

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FORMATION CURRICULUM  
FOR MINISTRIES USING THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM  
IN THE PHILIPPINES

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project thesis was intended to develop a Christian education curriculum that would assist Christian organizations using the Alternative Learning System in the Philippines to effectively integrate biblical education and spiritual formation into the educational service they provide to out-of-school youth. It was intended to complement and enhance the ALS curriculum by applying adult learning methods to biblical content in order to provide a more holistic education for young people who have left the formal school system, with the goal of seeing their lives transformed.

Through my own observations and the perceptions of a focus group consisting of experienced ALS providers, the educational and spiritual needs of ALS learners were described and the felt needs of the providers themselves were determined. The needs of the learners related primarily to their identity and outlook on life, their lack of biblical knowledge and their need for a life-transforming relationship with God through Christ. The focus group felt a need for a Christian education and values formation curriculum designed for use with ALS learners that, while reinforcing the objectives of the ALS curriculum, would directly address the learners' above-mentioned needs, be Bible-based and have enough flexibility to be adaptable to the variations in ALS learning centers.

These findings were considered in light of the literature review which explored aspects of the adult education philosophy of the ALS curriculum and spiritual formation theory and practice. Other Christian education curriculum resources were examined in light of the felt needs and, though deemed less than ideal for the context themselves, contributed in various ways to this study. A discovery Bible study format derived from the Praxis Cycle of John C. Lai which emphasizes interpretation, application and

reflection through group discussion was designed and applied to a series of forty-four chronological Bible stories.

Once an initial draft of the curriculum resources were nearing completion, samples of the facilitator orientation materials and lesson guides were distributed to the focus group and other ALS practitioners for analysis and application, and a survey was distributed to collect their feedback. It was not possible for the curriculum resources to be thoroughly tested during the course of this study. However, based on the responses of the ALS providers who evaluated the sample materials, it seems the curriculum, entitled *Exploring God's Story: a Spiritual Formation Curriculum for Youth Based on Chronological Bible Stories from Genesis to Revelation* has potential to achieve the desired outcomes.

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	x
CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND	
Background of the Study .....	1
Theoretical Framework .....	8
Conceptual Framework .....	12
Thesis Statement.....	14
Significance of Study .....	14
Assumptions .....	15
Definition of Terms .....	16
Scope and Delimitations of the Study.....	18
CHAPTER 2: SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE	
Motivation .....	20
The Need for Holistic Education for the Poor.....	24
Philosophy of Education .....	25
Educating Toward Christian Spiritual Formation in the Philippine Context ..	39
Curriculum Design .....	53
CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES	
Objectives .....	55
Procedures .....	56

Strategy .....	58
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	
Analysis .....	59
Design .....	66
Development .....	68
CHAPTER 5: CURRICULUM RESOURCE MATERIALS	
<i>Exploring God’s Story: A Spiritual Formation Curriculum for Youth     Based on Chronological Bible Stories from Genesis to Revelation</i> .....	72
PART 1: ORIENTATION .....	76
PART 2: LESSON OUTLINES .....	85
PART 3: RESOURCES .....	176
PART 4: DISCOVERY JOURNAL SAMPLE .....	192
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary .....	216
Conclusions .....	217
Recommendations .....	220
APPENDIX A: Survey of Christian ALS Providers .....	224
APPENDIX B: Feedback Instrument for Curriculum Resource Sample Materials . . .	225
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	226
CURRICULUM VITAE .....	232

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I am also deeply indebted to my ministry partners and members of the Integrated Christian Coalition of Alternative Learning System in Manila who introduced me to the possibility of using ALS education as a vehicle for ministry outreach to out-of-school youth and encouraged me to become involved as a service provider. Their passion and vision for expanding God's Kingdom among underserved Filipino youth encouraged me to accept the challenge of tackling such an extensive curriculum writing project. Special thanks goes to visionary Fe Foronda of Philippine Children's Ministries Network, Rev. R.G. Foncardas, Jr., who gave approval to opening Shining Stars Alternative Learning Center at Greenhills Christian Fellowship East, and Kathleen Cerezo-Salas, Instructional Manager *par excellence*, and to all of those who served as part of my focus group.

Above all, I thank my God and Savior. It is because of His enabling and for His glory that this work has been accomplished. Blessed be His name in all the earth!

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: ALS Learning Strands and Major Indicators . . . . .	8
Table 2: Knowles' Comparison of Pedagogy and Andragogy . . . . .	26
Table 3: Feedback Survey Results, Questions 1-3, 6 and 7 . . . . .	68
Table 4: Correspondence of Perceived Needs with the Ways Those Needs are Met by the Resources . . . . .	217



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Praxis Cycle .....	11
Figure 2: Adaptation of Lai's Praxis Cycle for Curriculum Design .....	12
Figure 3: The Spiritual Formation Curriculum Design Process .....	14
Figure 4: The 4 A's of Adult Learning .....	33

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Alliance of Concerned Teachers
ALS	Alternative Learning System
BALS	Bureau of Alternative Learning System
CBS	Chronological Bible Storying
iCalls	Integrated Christian Coalition of Alternative Learning System
IM	Instructional Manager
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OSA	Out-of-School Adult
OSY	Out-of-School Youth
SEAMEO-INNOTECH	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology
SSALC	Shining Stars Alternative Learning Center
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

### Background of the Study

The government of the Philippines has provided a useful tool for Christian churches and non-government organizations (NGOs) to use in their outreach to a marginalized sector of society: those who for various reasons, primarily economic, have not been able to complete elementary and secondary levels of education. The program, called Alternative Learning System (ALS), is a non-formal educational strategy that comes from the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS), a division of the Department of Education of the Philippines. BALS readily cooperates with NGOs which have contact with their target constituency: out-of-school youths (OSYs) and out-of-school adults (OSAs), meaning adults who were unable to graduate from high school. According to the training manual, the ALS Learning and Support Delivery System involves “inter-agency partnerships with non-government organizations, local government units, state universities and colleges and other organizations to provide learners a range of flexible learning support services in order that they may continue their learning outside of the formal school system.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the Alternative Learning System was obtained by attending the workshop entitled, “Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System, Accreditation and Equivalency, and Learning Support Delivery System” held at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 30 June to 4 July, 2009. The workshop was a cooperative effort between the Philippine Children’s Ministries Network and the Bureau of Alternative Learning System. Printed information was provided in a manual without bibliographic information or pagination.

The Alternative Learning System has helped thousands of Filipinos (72,076 in 2013 alone<sup>2</sup>) to gain the equivalent of a high school diploma. The program is relatively low-cost to the provider and free to the learner, but perhaps its greatest advantage is its flexibility. Because the ALS is a collection of over two hundred independent self-study modules, learners are able to work through the program at their own pace rather than having to conform to a rigid formal school schedule. This allows ALS providers to accommodate the concerns that caused the learners to leave school in the first place: livelihood pursuit, poor health, caring for children or younger siblings, or lack of money for daily fare and school supplies. ALS learning centers take advantage of this flexibility in a variety of ways. Meeting times vary from one to five days per week to accommodate the schedules of both the Instructional Managers (the term used for facilitators) and the learners. Meeting venues vary as well and include extension locations and mobile services to accommodate those in remote places. In addition, there are no restrictions on how the curriculum may be supplemented in order to enhance the learning experience.

Churches and NGOs that have an interest in providing a holistic ministry to the poor are finding the form of education provided through the Alternative Learning System to be practical because, in the process of meeting a need for education and social empowerment, it also opens doors for meeting spiritual needs. While the aim of the ALS modules is to prepare the learners to pass the annual Accreditation and Equivalency test, these Christian organizations seek to equip the learners with life skills that will contribute to a more successful life in general and introduce them to a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ as well.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Education, "DepEd releases 2013 ALS A&E test results," *Official Gazette*, 26 February 2014, <http://www.gov.ph/2014/02/26/deped-releases-2013-als-ae-test-results/>, (accessed 13 March 2014).

According to Rick Bell of Bright Lights Learning Center, an ALS center established by and located in their church, Cells Alive Christian Fellowship, becoming involved in educating OSYs from their vicinity has opened doors for evangelism and discipleship. As a result, a church has been planted in the community from which the students come. Students who began as street children have graduated, continued on to college or university, and are now actually Instructional Managers and assistants at Bright Lights Learning Center. Many of them are now involved in the church in a variety of key leadership positions.<sup>3</sup>

I have lived as a foreign missionary in the Philippines for over twenty years and have observed the need for an alternative to the public school system. While private schools abound, they generally do not meet the need of the poor. Overcrowding in the public schools is a major problem. According to statistics published by the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, classroom shortages for the nation were expected to be over 60,000, teacher shortages over 50,000, and the seating shortage over 800,000.<sup>4</sup> Antonio Tinio, the ACT national chairperson at that time, asserted in a media briefing that “public school education in the [Gloria Macapagal-]Arroyo years [2001-2010] is characterised by oversized classes with 60 or more students, contributing to a further decline in the quality of education.”<sup>5</sup>

Under such conditions, attention to individual student needs is an unaffordable luxury. Some students lack the physical stamina or financial resources needed to get to

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<sup>3</sup> Rick Bell, director of Bright Lights Learning Center, informal interview by author, 17 June 2009, Cainta, Rizal, Philippines.

<sup>4</sup> Alliance of Concerned Teachers, “Teachers protest education budget cut as new school year opens,” 2010, [www.actphils.com/node/188](http://www.actphils.com/node/188) (accessed 2 January 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Karl Wilson, “School drop-out rates highlight lost decade of education in Philippines,” *The National*, 28 June 2010, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/asia-pacific/school-drop-out-rates-highlight-lost-decade-of-education-in-philippines#full> (accessed 2 January 2012).

school regularly enough to progress through the system. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics published on its website that for the year 2009, primary school enrollment in the Philippines was almost 14 million<sup>6</sup> while secondary enrollment was less than 2 million.<sup>7</sup> According to a study published by SEAMEO-INNOTECH, an organization dedicated to identifying and developing solutions to the education problems and needs of Southeast Asian nations, “a typical cohort [in the Philippines] over the past 30 years reveals that for every 100 children entering Grade 1 at either 6 or 7 years of age, 15 of them would not proceed to Grade 2. Of the 85 left by end of Grade 2, another 9 will drop out by Grade 4, leaving 76 children from the original hundred. Sixty eight percent (68%) of the cohort will reach Grade 6 with close to 66% graduating. Of this number, 58 will move up to secondary education with 43 graduating.”<sup>8</sup> Obviously, when over 50% of school children are dropping out before graduating from high school, the result is a very large number of out-of-school youth! The lack of a high school diploma has far-reaching implications not only for continuing education but for employment and economic advancement. To address this problem, the Bureau of Alternative Learning System was created (originally as the Bureau of Non-Formal Education) and mandated to develop an accreditation and equivalency system that would enable those who have left the formal school system to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> UNESCO Institute of Statistics, “UNdata: a world of information,” [http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=UNESCO&f=series%3aE\\_1](http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=UNESCO&f=series%3aE_1) (accessed 23 January 2012).

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO Institute of Statistics, “UNdata: a world of information,” [http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=UNESCO&f=series%3aSAP\\_3](http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=UNESCO&f=series%3aSAP_3) (accessed 23 January 2012).

<sup>8</sup> SEAMEO-INNOTECH, “Access to and Demand for Secondary Education in the Philippines: a policy review and assessment study,” (no date given, no longer available). These statistics were found in two additional on-line sources, citing Dep-Ed, 2005, as the original source.

<sup>9</sup> National Literacy Policies: Philippines, [www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/policy/phl/index.htm](http://www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/policy/phl/index.htm), (accessed 16 January 2012).

But more important to me than the pervasive educational needs are the spiritual needs of the youth of this country. While an education is very important, it is possible to live a fulfilling life without a high school diploma. Consider Manny Pacquiao, who became the nation's well-loved boxing hero prior to passing the 2006 Accreditation and Equivalency test.<sup>10</sup> It is also possible, as innumerable broken marriages and suicides attest, to be well-educated yet miserable if one is not in a right relationship with God and others. I have long felt that the teen and young adult years are the most critical decision-making years of a person's life because, in most cases, the decisions made during this period, such as those regarding lifestyle, education, sexual activity, and marriage, set the course for the remainder of a person's life. The age range targeted by this project, 15 to 25 years, is a critical time period in the life of every young person as they move from adolescence to responsible adult.

In the terms of James Fowler's *Stages of Faith*, adolescents generally operate from a "conventional" mode in which they are content to believe, without much consideration, whatever those around them believe.<sup>11</sup> As they move into young adulthood, however, they have the capacity to begin considering other perspectives, questioning the norms and developing their own convictions. Fowler refers to this as "the emergence of an *executive ego*" that is willing to take responsibility for personal decisions.<sup>12</sup> Decisions that will bring about good outcomes require a reliable foundation and convictions that are strong enough to go against societal norms. The decisions and

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<sup>10</sup> Jerry E. Esplanada, "Pacquiao 'graduates' from high school," *Inquirer*, 22 Feb 2007, [http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/sports/view/20070222-51049/Pacquiao\\_%91graduates%92\\_from\\_high\\_school](http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/sports/view/20070222-51049/Pacquiao_%91graduates%92_from_high_school), (accessed 12 March 12, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1981), 167.

<sup>12</sup> Fowler, 179.

the convictions behind them must be founded on the Word of God and a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Psa. 19:1-16, 105, Acts 17:24-31, Rom. 5:1-5, Col.1: 15-23, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.) Therefore, I believe, the most important decision a person can make is to align with God's purpose and plan for His creation rather than simply conforming to cultural expectations. What better time to make that decision than in one's youth? The passion and energy of youth, harnessed by the Spirit of God for His purposes, is a powerful force for the propagation of His Kingdom (see Eph. 1:3-10, 2:1-10 and 2 Timothy 2:20-21).

This conviction and my personal desire to obey the Greatest Commandments (Matthew 22:37-38) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) have motivated me to look for ways to communicate God's truth to young people. When I learned of the Alternative Learning System and how it was being used by Cells Alive Christian Fellowship, I was struck with what a great opportunity it provides for a church to meet a real need in its community, and the tremendous potential it holds for bringing the transforming power of the Gospel into the lives of those who might otherwise be unreachable. I was inspired to join with others from my local church, Greenhills Christian Fellowship East, to start the Shining Stars Alternative Learning Center (SSALC), and have served as its administrator since September, 2010. During that time, I have felt the need for a Christian education curriculum that would help us meet the spiritual needs of our ALS learners. I am blessed with a gifted staff of committed Christians who are resourceful and experienced in sharing the Word of God. But it is always a problem, whenever we finish a Bible study series, to decide what to do next during "devotions," the time devoted each day to focusing on spiritual things. Though, by the grace of God,



our Bible lessons have produced favorable results in the lives of these young people, a well-rounded base for spiritual transformation has not necessarily been provided.

SSALC is passionate about providing our learners with a biblical foundation and the tools needed for developing a healthy spirituality that will guide them long after they leave our realm of influence. A comprehensive plan is needed.

From 2008 to 2010, I had the privilege and challenge of participating on a student curriculum-writing team from Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary as part of the Master of Arts in Religious Education program. Working through the process of developing the concept and design of that curriculum, which also targeted youth, equipped and inspired me to design a Christian education curriculum for a very specific target group: learners in ALS programs sponsored by evangelical churches and organizations.

From my initial inquiries into the practices of other faith-based ALS centers, conducted when we were preparing to open our learning center, there appeared to be no consistent method or process by which they approach the spiritual aspect of their education programs. The centers that I have visited use varied approaches such as adapting imported materials for youth or creating their own curricula as they go along in the development of their programs. One pastor that I met said that he had written his own curriculum based on the felt needs and real-life issues of the students. While meeting felt needs and addressing real-life issues is essential, this approach may not provide a reliable biblical foundation for spiritual growth.

## Theoretical Framework

The framework for this curriculum project was derived in part from that of the Alternative Learning System itself. The ALS mission, as stated in the training materials, is to provide an alternative pathway of learning that will “empower Filipino out-of-school youth and adults to continue to learn on their own so they may improve their quality of life and that of their family, community and country.”<sup>13</sup> The curriculum includes modules in five “Learning Strands” with the following primary objectives:

Table 1. ALS Learning Strands and Major Indicators<sup>14</sup>

<b>Learning Strands</b>	<b>Major Indicators</b>
Communication Skills	Clearly express ideas and feelings orally and non-verbally Ability to listen, read, comprehend and respond to ideas presented Ability to process and utilize available basic and multimedia information
Problem Solving & Critical Thinking	Numeracy skills To be aware of options and open to change Ability to make critical and informed decisions Innovativeness and creativity Scientific thinking Future orientation
Sustainable Use of Resources/Productivity	Ability to earn a living Sustainable use of resources (including time) and appropriate technology Entrepreneurship and Productivity
Development of Self and a Sense of Community	Self development (self awareness, self discipline, sense of responsibility, self worth self realization, relationship development, ability to participate with others) National identity (humanitarian, patriotic, pious) Knowledge of one’s history, pride in one’s culture and respect for those of others Recognition and practice of civil and political rights
Expanding One’s World Vision	Knowledge, acceptance, respect and appreciation of diversity Peace (nonviolent resolution of conflicts) Global (awareness, interdependence and solidarity)

<sup>13</sup> “Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System, Accreditation and Equivalency, and Learning Support Delivery System” training manual, no page number available.

<sup>14</sup> “Training of Instructional Managers,” no page number available.

The modules fall into three levels: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary and Secondary. Learners are tested when they enter the program to determine their starting level. Learners are supposed to be allowed to choose the modules they wish to study in order to achieve their learning goals. Each of the many modules contains three or four self-study lessons that the learners accomplish at their own pace. However, Instructional Managers are expected to create group sessions from the modules and to supplement them with additional activities or materials in order to cater to varying learning styles. Active and collaborative learning strategies, such as group discussions, group projects and role playing are encouraged. Studying the modules prepares the learners to take the Accreditation and Equivalency test. This exam, offered annually by the Department of Education, is comprised of two main sections of equal weight: a multiple choice section that covers content from all five Learning Strands and an essay section requiring the examinee to write on a given topic in Filipino or English. To pass the test, the learner must get passing scores in both sections.

The teaching methodology for the ALS curriculum is stated to be based on andragogy, the science of adult learning. Though he is not credited, the learning theory behind the methodology is clearly derived from Malcolm Knowles, whose principles of adult learning<sup>15</sup> are given in the training materials. According to these materials, andragogy, rather than pedagogy, is the preferred approach in view of the clientele for which it was designed.<sup>16</sup> While this learner-centered philosophy of education runs counter to the traditional Philippine educational model, a respect for the motivations,

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<sup>15</sup> Malcolm Knowles, "An Adult Educator's Reflections on Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle" in *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*, ed. Kenneth Stokes (New York: William H. Sadlier, Inc., 1993), 66-67.

<sup>16</sup> "Training of Instructional Managers."

experience and reasoning ability of older learners seems appropriate, especially in light of the ALS mission and objectives. Even if the learners are unprepared to respond like adults upon entering the program, showing respect for their opinions and life experience and treating them like self-directed individuals will encourage them to begin thinking for themselves. This is essential not only for developing a healthy identity and critical thinking skills but for forming a genuine faith. The kinds of reasoning and life skills reflected in the ALS mission and major indicators are important for all aspects of life, including the spiritual. The process of becoming like Christ is a life-long pursuit and requires the ability to read and reflect on God's Word, applying it to everyday practical situations within a community. Practicing the skills reflected in the indicators above with biblical content will presumably enhance the learners' capacity to reason, process and communicate in ways that will benefit them in all areas of life and learning.

Also evident in the ALS approach to learning is the educational philosophy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire was highly influential in the development of emancipatory education for the oppressed. His "popular education," also called education for critical consciousness, is "a process which aims to empower people who feel marginalized . . . to take control of their own learning and to effect social change" through "a collective effort in which a high degree of participation is expected from everybody."<sup>17</sup> Freire sought to eliminate the hierarchical elements pervasive in traditional education in order to empower the common people. His philosophy is evident in the ALS nomenclature which diverges from traditional terminology. For example, rather than students and teachers, the ALS refers to learners and facilitators or

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<sup>17</sup> Peace and Environmental Resource Center, "What exactly is Popular Education, anyway?" in *Bob Hale Youth College for Social Justice : Participants' Handbook*, (Ottawa, Ontario: 2002), <http://207.112.105.217/library/resources/social-justice/bob-hale/p04.html>, (accessed 26 April 2012), 4.

Instructional Managers. Rather than subjects and classes, the ALS has learning strands and learning groups. Freire believed solving real-life problems through dialogue to be the kind of education that liberates people and transforms their lives.

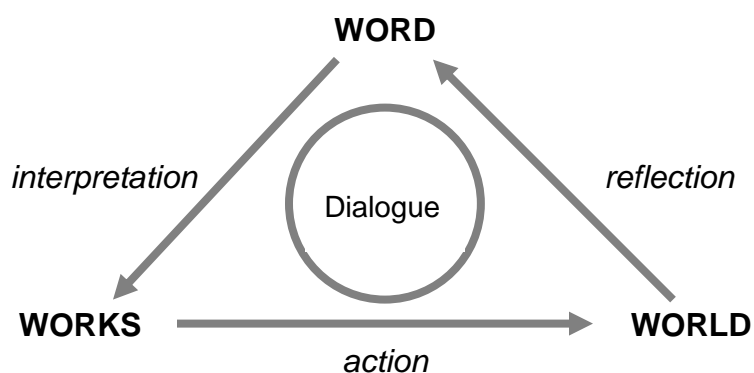


Figure 1. The Praxis Cycle<sup>18</sup>

The “praxis cycle” of John C. Lai (see Figure 1) finds its roots in Freire’s philosophy of “problem posing” popular education. Lai’s model is similar to David Kolb’s experiential learning model<sup>19</sup> which also has roots in Freire’s philosophy and is included in the BALS training manual. Both models encourage analysis of, reflection on and application of the learning content. However, Lai’s model specifically applies the learning cycle to biblical principles with the goal of encouraging the learners to think for themselves and discover their own applications of God’s Word to their own life situations.

Because the goal of spiritual formation is to bring about emancipation and transformation in the life of the learner, this learner-centered, participatory, problem-

<sup>18</sup> Used by permission from John C. Lai, “Andragogy of the Oppressed: Emancipatory Education for Christian Adults” (Felding Institute, HOD Program, 1995) [Database on-line]; available from ERIC, ED 396104, 24.

<sup>19</sup> David A. Kolb and Ronald Fry, “Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning,” in *Theories of Group Processes*, ed. Cary L. Cooper (New York, NY: John Wiley and sons, 1975), 33.

solving approach was considered appropriate as a theoretical framework for the development of a Christian spiritual formation curriculum to supplement the Alternative Learning System.

### Conceptual Framework

Although adult education is considered to be “learner centered,” as opposed to content or context centered, Robert W. Pazmiño points out the necessity of presenting the inalterable truths of the Word of God.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the curriculum includes what Edwin de Jong refers to as the “great things” of the Christian faith—deliberate teaching of content yet with flexibility and an emphasis on experiential learning.<sup>21</sup>

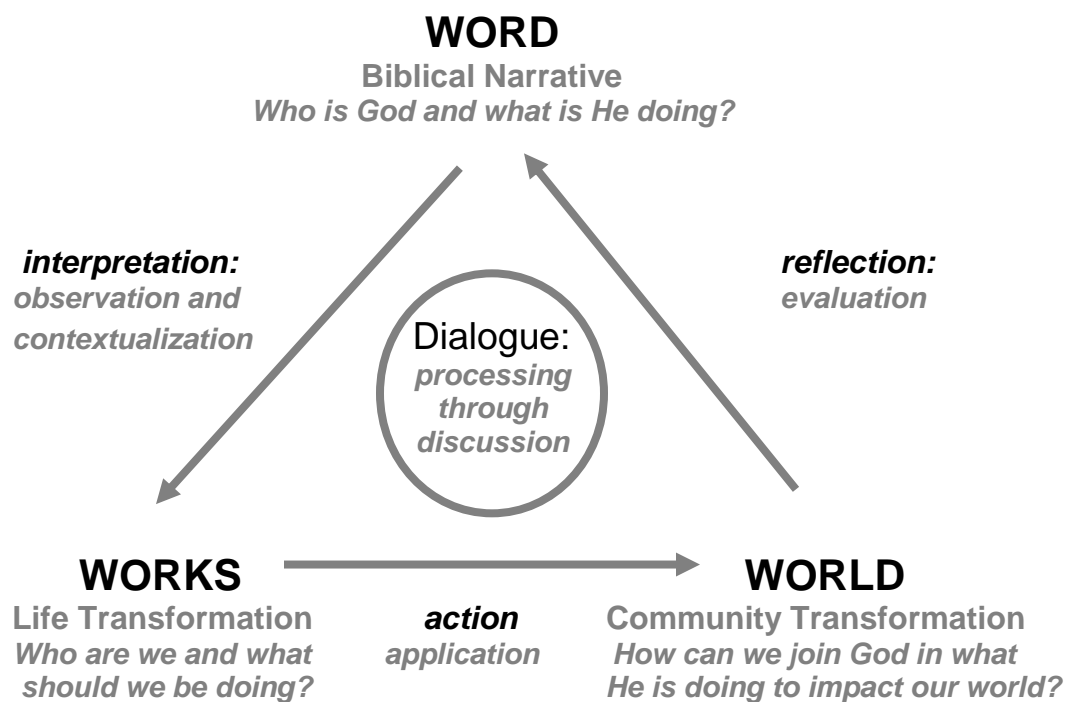


Figure 2. Adaptation of Lai’s Praxis Cycle for Curriculum Design

<sup>20</sup> Robert W. Pazmiño, “Adult Education with Persons from Ethnic Minority Communities,” in *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Adult Education*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 283.

<sup>21</sup> Edwin de Jong, “A European Philosophy of Congregational Education” (Gottmadingen, Germany, undated), [http://didache.nts.edu/pdfs/6-1\\_deJong.pdf](http://didache.nts.edu/pdfs/6-1_deJong.pdf), (accessed 22 September 2009), 2-3.

Figure 2 illustrates how the curriculum applies the praxis cycle to the biblical content. Each lesson begins with a question or activity that prepares the learner to relate to what they are about to hear by reflecting first on their own lives. This is followed by the presentation of a story directly from Scripture. Processing this content begins as the learners retell the story to each other. Sample discussion questions are provided for the facilitator to guide the learners in discovering what the story reveals about God and what He is doing in the world, and about ourselves and what God intends for us to be and do. Through dialogue, the learners and facilitator investigate together what the biblical narrative says to their own context and consider how to put into practice their discoveries. The curriculum provides suggestions for encouraging the learners to produce an “Action Plan” that they will apply either individually or corporately. The cycle continues during the next session when learners are asked to reflect on previous stories and what happened when they applied their Action Plans.

Additional opportunities for interpretation, action and reflection are given in the learner’s Discovery Journal. Occasionally, these include short writing assignments which, in addition to encouraging interpretation and reflection, allow the learner to practice written communication skills. These and the entire praxis cycle encourage participation, analytical thinking and personal expression, both verbal and written, in support of the greater ALS goals.

