

Promise

IBLAYS

Bible Lessons for Youth

Love

Witness

Baptism

Obedience

Faith

Spiritual Gifts

Resurrection

Truth

Hospitality

Community

Body of Christ

Spring 15

Leader's Guide

- U:1** The Pledge of God's Presence
- U:2** God Creates the Easter People
- U:3** Woven Together in Love



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* Teaching/Training articles for this issue may be found at: <http://www.ministrymatters.com/bly2015>

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



JASON SANSBURY

SCRIPTURE FOCUS:

The Holy Spirit at Work in Our Lives and Our Faith Communities

BIBLE LESSONS FOR YOUTH is designed to help youth understand and apply the Bible to their lives, using a “Bible-to-life” approach. Each quarterly volume contains 12–14 lessons.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR YOUTH is written using the outlines from the International Lesson Series, developed by the ecumenical Committee on the Uniform Series. These outlines for children, youth, and adult studies are also used in The United Methodist Church in the creation of Adult Bible Studies. Each six-year cycle provides an overview of the entire Bible.

The Holy Spirit lives in us . . .

The first church I attended as a teenager was a solemn place, full of quiet and thoughtful prayers and hymns sung to the music of a pipe organ. Soon after I started attending that church, a Petecostal friend invited me to attend worship at his church. I was overwhelmed. I also heard a lot about the Holy Spirit. My church had done a great job of teaching and helping me understand God and Jesus, but the Holy Spirit was rarely mentioned. When I went back to my church the following week, I had a lot of questions about the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s work in our lives.

This quarter we are going to study the promise of the Holy Spirit, the way the Spirit works in our lives, the presence of the Spirit in us as Easter people, and the gifts the Spirit gives to all who believe. This may well be the most you have ever thought about or taught about the Holy Spirit, but use this opportunity to help bring clarity to your young people about the Holy Spirit and the gifts the Spirit has given them.

As we celebrate this Easter season, may we be reminded that Jesus knew and promised the One who was coming after him, the One who gives us the power to love young people and share with them the truth of who God is!

SPECIAL NOTE: This issue of BIBLE LESSONS FOR YOUTH is arranged a bit differently inside because this quarter has fourteen Sundays. As a result, the format has been slightly rearranged in both the student and leader. In the student book, two of the trivia pages have been dropped and some of the devotions are located in different places. Also, the writer pictures and the notes page at the back of the book are missing. In this resource, the leader guide, the “How to Use” chart is not included. Also, the teacher-training articles are not included but are available at <http://www.ministrymatters.com/bly2015>.

All of these features, in both the student and leader, will return in the Summer issue of BIBLE LESSONS FOR YOUTH.

U=1 The Pledge of God's Presence

Overview

This five-week study is focused on God's Holy Spirit and explores the ways that God is with us. We begin in the Book of John, then travel to the beginning of Acts, and finally to the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of John is an image-driven book that provides opportunities for visual learners to imagine the

different aspects of the Holy Spirit: a dove, a lamb, advocate, teacher, judge, the power, peace-deliverer, guide, and joy-bearer. The unit also explores Jesus as the triumphant King and his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

03/01/15

S1//: Authority With Water and Spirit

Key Verse: "I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" —John 1:33 (NRSV)

Take-Away: God is our authority and the most important voice in our lives.

Bible Background:

On the night of Passover, the angel of death swept over the city and killed all the Egyptian baby boys. This was meant to be a punishment for the king who was mistreating God's people. God provided a way to protect the Israelites' baby boys. They were instructed to take the blood of the sacrificial lamb and paint it around the door frames on the outside of their houses. The angel of death would pass over houses marked in this way. The Bible Lesson for **Session 1** describes how Jesus took the place of the sacrificial lamb at Passover, becoming once and for all the sacrifice that would save God's people from eternal death. At his baptism Jesus was given all authority by the Holy Spirit.

03/08/15

S2//: The Helpful Advocate

Key Verse: "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." —John 14:26 (NRSV)

Take-Away: The Holy Spirit is our advocate for making good choices.

Bible Background:

There's a difference between the Holy Spirit being present and the Holy Spirit being in you. **Session 2** explores the role of an advocate—someone who speaks on your behalf. This is important to understand in terms of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit speaks on behalf of God. In this Scripture the Holy Spirit has not yet entered the disciples because Jesus is still with them. After Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit would come upon the disciples and speak through them as an advocate of God to make disciples of all people throughout the world. Today the Advocate is still present to help and speak on behalf of God—both to you and through you.

S3//: The Spirit of Truth!

03/15/15

Key Verse: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." —John 16:13 (NRSV)

Take-Away: As believers our responsibility is to seek and pursue truth.

Bible Background:

People often believe that sin cannot be rectified, that justice is a form of vengeance, and that judgment is handed out by people without authority. This was true in biblical times and it remains true today. The Bible Lesson tells about a God who sends the Holy Spirit to release sin's hold, bring justice, and to judge. Truth is the focus of **Session 3**. We can't seek truth in our own strength; we need the Teacher of truth, the Holy Spirit, to guide us.

S4//: Peace, Joy, and Power

03/22/15

Key Verse: "When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" —John 20:22 (NRSV)

Take-Away: The Holy Spirit comes to bring peace, joy, and power.

Bible Background:

Session 4 reminds us that peace, joy, and power come from the Holy Spirit, and most people can use a little more peace and joy in their lives. The same was true in Bible times when various powers took over Israel, and the Israelites were forced into slavery multiple times. Their desire for peace and joy was the hope they clung to throughout all kinds of adversity. Often the people of God have hoped for God's power to be unleashed and to destroy their enemies. However, they probably never have thought it would come through the form of breath. Receive the Holy Spirit!

S5//: The One Who Comes

03/29/15

Key Verse: "Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'" —Mark 11:9-10 (NRSV)

Take-Away: Praise the One who comes and follow his instructions.

Bible Background:

Jewish people waited with great anticipation for the Messiah and had many ideas about whom the Messiah would be. In fact, there were certain sects of Judaism that were devoted to watching for the Messiah. That's why, in **Session 5**, we see prophets and other servants of God being asked if they are the Messiah. The Messiah would come and set all things straight; the Messiah would change the world. In today's Bible Lesson, that moment arrived. Jesus, the Messiah, entered the city to set all things straight—and not by force but by his coming death and resurrection.

Supplies

All Sessions: Bibles, student books, pens or pencils

S1//:

- blindfold
- index cards
- pens or markers

S2//:

- no additional supplies needed

S3//:

- copies of old newspapers and magazines that include celebrity pictures
- scissors and tape
- half pieces of colored paper
- large sheet of paper
- markers
- index cards

S4//:

- no additional supplies needed

S5//:

- blindfold

NOTES:

TAKE-AWAY

God is our authority and the most important voice in our lives.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **John's declaration that** Jesus was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29b) fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:7.
- **Jesus being referred** to as the "Lamb of God" has roots in Scripture, specifically in connection with the Passover lamb (see Exodus 12; John 19:14, 36). Jesus is killed on the very night that the Passover lamb would be sacrificed as an offering.
- **This is Jesus'** first appearance in John's Gospel account, and he does not say a word.
- **The word *sin*** is singular in this passage, as it represents the sin of the whole world.
- **John's role was** to prepare people for Jesus. His act of baptism was meant to prepare people for the coming of the Lord.
- **The witness/testimony** verbiage is present throughout John's Gospel. John "testifies" to Jesus' one-of-a-kind relationship with the heavenly Father.
- **John's witness leads his** followers to become Jesus' followers.

S:1 Authority With Water and Spirit

Whom Do I Follow?

VOICES IN YOUR LIFE	DO THEY SPEAK WORDS OF HOPE?	DO THEY GIVE YOU DIRECTION?	DO THEY LEAD YOU TO JESUS?

The Word Was...

John 1:29-34 (NRSV)

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks

ahead of me because he was before me.'

³¹I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³²And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him." ³³I myself did not know him,

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 3 for a list of supplies for this session.

Whom Do I Follow? (10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: blindfold, index cards, pen or marker

Before the session: On the index cards write various commands or tasks, one per card (such as: Convince "it" to stand on her or his head; convince "it" to strut around like a chicken).

but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'³⁴ And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

John 1:29-34 **(Common English Bible)**

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁰ This is the one about whom I said, 'He who comes after me is really greater than me because he existed before me.'

³¹ Even I didn't recognize him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be made known to Israel."³² John testified, "I saw the Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove, and it rested on him."³³ Even I didn't recognize him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit coming down and resting is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'³⁴ I have seen and testified that this one is God's Son."

Key Verse

"I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"

—John 1:33 (NRSV)

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If you could control the number of voices that speak into your life, how many do you think you would allow? Who would they be?

Indicate your answers in the spaces below.



1. Ask for one volunteer to be "it." Hand out one of the previously prepared cards to each remaining youth. Explain that students with cards must direct (using words only) the person who is "it" to perform the tasks that are written on the cards.

2. Play the game:

Round 1: Instruct those with cards to give verbal direction at the same time.

Round 2: Instruct half the class to direct the person at the same time.

Round 3, 4, or 5: Keep reducing the number of people giving direction until you have only one person instructing "it."

3. Debrief the game by asking:

- What was it like when everyone was screaming directions at the person who was "it"?

THE WORD WAS...

- Is it easier to listen to a group of voices or only one voice? Why?
- What about in your life?

How many voices are screaming directions at you? Is it easy to listen to all of them, or do you wish for fewer voices?

4. Allow a few minutes for youth to reflect and make notes using the chart in the student book and to answer the question on page 5. Encourage youth to take one minute to silently thank God for the people who speak words of hope into their lives.

God's Authority and John

(5–10 minutes)

1. Read aloud the Bible Lesson, or ask for volunteers to do so.

2. Say: "In this passage the Son of God comes to John the Baptist to be baptized. John knew he was called by God to prepare the way for the Son of God. During the baptism, John heard God's voice confirming that Jesus is God's Son."

3. Ask: "Who told John to 'prepare the way'? Was it his friends, followers, or God?" Say: "John's authority came from God, and God's authority came through John because John submitted to God. John allowed God to be the one voice to guide his life."

4. Point out the question on page 6 in the student book and ask youth to write over and around the word *authority* the names of people who have authority over them. Remind youth that God is their supreme authority.

Water and Spirit

(10 minutes)

1. Say: "John baptized with water, but he talked about how the Son

THE WORD IS...

of God would come and baptize with the Holy Spirit. We know about baptism with water because we have seen the act of baptism in church."

2. Ask, "How many of you have been baptized?" Point out the space in the student book and ask youth to write about when they were baptized (if they were old enough to remember it; perhaps youth remember being told about their baptism).

3. After a few minutes, ask one or two youth, who feel comfortable doing so, to tell about their baptisms.

4. If possible, invite your pastor to visit your class and explain your church's view of baptism. If it's not possible, explain that baptism is an outward symbol of the following:

- Baptism is an outward action that symbolizes an inward commitment to follow Christ.
- Baptism is a commitment to join a community of believers in the pursuit of growing closer to Christ.
- Baptism is a commitment by parents to raise up children in faith. (Infant baptism isn't practiced by all denominations. You may want to talk about how your church views this practice. Also, consider talking about ways that other denominations baptize.)

Note to Leader: If you have students who have never been baptized and are interested in talking about being baptized, arrange for them to talk with you and your pastor after class.

You Hear That?

(15 minutes)

1. Ask youth to answer the first question in the student book. After a minute or two, call for definitions. Then ask youth if they think submitting is easy or difficult.

The Word Is...

God's Authority and John

Who has authority over you in your life?

AUTHORITY

Water and Spirit

When I was baptized . . .

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2. Say: "In the act of baptism, we submit to God. We give over our lives to God's direction. We submit to the truth that God has a better plan for our lives than we could ever dream up. In today's Bible Lesson Jesus was baptized, and God revealed Jesus as God's Son. John recognized this

even though Jesus never spoke. Also, people watching realized that this was the Son of God after the Holy Spirit came down over Jesus through a symbol." Ask, "What symbol was explained in the Scripture as the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus?" (*dove*). Point out the second question in the

The Word Will Be...

You Hear That?

☉ What does it mean to submit?

☉ What do you think it would have looked like for a bird to come out of the air and land on Jesus? Draw it below . . .



Closing Reflection

What will you do this week to seek out God's authority and voice in your life?
This week . . .

I commit to read Scripture _____ days.

I commit to pray for _____ (minutes) on _____ days.

I will spend _____ (minutes) each day listening for God's voice.

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student book and allow a few minutes for youth to draw as directed there.

3. After a few minutes, call on youth who would like to show their pictures. Then ask, "How would you feel if a dove suddenly landed on someone who was being baptized at our church? Would you think: *Wow, it's*

God's Holy Spirit, or Oh no! A bird ATTACK!?"

4. Continue: "John knew that Jesus is the Son of God because God told him what to look for as a sign. John's connection with God was deep."

Ask, "Do you ever wish you could hear from God in a similar way?"

THE WORD WILL BE . . .

Pause for responses, then say: "The best way to hear God is to stay connected to God. God requires time, focus, and availability. Do you spend time with God away from church? Do you focus on God in your everyday life? If so, how? What things can you do to hear the voice of God?" (*Know God's Word, spend time in prayer, and focus on serving God.*)

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Point out the commitment statements in the student book. Allow time for youth to complete.

2. Lead in saying this prayer, or one of your own: "God, may the conviction we have to draw near to you this week be lived out through our actions. Amen."

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- There are a variety of smartphone apps or websites that offer different sound effects. Divide youth into teams and, using those sites to play sounds, award points based on how quickly the teams recognize the noises. Some sounds will be easily recognizable; others more obscure. Discuss how it becomes easier to "hear" where God is directing us as we spend more time with God.

Older Youth

1. Explain that there are several titles used for Jesus in the Bible. Talk about the titles *Lamb of God* and *Son of God*. Ask, "Why do you think these titles are used?"

2. Now ask students to call out symbols or descriptions that are used in Scripture for the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to think of and share their own descriptions.

TAKE-AWAY

The Holy Spirit is our advocate for making good choices.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **This Bible Lesson** is part of an extended section in John's Gospel (see 13:31 – 17:26) when Jesus teaches the apostles (except Judas) a final lesson before leaving the site of the Last Supper and going to Gethsemane.
- **The Holy Spirit** moves and acts in community.
- **Love and the commandments** go hand in hand. It's not just about a set of rules to follow in our physical lives. It's also about the love in our hearts. This love is demonstrated by the way Jesus' followers serve God. Our actions show the world that we truly love God.
- **Although the Holy Spirit** is with the disciples at this point in time, the Holy Spirit is not *in them* until Jesus breathes on them in John 20. This is an important distinction for us today as well, because although the Holy Spirit is with us, it might not be in us.
- **The Holy Spirit** comes to others at Pentecost as recounted at the beginning of the Book of Acts. We celebrate the birthday of the church on Pentecost, the day the Holy Spirit came to the earliest followers of Jesus.

S:2 The Helpful Advocate

Make Your Choice!

Spend a few minutes thinking about the last two questions your leader asked:

- ☉ When you are in trouble, do you turn to your friends or to God for help?
- ☉ When you have easy choices, do you trust yourself or God for help with those choices?

The Word Was...

John 14:15-26 (NRSV)

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world

cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸ "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 3 for a list of supplies for this session.

Make Your Choice! (10 minutes)

1. In this activity the youth must choose an option from the questions you ask and move as quickly as possible to the correct side of the room as indicated by you. Youth may *not* stand in the middle. For example: Do you like (point to the right side of the room) cream cheese or (point to the

²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?” ²³ Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

²⁵ “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

John 14:15-26 **(Common English Bible)**

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ I will ask the Father, and he will send another Companion, who will be with you forever. ¹⁷ This Companion is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can’t receive because it neither sees him nor recognizes him. You know him, because he lives with you and will be with you.

¹⁸ “I won’t leave you as orphans. I will come to you. ¹⁹ Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

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²² Judas (not Judas Iscariot) asked, “Lord, why are you about to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered, “Whoever loves me will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Whoever doesn’t love me doesn’t keep my words. The word that you hear isn’t mine. It is the word of the Father who sent me.

²⁵ “I have spoken these things to you while I am with you. ²⁶ The Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you.”

**How might your
life change if you
read the Bible
every day?**

Key Verse

**“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send
in my name, will teach you
everything, and remind you of
all that I have said to you.”
—John 14:26 (NRSV)**

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left side of the room) butter on your bagel?

2. Ask the following:

- Which do you wear more often: jeans or sweat pants?
- Would you like to have many friends who “kind-of” know you or a few friends who know you inside and out?

- Would you like to have three eyes or three ears?
- If you were a superhero, would you like to have the superpower of invisibility or flight?
- When you have to make a tough choice, do you ask your friends or your parents for help?
- When you are in trouble, do you turn to your friends or to God for help?

THE WORD WAS...

- When you have easy choices, do you trust yourself or God for help with those choices?

3. Ask youth to spend a few minutes thinking about the last two questions and to reflect in the space provided in the student book.

Note to Leader: You may want to think of some original questions that are unique to your church to extend the time frame of this game and to make it more personal.

The Advocate **(10 minutes)**

1. Read aloud the Bible Lesson and ask the following questions:

- In verses 21, 23, and 24 we read that loving God means keeping God’s commandments. How do you keep God’s commandments in your life?
- Do you know what God’s commandments are?
- What does it mean to be an advocate? (verse 26)

2. Say: “We are called to listen to God and submit to God’s authority. We must allow God’s Holy Spirit to teach us.” Point out the question in the student book and allow a few minutes for youth to answer.

3. Call on students who wish to talk about their answers. Then remind youth that the Holy Spirit is their advocate and stands ready to help and teach them.

The Court Is in Session **(15 minutes)**

Before the class session or activity: As much as possible, arrange the meeting space to look like a courtroom. If youth are available, ask them to help you with this task.

THE WORD IS...

1. Choose youth to play the following four parts in a roleplay: the judge, the prosecuting lawyer, a "youth in trouble," the lawyer or advocate for the youth. The remainder of students should sit as observers in the "court room."

2. Provide background for the roleplay:

The "youth in trouble" is suspected of committing a robbery at a local store. The lawyer for the troubled youth will act as an advocate on her or his behalf. (The youth may NOT speak in her or his own defense.) The prosecuting lawyer will bring "evidence" against the youth to the judge. Each lawyer will receive two opportunities to argue the case before the judge rules.

The prosecuting lawyer will present the only evidence against the youth: She or he was in the store and left with several other youth at the same time that the robbery took place.

The advocate for the youth will explain that the youth is innocent and has been wrongly accused.

The advocate MUST win, so provide any necessary help to that end.

