

FINDING GOD'S PROMISES



FINDING GOD'S PROMISES – TEACHER'S MANUAL

First Edition by Cherie Noel

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INTRODUCTION

God chooses to work through faith. He doesn't explain all His plans or reasons right away. Instead, He builds a relationship through promises. We offer trust, and He provides direction and hope. In the Word and the family of God, we have everything we need to follow Him. And as we do, He leads us beyond our questions and doubts to a place of blessing and understanding.

Perhaps no one has taken a more dramatic and challenging journey of faith as the Israelites did from Egypt to Canaan. God broke them free from slavery and led them through the wilderness—through hunger, thirst, war, and even a sea. More importantly, God pointed them beyond their sin, showing them a path of love and righteousness.

To walk this path, Israel had to trust God's promises. He fulfilled each one, and if we study His faithfulness, we will better trust His promises for believers today.

This curriculum focuses on God's early relationship with the Israelites:

- Lessons 1–3** The structure and themes of the Bible
- Lessons 4–11** The beginnings of the world and the nation of Israel, along with foundational elements of the gospel
- Lessons 12–16** Israel's slavery in Egypt and the early years of Moses
- Lessons 17–23** The plagues, the Exodus, and the crossing of the Red Sea
- Lessons 24–29** The Ten Commandments and the Tabernacle
- Lessons 30–35** Israel's entry into their new home

Lesson Components

Content Objectives

These summarize the primary biblical doctrines or points supported by the lesson.

Learning Objectives

These are expected student outcomes. By the end of the lesson, students should be able to recall, explain, or discuss these points. Most of these objectives will be assessed in the lesson's quiz, but you may wish to reinforce or assess these points with discussions, projects, or other activities.

Vocabulary

On the first page of each lesson in this Teacher's Manual is a list of new vocabulary terms. Students may first encounter these words in the Student Manual, in Scripture, or as you teach through the Session Notes. You may wish to introduce all these terms at the beginning of the week—or as they appear in the lesson sequence.

Session Notes

Each weekly lesson includes three sessions (A, B, and C). The Session Notes suggest ways to explain, discuss, and illustrate the lesson content. You can approach most sessions in one of two ways, depending on your students' ability to work independently:

- **Guided Instruction** – Present the session material while working through most of the Student Manual exercises as a class.
- **Independent Work** – Present the session material first, then allow students to work through the exercises independently. Help as needed.

Individual student initiative varies widely at this grade level. Important factors for this material include . . .

- Reading level
- Chosen version of Scripture
- Familiarity with verse references

Consider working more closely with students at the beginning of the year. As they become familiar with exercises in the Student Manual, give them more opportunities to work individually or in groups.

Note that you will probably not use all the suggested discussion questions or activities in this Teacher's Manual. In particular, Session C usually offers more material than you could fit in a single class period. These extra devotional tools—like the Read-Aloud Stories—are not assessed in the lesson quiz.

Stories

Most lessons include a fictional narrative to be read aloud during Session C. Set in the modern day, these stories can help students imagine and discuss ways to apply principles from the lesson. Note that these stories feature challenging situations in which characters may make poor decisions or face unfair consequences. This should prompt critical thinking and discussion, as outlined in the Session Notes.

Every modern story corresponds to a reproducible coloring sheet that you can find at the end of the lesson. Consider asking students to listen to the story as they quietly color the picture.

Target Truths

At the end of each session is a short devotional takeaway. You may choose to develop this thought throughout the session or offer it as a concluding point.

Character Trait Activities

Excluding review lessons, each lesson includes an activity that can help students practice a character trait relevant to the lesson topic. Most of these activities require little preparation, but you may choose to build on the core ideas. These can greatly expand the social or kinesthetic dimensions of your lesson.

Student Manual Facsimiles

At the end of each lesson in this Teacher’s Manual are near-exact copies of the exercise pages in the Student Manual, but with suggested answers included. In places where students might record different terms from different Bible translations, you will find multiple answers separated by forward slashes (/).

Quizzes

Excluding review lessons, each lesson includes a ten-point quiz. These test the students’ grasp of some of the Learning and Content Objectives.

Students can study for these quizzes solely by reviewing the Student Manual exercises. The quizzes do not assess material discussed exclusively in the Teacher’s Manual, nor do they attempt to gauge spiritual growth or personal application.

In addition to these written quizzes, we also encourage you to monitor student progress through review discussions and other formative assessments.

Optional Components

Music Curriculum

Near the back of this Teacher’s Manual (TM p. 407) are the lyrics for nine classic hymns and one Christmas carol. You may wish to read the explanatory notes to introduce one song for each month of the school year.

- O Happy Day
- Count Your Blessings
- This Is My Father’s World
- To God Be the Glory
- Rejoice, the Lord is King
- Like a River Glorious
- Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
- Breathe on Me, Breath of God
- The Lord’s My Shepherd
- Away in a Manger

Students can find the lyrics near the back of the Student Manual (SM p. 161).

Scripture Memory

Each lesson includes a passage of Scripture that reinforces the topics of this study. Consider introducing the passage at the beginning of the week and then review the passage each day. At the end of the week, students could write the passage on the back of their weekly quiz, or you could ask parents and guardians to sign a sheet when their child recites the passage correctly at home.

For review weeks, consider assigning a specific verse or two to review, or ask students to recite a verse of their choice from the past unit. You could also write parts of the verses on the board and ask volunteers to help you fill the blanks.

A list of passages is also included on the last page of the Student Manual (SM p. 176), along with signature blanks for a parent or guardian.

Lesson 1	Hebrews 10:23	Lesson 17	James 4:6b
Lesson 2	Psalm 119:89	Lesson 18	Psalm 103:11
Lesson 3	Hebrews 11:1	Lesson 19	Psalm 78:52
Lesson 4	Genesis 1:1	Lesson 20	Exodus 15:13a
Lesson 5	Genesis 1:27	Lesson 21	Psalm 107:1
Lesson 6	Romans 6:23	Lesson 22	Psalm 94:12
Lesson 7	1 Corinthians 15:22	Lesson 23	Review Unit 4 Verses
Lesson 8	Psalm 97:10a	Lesson 24	Matthew 22:37
Lesson 9	Psalm 145:8	Lesson 25	Matthew 22:39
Lesson 10	Romans 8:28a	Lesson 26	1 John 4:7
Lesson 11	Review Unit 2 Verses	Lesson 27	Deuteronomy 6:13
Lesson 12	Psalm 37:5	Lesson 28	Psalm 23:6
Lesson 13	Joel 2:32a	Lesson 29	Review Unit 5 Verses
Lesson 14	Psalm 56:3	Lesson 30	2 Corinthians 5:7
Lesson 15	1 Peter 5:7	Lesson 31	Joshua 1:9a
Lesson 16	Review Unit 3 Verses	Lesson 32	Joshua 1:9b
		Lesson 33	Proverbs 3:5
		Lesson 34	Philippians 1:6
		Lesson 35	Review Unit 6 Verses

Extra Resources

You can purchase a packet of downloadable resources from the *Finding God's Promises* product page at **positiveaction.org**. The packet includes . . .

Bible Story Pictures (PDF)

Display these 56 illustrations as you teach through the biblical narratives. Also available for purchase separately as physical 12x15.5" cards.

Answer Slides (PDF)

These presentations allow you to review the Student Manual exercises question by question, with answers appearing as you progress.

Editable Quizzes (DOC)

Edit and print your own versions of the quizzes in this Teacher's Manual.

Piano Accompaniments (MP3)

Sing along to these piano arrangements of hymns in the music curriculum.