The concepts for the curriculum resources were approved by and developed in collaboration with other Christian ALS providers who provided input and feedback as shown in the following diagram:

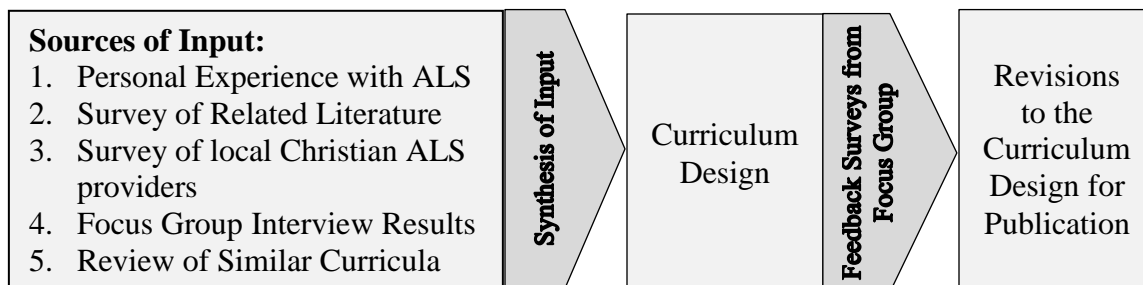


Figure 3: The Spiritual Formation Curriculum Design Process

### **Thesis Statement**

The purpose of this project was to develop a Christian spiritual formation curriculum that would complement the Alternative Learning System curriculum. It includes a facilitator's guide for implementation, curriculum goals, a content outline, and a learner's discovery guide. It was designed to assist Christian organizations using ALS to effectively integrate biblical education and spiritual formation into the educational service they provide for young people ages 15 to 25 years. In order to do this, answers to the following research questions needed to be determined: Do existing ALS centers targeting out-of-school youth feel the need for a spiritual formation curriculum? If so, what do they believe this curriculum should include? What format would provide the flexibility needed for the varied schedules utilized by different organizations?

### **Significance of the Study**

While Christian education and values formation curricula are available on the Philippine market for use in churches and public and private elementary and high schools, no Christian education curriculum intended for use in conjunction with the Alternative Learning System has been published to date. With at least 50% of Filipino youth out of school, there is obviously a huge need for alternative education for teens and



young adults. Churches and Christian NGOs are helping to meet this need. A Christian education curriculum emphasizing biblical foundations for faith and spiritual formation would be a great asset to those churches and organizations who are taking, or will take in the future, the opportunity to use ALS as an avenue for meeting the needs of out-of-school youth.

### **Assumptions**

While it was assumed that every faith-based ALS center will have its own resources, needs and circumstances as well as its own philosophy of Christian education, it was also assumed that there are points of similarity and identification with other faith-based ALS centers. If there were recommended guidelines or a suggested Christian educational curriculum available specifically for establishing church-based ALS centers, it would be easier for a church to get started in this kind of ministry. Perhaps more churches would be inspired to engage in holistic ministry to disadvantaged youth.

The ALS curriculum touches on moral, ethical and religious issues, but it does not espouse any religion and is designed not to offend adherents of any religion. It may leave the impression that all religions are of equal validity. It was assumed that a Christian organization would wish to correct erroneous thinking about world religions and local cults and establish a basis for truth that would enable the learners to distinguish biblical truth from error as they study the modules.

Rather than detracting from the goals of the ALS curriculum, it was assumed that a learner-centered, dialogue-based spiritual formation curriculum would enhance the learners' ability to think analytically and thereby equip them to better understand the ALS modules and pass the Accreditation and Equivalency test.

It was assumed that administrators or Instructional Managers from several Christian ALS centers in Rizal and the National Capital Region would be willing to serve as a focus group for input and evaluation of the proposed curriculum during the process of development. It was also assumed that their input would be representative of other Christian ALS centers in Metro Manila.

Based on personal observations in my own experience as an ALS provider, it was assumed that most learners will stay with an ALS program for at least one 10-month school year prior to passing the Accreditation and Equivalency test, so a curriculum spanning a year's time is appropriate.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Alternative Learning System.* According to the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, Republic Act 9155, the Alternative Learning System “is a parallel learning system to provide a viable alternative to the existing formal education instruction.”<sup>22</sup> The specific system referred to in this study is the *Accreditation and Equivalency Program*, “a certification of learning for out-of-school youth and adults aged 15 years and above, who are unable to avail of the formal school system, or who have dropped out of formal elementary or secondary education.”<sup>23</sup>

*Curriculum* may be defined in many ways, but for the purpose of this study, a definition will be adapted from Christian education expert Robert Pazmiño: curriculum is the content made available to learners under the guidance of a facilitator who plans

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<sup>22</sup> Philippine Congress, *Republic Act Number 9155: Governance of Basic Education act of 2001*, available from Chan Robles Virtual Law Library at <http://www.chanrobles.com/republicactno9155.html> (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System, Accreditation and Equivalency, and Learning Support Delivery System training manual.

learning experiences and fosters a reflective process designed to contribute to the learners' information, formation and transformation.<sup>24</sup>

*Instructional Manager* is the term used in the Bureau of Alternative Learning System training materials to refer to a curriculum facilitator of the Alternative Learning System. The Instructional Manager (IM) is “the key learning support person in the Alternative Learning System Learning Support Delivery System.”<sup>25</sup> In keeping with the philosophy of learner-centered adult education, the more hierarchical term *teacher* is avoided.

*Street children*, in this study, refers to out-of-school children and youth who “spend a majority of their time on the street because that is where they earn their livelihood.”<sup>26</sup> It does not necessarily mean that they are homeless. Often they are working as vendors or beggars on the streets to supplement the family income but return home to their communities regularly. This category of street children, referred to as *children on the street* by the 2004 Consortium for Street Children, is estimated to be approximately 70 percent of the entire street children population.<sup>27</sup>

*Spiritual formation*, also referred to as *Christian formation* in the literature, refers to the process of spiritual growth and transformation that takes place as a person integrates scriptural truth with daily life to become what God intended. It is not merely

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<sup>24</sup> Robert W. Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 232.

<sup>25</sup> Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System, Accreditation and Equivalency, and Learning Support Delivery System training manual.

<sup>26</sup> Catherine Scerri, *Sagip or Huli? Rescue of Street Children in Caloocan, Manila, Pasay and Quezon Cities*, (Manila: Bahay Tuluyan, 2004), 19.

<sup>27</sup> Henry Ruiz, “A Study of Policies and Programmes in the Philippines Addressing the Right of Street Children to Education,” National Research Coordinator, Childhope Asia Philippines, n.d, 11.

an accumulation of biblical knowledge. It is a holistic process involving “the whole person, not only with a soul to be saved or a mind to be taught.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

The scope of this study was to design a Christian education curriculum which would provide basic Bible knowledge and spiritual formation principles, with the intention of helping faith-based ALS centers offer a holistic education from a Christian worldview.

This study included an investigation of what curricula faith-based ALS centers are currently using to supplement the ALS curriculum for the purpose of Christian education. This involved a survey of and interviews with administrators and Instructional Managers from the member organizations of the Integrated Christian Coalition of Alternative Learning System (iCalls) to discover what they have been doing in the past and what their felt needs are in regard to spiritual formation curriculum. This group has served as consultants in the process of developing the curriculum.

While the Department of Education intends that the Alternative Learning System be used with learners of any age over 15, the curriculum was designed with out-of-school youth, ages 15 to 25, as the primary target group. Because these learners have dropped out of the formal schooling system at various stages, a wide range in academic capability was taken into account. The curriculum was based on compliance with the philosophy of non-formal education, the principles of andragogy, and presentation of content that includes essential stories, doctrines and spiritual formation principles found in the Word of God.

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<sup>28</sup> John M. Dettoni, “What is Spiritual Formation?” in *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 13.

This curriculum was designed for use over a one-year time period. It includes an instructional guide and lesson outlines for the facilitator and a journal for the learner. These describe the core elements of the curriculum and help facilitators adapt the curriculum to their particular situations. Due to the limitations and time constraints of a thesis project, this curriculum does not include a plethora of learning activities, but rather guidelines for how the curriculum might be implemented in keeping with the principles of andragogy. Facilitators will be expected to look for creative ways in which they, together with the learners, can apply the praxis cycle to the curriculum content.

## CHAPTER 2: SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE, STUDIES AND WORKS

Before a curriculum for the spiritual formation of ALS learners could be designed and written, a thorough survey of topics relating to the ways young people learn and how spiritual formation takes place needed to be conducted. This chapter will look at some of the theories and studies behind personal and community transformation, particularly as it relates to meeting the needs of the poor, the educational philosophy of andragogy and whether it is appropriate for the Christian education of out-of-school youth, how adult learning takes place, particularly in the affective realm and the goals of and approaches to spiritual formation, and the appropriateness of using chronological Bible stories as the basis for the curriculum content. Finally, there is a brief discussion of how this research contributes to the curriculum design.

### Motivation

The motivation behind this study came from an interest in transformational development, defined by Bryant L. Myers as “positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, and spiritually.”<sup>29</sup> While every human is in need of transformation, I am, as a Westerner living in the Philippines, perpetually confronted by a gravity of material need unlike that experienced by most in my homeland. Myers’ book has helped me understand the relationships between material, social, and spiritual needs, and how

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<sup>29</sup> Bryant L. Myers, *Walking With the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, Philippine ed. (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: OMF Literature, Inc., 2008), 3.

the nature of poverty is basically relational, involving broken, dysfunctional or oppressive relationships.<sup>30</sup> Because “sin affects every one of the five relationships in which every human lives”<sup>31</sup> (with ourselves, our community, outsiders, our environment, and God), it seems that any community development effort that does not address this relationship problem, and specifically the sin problem that lies at its core, cannot bring true transformation or lasting positive change. People need to hear the Gospel and be given a chance to respond, but it must be done “in a sensitive, appropriate, and non-coercive way.”<sup>32</sup> Only when the root problem has been dealt with can positive change begin. Therefore, merely providing education to the poor seems an insufficient approach to development work unless that education is holistic: addressing material, social, and spiritual needs.

According to the training manual, the vision and mission of the Alternative Learning System is “[to] empower Filipino out-of-school youth and adults to continue to learn on their own so they may improve their quality of life and that of their family, community and country.”<sup>33</sup> The ALS program would provide a good model for holistic education if it addressed the relational and spiritual aspects of life more adequately. The original purpose of this inquiry was to discover how the ALS curriculum might be enhanced to produce genuine transformation in the lives of the learners that will, in turn, impact their communities.

A subsequent yet significant motivation came from the community of ALS providers with which I have become associated, the Integrated Christian Coalition of

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<sup>30</sup> Myers, 86.

<sup>31</sup> Myers, 87.

<sup>32</sup> Myers, 88.

<sup>33</sup> “Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System, Accreditation and Equivalency, and Learning Support Delivery System” training manual, no page number available.

Alternative Learning System (iCalls). Members of this group have expressed the need for what they have referred to as “values education” to be applied in the ALS learning center context, and even invited me to speak to them on the topic. The terms *values education* and *moral education* have been used for some time in Philippine literature and curricula for all levels of education. These terms can be ambiguous and may refer to either the systematic transmission of a set of religious or socially accepted values from teachers to students, or to the process of teaching students evaluative reasoning skills which they can use to reach their own moral conclusions.<sup>34</sup>

Over the years, a number of programs have been implemented in public and private schools to address the “social diseases that gnaw at the moral fabric of the society,”<sup>35</sup> but according to a study by Michael Arthus G. Muega, professor of Philosophy of Education at the University of the Philippines, “it may be said that Values/Moral Education has failed to achieve its most important goal: to help produce moral individuals and productive citizens.”<sup>36</sup> Muega believes this is because the primary focus has been on values transmission rather than helping the student learn to “think logically and independently” and thereby become “a person who values accountability.”<sup>37</sup> He concludes from his study that Values/Moral education should be taught as an academic subject equal to Mathematics and Science because central to these areas of study are “the concepts of critical thinking, reasoning, and evidence, which are

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Arthus G. Muega, “Values/Moral Education: Current Conceptions and Practices in Philippine Schools,” *Alipato: A Journal of Basic Education* 4 (2010): 81.

<sup>35</sup> Muega, 81.

<sup>36</sup> Muega, 81.

<sup>37</sup> Muega, 81.



dangerously absent in Values/Moral Education when conceived as a mere instrument of inculcating problematic doctrinal moral values in the students.”<sup>38</sup>

While I agree that developing evaluative reasoning skills (i.e. analytical thinking) is essential for true moral change, I believe Muega’s study overlooks the fact that lives and communities will not change if everyone is taking their cues from the same cultural norms. There must be a reliable foundation for the curriculum content. If evaluative reasoning is not informed by biblical truth, learners risk reaching the wrong conclusions, what Pazmiño refers to as “pooled ignorance.”<sup>39</sup> As Pazmiño points out, curriculum content, which may include affective and lifestyle content as well as cognitive content, must provide a reliable foundation from which to begin the process of reflecting on, questioning and evaluating our own behavior and experience.<sup>40</sup>

Muega also overlooks the relational aspect of values transformation. As Fowler demonstrates, adolescents rely on feedback from authorities and peers as they develop their own identity and lifestyle, but “when God is a significant other . . . the commitment to God and the correlated self-image can exert a powerful ordering on a youth’s identity and values outlook.”<sup>41</sup> True transformation requires a relationship with our Creator and the renewing capacity of His Word by the power of His Spirit. Without God’s input, we have no reliable foundation for our values and insufficient inner motivation to live according to any imposed moral code. Because I believe the iCalls members would agree with this assertion, I concluded that what was needed was not another values education

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<sup>38</sup> Muega, 93.

<sup>39</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 283.

<sup>40</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 283.

<sup>41</sup> Fowler, 154.

curriculum but rather a curriculum resource that would promote spiritual formation in the learners as a foundation for personal values and moral living.

### **The Need for Holistic Education for the Poor**

While rapid population growth, urbanization, and urban migration are largely responsible for the increasing numbers of out-of-school youth, a study by Childhope Asia Philippines indicates that poverty, parental ignorance, vices and irresponsibility, moral degradation and a deterioration of values, reflections of the relationship problems addressed by Myers, are among the immediate causes for the proliferation of street children. Increasing numbers of children on the street, in turn, contributes to the number of out-of-school youth. According to the study,

Poverty and peer influence when compounded with problems and stresses in family life such as family break-up, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence by stepparents, underemployed parents, etc., altogether create undue pressure on the child to leave home and find solace, protection, and support from his peers on the street.<sup>42</sup>

According to the National Statistical Coordination Board, between 2006 and 2009, the rate of poverty in the Philippines hovered at around 21% of the population and in 2009, over 3.8 million Filipino families were living below the poverty line (PhP 46 or approximately US \$1.00 per day).<sup>43</sup> The government acknowledges that quality, accessible education is necessary for improving the quality of life for Filipinos.

According to the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-2010 created by the Arroyo administration, "Education is the right of every Filipino. It is a key investment

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<sup>42</sup> Henry Ruiz, "A Study of Policies and Programmes in the Philippines Addressing the Right of Street Children to Education," 13.

<sup>43</sup> National Statistical Coordination Board, "Table 1. Annual Per Capita Poverty Threshold, Poverty Incidence and Magnitude of Poor Families, by Region and Province: 1991, 2003, 2006 and 2009," 2011, [http://www.nscb.gov.ph/poverty/2009/table\\_1.asp](http://www.nscb.gov.ph/poverty/2009/table_1.asp) (accessed 6 February 2012).

that can break the Filipino's seemingly endless cycle of poverty, and provides the people, particularly the youth, with more opportunities."<sup>44</sup>

The Alternative Learning System was developed in response to the world-wide Education For All movement led by UNESCO. The Philippine Education For All 2015 National Action Plan called for

universal coverage of out-of-school youths and adults in the provision of basic learning needs whereby all persons beyond school-age, who for various reasons have failed to acquire the essential competence to be functionally literate, should finally be made functionally literate in their native tongue, in Filipino and in English.<sup>45</sup>

## **Philosophy of Education**

### Andragogy vs. Pedagogy

The Alternative Learning System appears to be founded primarily on the principles of andragogy, the science of adult learning, rather than pedagogy, which refers to educating children. The principles and practices of andragogy were primarily developed by educator Malcolm Knowles over several decades beginning in the 1950s. He has been frequently cited in many other sources for his "Assumptions of Andragogy."<sup>46</sup> Though he was not credited as the source, the ALS training manual makes use of Knowles' comparison of pedagogy and andragogy, and promotes the latter as the philosophical basis for the implementation of the ALS curriculum (see Table 2).

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<sup>44</sup> National Economic and Development Authority, *Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-2010*, Chapter 18: Education, <http://www.neda.gov.ph/ads/mtpdp/MTPDP2004-2010/PDF/MTPDP2004-2010.html> (accessed 6 February 2012).

<sup>45</sup> Preciosa S. Soliven and Marie Antoinette N. Reyes, "The Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education (ALE): National Report of the Republic of the Philippines," (UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, 2008), 6.

<sup>46</sup> Malcolm Knowles, "An Adult Educator's Reflections on Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle," in *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*, ed. Kenneth Stokes (New York: William H. Sadlier, Inc., 1993), 66-67.

Table 2. Knowles' Comparison of Pedagogy and Andragogy<sup>47</sup>

<b>ASSUMPTIONS</b>		
<b>About</b>	<b>Pedagogical</b>	<b>Andragogical</b>
Concepts of the learner	Dependent personality	Increasingly self-directing
Role of learner's experience	To be built on more than used as a resource	A rich resource for learning by self and others
Readiness to learn	Uniform by age-level and curriculum	Develops from life tasks and problems
Orientation to learning	Subject-centered	Task- or problem-centered
Motivation	By external rewards and punishments	By internal incentives, curiosity

Also applicable to this study is Knowles' composite definition of an adult, which includes biological, legal, social, and psychological aspects. "From the point of view of education, the psychological definition (that adults perceive themselves as responsible for their own lives) is the most significant."<sup>48</sup> The target learners for the ALS program are adults and children aged 15 and above who have dropped out of school or not had schooling available to them primarily because of economic reasons: the immediate need to work and earn an income is more pressing than the need for education. The assumption of the ALS curriculum developers is that out-of-school youth, even those not yet 18, are often responsible for their own livelihood and are making their own life choices. They are often self-directed, experienced, know what they need to know, and are likely to enroll in such a program only if they believe it will help them meet their goals. No one is forcing them to go to school. They are there by choice.

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<sup>47</sup> Malcolm Knowles, "Contributions of Malcolm Knowles," in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Adult Education*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 97.

<sup>48</sup> Knowles, "An Adult Educator's Reflections," 64.

Even if they are not functioning as adults upon entering the program, the ALS curriculum is designed to move the learners toward gaining life skills that will help them function in society as productive adults (see Chapter 1, Table 1). Presumably, encouraging them to practice self-directing, critical thinking skills will help learners develop those skills. According to Knowles' assumptions, as people mature,

1) their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being; 2) they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning; 3) their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles; and 4) their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness.”<sup>49</sup>

Knowles himself admitted that “many of the principles of andragogy have direct relevance to the education of children and youth” and may result in young people who are “better equipped to continue a process of lifelong learning” because they have been taught *how* to learn, not just *what* to learn.<sup>50</sup>

According to a study conducted in Russia, “andragogical principles of learning are widely needed now, and not only in adult education. Practically all sectors of educational services need these principles,” one of them being when, like most ALS learners, the learners “are trying to achieve educational objectives in a short time.”<sup>51</sup>

Another study on the applications of andragogy recommends that an andragogical approach be used with children and adolescents as well as adults because, “it is believed that passivity in a classroom does not help students to learn more effectively . . . Active

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<sup>49</sup> Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Cambridge Adult Education, 1970), 44-45.

<sup>50</sup> Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*, 58.

<sup>51</sup> Surguey I. Zmeyov, “Andragogy: Origins, Developments and Trends,” *International Review of Education* 44 no. 1 (1998): 107.

learning is more effective than passive learning, regardless of age.”<sup>52</sup> For these reasons, in spite of the fact that many ALS learners enter the program young and immature, it seems appropriate that the educational philosophy of andragogy be adopted for the development of a spiritual formation curriculum to complement the ALS curriculum.

In her work, *Group Process and the Inductive Method: Theory and Practice in the Philippines*, Carmela D. Ortigas applies adult learning theory to the Philippine context. Drawing from Knowles, she makes no distinction between the characteristics of Filipino and western adult learners, reiterating that

adults learn what they want to learn, see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear. Unless what is being taught has personal meaning for the individual and is relevant to his needs and problems, it will not be readily accepted... People learn best as a result of experience. They become trusting when they have experienced trust; responsible when they have experienced responsibility, independent when they have experienced independence.<sup>53</sup>

Ortigas points out that, because learners have feelings as well as thoughts, a non-threatening atmosphere of respect, acceptance, and trust nurtures the learning process. Historically, this has not been the typical learning environment in the Philippines. Through the *deductive* (didactic, banking, lecture) model of education, the primary method used by most Filipino schools, “educated Filipinos have been intellectually nurtured” and “moved by the eloquence of the great minds in church and government.”<sup>54</sup> Her concern, however, is that this model “has proved to be inadequate in providing many Filipinos the competency to think through critically and analytically concerns and issues

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<sup>52</sup> Sang Chan, “Applications of Andragogy in Multi-disciplined Teaching and Learning,” *Journal of Adult Education* 39, no. 2 (2010): 33.

<sup>53</sup> Carmela D. Ortigas, *Group Process and the Inductive Method: Theory and Practice in the Philippines*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 32.

<sup>54</sup> Ortigas, 34.

on a micro and macro level.”<sup>55</sup> Ortigas’s purpose is to promote the use of the *inductive* model of education, replacing classroom teachers with “*Facilitators of Learning*” who relate to learners of all ages in an adult-to-adult manner, produce lesson plans that “offer a variety of opportunities for active learner involvement” and “capitalize on the learners’ desire to incorporate their previous experiences into the educational process.”<sup>56</sup>

Ortigas has included in her book a paper by Jaime C. Bulatao, originally presented to the Psychological Association of the Philippines in 1965, which is still relevant today. Bulatao described the factors that contribute to the Filipino’s unwillingness or inability to take responsibility, individually or corporately, for positive change. The lower class, particularly, “finds little training in individual responsibility,” having “hardly anything to do other than obey. . . authority figures.”<sup>57</sup> He sees the problem as primarily one of self-image. “Psychologically, the self-image seems to be that of a dependent, helpless figure, whose main mechanism in the face of adversity is to endure and to take refuge within his family group.”<sup>58</sup>

According to Bulatao, Filipinos have trouble working productively with each other for the common good because they do not trust each other. They do not trust each other because they do not trust themselves. A person “has to experience himself as worthwhile and having his own destiny in his hands. . . that he, in company with other fellow citizens, is responsible for whatever goes on in his country.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ortigas, 35.

<sup>56</sup> Ortigas, 35.

<sup>57</sup> Jaime C. Bulatao, “Group Discussion in Nation Building,” in *Group Process and the Inductive Method: Theory and Practice in the Philippines*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 133.

<sup>58</sup> Bulatao, 133.

<sup>59</sup> Bulatao, 131.

Bulatao's "treatment" for helping people learn to work together, trust others and trust themselves is through group discussion. Collective problem-solving facilitates developing an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and individual responsibility. The group member overcomes shyness and inhibitions by learning to express thoughts and feelings and thereby "gains new self-control and power, enabling him to sustain interest and purpose in pursuing remote goals."<sup>60</sup>

Bulatao believes the educational system should utilize the group discussion model because it will be "through the group, by the group, and in the group that the Filipino can find himself."<sup>61</sup> ALS providers that develop the environment and leadership skills needed for healthy group discussion are poised for nation building through individual life transformation.

In their effort to guide Christian educators in curriculum development for adults, James C. Galvin and David R. Veerman describe Knowles' five steps toward a successful non-formal educational program and apply them to Christian education: determine the needs of the constituents, enlist their participation in planning, formulate clear objectives, design a program plan, and implement a system of evaluation.<sup>62</sup> They also advise against the following models: pedagogical (for children), academic (seminary type), banking (knowledge is deposited in the heads of the learners), and adversarial (debate).<sup>63</sup>

The "banking model" is repeatedly mentioned in the literature as a negative analogy. It is a reference to the work of Paulo Freire who wrote much about the process

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<sup>60</sup> Bulatao, 133.

<sup>61</sup> Bulatao, 134.

<sup>62</sup> James C. Galvin and David R. Veerman, "Curriculum for Adult Education," in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Adult Education*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 179-186.

<sup>63</sup> Galvin and Veerman, 179.



of liberation of the poor from oppression and the relationship of education to oppression. Freire described the “banking” concept of education as a means by which education perpetuates oppression. It is teacher-controlled, content-oriented, and hierarchical.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the banking model, Freire proposed dialogic, “problem-posing” education as a means of liberation and transformation.<sup>65</sup> In Freire’s model, the teacher becomes the “teacher-student” and the student becomes the “student-teacher” because “the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach.”<sup>66</sup>

John C. Lai takes the philosophy of Freire and specifically applies it to Christian education in his paper “Andragogy of the Oppressed: Emancipatory Education for Christian Adults.” He blamed the weakened state of modern Christianity on the Church, which has traditionally used pedagogical methods with adults. “When authorities tell people what is right or wrong, what to do or not to do and what the Bible *really* says, it is no wonder that people grow passive, lethargic and irresponsible,” perpetuating immaturity and dependency in the followers.<sup>67</sup> This “spoon-feeding” results in an unconscious enslavement to the institutional system.<sup>68</sup> Lai therefore encourages the use of andragogy (citing Knowles’s principles) and what he refers to as “emancipatory learning” which is more learner-centered than teacher centered.<sup>69</sup> “An emancipatory Christian education model must include: 1) a learning environment and structure which

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<sup>64</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ed. (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2008), 72-73.

<sup>65</sup> Freire, 86.

<sup>66</sup> Freire, 80.

<sup>67</sup> Lai, “Andragogy of the Oppressed: Emancipatory Education for Christian Adults,” 5.

<sup>68</sup> Lai, 10.

<sup>69</sup> Lai, 12.

facilitates participation on the part of learners; and 2) a process which develops the capacity for critical reflection.”<sup>70</sup>

This idea of critical reflection comes directly from Freire’s use of the term *praxis*: “theory linked to practice through reflection.”<sup>71</sup> Transformation will not result from merely depositing the Bible into people’s minds. Lai points out that “it is in the ‘doing of the Word’ (James 1:22) that transformation is effected.”<sup>72</sup> He has proposed a model based on Freire’s dialogical approach to teaching which he calls the “praxis cycle:” teacher and disciple are co-learners; the teacher (facilitator) guides the learners in critical reflection on the world and the Word of God, applying it to real life situations; and the teacher models and encourages action that will have an effect on that world.<sup>73</sup>

Lai’s praxis cycle (see Figure 1) has common elements with the “4 A’s of Adult Learning” model (see Figure 4 below) found in ALS facilitator training materials.<sup>74</sup> Also dialogic, this model presents the educational process as a cycle of new experiences (Activity), processing the experiences by linking them to what is already known (Analysis), generalizing and demonstrating new knowledge and skills (Abstraction) and practicing the new knowledge and skills in new situations (Application). It derives from the experiential learning model of David A. Kolb, a cycle of concrete experience, observation and reflection, formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, followed by testing in new situations the implications of the concepts that have been learned.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Lai, 17.

<sup>71</sup> Lai, 18.

<sup>72</sup> Lai, 19.

<sup>73</sup> Lai, 24.

<sup>74</sup> *Manual for Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency Learning Support Delivery System*, 8.

<sup>75</sup> David A. Kolb and Ronald Fry, “Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning,” in *Theories of Group Processes*, 33.

