valid. But since this event, the fortunes of women have changed and credit should go to Jesus for that. But another feature of this appearance is worthy of thought. Mary did not recognize Jesus until He spoke her name. If you have recognized Jesus as the resurrected Lord, you know it is not because you are so smart and perceptive; it is because Jesus has called you by name.

- *How has this encounter with Jesus changed your life?*

Read John 20:19-23 aloud.

- *Jesus' second appearance was to His disciples (v. 19-23). At this appearance He picks up where He left off before His trial and crucifixion. What does Jesus command His disciples to do?*

- *What does He give to them?*

Read John 20:24-31 aloud.

- *The third appearance is made especially for a doubting disciple (v.24-31). "Doubting Thomas," poor guy, he'll never live this incident down. Sometimes people have doubts. If they are honest doubts, Jesus will address them. If you have doubts regarding Jesus' message, don't keep them to yourself but record them, ask someone about them, and above all offer them to God. If they are genuine, let the story of Thomas comfort you.*
- *The message of Thomas' encounter with the Lord is that it is more blessed to not see and yet believe than to see and believe. Why does this manner of faith honor God?*

3. THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH (21:1-14)

Terms/People to Know

- *Zebedee (John 21:2)–The father of James and John.*

Ask someone to read John 21:1-14 aloud to the class.

Each sign (miracle) prior to the crucifixion pointed toward Jesus' impending death, but since this one comes after, it illustrates what is to come after the resurrection. As you read the story, remember every detail has meaning in the larger picture. Note some of the more important features. First, they are fishing at night and they catch nothing. Then in the morning they see Jesus. He tells them to cast their net on the right side of the boat and presto! They catch more than a boat-load of fish! The story is more than just a great fishing story. Here are some clues regarding the main elements: 1) fishing=evangelism; 2) night=before the resurrection; on the right side of the boat=a new, powerful way to be in the world. Now what do you think the story could mean?

4. GRACE (21:15-19)

Ask someone to read John 21:15-19 aloud to the class.

This is a wonderful story with which to conclude the gospel because it so aptly illustrates the power of grace. It is the restoration and commission of Peter. Here we see some interesting parallels to the scene where Peter betrayed the Lord in chapter 18.

- *How many things can you find which are the same? (The fire is the same and so is the presence of Peter, the beloved disciple John, and Jesus.)*
- *There are also some interesting differences. In fact, some things are precisely the opposite of what they were during Peter's betrayal. What features might be called mirror images? (Three features mirror those of the denial: then it was night, now it is day; then Peter denied Jesus three times, now he affirms Him three times; then Jesus died for Peter, but now Jesus tells Peter He will die for him.)*

- *How does this story provide us with hope for our own new beginnings?*

Ever Wonder What Do Fish Have to Do with Christians?

Ever wonder why so many Christians have those little fish on their key chains, necklaces, bumper stickers, and Bible covers? What's the big thing with fish?

The Early Church, because it was persecuted, developed various secret emblems, which helped Christians know who was and who wasn't a believer. The sign of a fish was one of these emblems.

Why a fish? The fish was used for two reasons. First, because Jesus fulfilled the sign of the prophet Jonah (Luke 11:29-32) by going beneath the surface of the earth for three days even as Jonah went beneath the surface of the water for three days. In baptism, Christians identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus, hence the sign of the fish. The second reason is because of this story. In the Gospels, evangelism is likened to fishing (Matthew 4:19-20). Christians have been "caught" by the message of the gospel. We are the fish of the apostles.

5. CONCLUSION (20:30-31 AND 21:22-25)

Ask someone to read John 20:30-31 and 21:22-25.

Now the writer John brings his narrative to its conclusion. He does so by noting the inadequacy of his work (21:25) and by giving the reason for his writing (20:30-31). And he gives us his testimony that what he has written is true (21:24).

- *How has reading this story of Jesus helped you to believe?*
- *By reading this gospel, how have you changed?*
- *Having believed and been changed, how can you testify to what you have seen and heard?*

APPLY THE WORD

1. THE FUTURE ISN'T SCIENCE FICTION

People need hope to live. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is reported to have said, "The world belongs to those who offer it hope." If this is the case, then the world belongs to God simply for the hope He offers. What is the hope God offers? Students are asked to examine Revelation 21 and 22 for clues relating to God's tomorrow. Ask your students to report their findings and describe the vision recorded there.

Everybody needs hope, even people who don't believe in God. But when you don't have God to trust for the future, you look to something else. These days, people look to so many different things.

Probably the most appealing thing about the story of Jesus is the hope that He offers. Christians look to God—and God has given us His vision of the future in the Bible, and especially in the life, death, resurrection, and teaching of Jesus. Turn to Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. Jesus is coming again—it's not science fiction. Read about the end of the world and in your own words, describe what you see.

2. A NEW LIFE

The renewal of all things by the power of the resurrected life of Christ includes the lives of believers. Students will be asked to explore 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 to discover where the faithful fit into the new creation. Have your students share their findings, and just for fun, speculate on what those new glorified bodies will be like.

In Revelation 21 and 22 you read about the renewal of all things and about a new heaven and a new earth. But what about you? What's your future? As a Christian, where do you fit in? Since you are a believer in Jesus you will also participate in His new creation. Turn to 1 Corinthians 15 for a description of what you can anticipate.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 and answer the following questions:

- *vv. 36-38: Paul says that our body is like a seed. Who does this remind you of?*
- *vv. 39-44: Here Paul describes a spiritual body. What is a spiritual body like?*

- *v. 58: Because we have this hope what should we do?*

LIVE THE WORD

The Great Commission

Each Gospel ends with some kind of commissioning statement from Jesus to His disciples. Jesus' commission in John is recorded in John 20:21-22. End this final exercise in the final Discovery Group with a group covenant to carry out the will of Jesus and fulfill His commission.

In John 20:21-22, Jesus commissions His disciples to continue His work in the world. We are also included in this great commission. We have been sent and we have the Holy Spirit. We are the bearers of the peace of Christ. Let's do it! Write a prayer of commitment and give yourself to Jesus and His great commission!

Bible Quizzing: A Perspective

Bible Quizzing is a program that helps youths study and learn about the Scriptures. About once a month, youths from different churches gather for a time of fellowship and competition. In each competition, there are questions about a specific pre-announced portion of Scripture and the teams compete in order to correctly answer those questions.

The official slogan of the Nazarene Youth International is quoted from I Timothy 4:12—“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity”. The purpose of Bible Quizzing is to help cultivate the actions, attitudes, and the lifestyle that are necessary to accomplish this slogan. The Bible Quiz program intends to reach this goal through a tactic that is divided in these different areas:

- An avenue of meaningful *Bible study* for youth to attain a deep and intimate knowledge of Scripture.
- A means of increasing *fellowship and interaction* among youth around the world.
- An integral part of the *outreach and discipleship* aspects of local church youth ministry.
- A medium for the *training and mentoring* of youth leadership.
- A catalyst for encouraging active participation in *ministry and mission* projects.

- A *bridge* for building relationships between youth from different world regions.
- An arena for exciting Christian *competition*.

Rules alone can never prevent unfair tactics or unsportsmanlike attitudes. However, these rules are necessary in order for the competition aspect of Bible quizzing to be clear and consistent. It is the duty of every individual associated with Bible quizzing to uphold the integrity and intent of these rules and guidelines. Any attempt to gain an advantage by circumvention, disregard, or manipulation is unethical and detrimental to the mission and purpose of Bible quizzing. The pursuit of success must never dominate the commitment to exhibit a Christ-like example.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A BIBLE QUIZZING MINISTRY

1. Bible Quizzes are intended to be for youths between 12 and 25 years old. You may want to divide the competition into two categories: 12-18, and 19-25.
2. The year for Bible Quizzing starts in August through May or June of the following year, or January 1st and continues until November or December (whichever works better for your district). Decide how much Scripture to be covered at each

- weekly meeting (e.g. one chapter or one story) and plan a calendar study chart.
3. During the year a tournament will be planned for every one or two months, generally on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon.
 4. Every local church can have one or more teams that meet together for Bible study and competition practice. Each team is composed of 4 or more people in a small group setting.
 5. The location for the competition events (tournaments) must be rotated amongst all the churches participating in the District.
 6. For every year, there is a book (or books) from the New Testament that is used as a resource material for the questions of the competition.

Following is the 8 year cycle that is used around the world for Quizzing.

- a. 2010-2011–John
- b. 2011-2012–Hebrews and 1 & 2 Peter
- c. 2012-2013–Matthew
- d. 2013-2014–Romans and James
- e. 2014-2015 – Acts
- f. 2015-2016–Galatians, Ephesians
Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
- g. 2016-2017 – Luke
- h. 2017-2018–1 & 2 Corinthians

Then the cycle begins again. We currently have Bible studies/questions for many of these books in English, Spanish, and French.

7. Every church must have someone who is the Bible Quiz chairman and two or three more mature helpers to help train the teams and lead them in a weekly Bible study over the Scripture. (e.g. If meeting twice a week, spend time in Bible study, discussion, devotion and make an effort to understand the material together in one meeting. In a second meeting spend time practicing for competition. If meeting once a week divide the time between Bible Study and Competition practice.)