Image Pack (PNG)

Copy and print over 130 illustrations from this study—for use in handouts, bulletin boards, and presentations.

K4–6 Curriculum Sequence

K4 Exploring God's Love

Students find countless examples of God's love—from Creation through the life and ministry of Christ.

K5 Learning About God

Students learn basic truths about God's character by studying the lives of major figures throughout Scripture.

1st Grade Enjoying God's Gifts

Students explore God's grace, as revealed in Creation, various Old Testament figures, and the work of Christ.

2nd Grade Finding God's Promises

By following Israel from Egypt to the promised land, students can see God's compassion, holiness, and faithfulness.

3rd Grade Growing with God

Students examine the tools that God used to sustain and grow figures like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Daniel.

4th Grade Building Life Castles

Starting with the life of Christ and continuing with the journeys of Paul, students discover the impact of the gospel.

5th Grade Possessing the Land

Students survey the structure, themes, and figures of the Old Testament, noting especially God's sovereign care.

6th Grade Winning the Race

Students review doctrines from all of Scripture, with special emphasis on life principles from the New Testament.

Suggested Weekly Schedules

Five-Day Option

Day 1 Session A

Day 2 Session B

Day 3 Session C

Day 4 Character Trait Activity

Day 5 Review and Quiz

Four-Day Option

Day 1 Session A

Day 2 Session B

Day 3 Session C

Day 4 Review and Quiz
Character Trait Activity

Three-Day Option

Day 1 Session A

Day 2 Session B

Day 3 Session C, without Story
Review and Quiz

Feedback

As a non-profit publishing ministry, we consider teachers our co-laborers in the faith. Each curriculum remains a work in progress, and the people who teach these studies have a great impact on the scope and format of every new edition. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us—we'd love to hear from you.

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A Final Word

We pray that this study will help you and your students know God's glory, grow in that knowledge, and share it with others. To benefit the most from this study, consider the following:

- Spend time each day in the Word. Use the material in this study to guide your devotional reading so that you can present God's truth and love from the heart. Spend time marking and adjusting the session notes to suit your students' needs.
- Pray for your students, and ask God to grow you.
- Be vulnerable to your students, expressing questions and confidence in equal measure. Encourage them to explore Scripture with you.
- Be the love and truth that you want to see from your students.
- Depend on God's strength and grace, even in your weakness.

LESSON 1

LEARNING FROM THE BIBLE

Scripture Memory – Hebrews 10:23

For the Teacher

Unit 1 is very different from the rest of this study. Besides introducing the broad themes of the curriculum, these three lessons should help students become more comfortable opening their Bibles and looking up specific verses. You may wish to improve these skills through “sword drills” or other lookup exercises.

Note that throughout this study, many Student Manual exercises include fill-in-the-blank summaries of Scripture. These more modern phrases do not necessarily correspond with any specific version or translation, but they can scaffold a student’s exploration of unfamiliar vocabulary and usage. As students read Scripture, consider its meaning, and then write key words in a simplified context, they can better understand their Bible on their own.

In Lesson 4, you’ll begin teaching the core narratives in this curriculum.

To prepare for this lesson’s Character Trait Activity (TM pp. 17–18), you may wish to print copies of the survey for your students.

Content Objectives

1-A Because God loves us and knows our path, He has given us promises.

1-B The Bible represents the work of many different human writers inspired by God.

1-C Verse references can help us find specific passages of Scripture.

Learning Objectives

Students should be able to . . .

- Look up specific Bible passages using verse references and a Table of Contents
- Discuss the function of promises to inspire hope
- Recognize several books of the Bible

Vocabulary

- **Scripture** – Religious writing; another name for the Bible
- **The Bible** – The set of 66 books inspired by God
- **Inspire** – To move, guide, or influence

SESSION 1-A GOD'S PROMISES

Discuss This year, we will study some of God's promises. So to begin, what *is* a promise? What do you say when you make a promise?

When you make a promise, you say that you will do something. You say that, sometime in the future, something will become true. Can you give an example of a promise?

You could promise to do your schoolwork. You could promise to tell the truth or to do your best. You could promise that everything will be OK.

Illustrate Promises can be very helpful. Imagine you're on a long hike with some of your friends. You've been on this trail before, so you know all the hills, all the turns, and all the best places to stop and take a picture.

But one of your friends is getting tired. He's run out of water. He's never been on this trail before, and he doesn't have a map. As far as he can tell, the trail goes on and on, forever and ever. He might as well give up.

But you know that there's only a little left in the trail. After you get over one more hill, you'll reach the end of the hike. There's someone waiting there with water, a picnic lunch, and a car that will carry everyone back home. If your friend can go on just a little farther, he'll be OK.

In this situation, you could make a promise. You could tell your friend that he has almost reached the end. If your friend believes you, he will try to keep going. He may rest awhile, but he will keep following you to the end.

Explain God watches over us, and He knows all about the paths we take. He sees the beginning and end of everything, and He wants us to keep doing the right thing and walking the right path. So He has left promises for His children. These promises—if we believe them—can give us hope for the future. They can help us keep going, even when things seem difficult.

Prompt Introduce the exercise in **section 1-A** (SM p. 5). Ask volunteers if each statement is a good promise. As time allows, review which statements are probably untrue. Discuss which promise could offer the most hope. Note that students will soon read promises like this for themselves in the Bible.

Target Truth If we believe that God loves us, we will trust His promises.

SESSION 1-B GOD'S OWN WORD

Discuss If we want to study God and His promises for us, where should we look? Where can we find promises like the ones listed on page 5?

God has left promises for us in *the Bible*. Do you know what the Bible is?

The Bible

The set of 66 books inspired by God

Inspire

To move, guide, or influence

Explain The Bible looks like one book from the outside—but it's actually 66 books collected into one big volume. These books were written over thousands of years by many different kinds of people. We can find words from men and women, kings and servants, soldiers and shepherds. But these many speakers and writers were all *inspired* by just one Author—God.

God did not pick up a pen and write all these words Himself. He worked through people to record His truth for us. That's why we call the Bible "God's Word." These books are the simplest way to learn about God.

Prompt After making sure that students can find the Table of Contents in their Bible, consider completing **section 1-B** (SM p. 6) together or in small groups. For the last question, students may need help turning to the Book of Colossians.

As you review the answers, note the following:

- The word *Genesis* means "beginnings." This book describes the beginning of many things in the world.
- Book pairs like 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel are pronounced "First Samuel" and "Second Samuel."
- The Book of Job is not pronounced like the English word *job*. This Job is the name of a man who followed God many years ago.
- There are over 40 writers who recorded the words in the Bible. We'll learn about some of these people this year, but more importantly, we'll learn about the God that worked through them.

Target Truth God worked through many people to record His Word for us.

SESSION 1-C SEARCHING SCRIPTURE

Discuss If you wanted to tell a friend how to find your home, what would you say?

- You could give them exact directions on how to get there. You could tell them what roads to look for and how many turns they need to make. You could describe exactly what your home looks like.
- Or you could give your friend your address. Then they could find your home on a map. The Internet makes that easy.

Illustrate Consider writing a sample address on the board, or even type the address into an online map. If possible, show students the directions from their current location to the address.

We can find things with other kinds of addresses, too. We use phone numbers to call people. To visit websites, we use links or web addresses.

Explain You probably already realized this, but the Bible is really big. There are over 700,000 words printed in there. To fit all of that in one volume, most printers use tiny text and very thin pages.

When we study the Bible and talk about it together, we need a way to find the right part of Scripture in a very big volume. In the last section, you used page numbers to find different books in the Bible. But people use differently-sized Bibles from different printers. We don't all have the same page numbers for each book—except for maybe Genesis, on page 1. So to find just the right spot in Scripture, we use verse references.

