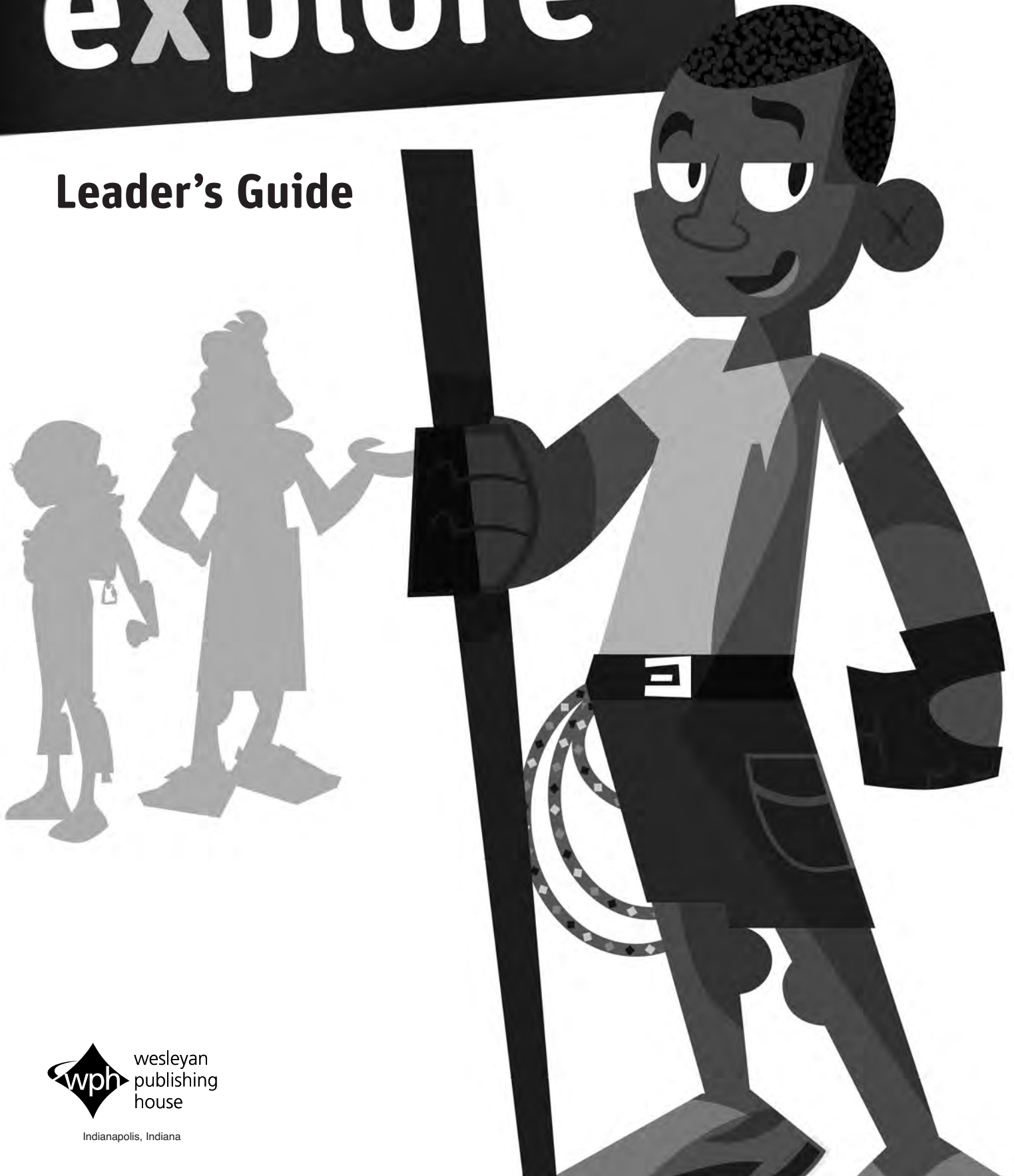


explore

books
5&6

Leader's Guide



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Indianapolis, Indiana



explore

A Discipleship Series for Preteens

**Investigate God's Word
for Yourself**



Link Your Life to God

explore leader's guide

Copyright © 2012 by Wesleyan Publishing House
Published by Wesleyan Publishing House, Indianapolis, Indiana 46250
Printed in the United States of America
ISBN: 978-0-89827-589-6

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www.wesleyan.org/wph

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introduction

Explore is a discipleship resource for your church's intentional ministry to preteens—those who may no longer consider themselves children but are not yet teens.

Your preteens are on the verge of becoming teens and embarking on a culture that is in need of an infusion of followers of Christ. Intentional discipleship as provided in Explore will help ground them in their faith, establish routines that will move them in their spiritual formation, and prepare them to face a world desperately in need of the Savior.

The Explore discipleship series is written in a small group format to provide opportunity for deeper, relational connections. It's progressive in design, moving students from an internal confirmation of their faith, to commitment to a fellowship of believers, on to service within the fellowship, and finally to personal ministry outside the doors of the church. It's intentional in that it combines personal teaching moments that are highly interactive and reflective with corporate celebrations.

Transition is a key word to describe the life of preteens. Their bodies are transitioning as they move from child-size to adult-looking bodies. Their minds are transitioning as they move from concrete to abstract thinking. They are developing the ability to reflect, interpret, and assimilate. Socially, preteens are moving from being family centered to friend centered. Spiritually, they are moving away from the borrowed faith of their parents and teachers to a personalized faith that they own.

This Time of Transition

"What you believe by the time you are 13 is what you will die believing. . . . Most people's minds are made up and they believe they know what they need to know spiritually by age 13. Their focus in absorbing religious teaching after that age is to gain reassurance and confirmation of their existing beliefs rather than to glean new insights that will redefine their foundations" (George Barna).

This time of transition is a prime opportunity to instill biblical truths and to give your preteens an opportunity to confirm their faith. Preteens are capable of powerful commitment and have the ability to process deep spiritual insights, if given the opportunity and motivation. Here are some key things to remember when sharing biblical truth with preteens:

- They desire authentic relationships with adults who are transparent.
- Boys often respect male leaders greater than female, while girls usually respect either equally. (Make sure you have male volunteers as part of your preteen ministry.)
- They need you to answer the question "So what?" so they can understand why.
- They are active and loud as they sort out who they are and where they fit in.
- They are very self-conscious and desire a great deal of attention.
- They need routine and clear guidelines, but seek independence.
- They need to talk and question.
- They have drastic mood swings and waffle between levels of maturity.
- Girls are all about friends and are into make-up, fashion, and appearance.
- Boys want to play and care little about personal appearance.

What Is the Explore Discipleship Series?

The Explore series is comprised of eight student books, each containing six weeks of discipleship lessons for preteens, for a total of forty-eight weeks of material. Each set of six lessons culminates in a celebration. There are also four leader's guides: one for student books 1 and 2, one for student books 3 and 4, one for student books 5 and 6, and one for student books 7 and 8.

The outline of lessons for the entire forty-eight-week course is:

book 1

Uncover the Truth about God

1. God
 2. The Bible
 3. Jesus
 4. Humanity
 5. Salvation
 6. Baptism
- Celebration: Baptism

book 5

Investigate God's Word for Yourself

1. Jesus in Action
 2. Unclean Jesus?
 3. Just Have Faith
 4. On Your Mark, Get Set, Follow Jesus
 5. Grapes, Bad Guys, and a Son
 6. Curtains Up
- Celebration: Bible Fair

book 2

Discover Your Place in God's Plan

1. The Trinity
 2. Temptation
 3. Bible Study and Prayer
 4. Holy Living
 5. Worship
 6. Membership
- Celebration: Student Membership

book 6

Link Your Life to God

1. The Lord's Prayer
 2. Prayer of Jabez
 3. Prayer for Boldness
 4. Jesus' Garden Prayer
 5. Daniel's Praise
 6. The Voice of God
- Celebration: Prayer Walk

book 3

Experience God's Power in You

1. Bible Study
 2. Prayer
 3. Evangelism
 4. Fellowship
 5. Service
 6. Stewardship
- Celebration: Student Leadership

book 7

Unearth God's Image in You

1. We Need God
 2. Mourning
 3. Humble and Hungry
 4. Mercy
 5. Pure Heart and Peace
 6. Persecution
- Celebration: Beatitudes Video

book 4

Encounter Your Mission for God

1. Fruit of the Spirit
 2. Spiritual Gifts
 3. Spiritual Disciplines
 4. Compassion
 5. The Call
 6. Missions
- Celebration: Mission Experience

book 8

Represent the Evidence for God

1. Bad Things
 2. Hell
 3. The Way
 4. Resurrection
 5. The Truth
 6. Creation
- Celebration: Defend the Faith Day

Christian character development is a lifelong process. No one is too young or old to start or stop growing deeper in their life with Jesus. It's a privilege to disciple every person intentionally. If we want our youth, young adults, parents, grandparents, and culture to behave like Jesus, now is the time to explore the truths of God and His church with our children.



note to leaders

Explore is a small group discipleship tool for the students in transition between your children's ministry program and youth group. The material provides for twenty-four weeks of teaching and four weeks of celebrations. This can be done by using two of the books in the fall semester for twelve weeks of programming and two of the books in the spring semester for another twelve weeks. It can also be used over two years providing a six week program each fall and spring for two years.

This small group can meet during the traditional Sunday school hour, during a midweek programming hour, or on Sunday evening. The books are also an excellent resource for setting up a time of independent programming—a time set apart from the typical ministry schedule for the purpose of intentional discipleship with preteens. Establishing a unique time of discipleship for preteens also allows flexibility in finding a time frame and location that works best for the group.

The Leader's Guide for each lesson contains the following elements in this order:

Thesis: A single sentence that summarizes the entire content of the lesson into one thought.

Main Points: Three sentences that summarize the primary teaching points for each lesson.

Lesson Preparation: Provides leader instructions for what to do prior to teaching each lesson.

Connect: Helps create a relational environment, giving the students and leader an opportunity to catch up on life.

Warm Up: Provides a "hook" and introduces the concept for the lesson to gain the interest and attention of students.

Engage: Presents the Bible teaching component, including biblical background.

Relate: Provides the real-life application, answers the "so what?" question and makes the theme personal.

Question: Launches the group into asking interactive and exploratory questions about the content and relational elements of what was presented so that they can process and internalize.

Prayer: Offers a suggested prayer to pray with the students.

Unwind: Creates group connection and lightens the atmosphere before sending them home.

Challenge: Provides a tangible outcome that practically relates the concept to the students' real world. Also includes a challenge verse to study each week with the goal being they will commit the verse to memory.

Additional resources to enhance each lesson can be found at www.wesleyan.org/explore.

Of these elements, *Engage*, *Question*, and *Challenge* appear in the student book. The students are asked to use their book as a reflection journal, completing the content and following the challenges.

There is enough material provided in each lesson for a full ninety minutes of programming. If your time is shorter than that, pick and choose the elements that work best for your group and fill your time allotment. The elements that parallel the student's book—*Engage*, *Question*, and *Challenge*—would be the foundational elements you would begin with and build the rest of your teaching time from.

The Bible verses referenced throughout Explore are quoted from the *Live Bible*. We strongly encourage you to make available for each student a copy of the *Live Bible* so that you and your preteens can be literally on the same page. In a small group, it is a challenge to have a Bible study with a leader and students using different Bibles and especially different translations. The Leader's Guide contains the corresponding page number for each biblical reference to help you find the verses quickly. The *Live Bible* is written in the New Living Translation which is most appropriate for this age level, providing easier readability and comprehension for preteens.

book
5

Investigate God's Word for Yourself

Leader's Guide

explore

In this book students will learn—

- Why the gospel is good news.
- How the gospel calls us to show compassion for others.
- Why it's important to have faith in Jesus.
- What it means to follow Jesus.
- How we can be close to God and have peace with Him.

You are on an amazing journey of faith—let's Explore it together!



1. Jesus in Action

The book of Mark is about the good news of Jesus.

Main Points

Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son.

Jesus did miracles, wonders, and signs.

Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead!