8. The District must have an elected or nominated Bible Quiz chairman, to plan and organize the calendar of the competition and also coordinate the different tournaments.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A WEEKLY BIBLE TEAM MEETING

1. Before the meeting, the leader should read and study the material to be covered during the meeting. Pray for the Lord's guidance.
2. The leader should arrive at the church where the Bible Study will take place before the time in order to prepare.
3. The group can play a game that helps the group begin thinking about the Scripture being covered.
4. Pray together.
5. Read the material out loud together. Spend time asking and answering questions regarding the passage. Help everyone in the group understand what the Scripture means.
6. Allow God to speak through the message of the text. Share a story or a personal experience that relates to the Scripture.
7. Allow time for more questions or input regarding the understanding.
8. Talk about what kind of response the Scripture calls for in the life of the church or in individual lives.
9. Close with prayer.
10. Encourage the study of material for next meeting. Hand out a paper w/ the material to be covered in the next meeting, the time, the place, and some study questions.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A WEEKLY COMPETITION PRACTICE

1. After the Bible Study or at a separate time during the week, practice for competition.
2. Encourage the memorization of important verses; spend time memorizing and quoting to each other.
3. Play a learning game to familiarize the group with the material being covered (ex. Hangman or Pictionary or charades).
4. Ask quizzing questions from the material being covered. (see examples)
5. Divide the group and compete against each other.
6. Keep the focus on knowing and understanding the Word and not on winning and losing.
7. Give out study “homework” for next practice.

COACHING

COACH’S JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Plan and attend practices
2. Arrange for personnel at practice and quizzes
3. Arrange trips to district invitationals and coach a team
4. Plan and participate on trips to off district tournaments
5. Contact quizzers on a weekly basis using notes (maybe an email) and phone calls
6. Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all quizzing events
7. Demonstrate and facilitate interest in God’s Word
8. Plan quiz parties at least twice during the quiz year
9. Recruit new quizzers and coaches
10. Plan a demonstration quiz with local pastors

11. Mentor assistant coaches
12. Organize and lead weekly devotionals (at practice or maybe during Sunday School)
13. Keep statistical records from quizzes
14. Manage a quiz budget if available from the local NYI
15. Keep an organized quiz schedule and keep parents of quizzing up to date
16. Keep local pastors updated on the state of quizzing. Encourage announcements, make sure events are on the church and NYI calendars and interact with the pastors on a regular basis
17. Product a newsletter to keep everyone, especially parents, up to date
18. Attend non-quizzing activities that the quizzers may be involved in. For example, a band concert or play at school
19. Integrate with the rest of the youth group. Be involved in other activities with the youths and work together with the NYI president or youth pastor. They will feel more comfortable with you when that occurs.

ASSISTANT COACH’S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attend practices and assist with the quiz activities – be a quizmaster or score-keeper
2. Coach at district invitationals and off district tournaments
3. Call quizzers during the week to encourage them to study and see how things are going
4. Check quizzer’s memory verse recall at practice
5. Fill in during the coach’s absence
6. Help lead devotionals
7. Assist in team formation – give opinions about how quizzers are doing and share with the coach

HOW TO MOTIVATE

Every individual has a personal agenda, the “Real Reason” he or she wants to be on the team. That personal agenda is the key to motivating each person.

It has been said that the only true motivation is self-motivation. If that is true, then our responsibility is to remove the barriers that demotivate an individual. Some factors that can limit a quizzers motivation is the fear of failure, not being successful, lack of excitement, lack of challenges and not seeing what they are capable of achieving in quizzing.

A quizzer may become less motivated because they do not realize what they are capable of accomplishing. When a quizzer experiences success or sees what they might accomplish, they become excited. Our goal should be to help them have big dreams or the desire to do better.

Quizzers like to be involved in things that provide them a sense of success. If they do not perceive that they have been successful, then they will not give more than the minimum effort required or they will drop out altogether. They must also have a sense of security and safety within the group. If they do not feel safe or accepted, many quizzers will not risk failure.

The biggest thing that makes quizzing different from any other Bible study is the competition factor. This factor is also a key to motivating most quizzers. Most people like to win and will often go to great lengths to win as long as the correct environment is there. Most quizzers are naturally motivated by the competition, but lack the safety from failure, and the vision to push themselves.

Seeing and knowing that there is more to achieve can be just the challenge needed to motivate. Help your quizzers see what they can accomplish if they work hard enough. Let them see really good teams quiz, great individual quizzers and award ceremonies. Discuss what it will take to accomplish what they have seen. It may take a while to convince them that they can accomplish the same thing.

Help them to create individual and group goals. Make some of them easily attainable and others that require a great stretch to achieve. Most quizzers also need to see how they have been successful before they will dare try to accomplish more. Each of us is nor-

mally our harshest critic. Take every opportunity to point out the successes, no matter how small they may be. Look hard to find things to compliment every quizzer on.

True motivation is internal, but external factors can play an important role in motivation. Consider these ideas when motivating.

- Set a good example – your enthusiasm will rub off on them
- Set appropriate goals – create multiple goals including some that will challenge them
- Give lots of feedback – praise first and then improvement
- Help quizzers measure success against themselves not others
- Provide incentives for reaching goals
- Keep track of personal scores and awards
- Make trips to tournaments
- Allow quizzers the opportunity to quizmaster when they reach certain goals like quizzing out or studying a certain amount
- Provide public recognition in church

Another effective way to help motivate is to create some yearly awards. Feel free to make up some unique ones of your own. Make sure the quizzers know exactly how to earn them and try to keep them updated on how they are doing.

ORGANIZING A QUIZ COMPETITION TOURNAMENT

What to do before the tournament

1. Announce, clearly, to all the participants, coaches, and officials the details of the Quiz (date, time and place, what to study, etc.)
2. Prepare the questions
 - a. Write down the questions or use prepared questions.

- b. Divide the questions into groups of 22 or 23 (That would be 20 questions, plus extras for bonus questions or challenges.) You will need enough groups of questions for all the rounds.
 3. Choose a format for the Quiz (Each team quiz each team; Round-robin style with each team quizzing within a group of 4-5, and the winner of each group quizzing against each other for the championship, etc.)
 4. Arrange for people to serve as Quiz Chairman (he or she reads the questions and rules on the correctness of the answer) and scorekeepers/jump judges (He or she keeps score and determines who jumped first for each question. Jump judges are not used if electronic jump seats are used.) If you have enough teams, you might have 3, 4, or more competitions going on at the same time in different rooms. If that is the case, you will need a Quiz Chairman and a score-keeper for each competition.
 5. Organize with someone to provide something to eat and drink. You may charge a fee for lunch, or have each person bring their own lunch.
 6. Make or buy the prizes
 - a. Choose some special prizes (Bibles, books, trophies, etc.)
 - b. Make strips or ribbons (for individuals and for teams)
 7. Make copies of points sheets
 8. Make a list of the announcements for the beginning of the competition
 9. Choose someone to lead a short devotional time before the tournament begins.
- a. Points sheets
 - b. Groups of questions (hidden from the participants)
 - c. Pencils or pens for the quizzing officials
 - d. Prizes
 - e. Tape recorder and music tapes (optional)
 3. Organize the venue
 - a. A table and chairs for the quizzing officials. (One set needed for each competition location.)
 - b. 2 benches or 8 chairs for the contestants
 - c. Seats for the quiz officials
 - d. Microphones (optional)—1 for the quiz chairman and 1 for the contestants
 - e. Tape recorder and music tapes
 - f. Prizes
 4. Begin the quiz with the devotion and the announcements
 5. After the quiz
 - a. Sum up the points and organize the contestants according to their points
 - b. Give the prizes.
 - c. Pray
 - d. Clean the church

WHAT TO DO ON THE TOURNAMENT DAY

1. Arrive at the church where the tournament will take place at least one hour before the time in order to prepare the venue.
2. Items to take to the tournament

Rules for Youth Bible Quizzing for the Church of the Nazarene

These rules are necessary to run a program whose purposes are clear and solid. Every member of the Bible Quizzing program must make sure that the rules and the program are respected. However, these rules cannot prevent unfair acts or attitudes that are not fair play. The actions and attitudes of those who are involved (teams members, coaches, competition officials, etc) must reflect the purposes and objectives of the program and of NYI. The pursuit of success must not dominate the goal of exhibiting a Christ-like attitude.

METHODS OF COMPETITION

Before any competition, the chairman should choose the quizzing method (electronic jump seats or jump judges) for all the teams. The methods that are going to be used must be clearly indicated to the officials, coaches, and captains of the team before the beginning of the competition.

THE TEAM

1. The Team is composed of four or more contestants who regularly attend the Church of the Nazarene and are members of the local NYI. More than five contestants can be used on a team during a competition, but only five can be in-

cluded in the team in each round. No one can be a member of the team if he or she has attended any university, college, Bible school, or any other educational training beyond high school.

2. The coach can talk with or assist his team only during the breaks between the questions.
3. Only four contestants per team can be competing. The fifth one is substitute.
4. Specific members of each team must be designated by the coach before the competition as the captain, and another as co-captain.
5. Only the captain can talk with the quiz chairman after a decision, either to challenge a decision, to protest, or to correct.

THE OFFICIALS OF THE QUIZ

- A. **The Quiz Director**—the person who organizes the tournament. His or her responsibilities include:
 1. Prepare the study and tournament calendar in advance
 2. Obtain all the officials necessary for the competition.

3. Provide all necessary materials for the competition: seats, groups of questions, score sheets, copy of biblical material, a stopwatch, pencil, etc.
 4. Prepare enough groups of questions for the competition.
 5. Prepare or buy the prizes for the quiz: certificates, trophies, or others
 6. Advertise the time, place and date of the tournament in all local churches and to all the people involved.
- B. **The Quiz Chairman**—the person who leads and controls the rounds in the tournament. His or her responsibilities include:
1. A good knowledge of the rules and of the material in the competition. During a competition, the interpretation of the Quiz Chairman is final.
 2. Be unbiased and consistent.
 3. Read each question during the round
 4. Recognize the first contestant and ask for the answer.
 5. Judge the correctness of each answer
 6. Consult, if necessary and wanted, with the scorekeeper when judging answers, challenges, or appeals.
 7. Note faults when they take place
- C. **The Scorekeeper**—the person who maintains the official scoring sheet during the tournament rounds. His or her responsibilities include:
1. A good knowledge of the rules of the Bible Quiz
 2. Register each member of the competing teams onto the scoring sheet.
 3. Register points obtained and/or lost by each team and individual contestant.
 4. Notify the Quiz Chairman when a contestant:
 - a. Has correctly answered four questions
 - b. Has committed three errors
 5. Regularly notify the Quiz Chairman of the running score
 6. Register the final team and individual results
 7. Serve as timekeeper.