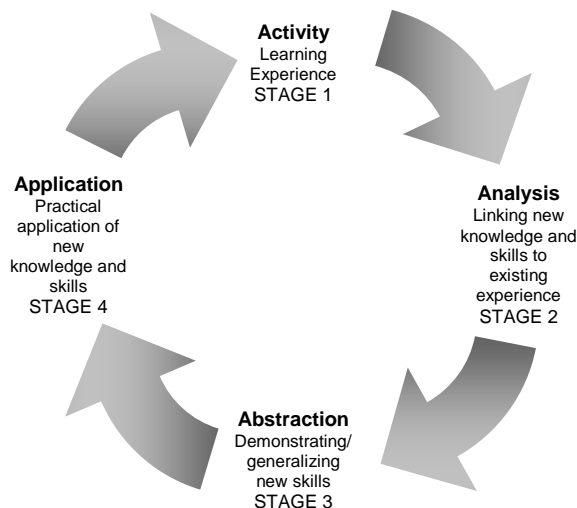


Figure 4. The 4 A's of Adult Learning<sup>76</sup>

Both Lai's praxis cycle and The 4 A's of Adult Learning include the critical steps of processing, analyzing, and reflecting on new knowledge and experience through dialogue. They emphasize Kolb's tenet that learning is not just collecting information or producing outcomes, but an on-going process of thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving during which each experience builds on previous ones.<sup>77</sup>

Jane Vella, whose work is to train others to teach adults more effectively, also believes that adult learning is best achieved in dialogue. Based on Freire's theoretical framework, she has proposed guidelines and principles for beginning, maintaining, and nurturing the dialogue.<sup>78</sup> Her "Seven Steps of Planning" were designed to help the

<sup>76</sup> Adapted from the *Manual for Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency Learning Support Delivery System*, (Pasig City, Philippines: Bureau of Alternative Learning System, Department of Education, 2004), 8.

<sup>77</sup> David A. Kolb and Alice Y. Kolb, "The Kolb Learning Style Inventory—Version 3.1 2005 Technical Specifications," published on-line by Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc., 2005, <http://www.whitewater-rescue.com/support/pagepics/lbsitechmanual.pdf> (accessed 14 March 2014), 2.

<sup>78</sup> Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: the Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994), 3.

prospective facilitator prepare before the dialogue begins.<sup>79</sup> In her second book, *Training through Dialogue*, Vella continued to build on Freire's principles, giving many examples of how to conduct "problem posing" education.<sup>80</sup>

In an article entitled "How to Conduct Effective Group Discussion: a Development Strategy," Gaston Z. Ortigas, honored as the father of development management at the Asian Institute of Management,<sup>81</sup> described the role and characteristics of the discussion leader. He also gave suggestions for how to ask the right kind of questions and respond in ways that keep the discussion going.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps counterintuitive for most educators, but of utmost importance for the facilitator or ALS Instructional Manager, is the need to be a good listener. The temptation, even among trained Instructional Managers, is to do too much of the talking. Silence is awkward, so the tendency is to fill it, rather than to wait for learners to formulate their own thoughts into words.

Paul Bergevin's philosophy of adult education assumes that adults can learn and change and must be given the opportunity to mature and act responsibly in all areas of life, including the spiritual.<sup>83</sup> He has posed two alternative philosophies of education. The first, indoctrination, like the banking model, assumes that it is possible to have "unalterable truth" and uses educational processes to propagate that truth to bring the

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<sup>79</sup> Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, 23-27.

<sup>80</sup> Jane Vella, *Training through Dialogue: Promoting Effective Learning and Change with Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), 28-29.

<sup>81</sup> *Bantayog ng mga Bayani: Honoring the Martyrs and Heroes of the struggle against dictatorship in the Philippines (1972-1986)*, s.v. "Ortigas, Gaston Z." <http://www.bantayog.org/node/165> (accessed 20 February 2012).

<sup>82</sup> Gaston Z. Ortigas, "How to Conduct Effective Group Discussion: a Development Strategy," in *Group Process and the Inductive Method: Theory and Practice in the Philippines*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 198-202.

<sup>83</sup> Paul Bergevin, *A Philosophy for Adult Education* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967), 5.

learners to a prearranged conclusion.<sup>84</sup> While something may be gained by this in terms of facts and skills, ultimately the learners do not learn to think on their own or exercise creativity in developing their own ways of doing things.<sup>85</sup>

The second philosophy, truth seeking, assumes that: truth is complex, evolving and evasive; different people learn differently; sometimes learners have to accept what Bergevin calls “a state of suspension” because what is to be learned can’t be understood or wholly accepted.<sup>86</sup> Given the opportunity to approach truth as partners in the learning process rather than merely recipients, learners experience the thrill of discovery and their untapped potential is released.<sup>87</sup> Bergevin believes adult education programs should be indigenous: “fashioned to solve the peculiar problem at hand in terms of the particular adults involved.”<sup>88</sup> The educator must first study the people who will be involved, start where they are, then help them move to larger views, broader concepts and new perspectives.<sup>89</sup> This latter philosophy seems most relevant for ALS learners, as they come with a wide range of knowledge and academic ability, yet generally lack critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Martha M. Leypoldt’s book, *Learning is Change*, is a good resource for practical ways of utilizing the principles and practices of andragogy and non-formal education with the goal of genuine transformation in the lives of those involved, including the teacher. For Leypoldt, learning is changing our minds, feelings and actions.<sup>90</sup> Attitudinal change precedes behavioral change: “In all learning situations, the feeling aspect of

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<sup>84</sup> Bergevin, 18.

<sup>85</sup> Bergevin, 19.

<sup>86</sup> Bergevin, 18.

<sup>87</sup> Bergevin, 23.

<sup>88</sup> Bergevin, 125.

<sup>89</sup> Bergevin, 126.

<sup>90</sup> Martha M. Leypoldt, *Learning is Change: Adult Education in the Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1971), 27-29.

learning is closely interrelated with the knowing and doing behaviors [so] the feeling level must be dealt with before the other levels can be touched.”<sup>91</sup> No genuine transformation in our learners can take place without addressing the affective domain. Leypoldt upholds Ralph Tyler’s principle of instruction that students learn from what they themselves do, not from what the teacher does,<sup>92</sup> so her book is designed to guide teachers to methods and resources that effectively involve the students in active learning.

### Learner Centered vs. Content Centered

Andragogy may be described as a learner-centered approach to education. It begins with the learner’s knowledge and experience, encourages input from what the learner knows and has experienced, and focuses on what the learner desires or feels the need to know and experience. But is this an entirely adequate approach to Christian education? Would we not say that there is a body of knowledge, or content, from the Word of God that must be conveyed if we are to address the spiritual need of the learners?

Robert W. Pazmiño has given a cautionary word in relation to a strictly andragogical approach to Christian education: andragogy must be kept in balance with a content-focused educational philosophy or it can become “destructive individualism that distorts the essential place of the wider community and the act of passing on the content of the Christian faith.”<sup>93</sup> He has insisted that “content considerations are foundational if one is to effectively share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Christian education of adults

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<sup>91</sup> Leypoldt, 64.

<sup>92</sup> Ralph Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950), 41.

<sup>93</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 280-1.

and challenge them with the demands of discipleship.”<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, if the emphasis is on utilizing the experience of the learners (one of the principles of Knowles’ andragogy) to the exclusion of introducing content that includes new perspectives, the result may be merely “pooled ignorance.”<sup>95</sup> In answer to Freire, Pazmiño would say that content *offered* does not equal content *imposed*. “Foundations in content are needed before they can be built up, revised or questioned . . . before they can be explored in relation to personal and corporate experience.”<sup>96</sup> The term *content* is not limited to cognitive content alone, but includes affective and lifestyle content as well.<sup>97</sup> Application of the content to the life of the learner is part of the educational process. For Pazmiño, content and experience are both essential to adult Christian education.

Pazmiño has brought up another issue that seems to have been neglected by the principles of andragogy, which emphasize the pragmatic and practical. While immediate application is important, it is not *more* important than “learning for the inherent value of understanding and discerning the truth.”<sup>98</sup> While Christian educators must understand the worldview and ethos of the target group, they must also compare these with the Christian faith in order to “discern areas in which the values and perspectives of the ethnic culture confirm, complement and contradict the Christian faith.”<sup>99</sup> Pazmiño represents the evangelical perspective by insisting on the authority of the Scriptures which “serve as the filter through which all other truths are examined for their consistency with a Christian

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<sup>94</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 281.

<sup>95</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 283.

<sup>96</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 283.

<sup>97</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 281.

<sup>98</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 285.

<sup>99</sup> Pazmiño, “Adult Education,” 286.

world and life view.”<sup>100</sup> Biblical revelation trumps reason, tradition and experience “which are conjoint and secondary sources for understanding and important for educational practice.<sup>101</sup> He has proposed what he calls a God-centered approach to education which “establishes as its starting point the authority of God as revealed through Jesus Christ and illumined by the Holy Spirit within Scripture.”<sup>102</sup> Undoubtedly, most, if not all, Christian ALS centers would adhere to this perspective.

Edwin de Jong would agree with Pazmiño’s insistence on the importance of teaching content. Writing from a Western European perspective on Christian education, de Jong believes that content must be presented for the sake of renewing the mind, and should include the “great things” of the Christian faith: God, man, sin, salvation and the important stories of Israel, the life of Christ and the early church.<sup>103</sup> However, he is also a proponent of non-formal education, which he calls student (learner) *and* subject (content) centered because it involves deliberate teaching and learning but with flexibility and an emphasis on experiential learning.<sup>104</sup> He would agree with Myers that restoration of the inward, vertical as well as the outward, horizontal dimensions of human life and relationships is essential. Christian education must help people live out their faith in the world.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Pazmiño, Robert W. *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 58.

<sup>101</sup> Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues*, 59.

<sup>102</sup> Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues*, 125.

<sup>103</sup> de Jong, 2.

<sup>104</sup> de Jong, 3.

<sup>105</sup> de Jong, 1-2.



## Educating Toward Christian Spiritual Formation in the Philippine Context

### The Goal of Spiritual Formation

This project initiates the development of a Christian education curriculum with the goal of guiding ALS students in their development as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The term *Christian spiritual formation* is being used to describe the curriculum because of the nuances of the term. Though it may be used interchangeably with *Christian education* or *discipleship*, spiritual formation is more specifically an approach to Christian education which focuses less on cognitive acquisition and more on affective and spiritual transformation. Rather than aiming to change the behaviors of the students through mostly cognitive appeals, *spiritual formation* utilizes a more informal, holistic, relationship oriented and character focused approach.<sup>106</sup> According to Dallas Willard, spiritual formation “refers to the process of shaping our spirit and giving it a definite character. It means the formation of our spirit in conformity with the Spirit of Christ.”<sup>107</sup>

The following from *The Christian Educator’s Handbook* distinguishes spiritual formation as follows:

Three elements mark the approach to Christian nurture and discipleship called spiritual formation: (1) it involves the whole church’s ministry; (2) knowledge is viewed as a means to Christian growth and never as an end in itself; and (3) there is a distinct accent on the work of God’s grace in the process of formation.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ronald T. Habermas, *Introduction to Christian Education and Formation: a Lifelong Plan for Christ-Centered Restoration* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 17.

<sup>107</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 53.

<sup>108</sup> John M. Dettoni, “What is Spriritual Formation?” in *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 11.

Implicit in the term *spiritual formation* is the idea that what is learned is integrated into the rest of life and therefore involves the whole person. “Information alone will not make a difference. The person who has taken in the information has been reshaped, remolded, and significantly altered by the active transformation of the data into meaning for oneself.”<sup>109</sup> Christian education must not be reduced to merely imparting information. Rather, “[s]killed and dedicated teachers can assist learners to see the whole from God’s perspective and thereby discover a personal meaning rooted in God’s providential care for them.”<sup>110</sup>

James Bryan Smith has pointed out that spiritual formation happens in everyone; the question is whether it’s good or bad. He explained that “spiritual formation involves developing a sense of our true identity. Our spirits are formed as we take in information about who we really are and as we begin living our lives on the basis of that identity.”<sup>111</sup> Our identity is formed either by the world or it is found in Christ. With reference to Erik Erikson’s work on the development and characteristics of adolescent identity,<sup>112</sup> Smith pointed out that “[m]any of the problems experienced by adolescents stem from the lack of a solid identity” and therefore they are “susceptible to the influence of others, and prone to stress, which often manifests itself in destructive behavior.”<sup>113</sup> He also drew from James Fowler’s reference to the adolescent’s need for “mirrors”<sup>114</sup> when he implored the church to reflect to young people a true, accurate identity that will combat

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<sup>109</sup> Dettoni, 15.

<sup>110</sup> Dettoni, 19.

<sup>111</sup> James Bryan Smith, “Spiritual Formation of Adolescents,” *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 248.

<sup>112</sup> Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1963), 261-262.

<sup>113</sup> Smith, 250-251.

<sup>114</sup> Fowler, 151.

the distorted image projected by the world. According to Smith, this reflection should include teaching theology and doctrine: “As we look into the Bible we see our incredible value, our true nature, our inability to live independently, our complete redemption and our regeneration in Christ who dwells within us.”<sup>115</sup>

As explained by Les L. Steele in his book on Christian formation, the term formation “implies that a person is in the process of being formed and at the same time is forming. As Christians our formation is a result of both God’s initiative and our responsibility. We are formed as we respond appropriately to God’s actions on our behalf.”<sup>116</sup> It connotes process: “When we speak of Christian formation, we are speaking of the process of becoming what we were first intended to be and are now allowed to be by the justifying work of Christ.”<sup>117</sup> It connotes transformation: “Sanctification is the process of growing in the love of God and neighbor... The work of sanctification is at the heart of Christian formation. Nothing less than the transformation of the person is the result of justification.”<sup>118</sup> It connotes holism: “Spiritual formation is a whole life process dealing with change in every essential part of the person,”<sup>119</sup> says Willard. Our spiritual development, explains Steele, is part of our daily life, not some separate, disconnected activity, as the term *Christian education* might imply. “Faith is formed and transformed as we encounter the realities of life with openness and honesty... It is not enough to believe the right things, or to do the right things, or to feel the right things. Our wholistic Christian faith demands all three.”<sup>120</sup> And it connotes the

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<sup>115</sup> Smith, 253.

<sup>116</sup> Les L. Steele, *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 10-11.

<sup>117</sup> Steele, 24.

<sup>118</sup> Steele, 24.

<sup>119</sup> Willard, 55.

<sup>120</sup> Steele, 53.

involvement of the Holy Spirit: “If there is to be any human transformation that is to be sustainable, it will be because of the action of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>121</sup>

Because of these connotations, the name *Christian Spiritual Formation Curriculum* best communicates the hope that this curriculum will be used by the Holy Spirit to fundamentally transform the lives of many young people.

### Intentional Approaches to Spiritual Formation

But how do we go about Christian spiritual formation in an intentional way? How can we guide young people in the process of becoming like Christ apart from what we know as *traditional* Christian education? Two models, *shared praxis* and the *pilgrimage model*, were considered.

Leading religious education theorist Thomas H. Groome promoted the *shared praxis* approach to faith education which, like Lai’s praxis cycle, requires relationship and utilizes active participation, reflection and dialogue. Groome emphasized that the aim of Christian education must go far beyond simply *knowing* to *being*.

The nature and purposes of Christian religious education require that we promote personal cognition as a critically reflective, dialectical, and dialogical process that encourages a ‘right relationship’ between knower and known in a community of discourse *and* that we broaden our concern beyond simply cognition. The incarnational principle that stands at the heart of Christianity demands a pedagogy that is grounded in and shapes people’s ontic selves—their identity and agency in the world.<sup>122</sup>

For example, it is not our aim that people simply *know* about virtues such as justice and compassion, but that they *be* just and compassionate in their everyday lives.

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<sup>121</sup> Myers, 44-45.

<sup>122</sup> Thomas H. Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 8.

Groome describes shared praxis as having five “movements” which may or may not be sequential: (1) expressing *present praxis*, either in the lives or society of the participants, (2) critical reflection on present action, allowing the participants to remember and analyze, (3) making accessible Christian story and vision, including what God has revealed about Himself through Scripture (the central figure of which is Jesus Christ), the Christian tradition of living faith to which we are called and “the ongoing coming to fulfillment of God’s intentions for humankind, history and all creation,”<sup>123</sup> (4) dialectical hermeneutic to appropriate Christian story and vision to the participants’ stories and visions, asking them to view present praxis in light of what God has revealed, and (5) a decision or response for lived Christian faith on the part of the participants.<sup>124</sup>

Shaping in Christian faith identity and agency, explained Groome, requires a vibrant Christian faith community: “the more Christian religious education can form a Christian community within the environment of its teaching/learning events, and the more faith filled is the community that surrounds its participants and sponsors the enterprise, the more likely will be their education in Christian identity and agency.”<sup>125</sup> Faith formation should not simply be relegated to a Christian education course, but should be seen as a function of “fostering a Christian environment in the ethos of the whole school.”<sup>126</sup>

Compatible with Groome is what Steele has referred to as the “pilgrimage model” approach to education for Christian formation. According to Steele, the aim of this education model is “to create experiences and environments that facilitate Christian

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<sup>123</sup> Groome, 139.

<sup>124</sup> Groome, 146-148.

<sup>125</sup> Groome, 26.

<sup>126</sup> Groome, 26.

formation.”<sup>127</sup> It is not simply telling about Jesus, but supporting others in their attempt to know him. Steele has drawn on Friere’s writings to explain the kind of educational environment that “helps people be free and take responsibility for their own freedom.”<sup>128</sup> Spiritual formation is not something we can force on others. Rather, we must find ways of empowering them to take responsibility for their own growth.

In the pilgrimage model, the learners are viewed as pilgrims, “created in the image of God and marred by the fall, journeying through the life cycle...and responsible to make sense out of their own lives in the light of the gospel.”<sup>129</sup> Teachers are co-pilgrims, also in the process of becoming like Christ, just farther along in the journey. Teachers, as well, should be self-reflective and open to learning: from the Word, from the students and from life experiences. “Knowledge of self-in-process is essential to being a good teacher.”<sup>130</sup> Sharing what we are learning is an effective means of teaching. “Whether we teach Bible or church history or theology, we must tell how the subject changed our lives.”<sup>131</sup> Steele warned that teachers should not be so tied to a set curriculum that they can’t take advantage of the teachable moment or respond to where the learners are in their journey. The curriculum should be viewed as a guide, “a road map in broad strokes that points individuals in the direction of Christian maturing.”<sup>132</sup>

According to Pazmiño, the pilgrimage metaphor strikes a balance between teacher- and student-centered approaches to education. The students and teachers are interdependent, but the teacher serves as an experienced guide “who cares for and

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<sup>127</sup> Steele, 176.

<sup>128</sup> Steele, 177.

<sup>129</sup> Steele, 180.

<sup>130</sup> Steele, 181.

<sup>131</sup> Steele, 183.

<sup>132</sup> Steele, 186.

stimulates those with whom she or he is traveling,” exerting effort to “plot the route so that the journey will be as rich, as fascinating, and as memorable as possible.”<sup>133</sup> In line with this is Pazmiño’s definition of curriculum:

Curriculum can be defined as that content made available to students and their actual learning experiences guided by a teacher. This definition implies that the teacher must assume responsibility in terms of content and experience in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of teaching. This responsibility results not in the determination or imposition of students’ experiences but in the guidance of these experiences as students are invited to participate. Students’ experiences are guided in ways that contribute to their information, formation and transformation. The teacher’s responsibility in relation to students’ experiences is to foster a process in which experiences become informed and are examined with reflection. These possible experiences are shared and reflected upon with others to gain wisdom for living.<sup>134</sup>

In my view, shared praxis, the pilgrimage model for spiritual formation and Pazmiño’s definition of curriculum are compatible with the andragogical philosophy of education cited above.

#### A Case for the Use of Narrative

*Christian Story and Vision* is central to Groome’s shared praxis approach.

Though Groome’s meaning for this term is broader than simply the Scriptural narrative, it includes the accounts derived from Scripture of what God has done, is doing and is yet to do in relation to humankind:

The metaphors Story and Vision and a narrative language pattern are effective in teaching the historical and practical nature of Christian faith because they reflect that this faith tradition is rooted in history, that it arises from God’s activity among humankind—among the people of Israel, in the historical life of Jesus, in the Christian community over time—and is to shape its adherents now in their whole way of ‘being’ in the world.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Pazmino, *Foundational Issues*, 242.

<sup>134</sup> Pazmino, *Foundational Issues*, 232.

<sup>135</sup> Groome, 140-141.

Groome goes on to explain that narrative helps people understand that Christianity is not merely a system of ideas but rather is for living out in everyday experience, praxis. He says that a good story is one in which we see ourselves reflected. “It is a ‘remembrance of being’ that illustrates and illuminates our own ‘being’ to us.”<sup>136</sup> In addition, a good story has a “surplus of meaning.” it can be returned to repeatedly, yet there will always be something new to discover.<sup>137</sup> He asserts that even creeds and dogmas of the faith can be made more accessible through narrative because they are actually distilled from the narrative of Scripture and historical Christianity. Therefore, “they can be appreciated by people and appropriated to their own lives most readily if catechesis is presented in narrative language that articulates their practical wisdom for life.”<sup>138</sup>

In an article published in 2007, Henry Corcoran expressed the belief that the scriptural narrative has transformational power because our imaginations allow us to enter the story and encounter God. In so doing, we confront ourselves and are able to look at our lives from a new perspective. The biblical story has the power to move us “from defeat to victory, death to life . . . old creation to new, blindness to spiritual sight, moral darkness to light . . . alienation to fellowship with God.”<sup>139</sup> In a study designed to determine if there is any correlation between reading the Old Testament as a story and spiritual formation, David Brisben conducted a qualitative study on 138 Christian college students in an Old Testament survey class in America. Brisben designed three kinds of structured experiences which included learning about the narrative structure of

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<sup>136</sup> Groome, 141.

<sup>137</sup> Groome, 142.

<sup>138</sup> Groome, 142.

<sup>139</sup> Henry A. Corcoran, “Biblical narratives and life transformation: An apology for the narrative teaching of Bible stories,” *Christian Education Journal* 4 no. 1 (Spring 2007): 41.



the Old Testament, listening to and discussing the story in small groups and focused observation in which the students imagined themselves as selected characters in the story. Through the students' written responses at the end of the course, Brisben found that the majority of the students felt that they had encountered God and experienced personal transformation during the course.<sup>140</sup>

In a presentation to The Institute of Spirituality in Asia, Bishop Luis Antonio G. Tagle spoke on the importance of story telling in Asia, explaining that it is a natural way of personal encounter in Asian culture. "In Asia, community building, facilitating and even envisioning new worlds or national identity is all sustained by story telling... For us Christians, the great epic is the story of salvation with a lot of stories of suffering, but also stories of hope. That is very Asian."<sup>141</sup>

Tagle connects storytelling to spirituality first by identifying spirituality not as isolated, pious actions, but rather as a life in God. "If we use Christian terminology, spirituality is about the story of Jesus heard, believed in, and lived by us in the power of the spirit for it is the spirit that will remind us what Jesus taught... so that our life's story would be woven into the life of Jesus."<sup>142</sup> He uses John 1:1-4 to illustrate how the apostle John could not help but tell the story of what he had seen and heard. His story was transformed by the story of Jesus.

Tagle asserts that the fundamental questions of spirituality are really questions about stories: "What is happening to my life? Where am I headed? What is the purpose of my life? Where is God in my life? What is my story? What ways do my stories

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<sup>140</sup> David Brisben and Amelia Klein, "Reading the Old Testament as story: a pedagogy for spiritual formation," *Christian Education Journal* 9 no. 2 (Fall 2012): 334.

<sup>141</sup> Luis Antonio G. Tagle, "Spirituality and Storytelling," in *Lecture Series 9: Spirituality and The Word*, ed. Edward Gerlock (Quezon City: Institute of Spirituality in Asia, Inc., 2010), 88.

<sup>142</sup> Tagle, 90-91.

occupy within the greater story of the God of life and love?”<sup>143</sup> Reflecting on questions such as these is part of Groome’s shared praxis approach.

In her descriptions of Filipino ways of thinking, author Melba P. Maggay claims that Filipinos in general do not tend to be analytical thinkers. They see themselves as “participating in, not reflecting upon, the world.”<sup>144</sup> She contrasts eastern and western thought, noting that there is “considerable distance between indigenous ways of thinking and feeling and western cognitive orientation,”<sup>145</sup> perhaps the most notable being between Filipino holism versus the western way of compartmentalizing reality. To communicate spiritual truths in the Filipino context, one must understand the Filipino “thinks synthetically, that is, harmonizes seeming contradictions and unites opposites.”<sup>146</sup> Unfortunately, Filipino Christians have been taught to communicate biblical truth in Western ways and may not consider that there are more appropriate and effective ways to communicate truth to the Filipino. According to Maggay,

We must recognize that the gospel has been brought to us in a cognitive style different from our own. It is not an accident that the gospels are stories rather than propositions. The Bible is a great deal more intuitive and personal in its announcement of the “News” than the Western World or even Filipino Christians have been. A poetical telling of the Gospel needs to be recovered.<sup>147</sup>

Therefore, she also suggests that biblical narrative, such as the parables of the gospels, are a more appropriate means of communicating to the Filipino than the “the more abstract reasoning of the epistles.”<sup>148</sup> When we share Christ with people, “we are

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<sup>143</sup> Tagle, 91.

<sup>144</sup> Melba P. Maggay, *The Gospel in the Filipino Context* (Mandaluyong: OMF Literature, Inc., 1987), 15.

<sup>145</sup> Melba P. Maggay, *Filipino Religious Consciousness: Some Implications to Mission* (Quezon City: The Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, 1999), 29.

<sup>146</sup> Maggay, *Filipino Religious Consciousness*, 29.

<sup>147</sup> Maggay, *The Gospel in the Filipino Context*, 16.

<sup>148</sup> Maggay, *The Gospel in the Filipino Context*, 17.

introducing them to a Person, not merely asking them to assent to certain propositions. We are telling them of an *event*, not of an *idea*. We are reporting *news*, not converting them to our *views*.”<sup>149</sup>

In a paper entitled “Spirituality for Asian Contexts—the Philippines and Beyond,” presented at the 2012 Theological Forum of Asian Theological Seminary, Dr. George Capaque also described Filipino spirituality as holistic and very relational. Because of the Filipino’s attraction to the concrete, symbols, rituals and art help to communicate reverence for that which is holy. Stories, he claims, are necessary because “narrative is an expression of Filipino spirituality.”<sup>150</sup>

According to an article by Tom Steffen, who served for 15 years with New Tribes Mission in the Philippines, humans are “storytelling animals” because God is a storytelling God,<sup>151</sup> evidenced by the fact that 65-75% of the Bible is in the narrative genre.<sup>152</sup> Since his time as a missionary to the Ifugao people of the Philippines, Steffen has made a major shift from pedagogy to narrative as a means of communicating biblical truth and one’s own world view. Stories can be used as a valuable tool for passing on the faith to adults.

Influenced by Trevor McIlwain’s Chronological Teaching Model, developed in the Philippines since 1980, and his own experience in the Philippines, Steffen has written the book *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry: Crosscultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad* to demonstrate that storytelling is a valid means of communicating the truths of

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<sup>149</sup> Maggay, *The Gospel in the Filipino Context*, 17.

<sup>150</sup> George N. Capaque, “Spirituality for Asian Contexts: the Philippines and Beyond,” (lecture notes from a paper presented at the 2012 Asian Theological Seminary Theological Forum, Makati, Philippines, 10 February 2012).

<sup>151</sup> Tom Steffen, “My Journey from Propositional to Narrative Evangelism,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 4, no.2 (2005): 204.