Lesson Preparation

Background: Read Mark 1:14–15.



Most preteens thrive on challenges. Present reading the Bible as a challenge and get them excited about reading. Continually give them the encouragement they need to succeed in this tough challenge. Also, do the challenge yourself. If you are not willing to participate, the students most likely will not participate either.

Items needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), action figure, five paper bags, an assortment of items to put into the bags, paper, pencils, large sponges, and masking tape

Connect

Who knows what this is?



Hold up a Bible. This should be a very easy question.

How important is reading the Bible?

How many of you have read an entire book of the Bible?

Encourage the students to be honest. Most students have never read an entire book of the Bible.

Many times we say reading the Bible is important, but we don't actually follow through with our actions. We are going begin a challenge this week—one that I hope everyone completes. Our challenge is to read the entire book of Mark. Don't worry! We will not be reading the entire book in one week. We will be reading a small section each week for the next six weeks.

Jesus in Action

Are you ready to take our challenge? Can you do it? I dare you to try!

Warm Up

Show the students an action figure. This can be a superhero, army man, etc.

Who knows what this item is called? This is an action figure.

Tell about an action figure you or someone you knew played with as a child.

Action figures were created first in the 1960's. They were called action figures because the figure can be moved into different poses that look like the real action hero.

How many of you have an action figure at home? What is your favorite one?

The book of Mark is the action book of the New Testament. The author of the book put more emphasis on what Jesus did as opposed to what He taught. It's a fast-paced, simple account of Jesus' ministry. As we read Mark, we will find the adverb *immediately* used a lot as Mark moves from one event to the next in Jesus' ministry.

Mark is the story of Jesus, the ultimate action hero!



Engage

Mark 1:1 says, "This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God" (p. 984, *Live*). In the gospel of Mark, the author wanted to show his readers that Jesus was the Messiah that they had been waiting for. He wanted to make sure his readers could see the difference between Jesus and all the other prophets God had provided to the Israelite nation.

read

Check It Out

Acts 2:22–24 summarizes the purpose of the Gospels.

Read Acts 2:22–24 (p. 1075, Live).

say

I Can Know It's True

1. Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son. During the time of Jesus, the Jewish nation was under the rule of the Roman Empire. Hundreds of years before then, God had sent prophets who promised that one day a Messiah would come, set the Jewish nation free, and establish a kingdom that would last forever. Jesus came as the Messiah and established a kingdom that was far greater than any earthly kingdom.
2. Jesus did miracles, wonders, and signs. The gospel of Mark is filled with the actions of Jesus. He performed miracle after miracle and spoke with the authority of God. However, these miracles were not enough to prove that

Jesus was the Messiah. There were many prophets before Him that had performed miracles, wonders, and signs of God's power.

3. Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead! This is what makes Him different from the other prophets. All the other prophets died, but none of them came back to life. This is the good news of Jesus. He did not stay dead. God brought His Son back to life so He could establish a kingdom that would last forever.

Relate

Before class, fill five paper bags with different items. Try to make the items as different in texture, size, and shape as possible. Suggested items include: flour, rocks, cotton balls, bucket/cup of water, and play-dough or clay. Number the bags one through five.

The object of this activity is for students to describe differences between five items. Begin by giving each student a piece of paper. Have them write the numbers one through five on their paper. Now, give the students time to explore the items in each bag. After examining an item, the preteens must list as many adjectives as possible to describe what they see. They may not write the actual name of the item on their papers.

Mark wanted to make sure the readers of his letter would know the difference between Jesus and everyone else. Jesus is the Messiah! He is the Son of God! He proved this by His miracles, wonders, signs, and ultimately by being crucified and raised from the dead. No one else has done what He has done.

Question

Tell a story to the students about something that happened in your life. When you are finished, have them tell the story back to you.

Just as you repeated my story, the author of Mark actually repeated another man's story. John Mark most likely wrote the book. However, it was Peter who told Mark about the good news of Jesus and what to write.



We can also learn other basic facts about the book of Mark.

Who: Who was it written to?

It was written to the Christians in Rome.

What: What makes Mark different?

Mark is a fast-paced book; it frequently uses the words immediately and one day; and it seems to focus more on the actions of Christ than His teachings.

Jesus in Action

Where: Where is the book found in the Bible?

It is the second book of the New Testament. Have the students find the book and bookmark it so they can find it easily when they read at home.

When: When did these events take place?

The events of Mark took place around 3 B.C. to A.D. 30. The book of Mark was most likely written in the A.D. 60s.

Why: Why was this book written?

The book of Mark was written to give the Christians in Rome a summary of Jesus' life and to prove that He is the true Messiah.

pray

Prayer

Dear Father,

We praise You for giving us Your Word. Help us learn to love Your Scripture and to follow You. Thank You for sending Jesus to be our Messiah. Help us discover something new this week as we begin to read the book of Mark. Amen.

Unwind

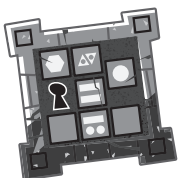
The book of Mark is an action-packed book of the Bible. Today, we are going to play an action-packed game!

Divide the students into two equal teams. Place a piece of tape down the middle of the room and put the sponges on the tape. Have each team start at opposite walls.

We are going to play Dodge-the-Sponge! If you get hit by a sponge, you are out of the game. When you get out, you must come over to the side and perform a crazy action before you can enter back into the game. Do not cross the center line or you will automatically be out. Also, catching a sponge from an opposing team member does not make that member out.

Are you ready? Go!

As students get out, have them do actions like fifteen jumping jacks, ten push-ups, a crazy dance, run in place, or any other funny action.



Challenge

Your challenge this week is to read Mark 1–3. As you read, highlight every miracle you find and count how many times the Pharisees caused trouble. Record the number in your book.

Explore

Mark 1:14–15 says,

“Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God’s Good News. ‘The time promised by God has come at last!’ he announced. ‘The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!’”
(p. 984, *Live*).

Underline this passage in your reading this week. What does it mean to you to repent and believe in the Good News?

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.



2. Unclean Jesus?

We are called to show compassion to others.

Main Points

The man was considered “unclean.”

Jesus had compassion on the man.

Jesus’ compassion resulted in action.

plan

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week’s challenge and read Mark 1:40–45.

ask

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, bull horn, straws with paper wrapping (the ones found at fast food restaurants), and a cup of water

Connect

Let’s play a game called “Who Would You Tell?” I am going to describe something and you must come up with someone you would tell. Pick a different person for each scenario.

Who would you tell if . . .

- you just met a famous singer?
- you found a one hundred dollar bill on the ground?
- you just won the championship game?
- you discovered the cure for cancer?
- you just witnessed an accident?

In the passage we are studying today, Jesus healed a man and told him not to tell anyone. The man was so excited that he could not keep quiet. He told everyone!

Warm Up

Bring out the bull horn you brought to class and begin saying through it, “Unclean! Stay away!” toward the students. Be dramatic in making sure the students stay away from you.

In the culture of Jesus, when someone had a skin disease called leprosy, they had to live outside the city. Any time someone would come close to the lepers, the lepers had to yell out, “Unclean! Stay away!” No one was allowed to touch the lepers or they would be considered unclean also.

See Leviticus 13:45 (p. 112, Live).

Engage

Jesus healed a man with leprosy. Jesus taught us a valuable lesson on compassion when He healed this man. Let’s take a look and see what happened.

Check It Out

Read Mark 1:40–45 with the students (p. 985, Live).

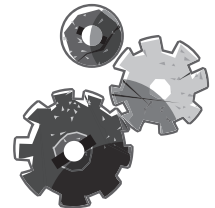
I Can Know It’s True

1. Jesus was approached by a man with leprosy. According to the law of Moses, anyone with a skin disease was considered “unclean.” That person could not enter towns and was not allowed to be touched by anyone else. This man was “unclean” and rejected by society and felt very lonely. In spite of his bleak situation, the man had faith that Jesus could heal him and make him clean. In our lives, there are many people who are different from us, rejected by society, and lonely. These people are looking for someone to show them the way to Jesus.
2. Jesus saw the man’s unfortunate condition and had compassion on him. After all, this man was not even allowed to visit or live with his own family. The sight of this outcast man caused Jesus to feel sorry and have sympathy for him. When we see others in unfortunate situations in life, we should be like Jesus and have compassion on them.
3. Jesus’ compassion resulted in action. Jesus’ compassion did not end with a sorry feeling. Jesus reached out, touched the man, and healed him! Afterward, Jesus told the man to keep quiet and not spread the news about this miraculous healing. If others found out, they would call Jesus “unclean” and interfere with His ministry. Did the man keep the secret? No! The man was so excited that he told everyone. As a result, Jesus had to stay in secluded places. How incredible it is to think that Jesus touched the leper even though others would consider Him “unclean.” We need to follow Jesus’ example. Compassion for other people should propel us to action.

Jesus has called us to compassion for others.

Relate

Jesus saw the man’s problem, had compassion on him, and healed the man. Just like Jesus, our compassion needs to compel us to action.



Unclean Jesus?

Give each student a straw with the wrapper on. Show the students how to bunch up the straw wrapper. Stand the straw straight up with one end on the table. Begin at the top of the straw and push the wrapper down. The wrapper should bunch up as you push it down the straw. Once the wrapper is completely bunched up, remove it from the straw and lay it on the table.

Next, put your straw in the cup of water and place your finger over the top of the straw. This should keep the water in the straw until you release your finger.

The water in this straw represents our compassion, and the straw wrapper represents us. When we have compassion for someone it should compel us to do something.

Drop a few drops of water from your straw onto the wrapper. Watch as it wiggles, squirms, and grows. Allow the students to do the same to their wrappers.



Question

Mark 1:41–42 says, “Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be healed!’ Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed” (p. 985, *Live*).

Why do you think Jesus touched the man with leprosy?

The Bible does not tell us why Jesus touched the man with leprosy, only that He did. Possibly Jesus wanted to physically show that He cared about the man; or it may have been because lepers were not touched and Jesus wanted to be different by touching him.

Could Jesus have healed the man without touching him?

Yes. Jesus can heal many different ways.

How does it make you feel knowing Jesus has compassion on others?

How does it make you feel knowing Jesus has compassion on you?

Many students think with their feelings. Try to get them to share how they feel. It may take a little prodding and patience.

Who are some people in your life who need your compassion?

Get the students to be specific. Encourage them to write down names of people who need their compassion.

How are you going to show that compassion?

Are there any other times in Scripture when Jesus had compassion on someone?

Yes. Examples include Matthew 9:36; 14:24; 15:32; 20:34, Mark 6:34; and 8:2.

Mark 1:43–45 says, “Then Jesus sent him on his way with a stern warning: ‘Don’t tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed.’ But the man went and spread the word, proclaiming to everyone what had happened” (p. 985, *Live*).

Why do you think Jesus told the man not to tell anyone about his healing?

Jesus did not want to be considered “unclean,” because He would not be allowed in the towns.

Why do you think the man did not listen to Jesus?

He was too excited about his great news to keep it a secret.

Would you have told other people or would you have remained quiet?

Prayer

Dear Father,

Thank You for having compassion on us. Help us recognize those people around us who are lonely and hurting. Help us to not only see the needs of others, but to show our compassion with our actions. Amen.



Unwind

Mark off an area in the room or play this game outside. Pick one student to be the “Leper.” Have him or her stand on one side of the field and the other students on the opposite side. Have the Leper turn so his or her back is facing the other students.

The students will call out together, “How long have you been sick?” to the Leper. The Leper will answer by calling out a certain number of years (up to the number five). The students will then take that many steps toward the Leper. Repeat this process until the Leper calls out “Unclean!” When the Leper cries, “Unclean,” all the students must run back to the starting line, trying not to be tagged by the Leper who is now chasing them. The first person to be tagged by the Leper is the next Leper.

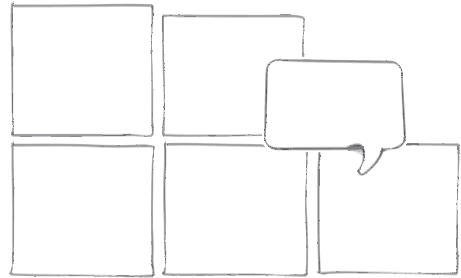
Unclean Jesus?