THE TOURNAMENT

1. Duration of the tournament.
 - a. There are 20 questions in a round
 - b. If there is a draw after twenty questions, there will be play-off questions until the draw is broken. Only one question is necessary to break the draw, unless no one answers it.
2. Composition of the teams
 - a. Each team's coach must give the names of his or her team to the scorekeeper before the first question is read.
 - b. The captain and the co-captain of the team must be designated before the first question is read.
3. Breaks.
 - a. A break lasts for one minute and can only be asked between questions.
 - b. Each team can ask for two breaks per round, and only the captain, the coach, or one of the officials can ask for a break.
4. Substitutions
 - a. The coach can only change an active member during a break. The contestant that leaves a round is a substitute and can come back in the competition later. The substitute comes back automatically to the competition when one of the contestants answers all the questions he has to answer, or makes all the faults and/or errors he is allowed to make.
 - b. Only a substitute can take the place of a contestant—two contestants who already are competing cannot exchange places.

5. Questions

- a. All the questions will be based on the same version of the Bible (announced ahead of time).
- b. A question for all can be read only once.
- c. If no contestant stands to answer a question within five seconds after it has been read, it will be considered closed. The Quiz Chairman must read the answer, and go on. No points will be given for that question.
- d. At any time before beginning to read the next question, the Quiz Chairman can throw out a question that contains incorrect information or has not been well read.
- e. A captain may appeal to the Quiz Chairman if there is incorrect information in a question, if the question was not well read, or if the question could not be understood because of interference.

6. Electronic Seats

- a. The equipment used for a Bible Quizzing competition is called “jump seats”. The cushions are plugged in to a box at the officials' table. Each cushion functions as a switch that shows with a light who stood up first.
- b. When all the lights are off (all the contestants are seated) the Quiz Chairman can start reading a question.
- c. When the question is being read, the first contestant to stand must answer the question
- d. The Quiz Chairman observes the lights while reading the questions.
- e. When a light is on, the Quiz Chairman stops reading, and calls the name of the contestant whose light is on.

N.B. Most quizzing programs will not have access to jump seats to begin with. In that case, a Jump Judge (or scorekeeper) will determine who jumped first.

7. Answers

- a. A contestant cannot answer before being recognized by name by the Quiz Chairman.
- b. The time limit of 30 seconds starts immediately after the contestant is recognized by the Quiz Chairman.
- c. The contestant must finish the question (if he interrupted the reading of the question) and give the correct and complete answer during the 30 seconds time limit.
- d. The Quiz Chairman can not repeat the question or give any information to the contestant. The contestant must answer without any help.
- e. If the correct question and answer are given in the correct time limit, without any errors in information, the answer will be considered as correct.

DECISIONS OF THE OFFICIALS

The Quiz Chairman must judge if the answers are correct this way:

1. When the contestant gives all the necessary information for the question and the answer, and sits back down, the Quiz Chairman will judge if the answer is correct.
2. The Quiz Chairman must not interrupt the contestant. The only exception is when the contestant gives enough incorrect information to eliminate any possibility to give a correct answer. If more information is necessary, the Quiz Chairman will not say anything until the contestant sits down or the 30 seconds time limit has ended.
3. If the Quiz Chairman considers that an answer is “correct” the points will be given to the team and the contestant.
4. If the Quiz Chairman considers that an answer is “incorrect”, the points will be deducted from the score of the team and/or contestant (if after question 16), and a bonus question will be read.
5. The Quiz Chairman will not judge an answer “incorrect” because of a pronunciation error.

ERRORS AND BONUS QUESTIONS

1. If an incorrect answer is given, the contestant with the corresponding seat on the opposite team can answer that question as a bonus.
2. The Quiz Chairman must read the question completely before the contestant answers the bonus question.
3. The contestant must answer the bonus question within 30 seconds.
4. A correct answer to a bonus question is worth 10 points for the team of the contestant who answered the question. Individual points are not given for bonus questions.
5. Points will not be deducted for incorrect answers given to bonus questions.

CHALLENGE AND APPEALS OF THE DECISIONS OF THE OFFICIALS

1. Only the acting team captain can challenge or appeal the decisions of the officials.
2. The captain may not challenge or appeal before the question and the bonus question (if necessary) are asked, answered and judged. All the challenges or appeals must be done before the beginning of the next question.
3. There may be no communication between the coach & captain, between two contestants, or the contestants and the audience.
4. Each captain can challenge a question only once.
5. Challenge
 - a. A captain may challenge a decision of the Quiz Chairman if he thinks an incorrect decision has been taken.
 - b. The captain can ask the Quiz Chairman to read the correct question and answer before challenging.
 - c. The captain of the other team can refute the challenge, once it is complete.
 - d. After hearing the challenge and the refutation, the Quiz Chairman will judge the validity of the challenge.

- e. The challenge will be invalidated if it contains incorrect information, or if the argument does not justify a different decision than the first one.
- f. The challenge will be accepted when the argument justifies the modification of the previous decision. When a challenge is accepted and the previous decision is reversed. The points will be adjusted as if the error happened in the beginning.

6. Appeals

- a. The captain can appeal to the Quiz Chairman to invalidate the answer due to an incorrect reading, incorrect information in the question, or visual/audio interference.
- b. After hearing the appeal, the Quiz Chairman may consult the scorekeeper for the final decision.
- c. The appeal will be upheld if the argument justifies the change of the first decision.
- d. When an appeal is upheld, the question appealed will be invalidated, and another question will be asked.
- e. The official point sheet must be changed as if the appealed question was not asked. The points given after the first decision will be deducted and the points deducted after the first decision are given again.

FAULTS

1. There is a fault when:
 - a. There is communication (verbal or non-verbal) after the Quiz Chairman asks the Question and before the points are given.
 - b. A contestant begins answering a question before being recognized by the Quiz Chairman.
2. Any contestant who does three faults in a round must leave the round. He may be substituted.

POINTS

1. A correct answer to a question is worth 20 points for the team and the individual contestant.
2. A correct answer for a bonus question is worth 10 points for the team.
3. Four correct answers (not including bonus questions) by any one contestant is worth 10 bonus points for the team and the contestant who answered the four questions. This is called a "quiz out". When a contestant has quizzed out, he or she must step down from the quizzing seat and may be substituted for if there is a substitute.
4. When 3 members from the same team answer at least one question correctly, there is a 10 point bonus for the team.
 - a. The fourth contestant who answers correctly gains 10 points for the team
 - b. The fifth contestant who answers correctly gains 10 more bonus points
5. Beginning with question #16, 10 points are deducted from the points of the team for each error.
6. At the third error of a contestant, 10 points are deducted from the points of the team and of the contestant. This is called an "error out" and the contestant may no longer answer questions for that round. The contestant may be substituted for.
7. For the fifth error of the team (and each subsequent error) 10 points will be deducted from the points of the team.
8. The points for the play-off questions after the time limit are not part of the individual or team points.

Study Tips

STUDY TIPS: MEMORIZATION

MEMORY VERSES

If your quizzers plan to learn all the memory verses this year, you'll want to pay special attention to the prejump list in the back of Book 1. The purpose of having a prejump list is to show them where the earliest "safe" place to jump on each memory verse is, and to help you learn to complete the verse with the fewest possible beginning words. Use it to perfect their skills in jumping on memory verses. Also, download the free memory verse flash cards from www.youthquiz.com or from the Power Tools CD.

"15" METHOD

1. Read the verse through a couple of times.
2. Have them say it without looking. If they get stuck, check the Scripture, and then go on.
3. When they can say the verse through without looking, they're ready to start memorizing. (You thought you were through, didn't you?)
4. Have them say the verse through as fast as they can, five times, without a mistake. If they make a mistake, start over.
5. Read the verse again to make sure they are saying it right. If not, do it over.
6. Have them say the verse five more times without a mistake. Then five more times. (That makes

15.) If at any time they make a mistake, start over with that group of five.

7. Do the next verse the same way, then return to the first verse memorized to make sure they still know it?
8. Continue the process until they are done memorizing.

WRITING QUESTIONS

It's a proven fact that the more you deal with a subject, the better you learn and remember it. It is a great idea to have your quizzers write their own questions as they study the material. Make sure they have a solid knowledge of the material before they begin to write questions. Once they do, they will find that practicing forming questions and answers will really test their knowledge of the material. Once they learn this method, you might find they don't need to actually write the questions and answers down on paper; it may be enough to simply form questions mentally and answer them in their mind. Those written questions could be used in practice and compared to the questions in this book.

PHRASE METHOD

1. Read the verse carefully, making sure they understand its meaning.
2. Break the verse into phrases (punctuation marks do this pretty well) and say each phrase several times, emphasizing words that are difficult to remember.
3. Read the entire verse again, concentrating on difficult parts.

4. Quote the verse 5 or 6 times, or until they can say it smoothly without error.
5. Review the verse about 10 times the same day they learn it.
6. Review the verse at least once a day for three or four days after they learn it.

3-5-7 PLAN

Assume that you've just studied 1 Corinthians 8. Now have the quizzers review the chapter three chapters before this chapter—chapter 5. Then review the chapter five before—chapter 3. Then review the chapter seven before your original chapter—chapter 1. Hence, the name 3-5-7 Plan. When the total number of chapters gets high enough, it will need to become the 3-5-7-9 Plan.