<sup>152</sup> Steffen, “My Journey,” 202.

Scripture to adults. It is a universal form of communication that connects with our imagination and emotions. He claims that storytelling is “the most natural, universal, and effective means of evangelism-discipleship that exists.”<sup>153</sup> After all, story was the primary way in which Jesus taught theology to his disciples!

In an article co-authored with J. O. Terry, Steffen gives historical evidence for the effectiveness of storytelling for discipleship. He reveals Origen and Augustine as proponents of narrative for communicating truth. These men “believed that all uninstructed new believers should understand the sweep of Scripture, i.e., ‘salvation history,’ through a comprehensive catechism.”<sup>154</sup> Many accounts down through history reveal how theologians and missionaries have found the Old Testament stories essential in communicating the nature of God and His work in the world to the lost. Steffen believes that evangelicals have lost sight of the potential of narrative as an adult teaching method because we have somehow come to believe that the word *story* connotes fiction, or that stories are primarily for entertainment or for children and non-literate tribal people. Though it was while he was among the Ifugao that he realized the vital importance of using stories, Steffen discovered when he moved to Manila that “urban Filipinos have a passion for stories that rivals that of the Ifugao.”<sup>155</sup>

Many people, even those who would identify themselves as Christians, see the Bible as a book made up of many random stories rather than one continuous, cohesive story or metanarrative. According to Steffen, this results in missing the “big picture” of God’s overall plan for the world and the people in it. “Since many Christians have given

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<sup>153</sup> Tom A. Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry: Crosscultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad*, rev. ed. (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 1996), 2.

<sup>154</sup> Steffen and James O. Terry, Jr., “The Sweeping Story of Scripture Taught Through Time,” *Missiology: an International Review* 35, no. 3 (2007), 317.

<sup>155</sup> Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 18.

the New Testament an elevated status, an understanding of the Old Testament and the God behind it is missed,” resulting in a failure to grasp “the awesomeness of God, which is the beginning of wisdom.”<sup>156</sup>

It is Steffen’s conviction that evangelism based merely on the last 25 percent of the Bible, often only on the Gospel of John, is insufficient to provide a solid foundation for spiritual formation. “Believers who evangelize tend to overlook the need to front-load the gospel message with sufficient Old Testament background so that a solid foundation for the ‘Good News’ is laid.”<sup>157</sup> It is “imperative to share the gospel story in the framework of the whole of Scripture” because “the Old Testament narrative frames God as relevant to all the affairs of life.”<sup>158</sup> He suggests that evangelism without that foundation may produce merely professing believers rather than true disciples.

Regarding the use of narrative, Dr. Grant Lovejoy of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary gives the following summary:

Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) is a method of presentation that tells selected biblical stories in chronological order in the power of the Holy Spirit so as to bring people to genuine faith in Christ, mature discipleship, and fruitful Christian service. Ordinarily CBS includes a time of dialog after the story. In the dialog the storyteller uses questions to guide listeners to discover the meaning and significance of the biblical story.<sup>159</sup>

The use of biblical narrative as the source of curricular content adapts well to Lai’s praxis cycle. Narrative is the means of presenting the Word, and then reflective questions are used to initiate the dialogue. I have personally experienced a training course derived from the CBS model called *Simply the Word*, an adaptation of the

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<sup>156</sup> Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 86.

<sup>157</sup> Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 89.

<sup>158</sup> Robert Strauss and Tom Steffen, “Change the Worldview...Change the World,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2009), 460-461.

<sup>159</sup> Grant Lovejoy, “Chronological Bible Storying: Description, Rationale and Implications” (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) <http://www.davidsills.org/images/CBS.pdf>, (accessed 22 September 2009).

workshop *Simply the Story* (see simplythestory.com), and was impressed with its power to communicate the content in a way that fully engages the learner. While these particular workshops do not stress the importance of telling the whole of God's story chronologically, story series have been developed for specific situations and people groups by personnel within organizations such as New Tribes Mission and the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Three such curricula and a Bible story book have been helpful in selecting appropriate stories for the proposed curriculum: *God and Woman: A Chronological Bible Storying Model for Storying the Good News to a Primarily Oral Culture Muslim and Hindu Women's Worldview*,<sup>160</sup> a series of 90 stories in chronological order, over half of which are from the Old Testament; *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ, Philippine Edition*,<sup>161</sup> a series of 50 comprehensive chronological Bible lessons; and *Chronological Bible Storying for Children International Children's Workers Guide*,<sup>162</sup> which uses a more cyclical series of 60 stories to fill in the historical and theological blanks over time, and *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name*.<sup>163</sup>

While these resources have been helpful to me, I do not see any of them as quite right for the ALS context. *Firm Foundations* probably has all the *content* needed, but I find it very cognitive and didactic, too wordy and not readily facilitating a more dialogic, shared praxis approach. In addition, the lessons are long and not readily adaptable to a

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<sup>160</sup> J. O. Terry, *God and Woman: A Chronological Bible Storying Model for Storying the Good News to a Primarily Oral Culture Muslim and Hindu Women's Worldview* (Singapore: International Mission Board, SBC, 1998).

<sup>161</sup> Trevor McIlwain, *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ, Philippine Edition* (Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1991).

<sup>162</sup> M. Kurt Jarvis, *Chronological Bible Storying for Children International Children's Workers Guide* (Saratoga Springs, UT: by the author, 2010).

<sup>163</sup> Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007).

typical ALS schedule. It has been my goal to produce a more “user-friendly” format that will not overwhelm the facilitators.

### **Curriculum Design**

To guide the curriculum design process, the ADDIE model of instructional design, as described in *ISD From the Ground Up: A No-Nonsense Approach to Instructional Design*, will be applied. According to author Chuck Hodell, this model “provides designers with the necessary structure for designing any curriculum, regardless of the variables involved.”<sup>164</sup> The ADDIE model includes five elements: analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. A general analysis of the needs of out-of-school youth and faith-based Alternative Learning System providers in the Philippines has been described in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 2 has also provided an analysis of educational theories, practices and resources that needed to be considered prior to writing a spiritual formation curriculum. A more specific analysis of ALS learners and providers based on my own observations and the responses of actual ALS providers, is given in Chapter 4. This analysis was used to inform the development of the design of the curriculum, as described in Chapter 3.

Due to the time constraints of this thesis project, full implementation and evaluation of the curriculum cannot be included in the process and therefore this project will be considered a curriculum prototype for further development. However, the ADDIE model calls for intermediate evaluations at every level of the design process,<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Chuck Hodell, *ISD From the Ground Up: A No-Nonsense Approach to Instructional Design* (Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, 2011), 24.

<sup>165</sup> Hodell, *ISD From the Ground UP*, 25.

so feedback from a focus group of ALS providers was sought as the curriculum concept was being developed and during the writing process.

While a variety of approaches to education have been discussed in this review, I see them as largely compatible, even mutually enhancing, for bringing about the desired outcomes in the learners. The adaptation of Lai's praxis cycle shown in Figure 2 (p. 12) illustrates how the foundational content of the Word of God, presented in stories, can be handled in a manner that is learner-centered and adult-oriented. Real-life application of scriptural truth is birthed from personal story-telling and corporate reflection on the unique life situations of the learners. The cooperative interaction of learner and facilitator creates an environment conducive to formation: development of a proper view of God, self and others that will position both the learners and facilitators for growth in Christ-likeness.



### **CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

The sources for Chapter 2 provided an excellent framework of theory and practice, primarily for contexts similar to but different than the context of urban out-of-school youth in the Philippines. While many of the findings could be considered to be universal educational and spiritual principles, it was of some concern that no studies of the impact of the Alternative Learning System on people's lives were found, particularly with regard to the efficacy and practice of its anragogical philosophy. Neither did I find studies directly related to the spiritual formation of Filipino youth. While I found the literature compelling and felt that an experiential, learner-centered, biblical narrative-based framework for the curriculum was ideal for producing the desired outcome of spritual formation, as a foreigner, I did not want to rely too heavily on my own observations and impressions. From the beginning I felt that if a curriculum were to be developed for the use of Christian ALS providers, actual practitioners should give input to the design of that curriculum. Therefore, the purpose of the research design was to meld the findings of all three of these sources of input—my own experience, the needs of ALS practitioners and the literature—into a useful tool for promoting spiritual awakening and growth in ALS learners.

#### **Objectives**

The initial phase of this study was qualitative. It included documenting my own observations as an ALS administrator with regard to the characteristics and needs of ALS

learners, a survey of Christian ALS providers, and a group interview with those among the providers who agreed to participate in a focus group to provide input for the development of the curriculum. It included a review of existing chronological Bible storying curricula, first to determine if there is already something available on the market to meet the perceived need, and secondly to help in the curriculum content selection process.

The second phase of the study was to develop the design and write the scope and sequence of the proposed curriculum based on the findings from the first phase in conjunction with what was learned through the literature review.

The third phase was to distribute sample lessons from the curriculum to the focus group members for an evaluation of it, requesting feedback and suggestions for improvement. The results of this evaluation survey were considered and the curriculum modified accordingly.

### **Procedures**

The initial survey was sent by email on May 16, 2012, to all of the ALS centers associated with the Integrated Christian Coalition of Alternative Learning System (iCALLS) for whom I was able to obtain email addresses. That survey, designed to find out what existing learning centers are currently doing for their learners in the area of Christian education, whether or not they are finding it effective, and what needs they feel for guiding their learners toward life in Christ, generated only one response. Fortunately, Micah Challenge Philippines sponsored a consultation of faith-based organizations using the ALS curriculum on August 2, 2012, and all iCALLS members were invited. I was invited to speak on the topic of developing values education curriculum. This gave me an

opportunity to distribute the survey (see Appendix A) to a large number of ALS providers. The survey included an invitation to participate in a focus group to assist in the development of the curriculum. Fourteen surveys were returned and nine participants agreed to join the focus group.

The results of the survey were compiled and summarized in narrative form (see Chapter 4). Those who responded favorably to serve as members of the focus group were invited to meet with me on September 11, 2012, to discuss the survey results and develop an outline of what the group considers essential inclusions in the curriculum. The group interview also elicited opinions regarding the appropriateness of using adult education strategies, particularly the “praxis cycle” and problem solving through dialogue, and how the curriculum might be made flexible and adaptable, considering the variety of schedules and formats used by the various ALS centers. Again, the results of this meeting have been summarized and presented in Chapter 4.

Taking into consideration my own observations, the findings of the survey and group discussion, the theoretical framework of non-formal adult education, a review of literature on the essentials of Christian spiritual formation and curricula using biblical narrative, a scope and sequence for a program of biblical foundations and spiritual formation for ALS learners was drafted. This initial draft, however, was too extensive, including more lessons than could practically be completed during a year of study. The scope and sequence was trimmed to 45 lessons, the lessons developed—including a journal workbook for the learners—and a facilitator’s guide prepared.

The initial draft of the scope and sequence, ten sample lessons, the learner’s journal and the facilitator’s guide were sent by email to the focus group for their

evaluation on September 23, 2013. The group members were asked to read through the material and, if possible, use it in their ALS context during the following month.

Included in the email was a sampling of open-ended questions to guide their evaluation of the lessons and facilitator guide. At the end of October, a follow-up email was sent which included a simple survey to which the group members could respond (see Appendix B).

Since only a few of the original focus group members responded, I distributed the materials to other contacts in the iCalls network of ALS providers. Nine surveys were eventually received and some of the suggestions immediately implemented by modifying the curriculum resources. A summary of the survey results is described in Chapter 4.

### **Strategy**

The curriculum is intended to be published privately and distributed to the members of iCalls for implementation in their ALS programs. Further feedback will be requested and revisions made as necessary. If the project proves to be a useful tool for these organizations, editing and preparation for formal publishing may be pursued. Translation to Filipino is also being considered.

The methods and procedures for the project proceeded as designed except that, after spending almost a year outside of the country while writing the curriculum, it was more difficult than anticipated to find and communicate with original focus group members who could then implement and give feedback on samples of the curriculum according to the thesis completion deadlines. Other local Christian ALS practitioners were able to do so. I do not feel this had an overly negative effect on the outcome. There will be opportunity for additional feedback and revisions prior to publication.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

The first two chapters of this study gave an analysis of the need for holistic education for the poor and potential approaches to meeting the need. The literature review indicated that a balance between learner-centered and content-centered educational philosophy, implemented through adult learning methods, is appropriate for the target group. In this section, more specific needs of the clientele for whom the curriculum was being designed are considered. Ultimately, the target population is ALS learners, but the users of the curriculum will be Instructional Managers or facilitators, so they and their instructional context needed to be considered as well. The aim of the analysis was to determine the goals of the curriculum and the best way of achieving them. This chapter presents the analysis of the needs of the learners, Instructional Managers and Christian ALS centers and how that analysis influenced the original design of the curriculum. Finally, how the curriculum might be further developed is discussed in light of subsequent feedback from ALS practitioners.

### **Analysis**

While no formal evaluations of the spiritual condition, worldview or Bible knowledge of ALS learners were conducted, my experience as an Instructional Manager at Shining Stars Alternative Learning Center during the past two years has resulted in a number of observations and impressions regarding the spiritual needs of our learners. To supplement my own observations, on August 2, 2012, I conducted a survey of

representatives from other Christian organizations using the Alternative Learning System in Metro Manila (iCalls member organizations) asking what, other than academic assistance, they perceive to be the greatest needs of their learners (see Appendix A). And on September 11, 2012, I met with a focus group of eight experienced IMs and ALS coordinators, derived from the list of survey respondents, to further analyze the target community and the context in which the curriculum will be implemented. The group included leaders such as the former administrator at Bright Lights Learning Center, now serving as the i-Calls chairperson, the ALS coordinator for Christ's Commission Fellowship, a Metro Manila mega-church, and the current Spiritual Development Leader for LALAF (Life and Livelihood Assistance Foundation), an organization that sponsors 50 ALS centers catering to over 2000 secondary level learners.

#### ALS Learners

As may be expected in this nation in which over 80 percent of the population identifies as Roman Catholic,<sup>166</sup> the majority of our learners come from a Catholic background. Because of this heritage, most already believe in God, believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and that Jesus is the Son of God. However, their general knowledge of the Bible is very limited. While they know of the Ten Commandments and the birth, death and resurrection of Christ, they would be hard pressed to find these passages in the Bible and seem to know very little of the rest of its content. Their concept of salvation focuses on behaviors, giving up vices and doing enough good things to out-weigh the bad, in order to gain God's acceptance.

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<sup>166</sup> The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Global Christianity*, 19 December 2011, <http://features.pewforum.org/global-christianity/total-population-percentage.php>, accessed on 10 January 2013.

My observation has been that, upon hearing the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, nearly all of them will respond that they have or wish to receive Christ as their Savior. But old patterns of thinking die hard and old habits of relating continue to dictate the way life is lived. As the antidote to what has become a very me-centered understanding of the Gospel, the learners need to grasp God's overarching plan of redemption as revealed in all of Scripture, grow in an understanding of what it means to live as a member of the Kingdom of God, and experience genuine life change through the transforming work of the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

When asked what they perceived to be the greatest needs of their learners, other than academic assistance, many of the survey respondents mentioned material needs and vocational training. But they also frequently mentioned spiritual and relational needs which concur with my own observations: life change, spiritual growth, values formation, character development, Christian perspectives, accurate view of self, motivation, mentoring in relationships, and counseling. They want their programs to “help change the learners’ way of life” and “uplift their spiritual condition.”<sup>167</sup> They expressed a desire to “ensure total transformation of our learners” because spiritual transformation “is the basic needs [*sic*] of every ALS learners [*sic*] and their families.” They want their learners to gain a biblical view of personal *identity* and *destiny* that will provide the foundation for a personal *mission* and *vision*.

I asked the focus group members to work in small groups to describe the “typical” ALS learner. The results confirmed my observation that, in general, the learners know

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<sup>167</sup> From survey responses, “Integrating ‘Values Education’ in ALS: Survey of Christian ALS Providers,” 2 August 2012.

the Bible is the Word of God, but they do not know the content. They know there is a God and that we can pray to Him, but beyond that, spiritual things are confusing. Spirituality is equated with good works and is more the concern of “old people.”

With regard to their worldview, the group described the learners as fatalistic, me-oriented, materialistic, and very limited in their perspective. Their pervasive attitudes stem from a survival mentality in which they see themselves as hopeless victims, resulting in behaviors that take only immediate consequences into account. Long term results or how these behaviors will affect others or even their own future is of little concern. They feel little or no sense of appreciation or responsibility to care for the environment.

Regarding relationships, the focus group members described bleak family circumstances. Most of their learners come from broken families and many have been abused, neglected or abandoned. They feel inferior, mistrustful and suspicious. One group member described them as “very wounded in spirit.” While most have a strong loyalty to their peer group, low self-esteem is manifested in a variety of ways.

I asked the focus group to discuss the learning styles they observe among their learners and to tell what instructional methods they have found produce the best results. The consensus was that they are primarily experiential learners and that small group discussion, in which the learners can participate and interact with one another in a process of discovery, is the most effective method of instruction.

#### Instructional Managers/Curriculum Facilitators

The survey respondents, who serve as Instructional Managers in ALS programs themselves, feel a need for a Bible-based Christian education curriculum designed



especially for ALS providers. According to their survey responses, most of them have used a variety of resources which they have found more or less helpful, but others say they have no curriculum to help them bring about the life change they wish to see in their learners. They want a curriculum that will help them integrate Christian values into the ALS modules, using a holistic approach to discipling the learners in a way that's appropriate for their context.

When asked about the Bible knowledge of the IMs in their programs, the focus group members described their co-workers as “advanced,” “above average,” and “knowledgeable.” In regard to their relationships with God, others, themselves and the environment, they are described as devoted disciples, compassionate servant leaders, growing in their relationship with God and developing Christ-like character. They are motivators, initiators, healing agents and counselors to the learners. They are resourceful, responsible stewards of the environment. They have an eternal perspective that motivates them to care for the learners. Though I am sure there are IMs who do not always exhibit such godly character, my own experience with the IMs at SSALC confirms this description. It seems that perhaps it is these very characteristics that motivate their choice to serve in this kind of ministry.

The ratio of IMs to learners in the centers represented ranges from 1:6 to 1:20 with the average being about 1:10. According to the focus group, the IMs rely on a wide variety of instructional methods, depending on the objectives of the lesson being taught. While some are already skilled at story telling and discussion leading, some would need further training in these methods. I have observed that the natural tendency among IMs is to use the didactic style of instruction so common in the schools and churches here.

Particularly when the lesson content is religious, or the group is large, the tendency is to preach. This suggests that there is a need for facilitator training to be included with the curriculum.

There is a wide range in scheduling among the learning centers. Some centers meet daily, while others operate only one day per week. While some centers have a short spiritual focus each day of classes, others have a longer period of time dedicated once a week to spiritual growth activities. Some try to use the ALS modules themselves, during the course of regular instruction, as the launching point for focusing on spiritual things. These groups would like to see a Bible curriculum thoroughly integrated with the ALS modules, showing how God's Story relates to the modules. The suggested lesson length for the proposed curriculum was 30 minutes. Some would like it to be modular in design, divided into units, yet stressed the importance of maintaining the "big picture." A learner's manual was suggested.

At the close of our meeting, I asked the focus group to envision the outcomes they hope to see in the lives of our learners as a result of using the proposed curriculum and then write what they consider to be the primary goal of the curriculum. The following were submitted (summarized and consolidated):

1. A personal encounter with the Lordship of Christ.
2. Know God as loving Father and Jesus as the friend they need, to discover their true identity and destiny, to love others as themselves and to distinguish between the world's system and God's Kingdom.
3. Total transformation of the learner: spiritual, emotional, social and intellectual.
4. Growing servant-leaders who disciple others.
5. Transformed lives who eventually will help transform lives (yet without causing them to feel that we are trying to change them).

6. Lifelong learners with academic excellence and lifelong spiritual transformation for the glory of God.
7. Effect the Kingdom values summed up in Micah 6:8 (to act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with God) in the lives of the learners.

### Analysis Summary

Based on the apparent needs of the learners and the needs and desires of the Instructional Managers and program coordinators, the aim of the curriculum should be to bring about transformation in the lives of the learners. This transformation will be recognized as the learners attain the following goals.

Learners who participate in this course will:

1. Expand their knowledge and understanding of God and His overarching plan for humanity, as revealed in His Word.
2. Enter into a personal relationship with God by faith in His overarching plan of reconciliation and redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ.
3. Discover their God-given identity and destiny.
4. Develop their life mission and vision as active agents in the Kingdom of God.
5. Discover and apply to their lives the principles God has revealed in Scripture for life in His Kingdom.

There was not a consensus among the survey respondents and focus group members about how these goals should be attained. However, there was enough support to justify basing the curriculum on a chronological series of Bible stories (as opposed to the ALS modules) and implementing the praxis cycle (see Chapter 1) whereby the learners are encouraged to discover what God's Story has to say to them.

## Design

The curriculum resource, entitled *Exploring God's Story: a Spiritual Formation Curriculum for Youth Based on Chronological Bible Stories from Genesis to Revelation* (see Chapter 4), was designed to comply with the above needs analysis as much as possible. It was based on a series of Bible stories that reveal the nature and character of God, the brokenness and need of humanity as the result of sin, and the redemptive plan God has been implementing since Creation. The curriculum resources include instructions for the facilitators on various ways to communicate the stories and how to lead a small group discussion to bring out the key revelations and principles found in them. Key concepts and sample discussion questions from each story are given for the use of the facilitator, but are not to limit the learners' own Spirit-led discoveries. Learners are encouraged to make practical applications of these discoveries to their own lives and the life of their community. A learner's journal has been included.

## Objectives

In addition to the goals for spiritual formation listed above, the curriculum resources were designed to reinforce the academic pursuits of the learners by encouraging skills needed for passing the Accreditation and Equivalency exam and for successful life beyond the ALS program. The lessons are designed to:

1. Help the learners develop critical thinking skills. This will be observed through increasing ability to make observations, recognize relationships and draw conclusions related to the Bible passages being studied.
2. Help the learners develop their communication skills. This will be observed through increasing ability to express themselves through story-telling, discussion and writing.
3. Help the learners develop self-confidence. This will be observed through increasing willingness to reveal their own thoughts and opinions in discussion, confidence to

communicate the story to others through creative means, and boldness to actively apply what is being learned to real life circumstances.

Part One of the curriculum resource material is introductory information to orient the facilitator to the philosophy behind the curriculum and how it is designed to be implemented. It gives general instructions for how to use each part of the lesson outline.

Part Two consists of the lesson guides to be used by the facilitator. Each lesson includes the following:

1. Lesson Number and Story Title.
2. Core Bible Passage from which the story is taken, plus supporting passages that will provide background information for the facilitator or transitional material to link the last story to the current one. A memory verse is also suggested here.
3. Key Concepts from the story to be brought out in discussion through the use of leading questions.
4. Primary Objectives to aim for.
5. Review of previous stories, Key Concepts, Action Plan outcomes and memory verses.
6. A question or brief activity to Engage the Learners by making a connection between the story and their life experience.
7. A suggested means of presenting the story and ideas for how the learners can Retell the Story.
8. Suggested discussion questions.
9. Guidelines for the development of an appropriate application: the Action Plan.
10. Evaluation notes: space in which the facilitator can make note of personal perceptions regarding the outcome of the lesson (points that came out in the discussion that had significant impact on the learners, ways the lesson might be improved, significant contributions made by learners, questions that need follow-up, etc.)

Part Three contains supplementary resource materials for some of the lessons.

The facilitator may opt to use these to promote learner involvement.

Part Four is the learner’s journal workbook, the *Discovery Journal*. It includes spaces where the learners can record their discoveries, develop their action plans, and reflect on what they are learning and experiencing as they put their plans into action. They will also record their memory verses in the Discovery Journal.

### Development

Samples of these resource materials were produced and distributed as email attachments for evaluation and pilot testing by members of the original focus group and additional Instructional Managers and administrators associated with iCalls. The recipients were asked to review the material and, if possible, implement a few lessons with their ALS learners. An email survey was subsequently sent requesting their evaluation of the curriculum (see Appendix B). Nine surveys were returned and the results are summarized as follows.

Table 3. Feedback Survey Results, Questions 1-3, 6 and 7.

1. Read the Facilitator Guide and sample lessons	Yes 9	No 0	
2. Implemented some lessons with ALS learners	Yes 6	No 3	
3. Was the Facilitator Guide helpful?	Very 8	Somewhat 1	
6. Do the session plans appear easy to use?	Very 2	Somewhat 5	No 2
7. Does the curriculum appear adaptable to your schedule?	Readily 2	Can adjust 4	No 2

Six of the nine respondents were actually able to test the sample resources by implementing some of the lessons with ALS learners. Those who did were able to give more specific feedback. All of the respondents felt that the Facilitator’s Guide was helpful and that implementation of the curriculum was likely to accomplish the desired

outcomes (listed in the survey) in the learners. Most of the respondents found the material easy to use and adaptable to the needs of their learning center, but two thought it might be very challenging for some facilitators and two said their time constraints could not accommodate such lengthy lessons.

Following are some additional comments volunteered by the respondents:

“I really think the material is excellent for its purpose.”

“I was really inspired and impressed by your work. I, personally, gained so much spiritual insights [*sic*] while teaching it to our students.”

“The thoroughness of the Facilitator’s Guide and the Praxis Cycle applied in each lesson made this curriculum very effective, enhanced by the Action Plan and the Discovery Journal for follow-up and Evaluation. Personally, I would recommend this Curriculum which was painstakingly, thoughtfully, professionally and prayerfully done.”

Several modifications were suggested:

1. A Filipino translation of the curriculum resources would be very helpful, possibly necessary in some situations.
2. Include in the Orientation material an example of how a lesson is to be used.
3. Rather than repeating excess words throughout the Lesson Outlines (e.g. Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit), emphasize the importance of these in the facilitator Orientation material in order to make the Lesson Outlines more succinct.
4. For facilitators who may not take time to read with understanding the Orientation material or are not already familiar with story-telling as an instructional method, the Orientation material may not be adequate. A training seminar may be necessary if the curriculum resources will be implemented as designed.
5. Consider creating a demonstration video on how to facilitate a discussion.
6. Make the objectives more concrete and measurable.
7. Suggest a time allotment for each section of the Lesson Outline.

8. The lessons are too long. Make them simpler and the teaching time shorter or suggest ways the lesson could be divided into shorter sessions.
9. Give additional suggested activities for the facilitator to choose from: transitional activities to capture the attention of the learners, examples and questions.

The analysis of the needs of ALS learners and Instructional Managers gave invaluable input to the design of the curriculum resources, found in Chapter 5, not only with regards to goals and objectives but also the choice of content, methodology and lesson format. A correspondence between the perceived needs and how the curriculum is designed to meet them is presented in Chapter 6. The feedback already collected, as well as future feedback, will be very helpful in developing a useful product for Christian ALS centers targeting out-of-school youth. Recommendations for improvement are considered in Chapter 6.



## **CHAPTER 5: CURRICULUM RESOURCE MATERIALS**

This thesis project has resulted in the development of a facilitator's guide for use by Christian Instructional Managers providing the Alternative Learning System to out of school youth in the Philippines. The curriculum resource has been entitled *Exploring God's Story: A Spiritual Formation Curriculum for Youth Based on Chronological Bible Stories from Genesis to Revelation*. The resources found in the following pages include an orientation to the curriculum resource materials, forty-five lesson outlines, and additional learning enhancement resources to be used by the facilitator and a journaling workbook for the individual learners.