3. When a "verdict" has been reached, use the questions in the student book to debrief the roleplay.

The Holy Spirit

(15 minutes)

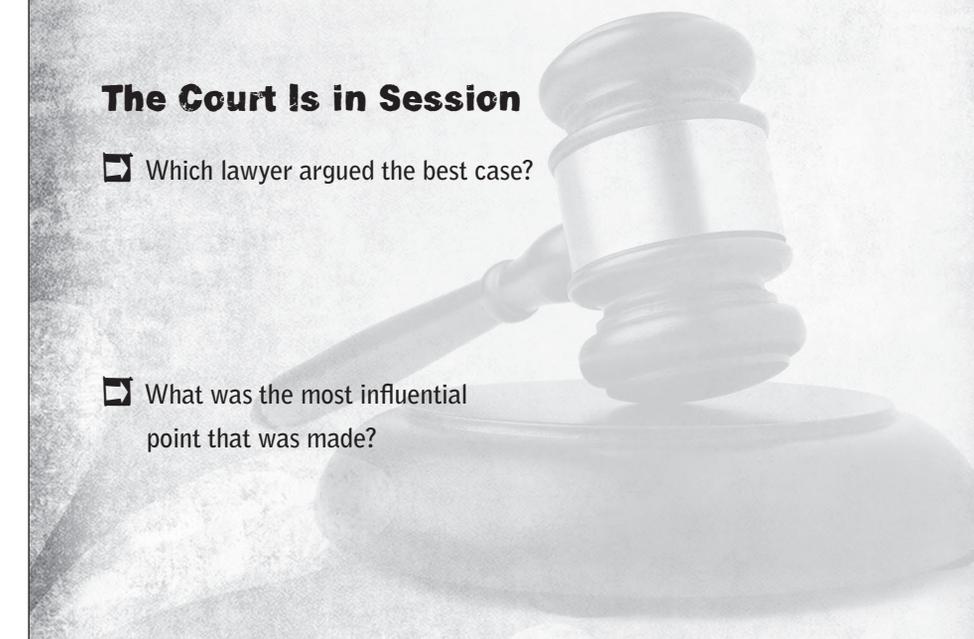
1. Say: "The Holy Spirit is a significant force in the world. It is God's Spirit on earth. God works in and through us via God's Holy Spirit. It is God's gift and promise to God's people. Having the Holy Spirit means that we are never alone, never lacking anything, and always have access to God's power. It's amazing that God loves us that much!"

The Word Is...

The Advocate

The Holy Spirit is referred to as a teacher in verse 26. If you could ask the Holy Spirit to teach you about one thing, what would it be?

The Court Is in Session

- 
- Which lawyer argued the best case?
 - What was the most influential point that was made?
 - Who is your advocate in life? Do you have more than one?

2. Say: "In our lives we must make choices. For example, what choices did you make this morning before arriving at church?" Allow youth to call out answers. Then say: "You made obvious choices, such as getting up, choosing clothes, brushing your teeth, and coming to class. But what other

choices did you make?" After a few answers, ask: "Do you think that your choices are mostly good or mostly bad? Why? What happens if you make a bad choice?"

3. Ask: "Knowing that you have the ability to tap into the Creator and

The Word Will Be...

The Holy Spirit

Circle your answer to the questions below.

- ✓ Do you trust God? **yes or no**
- ✓ Will you trust God, even if it sounds crazy and embarrassing? **yes or no**
- ✓ Do you read God's Word daily? **yes or no**
- ✓ How many days a week do you read your Bible?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Set a goal: How many times a week would you like to read Scripture?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Closing Reflection

- 🔍 What are you thankful for?

- 🔍 In terms of the Holy Spirit, what do you need to thank God for?

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Sustainer of the universe, would you be willing to trust your choices to God? How do we do this?" If no one gives this answer, say: "By staying connected to and loving God. So, how do we love God? By keeping God's commandments. And, how do we know God's commandments? By reading God's Word. God's Word

connects us to God. How often are you reading and studying God's Word?"

4. Point out the questions in the student book and allow a few minutes for youth to answer. Encourage youth to work toward meeting the goal they set for reading the Bible.

THE WORD WILL BE ...

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Say: "It's amazing that we are connected to God through God's Holy Spirit. But it's also something that we might unintentionally take for granted." Ask youth to answer the questions in the student book.

2. After a minute or so, allow youth to call out something they are thankful for in life or related to the Holy Spirit. When all have had the opportunity to respond, close by saying together, "Thank you, God, for your Holy Spirit. Amen."

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- 1. Ask youth to sit side by side in a straight line. When youth are seated, whisper a secret in the ear of the person on one end. That person should whisper the secret to the next person, one at a time, all the way down the line. The last person to receive the secret then shares aloud what she or he heard. Most likely it will be different from the original secret.

- 2. Explain that this game illustrates the difference between the truth we hear from our peers and the truth we hear directly from God, via the Holy Spirit.

Older Youth

- Tell about a time in your life when you believed you were doing the right thing but, in the end, it was the wrong thing. Say: "Sometimes we place our trust in people who give us bad counsel. Instead, we should place our trust in the God who never sends us down the wrong path. Our God wants us to prosper and not perish."

TAKE-AWAY

As believers our responsibility is to seek and pursue truth.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **It's important to** remember that the disciples' teachings and actions were not what led people to God; instead it was the work of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were persecuted for their actions, but the actions of the Holy Spirit brought salvation.

- **The Holy Spirit** demonstrated three things:

1. The world is wrong in relation to sin.
2. The world is wrong about justice.
3. The world is wrong about judgment.

- **There was a** new reality for the disciples. They would learn more from Jesus as they moved forward in following him. After Jesus ascended, the Holy Spirit took over and led the movement forward.

- **The Holy Spirit** has a larger role in Jesus' teachings in John's Gospel than in any other Gospel.

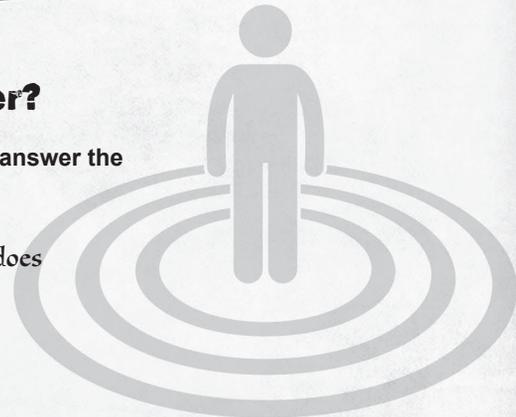
- **Jesus made visible** the presence of God (see Colossians 1:15). The Holy Spirit continues to make visible the presence of God in Jesus.

S:3 The Spirit of Truth!

Who's Got the Power?

After you choose your person, answer the following questions:

1. Who is this person and what does she or he do?
2. What has he or she influenced?
3. How have you seen this person's influence permeate your world?



The Word Was...

John 16:4b-15 (NRSV)

^{4b} "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶ But because I have said these

things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 3 for a list of supplies for this session.

Who's Got the Power? (10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: copies of old magazines and newspapers that include celebrity pictures, scissors, tape, half pieces of colored paper, and a large sheet of paper titled "Who's Got the Power?"

and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

John 16:4b-15
(Common English Bible)

^{4b} “I didn’t say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

⁵ But now I go away to the one who sent me. None of you ask me, “Where are you going?” ⁶ Yet because I have said these things to you, you are filled with sorrow.

⁷ I assure you that it is better for you that I go away. If I don’t go away, the Companion won’t come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will show the world it was wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment. ⁹ He will show the world it was wrong about sin because they don’t believe in me.

¹⁰ He will show the world it was wrong about righteousness because I’m going to the Father and you won’t see me anymore.

¹¹ He will show the world it was wrong about judgment because this world’s ruler stands condemned.

¹² “I have much more to say to you, but you can’t handle it now. ¹³ However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you in all truth. He won’t speak on his own, but will say whatever he hears and

will proclaim to you what is to come.

¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and proclaim it to you.

¹⁵ Everything that the Father has is mine. That’s why I said that the Spirit takes what is mine and will proclaim it to you.”

• • • • •

In my life, the person who has the greatest influence on me is:

Key Verse

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

—John 16:13 (NRSV)

world, such as school, friends, and places they frequent. As you hang the large sheet of paper, youth should cut out the person’s pictures they choose and attach them to the large sheet of paper.

4. After the students have attached their pictures, ask them to answer the questions in the student book on pages 12 and 13.

5. Before moving on, ask youth to write the person’s name from the last question on a piece of colored paper and attach over the person’s picture they posted earlier. Remind youth they can choose the people they allow to influence them.

Guided by the Spirit of Truth

(10 minutes)

1. Read aloud the Bible Lesson or ask several youth to do so. Then say: “In the Bible Lesson, Jesus told the disciples that he was leaving. Where was he going? (*to be with the Father*). Why do you think Jesus said that he would send the Holy Spirit? (*because we need help*). If you had the choice to follow in truth or lies, which would you choose?”

2. Say: “Of course, we all would choose to follow truth as opposed to lies. Lies hurt and isolate people. Lies always travel with more lies, and one lie is never enough. However, Jesus knows that we are people who often fall for the lies. Jesus knows that we need help in order to follow him. The Holy Spirit is here to guide us in truth (see verse 13).”

3. Ask the youth to complete the definitions on page 14 in the student book, as well as the last question.

4. After a few minutes, call on youth to read aloud their definitions. When everyone has

1. Say: “We all influence the world in different ways. Some people may be influencers by the choices they make, some by their style, and others by the way they speak.”

2. Ask, “Who do you think is the most influential person in the world—the President, a celebrity?” After a few answers, ask, “Where do you think popular trends originate?” After a few

more answers, say: “When trends start (such as fashion, catch phrases, or attitudes), people tend to follow whatever is popular.”

3. Hand out the magazines and newspapers and ask students to look at and pick a person they think has most influenced their individual worlds—not necessarily the world as a whole, but within their immediate

THE WORD IS...

participated who would like, read aloud the following definitions:

- *Truth*: the true or actual state of a matter; conformity with fact or reality
- *Fact*: something that actually exists; reality; truth; something known to exist, to have happened, to be true; a truth known by actual experience or observation
- *Lies*: a false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive; an intentional untruth; a falsehood

—definitions from Dictionary.com

5. Remind youth that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Ask, "Which of these do you follow the most in your life: truth, fact, or lies?"

Pick the Lie . . .

(10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: index cards and pens or pencils

1. Say, "Sometimes it's difficult to tell the truth from the lies." Hand out index cards, one per student. Ask each youth to write two truths and one lie about his or herself on the card, along with her or his name, and hand it to you.

2. Read aloud the cards, one at a time, pausing after each so the class can decide which statement is a lie. Be sure to tell whose card you are reading to help students better identify the lie.

3. After reading aloud all the cards, ask, "How were you able to determine which statement was a lie and which were truths? (*because we know the person*).

4. Allow youth a few minutes to answer the question in the student book, then talk about their answers. Say, "In order to know the difference between truth and lies, we must know the Spirit of truth."

The Word Is...

Guided by the Spirit of Truth

Define the following:

TRUTH: _____

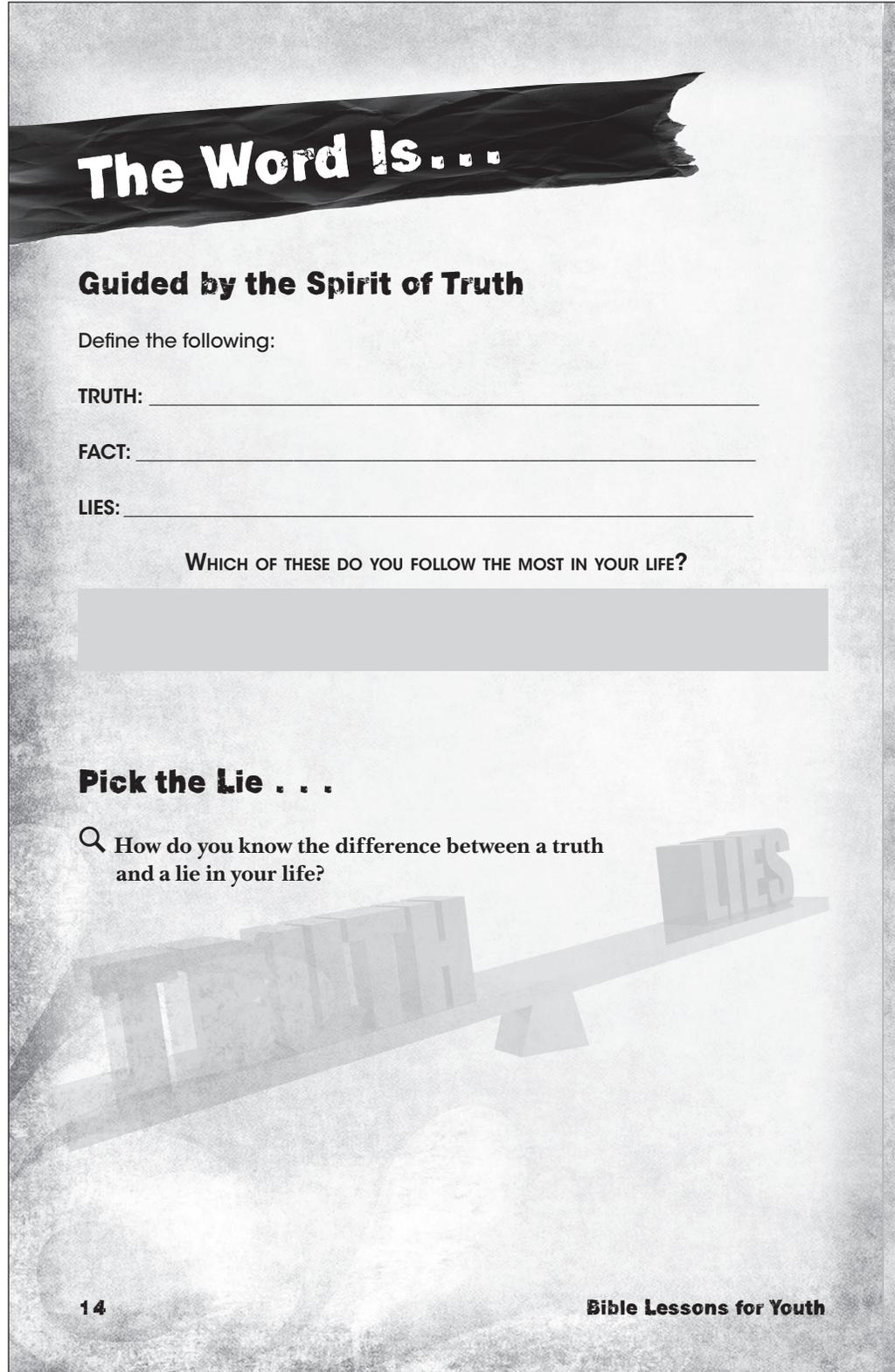
FACT: _____

LIES: _____

WHICH OF THESE DO YOU FOLLOW THE MOST IN YOUR LIFE?

Pick the Lie . . .

Q How do you know the difference between a truth and a lie in your life?



You Can't Handle the Truth!

(15 minutes)

1. Ask: "Have you ever heard someone say that perception is truth? Have you ever been judged by an isolated event or made a mistake and

felt like you would forever be known for that mistake? That's what it means to say, *perception is truth*. But, the truth is, we are not the sum of our mistakes nor our actions. Between God and yourself, you can make it right again."

The Word Will Be...

You Can't Handle the Truth!

Below are some ways to seek truth:

- Know Scripture.
- Seek wise counsel.
- Pray through circumstances.

List three people you admire:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Read the following definition for a *mentor*, then consider who of these three people you would choose as a mentor.

MENTOR: Someone older than you who is grounded in faith; someone safe with whom you can study Scripture and trust to give you wise advice

MENTOR

Closing Reflection

Write your choice of **MENTOR** here: _____.

After asking God for confirmation of your choice, schedule a time with your mentor to read the devotion on page 24, to read Scripture, and to answer the questions.

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2. Ask, "How can you live each day pursuing truth?" Pause for youth to call out answers, then point out the three ways listed in the student book.

3. Now ask: "Who has been a mentor to you? What have you learned from this person?" Ask youth

to list in the student book three people they admire.

4. Ask a youth to read aloud the definition for *mentor* in the student book. Suggest youth ask one of the people they admire to be their mentor.

THE WORD WILL BE ...

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Ask youth to write the name of their potential mentor in the student book, then ask youth to pray silently for God to confirm their choice. (Remind youth to talk to their parents about their choice.)

2. Refer youth to the devotion on page 24 as a resource when meeting with their mentor. Ask for prayer requests and close in prayer.

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- Read aloud the following true or false statements. Emphasize the importance of seeking truth.
 1. No word rhymes with the word orange. (*true*)
 2. There are fifty states in the USA. (*yes and no; four states are referred to as commonwealths.*)
 3. It shows weakness to ask for help. (*false*)
 4. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. (*true*)
 5. Candy corn is a food group, according to elves. (*true: according to the movie, Elf*)
 6. Going out in the cold with wet hair will cause you to "catch your death." (*false*)

Older Youth

1. Hand out sheets of paper and ask youth to write about a time when they thought a mistake would follow them forever. Then ask them to turn over the paper and write about a time when they held a mistake against someone else.

2. Talk about moving forward from past mistakes and hurts. Suggest youth wad up and throw away the papers as a symbol of their willingness to forgive (themselves and others) and move forward.

TAKE-AWAY

The Holy Spirit comes to bring peace, joy, and power.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **The words used** for wind, breath, and spirit are the same in Greek and Hebrew.
- **Paul, twenty years** later, asked a question reminiscent of today's Bible Lesson: "Who is sufficient for these things?" (1 Corinthians 2:16b, NRSV). The answer is simple—none of us. Apart from God we can do nothing. This is why the Holy Spirit is so important to us as sin-filled followers of God.
- **The role as** a "witness" in the Book of Acts is a very prominent distinction for those who follow God. We are commanded to be witnesses to the ends of the earth and to help bring salvation to all humanity.
- **Pentecost means "the fiftieth day"** and is so named because it occurs fifty days after Passover.
- **Many churches incorporate** the color red into their Pentecost services as a reminder of the Holy Spirit's presence in the church.
- **In the time** between Jesus' resurrection and return to heaven, Jesus appeared to many people, including over five hundred at one time (see 1 Corinthians 15:4-6).

S:4 Peace, Joy, and Power

Strike a Pose!

Describe what people might think about you just by looking at you.

The Word Was...

John 20:19-23:

Acts 1:8; 2:1-4 (NRSV)

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus

came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."²² When he had

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 3 for a list of supplies for this session.

Strike a Pose!