INDEX CARDS

A great way to help quizzers learn the memory verses (or all of the material) is to create a catalog of the verses they (or you want them) want to memorize. Write or type each verse on one side of an index card and put its reference on the back. Computer programs have made this a somewhat simple task, especially with the ability to purchase the NIV for that computer. (It's important that they do this step themselves (regardless of the method); try not to have their parents or you as coach do this for them. The cards will mean much more to them—and they'll remember the verse much better as well—if they take the time to mentally process each verse as they prepare the catalog.) Once they have all the verses on cards, they're now ready to begin. They'll probably want to memorize the verses in the order as they appear in the Scripture. Have them use any of the memorization methods already mentioned to actually learn the verse. The big advantage of this method is being able to separate those verses that they're having difficulty learning. They will also be able to review the verses by looking at the reference or review the references by looking at the verses.

STUDY TIP: COMPREHENSION

UNDERLINE METHOD

Have the quizzers read the chapter enough times that they know most of it, starting at the beginning of the chapter and underlining every fact in the chapter that they are not sure they would remember in a quiz without further study. Then, beginning with the first verse, have them study all the underlined phrases. To fully complete the study method, have them continue working on all these phrases until they know each of them well enough to recall details in a quiz.

STUDY TIP: READING

CD/CASSETTE METHOD/MP3/PODCAST

Learning comes easier when one can not only see the words but hear them as well. You can purchase a premade audio recording of the book to help your quizzers read and memorize. You might consider making your own recording using a blank recordable CD, (you will need a computer with a microphone and appropriate recording software) or a cassette tape and recording your own voice reading each chapter for study purposes. (Remember that it is illegal to make copies of premade Bible recordings, or to distribute or sell copies of your own voice recording of Bible passages without permission.) This may take some time, but you'll find it worth your while in the long run. Remember to read clearly and loudly. You might want to identify each chapter and/or verse with its reference as you come to it. Recorded CD's should be available at www.youthquiz.com.

There are several ways you can use a recording like this in your study. Here are a couple:

- Straight Reading—Read along in the Bible or scripture portion, and listen carefully to the recording at the same time while reading. In this way, they will not only see the words on the page but hear the words as well. This combination will help them remember the material better. A variation is to try to quote the material along with the recording.

- **Pantomime Reading**—Turn on the CD/Tape player/MP3 player. As the verses are read, pantomime (act out) everything that is happening. Exaggerate! Do fun, crazy things to act out the passages. If they are not too self-conscious, have your quizzers act out the passages. You'll be surprised to see how well this method helps them remember the material.

STRAIGHT READING METHOD

Simply have them read through the chapter carefully and thoughtfully five times. The more they read something, the better they will know it. Also, have them read the related scripture or commentary if they have some type of reference Bible. Be careful to use only the NIV for memory work but other versions can be helpful when trying to understand what the author is trying to convey.

REPETITION METHOD

1. Read verse 1 (of the chapter they are studying) three times.
2. Read verse 2 three times, verse 3 three times, verse 4 three times, and verse 5 three times.
3. Now read verses 1 through 5 all together at once.
4. Read verses 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 three times each.
5. Now read verses 6 through 10 all together at once.
6. Now go back to verse 1 and read straight through to verse 10.
7. Read verses 11 through 15, each three times; then read them together once; then go back to verse 1 and read through to verse 15.
8. Read verses 16 through 20 three times each; then 16 to 20 once all together; then 1 to 20 altogether.
9. Keep doing this until they finish the chapter.

PARAPHRASE METHOD

Have you ever stopped to think that if you were writing some of the Scriptures you're studying; it would sound a lot different from what you are reading?

Before you suggest this method to your quizzers, they'll need about three or four pieces of notebook paper. At the top of the first page they should write the number of the chapter they'll be reading. Have them read the chapter, through a couple of times. Now the goal is for them to rewrite the chapter, verse by verse, in their own words.

They can make it serious or funny, creative or normal—however they usually talk. They should paraphrase (explain how to accomplish paraphrasing) at least 10 verses of a chapter just to find out if they like this method. They do not even have to use it all the time. They should try it once in a while to lend variety to their studying.

STUDY TIP: PREJUMPING

QUESTION WRITING

In order to fine tune your quizzers prejumping ability it is really not as important for them to write hundreds of questions as it is for them to learn how to write questions. You will eventually have them move from actually writing questions and answers to simply forming them mentally. The key to good prejumping is not simply winning the jump but being able to correctly complete the question from the point where they jumped. Learning to recognize questions and answers in their mind will be of tremendous advantage as they begin to prejump.

In the average verse, there are four or five possible quiz questions. Even though several questions may cover the same information, the way a quizzer pre-jumps on each question is different. So, it is helpful to be able to look at a verse and see the different questions that can come from it. To write a question, have them begin by finding the answer in the verse and then decide how to ask a question about it. Beginning at the first verse, have them look at each phrase, each noun, each action verb, each adjective, and each adverb, to see if any could be an answer to questions. Then, have they written the questions.

KEY WORD SPOTTING

Key word spotting is to help a quizzer be able to jump faster. It is very difficult to improve their jump reaction time without learning to spot key words.

What is a key word? The key word is the word that comes at that place in the question where, for the first time, one can tell what the rest of the question is. In other words, if they hear a question and the quizmaster stops reading just before the key word, they won't know for certain what the rest of the question is. There may be only a few possibilities, and they may make an educated (or lucky!) guess, but they won't be for certain. However, if they were to hear one more word—the key word—they would know without a doubt what the correct question is.

Your job as a coach is to help the quizzers learn to locate that key word so that they can jump at that place in the question. In a quiz, that means faster decision-making under pressure. To get started, though, have them practice with a few questions and take all the time they need to decide what is the key word.

Here is an important point to remember: the key word will not always be the same for everyone! The better they know the chapter, the sooner they will be able to jump. Right now the key word for questions may be the last word; but by the end of the year, the key word on some of the very same questions could possibly be the third or fourth word. The key word changes as their knowledge of the material improves.

ANTICIPATING THE KEY WORD

Anticipation is accurately predicting that the next word of the question will be the key word. Why anticipate you ask? If a quizzers can tell that the next word of a question will be the key word, then they can jump just as the quizmaster begins to say it, but late enough that he or she does not have time to stop before he or she says at least the first syllable of the key word. The quizzers can then identify the key word by watching the quizmaster's mouth as a clue to the remainder of the word. This means that they will actually jump before they hear the complete question! If they can learn to anticipate accurately, they will obviously win many more jumps than a quizzers who does not anticipate. Remember, though, that anticipating is taking a definite risk; they will want to be sure that they know the material well enough to take this risk before you jump! Prejumping is a major hurdle for most quizzers to overcome, but when they do, they will find competition much easier.

RECORDING JUMPING

To practice their jumping and to improve anticipation of the key word, you may want to try this method. In order to use this method they will need computer recording equipment and a CD/DVD/MP3 burner, or a simple cassette recorder. To prepare for the study, record some of the questions and the answers to the CD/DVD/MP3 or cassette. Start the CD/DVD/MP3 or cassette and have them “jump” (either physically or mentally), and stop the recording at the point where they jump. Now have them try to complete the question and give the correct answer. To check yourself simply restart the cassette and then listen to the correct question and answer. They'll find that as their knowledge of the material increases, their ability to prejump earlier also improves.

STUDY TIP:

GENERAL REVIEW

After studying one-fourth of the chapters, take time out for a general review of all the chapters they've covered. Test them in each of the following areas:

1. Have them read through each chapter again. If there is time, they may even want to use a repetition method (Read chapter 1, then read chapters 1 and 2, then read chapters 1, 2, and 3, etc.)
2. Have them write out either a chapter-by-chapter outline, or a list of what events are in each chapter.
3. Have them review all the underlined phrases that they thought they might not remember in a quiz. Test them to see how well they still remember those verses. If they've forgotten any of the phrases, spend some more time studying with them.
4. Work with the prejump list of memory verses, and test their ability to complete each verse and give the reference.

Repeat this general review after completing one-half, then three-fourths, then all of the chapters. In each case, review all the chapters they've covered.

STUDY TIP: USING A CONCORDANCE

Have you ever noticed how some quizzers always seem to be able to jump way before your quizzers do? And how you could say almost any word in the material and they can tell you exactly what verse it's in? Chances are that those quizzers have been using a concordance.

What is a concordance? A concordance is a type of index—you know, those lists in the back of books that tell you where a certain subject is mentioned. A biblical concordance will tell you where and how many times any word is used in the Scripture. (Would it surprise you to know that the word “the” is used 55,728 times throughout the Bible?!) There are several types of these concordances: entire Bible, Old Testament, New Testament, and individual book concordances.

How can you use a concordance to help your quizzers in their study? Each year, youthquiz.com makes available a Quizzer's concordance that covers only the material being covered during that quiz year. This resource will tell you where and how many times each word is used in this book. Of special help to a quizzer is the list of “Unique Words.” These are words that are used only once in the material.

Being familiar with these words can be invaluable to a quizzer. A quizzer knowing that a particular word is used only once throughout an entire year's material will more quickly direct them toward the right passage when answering a question. Once they've acquired a concordance, find the unique word list, or go through the entire list of words and note those that are used only once. Have them mark these words with a certain color of marker or colored pencil—blue, perhaps. Then have them take their Scripture portion or Bible and locate each of these “blue” words and mark them. Now as they read and study the Scripture, they will be able to note when they come across a “blue” word. Many quizzers use the same approach with words used two or three times throughout the material, marking them with a different color, such as red and green.