Consider writing a reference like **Luke 6:27** on the board, and note the differences between book, chapter, and verse. As you identify each part of the reference, help students reach that part of their Bibles until they've found the exact verse.

- The books of the Bible are listed in the Table of Contents.
- Every book has at least one chapter. Some chapters are very short, while some spread out over many pages.
- Verses are short phrases or sentences that break up a chapter.

Prompt After completing the first exercise of **section 1-C** (SM pp. 7–8) together, use the second exercise to practice finding references in Scripture.

Target Truth The Bible is very big, but with patience, we can learn from it.

CHARACTER TRAIT ACTIVITY: LOVE

We show **love** to others by doing what's good for them.

We can better show love by learning more about others. Each student will interview a classmate and introduce their interests to the rest of the group.

- Print copies of the next page so that each student can have one half-sheet survey. As needed, read through the questions together.
- Divide students into pairs. If your class has an odd number of students, make a group of three, or let one student complete the survey with you.
- Ask students to take turns interviewing each other and recording answers on the surveys. Limit students to about 10 minutes total.
- When the students are finished, let one at a time introduce their partner's interests to the rest of the class. Consider keeping a running tally of students who prefer cats or dogs.

Afterward, explain that Jesus wants His followers to love others just like He loves us (cf. John 13:34). And to love people well, we must get to know them. Good friends and classmates will show interest in each other—in their life stories, in their likes and dislikes. Even if we don't like all the same things as our classmates do, we can learn a lot from our differences. When we ask good questions and listen well, we might just find a new favorite thing or a new friend.

ABOUT My CLASSMATE

- What is your first name?

- Where were you born?

- What's your favorite food?

- What's your favorite thing to do for fun?

- Which do you like better—cats or dogs?

Cats Dogs

ABOUT My CLASSMATE

- What is your first name?

- Where were you born?

- What's your favorite food?

- What's your favorite thing to do for fun?

- Which do you like better—cats or dogs?

Cats Dogs

LESSON 1

LEARNING FROM THE BIBLE

1-A GOD'S PROMISES

This year, you will read about many promises. God always keeps His promises because He is loving and powerful. He will never fail to take care of His children.



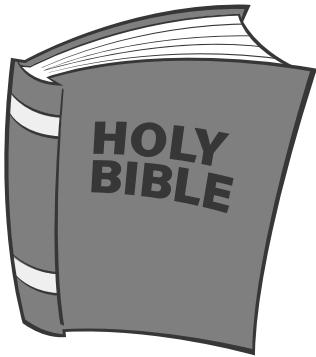
Read the sentences below. Mark the sentences that describe a **good promise**.

- If we pray to God, He will hear us.**
- Some people like to learn about God.**
- We should give up learning about God.**
- God will never stop loving His children.**
- God will give us what we need.**
- Where do we learn about God?**
- God has forgotten about us.**
- Schoolwork is never fun.**
- If we ask God to forgive us for the wrong things we do, He will.**



Cross out any of the sentences above that you think are untrue.





The Bible

The set of 66 books
inspired by God

Inspire

To move, guide,
or influence

1-B GOD'S OWN WORD

Open your Bible to the **Table of Contents**. You can find the Contents near the very beginning of the Bible. On this page, you should see the names of 66 books.



Using the Table of Contents, answer the questions below.

- ◎ What is the name of the *first* book of the Bible?

Genesis

- ◎ On what page does the **Book of Ruth** start? _____
- ◎ Some books of the Bible come in pairs—like **1 Samuel** and **2 Samuel**. Look at the names below, and mark the books that have pairs in your Bible.

<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chronicles
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corinthians	<input type="checkbox"/> Galatians	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timothy

- ◎ What is the shortest book name in the Bible? **Job**
(Hint: It has three letters.)



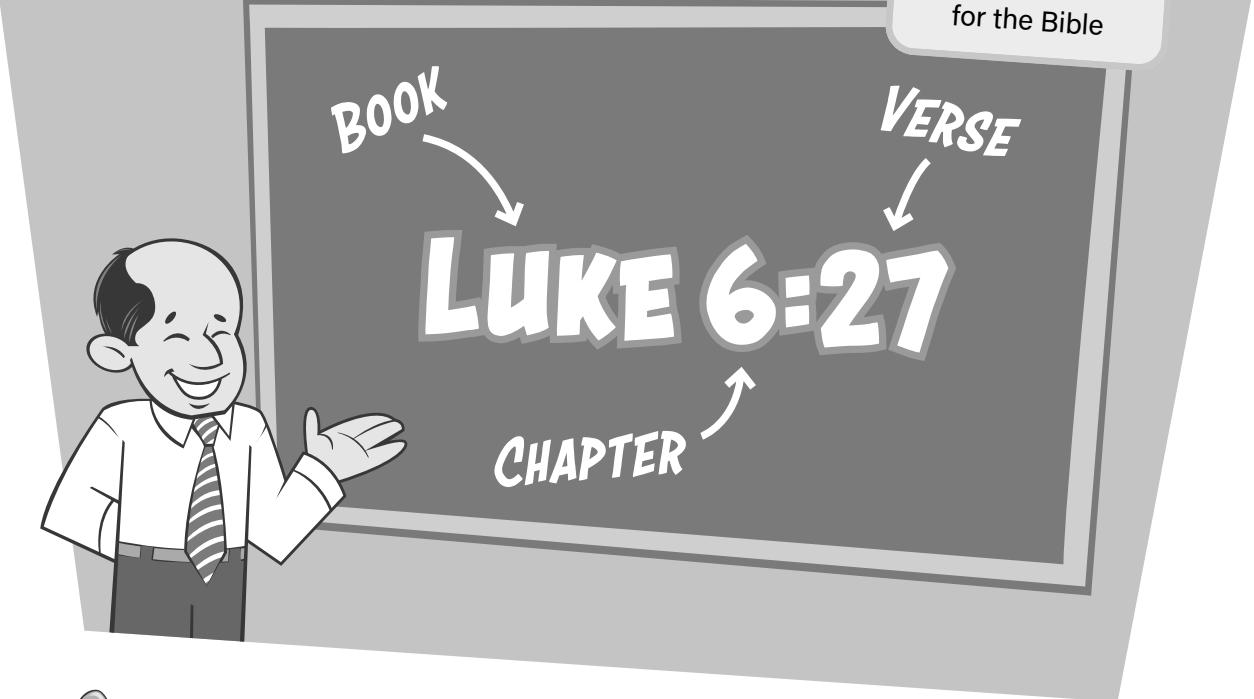
Find the page number for **Colossians**, and then turn to this page in your Bible. Mark all the names that appear in the first sentence of Colossians.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jesus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul	<input type="checkbox"/> Phoebe
<input type="checkbox"/> Priscilla	<input type="checkbox"/> Silvanus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timothy

1-C SEARCHING SCRIPTURE

Scripture

Religious writing;
another name
for the Bible



Use the words below to complete the sentences.

book **chapter** **verse**

JOHN 3:16

- In the reference above, the **16** is the **verse** _____.
- The **3** is the **chapter** _____.
- "JOHN" is the name of the **book** _____.