(10 minutes)

1. Say: "Today we will continue talking about the Holy Spirit and focus on three words: *peace*, *joy*, and *power*. Let's get started."
2. Ask everyone in the group to stand up. Explain that when you say one of the following words, the students must

said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁸ Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

¹ When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

**Apart from God
we can do nothing.**

John 20:19-23:

Acts 1:8; 2:1-4

(Common English Bible)

¹⁹ It was still the first day of the week. That evening, while the disciples were behind closed doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." ²² Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you don't forgive them, they aren't forgiven."

Key Verse

**"When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"
— John 20:22 (NRSV)**

strike a pose they think best illustrates that word. Some simple words are included so that everyone stays involved.

- superhero
- mouse
- ballerina
- happy
- embarrassed
- superman or superwoman
- joy

- bird
- Holy Spirit
- powerful
- masked
- snake
- peace
- Spider-man
- Jesus

3. Ask the following:

- In your opinion, what was the toughest word to illustrate?
- Do you think people see words like *happy*, *joy*, and *embarrassed* lived out in you on a daily basis?
- In the same way, do you think people see your faith? Why or Why not?
- If your life were filled with *peace*, *joy*, and *power*, could people tell by looking at you? Why or Why not?

4. Ask youth to spend a minute or so completing the description in the space provided in the student book. If your youth have known one another a while, and are comfortable doing so, let them read aloud their work and talk about whether they agree or disagree.

Receive the Holy Spirit. Peace!

(10 minutes)

- 1.** Read aloud the Bible Lesson. Say, "Jesus breathes on his disciples as they receive the Holy Spirit." Invite your students to turn toward a person sitting close and breathe on her or him. Ask, "Did anyone feel joy, power, or peace when the person breathed hot and smelly breath on you?"
- 2.** Say: "In today's Bible Lesson, Jesus visited the disciples after his death. He showed them his wounds and brought them peace—the same peace that the Holy Spirit gives."

3. Ask, "Are there situations in your life where you wish Jesus could breath peace?" Refer youth to the activity on page 18 in the student book. Allow time for them to complete the activity, then talk about places and times they need the Holy's Spirit's peace.

Receive the Holy Spirit. Joy!

(10 minutes)

1. Give youth a minute or so to define *joy* in the space provided in the student book. Then ask, "What is joy?" Wait for a few answers. Explain that Dictionary.com defines *joy* as an "emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying." Emphasize to youth that joy is more than just being happy. It's the result of something exceptional! Tell about a time in your life when you were filled with joy.

2. Ask for two volunteers. Instruct one volunteer to act very stoic and to be non-expressive. Ask the other volunteer to do everything possible (without touching the person) to make the first volunteer smile: make faces, tell a joke, or simply act silly.

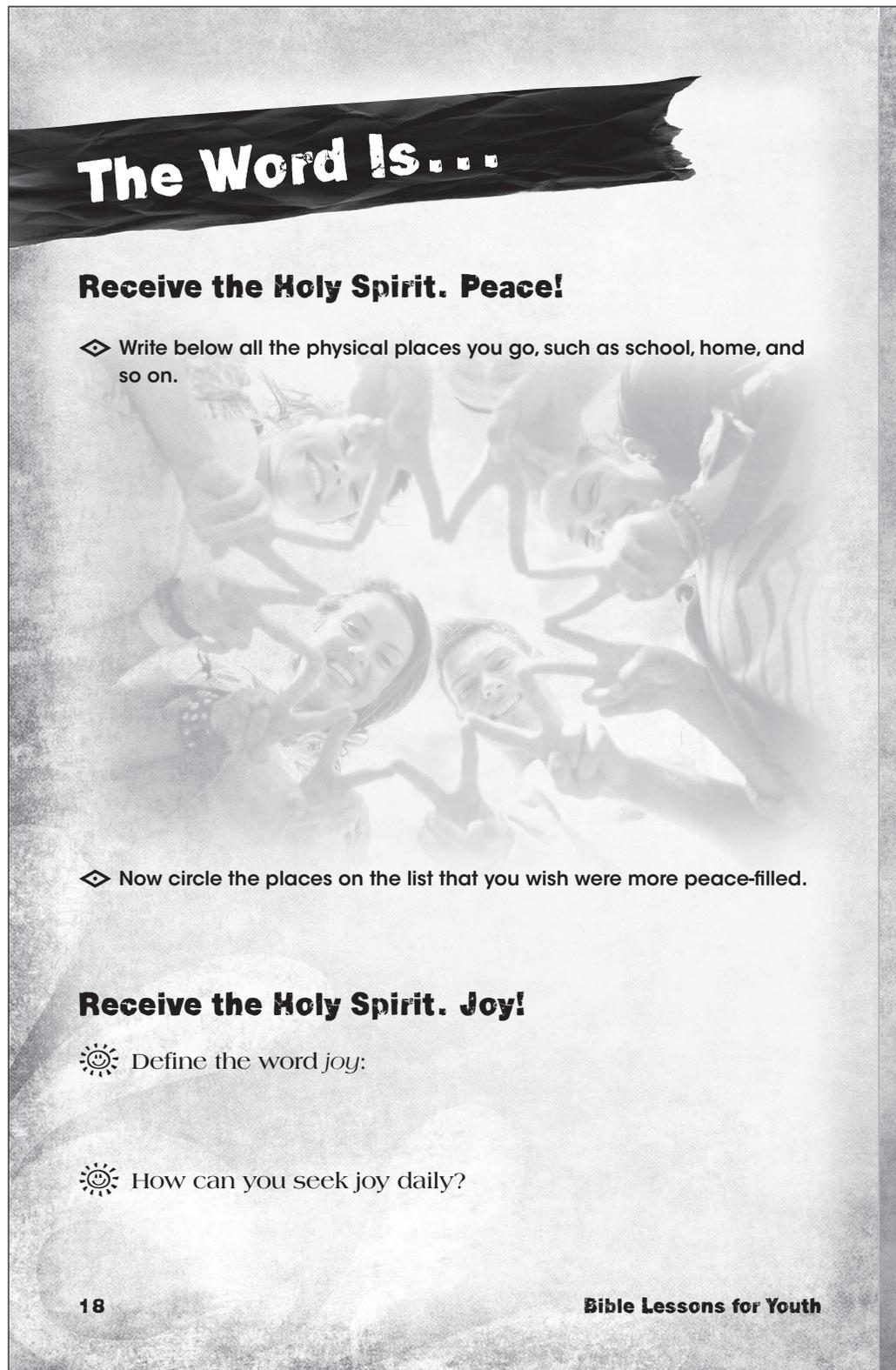
3. After a few minutes, ask, "Did the first volunteer finally smile?" If so, ask youth to tell what made the person smile. Then ask, "Is that an example of joy?"

4. Explain that the two people acting out probably did not experience joy. However, the youth watching the interaction may have experienced joy. If they observed something exceptional that satisfied their soul with laughter, then that's joy! Now ask youth to answer the second question in the student book: *How can you seek joy daily?* After a minute, call on youth who wish to tell some their ideas.

Receive the Holy Spirit. Power!

(15 minutes)

1. Say: "Do you think *power* is an appropriate word to describe the Holy Spirit? What do you think when you hear the word *power*?"



The Word Is...

Receive the Holy Spirit. Peace!

◇ Write below all the physical places you go, such as school, home, and so on.

◇ Now circle the places on the list that you wish were more peace-filled.

Receive the Holy Spirit. Joy!

☀ Define the word *joy*:

☀ How can you seek joy daily?

18 **Bible Lessons for Youth**

Ask students to quickly answer the questions in the student book. Talk about the last question.

2. Say: "Let's find out who is the most powerful person in our class today by having a little arm wrestling competition." (*Note to Leader:* In order

for this activity to work, you must be willing to participate. It's for fun—make sure you keep it fun!) Quickly organize a tournament. Allow students to pair up and arm wrestle, with the winners arm wrestling again, until you have one final winner: the "Most Powerful Person in the Class!" Ask

The Word Will Be...

Receive the Holy Spirit. Power!

I think the most powerful person in the WORLD is:

I think the most powerful person in our CHURCH is:

I think the most powerful person in this ROOM is:

The person that has the most power over MY LIFE is:

Closing Reflection

Complete the following sentences:

1. In my life I need _____.

2. In my life I need _____.

3. In my life I need _____.

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this youth to stand front and center to answer the following questions:

- How does it feel to be the winner of the "Most Powerful Person" competition?
- Do you think you won fairly? If so, then you are the "Most Powerful Person" in the room, correct?

- Since you are the Most Powerful Person in the room, can you lift a heavy object?
- Can you lift a parked car?
- Can you make the seasons change?
- Can you heal the sick?
- Assuming the answer was 'No' for the last three questions, do you

THE WORD WILL BE ...

know of something or someone more powerful than the strongest person on earth? (*The Holy Spirit is more powerful than any human; the Holy Spirit is God's power at work in the world!*)

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Say: "The Holy Spirit comes bringing peace, joy, and power. Which of these three (or all) do you need more of in your life?" Ask youth to complete the sentences in the student book.

2. After a few minutes, say: "The Holy Spirit, who is active in the world, will come upon you with peace, joy, and power if you call upon the name of God." Pause while youth pray over the places they need peace, joy, and/or power in their lives, asking God to send God's Holy Spirit upon them today!

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- You will need a stopwatch or cell phone. Instruct youth to call out as many different kinds of peace (Hint: or *piece*) as possible. The goal is to name 60 things in 60 seconds. Enlist someone to record and number the ideas (such as peace sign, piece of pie, piece of cake, peace be with you, piece of gum, and so on).

Older Youth

- Ask youth to call out places in the world that do not have peace. List responses and talk about why they don't have peace. Allow youth to pray for each place, being sensitive to those who might want to pray silently.

TAKE-AWAY

Praise the One who comes and follow his instructions.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Passover was an** annual Jewish festival, and all Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem to participate (see Exodus 12:16, Leviticus 23:4-8, and Numbers 28:16-18).
- **Jesus riding on** a colt is associated with Zechariah's prophesy of Israel's king riding into Jerusalem (see Zechariah 9:9).
- **The only other** reference to palms is found in Revelation 7:9.
- **The crowds that** gathered before and after Jesus' entrance on this Palm Sunday reflects the messianic expectations in Psalm 118:25-26. Jesus uses the verses before, 22-23, to speak of the rejection of the Son. (see Mark 12:10-11).
- **One week after** Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem, the same crowd called for his crucifixion.
- **The word Hosanna** in the Hebrew was translated to mean "lead us!" Jesus' presence was in many eyes meant to signal an overthrow of Roman occupation, but Jesus led in a much different way.
- **Palms were known** as "phoenix trees" because of their ability to grow new leaves after damaging fires. The early church embraced the palms as an additional reminder of resurrection and new life coming out of Jesus' sacrifice and death.

S:5 The One Who Comes

Blind Faith

List the top five people you would trust blindly with your life:

TOP 5

The Word Was...

Mark 11:1-11 (NRSV)

¹ When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately

as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."⁴ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 3 for a list of supplies for this session.

Blind Faith

(10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: blindfold

1. Ask for two volunteers. Blindfold one of the youth and ask him or her to stand with hands by her or his side. Explain that the blindfolded youth must be willing to completely trust the other youth.

in the street. As they were untying it,
⁵ some of the bystanders said to them,
 "What are you doing, untying the colt?"
⁶ They told them what Jesus had said;
 and they allowed them to take it. ⁷ Then
 they brought the colt to Jesus and threw
 their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸ Many
 people spread their cloaks on the road,
 and others spread leafy branches that they
 had cut in the fields. ⁹ Then those who
 went ahead and those who followed were
 shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the
 name of the Lord!

¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our
 ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹¹ Then he entered Jerusalem and went
 into the temple; and when he had looked
 around at everything, as it was already
 late, he went out to Bethany with the
 twelve.

out their clothes on the road while others
 spread branches cut from the fields.

⁹ Those in front of him and those
 following were shouting, "*Hosanna!*
Blessings on the one who comes in the name
of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessings on the coming
 kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna
 in the highest!" ¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem
 and went into the temple. After he looked
 around at everything, because it was
 already late in the evening, he returned to
 Bethany with the Twelve.

Hosanna!

Blessings on the one
 who comes in the
 name of the Lord!

Mark 11:1-11 (Common English Bible)

¹ When Jesus and his followers
 approached Jerusalem, they came to
 Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of
 Olives. Jesus gave two disciples a task,
² saying to them, "Go into the village over
 there. As soon as you enter it, you will
 find tied up there a colt that no one has
 ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If
 anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing
 this?' say, 'Its master needs it, and he will
 send it back right away.'" ⁴ They went
 and found a colt tied to a gate outside
 on the street, and they untied it. ⁵ Some
 people standing around said to them,
 "What are you doing, untying the colt?"
⁶ They told them just what Jesus said, and
 they left them alone. ⁷ They brought the
 colt to Jesus and threw their clothes upon
 it, and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread

Key Verse

"Then those who went ahead
 and those who followed were
 shouting, 'Hosanna!
 Blessed is the one who
 comes in the name of the Lord!
 Blessed is the coming
 kingdom of our ancestor
 David! Hosanna in the
 highest heaven!'"
 —Mark 11:9-10 (NRSV)

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2. Position the blindfolded youth to stand in the middle of the meeting space. Tell the second volunteer to give the blindfolded youth instructions for completing a task, such as walking to a chair and sitting down, or pouring a cup of water and drinking it. The idea is that the blindfolded youth must complete the task by listening to the verbal instructions. He or she

is literally, and blindly, following the other person's instructions.

3. When the task is complete, ask:

- *the youth who was blindfolded:* What was the most difficult part of the task?
- *the class:* Is it difficult to trust someone completely and blindly? Why or why not?

4. Point out the space in the student book and allow a few minutes for youth to make a list of five people they would trust blindly with their life.

5. After a few minutes, ask, "Were you surprised at the people you would trust blindly?" Point out to youth that each time they "go with the flow" and simply follow the crowd, they are following blindly.

Asking and Responding (5–10 minutes)

1. Read aloud the Bible Lesson, then ask: "Did you notice what happened in today's Bible Lesson? Jesus instructed his disciples to go into the city and complete some tasks in preparation for the Passover meal. Did they talk back and/or question Jesus, or did they simply follow his instructions?"

2. Ask, "How would you respond if Jesus asked you to do something that went against your normal behavior?"

- If Jesus asked you to sit with strangers instead of friends at lunch, what would you do?
- If Jesus asked you to stop and listen to someone having a bad day, what would you do?
- If Jesus asked you to speak up for someone being bullied, what would you do?
- If Jesus asked you to make new friends because your current friends are a bad influence, what would you do?

3. Now ask youth to answer and reflect on the questions on page 22 in the student book.

Jesus Enters (10 minutes)

1. Ask: "When Jesus entered Jerusalem, how did the people

THE WORD IS...

respond to him? In your life, how do you respond to Jesus?"

Wait for answers, then say: "Often we respond to Jesus in terms of the time we have available. In other words, Jesus gets whatever time is leftover at the end of the day."

2. Point out the questions in the student book and allow a few minutes for youth to complete the activity.
3. When everyone appears to be finished, ask:
 - What do you do when you first wake up and before going to school? Do you spend time with Jesus at the beginning of the day?
 - When you are not at school or in class, do you breathe hope into the lives of the people around you or do you take part in the daily gossip?
 - How do you end the day? Do you give thanks?
 - The people praised Jesus as he entered the city. Are you praising God each day of your life?

4. Say: "Jesus came into the world in order to give us life. How we respond to this truth says a great deal about our love for Jesus. Allow Jesus to enter your heart like he entered Jerusalem and respond with great praise!"

Hosanna!

(10 minutes)

1. As leader, tell about a time in your life when everything changed. This might be your wedding day, when your first child was born, when you completed a certain level of education, or when you achieved your dream job.
2. Point out that youth have moments that change their lives also. They might even include sad times, like when their heart was broken

The Word Is...

Asking and Responding

Circle one answer for each question below:

- When your parents ask you to do something that you don't fully understand, do you:
- TALK BACK ACT ANNOYED DO WHAT YOU WERE ASKED WITH JOY
- When you ask someone to do something for you, would you rather that they:
- TALK BACK ACT ANNOYED DO WHAT YOU ASKED WITH JOY
- How do you respond when you feel like God is asking you to do something:
- TALK BACK ACT ANNOYED DO WHAT YOU WERE ASKED WITH JOY

Jesus Enters

- Is Jesus a part of all areas of your life? Yes or No
- Do you have places where you feel Jesus' presence more than others? List those places:
- Now list areas of your life where you need Jesus to enter:

for the first time, or when their grades weren't great and they had to tell their parents. Say: "The sad and difficult moments often seem to have more power than the good times. Why do you think that is?" Wait for a few responses.

3. Say: "Today's Bible Lesson tells about a defining moment—the moment when Jesus is revealed as the answer to prayer for all the people who believe in God. In this moment our King enters the city, salvation comes to life, and the kingdom of God arrives for all to see. In this defining moment,

The Word Will Be...

Hosanna!

What are some of your defining moments?

Closing Reflection

God, I want to see you more. I want to be a participant of praise as you direct me to serve you. I desire encounters with you that change me and cause me to pause and cry out, "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" This week may your praise be on my lips wherever I am. In the name of the One who comes, Jesus, I pray. Amen.

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the only proper response is 'Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Mark 11:9, CEB).

4. Ask youth to spend a few minutes describing some defining moments in their lives, using the space provided in the student book. Ask students who

wish to tell about some of their defining moments.

Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Remind youth that Jesus came into the world to give us life. The

THE WORD WILL BE...

appropriate response to God's gift is praise. Spontaneously lead youth in singing a familiar praise chorus.

2. Now lead youth in saying together the prayer in the student book.

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- Suggest youth re-create the scene of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem. Ask for volunteers to read aloud the Bible Lesson as narrator and act out the story as the following characters:
 - Jesus
 - colt
 - disciples
 - people in the crowd

Older Youth

1. Say: "The disciples were leaders, but they were also followers. As the older youth in the group, you also need to be good leaders and followers. First, you need to be good followers of God. The younger youth look to you as an example. Secondly, you need to be good leaders. Have you taken any leadership roles in our church or youth group? If so, let's talk about them."

2. Call on youth to tell about times they have served as leaders. When those who want to share have finished, ask, "If you have never served as a leader, what can you do this week to change that?"

3. Allow youth to pair up and together set leadership goals, serving as accountability partners for each other in the days ahead.

U=2 God Creates the Easter People

Overview

“Love one another.” It seems simple enough, yet it turns out to be a struggle for us as people and as members of Christ’s body, the church. In this unit we will explore the practical parts of what it means to love one another, looking at the letters of John and one of the earliest defenses written of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Additionally, we’ll look at how to recognize truth and why it is so important to seek truth through the lens of faith in Jesus. Lastly we will examine ourselves and our churches as we think about how we welcome others into the community of faith.