# **EXPLORING GOD'S STORY**

**A SPIRITUAL FORMATION CURRICULUM FOR YOUTH  
BASED ON CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE STORIES  
FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION**

*Facilitator's Guide for ALS Instructional Managers*  
By Betsy Eyestone

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

(pagination shown for publication as an independent piece)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	4
PART ONE: ORIENTATION.....	5
Introduction .....	6
Educational Philosophy .....	7
Implementation.....	10
Lesson Format .....	11
PART TWO: LESSON OUTLINES .....	13
Introduction: The Bible Is God’s Story .....	14
1 The Story Begins .....	16
2 Adam and Eve .....	18
3 Sin Has Consequences .....	20
4 Cain and Abel .....	22
5 Righteous Noah .....	24
6 God Destroys, Yet Rescues, His Creation .....	26
7 God Chooses Abram to Father a Nation .....	28
8 God Makes a Covenant and Keeps His Promise .....	30
9 God Judges Sodom and Gomorrah .....	32
10 Abraham Passes the Faith Test .....	34
11 God Blesses Isaac .....	36
12 A Family Divided .....	38
13 The Promise Goes to Jacob .....	40
14 Jacob’s Brides .....	42
15 More Trouble in Jacob’s Family .....	44
16 Joseph Resists Temptation .....	46
17 God Rescues Egypt Through Joseph .....	48
18 God Rescues Israel Through Joseph .....	50
19 God Rescues Baby Moses .....	52
20 God Calls Moses to Rescue His People .....	54
21 God Reveals His Power and Plan .....	56
22 The People Complain Yet God Provides .....	58
23 God Gives the Law and the People Reject It .....	60
24 The Tabernacle: the Place to Meet with God .....	62
25 The People Reject the Land God Promised .....	64
26 Joshua Replaces Moses as Israel’s Leader .....	66
27 Crossing the Jordan .....	68
28 Two Battles, Two Outcomes .....	70
29 God Sends Judges to Rescue Israel .....	72

30	The Last Judge and the First King . . . . .	74
31	David: Man with a Hero's Heart . . . . .	76
32	Solomon: the Wise and Foolish King . . . . .	78
33	The Prophets Speak of Judgment and Hope . . . . .	80
34	God Reveals Himself to Other Nations . . . . .	82
35	Return to Israel . . . . .	84
36	The Rescue Begins: Jesus Is Born! . . . . .	86
37	Jesus Declares His Identity and Purpose . . . . .	88
38	Jesus Invites Followers to Kingdom Living . . . . .	90
39	Jesus Prepares His Disciples for His Death . . . . .	92
40	Death Can't Stop the Rescue Plan! . . . . .	94
41	The Holy Spirit Comes . . . . .	96
42	The Rescue Plan Is for Everyone . . . . .	98
43	The First Missionaries . . . . .	100
44	The Rescue Plan Completed: Jesus Will Return . . . . .	102
PART THREE: RESOURCES . . . . .		104
PART FOUR: DISCOVERY JOURNAL SAMPLE . . . . .		120

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## **PART 1: ORIENTATION**

**EXPLORING GOD’S STORY: A Spiritual Formation Curriculum  
For Youth Based On Chronological Bible Stories From Genesis To Revelation  
Facilitator’s Guide for ALS Instructional Managers**

Introduction: *What is this curriculum for and why do we need it?*

The Philippine Department of Education has provided a useful tool for Christian churches and organizations to use in their outreach to a marginalized sector of society: the Alternative Learning System. According to the Instructional Manager’s training manual, the vision and mission of the Alternative Learning System is “[to] empower Filipino out-of-school youth and adults to continue to learn on their own so they may improve their quality of life and that of their family, community and country.”<sup>168</sup> The ALS program would provide a good model for holistic education if it addressed the relational and spiritual aspects of life more adequately.

For Christians, of greater concern than the educational needs are spiritual needs. An education is very important, but it is possible to live a fulfilling life without a high school diploma. It is also possible to be well-educated yet miserable if one is not in a right relationship with God and others. In light of our eternal perspective, obedient believers are motivated by the Greatest Commandments (Matthew 22:37-38) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) to look for ways to communicate God’s truth to young people. **Christians implementing the Alternative Learning System have tremendous potential for bringing the transforming power of the Gospel into the lives of those who might otherwise be unreached.** While meeting a real need for education and social empowerment, it also opens doors for addressing spiritual needs.

The teen and young adult years are perhaps the most critical years of a person’s life because decisions made during this period often set the course for the remainder of a person’s life. Essential for a fulfilling, God-honoring life is making those decisions based on a reliable foundation. As Christians, we believe that foundation is a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, **the most important decision a person can make is to align one’s life with God’s purpose and plan for His creation.** What better time to make that decision than in one’s youth? The passion and energy of youth, harnessed by the Spirit of God for His purposes, is a powerful force for the growth of His Kingdom (Eph. 1:3-10, 2:1-10; 2 Timothy 2:20-21).

However, we must be careful not to abuse the freedom we have to use the ALS in this way, but rather take it as a God-given opportunity to represent Him to people who might not otherwise have the chance to know Him personally. Jesus did not force Himself on people. He did not take advantage of their needy condition to coerce them to follow Him. But He freely offered them the Way, the Truth and the Life, and it was often the poor who chose to follow Him. We would do well to model our approach after Him.

But how? While there are many evangelism, discipleship and values education curricula available on the Philippine market, I have not found anything providing a comprehensive, systematic biblical foundation for life-changing spiritual formation that takes advantage of the unique ALS learning center context. I was motivated by the

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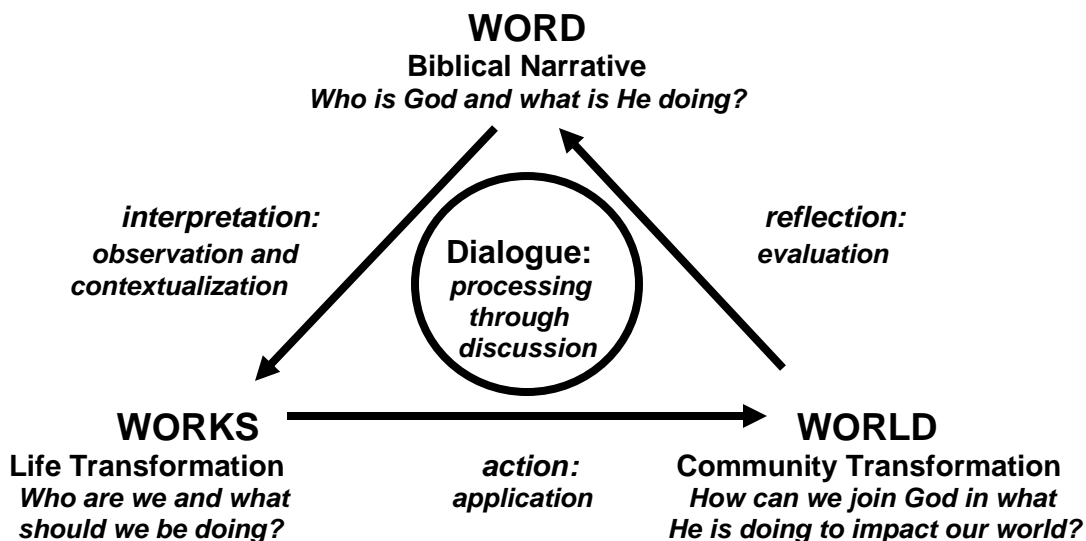
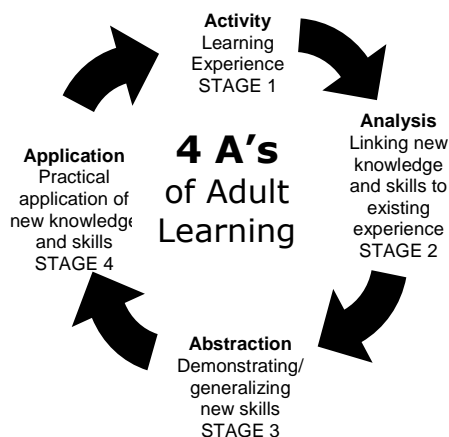
<sup>168</sup> “Training of Instructional Managers on the Alternative Learning System, Accreditation and Equivalency, and Learning Support Delivery System” training manual, no page number available.

thought that, if there were a Christian education curriculum available specifically for church-based ALS centers, it would be easier for a church to get started in this kind of ministry. Perhaps more churches would be inspired to engage in holistic ministry to disadvantaged youth! This curriculum was developed to maximize the time ALS Instructional Managers have with their learners in order to facilitate genuine spiritual transformation in the lives of the learners and their communities.

### The Philosophy Behind the Curriculum: *What makes this curriculum different?*

In the attempt to integrate biblical instruction with the ALS curriculum, the educational philosophy of the Alternative Learning System has been adopted. If you are a trained Instructional Manager, you will recall that the ALS is based on principles of adult education and that it is a learner-centered curriculum. This is important to note because this educational philosophy runs counter to the traditional Philippine educational model, but it suits spiritual formation well: **a respect for the experience and reasoning ability of older learners is essential for developing analytical thinking skills and a genuine, personal faith.**

Remember *The 4 A's of Adult Learning* from your training seminar? This curriculum uses an adaptation of a similar model, the *praxis cycle*, which specifically applies the adult learning cycle to biblical content. Both models encourage analysis of, reflection on and application of the learning content. **The goal of the praxis cycle is to encourage the learners to think for themselves and discover their own applications of God's Word.** While biblical content and suggested questions for guiding the discussion are given in the curriculum, facilitators will be expected to look for practical ways in which they, together with the learners, can apply the praxis cycle.





In her book, *Learning is Change*, Martha M. Leypoldt claims that no genuine transformation in our learners can take place without addressing the affective domain. Learning is changing our minds, feelings and actions,<sup>169</sup> but a change in feelings must come before there will be any significant behavioral change. “In all learning situations,” she says, “the feeling aspect of learning is closely interrelated with the knowing and doing behaviors [so] the feeling level must be dealt with before the other levels can be touched.”<sup>170</sup> **Our learners’ attitudes, beliefs and feelings about themselves, God and the world will determine their sense of identity and how they live out their destiny.** You will discover that many of the discussion questions in the curriculum were designed to address how something in the biblical story makes the learner feel.

Hearing truth from someone else is less likely to bring about change in one’s life than discovering the truth for oneself. Therefore, the facilitator is not to function as a teacher. God Himself will be the teacher through the stories found in His Word. **The facilitator will use discussion questions to guide the learners to explore God’s Story in order to find out for themselves what God has revealed** about Himself, people, and what He is doing in the world. Listening to someone teach *about* God and biblical doctrines is not nearly as memorable as hearing His very words and seeing Him in action in the mind’s eye as the stories of Scripture are told. Nothing reveals more about who God is than His Story, and nothing better answers the deepest questions of the soul.

In his work, “Spiritual Formation of Adolescents,” James Bryan Smith explains that “spiritual formation involves developing a sense of our true identity. Our spirits are formed as we take in information about who we really are and as we begin living our lives on the basis of that identity.”<sup>171</sup> Our identity is formed either by the world or it is found in Christ. Smith encourages the church to reflect to young people a true, accurate identity to combat the distorted image projected by the world. “As we look into the Bible we see our incredible value, our true nature, our inability to live independently, our complete redemption and our regeneration in Christ who dwells within us.”<sup>172</sup> In the characters of the Bible, we see ourselves.

**God is a story-telling God.** Story-telling was the primary way that Jesus transformed the thinking of His disciples. The majority of the Bible is in story form. Stories are not just for children. They can be used as a valuable tool for passing on the faith, even to adults. Melba Maggay, Filipino theologian, says that when we share God’s Word with people, “we are introducing them to a Person, not merely asking them to assent to certain propositions. We are telling them of an *event*, not of an *idea*. We are reporting *news*, not converting them to our *views*.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Martha M. Leypoldt, *Learning is Change: Adult Education in the Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1971), 27-29.

<sup>170</sup> Leypoldt, 64.

<sup>171</sup> Smith, James Bryan, “Spiritual Formation of Adolescents,” *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 248.

<sup>172</sup> Smith, 253.

<sup>173</sup> Melba P. Maggay, *The Gospel in the Filipino Context* (Mandaluyong: OMF Literature, Inc., 1987), 17.

Many people see the Bible as a book made up of many random stories rather than one continuous, cohesive story. According to Tom Steffen, who served for 15 years with New Tribes Mission in the Philippines, this perspective results in missing the “big picture” of God’s overall plan for the world and the people in it. If we only focus on the teachings of the New Testament, he says, an understanding of God as He has revealed Himself in the Old Testament is missed, resulting in a failure to grasp “the awesomeness of God, which is the beginning of wisdom.”<sup>174</sup>

It is Steffen’s conviction that evangelism based on parts of the New Testament, often only on the Gospel of John, is insufficient to provide a solid foundation for spiritual formation. He says, “Believers who evangelize tend to overlook the need to front-load the gospel message with sufficient Old Testament background so that a solid foundation for the ‘Good News’ is laid.”<sup>175</sup> It is “imperative to share the gospel story in the framework of the whole of Scripture” because “the Old Testament narrative frames God as relevant to all the affairs of life.”<sup>176</sup> He suggests that **evangelism without that historical foundation may produce merely professing believers rather than true disciples**. This could explain why the many robust evangelistic campaigns and programs that have taken place in this country in the past century have resulted in relatively few truly transformed lives and communities.

#### Implementation: *How does this curriculum work?*

The curriculum is designed to reinforce the academic pursuits of the learners by encouraging skills needed for passing the Accreditation and Equivalency exam and for successful life beyond the ALS program. The lessons will:

1. Help the learners develop analytical thinking skills. This will be observed through increasing ability to make observations, recognize relationships and draw conclusions related to the Bible passages being studied.
2. Help the learners develop their communication skills. This will be observed through increasing ability to express themselves through story-telling, discussion and writing.
3. Help the learners develop self-confidence. This will be observed through increasing willingness to reveal their own thoughts and opinions in discussion, confidence to communicate the story to others through creative means, and boldness to actively apply what is being learned to real life circumstances.

Because our ALS learners, and we ourselves, need to get the “big picture” in order to understand who God really is, who we are in relation to Him and *why* Christ’s incarnation, death and resurrection are so important, the majority of the curriculum content is taken from the Old Testament narrative. Using chronological Bible stories as the content works well with the praxis cycle: story-telling is the means of presenting the Word and then reflective questions are used to initiate the dialogue connecting God’s Story to our own (Works and World).

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<sup>174</sup> Tom A. Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry: Crosscultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad*, rev. ed. (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 1996), 86.

<sup>175</sup> Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 89.

<sup>176</sup> Robert Strauss and Tom Steffen, “Change the Worldview...Change the World,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2009), 460-461.

After hearing the story, the learners will be asked to visualize the setting and the characters in the story and analyze the words, decisions and actions of those characters and the consequences of their actions. The learners will compare themselves and events in their lives with the characters in the story and think about their own choices and the impact those choices have on their lives. They will be asked to look for clues about God's character and compare what they've learned about Him in this story with what they learned in the past stories. By putting themselves in the story, trying to imagine what the characters were thinking and feeling and how their choices affected them, **they begin the process of application of God's Word to their own lives.** They will gain a more complete picture of who God is and their relationship to Him. They will develop an overall view of what God has been and is continuing to do in the world and what that has to do with them.

The facilitator's questions are designed to help the learners develop analytical thinking skills, one of the aims of the ALS curriculum, so it is very important that the facilitator **allow the learners to do their own thinking.** This is difficult for those of us who love to preach and teach! Questions should help the learners closely observe the details of the story, interpret what they have heard, make connections between the story and their own lives and determine what to do about what they have learned. The questions are provided to help the facilitator "get the ball rolling," but they are not intended to restrict the flow of discussion related to the story or limit the emerging insights.

#### Lesson Format: *How do I use the Lesson Outline?*

Each lesson includes two main sections: information for facilitators to study *on their own* prior to presenting the lesson and activities to be done *with the learners*. In both sections there is a reminder to engage with the Holy Spirit in prayer as the lesson is prepared and executed. **The guidance of the Holy Spirit is essential for accurate interpretation and meaningful reflection on the Word.** As he has from the beginning, Satan still loves to twist the Word of God to lead people astray (Gen. 3:1-5). A facilitator must always rely on a broad knowledge of scripture as well as the guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) to avoid drifting into heresy. Remember to depend on the Holy Spirit during preparation for the lesson, but also **pray with the learners** to model reliance on the Holy Spirit throughout the praxis cycle.

The elements in the lesson guide are not intended to limit your insight, creativity or the leading of the Holy Spirit, but rather they should be considered suggestions to guide you as you interact with the story. **Note:** the normal script is written to you, the facilitator, and the *italic script* suggests what you might say to the learners **in your own words.** Please, do not just read it! Say it however you normally would in the language of your learners.

Here are some important points to remember about using the Lesson Outline:

- You need to be very familiar with the **Core Bible Passage** and the **Supporting Passages** if you will present the story and guide the discussion well. **Do not expect to prepare for the lesson just a few minutes in advance!** Good story-telling requires preparation time. Some methods of telling the story require advanced preparation with one or more of the learners.

- Learn the **Memory Verse** along with your learners to show them how you value hiding God's Word in your heart. Committing to memory a verse related to each lesson will implant truth in the learners' hearts that the Holy Spirit can bring to their minds when they need it. If you feel there are too many memory verses or that there are other verses that would be better, you are free to select those that you think are the most appropriate. Use the translation/version of the Bible you think will be most meaningful for your learners.
- As you study, compare your own observations of the scriptures with the list of **Key Concepts**. If you see an important concept in the story that is not listed in the lesson guide, you may add it.
- The **Primary Objectives** give you something to aim for as you guide the discussion and markers to watch for in your learners' responses. While many of the objectives relate to *inner* changes we hope will occur in the learners' understanding, beliefs and attitudes, these changes may be revealed *outwardly* in their discussion responses, if open-ended questions are used to help them reflect on what they are learning. If knowledge of your learners prompts you to focus on a Primary Objective other than or in addition to those listed, you may do it. Just be sure it actually comes from the scripture being studied. **Avoid inserting doctrinal views that are not found in the story.**
- The **Review of Previous Lessons** is a means of maintaining continuity in God's Story from lesson to lesson. Keep it interesting and relevant to your learners' experience. The Review is the time for them to share what happened when they implemented their Action Plans, an important part of the praxis cycle. It is also an opportunity for you, the facilitator, to observe whether the objectives of the lessons are being met. As the learners tell their stories, allow them to reflect on the changes they see in their own responses to life situations. The Review may best be done in their small groups in order to create a safe environment for sharing. **Do not fail to review the memory verses.** Use creative methods for review and consider using incentives that would motivate the learners.
- It is important to **Engage the Learners** prior to telling the story. The goal is to prepare them for the story by making a connection between it and their own lives. Do consider if there might be a better way than the one given of grabbing their attention. This is an area in which you can make the lesson more learner-centered by tailoring it to the life experience of your own learners.
- **Tell the Story** in creative ways that bring the story to life—be animated yet accurate. When quoting a character in the story, attempt to express through your voice and body language what that person was likely feeling at the time. One of the goals of the curriculum is to develop the learners as good communicators themselves. Start by setting a good example, but eventually begin assigning the stories in advance for them to prepare.
- Be creative in how you have the learners **Retell the Story**. Get everyone involved! Strongly encourage the learners to listen to the story carefully so that they can tell it to someone else. Allow them to practice telling the story to each other.

- When you **Guide the Discussion**, adapt the discussion questions to the context of your particular learners (keeping it learner-centered) while bearing in mind the Primary Objectives and schedule limitations. Encourage the learners to really **discuss and reflect** on what they heard rather than just giving short answers. **Help them discover the answers themselves** by asking additional leading questions rather than just giving them what you believe are the “right” answers. **Avoid teaching!**
- **Develop the Action Plan** based on the outcomes of the discussion. How does the Holy Spirit seem to be prompting this group at this time in response to His Word? Guide them to make either personal or group Action Plans that they can begin implementing right away. **Encourage a vision for God’s transforming work in their lives and the life of their community.** Again, watch for changes in the learners’ attitudes and beliefs about God, themselves and their world. Look for improvements in their ability to express their insights and opinions and willingness to take action.
- Use the **Evaluation Notes** space and margins to record ideas and observations you want to remember for future use of the curriculum: What worked well? What would you change next time? What were the unexpected insights and outcomes? What notable revelations or realizations struck one or more of the learners? What stories were told by the learners that might be indicators of transformation or useful examples for future learners? What changes would you suggest to the curriculum developer that would help make the curriculum more useful for the ALS context? Taking time to reflect on and record your observations will allow you see the impact God’s Word is having on the learners and help you to improve as a facilitator.
- The **Discovery Journal** is a learner workbook provided to help the learners keep a record of what they have learned and the ways they intend to apply what they have learned. Sometimes the material explores more deeply or personalizes one aspect of the story that wasn’t thoroughly covered in the discussion. Some of the activities in the journal can be done together in a small group, but **it is important for the learners to reflect on God’s Story**, respond in some way to what they are learning, note down their Action Plans and record their memory verses for future review.

It is up to you whether you want to use the Discovery Journal as a private diary for the learner’s and God’s eyes only, or more as an assignment workbook which they submit to you for assessment. Inform the learners of your intentions in advance if you will be reading their journals, or have such assignments submitted on a separate piece of paper. Some of the Discovery Journal activities are designed to be accomplished or discussed in small groups. In these cases, the learners should be encouraged to share their responses with their group for purposes of mutual encouragement and accountability, but they should never be coerced to reveal personal reflections if they choose not to.

The Discovery Journal is still being developed and may not be useful to you because it is not in the language of your learners. For the time being, you may wish to take ideas from it and create your own journal questions for your learners to write in their own blank notebooks.

- The goal of the curriculum was to give you enough content to cover a year of weekly sessions. If 45 lessons are too many for your annual schedule, you must determine which lessons to omit while still maintaining the overall flow of God’s Story. Prayerfully consider what you will and will not include. Because every learning center is different and there is **no standard time** set for addressing the spiritual needs of ALS learners, you will need to **adjust the material that is offered to meet the needs and time constraints of your learning center**. Perhaps your circumstances will not allow you to use all of the suggested material given in each lesson, or perhaps you will need to divide the material into two or more shorter sessions. Below are some examples of ways to divide the lesson outlines into shorter sessions.

May God bless you for your obedience to His Story. May He use you mightily as you share His Story with the young people you serve. May your life be changed as well as you process life and God’s Story together with your learners. To God be the glory!

SUGGESTIONS FOR DIVIDING THE LESSON INTO TWO SESSIONS			
Day 1	<p><b>Review Previous Lessons</b></p> <p><b>Engage the Learners</b></p> <p><b>Tell the Story</b> (assign a learner or group of learners to Retell the Story on Day 2)</p> <p><b>Guide the Discussion</b>, using the questions that are primarily for making observations about the story</p> <p>Introduce the <b>Memory Verse</b></p>	Day 2	<p>Have an individual or group <b>Retell the Story</b> using the suggested or other method</p> <p><b>Guide the Discussion</b> by using the questions that are designed to help the learners interpret and apply the story</p> <p><b>Develop the Action Plan</b> and continue memorizing the memory verse</p> <p>Complete the exercises in the <b>Discovery Journal</b></p>

SUGGESTIONS FOR DIVIDING THE LESSON INTO THREE SESSIONS					
Day 1	<p><b>Review Previous Lessons</b></p> <p><b>Engage the Learners</b></p> <p><b>Tell the Story</b> (assign a learner or group of learners to Retell the Story on Day 2)</p> <p><b>Guide the Discussion</b> by using only basic observation questions</p> <p>Introduce the <b>Memory Verse</b></p>	Day 2	<p><b>Retell the Story</b> using the suggested or other method</p> <p><b>Guide the Discussion</b> using the remaining questions</p> <p><b>Develop the Action Plan</b></p> <p>Review the <b>Memory Verse</b></p>	Day 3	<p>Have someone <b>Retell the Story</b></p> <p>Review the <b>Memory Verse</b></p> <p>Ask learners to share the most important thing they learned from the story</p> <p>Complete the <b>Discovery Journal</b> individually or in small groups</p>

## **PART 2: LESSON OUTLINES**

## INTRODUCTION: THE BIBLE IS GOD’S STORY

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Supporting Passages: Exodus 34:27-28; Jeremiah 36:1-4; Luke 1:1-4; 1 John 1:1-5; Ps. 119:9-11, 105; Ps. 17:7; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Heb. 4:12.

Memory Verse: Psalm 119:105

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- The Bible is not just hero stories, not just rules, but one Big Story of God’s work in the world.
- The accounts in the Bible are written by eyewitnesses and prophets.
- Though there were many writers, God is the author of this Story.
- The Bible is an account of God’s Rescue Plan<sup>177</sup> for His broken creation.
- It teaches us everything we need to know to live life the way God designed it.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. gain new respect for the Bible as God’s Story.
2. be inspired to explore God’s Story to find out what His message to us contains.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Engage the Learners**

Say something like...

*If I wrote you a long letter telling you exactly how to find a hidden treasure that would change your whole life, what would you do with the letter? (Wait for responses.) Would you put it away somewhere and ignore it because you don’t like to read? If you understood how great the treasure was, you would most likely read it carefully and do everything it said in order to find the treasure, right? The Bible is God’s letter to us and God’s Kingdom is the treasure. The Bible contains the most important information we will ever need to know. In our Bible lessons, we will learn who God is, what He has done, is doing, and will do in the future, and how His Story applies to us.*

#### **Tell the Story**

Today’s lesson is an introduction and doesn’t include a story. It is an exploration of a variety of scriptures that teach where the Bible came from and why it is so important.

Suggestion: Divide the large group into six small groups. Give each group a Bible.

Say: *The Bible was written over a period of approximately 1600 years by about 40 different people in 3 different languages. How did the authors know what to write?*

(Write this question on the board.) Assign each group one of the following scripture passages to discuss: Ex. 34:27-28, Jer. 36:1-4, Luke 1:1-4, 2 Pet. 1:16-18, 2 Pet. 1:19-21, 1 John 1:1-5. Ask the groups to use the verses to answer the question written on the

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<sup>177</sup> Thanks to Sally Lloyd-Jones for the term “God’s Rescue Plan” as a reference to the plan of salvation God set in motion in the Garden of Eden and will carry out to completion at Christ’s return.



board. After a few minutes, have a member of each group read the passage aloud and report their discovery to the whole group. List the answers on the board.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Before the Bible was written down, different people believed different stories and traditions about God. In fact most of the people groups in the world have traditional stories about what God is like and how the world began. What are some of the traditional Filipino stories about God and how the world began?*
2. *Is it possible that all the stories from around the world could be true? Explain.*
3. *God wanted us to know the truth so He made a way for it to be written down. Look at your Bible. It's divided into two main parts. What are they? How many "books" does each part have?*
4. *The Old Testament tells the part of God's story that happened before Jesus was born. It was originally written to the people of Israel, but it has much to teach us as well. It is in the Old Testament that we learn who God is, how the world began, and what God expects of us. It helps us understand why we need a Savior. Turn in the Old Testament to Psalm 119:9-11. Write on the board *The Bible is useful for...* Have someone read the verses aloud. Ask: *According to the writer of this psalm, what is God's word useful for?* List responses on the board.*
5. *The New Testament begins at the time when Jesus the Savior was born. From it we learn more about God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and how we can become members of the Kingdom of God. Ask 4 different readers to read aloud the following passages: Ps. 19:7, Rom. 15:4, 2 Tim. 3:14-17, Heb. 4:12. After each is read, add to the list of what the Bible is useful for.*
6. *As we study God's Story this year, we will be asking 3 basic questions in each lesson: (1) Who is God and what is He doing? (2) Who are we and what should we be doing? (3) How can we join God in what He is doing to impact our world?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. Suggestion: Enlarge the diagram found in Resources and use it to review the information given in today's lesson. If you have a way to project, this diagram can be found at <http://www.66clouds.com/extras.html>.
- B. Ask the learners to state what they have learned and what has changed in their own attitude toward the Bible because of what they have learned.
- C. Throughout the curriculum, there will be small group activities. If your group is more than 12 learners, they should be divided into small groups. Each group should be assigned an Instructional Manager or other facilitator. Ask the learners to complete the sentences in the Introduction lesson in their Discovery Journals, then encourage them to share their responses with their small group.
- D. Begin memorizing Psalm 119:105. Encourage the learners to write this verse in their Discovery Journals in whatever Bible version you have decided to use.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

# 1 THE STORY BEGINS

## ON YOUR OWN

### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 1:1-31, 2:1-3

Supporting Passages: Psalm 8, Psalm 19:1-4

Memory Verse: Psalm 19:1

### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God spoke the world and everything in it into existence.
- The original creation was perfect.
- God made people in His image, male and female.
- God gave them a responsibility to care for His creation.

### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. be awed by God's creative power expressed in the wonders of nature.
2. identify with the first humans, made in God's image with authority and responsibility.
3. acknowledge their own responsibility to care for creation.

## WITH THE LEARNERS

### **Review Previous Lesson**

Ask: *Why are we studying the Bible?*

Recite together Psalm 119:105.

### **Engage the Learners**

If you are able to use a computer and projector, find a video or create a slide show of the awesome variety in nature to show God's amazing creativity, or find a video that shows the relationship of the earth to the galaxy and universe to show the unfathomable vastness of creation. Examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGvfdtI2c0>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52RE2WXN4xA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zr7wNQw12l8>,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJXww8jYvEk>,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2fsNkAnzEI>.

If you are unable to use online resources, look for nature magazines or science books with good pictures. Give the learners time to interact with these materials. Have them tell what they think is the most amazing thing about the universe we live in.

### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

### **Tell the Story**

The Core Bible Passage may be divided into short sections. Consider having the learners take turns reading them, slowly and clearly, starting with Gen. 1:1, with a new reader for each section (e.g. 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, etc.). As the story is read, have one of the learners serve as a recorder to write on the board what God created on each of the 6 days of creation.

### **Retell the Story**

Set an example for how to tell the story. Practice ahead of time so you can give a smooth presentation of the passage from memory. The list created on the board can help guide you. Encourage the learners to join you on repeated phrases, such as “And God saw that it was good.”

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *This may be a familiar Bible passage. What do you see that is new or interesting to you?*
2. *Look closely at 1:26-28. What observations can you make? What is the meaning of those verses? What responsibility did God give the first man and woman? Do you think God intends us to have that same responsibility?*
3. *What do you think it means that God said that all he had made was very good (1:31)?*
4. *Discuss the meaning of Gen. 2:1. What does this verse tell us about creation? How does that compare with things you might have heard about evolution theory?*
5. *What have we learned about God from this part of His Story?*  
(Suggestion: Draw a large circle on a large sheet of manila paper or cartolina. In the circle, begin accumulating words or short phrases that describe God. Have the learners add to this circle during each lesson.)
6. *What have we learned about people?*  
(Suggestion: Draw a large circle on another sheet of paper. In that circle, begin accumulating words or short phrases that describe people.)
7. *How might this part of God’s Story change the way we think about ourselves and other people? How might that change the way we behave? Is there something we should be doing differently?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. If possible, play the YouTube video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX17pbZlhRs>. Have the learners complete the first part of Lesson 1 in the Discovery Journal.
- B. Based on the answers the learners gave to question #7 above, discuss possible real-life applications. Encourage them to create a plan for how they will apply this lesson either individually or as a group. They should be as specific as possible about where and when they will put this plan into action. Have them write down the plan in their Discovery Journal.
- C. Close by reading Psalm 19:1-4. Begin memorizing verse 1 together and have the learners write it in their Discovery Journals. Ask for a volunteer to close in prayer, reflecting on God’s marvelous creation.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 2 ADAM AND EVE

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 2:4-9, 15-25

Supporting Passages: Matthew 19:3-9

Memory Verse: Revelation 4:11

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God gave Adam and Eve life and everything they needed to thrive in and enjoy the garden.
- God gave only one restriction to what they could do: they must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- God gave Adam and Eve roles and responsibilities to perform.
- God did not design people to live in isolation; he made Eve as a helper for Adam (the implication being that they needed each other).
- God designed husbands & wives to leave their parents and “become one flesh.”
- In their original, innocent state, Adam and Eve were not embarrassed about being naked.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize God as the giver of life and a caring and generous provider.
2. understand that God created both man and woman for a purpose: even though he had provided everything they needed, they had responsibilities.
3. consider what God intended for the husband-wife relationship and evaluate their own attitudes toward marriage.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Discuss the Action Plan from Lesson 1. Have there been any outcomes yet? If there is anything to report, give them time to write what happened in their journals. Encourage volunteers to lead the group in worship by sharing the prayers or songs that they wrote in their Discovery Journals. Review Psalm 119:105 and Psalm 19:1.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Say: In many places, marriage no longer gets the respect that God intended for it. The divorce rate in many countries is very high. Even though divorce is not legal in the Philippines, people still split up and create families with different partners. Some Western countries, including the United States, have been legalizing “same-sex marriage.” What are the rules and expectations for marriage in your community? (Don’t rush this—allow time for them to discuss the ways marriage is observed and broken and the consequences of a low level of respect for marriage.) In today’s part of God’s Story we will learn something about God’s original intent for marriage. We will learn more about God, and God’s original design for creation.*

## **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

### **Tell the Story**

Be prepared to tell the story yourself or select 4 readers to read the passage in the following sections: 2:4-9, 2:15-17, 2:18-20, 2:21-25.

### **Retell the Story**

Ask the learners to tell what they heard without looking back at the Bible passage. Help them work collaboratively to reconstruct the story in order from memory.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Where is the story taking place?*
2. *Who are the characters in this story?*
3. *What do we learn about God here? (Add descriptive words to the “GOD” circle started in Lesson 1.)*
4. *What do we learn about Adam and Eve?*
5. *For what purpose did God create Adam? (What jobs did he give Adam to do?)  
For what purpose did He create Eve?*
6. *What do we learn about God’s intentions for marriage?*
7. *Jesus explained Gen. 2:24 in Matt. 19:3-9. What do you understand about marriage from what Jesus said? What do you think it means to be “one flesh?”*
8. *What can we learn about ourselves and people in general from this story? (Add descriptive words to the “US” circle.)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. Discuss how marriage is viewed in the Philippine culture (not by law, but people’s general attitudes about marriage), particularly in the communities the learners come from. Discuss how this view compares with God’s plan for marriage. What attitudes might need to change? What actions might need to be taken?
- B. Allow time to complete Lesson 2 in the Discovery Journal in small groups. Some may share a decision to do something that might be difficult. Encourage the learners to pray for each other.
- C. Close by reading Rev. 4:11 together in unison three times.

### **Prepare in Advance for Lesson 3**

Using Gen. 3:1-24, create a word-for-word script from your preferred translation. Include a Narrator, the LORD, Adam, Eve and the serpent. The script should be given to the actors in advance so they can rehearse reading their parts clearly and with appropriate expression of emotion.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

### 3 SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES

#### ON YOUR OWN

##### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 3:1-24

Supporting Passages: James 1:13-15; Romans 5:12-21

Memory Verse: Romans 6:23

##### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- The serpent tempted and lied to Eve, but both Adam and Eve gave in to their desires and willingly disobeyed God's instruction.
- After they disobeyed God, Adam and Eve experienced shame for the first time.
- Rebellion against God (doing something He has forbidden or failing to do something He has required) is sin and sin requires judgment.
- The ultimate consequence of sin is death and separation from God, but the whole earth and all people experience daily the consequences of sin.
- God had a plan to rescue His broken creation from the consequences of sin.

##### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. identify with Adam and Eve, who failed to trust what God had told them and chose to gratify their own desires.
2. acknowledge their own tendency to make excuses and blame others for their sin.
3. see the relationship between what happened in this story and what we continue to experience today: we still suffer the effects of the curse.
4. find the prophecy hidden in the curse against the serpent (v. 15).
5. acknowledge that, because they have sinned, they deserve death.

#### WITH THE LEARNERS

##### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask someone to tell what we've learned of God's Story so far. Review Ps. 119:105, Ps. 19:1 and Rev. 4:11.

##### **Engage the Learners**

Say: *If I told you to jump off a cliff, would you do it? Why not? Just as God created natural laws that have natural consequences, He also created spiritual laws that have spiritual consequences. Sin is rebellion against God's laws. Whenever we do something He told us not to do, or don't do something He has told us to do, we sin. Even though it might not appear dangerous, sin always has consequences. Today we will look at the serious consequences that resulted when a serpent convinced Adam and Eve to "jump off a cliff."*

##### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

##### **Tell the Story**

Have the actors read the script taken from Genesis 3 as described at the end of Lesson 2.

### **Retell the Story**

Have volunteers retell the story as they understood it. It doesn't have to be word-for-word, but help them fill in any important parts they may have left out.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *What do we learn about the serpent in the first part of the story?*
2. *Review what God told Adam in the previous story (Gen. 2:16-17). Were the instructions and consequences clear? Did the serpent force them to disobey God's instructions?*
3. *Imagine that you are Adam or Eve. Why did they do what God had told them not to do? What were they thinking and feeling? What would you have done?*
4. *What was the immediate result of eating the fruit? (Note: the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil gave them a conscience and they became ashamed of their nakedness.) Why did Adam and Eve hide from the LORD? How do you feel when you know you've disobeyed God?*
5. *When God confronted them, how did they respond?*
6. *Discuss the curse God declared as the consequence of the first sin. What aspects of life were affected because of it? What relationships have been affected? Help the learners see the connection between the curse and what we continue to experience today: conflict between people and Satan, husband and wife, people and the earth, and lots of pain and struggle to survive. The NET Bible (<https://net.bible.org>) translates v. 16b, "You will want to control your husband, but he will dominate you." The oneness God intended was and continues to be disrupted.*
7. *In verse 15, the curse on the serpent may have two meanings. What are they? Many theologians believe that this is the first glimpse we have of God's Rescue Plan for His creation: a prophecy that Eve's offspring (Jesus), though struck down by Satan, would eventually conquer Satan for good.*
8. *What have we learned about God? Ourselves? Add to the "GOD" and "US" circles.*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *In small groups, share with each other the ways you have personally experienced the results of the punishment God imposed as a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin. Discuss times that you have experienced negative consequences of your own sin.*
- B. *Read and discuss Rom. 6:23. From this verse we learn that all sin deserves death, but it also gives us a hint about God's Rescue Plan. Do you deserve death? According to this verse, what is our only hope for eternal life?*
- C. Complete Lesson 3 in the Discovery Journals. Begin memorizing Rom. 6:23 together.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 4 CAIN AND ABEL

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 4:1-16

Supporting Passages: 1 John 3:11-12

Memory Verse: 1 John 3:11

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Abel's offering was pleasing to the LORD but Cain's was not.
- Rather than changing his offering to please the LORD, Cain became angry that God rejected it and accepted Abel's offering.
- The LORD graciously warned Cain to change his attitude, but Cain succumbed to his anger and envy and killed his brother.
- Cain showed no remorse, only fear of punishment and concern for self-preservation. He chose separation from God over repentance.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives:**

Learners will:

1. be able to identify with Cain in his anger and envy.
2. recognize that, in light of his attitude toward God and the terrible crime he committed against his brother, God was patient and merciful in his dealings with Cain.
3. recognize the relationships in their own lives that are being threatened or damaged by anger and envy.
4. choose repentance from sin over separation from God.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review all the memory verses assigned so far in the Discovery Journal: Ps. 119:105, Ps. 19:1, Rev. 4:11 and Rom. 6:23. Ask several volunteers to share the most important thing they have learned so far in God's Story.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*When you give someone a gift, do you try to give them something you know they want or something you want? For example, if you were going to get a cake or ice cream for your dad for his birthday, would you get his favorite flavor or your own favorite flavor? Or imagine that you are a pig farmer but your aunt is a vegetarian. Will you give her pork chops as a gift? What might happen if you did? If you really wanted to please her, what would you give her? Our story today is about a young man who offered an unwanted gift.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Prepare to tell the story yourself or ask one of the learners in advance to prepare to tell today's story.



### **Retell the Story**

Have the learners take turns reading the Core Bible Passage aloud one verse at a time. Encourage a volunteer to tell the story from memory.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Who are the characters in this part of the story?*
2. *Describe the two brothers. What do we know about them?*
3. *Apparently they both knew what kind of offering God wanted, but Cain chose to offer something more in line with his work. Do you think God should have accepted Cain's offering just because it was what Cain wanted to do? Explain.*
4. *What attitudes and feelings were expressed? Do we sometimes feel like that when we can't have things our own way, or when others get approval and we don't?*
5. *Explain God's warning (vv. 6-7) in your own words. What were Cain's options at that point?*
6. *Imagine that you are Cain. Why are you so angry? Do you have a right to be angry? Explain.*
7. *What was the choice Cain made, and what was the result of that choice?*
8. *According to 1 Jn. 3:12, why did Cain kill Abel?*
9. *Even after God confronted him, Cain didn't repent for what he had done. He was still only concerned about himself and chose to leave the presence of the LORD. How might the story have ended differently if Cain had repented?*
10. *In light of what Cain did to his brother, do you think his punishment was too severe? Explain.*
11. *What new things have we learned about God in this story? Ourselves? (Add to GOD and US circles.)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. Ask the learners what action God is calling them to take. Give them time to think about it. If there is little or no response, ask leading questions: *Is there envy or anger that needs to be confessed? Are there relationships that need to be mended? Are there self-centered attitudes that cause you not to care what God thinks about what you are doing?* If there are relationship problems within the group, this is a good time for apologies to be made and forgiveness granted so try to create a climate for that to happen, but do not force it or point out problems you are aware of. Any response needs to come voluntarily from their own hearts.
- B. Have the learners talk in their small groups about the kinds of situations that make them angry and what has happened as a result of uncontrolled anger.
- C. Read 1 Jn. 3:11-12 and memorize verse 11. Complete Lesson 4 in the Discovery Journal.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 5 RIGHTEOUS NOAH

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 5:1-3; 6:1, 5-22; 7:1-5

Supporting Passages: Genesis 4:25; 5:4-32; Hebrews 11:7; Psalm 1

Memory Verse: Psalm 1:1-2

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- After the death of Abel and banishment of Cain, God gave Adam and Eve another son, Seth, and it is through his family line that God’s Story continues.
- One of Seth’s descendants, 8 generations later, was Noah, a righteous man.
- By that time, the earth had become a very wicked place. God was grieved by the corruption of His creation and determined to wipe it out.
- Only Noah found favor in His eyes, so God included Noah in His Rescue Plan.
- “Noah did everything just as God commanded him” (Gen. 6:22, NIV).

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. expand their concept of God—that He can feel grief, regret and emotional pain, and that He cannot tolerate sin.
2. see the connection between righteousness and faith—it is because Noah truly believed and trusted in God that he was able to live a righteous life.
3. consider the implications of the fact that, because Noah “walked with God,” (Gen. 6:9, NIV) God was able to use Noah’s life for a special purpose.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Allow the learners to review all of the memory verses with a partner. Then ask if anyone shared the story of Cain with someone at home. If so, ask them to tell what happened. Ask volunteers to share what happened when they apologized to someone for their anger.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Think of a time when your “barkada” all wanted to do something that you knew was wrong. What did you do? Why? (Allow a few volunteers to tell their stories.) Read Psalm 1. Today we will learn about someone who was blessed because he didn’t “go along with the crowd.”*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Prepare to tell this story yourself from memory in your preferred language. After Gen. 5:1-3, simply summarize the rest of chapter 5 and beginning of chapter 6 to explain the ancestry of Noah and set the stage for the main story. Proceed from Gen. 6:5 with as much detail as possible.

### **Retell the Story**

Using your preferred translation, print the whole story from 6:5 to 7:5. For Tagalog, go to <http://www.wordplanet.org/tl/index.htm> to cut and paste. Divide it into sections, but do not include the verse numbers. (See the English sample in Resources). Make a copy for each small group. Cut the sections apart, arrange them so they are out of order, and give each group a complete story. Group members should work together to put the story pieces in order. When they finish, have them read the story aloud. Check for accuracy.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Describe what you think life was like on earth at the time of this story. How would you compare it to the world today?*
2. *How did God feel about what He saw happening on earth? Why did it hurt God so badly that people had become so wicked? What had He originally said about his creation in Lesson 1? (It was very good.)*
3. *We learned in Lesson 3 that sin is rebellion against God. At this point, everyone but Noah was living in rebellion against God. Do you think that God's decision to destroy His creation was justified? Explain.*
4. *God still loved His creation and wanted to preserve it. What was His Rescue Plan at this point?*
5. *Why did God choose Noah for this special job? How is Noah described here? What does it mean that Noah "walked with God"? (Unlike Adam and Eve who hid from God and Cain who left the presence of God, Noah chose to live in the presence of God.)*
6. *According to Hebrews 11:7, what was Noah's attitude toward God? What was the foundation of his righteousness?*
7. *Noah believed God so whole-heartedly that he did the job God asked him to. Do you think it was easy? What might have made the job especially hard? (Note: building that huge ark was physically hard work, but certainly it must have been emotionally difficult to stay with it when everyone around him was in rebellion against God and probably mocking him.)*
8. *What new things have we learned about God in this story? About people? Add them to the charts.*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Divide into small groups or pairs so sharing will be easier. Discuss whether God is asking you to do something difficult. If so, what is it? What's the first step you would need to take in order to obey? Talk about ways you might help and encourage each other to do that first step. Pray for each other regarding what you have shared.*
- B. *Complete Lesson 5 in the Discovery Journal. Begin memorizing Psalm 1:1-2.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 6 GOD DESTROYS, YET RESCUES, HIS CREATION

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 7:11-24; 8:1-5, 13-21; 9:1-15

Supporting Passage: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Memory Verse: John 3:16

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God brought judgment upon the earth: 40 days and nights of rain and water gushing from the ground completely covered the earth so everything outside of the ark died.
- God provided a way of escape: Noah, his family and the animals were saved because Noah believed God and obeyed Him.
- When the flood dried up, God told Noah's family and all the animals to repopulate the earth.
- God declared that he would never again do such a thing, even though He knew people would be evil again.
- From this point on, people were allowed to eat meat, but not blood. At this point, blood became significant, particularly human blood. In this way, God emphasized the high value of human life.
- God gave the rainbow as the sign of his covenant with Noah.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. experience the variety of emotions associated with realizing that you and your family are the sole survivors of God's judgment, exiting the ark after over a year of confinement, and entering an uninhabited.
2. acknowledge the high value God places on human life, including theirs.
3. understand the significance of the rainbow and acknowledge the faithfulness of God's promises.
4. recognize that cooperating with God's Rescue Plan is the only hope of salvation.
5. gain assurance of salvation.
6. gain a sense of responsibility to share God's Rescue Plan with others.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask learners to share any decisions they have made related to past lessons. Have they taken action on their decisions? Encourage them to share what happened. Ask learners to quote any of the past memory verses. Review Rom. 6:23, 1 Jn. 3:11 and Ps. 1:1-2.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Use a printed picture or search images of Noah's ark on the internet to find a realistic replication of the ark to show the learners. Or you may wish to show the 3 min. video found at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a\\_wIKiOgk10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_wIKiOgk10) showing the discovery of the ark near Mt. Ararat. If you have time, you may wish to show the more detailed 33 min. video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCyOVGBnNp8>.

## Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit

### Tell the Story

Today's story is a rather long selection of four passages found in chapters 7-9. You may wish to tell the story yourself or choose 3 good readers to read the passages aloud, one reader for each chapter.

### Retell the Story

Have the readers read their sections again, but take time to discuss each passage before the next passage is read (see below).

### Guide the Discussion

1. Read Gen. 7:11-24 again. *Imagine that you were one of Noah's family members. How would you have felt that day? Describe in your own words what took place.*
2. Read Gen. 8:1-5 and 13-21. *How long had they been on the ark? (See 7:11 and 8:13-14 for dates.) Show how you would feel after the rain finally stopped and the waters began to recede. Act out what it must have been like as everyone disembarked from the ark. (Note: This might be a little wild and noisy, but if you have time and space, it will help the learners to imagine it what it was like.)*
3. *What did God say to Himself in response to Noah's burnt offering?*
4. Read Gen. 9:1-15. *What changes did God decree for life on earth? What do you think is the significance of those changes?*
5. *What was the covenant He made with Noah and every living thing? What was the sign of the covenant? Has God kept His promise?*
6. *Because Noah believed God, trusting that the ark was God's plan to rescue them from destruction, he and his family were saved from destruction. Read 1 Pet. 3:18-22 and discuss the meaning. (Note: Help the learners understand that it is not the water of baptism itself that saves us, but rather what the water represents: the burial and resurrection of Jesus. Peter is helping us understand that Jesus is our "ark" of safety—God's plan for rescuing us from destruction.)*
7. *Read John 3:16. How does our own story parallel Noah's story? (We must trust in Jesus in the same way that Noah and his family trusted in the ark to save them.)*
8. Add to the "GOD" and "US" charts. *How can we join God in what He is doing?*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. Discuss with the learners what action this lesson calls for. For some, it may mean placing their trust in Jesus as their Savior for the first time. Others may need assurance that they are saved from the consequences of sin. Some may sense the urgency to share God's Rescue Plan with others.
- B. Be available for counseling, as needed while the learners complete Lesson 6 in their Discovery Journals. Work on memorizing John 3:16.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 7 GOD CHOOSES ABRAM TO FATHER A NATION

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 12:1-5; 15:1-6; Genesis 16

Supporting Passages: Genesis 11:27-32; Galatians 3:6-9

Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:8-9

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God chose one man from whom He would make a great nation.
- That man and that nation were to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.
- God told Abram to leave Haran and go to Canaan and Abram obeyed.
- God promised the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abram.
- God promised Abram a son; because he believed God, he was considered righteous.
- Sarai became so desperate for a child that she stopped waiting on God and made her own plan to fulfill God's promise, but it resulted in jealousy and broken relationships.
- God was compassionate toward Hagar and blessed her, but Ishmael was not the promised son through whom the nations would be blessed.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that God chose Abram to be part of His Rescue Plan.
2. know that Abram's righteousness was based on his faith, not perfection.
3. understand that our righteousness is based on faith in God's grace, not in what we do.
4. understand the danger of unintended consequences when we push through with our own agenda rather than waiting for God's will in His way and time.
5. recognize the compassion in God's response to Hagar's plight, even though her son was not the one He had promised.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask learners to retell the entire story of Noah, both Lessons 5 and 6. Ask what was most meaningful to them in this story. Ask volunteers to share any decisions they made as a result of the last lesson's Action Plan. Review 1 Jn. 3:11, Ps. 1:1-2 and Jn. 3:16.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Say: Have you ever wanted something so badly that you did something wrong or foolish in order to get it? People often try to get good things in illegitimate ways. Lots of times people buy an unnecessary thing on credit, just to get it sooner, rather than saving up for it. They waste a lot of money on interest and sometimes don't have enough money for what they really need, so the item is repossessed or they have to pawn it. Perhaps you know someone who wanted a child or a husband so badly that she intentionally got pregnant before she was married and ended up a single parent. Maybe you've heard of people who lied about their age or falsified documents in order to qualify for a job. Do you have a story like that? What happened? Part of our story today is about someone who couldn't wait for God's timing and tried to get what she wanted in her own way.*

## Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit

### Tell the Story

Use Gen. 11:27-32 to get background information about Abram. Note that Terah, father of Abram, is a descendant of Shem, one of Noah's sons (see verse 10). Briefly summarize this information as an introduction to today's story. Because this story is taken from 3 separate chapters, you may wish to tell it yourself.

### Retell the Story

Read Gen. 12:1-5. Have the learners list on the board all the things that God said He would do. Ask: *What was Abram's response to what God told him to do?*

Read Gen. 15:1-6. Have the learners add to the list of promises God made to Abram. Ask: *What was Abram's response this time?*

Review chapter 16 by asking someone to describe Sarai's plan for giving Abram a child. Have someone else tell what happened next. Have someone else tell what happened to Hagar after she was sent away. Ask: *What was God's promise to Hagar?*

### Guide the Discussion

1. *What is God doing in this story? What can we learn about God from these three encounters? (Add them to the GOD chart.)*
2. *According to God's promise to Abram, for what purpose was God going to bless Abram? What could that mean? How could God bless all the nations of the earth through Abram?*
3. *Why is Abram appealing to God in 15:2-3?*
4. *Discuss 15:6. What is the significance of that verse? Compare with Gal. 3:6-9. How can we be related to Abram (Abraham) even though we are Gentiles?*
5. Read Eph. 2:8-9. Ask someone to explain it in their own words. *How does that verse apply to Abram? How does it apply to us?*
6. *Sarai's plan was culturally acceptable at that time, but it by-passed God's original intent. What were the unintended consequences of Sarai's solution to the problem of no children?*
7. *Imagine you are Hagar after her encounter with the LORD. How would you describe God? (Add any new ideas to the GOD chart.) Tell about a time when God was merciful and compassionate with you.*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *What have we learned from today's lesson that we can apply to our own lives?*
- B. *Is God requiring you to wait patiently for something? Tell about it. Is your plan for getting it God-honoring? Do you just need to wait, or is there a way to pursue that thing in a God-honoring way?*
- C. Complete Lesson 7 in the Discovery Journal and memorize Eph. 2:8-9.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 8 GOD MAKES A COVENANT AND KEEPS HIS PROMISE

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 17:1-11, 15-23; 21:1-7

Supporting Passages: Romans 4:18-23

Memory Verse: Galatians 5:6

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God changed Abram's name to Abraham ("father of many") and Sarai's name to Sarah.
- God established a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, that He would be their God and give them the land of Canaan.
- Abraham's part of the covenant was that he and his male descendants be circumcised as a sign of the covenant.
- Circumcision would be the sign that Abraham's descendants were the people of God.
- God repeated His promise that Sarah would give birth to a son.
- God fulfilled His promise and Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. explore the meaning and depth of the word "covenant."
2. understand that God instituted circumcision as a sign of His covenant with Abraham.
3. begin to grasp the significance of this covenant: it established Abraham's descendants as the people God had chosen to carry out His Rescue Plan.
4. acknowledge that God can be trusted: He keeps His promises.
5. recognize that God is not limited by human limitations.
6. affirm that it is our belief in God's promise of salvation through Christ that is credited to us as righteousness.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Have learners review the story of Abraham so far. Try to involve those who don't often participate. For example, start telling the story, then point to someone to finish the sentence. Start the next sentence, and point to another person to finish that sentence, etc. Review Ps. 1:1-2, John 3:16 and Eph. 2:8-9.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Discuss circumcision. Ask: *Does your community practice circumcision? Who gets circumcised and when? Why are most boys in the Philippines circumcised? Is there a meaning or "pamahiin" related to it? Today we are going to see where that custom got started and why.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**



**Tell the Story**

This story comes from 3 passages. You may wish to assign a section to each of 3 learners ahead of time so they can prepare to tell the story, or assign 3 readers.