Challenge

Your challenge this week is to read Mark 4–6.

As you read, draw a comic strip of an event in this passage in the boxes provided in your student books.



Explore

Psalm 145:8–11 says,

“The LORD is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. The LORD is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation. All of your works will thank you, LORD, and your faithful followers will praise you. They will speak of the glory of your kingdom; they will give examples of your power” (p. 613, *Live*).

Read this passage before your prayer time this week to remind yourself how compassionate our God is.

help

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.

3. Just Have Faith

We need to have faith in Jesus.

Main Points

Faith in Jesus made the woman well.

Faith in Jesus brought Jairus's daughter back to life.

Jesus will do miracles in your life when you have faith in Him.

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read Mark 5:21–43.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, blow dryer, brick, 2 liter soda bottle, candle, and lighter

Connect

How did your comic strips turn out?

Give the students time to show off their comics and explain the passage they chose.

Why did you choose to draw that passage?

Today, we are going to be talking about two people who were sick.

Have you ever been sick before?

How long were you sick?

Did you have to miss anything fun or exciting because you were sick?

Did you have to go to the hospital?

Did the doctor prescribe medicine or surgery in order for you to be cured from your illness?

plan

ask

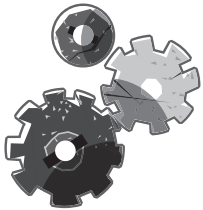
Just Have Faith

Warm Up

There are many different types of diseases and illnesses in the world. Today, we are going to pretend that we are doctors who have just discovered new, totally weird diseases. With a partner, I want you to describe these weird diseases. Decide on a name for the disease, the effects it has on a person, how it is caught, and the cure. We will take turns sharing our findings with the rest of the class.

After students have completed this activity, allow time for sharing and discussion.

In today's Scripture passage, we are going to read an account of two different people who had very real illnesses. Each of these individuals turned to Jesus, the only one who could truly heal.



Engage

Prior to today's passage of Scripture, Jesus performed tons of miracles, and His popularity skyrocketed as a result! Large crowds began to follow Him everywhere He went. As Jesus walked with the multitudes of people, two individuals from the crowd decided to approach Jesus for help.

read

Check It Out

Divide Mark 5:21–43 into small sections. Have the students read each section aloud.

Who are the three main characters in this event?

Jesus, Jairus, and a woman

say

I Can Know It's True

1. Faith in Jesus made the woman well. There was a woman in the crowd who had been sick for twelve years. She spent all her money on doctors but no one could make her better. She decided to turn to the one person who she knew could make her well. She had so much faith in Jesus that all she wanted to do was touch Jesus' robe. She sneaked up behind Jesus, touched His robe, and was immediately healed. Was it because Jesus' robe was magic? No. She was healed because she had faith.
2. Faith in Jesus brought Jairus's daughter back to life. Jairus was a synagogue leader and an important man in the community. He had a very sick twelve-year-old daughter at home. He looked for Jesus in the huge crowd and begged Him to heal the little girl. Unfortunately, as Jesus was headed to Jairus's home, He was stopped by the sick woman of twelve years we just discussed. Because of this interruption, Jairus's daughter died before Jesus arrived at his home. Jairus was most likely sad, upset, and scared. Jesus told Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have _____."

Have the preteens fill in the blank with the word faith.

Jesus arrived at Jairus's house soon after, and He brought the girl back to life.

3. Jesus will do miracles in your life when you have faith in Him. Just like Jairus and the woman, Jesus tells us, "Just have faith." When we put our faith in Jesus, He will do some amazing things in our lives. He can heal us from sickness, protect us from danger, deliver us from fears, provide for all our needs, comfort us when we are troubled, free us from sin, bring joy to our lives, and much more!

Relate

We are going to do an experiment that reminds us to put our faith in Jesus and nothing else.

Plug in the blow dryer and place it on the table. Place the candle a couple feet away from the blow dryer. Place the 2 liter bottle between the candle and blow dryer. Light the candle, and be prepared to blow dry the bottle.

This candle represents us and the blow dryer represents hard times. The two liter bottle represents us putting our faith in something other than Jesus. Do you think it will protect us from the blow dryer? It may look like we are protected, but let's see what happens.

Turn the blow dryer on and aim it at the bottle. The air should go around the bottle and blow out the candle.

Having faith in something other than Jesus does us no good. Now let's see what happens when we put our faith in Jesus.

Replace the bottle with a brick (be sure to tape over the holes if there are any in the brick). Turn the blow dryer on and aim it at the brick. This time the brick will stop the air from blowing out the candle.

Jairus and the woman were facing some tough times. Both of them had problems they could not solve themselves. Jesus told them to just have faith. He tells us the same thing, "Just have faith."

Question

Reread Mark 5:21–43, and underline one thing that stands out to you.

What is one thing that you underlined?



Just Have Faith

Mark 5:24–25 and 27 says, “Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. . . . She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe” (p. 989, *Live*).

Why do you think the woman sneaked up behind Jesus instead of just asking Him to heal her?

We are not told the answer to this. It could be because she was humble or embarrassed. Maybe it was because her sickness made her “unclean.” Maybe she was afraid Jesus would say no.

Mark 5:30 says, “Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my robe?’” (p. 989, *Live*).

How did Jesus know the woman touched Him?

He felt His healing power go out from Him.

Who did Jesus let go into the house where the child was dead?

Only Peter, James, John, and the mom and dad went into the house with Jesus.

Mark 5:41 says, “Holding her hand, he said to her, ‘*Talitha kum*,’ which means ‘Little girl, get up!’” (p. 989, *Live*).

What language is *Talitha kum*?

The words are Aramaic.

How hard do you think it was for Jairus to have faith in Jesus even after his daughter had died?

How hard is it for you to have faith in Jesus?

Encourage the students to be honest. Maybe even share a time when it was hard for you to have faith in Jesus, but you kept your faith in Him.

What does having faith in Jesus look like in your life?

Try to get the students to be specific. This may take awhile to think about. Examples could be: faith that Jesus will help me through my parent’s divorce, faith that I can tell others about Jesus, or faith that He will keep me safe during storms.

Prayer

Dear Father,

We thank You for all the amazing things You have already done in our lives. We pray that we can have faith in Jesus like the woman and Jairus. Please continue to do miracles in our lives as we put our faith in You. Help us not put our faith in anything or anyone else. Amen.



Unwind

The woman had to sneak through a crowd to tag Jesus. For our final game, we are going to play a fun game of tag.

Pick one child to be "It" and have the rest of the children line up on one side of the room. When you say go, the children will run from one side to the other trying not to get tagged. If they are tagged they must freeze. They also become "It" but must stay in the same spot while they try to tag the other students. Continue to go back and forth across the room until only one person is left.

Challenge

Your challenge this week is to read Mark 7–10.

While you read, do these three things:

1. Underline what makes people unclean.
2. Circle every place Jesus traveled.
3. In your book, list the unusual ways Jesus healed people in these passages.



Explore

Matthew 17:20 says,

"I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible" (p. 968, *Live*).

Read this verse several times this week until you have it memorized.

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.



4. On Your Mark, Get Set, Follow Jesus

We are called to pick up our crosses and follow Jesus.

Main Points

We can choose to follow Jesus.

We must turn from our selfish ways.

To have true life, we must give up our lives.

plan

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read Mark 8:31–38.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, paper, pencils, crayons, scissors, sheet of poster board, large paper clips, and a strong magnet

ask

Connect

How did you do on your reading last week?

Take time to encourage them in this challenge. Remind them how important God's Word is in our lives.

What are some of the unusual ways Jesus healed people?

Allow the students to share one or two ways they listed in their books from last week's challenge.

Where are some places that Jesus traveled?

If you have a Bible map, spend a couple minutes finding the different towns mentioned.

What was your favorite part of last week's reading?

Warm Up

Have the students form groups of two or three people. Give each group a piece of paper and pencil.

Pretend that a new game system just came out. You really, really want it, and you need to raise two hundred dollars to buy it. Together, come up with a way to raise that money.

Ideas can range from working on the weekends to doing extra chores.

How hard would you have to work to get the money?

What would you have to give up in order to earn that money?

Mention all of the fun activities, television shows, sports games, or free weekends they would have to miss out on.

Would it be worth giving that up to get the new game system?

Many times when we want something, we have to give up something else in order to get it. The true cost of the item might actually be higher than we originally thought. Jesus tells His followers if they want to follow Him, there is going to be a cost involved. The cost might seem high, maybe higher than the price of a game system, but Jesus is worth it!

Engage

Let's take some time and figure out the answer to this question: What is the cost of following Jesus?

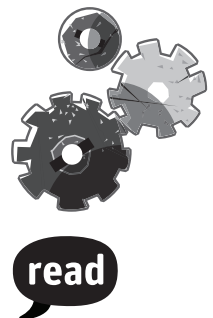
Check It Out

Listen carefully to the passage. When you hear the answer to the cost of following Jesus, put your finger on your nose.

Have a student read Mark 8:31–38 (pp. 993–994, Live). The answer is found in verses 34–35.

I Can Know It's True

1. We can choose to follow Jesus. In Mark 8:34, Jesus says, "If any of you wants to be my follower . . ." (p. 993, *Live*). There are a lot of people who try to get us to follow them. Some of these people might include movie stars, athletes, friends, or family. They would love for us to talk or act just like them. These people want our attention, money, and time. In addition to people, our interests, sports, or hobbies can distract us from following Jesus. It is up to us who we follow. Jesus wants us to follow Him and nothing else.



On Your Mark, Get Set, Follow Jesus

2. Jesus continued in Mark 8:34 by saying, “You must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me” (p. 993, *Live*). Turning from your selfish ways means saying “No” to yourself.

Think of some people you say no to.

Some examples are: friends, teachers, siblings, and parents. You can say no in your mind and through your attitudes. It doesn’t have to be voiced out loud.

Jesus tells us to say “No” to ourselves! He asks us to put aside our own wants and desires so we can focus on the needs of others. This is no easy task! We naturally want comfort, popularity, money, power, and so much more. Jesus tells us it is time to stop thinking about ourselves.

3. To have eternal life, we must give up our lives. Mark 8:35 says, “If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for [Jesus’] sake and for the sake of the Good news, you will save it” (p. 993, *Live*).

Does Jesus want us to die on the cross like He did? No, he doesn’t. Jesus wants us to have an amazing life here on earth. So what does it mean to “lose your life”? We must give our lives away. Every time we put someone else’s needs ahead of ours, we give our lives away. When we show kindness to someone who is unkind, we give our lives away. The more we lose, the more we gain.

Following Jesus comes with a high cost: our lives. Giving up our lives to Jesus is well worth the reward.

Relate

Give each student a piece of paper, crayons, and scissors. Have the students draw, color, and cut out a self portrait. The students will then need to fold the bottom of their portrait using an accordion style fold. Make at least three folds. In order to secure the fold, attach one paperclip on each edge of the fold. The paper person should now be able to stand up.

Hold up one of the magnets.

This magnet is going to represent Jesus. Let’s see if we can get each paper person to follow Jesus.

Allow the students to place their paper person on a sheet of poster board. Place the magnet under the poster board below the paper person. Move the magnet around and watch the paper person follow.

Our paper people had a lot of fun following the magnet. There is only one person in our lives worth following, and that is Jesus.

Question

Mark 8:34 says, "Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, [Jesus] said, 'If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me'" (p. 993, *Live*).



Do you think the cost of following Jesus is too high? Why or why not?

This can be a tough question. If they answer that the cost is too high, help them understand how much the benefits of following Jesus outweighs the cost.

Who are some people in your life who try to get you to follow them?

Try to have the students be as specific as possible.

What are some things in your life that distract you from following Jesus?

Computer, video games, sports, and being popular are major distractions in preteens' lives. There are, however, many more. Encourage the students to be honest and specific.