04/05/15

S1//: The Easter People Tell the Story

Key Verse: “[Christ] was buried, and . . . he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.” —1 Corinthians 15:4 (NRSV)

Take-Away: God calls us to tell our personal stories of experiencing Jesus as a part of the larger Resurrection story.

Bible Background:

Reading 1 Corinthians 15 can be challenging. Contrary to what we might expect, this chapter containing the earliest known recorded account of Jesus’ resurrection is not “proof” of that miraculous event. Instead it is an extended argument in defense of a belief in the resurrection of all the dead in the last days. Not all first-century Jews held such a belief; those who did not, therefore, found Jesus’ followers’ claim that God had raised Jesus from the dead to be absurd. In the Bible Lesson for **Session 1** the apostle Paul stressed the importance of the first Easter Day as evidence that, in Jesus’ resurrection, God had set God’s good plan for the end of history into irrevocable motion. Jesus’ resurrection confirms, and does not contradict, ancient Israel’s faith in God’s sovereignty over history.

04/12/15

S2//: The Easter People Reach Out and Share

Key Verse: “For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” —1 John 3:11 (NRSV)

Take-Away: The Christian community shares its goods as a way to love other people in need.

Bible Background:

One of the main themes of Johannine literature (which includes the Gospel of John, the three Letters of John, and Revelation) is the conviction that eternal life is not only future everlasting life in God’s presence but also abundant life in God’s presence today (see John 10:10; 17:3). The elder asserts “we have passed from death to life because we love one another” (see 1 John 3:14, NRSV). Christian love is more than pleasant fellowship; it is a manifestation of new life. Youth may find the command to love counterintuitive: How can “love” be commanded? During **Session 2** help youth understand that while the warm, fuzzy feelings our culture calls “love” cannot be produced on demand, actions taken for the good of another—the biblical definition of *love* as seen in Jesus (see John 3:16)—can be and have been commanded.

S3//: The Easter People Love One Another

Key Verse: "The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also." —1 John 4:21 (NRSV)

Take-Away: God calls Christians into a community marked by a mutual love.

Bible Background:

Although John's language in today's Bible Lesson is lofty and poetic, he uses his words in service of a practical truth that needs little, if any, commentary. Put simply: We don't truly love God, no matter how much we say we do, if we don't act in loving ways toward other people. In **Session 3**, the focus is on whether members of the Christian community love one another. Sometimes congregations forget that living life as the Easter People can be challenging! Do we actually love one another—or simply give lip service to the notion that we do? Young people can help keep congregations honest on this point, and you can encourage their frankness while reminding them, as would John, to scrutinize themselves as well!

04/26/15

S4//: The Easter People Teach Truth

Key Verse: "Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward." —2 John 8 (NRSV)

Take-Away: Christians have a responsibility to question teachings that contradict Scripture's witness to Jesus.

Bible Background:

Second John tackles the subject of heresy—teachings about God and Jesus that "go beyond" what the church has declared to be "orthodox," or "right thinking." Understandably, given his concern for the health of a still-developing Christian community, the elder does not write an even-handed, carefully measured essay about the teachings he opposes. He labels the "heretics" as deceivers, evildoers, even antichrists. Youth, who are often naturally skeptical, may wonder whether the elder's opponents saw themselves this way! We can share the elder's passion for defending the truth about Jesus without sharing in his demonization of those who disagree with us. In **Session 4** we can remind youth to take Peter's advice about making our defense of the truth "with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:16, NRSV).

05/03/15

S5//: The Easter People Welcome Others

Key Verse: "I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely how you walk in the truth." —3 John 3 (NRSV)

Take-Away: Christians extend a loving welcome to newcomers, including strangers and all who do what is good.

Bible Background:

Like 2 John, 3 John presents only one side of a controversial situation. One wonders if Diotrephes was writing equally bitter letters about the elder to his allies in early Christian congregations! We trust, however, that the Spirit guided the distribution and preservation of the elder's letter for a purpose; and its emphasis on hospitality agrees with the priority the rest of the New Testament places on welcoming others, including strangers. In **Session 5** you can help youth constructively critique their congregation's practice of hospitality, especially if some of them are new to the life of the church. Draw on their memories of what it was like to be an outsider and a newcomer to help the class and the congregation to grow as people who "do well" (verse 6) in loving those whom God sends our way.

Supplies

All Sessions: Bibles, student books, pens or pencils, a white cloth

S1//:

- ___ sheets of writing paper
- ___ markers
- ___ newspaper and magazines
- ___ scissors, glue, tape
- ___ poster board

S2//:

- ___ no additional supplies needed

S3//:

- ___ index cards
- ___ small box or basket
- ___ markers

S4//:

- ___ postcards or postcard-sized pieces of paper
- ___ markerboard or large sheet of paper and markers

S5//:

- ___ markerboard or large sheet of paper and markers

TAKE-AWAY

God calls us to tell our personal stories of experiencing Jesus as a part of the larger Resurrection story.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Paul likely wrote** the letter in 1 Corinthians 15 only twenty years or so after the first Easter.
- **In the first** century A.D., Corinth was a bustling commercial port, an urban center where diverse people with differing traditions mingled. The city also was known for loose morals, and the gap between its wealthy and poor citizens was significant.
- **Paul's only "scriptures"** (verses 3–4) were the Hebrew Scriptures, and scholars don't agree which specific texts, if any, Paul had in mind. Isaiah 53:5, Jeremiah 23:5, and Hosea 6:2 are some possibilities. Paul may also mean, however, that Jesus' death and resurrection are generally in line with God's saving actions, as recorded in Hebrew Scripture.
- **"Cephas" (verse 5) is** Peter's name in Aramaic, a language spoken by Jesus.
- **Paul says he** was like one "untimely born" (verse 8, NRSV), or stillborn, as a figurative way of describing his initial opposition to the good news (verse 9).
- **An apostle is** one who is sent on a mission.

S:1 The Easter People Tell the Story

Remember When . . . ?

Whether they're epic historical events or "tall tales" often repeated around the family dinner table, shared memories help to shape communities. What are some important memories that define your community?



The Word Was . . .

1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 20-22 (NRSV)

¹ Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in

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which also you stand, ² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you— unless you have come to believe in vain.

³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received:

Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 25 for a list of supplies for this session.

Remember When . . . ? (10 minutes)

1. As students arrive, encourage them to sketch or write responses to the question in the student book.
2. Now invite youth to talk about their responses. (If necessary, prompt discussion by talking about one of your community-shaping memories.)

that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

.....

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.²¹ For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being;²² for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at once—most of them are still alive to this day, though some have died.⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,⁸ and last of all he appeared to me, as if I were born at the wrong time.⁹ I'm the least important of the apostles. I don't deserve to be called an apostle, because I harassed God's church.¹⁰ I am what I am by God's grace, and God's grace hasn't been for nothing. In fact, I have worked harder than all the others—that is, it wasn't me but the grace of God that is with me.¹¹ So then, whether you heard the message from me or them, this is what we preach and this is what you have believed.

.....

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead. He's the first crop of the harvest of those who have died.²¹ Since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came through one too.²² In the same way that everyone dies in Adam, so also everyone will be given life in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 20-22
(Common English Bible)

¹ Brothers and sisters, I want to call your attention to the good news that I preached to you, which you also received and in which you stand.² You are being saved through it if you hold on to the message I preached to you, unless somehow you believed it for nothing.³ I passed on to you as most important what I also received: Christ died for our sins in line with the scriptures,⁴ he was buried, and he rose on the third day in line with the scriptures.⁵ He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve,⁶ and then he appeared

Key Verse

**"[Christ] was buried, and . . . he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures."
—1 Corinthians 15:4 (NRSV)**

Lord Jesus, may we feel you among us as we study and share the story of your triumph over sin and death." All respond, "Amen."

The News on Which We Stand

(15 minutes)

Before the session: Write each of the following phrases on a separate sheet of paper: *Christ died for our sins; Christ was buried; Christ was raised on the third day; Christ appeared to Cephas; Christ appeared to the Twelve; Christ appeared to over five hundred believers; and Christ appeared to James.*

1. Read aloud 1 Corinthians 15:1-2. Ask, "What does 'standing on' the good news mean?" (*believing to be true, staking one's life on*). Acknowledge thoughtful responses.

2. Now read aloud 15:3-7. Then shuffle and distribute the papers prepared earlier. Ask youth to arrange the events in order on the floor from memory.

3. When youth are satisfied with their sequence of events, instruct them to stand on the papers (sharing space as needed). Check the final sequence of events against the Bible Lesson and read aloud 15:8-11, 20-22.

Paul's Place in God's Plot

(10 minutes)

1. Say: "You all worked together to tell the Christian community's most important story. Let's look at what Paul says about why that story matters." Ask students to turn to 1 Corinthians 15 in their Bibles.

2. Read aloud the paragraph about Paul on page 28 in the student book. Ask students to

3. Lead students in a storytelling game. Say aloud a sentence that begins a story, either one that students likely know—such as, "Dorothy lived on a farm in Kansas,"—or one that begins an original story—such as, "An astronaut landed on an alien planet." Allow each player to add another sentence that has some connection to the previous sentence. Continue as time and interest allows.

4. Say: "Communities remember and re-tell the stories that matter to them. The story most important to the Christian community is the story of Jesus' resurrection on the first Easter Day."

5. Lead youth in saying the "Easter Greeting" on page 28 in the student book, with students saying the boldfaced words. Then pray: "Risen

THE WORD IS...

analyze Paul's argument in 15:12-19 using the printed prompts.

3. Recruit a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 2:15-17. Ask, "How does Genesis help us understand Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 15:20-22?" (*Adam brought death to all humanity, but Jesus brings new life.*) Say, "Paul believed the Christian community's story was important because so much was at stake."

4. Now ask students to read again 15:1-11, completing the chart in the student book with notes about what parts of the Christian story Paul was told by others (verses 3-7) and what parts of the story he tells for himself (verses 8-11).

Destination Corinth!

(15 minutes)

Supplies Needed: copies of newspaper and magazines, scissors, glue or tape, poster board

1. Recruit volunteers to read aloud, in their best "hard sell" voices, the "tourism ad" for Corinth in the student book. Say: "Of course ancient Corinth didn't actually advertise, but this ad hints at the city's first-century reputation." Ask:

- What would you say such a community values most? (*wealth, physical pleasure, entertainment, self-importance*). Acknowledge thoughtful responses.
- How do you see similar values reflected in our culture today?
- How do Christian values differ from values such as these?

2. Say: "God used Paul's telling of the Christian story to establish a different kind of community in Corinth, a community that took its cues for how to live from Jesus' death and resurrection. God also has gathered us together to live as a different kind of community." Ask, "How does our congregation (or

youth ministry) tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection in our local community?"

3. Hand out newspapers and magazines. Instruct students to find and cut out images they think illustrate the values of a Christian community.

Instruct students to glue or tape the images they choose to a poster board. Display the montage where others in the congregation may view it.

The Word Is...

Use this greeting during each session this month.

Easter Greeting

Welcome, Easter People! Death is behind you. New life is ahead!

THE PAST CANNOT CONTROL US. GOD'S GOOD FUTURE BEGINS TODAY!

We are no longer alone and left to ourselves.

WE ARE JOINED TOGETHER BY JESUS' VICTORY.

Easter People! Hear, believe, and live the good news: Christ is risen!

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!

Paul's Place in God's Plot

Like many first-century Jews, Paul believed that, when God's new heaven and earth arrived at the end of time, God would raise faithful people who had died to life. Paul believed Jesus' resurrection on the first Easter was just the beginning (the "first fruits" 15:20a, NRSV) of this resurrection of the faithful. But not everyone shared this belief—including some of the believers in the church at Corinth.

What does Paul say are the consequences for each of the people or groups below if God does not, and will not, raise the dead?

◆ for Jesus (15:13, 16) _____

◆ for Paul (15:14-15) _____

◆ for the believers in Corinth (15:14, 17, 19) _____

◆ for believers who have already died (15:18, 19) _____

The Word Will Be...

WHAT OTHERS TOLD PAUL	WHAT PAUL TOLD OTHERS

Destination Corinth!

VISIT INCREDIBLE CORINTH, COSMOPOLITAN CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD!

- * SEE our spectacular statues and tremendous temples honoring gods and goddesses!
- * FEAST on fabulous food and drink in our marvelous marketplaces!
- * MINGLE with exotic visitors from far-flung lands!
- * ENJOY YOURSELF! Life is short, and you deserve it!

IF YOU'VE GOT THE FUNDS, WE'VE GOT THE FUN!
WHAT HAPPENS IN CORINTH STAYS IN CORINTH!

Closing Reflection

Living God, who raised your Son from the grip of the grave: May we your people see him at work in the world and in ourselves. And, with your Spirit's strength, may we speak and show to others the good news that Jesus Christ brings new, eternal, abundant life! Amen.

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4. Ask:

- How closely does our congregation (or youth ministry) resemble this montage?
- What can we do to help our Christian community look even more like this montage?

5. Say: "Paul shared not only how others had seen the risen Jesus but also how he had. How have you seen and experienced Jesus in your life?" Invite volunteers to talk about their responses.

THE WORD WILL BE ...

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

Supplies Needed: a white cloth for use each Sunday in this unit

1. Gather students in a circle at the center of your meeting space. Spread the white cloth in the middle of the circle and place an open Bible on the cloth.

2. Say: "Easter People, God brings us together around the Word and sends us out to live the Word. Go forth and tell the story, in word and action, of God's love in the resurrection of Jesus."

3. Pray together the prayer in the student book; then sing together an Easter song, or verse of an Easter hymn (such as "Christ the Lord Is Risen," *The Faith We Sing*, 2116).

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

1. Hide real, candy, or plastic Easter eggs in your meeting space for students to hunt, but explain this twist in the rules: When they see an egg, they must go and tell another student where to find the egg.

2. After the egg hunt is over, talk with students about our calling to go and tell other people about the story of Easter, as Paul did.

Older Youth

• Provide Bible dictionaries, commentaries, encyclopedias, and Bible websites (if possible). Form two teams of students and allow five minutes for each to find as many facts as possible about first-century Corinth using the resources. Award teams one point for each unique fact discovered. Discuss the challenges and opportunities Corinth provided Paul in telling the Christian story.

TAKE-AWAY

The Christian community shares its goods as a way to love other people in need.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Though traditionally attributed** to John the apostle, son of Zebedee, only 1 John is believed to have been written by him. The writer of 2 and 3 John identifies himself as “the elder” and appears to have exercised pastoral authority in several late-first-century Christian congregations.
- **The letters share** significant vocabulary and concepts with the Gospel of John, including an emphasis on Jesus’ close relationship to God the Father and to those who believe in God; the presence of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers; and the commandment to love one another.
- **Today’s Bible Lesson** echoes Jesus’ final teachings to his disciples in John’s Gospel: the commandment to love one another (see John 13:34); the warning about the world’s hatred (see John 15:18-19); and the definition of *love* as laying down one’s life for another (see John 15:13).
- **The community who** first read 1 John appears to have suffered a division, apparently theological controversy regarding Jesus’ identity and true humanity (see, for instance, 2:18-23; 4:1-3).
- **First John’s insistence** that those who believe in Jesus must show their love in action agrees with James’ teaching that faith without works is dead (see James 2:17).

S:2 The Easter People Reach Out and Share

Major Message!

Imagine you’re sending a message in a bottle. Use the card below to write and draw whatever message you would want the person who finds your bottle to receive.

The Word Was...

1 John 3:11-24 (NRSV)

¹¹ For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹² We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and

murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous. ¹³ Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life because we

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 25 for a list of supplies for this session.

Major Message!

(10 minutes)

1. Greet students by name as they arrive and gather in a circle. Invite youth who wish to discuss the high and/or low points in their week.
2. Allow time for students to respond to the prompt in the student book. (Alternate idea: Ask students to write

love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. ¹⁶ We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

¹⁷ How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸ Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹ And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²² and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³ And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

1 John 3:11-24 **(Common English Bible)**

¹¹ This is the message that you heard from the beginning: love each other.

¹² Don't behave like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he kill him? He killed him because his own works were evil, but the works of his brother were righteous.

¹³ Don't be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have transferred from death to life, because we love the brothers and sisters. The person who does not love remains in

death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

¹⁶ This is how we know love: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

¹⁷ But if a person has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need and that person doesn't care—how can the love of God remain in him?

¹⁸ Little children, let's not love with words or speech but with action and truth. ¹⁹ This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts in God's presence. ²⁰ Even if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have confidence in relationship to God. ²² We receive whatever we ask from him because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love each other as he commanded us. ²⁴ The person who keeps his commandments remains in God and God remains in him; and this is how we know that he remains in us, because of the Spirit that he has given to us.

Key Verse

**"For this is the message
you have heard from the
beginning, that we should love
one another."**

— 1 John 3:11 (NRSV)

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their messages on actual slips of paper, then fold the papers and place in a basket or bowl. Draw and read aloud one message at a time, after checking to make sure it contains no inappropriate content, before allowing students to guess who wrote the message.)

3. Ask: "What's the best message you received last week? last year? ever?"

(If necessary, initiate discussion by answering these questions yourself.)

4. Say: "He didn't send them in bottles, but the apostle John wrote 'major messages' to his early Christian community. We'll be studying his messages throughout the month to learn how they still help us today to live as God's Easter People."

5. Lead the "Easter Greeting" (on page 28 in the student book), with students saying the boldfaced words. Then pray: "*Living Lord Jesus, teach us today what we need to know to grow as your agents of love in the world.*" All respond, "Amen."

Unmixing the Message **(10 minutes)**

1. Instruct students to work in pairs to solve the puzzle on page 32 in the student book. Each clue can be answered with a word from the Bible Lesson, using the NRSV translation. When students have deciphered each clue, they should rearrange the circled letters to discover the mixed message.

2. After sufficient time, review answers with students. (Answers: 1. children; 2. murder; 3. hearts; 4. brother; 5. everything; 6. evil; 7. commandments; 8. abide; 9. beginning; 10. son; 11. hates; 12. death; 13. help; 14. righteous. Message: Love one another.)

3. Review the Bible Lesson by enlisting youth to read it aloud from the CEB translation.

4. Ask:

- What part of today's Bible Lesson catches your attention?
- What part leaves you with more questions?

As time allows, discuss students' responses during the session.

Looking Closer at Love **(10 minutes)**

1. Ask, "According to John, how do we learn what love is?" (We should focus on Jesus, who gave up his life in love for us, see 3:16.)

2. Recruit four youth to read aloud Genesis 4:1-11 (reading the

THE WORD IS...

parts of narrator, Eve, God, and Cain). Ask:

- How does John use this story to make his point in today's Bible lesson? (*John points to Cain as a negative example; instead of loving his brother, Cain hated him.*)
- How would John answer the question Cain asked God? (See *Genesis 4:9; John would say we have a responsibility to "keep" or care for other people, our "brothers and sisters," see 3:17.*)

3. Ask, "According to John, what effects do acts of love that help others have on us?" (*They reassure us when we feel guilt or doubt, see 3:19-20; help us pray with boldness, see 3:21; give evidence of the Holy Spirit in us, see 3:24.*)

What Do You Have to Give?