Now, as soon as they hear one of these unique words, they should be able to recognize it as a key word, remember the reference, and quickly go there mentally to form their question and answer. You will

find that knowing these key words will greatly enhance your quizzer's ability to prejump. (You can also tailor this system as it suits their study style).

However you decide to have your quizzers use a concordance, be sure they have a good understanding of the material, as well as of the individual words. The concordance should supplement a good study plan—don't let them rely on it to solve all of their study problems.

Knowing the Scripture in this way will also help them in the future. It may help them find a verse that they need when speaking to a person seeking God. The Holy Spirit will bring that verse they learned years ago to memory at the appropriate time.

STUDY TIP: VARIETY IN YOUR STUDY

Throughout this book the quizzers will find many different study methods for use in individual study times. Chances are no one study method is right for everyone. What works best for one may not work for teammates. Just as important, however, is that their knowledge and recollection of the material will improve if they vary the study methods they use. Have them try a new method every now and then so they don't get bored and frustrated using the same technique over and

PRE-ANNOUNCING KEY

Remember that all questions will be “preannounced” in actual quizzing competition. In order to prepare your quizzers for this practice (and in case your team decides to use these questions in practice), we’ve included the preannouncing codes in this book as well. The code in front of the question indicates the type of question it is; the codes are explained in the “Preannouncing Key” found throughout the book.

(Code=Question Type)

G = General

X = Context

A = According to

S = Situation

I = In What Book and Chapter

Memory: Q = Quote;

V = Finish this (these) verse(s) (no reference);

R = Finish this (these) verses and give the reference

MEMORY VERSE LIST-JOHN

1:1	3:20-21	8:10-11	12:32	17:3
1:3-5	3:36	8:12	13:14-16	17:11
1:10-11	4:10	8:31-32	13:34-35	17:17-19
1:12-13	4:13-14	8:34-36	14:1	17:20
1:14	4:23-24	8:42	14:2-3	17:24
1:16-17	4:34-35	8:58	14:15	18:36
1:23	5:21	9:3-4	14:16-17	19:30
1:26-27	5:24	9:25	14:21	20:17
1:29	6:27	9:31-33	15:4	20:19-20
1:34	6:29	9:39	15:5	20:21
2:16	6:35	10:9-10	15:12	20:29
2:18-19	6:51	10:14-15	15:13-14	20:30-31
2:22	6:68-69	10:27	15:15	21:15
2:23	7:16	11:25-27	15:17	21:25
2:25	7:18	12: 8	15:26	
3:3	7:24	12:13	16:13	
3:5-6	7:37-38	12:24-25	16:28	
3:16-17	8:7	12:26	16:33	

PRE-JUMP LIST

A	13:34-35	I tell you the truth, whoever	5:24	On the evening.....	20:19-20
And	14:16-17	I will	17:11	On the last.....	7:37-38
After	2:22	If.....	14:15	Remain	15:4
Again	20:21	In.....	14:2-3	Sanctify.....	17:17-19
But I	12:32	In reply	3:3	Simon.....	6:68-69
But when	16:13	In the.....	1:1	Stop	7:24
Do not let	14:1	Jesus answered her.....	4:10	The next	1:29
Do not work	6:27	Jesus answered, "My.....	7:16	The Word	1:14
Everyone.....	3:20-21	Jesus answered, "The.....	6:29	Then.....	2:18-19
Father	17:24	Jesus answered, "	Everyone.....	Then Jesus declared.....	6:35
For.....	5:21	Jesus answered, "I am.....	4:13-14	Then Jesus told	20:29
For.....	3:16-17	Jesus answered, "I tell.....	14:6-7	They	12:13
From.....	1:16-17	Jesus did.....	3:5-6	This	15:17
Greater	15:13-14	Jesus did	21:25	Through	1:3-5
He	1:10-11	John replied	20:30-31	To	2:16
He did	2:25	Jesus replied	1:23	To.....	8:31-32
He replied.....	9:25	Jesus said.....	8:34-36	We.....	9:31-33
He who.....	7:18	Jesus said.....	11:25-27	When he	19:30
I am the gate.....	10:9-10	Jesus said, "Do	20:17	When Jesus	8:12
I am the good	10:14-15	Jesus said, "For.....	9:39	When the.....	15:26
I baptize.....	1:26-27	Jesus said, "My	18:36	When they had	21:15
I tell.....	12:24-25	Jesus said to.....	8:42	When they kept	8:7
I am the vine.....	15:5	Jesus straightened.....	8:10-11	Whoever believes	3:36
I am the living.....	6:51	My.....	4:34-35	Whoever has	14:21
I came	16:28	My command	15:12	Whoever serves	12:26
I have seen	1:34	My prayer	17:20	Yet a.....	4:23-24
I have told.....	16:33	My sheep	10:27	Yet to	1:12-13
I no.....	15:15	Neither	9:3-4	You	12: 8
"I tell you the truth," Jesus.....	8:58	Now	13:14-16		
		Now this.....	17:3		
		Now while	2:23		

Practice and Competition Questions for Bible Quizzing

JOHN 1

- Q Who was in the beginning?
A. *The Word (1:1).*
- Q What has the darkness not understood?
A. *The light (which shines in the darkness). (1:5).*
- Q Why did John come as a witness?
A. *To testify concerning that light (so that through him all men might believe). (1:7).*
- Q Whom did the world not recognize?
A. *The true light [OR Jesus, the Word] (1:10).*
- Q According to John chapter 1: verse 12, to whom did he give the right to become children of God?
A. *To all who received him, to those who believed in his name (1:12).*
- Q Three part answer: Of what are children of God not born?
A. *Natural descent, human decision, or a husband's will (1:13).*
- Q What did the Word become?
A. *Flesh (1:14).*
- Q Through whom was the law given?
A. *Moses (1:17).*
- Q According to John chapter 1: verse 21, whom did John say he was not?
A. *Elijah or the Prophet (1:21).*

JOHN 2

Q With what does John baptize?

A. *With water (1:26).*

Q According to John chapter 1: verse 28, where did all this happen?

A. *At Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing (1:28).*

Q Who came down from heaven as a dove and remained on Jesus?

A. *The Spirit (1:32).*

Q According to John chapter 1: verse 39, about what hour was it?

A. *About the tenth hour (1:39).*

Q Whose brother was Andrew?

A. *Simon Peter's (1:40).*

Q From where was Philip?

A. *The town of Bethsaida (1:44).*

Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph"?

A. *Philip said it to Nathanael and he replied, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" (1:45-46).*

Q Who is a true Israelite?

A. *Nathanael (1:47).*

Q On whom shall the angels of God ascend and descend?

A. *The Son of Man (1:51).*

Q What took place on the third day?

A. *A wedding (2:1).*

Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and when: "They have no more wine"?

A. *Jesus' mother said it to Jesus when the wine was gone (2:3).*

Q What did the servants fill to the brim?

A. *The six stone water jars (2:7).*

Q What did Jesus perform at Cana in Galilee?

A. *The first of his miraculous signs (turning the water into wine). (2:11).*

Q Who went up to Jerusalem when it was almost time for the Jewish Pass-over?

A. *Jesus (2:13).*

Q Who overturned the tables of the money changers?

A. *Jesus (2:15).*

Q Complete, in essence, the verse from which the following unique word comes: "Zeal"?

A. *"His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'" (2:17).*

Q What will Jesus raise again in three days?

A. *This temple (his body). (2:19).*

Q Who then believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken?

A. His disciples (2:22).

Q According to John chapter 2: verse 24, whom did Jesus know?

A. All men (2:24).

JOHN 3

Q Who was a member of the Jewish ruling council?

A. Nicodemus (a man of the Pharisees). (3:1).

Q What can a man surely not do a second time?

A. Enter into his mother's womb to be born (3:4).

Q According to John chapter 3: verse 5, unless what can no one enter the kingdom of God?

A. Unless he is born of water and the Spirit (3:5).

Q What blows wherever it pleases?

A. The wind (3:8).

Q From where did the Son of Man come?

A. From heaven (3:13).

Q Who shall not perish?

A. Whoever believes in God's one and only Son (3:16).

Q Who stands condemned already?

A. Whoever does not believe in God's Son (3:18)?

Q Into what does whoever lives by the truth come?

A. The light (3:21).

Q Who was put in prison?

A. John (3:24).

Q Who said, "I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him"?

A. John (3:28).

Q According to John chapter 3: verse 30, what must John become?

A. Less (3:30).

Q Without what does God give the Spirit?

A. Limit (3:34).

Q On whom does God's wrath remain?

A. On whomever rejects the Son (3:36).

JOHN 4

Q When did the Lord leave Judea and go back once more to Galilee?

A. When he learned that the Pharisees heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John (4:3).

Q What is called Sychar?

A. A town in Samaria (4:5).

Q According to John chapter 4: verse 7, what did Jesus say to the Samaritan woman?

A. "Will you give me a drink?" (4:7).

Q What is deep?