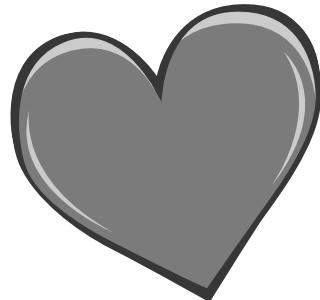
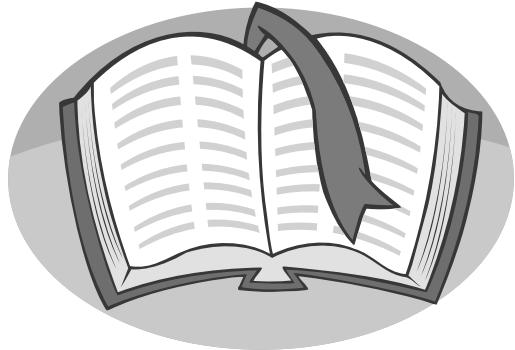
STUDENT MANUAL PAGES



Look up the following verses in your Bible and mark the best answer to each question.

Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning, what did God create?

- Nothing
- The heavens and the earth
- Just a few plants



Deuteronomy 6:5 – According to this verse, who should we love?

- Our friends
- Our enemies
- God

1 John 4:11 – Because God loved us, what should we do for others?

- Love them
- Smile always
- Hate them



LESSON 2

THEMES OF THE BIBLE

Scripture Memory – Psalm 119:89

For the Teacher

This lesson introduces several biblical themes, which students can learn while continuing to practice looking up references. Session C includes this curriculum's first read-aloud story, which can prompt a discussion of Scripture as a guide and help. The session also provides an opportunity to introduce part of the gospel, though concepts like *sin* will be defined and developed in later lessons.

For the Character Trait Activity, you will need a hula hoop or perhaps a loop of ribbon.

Content Objectives

- 2-A** Books of Scripture were originally written in old languages like Hebrew and Greek.
- 2-B** The Old Testament records God's interactions with the people of Israel thousands of years ago.
- 2-C** The New Testament describes the work of Jesus and how believers can follow Him.

Learning Objectives

Students should be able to . . .

- Recall at least one original language of Scripture
- Distinguish the Old and New Testaments
- Describe one general promise that God gave the people of Israel
- Recognize Jesus as God's manifest love and truth

Vocabulary

- **Translate** – To change words from one language to another; to interpret
- **Testament** – A promise or record; a name for the two major parts of the Bible
- **Israel** – A name for God's chosen nation or people
- **Prophet** – Someone chosen by God to share a message

SESSION 2-A WORDS OF TRUTH

Discuss The last book of the Bible was written about 2,000 years ago. Do you know how people lived during those times? What was different about life then?

- People did not have inventions like electric lights, cars, or computers.
- People lived in simple houses made of wood, stone, or clay.
- People had to serve kings or queens, and they had very few freedoms.
- Many people got their own food by growing crops or raising animals.

Explain Just as important: people back then spoke a different language than we do. Some people spoke in an old language called *Hebrew*, and others spoke *Aramaic* or *Greek*. Just like today, there were many different languages.

Discuss Do you have friends or family that speak a different language than you? If you want to understand them, what can you do?

Consider playing an audio or video clip of someone speaking in a language that your students do not understand.

Alternatively, ask students if they know how to greet people in other languages. You may wish to write some of the following on the board:

• Chinese: <i>Nǐ hǎo</i> (“Are you well?”)	• Spanish: <i>¡Hola!</i>
• Hindi: <i>Nameste</i> (“I bow to you.”)	• Russian: <i>Zdravstvuyte</i>
• Arabic: <i>Marhaba</i> (“Welcome.”)	• Japanese: <i>Kon'nichiwa</i>

Explain If you want to understand what someone says in another language, you need to . . .

- Learn the language yourself, which can take a long time
- Or have someone *translate* the words for you

We can read our Bible because people worked very hard to translate the words for us. We read the Bible in our own language, but we can learn the same truths that people knew thousands of years ago.

Prompt Introduce the exercise in **section 2-A** (SM p. 9). Consider completing the exercise as a group. As needed, find the verses together, read them out loud, and let students spell out the missing words.

Target Truth Scripture was written a long time ago in other languages, but its truth has survived to this day.

SESSION 2-B THE OLD TESTAMENT

Discuss Now that you've looked up a few passages in the Bible, you may have noticed that the 66 books are divided into two big sections. What are these sections called?

Scripture is divided into the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*.

Testament

A promise or record; a name for the two major parts of the Bible

Consider asking your students to look again at the Table of Contents in their Bibles.

Explain The Old Testament includes 39 books, from Genesis to Malachi. These were written mostly in Hebrew, the language spoken by Hebrews—also known as the people of *Israel*.

Israel

A name for God's chosen nation

Illustrate As time allows, briefly present the Middle East on a world map. Consider noting present-day Israel and Egypt. Students will explore the area's geography more in Lesson 9.

God made special promises to this group of people, which is why we call these books a *Testament*.

- God promised to give Israel a land to call home (Gen. 12:7).
- He promised to stay with them and be their God (Gen. 17:7).
- He promised to help the rest of the world through Israel (Gen. 12:3).

Besides making promises and keeping promises, God taught the Israelites about Himself. He showed them the difference between good and bad. Sometimes the Israelites followed God, and sometimes they did not. Either way, God did not abandon them or let their nation be destroyed.

In our Bible curriculum this year, we'll spend most of our time learning about ways that God cared for Israel.

Prompt Consider using the exercise in **section 2-B** (SM p. 10) as lookup practice. Read the verses out loud while students fill in the answers.

Target Truth God cares for those who follow Him.

SESSION 2-C THE NEW TESTAMENT

Read-Aloud Story

Read the story on the following page (“An A-maze-ing Day”), and discuss the following:

- Have you ever been to a life-size maze? Was it difficult to find your way through?
- Why did Archie not want to look at the map?
- Imagine the Bible as a kind of map. What does Scripture help us see? How does Scripture guide us? What happens if we ignore it?

Discuss The Old Testament is a record of God’s relationship with Israel thousands of years ago. But what does any of it have to do with us? What good is that Scripture now?

- The Old Testament helps us learn about God and follow Him.
- We can also learn from the successes and the failures of the Israelites.

Explain The Old Testament is good and helpful for many reasons. It also prepares us to understand the *New Testament*. This is another set of promises and teaching from one very important person—Jesus. He is special because …

- He was born on Earth as a human baby to a human mother, but He is actually God Himself. He is both fully God and fully human.
- After He grew up, He began teaching people about God. He also healed people who were sick. He showed truth and love.
- Then one day, Jesus died to pay the price for all the bad things that people have done. But this wasn’t a mistake or accident. This was part of God’s plan to save us and show us His love (cf. 1 John 4:9–10).
- Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead. He was alive again. This showed that He had power over death. God can forgive us for the bad things we do, and He can give us life that will never end.
- Eventually, Jesus went back to heaven. But before He left, He promised to return. One day, we’ll see Him again.

So today, if people believe what Jesus said and ask God to forgive them for the bad things they do, He will. Anyone can choose to follow Jesus.

Prompt

Show the students where to find the four Gospels. If possible, ask students to find the references in **section 2-C** (SM p. 11) on their own, and then review the answers together.

Target Truth Jesus revealed God’s love to us.

LESSON 2 STORY: AN A-MAZE-ING DAY

The lady behind the counter smiled at Kara and Kyle. “Here’s your map of the corn maze. Make sure you answer the four questions at the bottom. If you find all the right answers by the end of the maze, you’ll get prizes—a hat and a bag of homemade candy!”

Kara and Kyle grinned at each other while bouncing with excitement. Kara took the map and read off the questions.

“Question 1: How many purple flowers are in the flower bed?

“Question 2: In the center of the maze, what color is the flag on top of the tower?

“Question 3: What is the scarecrow wearing?

“And Question 4: What picture is carved into the giant pumpkin?”

Kyle cut in, “This will be easy! Let’s go!”