(15 minutes)

1. Ask, "What do you think John means by saying we should 'lay down our lives for one another' (3:16, NRSV)?" Affirm thoughtful responses.

2. Say: "We may not ever have to die to save someone else, but we all have something we can give to help others, especially our brothers and sisters in need (see 3:17). Giving what we have is one way to love, not just in word but in action (see 3:18)."

3. Form small groups of two or three students each or pairs. Instruct each small group or pair to develop a brief pantomime that portrays a situation of need.

4. Call on each small group or pair to present its pantomime to the whole group. After each presentation, allow the remaining students to guess what situation of need was depicted in

The Word Is...

Unmixing the Message

Fill in the blanks below with words from the NRSV translation. Then use the circled letters to form the unmixed message.

One name that John calls his readers _____

Cain's crime _____

God is greater than our _____. _____

Who Cain killed _____

What God knows _____

Cain was from the _____ One.

John's readers obey these: _____

Those who obey God _____ in God.

John's readers have heard his message from when?

Jesus' relationship to God _____

How does the world relate to John's readers? _____

Those who don't love abide in this: _____

What someone with the world's goods should do: _____

Cain's deeds were evil but his brothers' were:

UNMIXED MESSAGE: _____

the pantomime. Ask, "What are some specific ways in which you could help meet the needs of the people in this situation?"

5. Lead students in brainstorming ways your congregation works to meet other people's needs. (Consider

inviting an adult who participates in one of these efforts to visit your class and talk about what he or she does.)

6. Read aloud again 3:17. Invite students to use the space in the student book to list of some of "the world's goods" that they own. Instruct them to

The Word Will Be...

What Do You Have to Give?

Think about your possessions. How could you use these goods to help meet others' needs. Write or sketch below some ideas for doing so.

Closing Reflection

Loving God, whose Spirit raised your Son from death and is still at work today: May we your people boldly share our goods and ourselves with our brothers and sisters, so that we may experience on earth the new life you promise through Jesus Christ, who gave his life for the world. Amen.

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write about or sketch a specific way they do or could use some of these goods to help meet others' needs. Invite volunteers to talk about their ideas (and be prepared to do so yourself).

7. Read aloud again 3:22. Ask, "Since God commands us to give in

love to others, what should we ask God to give us?"

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Gather students in a circle at the center of your meeting space. Spread

THE WORD WILL BE...

the white cloth (from last session) in the middle of the circle and place an open Bible on the cloth.

2. Say: "Easter People, God brings us together around the Word and sends us out to live the Word. Go forth and love others in Jesus' name, knowing that in him you have passed from death to life."

3. Lead youth in saying the prayer in the student book. Then sing an Easter song (such as "Christ the Lord Is Risen," *The Faith We Sing*, 2116).

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- Ask students to identify feature scenes and actions in popular films that, based on today's Bible Lesson, the apostle John would recognize as being truly loving. For example: In the Disney film *Frozen* (2013), Princess Anna gives no thought for her own safety as she sacrifices herself to save her sister, Elsa. Ask students to design movie posters that communicate John's message about loving one another. If possible, post these posters for others to see.

Older Youth

- 1.** Brainstorm a list of popular songs with lyrics about love. Ask:
 - What are the messages about love in these songs?
 - What do you think about these messages?
 - Based on today's Bible Lesson, what would the apostle John say about these messages?

2. Ask students to rewrite one or more of the songs identified, making it a song that reflects John's message about love. If possible, record the new songs to play for others in the congregation.

TAKE-AWAY

God calls Christians into a community marked by a mutual love.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Today's Bible Lesson** reinforces the scholars' idea that this faith community had experienced division. John stresses both correct belief about Jesus (see 4:14-15; 5:1) and the importance of mutual love among believers (see 4:20-21; 5:2).

- **John's reference** to "the day of judgment" (4:17, NRSV) reflects the early Christians' belief that they were living in the last days.

- **God's invisibility** (see 4:20) is a common theme in Hebrew Scripture (see Exodus 33:21-23; Judges 13:21-22) and also echoes the Gospel of John's insistence on the uniqueness of Jesus as God's Son who makes the Father known (see John 1:18).

- **John insists** that God's commandments "are not burdensome" (5:3, NRSV), perhaps indicating that those who have divided the community are opposed to the law (antinomian).

- **The truth that** a believer "conquers the world" (5:5, NRSV) by faith in Jesus recalls Jesus' promise to his disciples in the Gospel of John: "I have conquered the world!" (John 16:33).

- **Although, in this** Bible Lesson, John focuses on relationships within the church, he never loses sight that Christians remain "in this world" (4:17). Experiencing Christian love inside the church strengthens us for life outside it.

S:3 The Easter People Love One Another

Did You See?

How often do you see—truly see—the people around you? Let's find out.



The Word Was...

1 John 4:13–5:5 (NRSV)

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as

the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶ So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 25 for a list of supplies for this session.

Did You See?

(10 minutes)

1. Greet students by name as they arrive and gather in a circle. Invite youth who wish to discuss the high and/or low points in their week.

2. Choose a volunteer to leave the meeting space for a few minutes. While the volunteer is absent, instruct

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

^{5:1} Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴ for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. ⁵ Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 4:13–5:5
(Common English Bible)

¹³ This is how we know we remain in him and he remains in us, because he has given us a measure of his Spirit. ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the savior of the world. ¹⁵ If any of us confess that Jesus is God's Son, God remains in us and we remain in God. ¹⁶ We have known and have believed the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them. ¹⁷ This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence on the Judgment Day, because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love because God first loved us.

²⁰ If anyone says, I love God, and hates a brother or sister, he is a liar, because the person who doesn't love a brother or sister who can be seen can't love God, who can't be seen. ²¹ This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

^{5:1} Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born from God. Whoever loves someone who is a parent loves the child born to the parent. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep God's commandments. ³ This is the love of God: we keep God's commandments. God's commandments are not difficult, ⁴ because everyone who is born from God defeats the world. And this is the victory that has defeated the world: our faith. ⁵ Who defeats the world? Isn't it the one who believes that Jesus is God's Son?

Key Verse

**"The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also."
— 1 John 4:21 (NRSV)**

the remaining students to draw on the appropriate blank figure in the student book what they remember about the way the absent volunteer is dressed. Encourage students to draw as many details as possible.

3. Call back the volunteer and determine which student produced the most accurate drawing. If time and interest allow, select another volunteer

(determined by the remaining image) and repeat the process.

4. Say: "In today's Bible Lesson, the apostle John tells us we need to see one another—not necessarily with our eyes, but definitely with our hearts."

5. Lead the "Easter Greeting" on page 28 in the student book, with students reading the boldfaced words.

Then pray: "Jesus our Savior, by the Spirit you give, may we see you in one another as we speak, listen, and learn today about living as your loving people." All respond, "Amen."

Close Reading!

(10 minutes)

1. Instruct students to sit in a close circle. Ask students to "count off" as "ones" and "twos" to create two groups of students. As a result every student should be sitting between members of the other group.

2. Lead students in reading aloud today's Bible Lesson antiphonally, with "ones" reading the odd-numbered verses and "twos" the even-numbered. ("Ones" will read both 4:21 and 5:1.)

3. Ask:

- What words or phrases caught your attention during the Scripture reading?
- What questions do you have about this Bible Lesson? (Keep responses in mind during the session.)

4. Say: "We read this Bible Lesson in a way that reminds us God created the church to be a community in which we live close to one another and close to Jesus."

Wonderful Words

(10 minutes)

1. Form three small groups or pairs. Each group will reread the Bible Lesson and answer the questions at the bottom of page 36 in the student book regarding the words *abide*, *love*, or *believe*, making notes in the appropriate circle. (If teaching a larger class, form more groups and duplicate assigned words.)

THE WORD IS...

2. Call on each group or pair to report responses to the whole group.

3. After all presentations, ask:

- What specific beliefs about Jesus does John stress? (*Jesus is Savior, Son of God, the Christ/Messiah.*)
- How does John say these beliefs affect those who hold them? (*They love their fellow believers; are unafraid to face God's judgment; obey God's commandments.*)
- Read 1 John 2:15-17. How is the community of believers John describes different from "the world"? (*It is focused on God rather than on self or values that don't last.*)
- How is faith a "victory" over the world? (*Believers can experience a life marked by a lasting, loving relationship with God and others.*) Acknowledge other thoughtful responses.

See How They Love!

(15 minutes)

Supplies Needed: index cards, a small box or basket, pens or markers

1. Explain that Tertullian (*tur-TULL-ee-un*) was a late-second and early-third-century Christian writer from what is known today as Tunisia in North Africa. He wrote an Apology, or defense, in response to Christianity's critics. In the excerpt printed in the student book, Tertullian talks about why some people are opposed to the church. Recruit a volunteer to read aloud the excerpt, then ask:

- How is Tertullian's description of the church like the apostle John's? (*There is emphasis on Christians sharing common faith and mutual love.*)
- When, if ever, have you heard non-Christians say similar things about Christians in general? about this congregation in particular?

The Word Is...

Wonderful Words

Abide

Love

Believe



❖ **WHAT DOES EACH OF THESE WORDS MEAN FOR JOHN?**

❖ **HOW DOES EACH OF THESE WORDS RELATE TO THE OTHERS?**

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Bible Lessons for Youth

2. Lead students on a walking tour of your church building or space. Encourage students to point out places or people they see who show evidence of ways in which members of your congregation love one another. (For example: A kitchen might remind students of how members prepare

and serve meals for one another; a nursery volunteer cares for the congregation's youngest members.) Consider taking photographs while on the tour and create a montage to display in a common area or on your congregation's website.

The Word Will Be...

See How They Love!

We are a body knit together ... by a common religious profession, by unity of discipline, and by the bond of a common hope It is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. *See, they say, how they love one another.*

—Tertullian (circa A.D. 160-225), Apology, Chapter 39

What is one practical way you will show love this week to one of your brothers or sisters in Christ?

1 _____

Closing Reflection

God of love, who lives with and in those who are loving: Help us, by your Holy Spirit, to confess Jesus as Savior and to live with one another as a community of compassion and care, so that the world may see your power and peace through us. Amen.

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3. Hand out index cards (or small slips of paper) and ask each student to write his or her name on a card. Place all the cards in a box or some other container. Allow students to draw out a card; if they draw their own name, they should select a different card.

4. Encourage students to perform, in the coming week, at least one loving act for the person whose name they drew. Point out the space in the student book for students to write about their plans.

THE WORD WILL BE ...

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Gather students in a circle at the center of your meeting space. Spread the white cloth (used last week) in the middle of the circle and place an open Bible on the cloth.
2. Say: "Easter People, God brings us together around the Word and sends us out to live the Word. Go and love all God's children, here and in the world, for those who love the parent also love the children."
3. Lead youth in saying the prayer in the student book. Then sing an Easter song, such as "Christ the Lord Is Risen," *The Faith We Sing*, 2116).

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- Play a game that illustrates "seeing" our brothers and sisters. Ask pairs of students to stand facing each other. One student performs actions using the head, face, arms, and hands that the other student must "mirror" as accurately as possible. After a few minutes, instruct students to switch roles. After both have performed the actions, ask: "How is seeing your partner in this game like and unlike how John tells us to 'see' our brothers and sisters in Jesus?"

Older Youth

- Invite students to recall people within the Christian community who have loved them. Encourage them to write a letter, as John the elder did, to one or more of these people, thanking them for their love and how that love influences their faith in Jesus. (You may want to write such a letter yourself as a model.) Allow youth who wish to read aloud their letters.

TAKE-AWAY

Christians have a responsibility to question teachings that contradict Scripture's witness to Jesus.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **The “elect lady”** (verse 1, NRSV) who received this letter may have been an actual woman who hosted believers (the “children”) in her home for worship and fellowship; or she may have been a literary personification of a congregation (the Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, is grammatically female).
- **The elder mentions** truth five times in the first four verses, and twice in conjunction with love—a clear indication of the letter’s primary themes.
- **The letter’s description** of the command to love as having been given “from the beginning” (verse 5) echoes 1 John 3:11 (see Unit 2, Session 2) and highlights its central place in Christian life.
- **Though often and** incorrectly associated with Revelation, the word *antichrist* only appears in 1 and 2 John (see 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:2-3; 2 John 7).
- **The elder is** engaged in an internal debate among Christians; he is not speaking about what other religions do or do not teach about Jesus.
- **The elder’s prohibition** against even greeting false teachers (see verse 10) may reflect the fact that this community was still forming its Christian identity.

S:4 The Easter People Teach Truth

Are You Telling the Truth?

Write two statements about yourself that are true and one statement that isn’t—but that you think you could fool someone else into believing!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Word Was...

2 John (NRSV)

¹ The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not only I but also all who know the truth, ² because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

³ Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, in truth and love.

⁴ I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father. ⁵ But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another. ⁶ And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 25 for a list of supplies for this session.

Are You Telling the Truth?

(10 minutes)

1. Greet students by name as they arrive and gather in a circle. Invite youth who wish to talk about the high and/or low points in their week.

commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning—you must walk in it.

⁷ Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist!

⁸ Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward. ⁹ Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ Do not receive into the house or welcome anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; ¹¹ for to welcome is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person.

¹² Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

¹³ The children of your elect sister send you their greetings.

2 John (Common English Bible)

¹ From the elder.

To the chosen gentlewoman and her children, whom I truly love (and I am not the only one, but also all who know the truth), ² because of the truth that remains with us and will be with us forever.

³ Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, will be ours who live in truth and love.

⁴ I was overjoyed to find some of your children living in the truth, just as we had been commanded by the Father. ⁵ Now, dear friends, I am requesting that we love each other. It's not as though I'm writing a new command to you, but it's one we have had from the beginning. ⁶ This is love:

that we live according to his commands. This is the command that you heard from the beginning: live in love.

⁷ Many deceivers have gone into the world who do not confess that Jesus Christ came as a human being. This kind of person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

⁸ Watch yourselves so that you don't lose what we've worked for but instead receive a full reward. ⁹ Anyone who goes too far and does not continue in the teaching about Christ does not have God. Whoever continues in this teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ Whoever comes to you who does not affirm this teaching should neither be received nor welcomed into your home, ¹¹ because welcoming people like that is the same thing as sharing in their evil actions.

¹² I have a lot to tell you. I don't want to use paper and ink, but I hope to visit you and talk with you face-to-face, so that our joy can be complete.

¹³ Your chosen sister's children greet you.

Key Verse

**"Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward."
— 2 John 8 (NRSV)**

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2. Allow time for students to think about and respond to the instructions in the student book.

3. Invite volunteers to read aloud their three statements. Allow students to determine which of each volunteer's statements are true and which are false. Repeat as time and interest allow.

4. Ask:

- How did you tell which statements were true and which were false? (*Relied on personal knowledge of speaker; recognized factual inconsistencies; realized what sounded unreasonable.*)
- How else do you tell what's true from what's false in your life? (*Rely on trustworthy sources; trust evidence of senses.*)

5. Say: "Trying to trick one another in a game is one thing. But, in today's Bible Lesson, the apostle John makes it clear that, when it comes to knowing Jesus, we must insist on the truth!"

6. Lead the "Easter Greeting" on page 28 in the student book, with students reading the boldfaced words. Then pray: "Jesus, Giver of all truth, help us learn today how to recognize and respond to true teaching about you." All respond, "Amen."

Pastoral Postcards

(10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: postcards or postcard-sized pieces of paper

1. Say: "Our Bible Lessons for this week and next week are two of the shortest books in the Bible, but they both have big messages."

2. Recruit a strong reader to read aloud 2 John. Instruct other students to follow along in the student book and to circle the word(s) they consider most important.

3. After the Scripture reading, invite volunteers to talk about which word(s) they circled and why.

4. Say: "One Bible scholar calls 2 and 3 John 'more postcards than letters.'" Distribute postcards (or postcard-sized pieces of paper). Ask students to write a brief message (three or four sentences), using their own words, expressing the main idea(s) of 2 John. Call on volunteers to read aloud their postcards.

In the Flesh

(15 minutes)

1. Say: "John warns against teachers who don't believe Jesus 'has come in the flesh' (verse 7, NRSV). These people may have

THE WORD IS...

taught some form of docetism (*DOH-suh-tis-em*), the belief that Jesus was actually a superior spiritual being who only appeared to be human."

2. Form four groups or pairs of students. Ask each to discuss one of the Scriptures listed in the student book, using the question provided and taking notes to report to the large group. In discussion, help students address the following points, as needed:

- John 1:1, 14, 18: Jesus reveals God and gives grace to us because he is God's Son in human flesh.
- Colossians 1:19-20: God makes peace with us through Jesus' human death.
- Hebrews 2:14-18: Jesus shared human flesh and blood to save us, through his death, from death and the devil.
- Hebrews 4:14-16: Because Jesus shared human weakness, he can help us when we are weak.

Antichrist Alert!

(10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: markerboard or large sheet of paper, markers

1. Ask:

- Why does false teaching about Jesus worry John? (*It violates God's command, verse 4; can lead believers away from the "full reward" of faith, verse 8; can break believers' close relationship with the Father and the Son, verse 9.*)
- How does God's command to walk in truth (verse 4) include both what we believe and what we do? (*God commands us to believe true teaching and to practice true love, verse 6.*)
- Why does John urge his readers to refuse welcome to false teachers? (*False teaching can threaten the unity of the Christian community.*)

The Word Is...

In the Flesh

What does each of these Scriptures teach us about Jesus' humanity and why it matters?

- John 1:1, 14, 16-18
- Colossians 1:19-20
- Hebrews 2:14-18
- Hebrews 4:14-16

Antichrist Alert!

People often think "the antichrist" is some mysterious future figure.

But the word, which literally means

"opposed to Christ," only occurs in John's letters to describe the false teachers he warned his original readers to avoid. John said antichrists deny Jesus' identity as God's Son. If "antichrist" is not a specific individual but a description of attitudes and actions opposed to Jesus, how do you see "antichrist" in the world today? What about in yourself?



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Bible Lessons for Youth

2. Write the word *antichrist* on a markerboard or large sheet of paper. Encourage youth to call out their initial responses to the word as you record them on the markerboard. Then read the information on page 40 in the student book. Talk about the questions in the text.

Your Turn to Testify

(5 minutes)

1. Ask youth to read the devotional on page 46. Ask:

- How should Christians treat those whose teachings about Jesus are different from our beliefs?

The Word Will Be...

Your Turn to Testify

Create a roleplay based on your assigned scenario from the situations below.