What does saying "No" to yourself mean to you?

What are ways you can say "No" to yourself this week?

Read Mark 9:33–37 aloud with the students.

"After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, 'What were you discussing out on the road?' But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, 'Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.' Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me.'" (p. 994–995, *Live*)

How does this passage correlate with the passage we just studied?

Who is one person you can put before yourself this week?

How are you going to put him or her before yourself?

On Your Mark, Get Set, Follow Jesus

pray

Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for being our example on how to live. Help us to say no to ourselves and to the distractions in this world. We want to experience the true life that only comes from You. Amen.

Unwind

Let's play "Who's The Leader?"

Instruct the students to sit in a circle. Pick one student to stand in the middle of the circle and close their eyes.

I am going to tap one person from the circle on the shoulder to signify that they are the leader. The leader will begin by making a hand motion (rubbing hands together, snapping, etc.). The rest of you must watch carefully and repeat that motion. After a few seconds, the leader will switch to another hand motion, and everyone must imitate that motion. Continue this process until the person in the middle has successfully guessed which student is the leader. Remember, try not to stare at the person leading or you might give away the leader.

After choosing a leader, the person in the middle can open their eyes and begin the game.

Remember, there is only one person worth following, Jesus.



Challenge

Your challenge this week is to read Mark 10–13.

Do these three things as you read the chapters:

1. Highlight every question asked.
2. Circle the different names people call Jesus.
3. In your book, write the names people called Jesus.

Explore

John 10:27–29 says,

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand" (p. 1058, *Live*).

help

How does this passage make you feel knowing you are His sheep?

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.

5. Grapes, Bad Guys, and a Son

Jesus teaches us through parables.

Main Points

The owner of the vineyard represents God.

The tenant farmers represent the religious leaders who were rejecting Jesus.

The servants represent the prophets, and the son represents Jesus.

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read Mark 12:1–12.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, paper cups (three per student), hot water, cold water, room temperature water, ping-pong balls, and ping-pong paddles

Connect

What are some names of Jesus you circled in last week's reading?

Which name did you like the most? Why?

Was there anything that confused you in this passage?

Take some time to help preteens understand any confusing passages. Remember, it is OK to admit that you don't know the answer to their questions.

What was your favorite part of this week's reading?

Warm Up

Have you ever heard of *Aesop's Fables*?

Read the following famous fable to the students.

plan

ask

Grapes, Bad Guys, and a Son

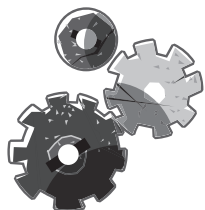
“The Hare and the Tortoise”

A Hare one day ridiculed the short feet and slow pace of the Tortoise, who replied, laughing: “Though you be swift as the wind, I will beat you in a race.” The Hare, believing her assertion to be simply impossible, assented to the proposal; and they agreed that the Fox should choose the course and fix the goal. On the day appointed for the race the two started together. The Tortoise never for a moment stopped, but went on with a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course. The Hare, lying down by the wayside, fell fast asleep. At last waking up, and moving as fast as he could, he saw the Tortoise had reached the goal, and was comfortably dozing after her fatigue. Slow but steady wins the race. (*Aesop’s Fables*, Translated by George Fyler Townsend, public domain)

Every one of *Aesop’s Fables* was a story that taught a valuable lesson. What was the valuable lesson from this story?

The lesson is “Slow but steady wins the race.”

Jesus also used stories to teach valuable lessons. These are called parables. Many times Jesus used these earthly stories to portray a heavenly meaning.



Engage

In Mark 12:1–12, Jesus used a parable to teach an important lesson. Let’s take a look at this parable and uncover the heavenly meaning of this earthly story.

read

Check It Out

Read Mark 12:1–12 to the students (p. 998, Live). Have the students underline the different characters in the parable while you read.

There are many different characters in this parable. We are going to answer the question: Who do these characters represent?

say

I Can Know It’s True

1. The owner of the vineyard represents God. The parable begins by describing a man who buys a field and prepares it for harvest. He plants the vineyard, builds a wall, digs a pit, and builds a tower. Once everything is ready, the owner rents the field to other farmers. The owner provides everything the renters need in order to have a bountiful harvest.

Just like the owner provides to the renters, God provides for us. God gives us everything we need in life, and we can trust that He will provide for all our needs.

2. The tenant farmers represent the religious leaders who were rejecting Jesus. The story continues with farmers who rent the vineyard from the owner. When harvest time comes, the owner sends his servants to the farmers to collect what was owed to him. The tenant farmers proceed to beat up and kill several servants who came to collect the money. After the farmers reject several sets of servants, the owner sends his own son to collect what was due. The farmers decide to reject and kill the owner's own son in hopes of taking over the fields. At the end of the parable, the owner comes back and pronounces judgment on the farmers.

After hearing this parable, the religious leaders in that day were upset, because they knew they were being portrayed as the bad guys in Jesus' story. They were the ones who were going to be judged in the end.

There are many people today who reject Jesus just as the religious leaders did. God, like the land owner in the parable, is patient and gives people many chances. But, in the end, God will judge those who reject His Son.

3. The servants represent the prophets and the son represents Jesus. Throughout the history of Israel, God sent prophets to His people to teach them and warn them of coming judgment. These prophets were often mistreated and rejected, like the servants in the parable. Examples include Elijah being chased into the wilderness, Isaiah being sawed in two, Zechariah being stoned in the temple, and John the Baptist being beheaded.

In the parable, the owner ultimately decides to send his own son. The farmers mistreat the son the same way they did the servants. Jesus, God's Son, was also rejected and killed. But the parable doesn't end with the death of the son. The owner rents his vineyard to different farmers—ones that would not reject him, his servants, or his son.

Relate

The owner was surprised by the reaction of the tenant farmers. Today, we are going to do an experiment that might surprise one of our senses.

Gather around a table and hand each student three cups. Fill the first cup with ice cold water, the second cup with room temperature water, and the third cup with hot water (just not too hot to touch).

At the same time, we are going to place our left index finger in the warm water and our right index finger in the cold water. After counting to twenty-five, we will quickly take our fingers out and place them both in the middle cup.

Grapes, Bad Guys, and a Son

To one hand, the middle cup will feel hot; and to the other hand, it will feel cold.

Is the middle cup hot or cold? Both! Does it feel like your fingers are in different cups of water?



Save these cups for the next activity.

Question

Mark 12:3–5 says, “But the farmers grabbed the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. The owner then sent another servant, but they insulted him and beat him over the head. The next servant he sent was killed. Others he sent were either beaten or killed” (p. 998, *Live*).

Why do you think the tenant farmers acted the way they did?

They were selfish and greedy. They did not love the owner. They did not believe they would be punished for their actions.

How would you have felt if you were the owner and the first servant you sent out came back beat up and empty-handed?

Angry, sad, frustrated, or confused

How many more chances would you have given the farmers?

What would you have done if you were the owner and the farmers killed your son?

*Matthew 13:24–30 (p. 962, *Live*) is another parable of God’s judgment. The explanation of the parable is found in Matthew 13:36–43 (pp. 962–963, *Live*). Read these two passages together as a class.*

After reading this parable, how important is it for you to believe in Jesus?

It is very important to believe in Jesus. If we do not, we will be thrown out just as the weeds were.

How important is it for you to tell others about Jesus?

The only way others will hear about Jesus is if we tell them.

pray

Prayer

Dear Father,

Thank You for sending Your Son to save us. Help us not be like the farmers who rejected the son. Thank You for giving us so many chances to accept Jesus as our Savior. Help us accept Jesus and live for You. Amen.

Unwind

The owner of the vineyard gave the farmers many chances. In today's game, you are going to get several chances to win the game. We are going to use the cups from our experiment, some ping-pong balls, and some ping-pong paddles.

Split the students into two teams. Each team will build a tower out of ten cups on their side of the room. Each student will get a ball and paddle. The teams will simultaneously hit the ping pong balls toward their opponent's cup tower. The first team to knock down the other team's tower wins.

Challenge

This week's challenge is to read Mark 14–16. As you read, answer the questions below. Unscramble the circled letters to finish this sentence: Jesus is the

_____.

Why did the religious leaders not arrest Jesus during the Passover celebration? It would cause a _____.

Who did Jesus say will always be among us? _____.

What did Jesus break and give to His disciples? _____.

What was the name of the olive grove where Jesus prayed?

_____.

With what did Judas betray Jesus? _____.

What did Jesus call out with a loud voice?

_____, _____, _____?
_____, _____, _____?

Answers: 1. riot; 2. poor;
3. bread; 4. Gethsemane;
5. kiss; 6. Eloi, Eloi, lema
sabachthani; Jesus is
the SON OF GOD.

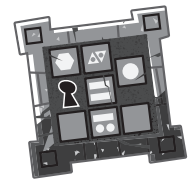
Explore

Jesus says in Matthew 13:40–41, and 43,

"Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. . . . Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!" (p. 963, *Live*).

Read this passage several times this week. Consider what kind of impact this truth has on your life.

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.



6. Curtains Up

We are no longer separated from God because of Jesus' sacrifice.

Main Points

The curtain represents separation from God.

Jesus is now our High Priest.

We are now God's temple.

plan

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read Mark 15:33–39; Hebrews 9:1—10:18.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, paper (one per student), old looking pennies, vinegar, salt, measuring utensils, containers with lids, and paper towels

ask

Connect

Did anyone unscramble the letters in your challenge?

What was the answer?

Jesus is the SON OF GOD.

How does it feel knowing you have read an entire book of the Bible?

What was the hardest part of reading the book of Mark?

Warm Up

Give each student a piece of paper and keep one for yourself.

Take your piece of paper in your hands and rip it in half from top to bottom. Now take the two pieces you have, put them together, and rip them in half again. Count how many times you can repeat this process.

Who was able to rip the paper in half the most times?

Today, we are going to examine a passage in Mark that records a curtain being torn in half from top to bottom.

Engage

Mark wrote about a curtain that was torn in two when Jesus died. This small detail would have been significant to the original readers of Mark. However, many readers today might not understand the significance of the temple curtain.

Check It Out

Together as a class read Mark 15:33–39 (p. 1005, Live).

I Can Know It's True

1. The curtain represents separation from God. The temple was established as a place for the Israelites to worship to God.

Read Hebrews 9:1–8 (p. 1219, Live).

Because the people were sinful, they did not have the privilege of entering into the Most Holy Place. The Most Holy Place was where God made His presence known. In fact, a large curtain divided this room from the rest of the temple specifically to separate a Holy God from sinful people. The high priest was the only person who could enter and approach the almighty God.

2. Jesus is now our High Priest! When the high priest entered into the Most Holy Place, he would offer a blood sacrifice to cover the sins of the people. These sacrifices had to be made once every year because the animal's blood was not perfect. However, the law changed after Jesus died on the cross. Jesus, a perfect man, offered His own blood to cover the sins of the people. Since the sacrifice was perfect, the high priest no longer had to go behind the curtain to offer imperfect animals. God tore the curtain from top to bottom to show that everyone can have direct access to Him through Jesus.

Read Hebrews 10:19–22 (p. 1221, Live).

3. We are now God's temple! The curtain that separated us from God's presence tore in half, and the old temple was no longer needed. Does that mean God no longer has a temple? No, God has a new temple! God's presence isn't found in a building or in a structure but in the hearts and lives of those who follow Him.

Being God's temple is a great responsibility. Knowing God lives in us should change what we put into our hearts and minds. We should ask ourselves if the things we watch, listen to, and think about are appropriate for God's temple. How amazing is it to know that the holy God is living in you and me!

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16 (p. 1130, Live) and Ephesians 2:22 (p. 1165, Live).



Curtains Up

Relate

When the temple curtain tore in two pieces, it signified the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant. Today, we are going to make some old pennies look brand new!

Place the old pennies, vinegar, salt, paper towels, measuring utensils, and containers out on a table. Instruct each student to take an old penny and place it to the side. Next, take a container and put half a cup of vinegar into the container. Place two tablespoons of salt into the vinegar. Put the penny into the vinegar and salt mixture and place the lid on the container. Make sure the lid is secure. Finally, shake the container as fast as you can for one minute. Take the penny out of the mixture and wipe it off with a paper towel.