A. The well (Jacob's well). (4:11).

Q Who will never thirst?
A. *Whoever drinks the water Jesus gives him (4:14).*

Q According to John chapter 4: verse 17, when is the Samaritan woman right?
A. *When she says she has no husband (4:17).*

Q Who worship what they know?
A. *The Jews (4:22).*

Q When will Messiah explain everything to the Samaritans?
A. *When he comes (4:25).*

Q Who left her water jar?
A. *The Samaritan woman (4:28).*

Q What did Jesus' disciples urge him?
A. *"Rabbi, eat something" (4:31).*

Q According to John chapter 4: verse 33, what did his disciples say to each other?
A. *"Could someone have brought him food?" (4:33).*

Q Who even now draws his wages?
A. *The reaper (4:36).*

Q How long did Jesus stay with the Samaritans?
A. *Two days (4:40).*

Q Who has no honor in his own country?
A. *A prophet (4:44).*

Q Who was close to death?
A. *A certain royal official's son (4:47).*

Q Who took Jesus at his word and departed?
A. *The royal official (4:50).*

Q According to John chapter 4: verse 54, what was this?
A. *The second miraculous sign that Jesus performed (4:54).*

JOHN 5

Q What is surrounded by five covered colonnades?
A. *A pool—which in Aramaic is called Bethesda—in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate (5:2).*

Q According to John chapter 5: verse 6, what did Jesus learn?
A. *That the invalid had been in this condition for a long time (5:6).*

Q When does the invalid have no one to help him into the pool?
A. *When the water is stirred (5:7).*

Q What does the law forbid?
A. *Carrying your mat on the Sabbath (5:10).*

Q Where did Jesus later find the man who was healed?
A. *At the temple (5:14).*

Q Who persecuted Jesus?
A. *The Jews (5:16).*

Q Why can the Son do only what he sees his Father doing?
A. *Because whatever the Father does the Son also does (5:19).*

- Q Whom does the Father judge?
A. *No one (5:22).*
- Q Whose voice will the dead hear?
A. *The Son of God (5:25).*
- Q What will all who are in their graves hear?
A. *The Son's voice (5:28).*
- Q According to John chapter 5: verse 30, how can Jesus do nothing?
A. *By himself (5:30).*
- Q Who was a lamp that burned and gave light?
A. *John (5:35).*
- Q Two part question: 1) what have the Jews never heard; and 2) what have the Jews never seen?
A. *1) The Father's voice and 2) The Father's form (5:37).*
- Q From whom does Jesus not accept praise?
A. *From men (5:41).*
- Q In whose name has Jesus come?
A. *In his Father's name (5:43).*
- Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in what situation: "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"
A. *Jesus said it to Philip when he looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him (6:5).*
- Q Who was Simon Peter's brother?
A. *Andrew (6:8).*
- Q What should the disciples let be wasted?
A. *Nothing (6:12).*
- Q What did the people intend to do by force?
A. *Come and make Jesus king (6:15).*
- Q How was Jesus approaching the boat?
A. *Walking on the water (6:19).*
- Q When did the boat immediately reach the shore where the disciples were heading?
A. *When the disciples were willing to take Jesus into the boat (6:21).*
- Q What did the crowd do once they realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there?
A. *They got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus (6:24).*
- Q Who will give the crowd food that endures to eternal life?
A. *The Son of Man (6:27).*

JOHN 6

- Q According to John chapter 6: verse 1, to where did Jesus cross some time after this?
A. *To the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberius). (6:1).*
- Q Where did Jesus sit down with his disciples?
A. *On a mountainside (6:3).*

- Q What did our forefathers eat in the desert?
A. *The manna (6:31).*
- Q Who is the bread of life?
A. *Jesus (6:35, 48).*
- Q According to John chapter 6: verse 37, what will come to Jesus?
A. *All that the Father gives him (6:37).*
- Q Who began to grumble about Jesus?
A. *The Jews (6:41).*
- Q By whom will they all be taught?
A. *God (6:45).*
- Q Who has everlasting life?
A. *He who believes (6:47).*
- Q What will Jesus give for the life of the world?
A. *His flesh (6:51).*
- Q What does whoever eats Jesus' flesh and drinks his blood have?
A. *Eternal life (6:54).*
- Q Who will live because of Jesus?
A. *The one who feeds on him (6:57)?*
- Q Who were grumbling about Jesus' teaching?
A. *Many of his disciples (6:61).*
- Q Who gives life?
A. *The Spirit (6:63).*
- Q What did Jesus go on to say?
A. *"This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him" (6:65).*

- Q Who has the words of eternal life?
A. *Jesus (6:68).*
- Q Who is a devil?
A. *One of the Twelve (6:70).*
- Q Who was the son of Simon Iscariot?
A. *Judas (6:71).*

JOHN 7

- Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and when: "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do"?"
A. *Jesus' brothers said it to Jesus when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near (7:2-3).*
- Q In what does no one who wants to become a public figure act?
A. *Secret (7:4).*
- Q What is right for Jesus' brothers?
A. *Any time (7:6).*
- Q How did Jesus go also to the Feast after his brothers had left?
A. *Not publicly, but in secret (7:10).*
- Q What was among the crowds?
A. *Widespread whispering about Jesus (7:12).*
- Q When did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach?
A. *Not until halfway through the Feast (7:14).*

Q From whom does Jesus' teaching come?

A. *From him who sent Jesus (7:16).*

Q According to John chapter 7: verse 20, what did the crowd answer?

A. *"You are demon-possessed. Who is trying to kill you?" (7:20).*

Q By what should the crowd stop judging?

A. *Mere appearances (7:24).*

Q According to John chapter 7: verse 25, what did some of the people of Jerusalem begin to ask at that point?

A. *"Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?" (7:25).*

Q Who is true?

A. *He who sent Jesus (7:28).*

Q Who sent temple guards to arrest Jesus?

A. *The chief priests and the Pharisees (7:32).*

Q Who said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him?"

A. *The Jews (7:35).*

Q Complete, in essence, the verse from which the following unique word comes: "Streams"?

A. *"Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (7:38).*

Q What is the town where David lived?

A. *Bethlehem (7:42).*

Q Who laid a hand on Jesus?

A. *No one (7:44).*

Q Who retorted, "You mean he has deceived you also?"

A. *The Pharisees (7:47).*

Q Who was one of the Pharisee's own number?

A. *Nicodemus (7:50).*

Q According to John chapter 7: verse 53, where did each go?

A. *To his own home (7:53).*

JOHN 8

Q When did all the people gather around Jesus?

A. *At dawn (8:2).*

Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in what situation: "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery"?

A. *The teachers of the law and the Pharisees said it to Jesus when they brought in a woman caught in adultery and made her stand before the group (8:4).*

Q What did Jesus straighten up and say to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees?

A. *"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (8:7).*

- Q What did the older ones do?
A. *Went away first (one at a time). (8:9).*
- Q According to John chapter 8: verse 12, what is Jesus?
A. *The light of the world (8:12).*
- Q Why did the Pharisees say Jesus' testimony is not valid?
A. *Because he is appearing as his own witness (8:13).*
- Q When are Jesus' decisions right?
A. *If he does judge (8:16).*
- Q What if the Pharisees knew Jesus?
A. *They would know his Father also (8:19).*
- Q What did this make the Jews ask?
A. *"Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come?'" (8:22).*
- Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply:
"Who are you?"
A. *The Jews said it to Jesus and he replied, "Just what I have been claiming all along" (8:25).*
- Q When will the Jews know that Jesus is the one he claims to be?
A. *When they have lifted up the Son of Man (8:28).*
- Q When are the Jews really Jesus' disciples?
A. *If they hold to his teaching (8:31).*
- Q What is everyone who sins?
A. *A slave to sin (8:34).*
- Q Why are Abraham's descendants ready to kill Jesus?
A. *Because they have no room for his word (8:37).*
- Q According to John chapter 8: verse 41, what are the Jews doing?
A. *The things their own father does (8:41).*
- Q Whose desire do the Jews want to carry out?
A. *The devil's (who is their father). (8:44).*
- Q By whom is Jesus not possessed?
A. *A demon (8:49).*
- Q When does Jesus' glory mean nothing?
A. *If he glorifies himself (8:54).*
- Q Who picked up stones to stone Jesus?
A. *The Jews (8:59).*

JOHN 9

- Q What happened so that the work of God might be displayed in the life of the man born blind?
A. *He was born blind (9:3).*
- Q Where did Jesus spit?
A. *On the ground (9:6).*
- Q According to John chapter 9: verse 8, what did those who had formerly seen the man begging ask?
A. *"Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" (9:8).*

Q What was the day on which Jesus had made mud and opened the man's eyes?

A. *A Sabbath (9:14).*

Q Why did some of the Pharisees say Jesus was not from God?

A. *For he did not keep the Sabbath (9:16).*

Q Who sent for the man's parents?

A. *The Jews (9:18).*

Q Who is of age?

A. *The man who had been born blind (9:21).*

Q Situation question: to whom was it said, when, and what was the reply: "Give glory to God, we know this man is a sinner"?

A. *It was said to the man who had been blind when the Pharisees (or Jews) summoned him a second time. He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (9:24-25).*

Q To whom does God not listen?

A. *To sinners (9:31).*

Q Who was steeped in sin at birth?

A. *The man who had been blind (9:34).*

Q Whom did Jesus say the man has now seen?

A. *The Son of Man (9:37).*

Q Who will become blind?

A. *Those who see (9:39).*

Q What if some Pharisees were blind?

A. *They would not be guilty of sin (9:41).*

JOHN 10

Q Who enters by the gate?

A. *The man who is the shepherd of his sheep (10:2)*

Q Whose voice do the sheep not recognize?

A. *A stranger's (10:5)*

Q Who were thieves and robbers?

A. *All who ever came before Jesus (10:8)*

Q Complete, in essence, the verse from which the following unique word comes: "Pasture"?

A. *"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture" (10:9).*

Q Who is not the shepherd who owns the sheep?

A. *The hired hand (10:12)*

Q Who are not of this sheep pen?

A. *Other sheep Jesus has (10:16)*

Q Who were again divided at these words?

A. *The Jews (10:19)*

Q Where was Jesus walking?