- You are attending a Bible study at a friend's church. The group is studying Jesus' miracles. Another participant says to you: "I love Jesus so much. I mean, he was so amazing! He was more than human. Don't you think that's why he's so great?"
- A new movie, *Secrets Jesus Whispered*, is a box-office blockbuster. The film's creators claim the movie is based on "explosive documents the church tried to hide," including a supposed ancient letter describing how Jesus survived death on the cross. Some non-Christian friends invite you to see the movie with them.
- A new student at school notices that you are reading a New Testament at lunch and says, "I think it's cool you're reading that. I like to read history, too, and Jesus is one of history's great teachers of morals and ethics, just like Confucius and Buddha."

NOTES:

Closing Reflection

Holy God, you sent Jesus Christ in the flesh to be the way, the truth, and the life. By your Spirit, may we truly show him to the world, not only in what we say but also in what we do. Amen.

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- How can we tell the difference between false teachers and people who simply disagree with us?
- John warned against false teachers who claimed to be Christian. How much, if at all, do his warnings apply to people of other faiths? Explain.

2. Say, "We all have opportunities to offer true testimony about Jesus and our faith." Form three groups or pairs of students and assign each one of the scenarios in the student book. Instruct each group to prepare a brief roleplay that portrays a response. Point out space for notes in the student book.

THE WORD WILL BE...

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Gather students in a circle. Spread the white cloth (used in each session) in the middle and place an open Bible on the cloth.
2. Say: "Easter People, God brings us together around the Word and sends us out to live the Word. Go and offer your testimony, loving and true, to the Son of God who has come in the flesh to save us and the world God loves."
3. Lead youth in saying the prayer in the student book. Then sing an Easter song (such as "Christ the Lord Is Risen," *The Faith We Sing*, 2116).

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- Explain that creeds are one way the church remembers true teaching about God. Read together the Apostles' Creed or a brief, modern creed (such as those in *The United Methodist Hymnal*, pages 883–886). Ask students to choose a phrase from the creed that especially interests them and to illustrate it. Invite volunteers to present and explain their illustrations.

Older Youth

- Explore how heresies often go beyond true teaching about Christ by over-emphasizing one aspect of Christian faith at the expense of others. Provide a good theological dictionary and/or links to reputable theological websites (check with your pastoral staff) and ask students to prepare a brief summary of a heresy from church history that answers: *What truth about God/Jesus was this heresy trying to protect? Why did this heresy need to be corrected?*

TAKE-AWAY

Christians extend a loving welcome to newcomers, including strangers and all who do what is good.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Third John is** the shortest book in the New Testament. In the original Greek, it is only 219 words long.

- **Unlike 2 John**, which may have been addressed to a symbolic recipient ("the elect lady"), 3 John appears to have been addressed to a specific individual. Gaius, however, was a common name in the ancient Roman world, and we do not know anything else about him. He may have been the leader, or at least a leading member, of the local congregation to whom the elder writes.

- **Third John is** a letter of recommendation on behalf of itinerant Christian missionaries/preachers (verses 5–8). According to C. Clifton Black, "doing well" for them (verse 6) "connotes . . . assistance in bearing their travel expenses" (*The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. XII, Nashville: Abingdon, 1998, p. 462). Demetrius (verse 12) may be one of these missionaries; he may also be the one who brought this letter to Gaius.

- **We know Diotrephes** only through the elder's condemnation of him. Perhaps he believed he was rightly following the elder's instructions in 2 John 10-11!

S:5 The Easter People Welcome Others

Ridiculous Recommendation!

I _____ (1. *adverb*) recommend my star pupil, _____ (2. *celebrity first name*) _____ (3. *famous fictional last name*), for admission to your institution of _____ (4. *adjective ending in "-er"*) learning.

This student excels in the classroom, earning straight _____s (5. *letter*) on assignments. Her/his extracurricular activities include playing _____ (6. *noun*) in the band and experience in the _____ (7. *verb ending in "-ing"*) squad. S/he also volunteers _____ (8. *numeral*) hours every week at a church _____ (9. *noun*) food pantry.

S/he is the most _____ (10. *adjective*) student I've known and will make a _____ (11. *adjective*) addition to the class of _____ (12. *four numerals*).

The Word Was . . .

3 John (NRSV)

¹ The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

² Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

³ I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely how you walk in the

truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

⁵ Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends, even though they are strangers to you; ⁶ they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on in a manner worthy of God; ⁷ for they began their journey for

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 25 for a list of supplies for this session.

Ridiculous Recommendation! (10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: markerboard or large sheet of paper, markers

1. Greet students by name as they arrive and gather in a circle. Invite youth who wish to discuss the high and/or low points in their week.

the sake of Christ, accepting no support from non-believers.⁸ Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth.

⁹ I have written something to the church; but Diotrophes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.¹⁰ So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with those charges, he refuses to welcome the friends, and even prevents those who want to do so and expels them from the church.

¹¹ Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.¹² Everyone has testified favorably about Demetrius, and so has the truth itself. We also testify for him, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³ I have much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink;¹⁴ instead I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face.

¹⁵ Peace to you. The friends send you their greetings. Greet the friends there, each by name.

3 John (Common English Bible)

¹ From the elder.

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I truly love.

² Dear friend, I'm praying that all is well with you and that you enjoy good health in the same way that you prosper spiritually.

³ I was overjoyed when the brothers and sisters arrived and spoke highly of your faithfulness to the truth, shown by how you live according to the truth.

⁴ I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are living according to the truth.⁵ Dear friend, you act faithfully

in whatever you do for our brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers.

⁶ They spoke highly of your love in front of the church. You all would do well to provide for their journey in a way that honors God,⁷ because they left on their journey for the sake of Jesus Christ without accepting any support from the Gentiles.⁸ Therefore, we ought to help people like this so that we can be coworkers with the truth.

⁹ I wrote something to the church, but Diotrophes, who likes to put himself first, doesn't welcome us.¹⁰ Because of this, if I come, I will bring up what he has done—making unjustified and wicked accusations against us. And as if that were not enough, he not only refuses to welcome the brothers and sisters but stops those who want to do so and even throws them out of the church!¹¹ Dear friend, don't imitate what is bad but what is good. Whoever practices what is good belongs to God. Whoever practices what is bad has not seen God.

¹² Everyone speaks highly of Demetrius, even the truth itself. We also speak highly of him, and you know that what we say is true.

¹³ I have a lot to say to you, but I don't want to use pen and ink.¹⁴ I hope to see you soon, and we will speak face-to-face.

¹⁵ Peace be with you. Your friends here greet you. Greet our friends there by name.

Key Verse

**"I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely how you walk in the truth."
—3 John 3 (NRSV)**

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2. Before students open the student book, ask: "When, if ever, have you needed a letter of recommendation?" (You may want to talk about your personal experience, especially if you have mostly younger youth.)

3. Again, leaving the student book closed, lead youth in preparing a letter of recommendation using Mad Lib-style. Read aloud from the activity

in the student book and solicit the response indicated for each blank in the "letter." Write students' responses as a numbered list on a markerboard or large sheet of paper.

4. Now ask students to open the student book and recruit a volunteer to read aloud the "letter," inserting the words from the list into the appropriate blanks.

5. Say: "Today's Bible Lesson is a letter of recommendation—but much less ridiculous than this one! John recommends not only a specific individual but also the practice of Christian hospitality."

6. Lead the "Easter Greeting" on page 28 in the student book, with students reading the boldfaced words. Pray: "*Jesus, may we welcome your presence in our learning with, our listening to, and our loving one another this day.*" All respond, "Amen."

Who's Who?

(10 minutes)

1. Say: "Third John is the shortest book in the New Testament, but it's still a challenging read. Because it's so brief, we don't learn many specifics about the situation it addresses. We have to 'read between the lines' and make some educated guesses about who's who and what's going on."

2. Recruit a strong reader to read aloud 3 John. Then form four groups or pairs of students. Assign each group one of the individuals listed on page 44 in the student book, along with responsibility for taking notes about the assigned person, as the Scripture is read. Call on the reader to begin.

3. After the Bible Lesson is read, call on each group or pair to report to the class. Then ask:

- What does the letter say about this person?
- What else might we reasonably assume about this person?

Clarifying the Content

(10 minutes)

1. Say, "Now let's focus on what we do know about the situation in 3 John."

THE WORD IS...

2. Ask:

- What is the elder asking Gaius to do? (*He asks him to welcome and support missionaries who come to him from outside his own Christian community, see verses 5–8*)
- What evidence do we have that Demetrius might have been one of these missionaries? (*The elder has written this letter to recommend him to Gaius, see verse 12.*)
- According to the elder, how was Diotrephes treating these missionaries? (*He was refusing to welcome them and shunning those who wanted to welcome them, verse 10*)
- As in 2 John, in 3 John we only have the elder's side of an argument. For all we know, Diotrephes believed he was following the instructions in 2 John 10-11! How does knowing early Christians sometimes disagreed shape your attitude toward disagreements among Christians today?

Put Out the Welcome Mat!

(15 minutes)

1. Say, "The elder's instruction to practice hospitality is clear." Form three groups or pairs of students. Instruct one group or pair to use the "welcome mat" in the student book to write about or sketch ways to make newcomers feel welcome at home; another group, at school; in the third group or pair, welcome in your congregation. Invite volunteers from each group or pair to present responses.

2. Say: "Christians aren't the only people who practice hospitality, of course. What makes Christian hospitality different?" Wait for responses. Suggest, if needed, that Christian hospitality should be a

The Word Is...

Who's Who?

? The elder: _____

? Gaius: _____

? Diotrephes: _____

? Demetrius: _____

Put Out the Welcome Mat!

What are some specific things you do (or could do, or should do) to make newcomers feel welcome in your home? at your school? in your church?

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concrete expression of love for others; see 3 John 6.

3. Keep students in the existing groups or pairs and ask each to read one of the Scriptures cited in the student book. Challenge groups to plan and perform a "TV commercial"

encouraging Christians to practice hospitality, highlighting the reasons given in each Scripture.

4. Lead a discussion comparing and contrasting the three perspectives on hospitality. As needed, suggest the following key points:

The Word Will Be...

Third John isn't the only New Testament Scripture that tells Christians to practice hospitality. Whom do each of the following Scriptures say Christians should welcome, and why?

ROMANS 15:7	HEBREWS 13:1-2	MATTHEW 25:35

So WELCOME each other, in the same way that Christ also WELCOMED you, for God's glory. —Romans 15:7 (CEB)

Closing Reflection

Jesus, you came to our world as a stranger, and made those who welcomed you children of God.

By your Spirit, may we welcome you still by welcoming others, so that they may experience your love through us. Amen.

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- Romans 15:7: Our welcome of others reflects the truth that we have been welcomed into fellowship with God through Jesus.
- Hebrews 13:1-2: Hospitality is an expression of love.
- Matthew 25:35: The way we treat strangers is indicative of the way we treat Jesus.

5. Ask:

- Third John 3:11 says everyone who does good is from God. Should Christians welcome only people who do good? (see also 2 John 10-11).
- Who would you have difficulty welcoming to our class? Why?

THE WORD WILL BE ...

- What is one specific thing we don't already do that we can start doing as a class to grow in our practice of hospitality?

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Gather students in a circle at the center of your meeting space. Spread the white cloth (used before) in the middle of the circle and place an open Bible on the cloth.

2. Say: "Easter People, God brings us together around the Word and sends us out to live the Word. Go from this place to imitate whatever is good and to welcome others as God has, in Christ, welcomed us." Lead youth in saying the prayer in the student book and singing an Easter song (such as "Christ the Lord Is Risen," *The Faith We Sing*, 2116).

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- One simple practice that encourages hospitality is the use of name tags. Buy reusable name badges and lanyards. Encourage students to design name tags that reflect their personalities. Keep extras so visitors and new class members can make name tags, too.

Older Youth

- Lead a walking tour of your church building and encourage youth to think like visitors. Consider the presence or absence of greeters, lighting, clear signs of direction, and so on. After the tour, brainstorm a list of suggestions for improvement. Arrange for students to present and discuss the list with appropriate staff leadership.

U=3 Woven Together in Love

Overview

This unit explores the final chapters of Paul's letter to the church in Corinth. Paul focuses on spiritual gifts, specifically, *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues. He is responding to some of the Corinthians who are claiming special status because they possess these spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12–14, Paul affirms the gifts of the Spirit but emphasizes love as the greatest of all gifts.

Another prominent theme is the idea of diversity. Just as the human body has different parts that perform different tasks in order that the whole may function completely, the church's health is also dependent upon a diversified body of believers. When the body brings together its many gifts and works together in love, the message of Christ can move forward in the world.

05/10/15

S1//: Gifts of the Spirit

Key Verse: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed." –1 Corinthians 12:1 (NRSV)

Take-Away: Spiritual gifts are meant to be used to glorify God.

Bible Background:

Session 1 begins with Chapter 12 of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth. Apparently, some of the Corinthians believed they deserved special status because they possessed the gift of speaking in tongues. Paul reminds them of where they've been as worshipers of false idols to where they've come to be as worshipers of the living God. He goes on to explain that, even though there are a variety of gifts, they come from the same Spirit. Spiritual gifts are diverse, meant to be used together for the edification of the church, and they do not determine a person's status.

S2//: The Spirit Creates One Body

05/17/15

Key Verse: "As it is, there are many members, yet one body." –1 Corinthians 12:20 (NRSV)

Take-Away: There is value in the diversity of spiritual gifts as they work together to build up the body of Christ.

Bible Background:

Some scholars have noted that the Corinthians' failure to acknowledge the church's diversity was their most fundamental problem. In the first part of Chapter 12, Paul establishes the church's unity. In the latter half, Paul explains their diversity. Using the human body as an illustration, Paul shows that diversity is essential to the body and that all members must work together in an interdependent relationship. Paul is quick to address their idea of being spiritually superior to the "weak" members of the church. He notes that on the body, parts thought to be weaker are actually the most necessary. Session 2 is a good time to remind youth this is true also within the body of Christ.

First Corinthians 13 is one of the most quoted Scripture passages. Featuring characteristics about love, these verses often are read at weddings and funerals and other special events. Interestingly, President Barack Obama quoted verse 11 ("When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, reason like a child, think like a child. But now that I have become a man, I've put an end to childish things." [CEB]) in his 2009 inaugural address. Also, British Prime Minister Tony Blair read the chapter at Princess Diana's funeral in 1997.

05/24/15

S3//: Gift of Languages

Key Verse: "Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret." – 1 Corinthians 14:13 (NRSV)

Take-Away: The Holy Spirit works through spiritual gifts to help us communicate and live in community.

Bible Background:

The spiritual gift of speaking in tongues played an important role in the launch of the Christian church, as recorded in Acts 2. On the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover, during the celebration of the wheat harvest, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples of Jesus Christ. God gave the disciples the ability to speak the specific languages of those whom they were addressing.

Speaking in tongues, as Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 14, is probably different from the Acts 2 experience. His main concern was that an interpreter be present when the gift of tongues was exercised in public worship. **Session 3** emphasizes that all prayers and singing were meant for the edification of both the believers and unbelievers.

05/31/15

S4//: The Greatest Gift Is Love

Key Verse: "Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." – 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NRSV)

Take-Away: The greatest spiritual gift is love.

Bible Background:

Paul spent the previous chapter discussing spiritual gifts. Now, in Chapter 13, he points out that the gifts are useless if they are exercised without love. Love, Paul emphasizes, is the foundation of all the gifts.

The love that Paul describes sounds a lot like Christ himself. It was "excellent" because it looked not within but beyond itself, exhibiting generosity and friendship (see Romans 5:7-8). This gift is permanent, unlike the others which are temporary. All the gifts hinge on the virtues of faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love. Love is made possible by faith in God and God enables hope (see Romans 4:16-25).

Session 4 answers the question: What is the necessary mark of a Christian life? It's sacrificial love for others, which is an expression of gratitude for God's love for us, and obedience to Christ's commands.

Supplies

All Sessions: Bibles, student books, pens or pencils

S1//:

___ large sheets of paper and markers

S2//:

___ Bible dictionaries
___ slice-and-bake cookie rolls, tubes of icing, and sprinkles

S3//:

___ large sheets of paper and markers
___ sticky notes
___ large pillar candle, small candles, matchers or lighter

S4//:

___ large sheets of paper and markers

Notes:

.....

Corinth was a thriving port city and known for its culture, commerce, immorality, and great wealth. It was home to a famous temple to Aphrodite (Greek goddess of love, beauty, and sexuality), where one thousand temple prostitutes were said to have worked.

TAKE-AWAY

Spiritual gifts are meant to be used to glorify God.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Because of the** misuse of spiritual gifts or the lack of appreciation for the spiritual person, Paul provided an in-depth explanation concerning spiritual gifts. Some Corinthians believed they had special status if they possessed the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. (In the original Greek this is called *glossolalia*.)

- **Paul had to** remind the church at Corinth of where they came from (being worshippers of idols) to where they were now (being worshippers of the living God).

- **Paul said that** believers must be able to discern if the "Spirit" is of God (see Romans 8:9 and 1 Corinthians 2:12).

- **God bestows spiritual** gifts on all believers for the edification of the church. There are "varieties" of gifts that demonstrate difference and diversity.

- **Even though Paul** does not specifically speak of the Trinity, he does allude to it (12:4-6).

- **Paul clarifies his** explanation by listing some examples of spiritual gifts. The Spirit "apportions" all the different kinds of gifts, and the gifts do not determine a person's status.

Note to Leader: For more information about the charismatic gifts (speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and miracles), consult these resources posted on MinistryMatters.com at <http://bit.ly/O9UZ6B>.

S:1 Gifts of the Spirit

The Greatest Gift

The best gift I've ever received is _____.

I waited this long for it: _____.

After I received it, I _____.

God's best gift to me is _____.

I waited this long for it: _____.

After I received it, I _____.

The Word Was...

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NRSV)

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak.

³ Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever

says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 47 for a list of supplies for this session.

The Greatest Gift (10 minutes)

1. Ask the following questions, pausing after each for brief discussion:

- What's the greatest gift you've ever received?
- What's the greatest gift you have given?
- What's the greatest gift God has given to you?"

the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.⁸ To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 **(Common English Bible)**

¹ Brothers and sisters, I don't want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts.² You know that when you were Gentiles you were often misled by false gods that can't even speak.³ So I want to make it clear to you that no one says, "Jesus is cursed!" when speaking by God's Spirit, and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.⁴ There are different spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;⁵ and there are different ministries and the same Lord;⁶ and there are different activities but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.⁷ A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good.⁸ A word of wisdom is given by the Spirit to one person, a word of knowledge to another according to the same Spirit,⁹ faith to still another by the same Spirit, gifts of healing to another in the one Spirit,¹⁰ performance of miracles to another, prophecy to another, the ability to tell spirits apart to another, different kinds of tongues to another, and the interpretation of the tongues to another.¹¹ All these things are produced by the one and same Spirit who gives what he wants to each person.