The brother and sister both ran for the maze entrance. They found a wooden arch that led into a field of tall, dry corn stalks. The stalks towered over their heads, too thick to see through, but someone had cut a twisting, winding path through the field, with many different branches and dead ends.

Kara and Kyle were just about to enter the maze when somebody pushed past them. It was Archie, a big fifth grader from their school. He yelled back, “Stay out of my way—I’m going to be the first one out of this maze!”

Kara wanted to yell something back, but she knew that Christians should try to show love, even to people who weren’t nice.

“Aaarchie!” Kara heard Archie’s mom call after him. “You forgot your maaap!”

“Leave me alone, Mom—I don’t need a silly map! Just hold my drink until I get through this little kid maze.” In a flash, Archie disappeared into the stalks.

Kara shrugged at Kyle, and they entered the maze. The rest of the world vanished, and there was only

the maze, with its tight pathways and its thick stalks rustling in the breeze. At first, the pair ran and took every turn they saw, whizzing right and left, left and right. But then they noticed that they kept passing the same sign.

Kara stopped her brother. “We’re just going in circles,” she said. “Can we look at the map again?”

Kyle sighed and nodded. They found a little clearing and sat on a hay bale. Kara took the map from her pocket and spread it out on her lap.

She groaned. “Wait a minute—the map has clues! Why didn’t we see these before? OK, now . . . we must be riiight *here*,” she pointed to a corner on the map.

Kyle pointed to their left and said, “That means we have to go this way.”

Every so often, they checked their map to make sure they were going the right way. They passed the flower bed and discovered that there were three purple flowers. When they found the flag at the center of the maze, they saw it was blue. Two questions down, and two to go.

They were close to the scarecrow when Archie came plowing through the corn stalks. As usual, he wasn’t happy to see them. “What are you doing here? Trying to cheat and follow me?”

Kyle spoke up, “We were just checking the scarecrow. Did you see what he’s wearing?”

“Who cares about a scarecrow?” Archie laughed. “You keep stopping like this, and I’ll definitely beat you out of the maze—and without a map!”

Kara and Kyle let him go without a word. They turned a few more corners and found the scarecrow, who wore a top hat and a bright red tuxedo.

Kara made a note on her map and said, “Only one more item to find!” The pair headed for the end

Story continued on next page »

of the maze, where they found the giant pumpkin carved with a picture of a pie.

Stepping out of the maze, Kara and Kyle felt like the world seemed extra bright and open. Up ahead, they saw that Archie had indeed finished before them. But he didn't seem to enjoy his victory. He was speaking loudly with the lady at the counter. She asked him if he knew the answers to the four questions on the map, but Archie didn't know a single one.

"Oh, that's too bad," said the lady, trying to be nice. "Maybe next time? You could pay a little more attention to your map."

Archie whined for a long time. "But I didn't take my map! And I didn't know I had to answer any questions!"

After Archie finally wandered off, Kara and Kyle politely gave their answers to the lady. She gave each of them a baseball cap with "Thatcher's Corn Maze" on it. She also handed them two bags of candy—with chocolate fudge, a candied apple, and caramel popcorn. Kara and Kyle thanked the lady, and then ran to find their mom.

"Way to go!" she said. "Wasn't sure if I'd ever see you two again. Only one piece of candy for now, though. We're grabbing pizza for dinner."

CHARACTER TRAIT ACTIVITY: DETERMINATION

We show **determination** by overcoming obstacles to reach our goal.

Students can demonstrate dedication through a cooperative activity. Ask the students to line up across the room and then hold hands to form an unbroken chain. Give a hula hoop to a student at one end of the line, and ask the group to make the hoop travel to the other end. The students should not let go of their classmates' hands, which means they'll need to carefully maneuver through the hoop, one by one, as they send it along the line.

If you have students with special needs that might prevent them from completing this activity, consider these alternatives:

- Hold the hula hoop in one place, and ask the line of students to move through it. Raise, lower, or angle the hoop to accommodate students with wheelchairs or other equipment.
- Instead of a hula hoop, use a large loop of ribbon or fabric.

Consider timing the students on their first try, then giving them a second chance to improve their time.

After the activity, discuss which parts were difficult. How could students go faster if they had another chance? What would happen if someone got too frustrated and broke the line?

Note that as students begin studying the Bible this year, they may find it difficult to understand some verses. Some passages require a little patience, while others may require students to seek help from a teacher or each other. Regardless, students who persevere will find truth and help in Scripture, even if they don't find answers to every possible question.

LESSON 2

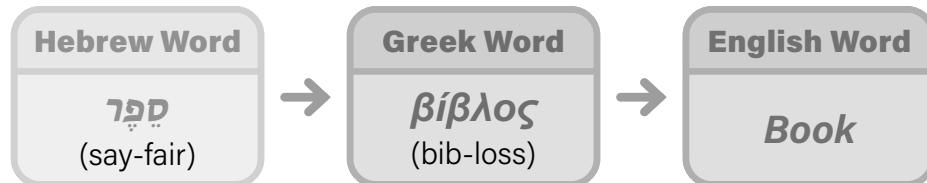
THEMES OF THE BIBLE

2-A WORDS OF TRUTH

People first wrote the Bible in languages other than English. Most of Scripture was written in Hebrew, and some was written in Greek. These two languages are very old. They look and sound different from English.

Translate

To change words from one language to another; to interpret



Look up the references below and read the verses. Then **translate** the **Hebrew** and **Greek** words into English.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the ...

אָרֶץ

E A R T H

Genesis 1:3

God said, "Let there be ...

אוֹר

L I G H T

Matthew 1:21

Mary will have a son, and you will call His name ...

Ἰησοῦν

J E S U S

Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the ...

κόσμου

W O R L D

Testament

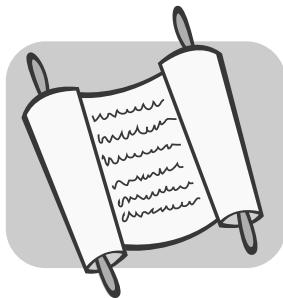
A promise or record; a name for the two major parts of the Bible

Israel

A name for God's chosen nation or people

2-B THE OLD TESTAMENT

The **Old Testament** was written thousands of years ago. These 39 books describe how God cared for the people of **Israel**. The Israelites were part of God's plan to share His love with the whole world.



Read the following verses. In each box, write the **letter** of the correct word.

C. Canaan**E. Egypt****I. Isaac****L. Law****P. Prophets****Prophet**

Someone chosen by God to share a message

**Genesis
21:3**

Abraham and Sarah had a son named I. This family was the beginning of the nation of Israel.

**Exodus
5:4**

For a long time, the king of E forced the Israelites to work for him.

**Exodus
24:12**

After God rescued the Israelites, He gave Moses a L written in stone.

**Leviticus
25:38**

God gave the land of C to the Israelites. This became their new home.

**Jeremiah
25:4-5**

Some Israelites did not follow God, so He sent P to warn them.

2-C THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament records many things that Jesus said and did while He was on Earth. These books also describe the work of Jesus' followers.



Read the following verses to complete the puzzle.

ACROSS

1. Matthew 2:1

Jesus was born in **B**_____, in Judea.