A. *In Solomon's Colonnade (10:23)*

- Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in what situation: "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly"?
- A. *The Jews said it to Jesus when they gathered around him while he was walking in the temple area in Solomon's Colonnade during the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem (10:24)*
- Q Who shall never perish?
- A. *Jesus' sheep (10:28)*
- Q What has Jesus shown the Jews?
- A. *Many great miracles from the Father (10:32)*
- Q According to John chapter 10: verse 34, what is written in the Jews' Law?
- A. *"I have said you are gods" (10:34)*
- Q Who escaped the Jews' grasp?
- A. *Jesus (10:39)*
- Q According to John chapter 10: verse 42, who believed in Jesus?
- A. *Many (in that place) (10:42)*

JOHN 11

- Q When did Jesus stay where he was two more days?
- A. *When he heard that Lazarus was sick (11:6).*
- Q According to John chapter 11: verse 8, who tried to stone Jesus a short time ago?
- A. *The Jews (11:8).*
- Q Who has fallen asleep?
- A. *Lazarus (11:11).*
- Q What did Jesus tell his disciples plainly?
- A. *"Lazarus is dead" (11:14).*
- Q How long did Jesus find that Lazarus had already been in the tomb?
- A. *Four days (11:17).*
- Q What was less than two miles from Jerusalem?
- A. *Bethany (11:18).*
- Q Who stayed at home?
- A. *Mary (11:20).*
- Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: "Your brother will rise again"?
- A. *Jesus said it to Martha, and she answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (11:23, 24).*
- Q Who was to come into the world?
- A. *The Christ, the Son of God (11:27).*

Q Who had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him?

A. *Jesus (11:30).*

Q When was Jesus troubled?

A. *When he saw Mary weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping (11:33).*

Q Who wept?

A. *Jesus (11:35).*

Q What was laid across the entrance?

A. *A stone (11:38).*

Q Why does Jesus thank his Father?

A. *That he has heard him (11:41).*

Q What was around the dead man's face?

A. *A cloth (11:44).*

Q Who called a meeting of the Sanhedrin?

A. *The chief priests and the Pharisees (11:47).*

Q Who prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation?

A. *Caiaphas (11:51).*

Q Why did Jesus no longer move about publicly among the Jews?

A. *Because from that day on the Sanhedrin plotted to take his life (11:53, 54).*

Q Who had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him?

A. *The chief priests and Pharisees (11:57).*

JOHN 12

Q How many days before the Passover did Jesus arrive at Bethany?

A. *Six (12:1).*

Q What was worth a year's wages?

A. *The perfume Mary poured on Jesus' feet (12:5).*

Q For what was it intended that Mary should save this perfume?

A. *For the day of Jesus' burial (12:7).*

Q Who made plans to kill Lazarus as well?

A. *The chief priests (12:10).*

Q Who heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem?

A. *The great crowd that had come for the feast (12:12).*

Q Who is seated on a donkey's colt?

A. *The Daughter of Zion's king (12:15).*

Q According to John chapter 12: verse 18, what had many people heard?

A. *That Jesus had given this miraculous sign (12:18).*

Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the result: "Sir, we would like to see Jesus"?

A. *Some Greeks who were among those who went up to worship at the Feast said it to Philip; Philip went to tell Andrew, and they in turn told Jesus (12:20-22).*

Q What if a kernel of wheat dies?

A. *It produces many seeds (12:24).*

Q What is troubled now?

A. *Jesus' heart (12:27).*

Q Who will be driven out?

A. *The prince of this world (12:31).*

Q What has the crowd heard from the Law?

A. *That the Christ will remain forever (12:34).*

Q What was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet?

A. *Even after Jesus had done these miraculous signs in the crowd's presence, they did still not believe in Jesus (12:37-8).*

Q Who saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him?

A. *Isaiah (12:41).*

Q Who does not believe in Jesus only, but in the one who sent him?

A. *A man who believes in Jesus (12:44).*

Q According to John chapter 12: verse 47, whom does Jesus not judge?

A. *The person who hears Jesus' words but does not keep them (12:47).*

Q What leads to eternal life?

A. *The Father's command (12:50).*

JOHN 13

Q What had the devil already done?

A. *Prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus (13:2).*

Q According to John chapter 13: verse 4, what did Jesus take off?

A. *His outer clothing (13:4).*

Q When will Simon Peter understand?

A. *Later (13:7).*

Q What does a person who has had a bath need only to wash?

A. *His feet (13:10).*

Q Whose feet should the disciples also wash?

A. *One another's (13:14).*

Q According to John chapter 13: verse 17, what if the disciples do these things?

A. *They will be blessed (13:17).*

Q Who accepts Jesus?

A. *Whoever accepts anyone Jesus sends (13:20).*

Q Who was reclining next to Jesus?

A. *The disciple whom Jesus loved (13:23).*

JOHN 14

- Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and when: "Lord, who is it?"
A. *The disciple whom Jesus loved said it to Jesus when Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means" (13:24, 25).*
- Q When did Satan enter into Judas?
A. *As soon as Judas took the bread (13:27).*
- Q For what did some think Jesus was telling Judas to buy what was needed?
A. *The Feast (13:29).*
- Q Who is now glorified?
A. *The Son of Man (13:31).*
- Q What does Jesus tell his disciples now, just as he told the Jews?
A. *Where he is going, they cannot come (13:33).*
- Q What will all men know if the disciples love one another?
A. *That they are Jesus' disciples (13:35).*
- Q Who will disown Jesus three times before the rooster crows?
A. *Peter (13:38).*
- Q Complete, in essence, the verse from which the following unique word comes: "Disown"?
A. *"Then Jesus answered, 'Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!'" (13:38).*
- Q Complete, in essence, the verse from which the following unique word comes: "Rooms"?
A. *"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you" (14:2).*
- Q Who is the way and the truth and the life?
A. *Jesus (14:6).*
- Q Whom has anyone who has seen Jesus seen?
A. *The Father (14:9).*
- Q Why will anyone who has faith in Jesus do even greater things than what Jesus has been doing?
A. *Because Jesus is going to the Father (14:12).*
- Q When will the disciples obey what Jesus commands?
A. *If they love him (14:15).*
- Q Who lives with the disciples and will be in them?
A. *The Spirit of truth (14:17).*
- Q As what will Jesus not leave the disciples?
A. *Orphans (14:18).*

Q According to John chapter 14: verse 20, what will the disciples realize on that day?

A. That Jesus is in his Father, that they are in Jesus and that Jesus is in them (14:20).

Q Who will not obey Jesus' teaching?

A. He who does not love Jesus (14:24).

Q Whom will the Father send in Jesus' name?

A. The Counselor, the Holy Spirit (14:26).

Q When would the disciples be glad that Jesus was going to the Father?

A. If they loved Jesus (14:28).

Q What must the world learn?

A. That Jesus loves the Father and that Jesus does exactly what his Father has commanded him (14:31).

JOHN 15

Q Who is the true vine?

A. Jesus (15:1).

Q What does the gardener prune?

A. Every branch that does bear fruit (15:2).

Q What can no branch bear by itself?

A. Fruit (15:4).

Q Who is like a branch that is thrown away and withers?

A. Anyone who does not remain in Jesus (15:6).

Q How has Jesus loved the disciples?

A. As the Father has loved him (15:9).

Q What may be complete?

A. The disciples' joy (15:11).

Q What if the disciples do what Jesus commands?

A. They are his friends (15:14).

Q What does Jesus no longer call the disciples?

A. Servants (15:15).

Q According to John chapter 15: verse 16, whom did Jesus choose?

A. The disciples (15:16).

Q What fruit did Jesus appoint the disciples to bear?

A. Fruit that will last (15:16).

Q Out of what has Jesus chosen the disciples?

A. The world (15:19).

Q What if the world obeyed Jesus' teaching?

A. They will obey the disciples' also (15:20).

Q Who hates Jesus' Father as well?

A. He who hates Jesus (15:23).

Q Who goes out from the Father?

A. The Spirit of truth (15:26).

Q Why must the disciples also testify?

A. For they have been with Jesus from the beginning (15:27).

JOHN 16

Q Out of what will the world put the disciples?

A. *Out of the synagogue (16:2).*

Q According to John chapter 16: verse 4, what will the disciples remember when the time comes?

A. *That Jesus warned them (16:4).*

Q Why are Jesus' disciples filled with grief?

A. *Because Jesus has said these things (16:6).*

Q Two part answer: when will the Counselor not come to the disciples and when will Jesus send him to them?

A. *Unless Jesus goes away the Counselor will not come to the disciples; but if he goes, he will send him to them (16:7).*

Q Who now stands condemned?

A. *The prince of this world (16:11).*

Q How much more does Jesus have to say to the disciples?

A. *More than they can now bear (16:12).*

Q Why did Jesus say the Spirit of truth will take from what is his and make it known to the disciples?

A. *Because all that belongs to the Father is his (Jesus'). (16:15).*

Q According to John chapter 16: verse 16, when will the disciples see Jesus?

A. *After a little while (16:16).*

Q Situation question: who said it, and to whom: "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?"

A. *Some of Jesus' disciples said it to one another (16:17).*

Q What will turn to joy?

A. *The disciples' grief (16:20).*

Q Who forgets the anguish because of her joy?

A. *A woman giving birth to a child when her baby is born (16:21).*

Q According to John chapter 16: verse 23, what will Jesus' Father give the disciples?

A. *Whatever they ask in Jesus' name (16:23).*

Q Who loves the disciples because they have loved Jesus?

A. *The Father himself (16:27).*

Q What does Jesus not even need?

A. *To have anyone ask him questions (16:30).*

Q Who has overcome the world?

A. *Jesus (16:33).*

JOHN 17

Q According to John chapter 17: verse 1, what did Jesus do after he said this?

A. *He looked toward heaven and prayed (17:1).*

Q Who is the only true God?

A. *The Father (17:3).*

Q What did Jesus have with the Father before the world began?

A. *Glory (17:5).*

Q What did the disciples know with certainty?

A. *That Jesus came from the Father (17:8).*

Q Whose is all that the Father has?