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List the Gifts

From today's Bible Lesson (using the CEB version) and 1 Corinthians 12:27-28, list each of the gifts of the Spirit, along with an example of this spiritual gift among Christians.

1. Gift: _____
Example: _____
2. Gift: _____
Example: _____
3. Gift: _____
Example: _____
4. Gift: _____
Example: _____
5. Gift: _____
Example: _____
6. Gift: _____
Example: _____
7. Gift: _____
Example: _____
8. Gift: _____
Example: _____
9. Gift: _____
Example: _____

Continued on page 50

Key Verse

**"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed."
— 1 Corinthians 12:1 (NRSV)**

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2. Ask students to complete the devotion on page 64 in the student book and answer the questions on page 48 in the student book.

3. As you begin the session, remind youth that God gives all of us gifts to use for God's glory.

List the Gifts

(10 minutes)

1. Ask a volunteer to read aloud today's Bible Lesson from both versions and also to read a portion of the Bible Lesson for next week: 1 Corinthians 12:27-28.

2. Next, ask youth to pair up and complete the list on page 49 in the

THE WORD WAS...

student book. Help any youth who need it in choosing examples of the spiritual gifts or better understanding the context of the Bible Lesson.

3. When most are finished with their lists, allow those who wish to call out the gifts they found, along with the examples.

4. Then say, "The main purpose of the Bible Lesson is to highlight the diversity and generosity of gifts given by the Spirit to Christians." Allow a few minutes for youth to answer questions at the top of page 50 in the student book, then talk about their answers.

Group the Gifts

(10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: two large sheets of paper and markers

Note to Leader: Commentaries and biblical teachers differ slightly on how to apply the information about spiritual gifts. At least one commentator has identified five categories into which the gifts may be grouped: *shepherding, serving, strengthening, salvation, and spiritual insight* (see <http://bit.ly/1C53b1F>). These categories are the basis for the following activity. *Before the session:* Draw a large, open outline of the letter "S" and divide the letter into five different segments. Label each segment with one of the categories listed above, leaving room for youth to write inside each section.

Also, write the following gifts on a large sheet of paper and post where all youth can see: *administration, hospitality, music, evangelism, prayer, teaching, craftsmanship, leadership, helping, encouragement, mercy, missions, pastoring, giving.*

1. Using the list created earlier in "List the Gifts," instruct youth to write each spiritual gift on the appropriate segment/category of

THE WORD IS...

the "S." *Hint:* At least one category may have multiple gifts and at least one category may have no gifts. (Answers: *shepherding—none; serving—none; strengthening—healing; salvation—faith, miracles, tongues; spiritual insight—word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discernment of spirits, interpretation of tongues*)

2. Ask:

- How do you understand these gifts to fit into these categories?
- Why do you think Paul didn't include shepherding or serving as gifts in this passage?

3. Now ask youth to write each gift from the list you prepared earlier on the correct segment/category.

4. When all the gifts have been added to the poster, talk about their answers. (Answers: *shepherding—administration, leadership, pastoring, teaching; serving—craftsmanship, giving, helping, hospitality; strengthening—encouragement, mercy, music; salvation—evangelism, missions; spiritual insight—prayer*)

5. Ask:

- How do you see these spiritual gifts being used in the church today?
- Why does God give such gifts?

Discover Your Gifts

(10 minutes)

1. Ask youth to complete the quiz in the student book, choosing the one statement that best describes them.

2. When finished, youth should mark their answers on the grid. For each spiritual gifts category, tally the number of answers marked under that category (for example, if a student chose "b" for numbers 1 and 5, then the "strengthening" category score would be 2). The category with the most answers is the most likely

category for spiritual giftedness.

Students may have categories that tie; if so, offer students the following descriptions to help them break the tie or help them research online more information about spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts categories descriptions
(see previous website on page 49):

- Shepherding—administration, apostle, leadership, pastoring, teaching (visible, influential leadership positions)
- Serving—craftsmanship, giving, helping, hospitality, serving (meet the needs of others)

The Word Is...

▼ Which gifts do you see at work among Christians today?

▼ According to verse 7, who receives gifts from the Spirit?

▼ Why does the Spirit give gifts?

Discover Your Gifts

For each number circle the letter of the statement that best describes you.

1.—a. I'm really good at figuring out other people—what makes them "tick" and their motives.

b. I'm good at and enjoy taking leadership positions at school and/or church (youth group, church committees, and so on); I understand and am good at leading others to reach their goals.

c. The best way for me to praise and worship God is through music, and I'm a member of the worship team, choir, or orchestra.

d. I am a cheerful giver and willingly give my possessions to others in need.

e. I can't wait for the summer mission trip. I love taking the gospel to those who don't know Christ.

2.—a. I'm an artistic person and enjoy creating things that bring glory to God.

b. I easily talk to others about my relationship with Christ, my faith journey, and my church participation. I often invite friends to church and youth group events without hesitation.

c. I'm super organized and I enjoy bringing order to chaos.

d. I love to pray and often pray for long periods of time. I love to pray for others and watch how God answers my prayers.

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e. When someone is sad or hurting, I'm compelled to offer that person a note of encouragement to let them know I'm thinking of them and God loves them.

3.—a. I have a special knack for reading Scripture and being able to understand it quickly and apply it to real life.

b. Need a place to stay or want to find a yummy meal? I'm your guy or gal! I love to host others at home or church, making sure they are comfortable.

c. The most important gift God has given to me is the ability to boldly share the Gospel with unbelievers.

d. I am drawn to those who are sick or suffer physically. I love bringing comfort and healing through offering medicine and/or therapy.

e. I love to teach God's Word to others. Helping with kids' Sunday school or vacation Bible school is something I enjoy.

4.—a. I am a good leader.

b. I am sensitive to those who hurt, and I want to help meet their needs.

c. I enjoy serving God, my church, and others.

d. Someday I'd like to serve as a missionary in a foreign country.

e. People ask me to pray for them because they know I will.

Bible Lessons for Youth

The Word Will Be...

5.—a. I have a consistent prayer life and consider it an important part of my relationship with Christ.

b. I'm pretty sure I'll work as a pastor, church leader, or Bible teacher someday.

c. I'm good at building up others with words of encouragement; I'm a natural cheerleader.

d. I'd rather talk about my faith journey and share the gospel than do almost anything else.

e. I like to work behind the scenes, helping others do their jobs for God more effectively.

For each question, circle the letter you marked on the grid below. Give yourself one point for each answer. Add the number of points for each column and record the number in the "TOTAL" box for the column at the bottom. Your highest score is the category for which you are likely most gifted.

Question	Shepherding	Serving	Strengthening	Salvation	Spiritual Insight
1	b	d	c	e	a
2	c	a	e	b	d
3	e	b	d	c	a
4	a	c	b	d	e
5	b	e	c	d	a
TOTAL					

Categories from: http://www.igniteyoungpeople.org/files/downloadable_resources/5%20spiritual%20Gifts%20Categories%20Hand%20Out.pdf

Use Your Gifts

Write the gifts God has given you on the box. Below write a short prayer of commitment about how you plan to use your gifts for God's glory and the body of Christ.

Dear God,
I'll use my spiritual gifts by:



"We haven't received the world spirit but God's Spirit so that we can know the things given to us by God."
—1 Corinthians 2:12 (CEB)

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- Strengthening—encouragement, healing, mercy, music, prophecy (building deep relationships with people and expressing God's love through those relationships)
- Salvation—evangelism, faith, miracles, missions, tongues (easily and passionately share faith with others)

- Spiritual Insight—discernment, interpretation of tongues, knowledge, prayer, wisdom (clearly shares God's desires)

Note to Leader: This is an informal quiz based upon online selections. You may want to use a more formal, in-depth quiz from an online provider.

THE WORD WILL BE...

A good one, based upon Church of the Resurrection's *Serving From the Heart* study, is located at <http://www.ministrymatters.com/spiritualgifts/>.

3. As a large group, discuss everyone's spiritual gifts. Then ask:

- Is anyone surprised by the quiz? Why or why not?
- How can you best use your spiritual gifts to glorify God?

Closing Reflection: Use Your Gifts

(5 minutes)

1. Allow a few minutes for youth to complete the student book activity.
2. Close with this benediction: "Go in peace, confident that God will make known your gifts so that you may use them for the glory of God."

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

- Brainstorm and list spiritual gifts observed in your faith community and how they are used for the community's benefit. Place each gift into one of the five categories listed previously. Talk about ways members of your faith community can use their spiritual gifts.

Older Youth

1. Research the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues using Bible resources. Ask: "Do you believe you have this gift? Why or why not?"
2. Invite your pastor to talk about your denomination's belief on speaking in tongues in the church today.

TAKE-AWAY

There is value in the diversity of spiritual gifts as they work together to build up the body of Christ.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Diversity is essential** to the body of Christ, and there is unity in diversity.
- **All spiritual gifts** must be employed for the effective operation of the church.
- **All body parts** are essential to the makeup of the one body. The use of the body as an example was widespread in the ancient world (see Romans 12:4–8).
- **God arranged the** composition of the body to demonstrate the interdependence of the parts of the body (see 1 Corinthians 12:11, 24, 28).
- **All believers become** united into the body of Christ through the baptism of the Spirit (see Galatians 3:27–28).
- **The enlightened, high-status** Corinthians looked down on their lower-class brothers and sisters in the faith, regarding them as something of an embarrassment; yet Paul insists that the “weak” in the community have an indispensable role in the life of the church.

S:2 The Spirit Creates One Body

What Does Diversity Mean to You?

“Diversity is essential to the body.”

- ☆ How is this statement true or false for you?
- ☆ What does diversity mean to you?
- ☆ Do you have other thoughts about the above statement?

The Word Was . . .

1 Corinthians 12:14-31 (NRSV)

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.

¹⁶ And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of

the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 47 for a list of supplies for this session.

What Does Diversity Mean to You?

(10 minutes)

1. Ask students to complete the activity in the student book. If necessary, define the terms for them, but allow an open-ended definition of “the body.” For example, they may think of it in terms of the physical

the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect;²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member,²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues.²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 12:14-31 **(Common English Bible)**

¹⁴ Certainly the body isn't one part but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not a hand," does that mean it's not part of the body? ¹⁶ If the ear says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not an eye," does that mean it's not part of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, what would happen to the hearing? And if the whole body were an ear, what would happen to the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God has placed each one of the parts in the body just like he wanted. ¹⁹ If all were one and the same body part, what would happen to the body? ²⁰ But as it is, there are many parts

but one body.²¹ So the eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you," or in turn, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."²² Instead, the parts of the body that people think are the weakest are the most necessary.²³ The parts of the body that we think are less honorable are the ones we honor the most. The private parts of our body that aren't presentable are the ones that are given the most dignity.

²⁴ The parts of our body that are presentable don't need this. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the part with less honor²⁵ so that there won't be division in the body and so the parts might have mutual concern for each other.²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it.²⁷ You are the body of Christ and parts of each other.²⁸ In the church, God has appointed first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, the ability to help others, leadership skills, different kinds of tongues.²⁹ All aren't apostles, are they? All aren't prophets, are they? All aren't teachers, are they? All don't perform miracles, do they? All don't have gifts of healing, do they? All don't speak in different tongues, do they? All don't interpret, do they?

³¹ Use your ambition to try to get the greater gifts. And I'm going to show you an even better way.

Key Verse

**"As it is, there are many members, yet one body."
— 1 Corinthians 12:20 (NRSV)**

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body, the school's student body, or the larger body of Christ.

2. Discuss with students their thoughts about the statement: *Diversity is essential to the body.* Talk about these questions:

- What does diversity mean to you?
- Do you consider diversity essential to healthy life and living, or is

essential too strong a word? Explain your answer.

Hear the Scripture **(10 minutes)**

1. Ask a volunteer to read aloud today's Bible Lesson from both versions. Divide the large group into four equal teams or pairs. Assign one

THE WORD WAS...

part of the body to each team: foot, hand, ear, and eye.

2. Next, assign a sound each team will make to represent its body part (for example, the foot could stomp, the hand could clap, the ear could sing, and the eye could make a clicking sound like a camera taking a picture). Or, allow each team to decide the sound its body part will make.

3. Slowly read through the Bible Lesson a third time (from either version), pausing as you say the names of body parts. Teams should make their particular sound when their body part is read. If you read the word *body*, all parts should make their sounds together and loudly.

4. Ask:

- What is today's Bible Lesson saying?
- What does it mean?
- How does reading the Scripture this way help you better understand it?

Diagram the Gifts **(10 minutes)**

1. Allow students to partner up. Ask each pair to compare and contrast the following Scripture passages with today's Bible Lesson by following the instructions on page 54 in the student book. Youth should write characteristics for each passage on the corresponding circle. Characteristics that both passages have in common should be written where the circles intersect.

2. Discuss the Scripture passages as a class and ask volunteers to read aloud their answers. Youth should be prepared to explain why they placed a certain characteristic in a certain circle.

3. Ask:

- How does diagramming these passages help you better understand spiritual gifts?
- Why does God give some spiritual gifts to some people and some to others?
- Do you believe God would choose not to give at least one spiritual gift to a Christian? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

Gifts in the Church

(10 minutes)

Supplies Needed: Bible dictionaries

1. Ask youth to work in pairs to complete the activity in the student book. Hand out Bible dictionaries. First, students should make sure they understand how each of the gifts is defined and what it looks like in the church today.
2. Next, ask youth to give a specific example of someone who exercises that gift in your church or youth group.
3. Finally, ask them to consider what roles or gifts are generally considered "weak" or "least honorable." Point out that Paul said these are actually the most indispensable. Ask youth to give examples to support their opinions.
4. When pairs are ready, discuss all answers as a class. Then talk about how they see all of the people with these gifts working together for the larger purpose of ministry, giving specific examples.

Cookie Cutter?

(10 minutes)

Before the session: Bake some cookies and take to class, along with napkins, tubes of icing, and sprinkles. Use a simple slice-and-

The Word Is...

Diagram the Gifts

Compare and contrast the spiritual gifts mentioned in today's Bible Lesson with those described in Romans 12:6-8. Record information in the appropriate place below.

I Corinthians 12:27-31 **Romans 12:6-8**

What They Have in Common

Compare and contrast the spiritual gifts mentioned in today's Bible Lesson with those described in Ephesians 4:11. Record information in the appropriate place below.

I Corinthians 12:27-31 **Ephesians 4:11**

What They Have in Common

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bake roll from the refrigerated section of the grocery store, but use a cookie cutter to cut out uniform cookies, making them all the same shape and size.

1. Give each student a napkin and a cookie. Say: "We've talked today about diversity in the church. It's

important to realize that each of us is uniquely gifted and has a special role in the body of Christ. We're far from 'cookie cutter,' aren't we? Notice how your cookies are all the same shape and size. The church is the exact opposite of a box of cookies made with a uniform cutter."

The Word Will Be...

Gifts in the Church

Where do you see these gifts at work in your church or youth group?

APOSTLES

PROPHETS

TEACHERS

MIRACLES

HEALING

HELPING

LEADERSHIP

TONGUES

What would you say are the gifts considered to be the weakest or least honorable? How are these roles actually the most indispensable?

Closing Reflection

Write a sentence prayer below for the person you chose from the list above.

Dear God: _____

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2. Hand out tubes of icing and sprinkles and so on. Allow students to "alter" their cookies to best reflect their individual uniqueness. They may decorate it or break off a side, for example.

3. When everyone has finished their decorations, take a look at all the unique cookies and mention how they now are a better representation of the body of Christ. As youth eat their cookies, remind them that individuals working together can do great things for God.

THE WORD WILL BE...

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Ask youth to look again at the list compiled in the "Gifts in the Church" activity and to choose one person for whom they will write a sentence prayer using the space provided in the student book. Encourage youth to pray for the person's ministry throughout the coming week.

2. In closing, thank God for each youth and his or her unique gifts.

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

1. Find and cut a picture of the human body into enough pieces for each youth to have one piece. Hand out the picture pieces and ask youth to reconstruct the original picture, taping the pieces back together.

2. When the picture is reassembled, ask: "How does the exercise of fitting all the body parts together help you better understand today's Bible Lesson?"

Older Youth

1. Create a two-column handout. In the left column, put an abstract generic outline of the human body (easily found online). In the right column, list ministries and positions of service in the church (pastor, bishop, elder, deacon, Sunday school teacher, mercy ministries, prayer team, committee chair, choir director, worship team director, and so on).

2. Ask youth to relate body parts on the left with entries on the right. Then talk about the similarities and differences of the human body with its many members and the body of Christ with its many members.

TAKE-AWAY

The Holy Spirit works through spiritual gifts to help us communicate and live in community.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **On the Day** of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover, during the celebration of the wheat harvest, the Christian church was launched when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples of Jesus Christ.

- **The Feast of Pentecost**, one of three annual pilgrimages, is also known as the Feast of Weeks or Feast of Harvest and marks the end of the early summer wheat harvest (see Exodus 23:16-17; 34:22-23).

- **The disciples were** able to expound on the Word of God in other tongues as God gave them utterance in the specific language and culture of those to whom it was addressed.

- **In public worship**, one should be mindful that prayers and singing are for the edification of the believers and unbelievers and should be offered in an understandable manner.

- **Paul indicated that** speaking in tongues without interpretation does not allow an outsider to benefit from it. *Outsider* in Greek means "unskilled" or "amateur." These "outsiders" may be believers in contrast to the "unbelievers" that Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14:22-25.

- **The gatherings of** the early church were for the purpose of mutual edification.

S:3 Gift of Languages

What Do You Know?

According to the Bible, indicate below which of the statements about speaking in tongues are **TRUE**.

- ___ 1. Speaking in tongues happened to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, with tongues of fire hovering over them.
- ___ 2. Paul taught that every person should have his or her individual experience of speaking in tongues and it was OK if it was confusing to others. That time was special just for the person and God.
- ___ 3. Speaking in tongues is not a gift of the Holy Spirit. It's a skill that must be practiced for many years.
- ___ 4. One form of speaking in tongues is being able to speak a language that is foreign to you but is understandable to the hearer for the purpose of talking about the Word of God.
- ___ 5. Speaking in tongues is not mentioned in the Bible.

The Word Was...

Acts 2:1-7, 12:
1 Corinthians 14:13-19
(NRSV)

¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON

LAUNCH

See page 47 for a list of supplies for this session.

What Do You Know?

(5 minutes)

1. Say: "Today we will talk about the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. I'm sure we all have ideas about what the Bible does and does not say about speaking in tongues. To get started, let's see how much you know (or don't know)." Ask youth to complete the true or false activity in the student

and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"

¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret.

¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive. ¹⁵ What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also.

¹⁶ Otherwise, if you say a blessing with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since the outsider does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you may give thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; ¹⁹ nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

**Acts 2:1-7, 12:
1 Corinthians 14:13-19
(Common English Bible)**

¹ When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

⁵ There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

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⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. ⁷ They were surprised and amazed, saying, "Look, aren't all the people who are speaking Galileans, every one of them?"

¹² They were all surprised and bewildered. Some asked each other, "What does this mean?"

¹³ Therefore, those who speak in a tongue should pray to be able to interpret. ¹⁴ If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind isn't productive. ¹⁵ What should I do? I'll pray in the Spirit, but I'll pray with my mind too; I'll sing a psalm in the Spirit, but I'll sing the psalm with my mind too. ¹⁶ After all, if you praise God in the Spirit, how will the people who aren't trained in that language say "Amen!" to your thanksgiving, when they don't know what you are saying? ¹⁷ You may offer a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving, but the other person is not being built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ But in the church I'd rather speak five words in my right mind than speak thousands of words in a tongue so that I can teach others.

Key Verse

**"Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret."
— 1 Corinthians 14:13 (NRSV)**

book. (Answers: *TRUE statements are numbers 1 and 4.*)

2. When everyone is finished, ask:

- What surprised you about what the Bible does and does not say about speaking in tongues?
- What knowledge or experience do you have about speaking in tongues?

- How has God used this gift throughout the centuries to build the church?

**Code the Scripture
(10 minutes)**

Supplies Needed: large sheets of paper, markers, sticky notes, pens or pencils

1. Allow youth to pair up, then tell partners to choose one verse from today's Bible Lesson. Each pair should use some type of code, secret, or foreign language to rewrite the chosen verse. Pairs can create their own language, made up of words or symbols, or use a foreign language in which they may be fluent, but their classmates are not. Point out the space on page 58 in the student book to use to work out the code.

2. As pairs finish, they should transfer their "secret" verse to a large sheet of paper and hang on the wall. Hand out sticky notes and pens or pencils for youth to use while trying to decipher the secret verses. Youth should write their best guesses on a note and stick it to the large sheet of paper.

3. When everyone has finished, read aloud all the guesses and then allow each pair to explain its code or language and read aloud the correct interpretation of the verse.

**Breaking News
(15 minutes)**

1. Divide the class into two teams: a newsroom team and a field-reporting team. Both teams should read the Bible Lesson as if they are on the scene at Pentecost. They should also pretend that Paul is an expert, available for comment upon the happenings at Pentecost.

2. Each team should follow the instructions below.

- The newsroom team should assign a news producer and anchor and other roles, depending upon time and how many youth are on the team.
- The field-reporting team should assign a news reporter and Paul (expert commentator) and may assign other roles, such as eyewitnesses, depending upon available time and how many youth are on the team.

THE WORD IS...

3. Ask teams to read each version of today's Bible Lesson, making notes in the student book about what they will ask and report. They will need to loosely script what the anchor will say to introduce the reporter. The reporter will need to loosely script the questions to ask Paul. Paul will need to loosely script the points he wants to emphasize (consistent with the 1 Corinthians passage).

4. When the teams are ready, begin the newscast. (Consider presenting the newscast for younger classes or during a churchwide gathering.)

5. After the newscast, ask:

- What happened at Pentecost and why?
- How did the Holy Spirit help people communicate in their different native languages at Pentecost?
- How did/does the Holy Spirit help people communicate in their spiritual languages?

Rate My Worship

(15 minutes)

1. Ask a volunteer to read aloud the Key Verse from page 57 in the student book. Say: "In this verse Paul emphasizes that even though speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift, the language must be translated so that all worshippers are able to understand and worship. The gatherings of the early church were for the purpose of mutual edification."

2. Pair up youth and ask partners to rate their worship using the chart in the student book.

- First, ask students to think about how well the weekly worship service edifies people who attend; mark in the top triangle.
- Second, ask students to think about how well youth worship events (or retreats/activities

The Word Is...

Code the Scripture

Create your own secret code or language. Make notes below. What type of "alphabet" will you create? Will your language feature symbols? If you speak a foreign language (but your classmates do not), write about it below.

Choose one verse from today's Bible Lesson and translate the verse into your "secret" language. Write it below.

Breaking News

Use the space below to plan your newscast.

NEWSROOM TEAM



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FIELD-REPORTING TEAM



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aimed at teens and students) edify those who attend; mark in the bottom triangle.

3. Discuss students' ratings and ask:

- If you can't understand the preacher or teacher, are you still able to worship? Why, why not?

- What type of instruction would Paul give to our church regarding its worship service and events?

4. Invite volunteers to discuss the most positive aspects of the church's worship services and events. Send suggestions to the worship committee and/or worship director.

The Word Will Be...

Rate My Worship

	ALWAYS	ALMOST ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
I understand the sermons/ lessons.					
The sermon/ lesson illustrations are relevant to my life.					
I feel like the preacher/ teacher understands me/my life.					
I understand the elements of the worship service and why we do them.					
The music helps me worship God.					

Closing Reflection

Today I prayed that God would show me how I can use my spiritual gifts to help others better understand the gospel message. Possible answers to my prayer include:

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Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

Supplies Needed: large pillar candle, small candles (one per student), matches or lighter

1. Sit in a circle. Light a large pillar candle and place it in the center of

the circle. Give a small candle to each student, then light the first individual candle using the pillar candle and allow youth to pass the flame around the circle.

2. Say: "As we pass the fire around our circle, think about how the tongues of fire rested on each

THE WORD WILL BE...

disciple at Pentecost, while he spoke in a foreign language that was understandable to his hearers. Through this miracle God launched the church, sending out the gospel message to all people."

3. Suggest youth ask God, in a silent prayer, how to best use their spiritual gifts to help others understand the gospel, then complete the sentence in the student book.

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

1. Using red, orange, and yellow construction paper, cut out "flames"—one for each student. Choose a phrase of praise, such as "praise God," "thanks be to God," or "God is love" and look up the translations online in several different languages. Write these on slips of paper and give to students.

2. Ask youth to copy the foreign words on the tongues of fire, along with the language and translation.

3. Display the tongues of fire on the wall, then discuss the importance of the gift of speaking in tongues at Pentecost.

Older Youth

1. On a large sheet of paper write "Day of Pentecost" and "House of Cornelius" across the top. Draw two columns below the heading; label one, "Compare" and the other, "Contrast."

2. Ask students to reread today's Bible Lesson, then ask a volunteer to read aloud Acts 10:44-48 and 11:15-16. Talk about how the two events are alike and how they are different. Record answers in the appropriate column.

TAKE-AWAY

The greatest spiritual gift is love.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

- **Paul expounded on** love as a “more excellent way” (12:3, NRSV) of life. The “excellent way” did not focus on spiritual gifts as the most important, because without love, gifts are invalid.
- **The love Paul** described was “excellent” because it looked not within but beyond itself, exhibiting generosity and friendship (Romans 5:7–8).
- **Paul compared and** contrasted this love with other spiritual gifts to emphasize that the other gifts are temporary; but this love is permanent.
- **Writing to people** who are just learning to follow God, Paul is helping to establish what the church should look like and how the “body” should live and worship together.
- **Though this passage** is quoted often at weddings, 1 Corinthians 13 isn’t about romantic love. Instead it’s about a selfless love that should be a part of all our relationships.

S:4 The Greatest Gift Is Love

All You Need Is Love

✎ What comes to mind when you think about love songs or music that celebrates love?

✎ Write below song titles and/or lyrics that relate to love and relationships:

The Word Was...

1 Corinthians 13 (NRSV)

¹ If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over

my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

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Bible Lessons for Youth

LESSON LAUNCH

See page 47 for a list of supplies for this session.

All You Need Is Love (10 minutes)

1. Divide the class into two teams. Ask youth to work with their teammates to answer the questions in the student book. When all the students have arrived and finished the activity, play a “sing-off” game with the teams.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13
(Common English Bible)

¹ If I speak in tongues of human beings and of angels but I don't have love, I'm a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal.

² If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and everything else, and if I have such complete faith that I can move mountains but I don't have love, I'm nothing. ³ If I give away everything that I have and hand over my own body to feel good about what I've done but I don't have love, I receive no benefit whatsoever.

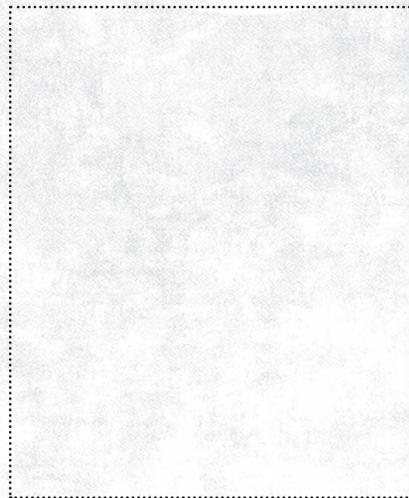
⁴ Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, ⁵ it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, ⁶ it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. ⁷ Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never fails. As for prophecies, they will be brought to an end. As for tongues, they will stop. As for knowledge, it will be brought to an end. ⁹ We know in part and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, what is partial will be

brought to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, reason like a child, think like a child. But now that I have become a man, I've put an end to childish things. ¹² Now we see a reflection in a mirror; then we will see face-to-face. Now I know partially, but then I will know completely in the same way that I have been completely known. ¹³ Now faith, hope, and love remain—these three things—and the greatest of these is love.

Draw the Scripture

Team 1: Verses 1-3



continued on page 62

Key Verse

**"Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."
— 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NRSV)**

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2. Call out a word related to the topic of love/relationships (using the list in the next column). Explain that Team 1 must sing a lyric using that word; then Team 2 must sing a lyric using that word. Any team member can sing, and teams have five seconds to sing once the word is called out. Teams may refer to the lists of songs they wrote in the student book. Play continues back and forth until one

team is unable to sing a lyric using that word. The last singing team receives a point.

Possible list of words (you may add to or delete from the list, depending on the amount of time you play the game): love, heart, heartache, marry, marriage, always, never, together, alone, mine, memory(ies), night, day, sun, moon.

3. After the game, ask:

- How does pop culture—especially the music culture—view love?
- How does the Bible view love?
- What do you know about what the Bible teaches about love?

Draw the Scripture

(15 minutes)

Supplies Needed: large sheets of paper and markers

1. Divide a large sheet of paper into three sections. You will need a strip at least four to six feet long, or you may choose to tear off three sections, measuring about one to two feet each.

2. Divide the group into three teams and hand out markers to each team. Assign the following verses to the teams as follows:

Team 1: verses 1–3

Team 2: verses 4–8

Team 3: verses 9–13

3. Ask a volunteer to read aloud today's Bible Lesson from both versions. Encourage teams to listen closely to their assigned verses.

4. After the Scripture reading, ask the students to first brainstorm and sketch ideas for illustrating their assigned verses on pages 61–62 in the student book. When they are ready, they should illustrate their assigned verses, using the markers and large sheets of paper. They also may choose a key verse to illustrate (if they believe it fully captures the entire passage), or they may draw several illustrations on their papers.

5. When teams are finished drawing, call on each to present and explain its illustration. Allow other teams to ask questions, if they need further clarification.

THE WORD IS...

6. After all the presentations, ask:
- How does illustrating the Scripture help you better understand it?
 - How does illustrating the Scripture help you better apply it to your life?
 - What does today's Bible Lesson mean for your life right now?

The Greatest of These Is Love

(10 minutes)

1. Say: "Paul uses a writing technique in today's Bible Lesson that is called 'personification.' He gives human-like attributes to love. It's interesting, though, to compare this Scripture passage to another passage that describes Jesus." Ask youth to complete the comparison in the student book.

2. When most youth are finished, ask:
- What surprised you about the two lists?
 - You've probably heard the 1 Corinthians 13 passage read at weddings or other special events. How do you understand it differently after comparing it to Jesus and his sacrifice?

Blog About Love

(10 minutes)

1. As youth are thinking about Jesus' perfect and sacrificial love, ask them to complete the activity in the student book. Explain that students should create a blog post that expresses some aspect of what they've learned today about how Christians should love.
2. Use these questions with the students as writing prompts:
- What did you learn today about 1 Corinthians 13 that you

The Word Is...

Team 2: Verses 4-8

Team 3: Verses 9-13

The Greatest of These Is Love

In the left column below write one statement per line about love as described in verses 4-8a. Instead of using the word, *love*, though, replace it with *Jesus*. In the right column, using Philippians 2:5-8, write a phrase, summary, or descriptive word that describes the way Jesus lived out that characteristic (you may repeat descriptions). You may not use all the lines, depending upon how you combine words and phrases.

Love Jesus is... (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)	What Jesus did... (Philippians 2:5-8)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- didn't know before? How will that influence your life?
- How does Jesus love you? How will that change the way you love others?
 - What's the most difficult aspect of loving as 1 Corinthians 13 describes? Write about a situation

in which expressing love is difficult and then write about how today's Bible Lesson will help you love others.

3. After youth have written their blog posts, invite volunteers who wish to read aloud their posts.

The Word Will Be...

Blog About Love

Write a blog post about some aspect of love that you've learned from this Bible Lesson.



Closing Reflection

Reflect on today's Bible Lesson and the ways that Paul described love. Using each letter of the word, write an acrostic poem below. Your poem should be prayerful in nature, reflecting ways you desire to show love to others according to 1 Corinthians 13.

L _____
O _____
V _____
E _____



Note to Leader: If any students have a blog, ask them to post their entries online using their phones or tablets, if available. When the blogs are updated, visit the posts and leave encouraging comments for the writers. Consider sharing the links to the posts on social media so that others in the

church and community may read them and comment also.

Closing Reflection

(5 minutes)

1. Ask students to reflect on the Bible Lesson and the ways that Paul

THE WORD WILL BE...

describes love. Then ask them to follow the instructions in the student book.

2. If time permits, ask volunteers to read aloud their poems. Close with a time of silent prayer.

LESSON OPTIONS

Younger Youth

1. Hand out folded paper (like a greeting card) and art supplies and ask youth to make a "valentine" for the Corinthian church, using 1 Corinthians 13 for inspiration. Ask youth to pretend that Paul wants them to summarize and illustrate his message about love. Explain that cards should have a cover illustration and an inside message.

2. Call on volunteers to read aloud their valentines and tell how they chose the message and illustration for their cards. Display valentines in the meeting space.

Older Youth

1. On a markerboard write the following phrase but do not tell youth it describes Paul: *threatened, imprisoned, and murdered Christians.*

2. Divide youth into two teams and explain that teams will debate whether or not Christians are expected to love a person fitting the description written on the paper, with one team arguing yes, the other no, and both offering at least three reasons that support each stance.

3. At the end of the debate rounds, ask youth to guess who fits the description. If they don't guess, reveal that it describes the apostle Paul, and it was Christ's sacrificial love that saved him. Talk about how much God loves us and what it means for us to love sacrificially.

Meet the Writers



JACOB FASIG
YOUTH MINISTER, WRITER

U:1 Jacob Fasig, writer of Unit 1, has worked in youth ministry since 1997, serving in various churches and staffing dynamics. He is a co-author to *Now What: Next Steps for Your New Life in Christ*, and he enjoys playing music and riding a bike.

U:2 Mike Poteet, writer of Unit 2, is a teaching elder (ordained minister) in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who serves the larger church as a curriculum writer. He writes regularly for Cokesbury's *LinC* and *FaithLink*. He, his wife, and their two children live near Philadelphia, PA. Mike works with rare books, serves as a children's Sunday school teacher, and never misses a chance to watch *Star Trek*.



MIKE POTEET
WRITER, ORDAINED MINISTER



MARY BERNARD
WRITER, EDITOR,
SOCIAL-MEDIA CONSULTANT

U:3 Mary Bernard, writer of Unit 3, is a Nashville-based writer and editor. Mary has been a Christian educator for more than twenty years. She is a regular contributor to BIBLE LESSONS FOR YOUTH.

Julie Conrady, writer of articles, has written for BL4Y since 2006. She has taught all ages in churches and in schools, but especially likes working with youth. She currently serves as a Chaplain Intern at a local hospital and enjoys scrapbooking, reading, and playing video games in her spare time. She lives in Norman, Oklahoma, with her husband Josh, son Stark, dog MollyJane, and black cats Seuss and SamIAM. This quarter's teaching/training articles may be found at <http://www.ministrymatters.com/bly2015>.



JULIE CONRADY
WRITER, CHAPLAIN, TEACHER

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CYCLE 2013-2016**

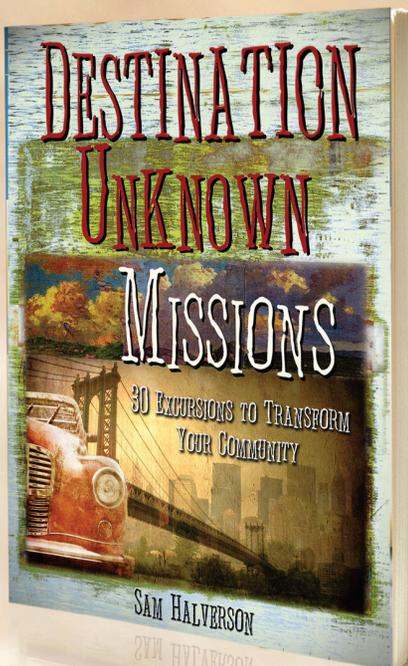
	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	
FALL	Sept.	CREATION <i>(Genesis, Exodus, Psalm 104)</i>	HOPE <i>(Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Job, Psalm 86, Ezekiel, Isaiah 52)</i>	COMMUNITY <i>(Acts)</i>
	Oct.			
	Nov.			
WINTER	Dec.	JUSTICE <i>(Luke, James)</i>	WORSHIP <i>(Psalm 95:1-7, Daniel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Ephesians, Hebrews, James)</i>	TRADITION <i>(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Revelation)</i>
	Jan.			
	Feb.	Christmas Sunday December 22	Christmas Sunday December 21	Christmas Sunday December 20
SPRING	Mar.	TRADITION <i>(Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel, Nehemiah, Psalm 110, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Zechariah, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, Revelation)</i>	GOD: THE HOLY SPIRIT <i>(Mark, John, Acts, 1 Corinthians 12-14, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John)</i>	FAITH <i>(Mark, Luke)</i>
	Apr.			
	May	Easter April 20	Easter April 5	Easter March 27
SUMMER	June	COMMUNITY <i>(Nehemiah, Haggai, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians)</i>	JUSTICE <i>(Amos, Micah, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Malachi)</i>	CREATION <i>(Genesis, Psalm 8, 104, 136, 148, Zephaniah, Romans)</i>
	July			
	Aug.			

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