Look how new your pennies look! Your new pennies will help remind you we are living under the new covenant of God. There is no longer a curtain that separates us from having a personal relationship with God. We have a new High Priest, and we are God's temple.



Question

Hebrews 10:1–2 says, “The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared” (p. 1220, *Live*).

How would you feel if you had to continually sacrifice animals to receive forgiveness of the things you did wrong?

Why is Jesus' sacrifice considered the ultimate sacrifice?

He was God in flesh and the only perfect man to live.

The curtain in the temple was very large. It was sixty-six feet high, thirty-three feet wide and about four inches thick. It was so heavy it took about three hundred priests to carry it.

Mark 15:38 says, “And the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom” (p. 1005, *Live*).

Why do you think Mark added that the curtain was torn from top to bottom?

Only God could have started from the top and torn down. The curtain was much too large for any human to tear it top to bottom.

First Corinthians 3:16 says, "Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?" (p. 1130, *Live*).

What does it mean that our bodies are now God's temple?

The Holy Spirit now dwells within us.

How should knowing we are God's temple affect our lives?

We should live in a way that honors God all the time.

What are you going to change in order to be a better temple for God?

Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for being our High Priest. We praise You for the sacrifice You made on the cross for our sins. Please help us remember that we are Your sanctuary. Help us live holy lives for You. Amen.



Unwind

Let's put our new pennies to good use. We are going to play Extreme Heads or Tails!

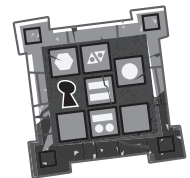
I am going to flip one of the pennies in the air. Before I flip the coin, you will need to choose whether you think the penny will land on heads or tails. To choose heads, put your hands on your head. To choose tails, put your hands on your backside. If you guess correctly, you may remain standing. If you guess wrong, you must sit down.

Continue to flip the coin until there is only one preteen left standing. The final person standing is the winner and gets to flip their penny for the next round.

Play as many rounds as time allows. Make sure the students have their hands on their head or backside before you flip.

Challenge

Your challenge for this week is to pick another book of the Bible to read. Create a reading plan for the next several weeks that will help you accomplish your goal. Remember to enjoy reading the Bible and mark different things you find interesting. If you have any questions, write them down and ask your pastor, teacher, or parents if they can help.



Curtains Up

Explore

Mark 16:6 says,

“But the angel said, ‘Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body’” (p. 1005, *Live*).



Do you believe this passage? Work on memorizing what the angel said this week.

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.

Bible Fair Celebration

Reading an entire book of the Bible is a significant accomplishment in preteens' lives. It is important to make a meaningful celebration that will encourage the preteens to continue their reading of God's Word. The following pages provide an outline of preparation for this celebration, a sample celebration, and ideas on making the day memorable.

For this celebration service, your students will be planning a Bible Fair to share with the church. A Bible Fair is similar to a Science Fair. However, instead of presenting what they learned in science, the students will present what they learned from Scripture.

Preparation for the Celebration

1. Meet with the pastor to set up a date, time, and location for the Bible Fair. Suggested times could be on Sunday morning between services or during the Sunday school hour. (The Sunday school classes could spend some time investing in the students by exploring the Bible Fair.) The Bible Fair could be set up in the church's lobby or in a classroom.
2. Meet with the students to plan the details of the Bible Fair:
 - a. Instruct each student to look over their student books and the book of Mark. Instruct them to pick out some of the most interesting passages they read.
 - b. Have the students share with the class the passages they picked. Encourage them to pick one of their passages to do their Bible Fair project on. Try not to have any repeat passages.
 - c. Hand out some paper and pencils to each student. Give each student some time to write out the answers to the following questions:
 - What do you find interesting about this passage?
 - Who are the different characters in this passage?
 - Where does this passage take place?
 - What is this passage about?

Bible Fair Celebration

- Why did this passage take place?
 - What can I learn from this passage?
 - What are some questions I have about this passage?
 - How can I present what I learned in an interesting way?
3. Encourage the students to make a display about the passage they chose. They can make this at home or in the classroom. Promote being as creative as possible. They can use different translations of the Bible, Internet Bible resources, study resources, and multi-media. They may even redo an experiment from one of the lessons.
 4. Give the students the information on when and where the Bible Fair will take place. Remind them to be their early to set up.
 5. Promote the Bible Fair to the congregation.

The Celebration

1. Before the students arrive, set out tables or booths for each student to use.
2. When the students arrive, show them their booth and help them set up their Bible Fair displays. Remember not to compare how good they did with any of the other booths. Praise all students for their hard work and great accomplishments.
3. Open the Bible Fair for the congregation to enjoy. Encourage the students to share what they learned as people look at their booths.
4. Remember to clean up when the Bible Fair is over and thank the students for doing such a wonderful job.

Following the Celebration

1. Present each student with a certificate reminding them of their great accomplishment.
2. Challenge them to keep reading books of the Bible. Ask them what book they are planning to read next. Record this in your leader's guide and ask the students from time to time how they are doing.
3. Continue reading the Bible yourself. Share with the students what you are reading and how you are doing.

Leader Notes

Leader Notes

Leader Notes

book
6

Link Your Life to God

Leader's Guide

explore



In this book students will learn—

- How to put God first in your prayers.
- Why you can trust God when you pray.
- What difference it makes to pray with others.
- Why it's important to praise God in prayer.
- How to have a conversation with God.

You are on an amazing journey of faith—let's Explore it together!

1. The Lord's Prayer

Jesus teaches us to put God first in our prayers.

Main Points

The first part of Jesus' prayer relates to God.

The second part of Jesus' prayer relates to us.

When we pray, we should put God first and ourselves second.

Lesson Preparation

During the next six weeks, you and your students will be studying different prayers found in Scripture. Each week the challenge for the students involves writing in their prayer journals. You should also keep a prayer journal and complete the challenges with the students. Each week during prayer time, you will lead the students in an interactive prayer.

Background: Read Matthew 6:9–13 and Luke 11:2–4.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, toy train, tennis ball tube, tennis ball, three golf balls, dried beans, half sheets of paper (sixteen per student), stapler, markers, five paper cups, and rubber bands

Connect

What do you think prayer is?

Why do we pray?

Who do we pray to?

When do you normally pray?

How does praying make you feel?

What is one prayer that God has answered for you?

Be ready to share a prayer of yours that has been answered.

plan

ask

The Lord's Prayer

During the next six weeks, we are going to explore six famous and not-so-famous prayers in the Bible.

Warm Up

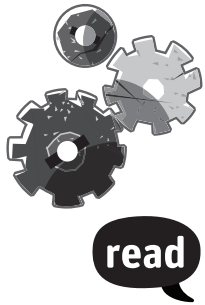
Show the students the toy train.

Who likes trains?

Has anyone ever had the opportunity to ride in a train before?

Allow the students to share about their experience riding a train.

All trains have one thing in common. Do you know what it is? The engine of the train always comes first. As we look at our Scripture passage today, we will discover that Jesus teaches us to put someone first every time we pray.



Engage

Jesus taught His followers about prayer. As He taught, He gave them an example on how to pray. This prayer is probably the most famous prayer in the Bible. We call it the Lord's Prayer.

Check It Out

Read Matthew 6:9–13 (p. 952, Live).

Have dry erase markers and a white board available. Draw a line down the middle of the white board. Write "God" on one side and "Us" on the other.

I am going to read this prayer over again in phrases. As I read each phrase, tell me if that part of the prayer is about God or about us.

Read Matthew 6:9–13 again. Have a student write each part on the correct side of the board. Divide the prayer as follows:

1. "Our Father in heaven" = God
2. "May your name be kept holy" = God
3. "May your Kingdom come soon" = God
4. "May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" = God
5. "Give us today the food we need" = Us
6. "And forgive our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us" = Us

7. "And don't let us yield to temptation" = Us

8. "But rescue us from the evil one" = Us

I Can Know It's True



1. The first part of Jesus' prayer relates to God. Jesus began His prayer by recognizing who God is. Jesus gave God praise and prayed that God's will would be done. Of all the ways Jesus could have started His prayer, He chose to put God first.
2. The second part of Jesus' prayer relates to us. Jesus continued His prayer by talking to God for us. What are some requests Jesus made specifically for us? He asked God to provide the food we need. He asked for our sins to be forgiven. And Jesus asked that we would be protected from temptation and the Evil One.
3. When we pray, we should put God first and ourselves second. Often times, our prayers begin with a list of personal needs, wants, and concerns. Jesus' prayer shows us that God is concerned with our physical and spiritual needs. While these personal needs might be important, we must follow Jesus' example and offer God the praise and adoration He deserves before we ask for things for ourselves.

So remember when we pray, we should put God first and ourselves second.

Relate

It is best to prepare for this experiment ahead of class time. Begin by taking an empty tennis ball tube. First, place one tennis ball into the tube. Next, put three golf balls into the tube. Finally, fill the rest of the tube with dried beans, shaking the tube somewhat to fit as many beans as possible. Now you will have an exact measurement of beans for the experiment. Empty the tube, putting the beans in a cup. The experiment is now ready.

Do you think it is possible to fit all these objects into this container?

Show students the beans, tennis ball, golf balls, and tennis ball tube.

Let's try to fit the objects in the container. Which object should I put in first?

Let the students give suggestions as to which object should go first. For this object lesson to prove the point, choose the suggestion of the student who says to put the beans in first.

Let's put in the beans first.

The Lord's Prayer

Next, we will put in the golf balls and finally the tennis ball.

Do the objects fit?

No. Remove the tennis ball and golf balls. Empty the beans back into the cup.

We are going to try this again. Which object should we put in first this time?

You can try multiple times to put the items in the tube, changing the order each time. After the purposefully failed attempts, put the tennis ball in first, the golf balls in second, and the beans in the tube last.

Do the objects fit?

Yes!

The only way we can fit all these objects into this container is by putting the tennis ball in first. We have to start with the right object. Similar to needing the tennis ball first, when we pray, we should to put God first and ourselves second.



Question

There is a very similar prayer found in Luke. Luke 11:1–4 says,

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” Jesus said, “This is how you should pray: ‘Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation.’” (p. 1024, *Live*).

What are some differences between the prayer in Luke and the prayer in Matthew?

Luke leaves out “in Heaven” in God’s name. Luke doesn’t have the part about God’s will being done on earth. Matthew ends with “rescue us from the evil one.”

What are some different ways we can put God first in our prayers?

We can spend time recognizing who He is. We can give Him thanks for what He has done.

What are some different things we can praise God for?

Try to encourage the students to come up with at least four things they can give God praise for.

Jesus calls God “our Father in heaven.” What are some other names of God?

Some examples include: I AM, Mighty God, Ancient of Days, Lord of Lords, Everlasting God, Healer, Shepherd, the Beginning and End, and Everlasting Father.

Jesus prayed that God would provide the food we need. What are some other needs you can pray for?

Matthew 6:12 says, “And forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us” (p. 952, *Live*).

How hard is it to forgive other people for sinning against us?

What does it feel like when other people forgive you?

Matthew 6:13 says, “And don’t let us yield to temptation” (p. 952, *Live*).

What is a time when God helped you overcome a temptation?

Why do you think we should put God first and us second when we pray?

Prayer

For our prayer time, we are going to make prayer journals to fill out over the course of this series.



Give each student sixteen half sheets of paper. Staple the half sheet of paper down one side to make a booklet. Allow some time for the students to decorate the cover of their prayer journal.

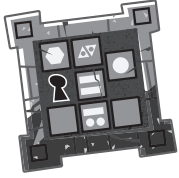
Now that we have made our prayer journals, we are going to take the next five minutes to write in them. Find a place in the room to write out a prayer to God in your journal. Practice putting God first and yourself second as you write out your prayer.