A. *Jesus' (17:10).*

Q According to John chapter 17: verse 12, what did Jesus do while he was still with his disciples?

A. *Protected them and kept them safe by that name the Father gave Jesus (17:12).*

Q Who has hated the disciples?

A. *The world (17:14).*

Q According to John chapter 17: verse 16, how are the disciples not of the world?

A. *Even as Jesus is not of it (17:16).*

Q How has Jesus sent the disciples into the world?

A. *As the Father sent him into the world (17:18).*

Q For whom does Jesus also pray?

A. *For those who will believe in Jesus through the disciples' message (17:20).*

Q Why has Jesus given the believers the glory that the Father gave him?

A. *That they may be one as Jesus and the Father are one (17:22).*

Q According to John chapter 17: verse 25, whom does the world not know?

A. *The Righteous Father (17:25).*

Q What will Jesus continue to do?

A. *Make the Father known in order that the love the Father has for Jesus may be in the believers and that Jesus himself may be in them (17:26).*

JOHN 18

Q Who knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples?

A. *Judas, who betrayed Jesus (18:2).*

Q Who were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons?

A. *A detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees (who were guided to the olive grove by Judas). (18:3).*

Q Who came to the olive grove?

A. *Judas, a detachment of soldiers, and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees (18:3).*

- Q Situation question: who asked it again, of whom, and what was the reply: "Who is it you want?"
A. *Jesus asked it of the detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees and they said, "Jesus of Nazareth" (18:7).*
- Q What did Simon Peter draw?
A. *A sword (18:10).*
- Q Who was the high priest that year?
A. *Caiaphas (18:13).*
- Q Who was known to the high priest?
A. *Another disciple who was following Jesus with Simon Peter (18:15).*
- Q What did the girl at the door ask Peter?
A. *"You are not one of his disciples, are you?" (18:17).*
- Q What did the servants and officials do to keep warm?
A. *Stood around a fire they had made (18:18).*
- Q Who surely know what Jesus said?
A. *Those who heard him (18:21).*
- Q What did one of the officials nearby demand?
A. *"Is this the way you answer the high priest?" (18:22).*
- Q To whom did Annas send Jesus?
A. *Caiaphas the high priest (18:24).*
- Q Who challenged Peter?
A. *One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off (18:26).*
- Q To avoid what did the Jews not enter the palace?
A. *Ceremonial uncleanness (18:28).*
- Q Three part answer, In John Chapter 18, to what three people did the Jews take Jesus?
A. *1) Annas (18:13).
2) Caiaphas the high priest (18:24).
3) Pilate (18:29).*
- Q Who have no right to execute anyone?
A. *The Jews (18:31).*
- Q When did Pilate summon Jesus and ask him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"
A. *When he went back inside the palace (18:33).*
- Q What if Jesus' kingdom were of this world?
A. *Jesus' servants would fight to prevent his arrest by the Jews (18:36).*
- Q According to John chapter 18: verse 37, who listens to Jesus?
A. *Everyone on the side of truth (18:37).*
- Q Who asked, "What is truth?"
A. *Pilate (18:38).*

Q What is the Jew's custom?
A. *For Pilate to release to them one prisoner at the time of the Passover (18:39).*

Q What did the Jews shout back?
A. *"No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" (18:40).*

JOHN 19

Q Who took Jesus and had him flogged?
A. *Pilate (19:1).*

Q According to John chapter 19: verse 3, what did the soldiers do to Jesus?
A. *They went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" and struck him in the face (19:3).*

Q To whom is Pilate bringing Jesus out?
A. *The Jews (19:4).*

Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in reply to what: "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him"?
A. *Pilate said it to the chief priests and their officials when they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" (19:6).*

Q When did Jesus give Pilate no answer?
A. *When Pilate asked Jesus, "Where do you come from?" (19:9).*

Q What if power were not given to Pilate from above?
A. *He would have no power over Jesus (19:11).*

Q Where was the judge's seat?
A. *At a place known as the Stone Pavement (19:13).*

Q Who finally handed Jesus over to the chief priests to be crucified?
A. *Pilate (19:16).*

Q What did Pilate have prepared and fastened to the cross?
A. *A notice which read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS (19:19).*

Q Who read this sign?
A. *Many of the Jews (19:20).*

Q What was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom?
A. *Jesus' undergarment (19:23).*

Q Who stood near the cross of Jesus?
A. *His mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (19:25).*

Q Who took Jesus' mother into his home from that time on?
A. *The disciple whom Jesus loved (19:27).*

Q What did the soldiers soak in a jar of wine vinegar?
A. *A sponge (19:29).*

Q Why was the next day to be a special Sabbath?
A. *It was the day of Preparation (19:31).*

Q Whose legs did the soldiers not break?

A. *Jesus' (19:33).*

Q According to John chapter 19: verse 36, what scripture would be fulfilled?

A. *"Not one of his bones will be broken" (19:36).*

Q How was Joseph a disciple of Jesus?

A. *Secretly (19:38).*

Q Where had no one ever been laid?

A. *In a new tomb in the garden at the place where Jesus was crucified (19:41).*

Q Where did Joseph and Nicodemus lay Jesus?

A. *In a new tomb (in which no one had ever been laid). (19:42).*

JOHN 20

Q According to John chapter 20: verse 1, what had been removed from the entrance?

A. *The stone (20:1).*

Q Who reached the tomb first?

A. *The other disciple (20:4).*

Q Who bent over and looked in the tomb?

A. *The other disciple (20:5).*

Q What had been around Jesus' head?

A. *The burial cloth (20:7).*

Q Who stood outside the tomb crying?

A. *Mary (Magdalene). (20:11).*

Q What did two angels in white ask Mary?

A. *"Woman, why are you crying?" (20:13).*

Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was she thinking: "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him"?

A. *Mary said it to Jesus, thinking he was the gardener (20:15).*

Q What did Mary cry out in Aramaic?

A. *"Rabboni!" (20:16).*

Q With what news did Mary Magdalene go to the disciples?

A. *"I have seen the Lord!" (20:18).*

Q When were the disciples overjoyed?

A. *When they saw the Lord (20:20).*

Q In John chapter 20, how did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit?

A. *Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22).*

Q Who was not with the disciples when Jesus came?

A. *Thomas (called Didymus). (20:24).*

Q Unless what will Thomas not believe it?

A. *Unless he sees the nail marks in Jesus' hands and puts his finger where the nails were, and put his hand into his side (20:25).*

Q Who said, "My Lord and my God!"?

A. *Thomas (20:28).*

Q Where did Jesus do many other miraculous signs?

A. *In the presence of his disciples (20:30).*

Q What may you have by believing?

A. *Life in Jesus' name (20:31).*

JOHN 21

Q From where was Nathanael?

A. *Cana in Galilee (21:2).*

Q When did the disciples not realize that it was Jesus?

A. *Early in the morning when they saw Jesus standing on the shore (21:4).*

Q According to John chapter 21: verse 6, what did Jesus say?

A. *"Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some" (21:6).*

Q Who jumped into the water?

A. *Simon Peter (21:7).*

Q Into what did Simon Peter jump?

A. *The water (21:7).*

Q Who climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore?

A. *Simon Peter (21:11).*

Q Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the response: "Come and have breakfast"?

A. *Jesus said it to the disciples and none of them dared ask him, "Who are you?" (21:12).*

Q When did Jesus say to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

A. *When they had finished eating (21:15).*

Q Why was Peter hurt?

A. *Because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" (21:17).*

Q When did Peter go where he wanted?

A. *When he was younger (21:18).*

Q Whom did Peter turn and see was following Jesus and him?

A. *The disciple whom Jesus loved (21:20).*

Q What if Jesus wants the disciple whom he loved to remain alive until he returns?

A. *What is that to Peter? (21:22).*

Q What spread among the brothers?

A. *The rumor that the disciple whom Jesus loved would not die (21:23).*

Q Who testifies to these things and wrote them down?

A. *The disciple whom Jesus loved (21:24).*

Q What if every one of the many other things Jesus did were written down?

A. Even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written (21:25).

NAZARENE YOUTH BIBLE QUIZZING SCORE SHEET

ROUND _____ DATE _____ Winner _____

TEAM:																								
NO.	NAME OF QUIZZER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	OT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL ERROR
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								
S																								
BONUS AND PENALTY POINTS																								
RUNNING SCORE																								

Errors are a 10-pt team penalty

TEAM:																								
NO.	NAME OF QUIZZER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	OT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL ERROR
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								
S																								
BONUS AND PENALTY POINTS																								
RUNNING SCORE																								

Errors are a 10-pt team penalty

20pts for each correct "jump" answer 10pts bonus for 3rd, 4th, 5th quizzer correct "jump" answer 10pt penalty for error-out
 10pts for each correct bonus answer 10pts bonus for quiz-out with no error 10pt penalty on errors after question 15

WHEN YOU DISCOVER JOHN.... YOU DISCOVER JESUS!

Discovering John is a Bible study containing 13 lessons that deal with the central issues of who Jesus is and why He came. As your youth work through these studies, they will grow in their knowledge of Jesus and His mission. But more importantly, they will have an opportunity to know Jesus personally.

This course is designed to help youth leaders:

- Communicate belonging and acceptance
- Build personal relationships with and among youth
- Teach scriptural principles of living
- Model discipleship in a real-life setting
- Deepen their understanding of God's Word
- Help youth grow in their faith

Chris Wiley has served as an urban missionary living and working in Boston. He was the founder and director of Cambridge Institute, an organization committed to taking the whole gospel to the whole city. The Institute worked cooperatively with urban churches in church planting, lay training, youth ministry, and compassionate ministry.

Chris is also the author of *The Little Commission Handbook: A Youth's Guide to Christian Service*.