**Retell the Story**

Ask volunteers to recall what they heard from each part of the story.

**Guide the Discussion**

1. *What observations can you make about this part of the story?*
2. *What was God doing in the story?*
3. *How did Abraham respond to what God was doing?*
4. *Why do you think God changed Abram and Sarai's names?*
5. *What is a covenant? (Encourage the learners to look up the meaning in a dictionary or Bible dictionary.) What was the covenant God was making with Abraham? What was the significance of this covenant?*
6. *What was the sign of the covenant? Why do you think God required a sign?*
7. *Have you ever heard of a 90-year-old woman having a baby? Why do you think God made Abraham and Sarah wait so long for the child He had promised them many years before?*
8. *What promises have we seen God fulfill so far in the story? What would you say to a person who has trouble trusting God?*
9. *Read Romans 4:18-25. In this passage, the Apostle Paul is comparing us with Abraham. According to these verses, what made Abraham righteous in God's eyes? (His faith; belief in God's promise to him.) Reread vv. 23-25. What makes us righteous in God's eyes? (Our faith; belief that Jesus died for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.)*

**Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *The outward sign of Abraham's faith in God was circumcision. Read Gal. 5:6. Is circumcision a sign of our faith in God today? According to this verse, what should be the outward sign of our faith in God?*
- B. *Let's think about our class. Are we a loving group? Is our faith in God evident in the way we treat each other? How about at home? Share with your small group someone that you have trouble loving. Pray for each other.*
- C. *Begin memorizing Gal. 5:6. Complete Lesson 8 in the Discovery Journals.*

**Prepare in Advance for Lesson 9**

Use Gen. 18:1-5, 16-33 and 19:1-29 to prepare a dramatic reading for the next lesson. You will need a narrator, Abraham, the LORD, 2 angels, Lot, 3 men to represent the citizens of Sodom, Lot's wife, and Lot's 2 daughters. Help the learners prepare to present the drama so that the story will be clearly understood.

**Evaluation Notes:**

## 9 GOD JUDGES SODOM AND GOMORRAH

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 19:1-29

Supporting Passages: Genesis 18:1-5, 16-33; 2 Pet. 2:4-10

Memory Verse: Psalm 1:3-4

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God is merciful but will judge sin.
- The people of Sodom were exceptionally wicked. Not even 10 righteous people could be found there.
- Lot, Abraham's nephew, lived among these people but was not one of them—he still had faith in God.
- God considered Lot to be a righteous man and had a plan to rescue him from the destruction He was bringing on the city.
- The “men” (called angels in 19:1 and 15) offered salvation to all of Lot's family, but only Lot and his two daughters had the faith to obey what the angels told them to do.
- God knows how to rescue the righteous.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. see that God cannot tolerate sin indefinitely: He will bring judgment on the wicked.
2. recognize that, even though Lot was far from perfect, God had mercy on him and rescued him because he trusted in God.
3. be able to identify similarities and differences between the account of Noah and the account of Lot.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask the learners if anyone has a “love story” to share. What happened when they shared God's love with someone who didn't expect it?

Have a volunteer to retell the entire story of Noah. Allow others to assist the volunteer if necessary. Review Jn. 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9 and Gal. 5:6.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Imagine yourself on a tightrope between two of the tallest buildings in Ortigas Center. Thousands of people are watching and yelling and even throwing things as if they want you to fall. You know that every move you make has to be perfect or you will fall to your death. Suddenly, Superman appears and offers to carry you across! Are you going to trust yourself and try to get across on your own, or are you going to let Superman carry you? (Ask them to explain their responses). In our story today we will learn about a man who realized he couldn't save himself and had to depend on God's messengers to rescue him.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

### **Tell the Story**

Use Gen. 18:1-5, 16-33 to give as much background for the story as you wish. Then read or tell the story from the Core Bible Passage. Better yet, use the drama that you created and allow the learners to present it.

### **Retell the Story**

Ask someone to retell the part of the story from Gen. 18 (Abraham's encounter with the LORD). Have someone else retell what they understood of the rest of the story (Lot's experience with the angels and escape from Sodom).

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *What observations did you make about Abraham's encounter with the visitors? Was there anything surprising about that interaction? What can you say about Abraham's relationship with God?*
2. *What was God doing in this story? Why?*
3. *Read 2 Peter 2:6. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah have been used as an example down through the centuries. Why? Describe the people of Sodom. Are there people like that today?*
4. *What about Lot? Was he a perfect man? (Would a perfect man offer his virgin daughters to the wicked men outside his door? No. Yet Lot's greatest concern was a good one: to provide safety and hospitality to his guests. It seems he was very upset by the wickedness of the people, yet he had remained living among them, and had arranged for his daughters to marry two of them.)*
5. *Why do you think God rescued Lot? (It seems that God had mercy on Lot partly for Abraham's sake, as Lot had been a member of his household.) Compared to the rest of Sodom, Lot might be considered righteous, but he was still a sinner. Remember what we've learned about the relationship of righteousness and faith? How did Lot demonstrate faith in God? (Lot believed God's messengers and did what they told him to do.)*
6. *Read and discuss 2 Pet. 2:4-9. On the board or a large sheet of paper, create a Venn diagram (see Resources). Compare the story of Lot with the story of Noah. What similarities do you see? (Write the similarities in the place where the circles overlap.) What's different? (Write the differences in the parts that don't overlap.)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Compare your neighborhood with Sodom. Are there things that happen there that you need to avoid or even speak out against? Give examples.*
- B. *Discuss in your small groups what you might do to avoid or deal with the wickedness in your community. Can you work together and help each other?*
- C. *Encourage the learners to read and think about Psalm 1 again, this time in relation to Lot and the people of Sodom. Complete Lesson 9 in the Discovery Journal. Review Psalm 1:1-2 and begin memorizing verses 3-4.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 10 ABRAHAM PASSES THE FAITH TEST

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Gen. 22:1-18

Supporting Passages: Heb. 11:17-19; James 2:14-24

Memory Verse: Psalm 1:5-6

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God's command must have been shocking to Abraham, but he remembered God's promise regarding Isaac, and trusted that God would somehow keep his promise.
- God's command was a severe test of Abraham's faith and willingness to obey God.
- God was giving a preview of the time when He would sacrifice His only Son.
- God rewarded Abraham's obedience and he became an example of a righteous man of faith for the generations to come.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. understand that God does not require human sacrifices: His command to Abraham was unique and for the purpose of providing an example of what faith looks like.
2. grasp the significance of God's provision of a substitute sacrifice: the ram in the place of Isaac foreshadows the death of Jesus in our place.
3. begin to understand that events that God brought about in the history of Israel were preparing people down through the ages to trust His Rescue Plan.
4. move a step closer to trusting God with all that they are and have.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask someone to review the story from Lesson 9. Ask volunteers share their Action Plan from that lesson or any updates from previous Action Plans. Pray for them as they work on carrying out their plan. Review Eph. 2:8-9, Gal. 5:6 and Psalm 1:1-4.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Have you ever had to give up something that was very precious to you? Tell about it.*

(Note to facilitator: perhaps you have a story you could share from your own life of something you knew God was requiring you to submit to Him that was very difficult for you to give up. Share your story, how you felt, and what was the result of that sacrifice.)

*Today we will hear about a command of God that seemed to be requiring Abraham to make an unreasonable sacrifice. Only one thing was more precious to Abraham than his son Isaac. Do you know what that was? (Allow learners to guess, but don't reveal the answer at this time.)*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Read or tell the story from Gen. 22:1-18.

### Retell the Story

Ask the learners to imagine being Abraham at the time of this story. Ask a volunteer to pretend to be Abraham and tell the story from Abraham's perspective.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *From past stories, what do we know about Abraham's relationship with Isaac? How precious was Isaac to Abraham?*
2. *Share your thoughts regarding this story. What surprises you about it?*
3. *God's command to Abraham seems outrageous. Describe the feelings Abraham must have experienced. What do you think God was doing here?*
4. *There is no record of Abraham objecting or becoming terribly upset by what God asked him to do. Why do you think he was able to go ahead with obeying God so calmly? (Carefully note Abraham's words in verses 5 and 8.)*
5. *What promise had God made concerning Isaac? Read Heb. 11:17-19. These verses give us insight into what Abraham might have been thinking as he made the trip to the mountains. Explain them in your own words.*
6. *Read Jam. 2:21-23. Abraham's faith had feet on it. What does that mean? (Abraham's actions reflected his faith. He believed God's promises to him and acted on his belief. If he had not obeyed God, it would have been a sign that he really did not trust God.) What was more precious to Abraham than Isaac?*
7. *Remember how Noah's ark was like an illustration of our salvation through Jesus Christ? What do you think this story might be an illustration of? (Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac is a picture of God's willingness to sacrifice His own beloved Son; God's provision of the ram as a substitute sacrifice to spare Isaac is like God's provision of Jesus as a substitute sacrifice for us.)*
8. *What do you think was God's purpose for these events?*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *Talk about your most precious possessions and relationships. Is there anything you would refuse to give up, even if God Himself asked for it? Have you ever lost something only to realize later that, because you lost it, you gained something better?*
- B. *Sometimes God does take away people and things that are precious to us. Does that mean God is cruel and uncaring? What does it mean? (Help the learners see that God allows some things to happen for reasons that we don't understand, but since He is God, we need to trust that He knows what He's doing. Sometimes He is testing our faith, just like He tested Abraham. Sometimes He takes something away in order to give us something better. Usually that better thing is Himself. He wants us to give up anything that is taking His place in our lives. He wants us to love Him more than anything else, not because He is selfish, but because He knows that loving and obeying Him is what will give us true joy in life. That's what He made us for!)*
- C. Complete Lesson 10 in the Discovery Journal. Work on memorizing Ps. 1:5-6.

### Evaluation Notes:

# 11 GOD BLESSES ISAAC

## ON YOUR OWN

### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 26:1-32

Supporting Passages: Genesis 24:1-27, 54-67

Memory Verse: Romans 12:14-19

### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God miraculously provided a wife for Isaac from among Abraham's relatives.
- God repeated to Isaac the same promise that he had given to Abraham, not because of anything Isaac had done but "because Abraham obeyed me."
- Though somewhat of a coward, Isaac was a man of peace, avoiding confrontation and conflict with the people of the land he was inhabiting.
- Isaac's faith in God grew as he experienced God's faithfulness to him. His fear turned to confidence that God would provide.
- God blessed Isaac with so much wealth and success that it was evident to the rulers of the surrounding lands that the LORD was with him.

### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize evidence of God's sovereign care in the life of Isaac.
2. identify with Isaac's failures while aspiring to his virtues.
3. recognize that because Isaac kept the covenant by obeying the LORD, God was given the glory for Isaac's success.

## WITH THE LEARNERS

### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask volunteers to summarize the entire story of Abram/Abraham, from the time God called him to leave his homeland through the faith test in the last lesson. Be sure they include the promises of God's covenant with Abraham, and mention Abraham's faith in action as the basis of his righteousness. Review Gal. 5:6 and Ps. 1:1-6.

### **Engage the Learners**

*Think of a time when you prepared something for yourself but someone else got it instead of you (e.g. you prepared food for yourself but someone else ate it, you grew a papaya or some other produce but a neighbor picked it and used it, you bought something you needed but someone stole it, etc.) Tell about what happened. What did you do about it? Our story today is about Abraham's son Isaac. Isaac had trouble with his neighbors, too.*

### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

### **Tell the Story**

Use as much of the background information from the supporting passages in Gen. 24 as you have time for to set the stage for today's story. Include enough detail so that the

learners will be able to clearly see that it was God who provided a wife for Isaac. Then tell the main story from chapter 26.

### **Retell the Story**

Have learners act the roles of Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Abimelech, Isaac's servants and herdsmen and the herdsmen of Gerar while another learner narrates the story.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Discuss the way that Isaac got a wife. Is there anything surprising about this?*
2. *It seemed to matter a lot to Abraham that Isaac marry someone from his own country. Do you think it mattered to God whom Isaac would marry? Explain.*
3. *Why did Isaac move to Gerar? Was he supposed to be there? Explain.*
4. *What promise did God make to Isaac while he was in Gerar?*
5. *What clue do we have that Isaac had trouble trusting God's promise? (If he had really believed God's word that He would be with him and bless him and multiply his descendants, Isaac wouldn't have feared for his life and lied to the men of Gerar about Rebekah.)*
6. *Did God punish Isaac for his lack of faith? Explain your answer.*
7. *Why did Abimelech ask Isaac to move away? What was Isaac's response?*
8. *What happened when Isaac moved to a new place? What was Isaac's response? What does this indicate about Isaac's faith?*
9. *In what way was Isaac's response different the second time God repeated the promise? What did he do?*
10. *Why do you think Abimelech wanted a treaty with Isaac? To whom did Abimelech give credit for Isaac's success?*
11. *How would you summarize what God was doing throughout this story? What did Isaac learn about God during this time? Are there any words we can add to the GOD circle?*
12. *What words would you use to describe Isaac? Do those words describe us?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Read Rom. 12:14-19. How does it relate to today's story? What changes need to happen in the way you relate to difficult people?*
- B. *Is there something you need to let go of (such as an old grudge, anger at someone who wronged you in the past, plans to get back at someone who is persecuting you, etc.) and trust God to deal with that person instead? (You may be able to refer back to an incident that was shared during Motivate the Learners. Help them develop a plan of action for dealing with such situations.)*
- C. *Work on memorizing Rom. 12:17-18. Complete Lesson 11 in the Discovery Journal.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 12 A FAMILY DIVIDED

### **ON YOUR OWN**

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-38

Supporting Passages: Hebrews 12:16-17; Ephesians 2:1-9

Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:4-5

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Like Sarah, Rebekah was barren for years, but when the time was right, God allowed her to become pregnant with twins.
- God revealed the destiny of these twins to Rebekah, showing that he knew in advance what they would be like even before they were born.
- The sons of Isaac lived out God’s predictions, but their sinful choices resulted in deep family conflict.
- Esau was foolish, valuing short-term gratification over a long-term blessing, and rejected his birthright. (See <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/birthright/> or check any Bible dictionary or study Bible for the significance of the birthright).
- Rebekah and Jacob unnecessarily resorted to sinful means (favoritism, fraud) to “help God” make the predictions come true.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that God does not control our choices but already knows the outcome.
2. understand that God does not need our help to accomplish His Plan, but He wants our cooperation with His revealed will.
3. understand that rejecting the grace of God is the gravest sin of all.

### **WITH THE LEARNERS**

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Eph. 2:8-9, Gal. 5:6 and Rom. 12:17-18. Allow learners to share anything they wish to report from their past Action Plans. Have they shared the stories with others? Have they been successful in applying any of their Action Plans?

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Imagine it’s a very hot summer day. You’re on your way home from your computer class. You’re one of the top students and you’ve already been promised a job once you complete the certification. Tomorrow is your big exam, and you feel ready. When you get off the jeepney, you realize how thirsty you are—crazy thirsty, like you don’t know how you’ll be able to walk the rest of the way home if you don’t get a drink NOW! There’s a McDonalds right in front of you. You begin thinking about how wonderful an icy cold softdrink would taste. Your thirst becomes greater. You have enough money for a small drink, but if you buy the drink you won’t have enough fare to get to class tomorrow. If you miss the exam, you won’t get the certification. If you don’t get the certification, you won’t get the job. But all you can think about right now is how badly you want that drink! What are you going to do and why? Welcome to Esau’s world.*



## Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit

### Tell the Story

Since this is a long story, you may wish to read it aloud or assign 3-4 learners to read it.

### Retell the Story

Have the learners choose characters and reenact the story in an impromptu drama.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *What do we learn about Rebekah in this part of the story? In what ways was Rebekah like Sarah? (In addition to being barren for many years, she also felt she needed to “help God” accomplish His will for Jacob, like Sarah who tried to “help God” give Abraham an offspring through Hagar.)*
2. *What important information did God give to Rebekah? What does that tell us about God? (Add to the GOD chart.)*
3. Write the names Esau and Jacob at the top of the board. Choose a recorder to write responses under each name. *Jacob and Esau were twins, but they weren't much alike. How does the Bible describe them? (Encourage them to include physical traits, preferred activities, relationship to parents, character traits, etc.)*
4. *What is the significance of the birthright? What benefits was Esau giving up when he sold his birthright to Jacob? Why do you think he gave it up so easily?*
5. *If you were the neighbor of Jacob and Esau, which of the brothers would you prefer to have as your friend? Explain your answer.*
6. *Rebekah and Jacob resorted to a devious plan of deceit to ensure that Jacob got the blessing of the firstborn. Do you think that was necessary? Do you think God needed their sinful behavior to accomplish His plan for Jacob? Explain.*
7. *What advice would you give to Isaac and Rebekah about parenting? What happens to families when parents show favoritism, brothers cheat each other and children lie to their parents? What happened to Jacob and Esau's relationship?*
8. *Read Heb. 12:16-17. What word is used here to describe Esau? Why was he considered “godless” for giving up his birthright? (To be born the first male in the family was a great blessing. Being born just minutes before Jacob was a gift of God's grace, yet Esau did not appreciate the value of it until it was too late.)*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *Read Eph. 2:1-9. What is God's gift of grace to us? Have you accepted that gift? What happens if we reject God's gift of grace? (See Rom. 2:5.)*
- B. *Who do you know that needs to hear this message? Share today's story and today's memory verse with someone. Afterward, tell us what happened.*
- C. Complete Lesson 12 in the Discovery Journal. Begin memorizing Eph. 2:4-5.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 13 THE PROMISE GOES TO JACOB

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 27:41-46, 28:1-5, 10-22; Genesis 32:1-12

Supporting Passages: Romans 9:14-16; John 15:7-17

Memory Verse: John 1:12

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Because Jacob had cheated him out of his father's blessing, Esau wanted to kill Jacob.
- Jacob's mother Rebekah plotted his escape and sent him away to a safe place.
- Jacob had received the blessing from Isaac, but now Jacob had his first personal encounter with God Himself: God's covenant with Abraham was now with Jacob.
- Jacob tentatively acknowledged the LORD as his God for the first time.
- In spite of the fact that Jacob had not proved himself a righteous man, God had chosen him as the one through whom He would fulfill His promise to Abraham.
- By the time Jacob was returning to Canaan many years later, he understood that the blessings he had received were due solely to God's unmerited grace in his life, and was trusting God to protect him and his family from Esau's wrath.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that God chose Jacob long before Jacob chose God.
2. understand that God chose us in spite of our faults—we did nothing to earn His grace.
3. understand that it is because God first chose us that we can choose Him.
4. understand that faith grows over time; God does not expect our faith to be fully mature at the time He calls us.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask the learners to think about major themes that have been developing through God's Story. What kinds of things have been repeated? What have we seen God doing? What can we say about people in general? Have them give examples from specific stories. Have them quote as many of the memory verses as possible. Have everyone review Ps. 1:1-6, Rom. 12:17-18 and Eph. 2:4-5, 8-9.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Remember what happened to Esau in our last story? If you were Esau, how would you feel about Jacob? As a matter of fact, Esau was so mad he wanted to kill Jacob! If you were Jacob, what would you do now? Let's find out what Jacob did.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Choose a narrator, different people to read for Rebekah, Isaac, Jacob and the LORD. Have them read the passages from Chapters 27 and 28. Gen. 32:1-12 will be read later.

### Retell the Story

Have someone retell the story or ask a different group of 4 to act out what they just heard.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *Was there anything in this passage that surprised you?*
2. *What was the primary reason Jacob left Canaan? What was the reason his mother wanted him to go to Haran in Paddan Aram?*
3. *What are the differences between Isaac's blessings on Jacob in this chapter and the last chapter (see 27:27-29)? Why the change?*
4. *How did God reveal himself to Jacob? What did He promise Jacob? What was added that wasn't part of the promise to Abraham and Isaac?*
5. *Describe Jacob's response to the dream. How did he feel? What did he say? What did he do? What promise did he make?*
6. *Who chose whom? Did God choose Jacob or did Jacob choose God? Which came first?*
7. *At this point, Jacob was a fugitive, running away from his angry brother. Did God punish Jacob for the way he had treated his brother and father? (No; Jacob experienced the mercy of God: not getting the punishment that he deserved.) Had Jacob done anything to earn God's favor? (No; Jacob experienced the grace of God: getting a blessing he did not deserve.)*
8. *Read Rom. 9:14-16. What does this teach us about God? About ourselves?*
9. *In our next lesson we will hear what happened to Jacob in Padan Aram, but let's skip ahead and see what happened when Jacob returned to Canaan. To get there, he had to pass through the territory of his brother Esau. Read Gen. 32:1-12. Does this sound like the same man? What's different about him now? How has his relationship with God changed?*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *Discuss the difference between justice, mercy and grace. Tell about a time when you or someone you know experienced justice (getting the punishment you deserved), mercy (not getting a punishment you deserved) or grace (getting a blessing you did not deserve). According to Eph. 2:4-5, what is the source of God's mercy and grace?*
- B. *God chose Jacob to be the one through whom His Rescue Plan would continue, so His purpose of blessing all nations would be fulfilled. Read John 15:16-17. In these verses, Jesus is talking to His disciples. For what purpose had he chosen them? What kind of "fruit" do you think Jesus was talking about?*
- C. *Share in your small groups: Has God chosen you? Explain your answer. (If they are unsure, this may be a good place to introduce the memory verse, John 1:12.) If God has chosen you, and you have received His Son as your Savior, what is His purpose for you? (To bear fruit.)*
- D. *Give time to complete Lesson 13 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize John 1:12.*

### Evaluation Notes:

## 14 JACOB'S BRIDES

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 29, 30:1-24

Supporting Passages: Proverbs 3:11-12; James 1:2-4

Memory Verse: James 1:4

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- In Haran, Jacob the deceiver became the victim of deception: his Uncle Laban, tricked him into working for him for an extended period of time.
- In spite of the unfair treatment, God used this time in Jacob's life to discipline Jacob, grow his family and increase his wealth.
- Producing children became an unhealthy competition between Jacob's two brides.
- Rachel: though blessed with great beauty and Jacob's love, was barren and bitter.
- Leah: though she was not loved by Jacob the way Rachel was, she was blessed with many children and chosen by God to be part of the Rescue Plan (through Judah).

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will

1. acknowledge that, though God had showed mercy on Jacob, He did allow Jacob to experience some long-term discipline under his Uncle Laban.
2. recognize that even difficult and unfair circumstances can be used by God for our good, for God disciplines those He loves.
3. agree that trusting God's sovereignty can improve family relationships.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Ps. 119:105, Ps. 19:1 and Jn. 1:12. Review the definitions of justice, mercy and grace and ask the learners to give an example of each from the stories we've studied so far. Review Jacob's life from his birth through the events that forced him to leave home.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*What are some of the ways that women try to secure the love of their husbands? (If you have married learners in the group, consider asking the women what they do to try to keep their husbands from moving on to someone else.) Our story today is about two women who were competing for the love of the same man by...having babies!*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Begin by distributing name cards with the names of Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel, their servants, Bilhah and Zilpah, and all of Jacob's children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah, Joseph and Benjamin. Tell or read the story from Gen. 29:1-30 only. Begin building Jacob's Family Tree on the board or a large sheet of paper by drawing a box with the name "Jacob" in it. From each

side of the box draw a line with an oval at the opposite end. The learners holding the names of Leah and Rachel should attach their name cards in the ovals. (See illustration in Resources.) Continue telling the story from verse 31 on through Gen. 30:24. Instruct the learners to attach the names in the correct places when they hear them mentioned in the story. The birth of Benjamin is not included in this part of the story, so you will need to explain that, some time later, Rachel had another son whom Jacob named Benjamin.

### **Retell the Story**

Choose volunteers to take turns telling the story, or have all of them stand in a circle facing each other. Holding a ball or wad of paper, start the story with one sentence about Jacob's arrival in Paddan Aram, then toss the ball to someone else to tell the next segment of the story. That person should toss the ball to someone else who will tell the next part of the story, and so on.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Is there anything in this story that surprises you?*
2. *It seems that Jacob comes from a family of sneaky people. Remember how his mother coached him in deception when he was still at home? Compare that with the way Laban treated Jacob.*
3. *God had graciously rescued Jacob from Esau, but He allowed Jacob to suffer unfair treatment from Laban. Read Prov. 3:11-12. Why does God allow us to suffer negative consequences of our sin? What are they a sign of?*
4. *Describe Rachel. Besides being beautiful, what kind of person was she? What was her response to her inability to bear children? Why do you suppose God allowed her to remain barren for so long? Does she remind you of anyone else we've heard about in our lessons? Explain.*
5. *Describe Leah. How do you think Leah felt when Jacob was so disappointed that Laban had given her to him and then married Rachel a week later? What do you think: was Leah a blessing or a curse to Jacob? Explain. (Tell the learners that Leah's son, Judah, would become the ancestor of Jesus.)*
6. *How would you describe their family relationships? What attitudes were damaging those relationships? How might trusting God's sovereignty have improved their relationships?*
7. *Read James 1:2-4. How do these verses apply to Jacob and his wives? How might things have been different if they had known these verses? Did anything good come out of Jacob's time in Haran?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Think about the issues that are hurting the relationships in your own family. Discuss with your small group: Is favoritism or jealousy a problem in families today? How might trusting God's wisdom and sovereignty improve your family relationships?*
- B. *Discuss the meaning of Jam. 1:2-4 and begin memorizing verse 4. Give the learners time to pray for each other and complete Lesson 14 in the Discovery Journal.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 15 MORE TROUBLE IN JACOB'S FAMILY

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 37

Supporting Passages: Genesis 35:9-15; Psalm 121

Memory Verse: Psalm 121:1-2

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God reaffirmed His promise to Jacob and gave him a new name: Israel.
- Family rivalry continued into the next generation. Jacob's obvious favoritism created rivalry not only between his wives but also among his sons.
- Joseph's half-brothers were jealous of him to the point of hatred. When they had the chance, they got rid of him.
- In spite of his brothers' wicked intentions, God had a plan for Joseph in Egypt.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. acknowledge that parental favoritism doesn't justify hatred and cruelty.
2. discuss why God allows the innocent to suffer at the hand of the wicked.
3. discover evidence of God's sovereignty over sinful humanity: God will accomplish His overall plan in spite of human failure.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Rev. 4:11, Rom. 6:23 and 1 Jn 3:11. Ask the learners to report on any differences in family relationships as a result of their change in attitude toward trials. Ask if they have any updates to report from sharing the stories with family members or friends. Review the last lesson: *How many children did Jacob have? How many were born to Leah? Who was Jacob's favorite wife? What were the names of Rachel's children?*

#### **Engage the Learners**

*From the beginning of God's Story, we've seen how jealousy and rivalry have corrupted God's family. Think all the way back to the beginning of the story. What was the first case of sibling rivalry ever recorded? (Cain and Abel) What was the result of that rivalry? What other examples have we seen? (Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah) In today's story we will hear about another sibling rivalry, caused by favoritism and jealousy of another's blessings. Who do you think was Jacob's favorite son and why?*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Begin with the background information found in Gen. 35:9-15. Jacob and his family were now back in Canaan, the land God had promised Abraham. God was reassuring

Jacob that He was remaining true to His promises. He assigned Jacob a new name, Israel, and from that point on, his offspring would be known as the children of Israel. Now tell the story from Genesis 37.