DOWN

2. Matthew 14:14

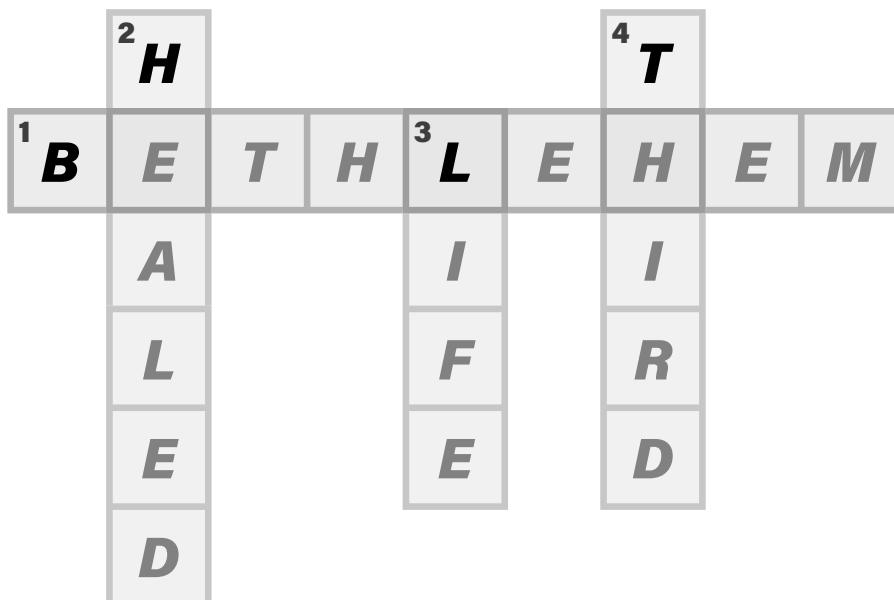
Jesus met many people and **h**_____ those who were sick.

3. John 14:6

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the **L**___."

4. Luke 18:33

Jesus promised that people would beat Him and kill Him. But on the **t** day, He would rise again.



FINDING GOD'S PROMISES

LS. 2 STORY: AN A-MAZE-ING DAY



LESSON 3

TRUSTING GOD

Scripture Memory – Hebrews 11:1

For the Teacher

This lesson presents several basic truths about God’s character. To illustrate God’s power and love, Sessions A and B feature biblical narratives. The session text summarizes the given Scripture while also suggesting specific verses to read. If you can blend Scripture-reading with modern-language summaries, you may gently introduce your students to biblical terms and phrasing.

For the Character Trait Activity, you may wish to provide drawing materials for your students.

Content Objectives

- 3-A** Jesus taught Peter about faith by helping him walk on water.
- 3-B** In the Parable of the Lost Son, the father pictured God’s love by welcoming the son back home.
- 3-C** We need faith to follow God and enjoy His gifts.

Learning Objectives

Students should be able to . . .

- Recall key points from Peter’s meeting with Jesus in the storm (Matt. 14:22–33)
- Define *faith* as a belief in something we cannot see or prove
- Define *parable* as a story that pictures a lesson
- Explain how the Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11–32) illustrates God’s love for people who turn back toward Him

Vocabulary

- **Disciple** – A student or follower who learns from a teacher
- **Faith** – A belief in something we cannot see or prove; trust in God
- **Parable** – A story that pictures a lesson

SESSION 3-A TRUSTING GOD'S POWER

Discuss Before Jesus died and rose again, He spent about three years healing and teaching people. During this time, He had many *disciples*. What does that word mean?

Disciple

A student or follower who learns from a teacher

Jesus taught people so that, after He returned to heaven, they could continue teaching others. Jesus had all kinds of disciples, and He chose twelve close disciples to follow Him wherever He traveled.

Prompt Before reading from Matthew 14, you may wish to introduce the exercise in **section 3-A** (SM pp. 12–13). Consider asking students to mark their answers as you read through the story.

Matthew 14 One day, after Jesus had been teaching people for a long time, He decided to spend some time alone. **Read Matthew 14:22–23.** Jesus sent His twelve close disciples ahead to the next town. They took a boat across the Sea of Galilee. This might normally be a peaceful trip, but suddenly, a storm rolled over them.

The waves beat against the boat, and the wind kept them from reaching land again. And then the disciples saw something even more frightening.

Read verses 24–25. At first, the disciples did not even recognize Jesus.

Read verses 26–27.

Discuss There weren't any ghosts or spirits walking around on the sea, but the men couldn't believe what they were seeing. If you were one of the disciples, how could you tell if that person out there was really Jesus?

Peter was one of the disciples in the boat. **Read verses 28–31.** Peter trusted Jesus enough to try walking on water, even though that's impossible. Peter believed in God's power. Peter did have a moment of doubt, but Jesus rescued Him and the rest of the disciples. **Read verses 32–33.** Through this storm, Jesus taught Peter to have more *faith* in God.

Faith

A belief in something we cannot see or prove; trust in God

Prompt Let students complete the exercise in **3-A** (SM pp. 12–13).

Target Truth We can trust God despite our troubles.

SESSION 3-B TRUSTING GOD'S LOVE

Explain When Jesus taught His disciples, He often told *parables* to help people understand things about God.

Parable

A story that pictures a lesson

Prompt Before reading from Luke 15, consider introducing the exercise in **section 3-B** (SM p. 14). Ask students to mark answers as you read.

Luke 15 One day, some religious leaders were complaining that Jesus spent too much time with people they didn't like. Jesus showed love to everyone—even people who did bad things.

Jesus explained that God cares about everyone. He told three stories about finding something that was lost (cf. Luke 15:3–33). The third story was the Parable of the Lost Son. In this parable, the father is a picture of God.

Read Luke 15:11–12. The younger son asked for his inheritance early. Then he took all that money and left his family behind. **Read verse 13.** In just a short time, the son had spent all his money while partying and having fun. He had no money left, and to make matters worse, the people in that country began to run out of food. The son had to find a hard, dirty job just to survive. **Read verses 15–17.**

But then the son had an idea. He remembered that even his father's workers lived better than this. Maybe if he apologized for doing wrong, his father might hire him as a servant. **Read verses 18–19.**

Discuss Do you think the son's plan worked? What might the father do?

Read verse 20. The son continued to tell his father that he had done wrong and that he wasn't even worthy to be called his son anymore. But the father was just so happy to see his son again. **Read verses 22–24.** Everyone prepared some food and threw a huge party.

Unfortunately, one person was not happy. The older brother, the one who had stayed home, got upset. **Read verse 28.** But the father explained that it was right for them to celebrate. **Read verses 31–32.** This is how God feels toward people who turn back toward Him.

Prompt Let students complete the exercise in **3-B** (SM pp. 14–15).

Target Truth We can trust God to forgive us when we turn back to Him.

SESSION 3-C FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

Discuss Who is someone that you trust? What kind of people do you *not* trust?

People can earn our trust by telling the truth and keeping their promises. But when people lie to us or break their promises, we learn not to trust them. They are not trustworthy or faithful.

Explain God teaches us to trust Him bit by bit. As we learn about God's promises and see Him keep them for us, we will have more and more faith.

- Sometimes, like Peter on the Sea of Galilee, we have to trust God to protect us. We have to step out and keep our eyes on Jesus.
- And sometimes, like the Lost Son in Jesus' parable, we have to trust God to still love us. When we do something wrong, we can pray to God and have faith that He'll forgive us.

If we don't trust, we cannot be close to God. We cannot learn from His Word, and we cannot enjoy the world He created. But if we do trust God, we can overcome our fears and do right.

Read-Aloud Story

Read the story on the following two pages ("A Rush of Fun"). Afterward, discuss the following.

- What helped Ben trust the zipline and choose to ride it?
- Imagine if Theo had made fun of Ben and forced him to go down the zipline. If Ben were forced to ride the zipline, could you really say that he trusted anything?
- It takes faith to choose to follow God. How can we help other people to trust God and do right? For example, if they doubt that God loves them, what can we do for them?