Unwind

Set up a table on one side of the room with five paper cups. Make a mark on each cup using these different color markers: red, brown, blue, green, and orange. Have the preteens line up across from the table behind a line ten feet away. Hand one rubber band to each student.

Using our rubber bands, we are going to work as a team to knock over these cups. We will shoot the rubber bands one person at a time. The challenging part is that you must knock the cups down in the following order: orange, brown, red, green, and blue. If you knock down a cup out of order, we will need to start over again.

The Lord's Prayer



Challenge

Your challenge this week is write out your five prayers in your prayer journal. Practice putting God first and yourself second.

Explore

Deuteronomy 6:4–5 says,

“Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength” (p. 182, *Live*).

Read this passage before you pray this week. Does this command sound familiar? It should. This is the passage Jesus quoted when asked what was the most important commandment. When we love God with all our heart, soul, and strength, it is easy to remember to keep Him first.



For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.

2. Prayer of Jabez

We should take time to pray for ourselves and rely on God to answer.

Main Points

To get an answer, we need to pray.

It is OK to pray for yourself.

God answers prayers.

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge. Read 1 Chronicles 4:10 and 1 John 5:14.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, old tire (free at most tire repair shops), index cards (one per student), and scissors

Connect

How did you do on your prayer journals last week?

Does anyone want to share one of their prayers?

Do not make anyone share their prayer if they do not want to. Their prayer may be too embarrassing or personal. However, some of the student's prayers can be amazing and touching.

How did you feel putting God first last week?

What do you think is the hardest part about writing out your prayers?

What is the longest prayer you have ever heard?

What is the shortest prayer you have heard?

plan

ask

Prayer of Jabez

The prayer we are going to read today is a very short prayer—only two sentences long! Even though it is short, we can still learn from Jabez’s prayer.

Warm Up

Bring in an old tire and show it to the class.

Do you know what this is?

Have you ever been in the car when the tire went flat?

What are some other ways we could use this tire?

Did you know tires are very important in my life? They are probably pretty important in your life, too. I rely on a tire every day. Every time I drive, I am relying on the tires on my car to not pop or go flat. I would not be able to arrive at my destination if my tires didn’t work the way they are supposed to.

There are many people in the Bible who relied on God. Today, I want to read about one of those people.

Engage

In the Bible, the book of 1 Chronicles begins with a long list of descendents of Adam. Somewhere in the middle of this list of people, the Bible mentions a man by the name of Jabez. The author of 1 Chronicles took a brief moment from listing the descendents of Adam to record a prayer that Jabez prayed.

read

say

Check It Out

Read 1 Chronicles 4:10 (p. 396, Live).

I Can Know It’s True

1. To get an answer, we need to pray. First Chronicles 4:10 begins by saying Jabez “was the one who prayed to the God of Israel.” Because Jabez took the time to pray, God answered his requests.

Although God already knows what we need, He wants us to take a break and spend time with Him. He wants to answer our prayers, but we have to pray them first.

2. It is OK to pray for yourself. Some people say prayers strictly for other people. They have good intentions and do not want to be selfish by praying for themselves. Praying for others is extremely important, but Jabez shows us we can also pray for our own personal needs. In this prayer, Jabez asked that God would bless him and be with him. He didn’t mention anyone other than himself.

3. God answers prayers. Jabez could have tried to obtain these blessings on his own, but he knew that true blessings only came from God. He relied solely on God to answer his prayers. In the end, God granted his requests.

God always answers our prayers. Sometimes He says yes to our requests and sometimes He will tell us no. Other times He might even tell us to wait. No matter the answer God gives us, we can rely on the fact that He hears us and will always answer our prayers.

Just like Jabez, we should take time to pray for ourselves and then rely on God to answer.

Relate

God can do seemingly impossible things in our lives when we rely on Him.

Hold up an index card.

Who thinks they can cut a hole in this card and step through it? It sounds impossible, but it's not!

For a video demonstration of the following activity, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71bzxv0032>.

Give each student an index card and a pair of scissors. First, you must fold the index card in half lengthwise. Then, begin by making a cut on the fold close to the left edge of the card. Cut from the bottom to the top, stopping just short of the top and leaving the cut piece attached. Now, move the scissors over to the right a quarter inch. Make the same cut, stopping short of the top each time. Repeat these cuts every quarter inch until you reach the end of the card. Once all the cuts are made, flip the card over. Now, you are going to make cuts in between the previous slits you already made. Again, be sure to stop before reaching the top of the card. Unfold the card and cut down the fold leaving the two ends uncut. The card should now open up into a very large circle.

Now that we all have large circles, let's do what seemed impossible by stepping through our cards.

Question

If you could pray for anything in the world and God would give it to you, what would you pray for?

What were Jabez's five requests?

Bless me; expand my territory; be with me; keep me from trouble; and keep me from pain.



Prayer of Jabez

Jabez only prayed for himself in this prayer. Does this mean we shouldn't pray for anyone else?

No. It is very important to pray for other people. However, it is also OK to pray for yourself.

First John 5:14 says, "And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him" (p. 1252, *Live*).

What do you think this verse is saying?

How does this verse relate to what Jabez prayed for?

Jabez asked for blessings in his life and God gave him what he asked for.

What types of requests should we pray for?

Anything that pleases God.

What are some things that please God?

Why do you think some people say it is not OK to pray for yourself?

Luke 11:11–13 says, "You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (p. 1024, *Live*).

Do you think God wants to give us blessings in our lives?

Yes!



Prayer

We are going to take some time and pray for ourselves today. Right now, I want you to get into the most uncomfortable position you can.

Encourage the students to get really uncomfortable. They can stand on their heads or tie themselves into a pretzel.

Now that we are all very uncomfortable, I want you to silently pray to God about something that is uncomfortable or hard in your life right now. You will have sixty seconds to pray.

After sixty seconds, say, "Amen" to indicate the sixty seconds is over.

Now I want everyone to get into the most comfortable position you can. Now take time to give God praise for a blessing in your life right now.

Give the students sixty seconds to pray and end the prayer time by saying, "Amen."

Unwind

Let's play a game with our old tire!

Take the students outside in an open area. Mark a line to indicate the starting line.

We are going to have a competition to see who can roll the tire the farthest! You only get one roll, and you must not cross the starting line.

Give each student a turn to roll the tire. Keep track of the farthest roll by placing a cone where the tire stopped. Congratulate the winner and play again if time allows.

Challenge

This week's challenge is to pray for three areas in your life. Remember to write down your prayers in your prayer journals.

1. Pray for forgiveness of any sins you have committed.
2. Pray for God to bless your life. (It is OK to pray for specific blessings.)
3. Praise God for the blessings He has already given you.

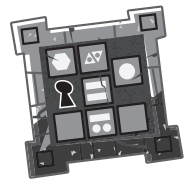
Explore

First John 5:14–15 says,

"And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for" (p. 1252, Live).

Write this passage at the top of the pages in your prayer journal this week. After writing the passage down, read it out loud to help you memorize it.

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.



3. Prayer for Boldness

Prayer is powerful when we gather together and pray.

Main Points

The believers prayed together.

The believers prayed for boldness.

The believers prayed for miracles.

plan

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read Acts 3:1—4:37.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, jar (canning type), golf ball, uncooked rice, Starburst candies, Hershey Kisses, and sour gummies

ask

Connect

What are some blessings God has given you in your life?

What are some blessings you prayed for last week?

Have you ever had to pray in front of a large group? What was it like?

Do you enjoy praying with other Christians?

Do you think there is any benefit to praying with other Christians?

In our lesson today, Peter and John joined with others believers to pray together.

Warm Up

We are going to begin today by doing something that takes a little boldness. I need a brave volunteer.

Have the student stand in front of the classroom with you. Instruct the student to stand straight as a board, feet together and arms across his or her chest. Stand behind the student with your hands out ready to catch him or her.

When I count to three I want you to fall backwards. Do not bend your knees or try to catch yourself. Just fall straight back, and I will catch you. One, two, three!

Catch the student as he or she falls backward into your arms. If the student fell backwards and trusted you, give him or her praise for being bold. If he or she didn't trust you, ask why he or she was afraid and tell the student he or she did a good job.

Was it hard to fall backwards when you couldn't see me? Why or why not?

What are some things you are afraid of?

Have you ever been afraid to tell someone about Jesus?

Today, we are going to read a prayer the disciples prayed when they were scared to share about Jesus.

Engage

In Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested for telling people about Jesus. The religious leaders threatened them and told them to stop telling other about Jesus.

Check It Out

Read Acts 4:23–31 (pp. 1077–1078 Live).

Encourage the students to underline the specific requests the disciples prayed for.

I Can Know It's True

1. The believers prayed together. When the other believers in Jerusalem heard the report from Peter and John, they decided to do the most powerful thing they could do; they prayed. It is important to note that they didn't leave each other and pray alone. The believers didn't say, "We'll pray later." No, they immediately prayed together as a group of believers.

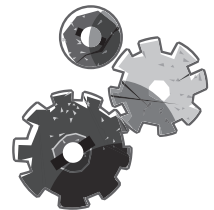
Many times, we get embarrassed to pray in a group or think we have to pray alone. We can learn from the believers in Jerusalem. Prayer is powerful when we gather together and pray.

2. The believers prayed for boldness. The believers were scared to tell others about Jesus after the religious leaders threatened their lives. During the midst of this tough time, listen to what the disciples prayed for.

Read Acts 4:29 (p. 1078, Live).

The believers prayed for great boldness to preach God's Word! They didn't run away from their jobs or pray that someone else would witness instead. They prayed that God would give them boldness to share His Word.

We should pray for boldness to tell others about Jesus just like the disciples. Yes, it can be scary and intimidating at times. But God wants us to tell others about Him, and He will give us the boldness and power to do so when we ask.



Prayer for Boldness

3. The believers prayed for miracles. The believers knew that God can do anything! So they prayed that God would work miracles, perform wonders, and heal people. They didn't pray for miracles to receive personal credit and glory. They asked for miracles so others could see how amazing God is.

God still does miracles today! As believers, we should pray for miracles in Jesus' name. When He gives us a miracle, we need to remember to give God the glory.

Relate

Show the students the jar, golf ball, and uncooked rice.

This ball represents us and the rice represents our fears.

Place the ball in the jar and allow the students to take turns pouring rice on top of the golf ball. Completely cover the golf ball with several inches of rice, leaving a few inches of empty space at the top of the jar. Secure the lid onto the jar.

Sometimes, we can be so afraid to tell someone about God that we feel like this golf ball; we are buried in our fear. But watch what happens when we pray for boldness to overcome our fear.

Have a student move the jar vigorously back and forth without lifting the jar off the table. The golf ball will slowly rise to the top of the rice.

When we are scared to tell others about Jesus, we can pray for boldness. God will lift us up out of our fears!



Question

Matthew 18:20 says, "For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them" (p. 969, *Live*).

What does God promise when we pray with other believers?

God promises that He is there among us.

Acts 4:23–24 says, "As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God" (pp. 1077–1078, *Live*).

Why do you think the believers decided to pray after they heard John and Peter's report?

How important is it to have other believers pray with you?

Acts 4:18, 21 says, "So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. . . . The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot" (p. 1077, *Live*).

How would you feel if you were threatened not to tell anyone about Jesus?

Would you still tell others the good news or would you keep quiet?

Share a time when you needed boldness to tell about Jesus. Did you follow through and share about Jesus?

The disciples prayed for miracles and for healing. Do you think God still heals people today?

What miracles have you seen?

Acts 4:31–33 says, "After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all" (p. 1078, *Live*).

How did God answer their prayer?

He filled them with the Spirit and gave them boldness.

Prayer

For our prayer time, we are going to pray for other people in our lives.

Gather the students into a circle. Hand each student one Starburst candy. Tell them not to eat the candy until instructed to do so.

Starburst candies are chewy and sweet. For our first part of prayer time, we are going to pray for someone who is sweet in your life, a friend. When I tell you to go, I want you to eat the Starburst. While you are chewing on the candy, close your eyes and silently pray for one of your friends.

Next give each student a Hershey Kiss.

Often times we get kisses from people in our family. We are now going to eat this candy and silently pray for someone in our family.

Finally give each student a sour gummy.



Prayer for Boldness

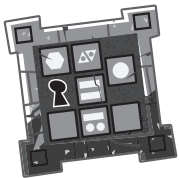
There are people in our lives that seem “sour” to us. These are people we just don’t like or have a hard time getting along with. As we eat our final piece of candy, pray for someone you don’t like. Pray that you will have the boldness to share the love of Jesus with them.

Unwind

When the believers heard Peter and John’s report, they gathered together and prayed. Let’s finish with a game that gathers us all together.

This game is best played in a large room or outside. Play a game of tag with the following rules:

1. If you are tagged by the person who is “It,” you must link arms. Together, you must try and tag the next person. When the next person gets tagged, they must too link arms making a group of three. Continue in this manner until every person is tagged.
2. If you run outside the boundaries, you will automatically have to join in with the group linking arms.
3. The last person to be tagged is the winner and will be “It” for the next round.



Challenge

Your challenge this week is to ask God to reveal one person who needs to hear about Jesus. Pray for this person by name, and pray that God will give you boldness to share His good news. Write the person’s name in your prayer journal and pray for him or her every day. Begin to look for different opportunities to talk about Christ with this person.

Explore

Second Timothy 1:7–8 says,

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord” (p. 1200, *Live*).

Remember this passage this week as you tell your friend about Jesus. Ask God to renew His power, love, and self-discipline in you.

help

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.

4. Jesus' Garden Prayer

We are to humbly pray for God's will in our lives.

Main Points

We should humble ourselves when we pray.

We can go to God when we are troubled.

We should pray for God's will to be done.

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read Matthew 26:36–46.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, tennis ball, playground ball, and dice

Connect

How did you do with praying for boldness last week?

Did anyone get the chance to talk about Jesus with the person you were praying for?

Were you nervous to witness to that person?

When someone says, "Let's pray," what do most people automatically do?

Most people bow their heads, close their eyes, and fold their hands.

Why do people bow their heads, fold their hands, and close their eyes?

Answers can range from not being distracted to keeping tradition.

Do we have to do all those things to pray?

No.

plan

ask

Jesus' Garden Prayer

In today's prayer, Jesus does more than just bow His head. He actually laid on the ground!

Warm Up

I want to begin our lesson by asking you what you would do if something happened.

Depending on the number of students, you can have everyone answer each question or pick a couple of students per question. Feel free to make up your own questions. The possibilities are endless.

What would you do if the sky turned pink instead of blue?

What would you do if we had two noses and only one eye?

What would you do if you could run as fast as you wanted?

What would you do if you never needed sleep?

What would you do if you sneezed out dollar bills?

What would you do if God wanted one thing for you, but you wanted something else?

In our prayer today, we will read about how important it is to do what God wants.

Engage

The night before He was crucified, Jesus took three disciples to a garden called Gethsemane to pray.

Check It Out

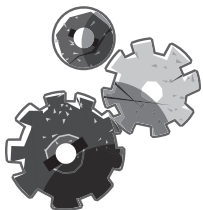
Read Matthew 26:36–39 (pp. 978–979, Live).

What can we learn from this short prayer that Jesus prayed?

I Can Know It's True

1. We should humble ourselves when we pray. Matthew 26:39 says, "He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground" (pp. 979–978, *Live*). Bowing down shows that you are submitting to the other person and letting them be "in charge" of you. Having your face on the ground is a very humbling position to be in. When Jesus prayed, He put His face to the ground. Jesus didn't bow to the ground because He was tired. He wanted to be humble before God.

If Jesus, the Son of God, humbled himself when He prayed, how much more should we humble ourselves? Humbling ourselves doesn't mean we have to bow down every time we pray. The position of our bodies doesn't matter; it's



read

say

the position of our hearts that is important. When we truly recognize how big and amazing God is, we should be humbled that we are able to approach such an awesome God.

2. We can go to God when we are troubled. Jesus knew He was about to face the hardest point of His life. He was about to go through an indescribable amount of physical and emotional pain on the cross. Matthew 26:37 says Jesus “became anguished and distressed” (p. 979, *Live*). With the weight of the sins of world on His shoulders, Jesus went to God. He prayed, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me” (Matt. 26:39; p. 979, *Live*).

Every one of us will face hard times. God does not promise us an easy life. But, when these troubled times come, we need to do what Jesus did—go to the Father in prayer. He will help us through the difficult times in our lives.

3. We should pray for God’s will to be done. Even though Jesus prayed that the suffering would be taken away, He ended His prayer by saying He wanted God’s will to be done. Jesus knew that God’s way is the best way, and He was willing to follow God’s will no matter what. God did not take away the suffering that Jesus had to endure, but He did give Jesus the strength to go to the cross and die for our sins.

When we pray, we need to remember that God’s will is the best way for our lives. We should pray for God’s will and then follow it, even if His will differs from our own.

Relate

Our lives are much better when we follow God’s will.

Take the students outside and show them the tennis ball.

This ball represents each of our lives. When we try things on our own, we can only go so far.

Hold the ball up and drop it. Take note of how high the ball bounces.

Without forcefully throwing the ball down, is there any way I can make this ball bounce higher?

Take some suggestions, like holding it higher before dropping it or by tossing it in the air first. Bring out the playground ball and show it to the students.

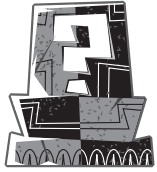
This playground ball represents God’s will for each of our lives. When we pray, we should always want what God wants for us.

Jesus' Garden Prayer

Place the tennis ball on top of the playground ball. Drop them at the same time with the tennis ball on top. When the playground ball hits the ground it will launch the tennis ball high into the air.

We are more successful when we follow His will.

Give the students time to bounce the ball themselves.



Question

Matthew 26:37–38 says, “He took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me” (p. 979, *Live*).

Why was Jesus distressed and troubled?

He knew the spiritual, physical, and emotional pain He was about to endure.

How would you feel knowing that you were about to suffer like Jesus did?

Encourage them to be honest. Ask if they think they could have voluntarily gone through what Jesus did.

*Read Matthew 26:36–44 again (pp. 978–979, *Live*).*

What did Jesus ask the disciples to do? What did the disciples do?

They were supposed to stay awake and pray. They fell asleep.

Why do you think Jesus prayed the same prayer three different times?

The Bible doesn’t say why Jesus did this. Allow the students to share their opinions.

Share a time you were troubled and prayed to God.

Jesus humbled himself by bowing down and placing His face on the ground. What are some ways we can show God our humble attitude?

We can show our humility by kneeling down, bowing our heads, or even serving others.

How does a person with a humble heart act?

They avoid showing off; they care about others; and they look for ways to serve.

Prayer

We are going to put ourselves in different positions to pray. To begin, I need everyone to stand. Lift your hands toward the sky and look up. While you are in this standing position, I want you to pray and give praise to God for everything you can think of.

Give sixty seconds for the students to pray.

Next, I want you to kneel down on your knees and bow your head. While you are on your knees, I want you to pray for someone else. Pray for a specific person and his or her needs.

Give the students sixty seconds to pray for someone else.

Finally, I want you to lay flat on your face. For this last time of prayer, I want you to pray for yourself. Tell God about any troubles in your life. Be honest with God and pray for His will to be done.

Give the students another sixty seconds to pray. End this prayer time by praying out loud for the students in your class.

Unwind

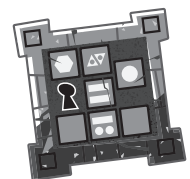
Divide the students into two equal teams. Line the teams up on one side of the playing area. On the other side of the playing area, place one chair across from each team. Give the first person on each team one of the dice.

We are going to play "Roll It, Run It!"

Begin by having the first person on each team roll the die. That person must quickly look at the rolled number, run to the chair, and circle around the chair the corresponding number of times. After completing the necessary circles, that person must run back to the team and then the next person can follow suit. The first team to complete the relay wins.

Challenge

The challenge this week is to pray for God's will to be done in your life. Write in your prayer journal about any troubles you are experiencing and pray that God's will be done in your life. Remember to humble yourself as you pray this week.



Jesus' Garden Prayer

Explore

Read the parable found in Luke 18:9–14 (pp. 1034–1035, Live).

Verse 14 says,

“I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (p. 1035, *Live*).

Familiarize yourself with this parable by reading it several times this week. Memorize Luke 18:14 and quote it to yourself to help you be humble as you pray.

A black speech bubble icon with the word "help" in white lowercase letters.

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.

5. Daniel's Praise

Giving God praise is an important part of prayer.

Main Points

We can praise God for His attributes.

We can praise God for His work in the world.

We can praise God for His work in our personal lives.

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read Daniel 2:1–23.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, three items you are thankful for (or diaper, keys, and shirt), 2 liter bottle of Diet Coke, Mentos, butcher/newsprint paper, markers, index cards, and balloons

Connect

How hard was it to be humble when you prayed last week?

What are some ways you showed God humility?

How do you feel when you do something nice for a person and they say "Thank you"?

How does it feel when they don't say "Thank you"?

Do you think God wants us to say "Thank you" to Him?

When we say "Thank you" to God, we are giving Him praise.

Warm Up

For class, bring in three items you are thankful for from home or use these three items: a diaper, keys, and a shirt.

I have three items here that I give God praise for every day. The first item is a diaper.

Show the students the diaper.

plan

ask

Daniel's Praise

I praise God for this diaper because changing my child would be a lot more difficult without it! The second item I brought is my set of keys.

Show the students your keys.

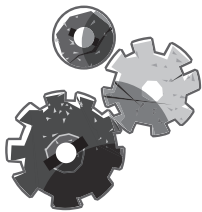
Without my keys, I wouldn't be able to get into my house or drive my car. And finally, I am thankful for my clothes.

Show the students one of your shirts.

Clothes are a very important thing to have!

What are some items you have that you give God praise for?

Today's lesson is all about giving God praise in our prayers.



Engage

Daniel was captured by a king named Nebuchadnezzar. The king had a troubling dream one night that he would not share with anyone. He wanted a wise man to describe his dream and then interpret what it meant. Daniel prayed that God would give him the explanation of the king's dream, and God did. In response to God's faithfulness, Daniel praised God.

read

Check It Out

Read Daniel 2:19–23 (p. 855, Live). On a white board, have the students help you make a list of all the things Daniel praised God for.

say

I Can Know It's True

1. We can praise God for His attributes. Daniel began his prayer by praising God for His wisdom and power. God is all-knowing and all-powerful, and He gave Daniel the wisdom he needed.

Just like Daniel, we can praise God for who He is. Not only is God all-knowing and all-powerful, but He is also loving, just, and holy. He is merciful and kind. These are just a few of the amazing attributes we can praise Him for!

2. We can praise God for His work in the world. Which praises acknowledge God's work in the world?

God controls the course of the world, removes kings, gives wisdom and knowledge, and reveals mysterious things. See Daniel 2:21–22 (p. 855, Live).

We can see God's handiwork in the world all around us. He causes the sun to shine and brings rain to the growing plants. He keeps the earth spinning in exactly the right distance from the sun. He sets the moon and stars in space

to give us the perfect light at night. God provides food and protection for the animals. All creation points to a God who deserves our adoration and praise.

3. We can praise God for His work in our personal lives. God is not only at work in the world around us, He is working specifically in each of our lives. For Daniel, God gave him wisdom at just the right time to save his life! Daniel recognized the answer to the king's dream came directly from God.

We might not have to interpret any dreams, but we all face challenging situations. Whether we realize it or not, God works in our lives every day. We need to take time to recognize God's involvement in our lives and offer a prayer of praise for His goodness to us.

Relate

There are many praises we can lift up to God. For today's experiment, we are going to see how high we can make send our praises.

This experiment must be done outside in an open area. Gather a 2 liter bottle of Diet Coke, Mentos, and a piece of paper. Place the Diet Coke on a flat surface and have the students watch at a safe distance.

This Diet Coke is going to represent our praises. These Mentos are going to help us lift up our praises.