Prompt

Consider helping students look up the two references in **section 3-C** (SM p. 15) and then letting them fill in the blanks on their own.

Give students time to answer the open-ended question (SM p. 16), then ask volunteers to share their ideas. What good things will we do if we trust God?

As time allows, read **Psalm 37:1–9** together. This passage notes many things people will do if they trust in God.

Target Truth Faith helps us enjoy all of God's gifts.

LESSON 3 STORY: A RUSH OF FUN

Ben grabbed his hat and water bottle, then scrambled out of the tent after his big brother Theo. Ben almost felt ready for today.

Theo had just turned 18, and this was the first time the two brothers could go camping alone—with even Mom and Dad. This morning, Ben and Theo planned to hike up the mountain together.

On the park map, the trail seemed to go all the way to the top of the mountain, where people could find some great views of the valley below. There was also a platform with a zipline, which people could ride back down the mountain, instead of hiking.

As Ben and Theo set off along the trail, Theo seemed excited about the zipline, but Ben wasn't so sure. He asked, "So is the zipline safe? Like, really, really safe?"

Theo was quick to answer. "Oh, yeah, they've been using it for years. They wouldn't let people ride it if it wasn't safe."

That helped Ben for about a minute. Sure, people had been riding the zipline for years, but for how many years? Was it getting old? Did someone ever replace it?

Soon, Ben had to pay more attention to the trail. At first, the hike was easy. But after a half an hour, the path turned steeper and zigzagged up the mountain. The brothers heard a roar of water in the distance, and they eventually came to a giant waterfall, where they stopped to take pictures. In the pool below the falls, Ben spotted a long water snake.

Ben and Theo started hiking again, but they took a break every hour or so, stopping to drink some water and cool off in the breeze. Despite the rest, Ben's legs started to feel wobbly. Just as he began to wonder how far he could walk, the brothers rounded a large boulder and saw a sign that read "Zipline this way." It had an arrow pointing straight up, and Ben looked up to see a long wooden staircase built into the side of the mountain, leading all the way to the zipline platform.

"All right!" shouted Theo. "We made it!"

All of Ben's worries about the zipline came rushing back. "Yeah," he said, with much less enthusiasm. "I guess we're here."

Theo started up the stairs without waiting. "This is gonna be awesome! I've ridden on one of these only once before. You go flying way above the trees, and you can see for miles. I'm going to take a video while I'm riding down. Hey, what's up? Come on!"

Ben had not moved. "Can we wait a minute? I'm . . . I'm not sure I want to do the zipline, after all."

Theo paused. "Oh, wait, really? I think you're going to love it, though."

"But I've never been on a zipline before. How do you know we won't fall? I mean, do you know what would happen if someone fell from that high? That would be the end, Theo! *Splat!*" Ben shook his head. "You can go, but I'll just hike back down to the campsite."

Theo thought a moment. "We can't do that. Mom and Dad asked me to stick with you for the whole trip. If you take the trail back, I will too." He looked up the stairs. "I tell you what. Just walk up the steps to the platform and check it out. If you still don't want to go, we can hike back down."

"OK," Ben shrugged. "I guess."

The boys climbed the stairs, and Theo pointed at the platform. "Look, they built the zipline to be safe. See how thick those wooden supports and concrete blocks are? And see that? The end of the zipline isn't just tied to the pole—it's got anchors buried deep in the rock. You couldn't break that line with an elephant, much less a scrawny kid like you."

"Hey!" Ben yelled, but he looked at the platform again. It was true, the builders had made sure this zipline was strong and secure.

Story continued on next page »

They reached the platform and looked out over the valley. Theo took some pictures, and they both watched another family get ready to zip down. Theo pointed again.

“See the harness they’re wearing? It hooks up to the trolley—that’s the part that slides along the cable. The harness has three buckles. Even if one comes undone, the others will still hold. The park ranger will put the harness on you, and she’ll also check and double-check all the buckles. There’s no way you’re falling out of that.”

Ben watched the next few kids in line. Sure enough, each one of them was triple-buckled and double-checked. One little girl, after getting a final thumbs up from the ranger, stood at the edge of the platform for just a second, then jumped, laughing as she zipped out into the air. Ben could hear her yelling all the way down the mountain.

It really did look like a lot of fun, and that girl was even smaller than Ben. He thought through all of the safety checks and made a decision.

“All right,” said Ben. “I guess I’ll try it.”

“Yes!” yelled Theo, surprising everyone else on the platform. He stopped jumping and whispered to Ben, “Yeeesss—You won’t regret this!” Theo really wanted to ride the zipline—and he really, really didn’t want to hike back down the mountain.

Two more people went, and then it was Ben’s turn. One park ranger helped him get his legs through the harness, and another person checked everything, pulling on the straps and tightening all the buckles. Suddenly, Ben found himself at the edge of the platform. He could see the treetops below him. Somewhere, a crow cackled at him.

The ranger spoke up. “All you have to do is sit down and lift your feet—then you’ll be off!”

Ben gulped, said a quick prayer in his mind, and sat in the harness. The platform rushed away from him as he whirred through the air, far above the treetops. At first, his heart was pounding, but then he relaxed. It really was like flying! He let out a loud whoop and laughed.

Before he knew it, he was approaching the landing zone. He slowed down until his feet gently touched down, and someone helped him take off the harness. Ben had plenty of time to wait and see Theo come floating in to the landing platform. Theo was yelling just as much as that little girl had. The brothers gave each other a high five.

Theo seemed to be stuck at a loud volume. “That was awesome! . . . Wait! No! I forgot to take a video!”

Ben laughed. “Maybe we can do it again tomorrow!”

CHARACTER TRAIT ACTIVITY: FAITH

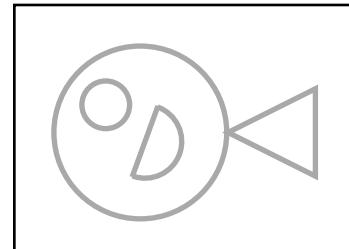
We show **faith** by trusting God even when we don't understand what He's doing.

Students will follow verbal instructions to draw a picture, one shape at a time. Give each student a marker or crayon and a blank piece of drawing paper. Warn them not to look at anyone else's paper during the activity. Read through the following steps, one at a time, giving students time to complete each before moving on to the next. You may wish to complete Drawing #1 together on the board, then ask students to complete Drawing #2 without any visual references.

Drawing #1

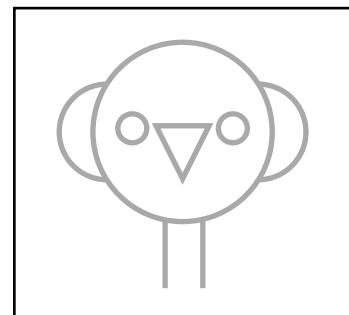
1. Draw a large circle.
2. Inside the large circle, draw a smaller circle at the top left.
3. On the right side of the large circle, draw a triangle so that one corner touches the edge of the large circle.
4. In the middle of the large circle, draw a half-circle.

Ask students what animal they think it is. It should look something like a fish.



Drawing #2

1. Draw a large circle.
2. In the middle of the large circle, draw a triangle with one corner pointing down.
3. On the left side of the triangle, draw a small circle.
4. On the right side of the triangle, draw a small circle.
5. On the left side of the large circle, draw the letter C. The C should touch the edge of the circle.
6. On the right side of the large circle, draw a backwards letter C to mirror the first. It too should touch the edge of the circle.
7. Below the large circle, draw two lines pointing straight down. They should start at the edge of the circle.



This second drawing should look something like a bird.