Take the cap off the Diet Coke. Role a piece of paper into the shape of a tube, making sure it will fit inside the opening of the bottle. Have four Mentos ready to drop into Diet Coke.

Are you ready to lift up our praises?

Drop the Mentos into the Diet Coke via the paper tube. Warning: Back away quickly or you will get sprayed with Diet Coke.

Question

Why do you think God enjoys hearing our praises to Him?

What are three qualities of God that we can praise Him for?

What are three praises we can give to God for what He has done around us?

What are three specific praises you can give God for what He has done in your own life?



Daniel's Praise

Psalms 117 says, "Praise the LORD, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth. For he loves us with unfailing love; the LORD's faithfulness endures forever. Praise the LORD!" (p. 599, *Live*).

What does author of this passage give God praise for?

God's unfailing love and enduring faithfulness

What other verses or chapters in the Bible give praise to God?

Some examples are: Psalm 31:19; 100; 107:1; 1 Chronicles 29:11–13; Daniel 6:10; and 2 Corinthians 9:15.



Prayer

Tape several large pieces of butcher paper or newsprint on the walls of the room.

We are going to give God praise today by using the letters of our names. I want you to write the letters of your name on one of the papers on the wall. Next, you will give God praise for things that begin with each letter in your name. For example, Bob could write the following praise: B—Beautiful flowers, O—orange juice, and B—Brother.

Hand each student a marker and give them enough time to write their praise acronyms.

Unwind

Before class, write the names of different body parts on index cards (examples: left arm, right leg, head, both legs, and both hands).

There are many things we can praise God for, such as our arms, legs, and other parts of our body. We are going to play a game that will remind us how thankful we should be for our bodies. I am going to throw a balloon into the air, and as a class, you are going to see how long you can keep it in the air. There is one catch. I have made up several cards with a body part written on them. You will choose a random card, and you cannot use the body part that is on your card for this game.

Time how long they can keep the balloon in the air. Give them several chances to break their record.

Challenge

Your challenge this week is to give God praise in the three areas we talked about in our lesson. In your prayer journals, write “Attributes of God” at the top of one page, “What God Has Done in the World” on another page, and “What God Has Done in My Life” on the top of a third page. Fill out the pages throughout this week as you notice God’s blessings.



Explore

Exodus 15:2 says,

“The LORD is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him—my father’s God, and I will exalt him!” (p, 69, *Live*).

In this passage, Moses praised God after He gave the Israelites freedom from Egypt. Read why Moses gave praise to God in Exodus 14 this week.

For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.



6. The Voice of God

Prayer is talking to God and God talking to us.

Main Points

Prayer is a conversation with God.

We should pray to God for guidance.

When God speaks, we need to listen.

plan

Lesson Preparation

Background: Make sure you have completed last week's challenge and read 1 Samuel 22:1–10 and 23:1–12.

Items Needed: *Live Bible* (one per student), student books, index cards, pencils, clear 2 liter pop bottle, glass eye dropper, cup, and water

ask

Connect

What are some attributes you praised God for last week?

What are some works you praised God for in the world?

What are some works you praised God for in your life?

What does it mean to hear someone?

What does it mean to listen to someone?

Is there a difference between hearing someone and listening to him or her?

Warm Up

Give each student an index card and pencil.

We are going to go for a walk outside. I want you to be quiet as we walk. Your goal is to hear as many sounds as you can. Write the different sounds you hear on the card.

Take the students outside for a walk. Remind them to be very quiet as they walk.

What sounds did you hear?

Why did some of you hear sounds that others did not?

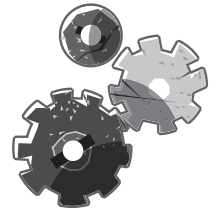
In today's Scripture, David prays to God and listens to God's voice.

Engage

Before David became king, he was chased into the wilderness by King Saul. Saul was jealous of David and wanted to kill him. However, God kept David safe. In the midst of running from Saul, David and his men encountered a town that needed help.

Check It Out

Let's read what happened in 1 Samuel 23:1–4 (p. 291, *Live*).



I Can Know It's True

1. Prayer is a conversation with God. We see in 1 Samuel 23 that David and God talked back and forth. While running from Saul, David discovered that the Philistines were stealing grain from the people in a town called Keilah. David felt compelled to help, but he did not know whether to stay and defend the town or keep running from Saul. David decided to ask God. Although we don't know how God's voice sounded or by what means He spoke, we see both God and David talking together.

We need to remember that prayer is a conversation with God. God loves listening to what we have to say, and He wants us to listen to Him in return. How does God speak to us today? He speaks audibly, directly to our hearts, through the Bible, and through other people.

2. We should pray to God for guidance. The decision to attack the Philistines was not an easy decision for David. He was already in the midst of fleeing from King Saul, and the Philistines had a powerful army. It would not be an easy fight. Even David's own men did not want to fight the Philistines. David did not know what to do, so He went directly to God for guidance.

We will all have decisions to make in life. Some decisions do not have an obvious choice. Before we seek guidance from our friends, parents, or teachers, we need to turn to God and ask Him what we should do.

3. When God speaks, we need to listen. God told David to attack the Philistines and save the people of Keilah. David and his men were terrified of the Philistines, and they were not sure they wanted to listen to God. Being unsure, David prayed again. What did God tell David to do?

Read 1 Samuel 23:4 (p. 291, Live).



The Voice of God

This time David listened to God, and God brought them victory.

There are many times God tells us to do something, and we simply do not to listen. We disobey because we are scared or don't agree with God. If we hear God's voice and don't obey, we are not really listening. David listened to God and was blessed for obeying. God will bless us, too, if we listen to His voice.

Relate

For a video demonstration of the following activity, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNOxFiJ4IDU>.

Before class you will need to make an obedience bottle. To make the bottle, you will need a clear, empty 2 liter pop bottle, a glass eye dropper (these can be found at most craft/hobby stores), water, and a cup. First, fill the 2 liter bottle to the brim with room temperature water. Next, fill the cup with water. The cup will be used to test the eye dropper before placing it into the bottle. Fill the eye dropper with just enough water to make the tip of the rubber hover at the surface of the water. After the eye dropper contains the proper amount of water, place the eye dropper in the 2 liter bottle and replace the cap. You should be able to squeeze the bottle and the eye dropper will plunge to the bottom.

Show the students your obedience bottle.

This is my obedience bottle. The eye dropper inside does what I tell it to do. Watch.

Tell the eye dropper to go down and then back up as you squeeze the bottle. Do this several times to amaze your students.

This eye dropper reminds us of what we should do when God speaks to us through prayer. We need to listen to God's voice and obey.

Give the students time to play with the obedience bottle.



Question

Many times people will compare prayer to talking on the phone.

What are some similarities and differences between prayer and talking on the phone?

Both include having a conversation; you can't see the person you're talking to; and you can call anytime day or night. You can lose reception on the phone; God is with you when you talk to Him; and God never misses a call.

First Samuel 23:4 says, "So David asked the LORD again, and again the LORD replied, "Go down to Keilah, for I will help you conquer the Philistines" (p. 291, *Live*).

God spoke directly to David in this prayer.

Does God still speak to us the same way He did to David?

Yes.

What are some other ways God speaks to us?

God speaks through the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and other people.

Choose some of the following passages and list the ways God spoke: Matthew 1:20–21; Acts 1:23–26; 9:3–6, 10–16; 16:6–10; Numbers 22:27–31; 1 Samuel 3:1–14; and 1 Kings 19:11–13.

Prayer

Many times our lives are too busy to listen to God. We constantly play music or have the television on. Today, I want to spend time listening to God in silence. I want you to find a place in the room where you can sit and not be distracted. Once you have found a place, pray silently for five minutes. While you are sitting, ask God to speak to you and then listen to what He has to say.

After five minutes, finish with a word of prayer.

Unwind

When we pray, we talk to God and He talks to us. Let's give everyone a chance to talk in our final game.

Have the students sit down in a circle.

I am going to begin telling a story, and you are going to help me finish the story. I will begin by saying five words, and then the person to my left will continue the story by saying five more words. This process will continue with every person in the circle until it gets back to me. I will finish the story. Are you ready?

To make this even more interesting, recruit a student to record the story on the white board while it's being told.

There once was a dog . . .

Make sure the students only say five words while they are continuing the story.



The Voice of God



Challenge

Your challenge this week is to set up a time where you will spend some quiet time with God. Try to find a place and time in which you will not be interrupted. Remove anything that will distract you and don't play any music. Just spend time talking and listening to God.

Explore

First Samuel 3:10 says,

"And the LORD came and called as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel replied, 'Speak, your servant is listening'" (p. 272, *Live*).

Read this passage before you pray this week. Reflect Samuel's attitude to God by asking Him to speak to His servant. Remember to listen to what He has to say to you.



For additional electronic resources, go to www.wesleyan.org/explore.

Prayer Walk Celebration

Completing Explore book 6 is a great accomplishment in a preteen's life. It is important to make a meaningful celebration that will encourage the preteens to continue their discipline of prayer. The following pages provide an outline of preparation for this celebration, a sample celebration, and ideas on making the day memorable.

For this celebration service, your students will be planning a prayer walk to share with the church. The students will set up different prayer stations throughout the church building and invite the congregation to move through the various stations. At each station, the participants will be instructed to pray for various things.

Preparation for the Celebration

1. Meet with the pastor to set up a date, time, and location for the prayer walk. It would be best to do the prayer walk when no other services or events are planned. Plan on using as much of the church as possible for this event.
2. Meet with the students to plan the details of the prayer walk.
 - a. Explain to the students that they will be planning a prayer walk.

The prayer walk will take place at the church. We will be setting up prayer stations throughout the church with instructions on what to do and what to pray for. These stations should be somewhat similar to what we have been doing during our prayer time these past six weeks.

- b. Remind the students of some of the prayer activities they have done.
 - c. Begin a brainstorming session on different prayer stations in which people can participate. Have a student write down all the ideas on white board. Remember there are no bad ideas during a brainstorm. Do not discredit or cross off any ideas during the brainstorming time. The following are some quick ideas for prayer stations to help you get started:
 - One in the church nursery where participants are instructed to pray for the smallest ones of their congregation and those who care for them
 - One in the children's and youth's worship or classroom areas and instruct participants to pray for students and the staff who lead them

Prayer Walk Celebration

- One in the sanctuary or worship area where participants sit in chairs or pews and pray for those who will be sitting in the seats
 - One that challenges participants to pray for their own needs of repentance, transformation, growth, etc.
 - One that maps out the surrounding communities (a compass on the floor showing the direction to those communities is effective) and challenge participants to pray for the individuals in those communities that need to be reached for Christ
 - One near the church office where participants can pray for church leaders
 - One where participants pray specifically for individuals in their lives who need Christ
 - One that will lead the participants through the lessons in the curriculum
- d. Next, as a class decide how many stations you would like to set up. Pick the top ideas from the brainstorming sessions. Remember you cannot do it all. Remind the students that it is OK for their idea not to be picked and this is not a competition.
- e. Have the students set the tone at the stations by possibly playing soft music, setting soft lighting, and maintaining a reverent atmosphere.
- f. Make final plans on when the students should meet to set up, what their responsibilities will be, and any other final details.
3. Promote the prayer walk to the congregation.

The Celebration

1. Before the participants arrive, set up the stations. Remember to include clear instructions at each station and signs to help guide participants on where to go next.
2. Spend some time with the students in prayer before everyone arrives.
3. Open the prayer walk for the congregation to enjoy. Encourage the students to greet participants as they arrive and give instructions for the prayer walk.
4. Remember to clean up when the prayer walk is over and thank the students for doing such a wonderful job.

Following the Celebration

1. Challenge them to keep praying and writing in a prayer journal.
2. Choose a random object that will be special for your class. Give each student this object and explain to them that this is your classes special object to remind each one of them the power of prayer. The object can be anything (for example: rocks, crosses, even Hot Wheels), just make it special for each class.

Leader Notes

Leader Notes

Leader Notes

Leader Notes