Explain that we often need to trust God when we don't understand what He's doing. He asks us to follow Him, do right, and show love, even when no one else rewards us. He may let us face troubles without any explanation. But we can trust Him to take care of us. He turns everything toward the good of those who love Him (cf. Rom. 8:28)

As time allows, let students color or embellish their drawings.

LESSON 3

TRUSTING GOD

3-A TRUSTING GOD'S POWER

While on Earth, Jesus taught many **disciples**. One of Jesus' closest disciples was a man named Peter, and he learned to trust Jesus in an amazing way.



Read each passage, and then mark which event came **first**.

Disciple

A student or follower who learns from a teacher

Matthew 14:22-23

Jesus climbed up a mountain to pray.

Jesus sent away His disciples and all the other people.

Matthew 14:24-25

Jesus walked on the water toward the disciples in the boat.

Wind and waves beat against the disciples' boat.

Matthew 14:26-27

The disciples saw Jesus and thought that He was a ghost or spirit.

Jesus told His disciples not to be afraid.

Matthew 14:28-29

Peter said that Jesus should tell him to come out on the water.

Jesus said to Peter, "Come."



Faith

A belief in something we cannot see or prove; trust in God

Matthew 14:30-31

Jesus asked Peter why he doubted.

Peter began to sink into the water.

Matthew 14:32-33

The wind stopped blowing.

The disciples worshiped Jesus, saying He had come from God.

Peter still doubted sometimes, but he continued to follow his Teacher. After Jesus died and rose again, Peter became an important leader in the Church. He taught many other people to have ***faith*** in God.

3-B TRUSTING GOD'S LOVE

Jesus told people about God's love, and He also *showed* them God's love by doing kind things. He healed people and served them. He had compassion even for people that everyone else hated.

To explain His kind of love, Jesus told a **parable** about a lost son and a forgiving father.

Parable

A story that pictures a lesson



Read the following passages and mark the best ending to each sentence.

Luke 15:13 – The younger son left his family and took his money to . . .

a country far away. a bank. his older brother.

Luke 15:15 – After he ran out of money, the son had to work by . . .

teaching. fishing. feeding pigs, or swine.

Luke 15:18-19 – Finally, the son decided to go . . .

to a different pig farmer. to his aunt's home. back to his father.

Luke 15:20 – When the father saw his son coming home, he . . .

warned the son to stay away. ran to him and hugged him. asked for all his money back.

Luke 15:24 – The father began to prepare a huge party. He said that his son had been dead, but was now . . .

alive. lost. very dead.

Luke 15:28 – The older son found out that his younger brother had returned. When he heard about the party, he was . . .

happy to see his brother. angry and did not go in. scared of his brother.

In Jesus' parable, the father explained why he had to celebrate. He loved both his sons, but one had wandered away. The father didn't care about all the wasted money. There was plenty of money left for the older son. The father was just so glad that his son had come back home safe.

God is more loving than any human. If humans can show love like the father in this parable, then God can, too.

So why did Jesus care for people who did wrong? Because He wanted them to come back to God, our Father.

3-C FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

Throughout Scripture, God asks us to trust Him. Many verses describe God's power and love, and it takes faith to believe that these words are true. Thankfully, God earns our trust by taking care of us. We can have faith because He is faithful to us.



Read the following passages. Complete the summary sentences by using the words below.

delight **desires** **gift** **lights** **Lord**

◦ **Psalm 37:4**

Delight yourself in the **Lord**, and He will give you the **desires** of your heart.

◦ **James 1:17**

Every good and perfect **gift** comes down from the Father of **lights**.

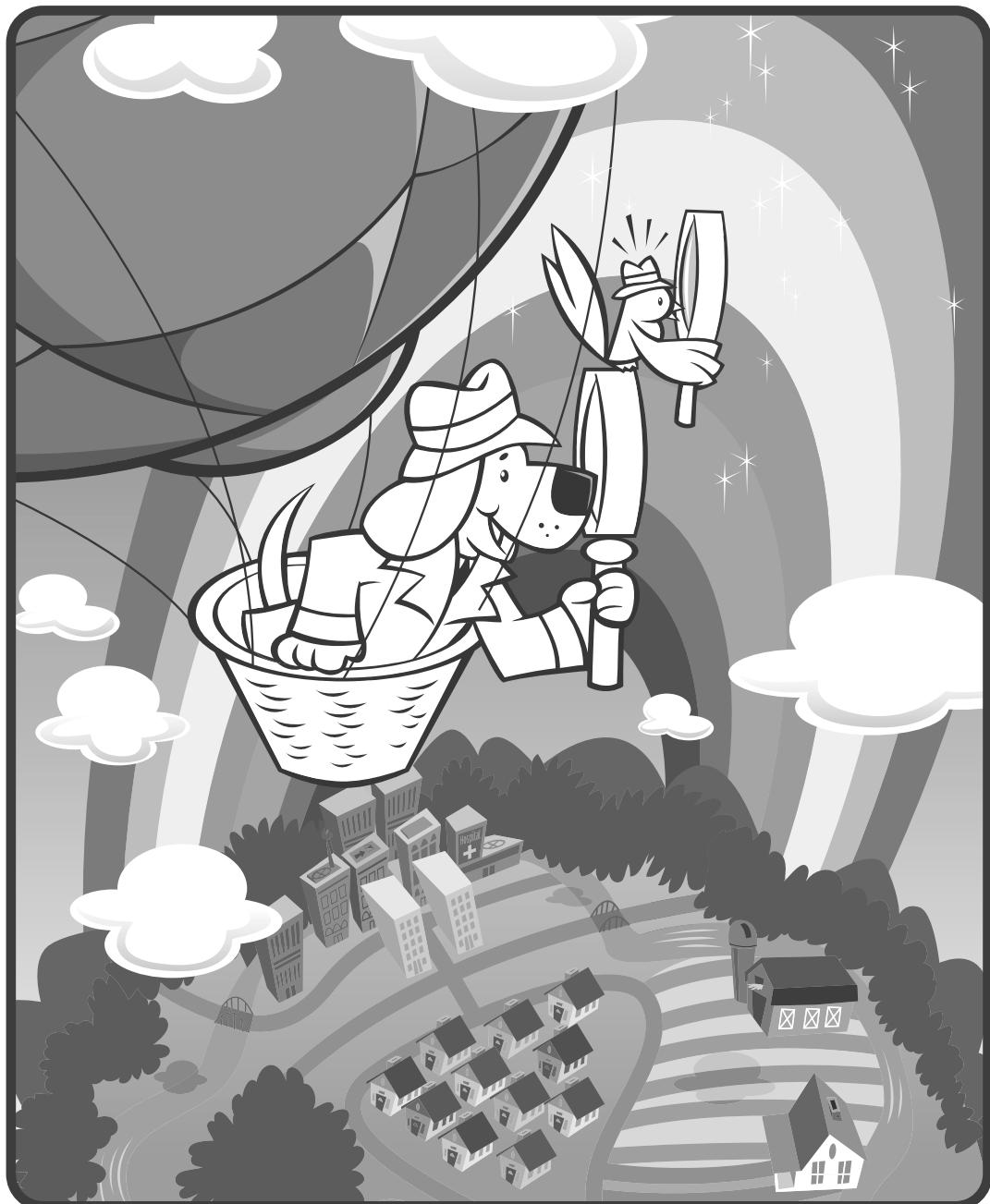
STUDENT MANUAL PAGES



If we believe that God loves us, we will try to pass on His love to others. Describe one way to show faithful love to people this week.

Answers will vary.

STUDENT MANUAL PAGES



FINDING GOD'S PROMISES

LS. 3 STORY: A RUSH OF FUN