### **Retell the Story**

Have a volunteer retell the story while others act it out.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Where are Jacob and his family living now?*
2. *According to the story, what were all the reasons that Joseph's brothers hated him? Did Joseph deserve their hatred? Do you think Joseph invented the dreams just to upset his brothers? Explain your answer.*
3. *Imagine being one of Joseph's brothers, seeing your father treat Joseph so differently than the rest of you and hearing your little brother's "crazy" dreams. Have you ever felt like that? Do you think the brothers' actions against Joseph were justified? Explain.*
4. *What do you think about Joseph's dreams? Why did the dreams upset the brothers so much? Where do you think the dreams came from?*
5. *It seems Jacob's sons must have harbored quite a lot of anger against him to do such a cruel thing. Who do you think was hurt the most by the brothers' actions?*
6. *Was it Joseph's fault that his father loved him most and gave him a special robe? Was it Joseph's fault that he had those strange dreams? Why did God allow the brothers to do such a terrible thing? Why didn't God protect Joseph—or did He?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. Discuss the fact that God allows suffering in the world: *Suffering is one of the consequences of what happened in the very beginning when all of creation was broken by sin. Even the most innocent children suffer. Since Adam and Eve, all people have been born with a sinful nature. God does not keep people from sinning—everyone has the freedom to choose whether to submit to God or rebel against Him. The consequences of sin don't only affect the wicked—their victims and others around them are seriously affected as well. Think of some examples. How have you been affected by someone else's sin? How has someone else been affected by your sin?*
- B. Read Psalm 121. What does this tell us about God? (Add to the "GOD" chart.) *Even though God doesn't stop people from sinning, He has ways of protecting His people. How did God actually protect Joseph? What do you think would have happened if the caravan of Ishmaelites hadn't come by at just the right time? Can you think of a time when God protected you by bringing along the right circumstances at just the right time?* (Allow the learners time to tell their stories then encourage them to thank God for His protection. Pray for those who may still be suffering from another's sin.)
- C. Begin memorizing Ps. 121:1-2 and complete Lesson 15 in the Discovery Journal.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 16 JOSEPH RESISTS TEMPTATION

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 39

Supporting Passages: Proverbs 6:27-35

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:13

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Even though Joseph was just a slave, God blessed him and the household he served.
- In spite of repeated seduction by Potiphar's wife, Joseph did not take advantage of the opportunity to indulge in "secret" sin.
- Though his motives and conduct were righteous, Joseph was falsely accused and unjustly punished.
- Even in prison, Joseph maintained his integrity and God blessed him.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. observe again that God does not keep people from doing evil things that cause His children to suffer injustice, but He has ways of protecting them through it.
2. recognize Joseph as a man of integrity: his actions were consistent with who he was as one of God's chosen people.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask someone to review the circumstances surrounding the birth of Joseph and what happened to him in the last lesson. Review Psalm 1, Rom. 12:17-18 and Ps. 121:1-2.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Play the game "Honey, if you love me, smile." The object of the game is for Person A to approach someone else (Person B), kneel in front of them and say "Honey, if you love me, smile," and do silly things to try to "tempt" Person B to smile. Person B must try to resist the temptation to smile, maintain a straight face, and say "Honey, I love you but I just can't smile." If Person A is able to make Person B smile, Person B becomes the "tempter." If Person A is unsuccessful, he or she must try to make someone else smile.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

This is a very dramatic story. When you tell it, use tone of voice and facial expressions to help convey the feelings behind what's happening.

#### **Retell the Story**

You may want to retell this story as a "That's Good. No, That's Bad" story (see sample in Resources). Teach the learners the words to respond after you say your part. You may wish to translate it into your learners' language or use it as an English language activity.



### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Describe Joseph. Tell everything we have learned about him so far. (You may want to have the learners create a list of things they know about Joseph on the board.) Now, imagine that you are Joseph. Describe the situation you find yourself in when you arrive in Egypt.*
2. *Guys, pretend that you are Potiphar. Explain why you have entrusted so much responsibility to Joseph.*
3. *Ladies, imagine that you are Potiphar's wife. Describe how you feel about Joseph and explain why you lied in order to get your husband to put him in jail.*
4. *The story says that the LORD was with Joseph in Egypt, even in jail. Did God prevent him from suffering evil and injustice? Even though bad things happened to Joseph, God was with him and had a way of making things work out for good. What might have happened to Joseph if God had not been watching over him, protecting him, giving him success?*
5. *The LORD was with Joseph, but Joseph also had faith in God's sovereignty and cooperated with what God was doing. What do you think would have happened if Joseph had not been a faithful, responsible servant? What do you think would have happened if he had given in to the temptation to go to bed with Potiphar's wife? Read Prov. 6:27-35 to find out.*
6. *Joseph was a man of integrity. Discuss what it means to be a person of integrity. (People of integrity live by what they believe. Their actions are consistent with who they are as God's people. For a person of integrity, pleasing God is more important than pleasing people.)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Discuss in small groups: Are you a person of integrity? Are your words and actions consistent with who you are as a child of God? Are you willing to make every effort to resist temptation so that, like Joseph, you will not sin against God?*
- B. *Read 1 Cor. 10:13 and discuss the meaning. How can that verse be a comfort to you? Remember it and when temptation comes, look for the way of escape!*
- C. *There is a lot of reading required for Lesson 16 in the Discovery Journal. You may ask the learners to complete it as an in-class reading/writing assignment or you may prefer to assign it as homework. Begin memorizing 1 Cor. 10:13.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 17 GOD RESCUES EGYPT THROUGH JOSEPH

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 41:1-40, 46-57

Supporting Passages: 2 Corinthians 9:8

Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:6-7

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God had an elaborate plan for rescuing many, many people from starvation.
- Rather than preventing the famine, God chose to demonstrate His sovereignty to Pharaoh by predicting the future and revealing the rescue plan through Joseph.
- Joseph honored God by clearly telling Pharaoh that his dreams were a revelation from God Himself.
- Pharaoh honored God by acknowledging Him as the source of Joseph's wisdom.
- God honored Joseph for his integrity and faithfulness and used Pharaoh to move him from prison to a position of authority.
- God blessed Joseph, and through Joseph, Egypt and all the surrounding countries were blessed.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. find evidence of God's sovereignty: the world is His and He controls the future.
2. see that God acts in order to reveal Himself to people.
3. acknowledge that God entrusts great responsibility to the faithful.
4. recognize that God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others.
5. express a desire to be used by God for His glory.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Joseph's ancestry. Have the learners try to recall, in order, the people they have learned about so far in God's Story. Review Eph. 2:4-5, 8-9, John 1:12 and 1 Cor. 10:13.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*If you could know in advance that your business (or farm, depending on the background of your learners) was going to do very, very well this year and very, very poorly next year, what would you do? (Give time for responses.) In today's story, we will see what Pharaoh, ruler of Egypt, decided to do when God revealed the future to him.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Connect today's story with Lesson 16 by explaining that Joseph was in prison for two years. During that time, God enabled Joseph to interpret the dreams of two of the other inmates and what he predicted came true. Go on to tell today's story from Gen. 41. Tell them to listen carefully because afterward you will choose someone to retell it.

### **Retell the Story**

Tell the learners that when you point to them, they should tell part of the story. Allow the first person to tell the first part, then point to someone else to tell the next part, etc.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Why did Pharaoh bring Joseph out of prison? Why do you think Pharaoh's dreams troubled him so much?*
2. *In what way did Joseph honor God in this story?*
3. *What do we learn about God in this story? What evidence is there that God is omniscient (all-knowing)? What evidence is there that He is omnipotent (all-powerful)?* (Add to the GOD chart.)
4. *The Egyptians were not God's chosen people. Why do you think God revealed this important information to Pharaoh?*
5. *What do you think God is doing in this part of the story? Do you think God was blessing Joseph just to reward Joseph and make him happy? Explain your answer.* (Ask the learners to recall the parts of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Help them see how God was beginning to fulfill part of that promise through Joseph by blessing those who bless him and making him a blessing to the people around him.)

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *In today's story, we saw how God blessed many people through Joseph. Joseph was a slave and a prisoner. He did not have wealth, yet he was able to be a blessing to those around him. If you have placed your faith in Christ, in a spiritual sense, you are a descendent of Abraham, one of God's chosen people. According to 2 Cor. 9:8, what is the reason for God's blessing in our lives?*
- B. *Are you willing to be a channel of blessing to others? What has God blessed you with that you can share with someone else? Have you been faithful in using God's blessing in your life for His glory? Give examples.*
- C. Discuss the meaning of Eph. 2:6-7 and work on memorizing it together. Encourage the learners to work with a partner to complete Lesson 17 in the Discovery Journal.

### **Prepare in Advance for Lesson 18**

The scripture passage for the next part of the story is very long. Consider using the Readers' Theatre script found in Resources to make the presentation of the story more interesting. Choose learners for each member of the cast, assigning the best readers for the longest parts (Narrator, Jose, Juda), and provide them in advance with a copy of the script. Explain to them that in Readers' Theatre they won't really act out the story, but use appropriate gestures and facial expressions, speaking the parts directly to the audience as though they were speaking to the other characters in the story. (If you are unfamiliar with Readers' Theatre, look on-line for more information.) Provide time for the cast to rehearse to be well prepared to present the story for the next lesson.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 18 GOD RESCUES ISRAEL THROUGH JOSEPH

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Genesis 42-46:4

Supporting Passages: Genesis 50:19-20; Romans 12:17-21

Memory Verse: Romans 12:19

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God used Joseph and the land of Egypt not only to save Jacob's family from the famine, but also to provide a place for them to thrive and multiply.
- God used this humbling experience to cause Joseph's brothers to acknowledge their sin and to bring reconciliation to the family.
- God reaffirmed His presence and promise to Jacob and gently comforted him as he left Canaan for Egypt.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. acknowledge that God is in control: He works in mysterious ways to accomplish his larger purpose for our lives.
2. observe how repentance and forgiveness bring restoration and healing in relationships.
3. choose restoration over resentment and revenge in their own relationships.
4. express gratitude that, even when our faith is weak, God's presence and promises remain to carry us through.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Choose a volunteer to summarize the story of Joseph's life so far. Ask the learners to share how God has enabled them to be a blessing to others. Review Rom. 12:17-18, James 1:4 and Eph. 2:4-9.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Today we will hear the rest of Joseph's story. It's a long but fascinating account of what happened when Joseph and his brothers saw each other again.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Read the story or have the Reader's Theatre cast present the story using the script provided in Resources.

#### **Retell the Story**

Ask the listeners to retell the story, summarizing it by telling what they thought were the main points to remember.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *What observations can you make about Joseph's brothers in this story as compared to earlier in their lives? (There are many observations the learners might make, but help them see how self-sacrificing the brothers are now willing to be for their father and youngest brother, Benjamin, compared to how cruel they were to Joseph and how badly they hurt their father when they got rid of Joseph.)*
2. *Describe Jacob (Israel) at this point in his life. Is he demonstrating much faith? What seems to be #1 in his life? How does God deal with Jacob at the end of the story? (Help the learners see that, in spite of Jacob's apparent lack of faith, God deals gently with him, reminds him of His presence and promise, and comforts him regarding the end of his life.) What can we learn about God from this? (Add to GOD chart.) How does this make you feel toward God?*
3. *How would you describe the way Joseph treated his brothers?*
4. *What might have happened if Joseph had held resentment and anger against his brothers all those years? What might the outcome have been if he had taken quick revenge on them when they first arrived in Egypt?*
5. *What did happen because Joseph showed mercy on his brothers? (The brothers had time to express remorse for their sin, Joseph forgave them, their family relationships were restored and Israel's family was rescued from the famine).*
6. *What was the great truth about God that Joseph recognized and explained to his brothers? (Reread Gen. 45:5-8 if they can't remember. Add to GOD chart.) How did knowing this truth determine Joseph's attitude toward his brothers?*
7. *After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were afraid that Joseph might still take revenge on them. They begged for his forgiveness and offered themselves as his slaves. Read Gen. 50:19-21 to hear how Joseph responded. What can we learn from Joseph?*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *Our human nature wants pay back those who harm us. Joseph was in a position of power that would have allowed him to punish his enemies, but instead he chose to restore relationships by offering mercy and forgiveness. He honored God by acknowledging that God had a purpose for what happened and was in control of it. How can knowing that God is in charge of our lives impact our relationships?*
- B. *Does this mean we should allow people to repeatedly hurt us or others? God makes it clear in other parts of His Story that we are to defend the helpless who are being oppressed (see Isa. 1:17 for an example). The Bible doesn't say much about defending ourselves personally, but it does prescribe a justice system to protect us. Discuss examples of abuses that should be reported to the authorities.*
- C. *Read Romans 12:17-21. According to these verses, who will be the one to take revenge on our enemies? How are we to treat our enemies? Discuss in your small groups practical ways that you can "overcome evil with good."*
- D. *Complete Lesson 18 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize Rom. 12:19.*

### Evaluation Notes:

## 19 GOD RESCUES BABY MOSES

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Exodus 1:1-2:10

Supporting Passages: Hebrews 11:6

Memory Verse: Hebrews 11:6

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God blessed the descendants of Israel in Egypt and caused them to multiply.
- The new Pharaoh feared them and tried to control their growth by enslaving them.
- When that didn't work, Pharaoh tried infanticide, but the midwives feared God more than Pharaoh and saved the babies' lives.
- God had a special plan for Moses and orchestrated an amazing rescue to save his life.
- God's law is higher than human laws, even the king's commands.
- God uses people in creative ways to make His plans succeed.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. observe again God's sovereign control over His Rescue Plan.
2. acknowledge that, while human laws are generally for the good of society, God's laws supersede them when they are contrary to God's will.
3. see that God gives supernatural wisdom and courage to common people.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Guide the learners to give an overview of the book of Genesis. *What have we seen God doing since the beginning of Genesis? What have we learned about God? What have we learned about ourselves? What are some of the important lessons we have learned? Perhaps a good verse to summarize the lessons of the book of Genesis is Heb. 11:6.* (Read the verse and discuss how it relates to the lives of the characters we've met so far in God's Story.) Review Psalm 119:105, Ps. 19:1, and Rom. 12:19.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*In many countries there are laws that make it legal for doctors to perform an abortion if medical tests indicate that the baby has a defect. Perhaps some day doctors will be required to abort babies when they detect a defect or abnormality. In China, local officials are known to require doctors to perform abortions on women who have already had one or two children because of the country's one-child policy.<sup>178</sup> If you were a doctor in this situation, what would you do? Why? In our story today we will hear about midwives who refused to obey orders because they respected God more than the king.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

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<sup>178</sup> Edward Wong, *New York Times*, *Asia Pacific ed.* "Reports of Forced Abortions Fuel Push to End Chinese Law," at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/23/world/asia/pressure-to-repeal-chinas-one-child-law-is-growing.html? r=0>. Accessed 21 August, 2013.

### **Tell the Story**

Because this story is short and easy to tell, it is a good one to assign to a learner. Or divide the story into 3 parts (Ex. 1:1-14, 1:15-22, 2:1-10) and assign one part to each of three learners. Coach them in advance on how to prepare and present the story.

### **Retell the Story**

Ask three volunteers to retell the story as they understood it.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *About 350 years had passed since Israel and his descendants moved to Egypt. What had happened in that time? Why were the Egyptians now so upset? What were Pharaoh's attempted solutions to the problem?*
2. *What was the predicament that Shiphrah and Puah found themselves in? What do you think about their solution to the problem? Was their disobedience and the lie they told to Pharaoh about Hebrew women justified? Explain your answer.*
3. *Shiphrah and Puah might have been killed for disobeying the king's instructions. Do you think you would have been brave enough to disobey Pharaoh? Read Hebrews 11:6. What strengthened the midwives in their civil disobedience?*
4. *Who would have thought of putting a baby in a basket in the Nile River? Was Moses' mother crazy? (What about the crocodiles?) Moses' sister, Miriam, was just a young girl when she approached the daughter of the murderous king. Would you have been brave enough to talk to her, or even thought to suggest that a Hebrew woman be found to nurse the baby? (Lead the learners to recognize God's involvement in giving the midwives, Moses' mother and Miriam wisdom and courage for their situations and that He can do the same for them.)*
5. *Who else did God use to protect the life of Moses? What does that tell us about God? (Give the opportunity to add to the GOD chart.)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *This story is about ordinary, God-fearing women who were in seemingly impossible situations. They had no way of knowing that their plans would work, but they did what they believed was right and trusted in God to take care of them. Do you feel like you are in an impossible situation with no solution? (Allow time for sharing stories.)*
- B. *Read Heb. 11:6 and discuss in small groups: What does Heb. 11:6 promise? Check your faith: Do you believe that God has a solution to your "impossible situation"? Do you respect God's laws above what friends, family or community leaders tell you to do? Do you believe that He can give you the wisdom and courage needed to tackle that problem? Are you willing to look for God's creative solution?*
- C. *Allow the small groups time to brainstorm solutions for problems that have been discussed then pray for each other. Complete Lesson 19 in the Discovery Journal and begin memorizing Heb. 11:6.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 20 GOD CALLS MOSES TO RESCUE HIS PEOPLE

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Exodus 3:1-15; 4:10-17; 5:1-9; 5:22-6:12

Supporting Passages: Exodus 2:11-25; Psalm 103; Luke 12:11-12; 2 Cor. 12:8-9

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 12:9

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God heard the cries of His people and had compassion on them.
- God had a plan to use Moses to rescue His people from slavery in Egypt.
- Moses was fearful and had a hard time trusting God to use him.
- God was angry with Moses' unbelief, but He made allowance for Moses' weakness.
- Even though things got much worse after Moses approached Pharaoh, God reassured Moses by repeated his promise to rescue the people.
- God announced His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the Israelite nation.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives:**

Learners will:

1. observe that God
  - is powerful and holy yet patient with the weak and fearful,
  - has compassion on the suffering,
  - does not forget His promises.
2. acknowledge that God uses weak, cowardly, unqualified people who are willing to submit to His will.
3. choose dependence on God rather than themselves to do His will.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask a volunteer to retell how God saved the life of Moses. Review Rev. 4:11, John 3:16, and Hebrews 11:6.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*What's the main thing that keeps you from serving God? In our last lesson, we learned that Moses had been adopted into the royal family. That meant he would have received the best of everything that Egypt had to offer. But he knew he was a Hebrew (this is what the descendants of Israel were now called). He knew that the slaves who served Pharaoh and the other Egyptians were his own people. One day, while he was watching the slaves work, he saw an Egyptian seriously abusing a Hebrew. In defense of his true countryman, Moses killed the Egyptian. When Pharaoh found out, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses escaped to Midian and lived in exile for 40 years. While he was gone, that king died, but the new one was just as hard on the Hebrews, and God heard their cries for help. He had already chosen, protected and prepared Moses to save them, but in today's story, we will learn why Moses did not want to be part of God's Rescue Plan.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**



### **Tell the Story**

Today's story is taken from several segments of scripture, so it may be best to read them.

### **Retell the Story**

The story is taken from four passages. After each passage is read, have a volunteer retell the part that was just read.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *What observations can you make about Moses from this part of God's Story? How did Moses feel about himself at this point in his life? In what ways is Moses like you? (Add to the US chart.)*
2. *What observations can you make about God? (Add to GOD chart.)*
3. *Describe Moses' situation. Just imagine: what would it be like to go back to Egypt after 40 years to ask the new king to let all his slaves go on a holiday? If God came to you today and asked you to give an unwelcome message to some high government official, how would you respond? What would be your excuse?*
4. *Did God choose Moses to speak to the Hebrew people and Pharaoh because he had great speaking skills and persuasive powers? Who was the real power behind this plan? What was God's promise to Moses in 4:12?*
5. *Review Ex. 4:10-14. In verse 14 it says that God's anger burned against Moses when Moses asked Him to send someone else. Why was God so angry with Moses? What did God do in His anger? Did He lash out and punish Moses? Did He say, "Oh, never mind, I'll find someone else" and let Moses off the hook? What might we learn about how God deals with us from this story?*
6. *Read Psalm 103 out loud and encourage the learners to make observations. What do you like about this psalm? How does it make you feel? What does it tell you about God? About yourself? (Add to charts, if appropriate.)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Read Luke 12:11-12 to learn what Jesus instructed His disciples. How can we apply this to ourselves?*
- B. *The Apostle Paul had a weakness, too. Read 2 Cor. 12:8-9. What was Paul's attitude toward his weakness? Can you think of someone today whom God has used mightily regardless of a weakness or handicap?*
- C. *Begin memorizing 2 Corinthians 12:9. Complete Lesson 20 in the Discovery Journal.*
- D. *If time allows, close the lesson by reading Psalm 103 as a group, each person reading one verse. Ask the learners to respond to this psalm. Encourage spontaneous responses of worship, praise and thanksgiving. Perhaps someone will want to give a testimony of what the psalm means to them. Perhaps a song will come to mind. If learners seem shy or unresponsive, suggest that they finish this sentence "popcorn style." We praise you, Lord God, because you...*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 21 GOD REVEALS HIS POWER AND PLAN

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Exodus 11; 12:1-14, 21-42

Supporting Passages: Exodus 7-10; Num. 9:13; John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5:6-13

Memory Verse: John 1:29

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God had a plan for demonstrating His power so both the Egyptians and the Israelites would know without a doubt that He is the LORD of all.
- Despite devastating plagues, Pharaoh refused to give in, so all of Egypt suffered.
- God instituted a special ceremony that the Israelites were to observe every year to remind them of how He rescued them from Egypt: the Passover.
- On their last night in Egypt, those who obeyed by putting the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts were rescued from the final plague: the death of the firstborn.
- God orchestrated an amazing plan by which the Israelites escaped from Egypt with the wealth of the Egyptians willingly given to them.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. understand that God wants all people to know that He is the LORD.
2. understand the importance of the first Passover ceremony as the only means of salvation from the 10<sup>th</sup> plague God sent on Egypt.
3. begin to understand the significance of the Passover as a picture of salvation.
4. praise and worship Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away our sin.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Moses' life so far. Did anyone experience God at work in their life by applying what they learned in the last lesson? Review John 1:12, James 1:4 and 2 Cor. 12:9.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Moses and his brother went before Pharaoh many times. When Pharaoh repeatedly rejected Moses' message and refused to let the Hebrews go, he and all his people suffered the terrible consequences: water turning to blood, millions of frogs, farms destroyed, swarms of insects, etc. In Exodus 7-10 you can read about the first 9 plagues that God sent on Egypt. In today's lesson, we will hear about the 10<sup>th</sup> plague and see how God once again claimed Abraham's offspring as His own special people. He instituted a ceremony that would become a lasting picture of God's Rescue Plan.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Tell or read this story yourself or assign two or more learners to prepare to present it. It can be divided into 4 parts: God's warning to Pharaoh, God's instruction to Moses,

Moses instruction to the elders of Israel, and the account of the death of Egypt's firstborns and Israel's escape.

### **Retell the Story**

Suggestion: Have the learners turn to a partner and retell the story to each other.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *In Ex. 9:13-16, God clearly explained to Pharaoh through Moses the purpose of the plagues. What was that purpose?*
2. *In Ex. 10:1-2, God explained to Moses another reason for the plagues. What was that purpose?*
3. *What was the impact of Pharaoh's refusal to let the Israelites go? If you were an Egyptian, what would you want to say to Pharaoh after Moses spoke to him the last time?*
4. *Describe the Passover ceremony. What do you notice about it? What was the most important part of the Passover lamb? What was the purpose of that first Passover? Why did the Lord instruct them to celebrate the Passover by repeating the ceremony every year?*
5. *Prior to this, God had not yet established the regular practice of animal sacrifice that His people would some day observe. The Passover lamb, the first such animal sacrifice, was evidence that the shedding of blood was necessary for salvation in God's plan for them. If any of the Israelites had not believed Moses' message from God and not followed his instructions about the blood on the doorposts, what would have happened?*
6. *A year later, God gave further instruction through Moses regarding the celebration of the Passover. Read Num. 9:13. What can you say about the importance of the Passover for the people of Israel?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *In John 1:29, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," and in 1 Cor. 5:7, Paul refers to Jesus as "our Passover lamb." What similarities can you see between the Passover lamb and Jesus? Differences?*
- B. *In the book of Revelation, John writes of the special vision he had of future events in Heaven. Read Rev. 5:6-13. How is Jesus described? What do verses 9-10 say about those who have been purchased with the blood of the Lamb? From this we can see that salvation is no longer only for the Israelites and those who observe the Passover with them, but for every people group on earth! Someday we will even see Egyptians who have placed their faith in the blood of Christ worshipping the Lamb with us! Praise and thank Him for the blood that was shed to rescue you from death.*
- C. *If you know a song taken from the words of the elders in Revelation 5, teach it to the learners and sing it in worship to the Lord. Memorize John 1:29. Complete Lesson 21 in the Discovery Journal.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 22 THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN YET GOD PROVIDES

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Exodus 14:10-31; 15:22-27; 16:1-15, 31-32; 17:1-7

Supporting Passages: Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-9; 16:16-30; Mat. 6:25-34

Memory Verse: James 1:2-3

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- In the final stage of rescuing His people from Egypt, God performed another amazing miracle so that the Egyptians would know that He is the LORD and glorify Him.
- As a result of their amazing rescue, the Israelites feared the LORD, too, and placed their trust in him... for awhile.
- The people quickly forgot God's ability and/or desire to miraculously protect them.
- Repeatedly, God lovingly provided for them, but some still failed to trust Him.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. observe that there is no limit to the wonders God can perform.
2. evaluate their own attitudes in relation to the Israelites' short memory, lack of faith and grumbling nature.
3. recognize that worrying and grumbling is evidence of a lack of faith.
4. confess their own lack of faith and trust their concerns to God.
5. desire to be attentive to God's provision for them and thank Him for it.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Have the learners share the music, poetry and artwork they created from Rev. 5. Review Ps. 121:1-2, Rom. 12:19 and John 1:29.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Create a large, 2-column chart on the wall or board. Over the first column write: GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE! Over the second column write: WOW! PRAISE THE LORD! Have 8 pieces of bond paper or 5x7 index cards available. Say: *When the Israelites escaped Egypt, God led them through the desert toward the Red Sea. (Show a map, if possible.) During the day, He guided them by a pillar of cloud, and at night, by a pillar of fire so they could see their way. It should have been clear to them that God was with them every step of the way. But when Pharaoh, again, changed his mind and went after them, the Israelites acted like their God was powerless to help them.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Divide the story into the following segments and assign a reader for each: Ex. 14:10-12; 14:13-31; 15:22-24; 15:25-27; 16:1-3; 16:4-15, 31-32; 17:1-4, 5-7. After each segment is

read, have the learners summarize the Israelites' complaint or God's miraculous provision and write it on the paper or index card. Place it on the chart.

### **Retell the Story**

Ask a volunteer to retell the story, using the chart as a reminder.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Imagine you are the captain of Pharaoh's army. Tell the story of the Israelites' escape from your point of view.*
2. *Think of the miracles that we've learned about so far in God's Story. Which one do you find to be the most amazing? Why?*
3. *Is there anything that surprised you in this story? How would you describe the Israelites attitudes and behavior? Do you think you ever act the same way? (Add to US chart.)*
4. *To whom did the people always complain? Who did they blame for their troubles? How would you feel if you were Moses?*
5. *How would you describe God's attitude and behavior toward His people in this story? What can you say about God's power over nature? (Add to GOD chart.)*
6. *What do you think God was doing in this part of the story (i.e. what were the reasons behind what He did)?*
7. *Imagine that you are one of the Israelites during the time of this story. How do you feel about your fellow-citizens? What would you like to say to Moses? What would you like to say to God?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. Discuss in small groups: *Can you think of a time that you acted as if there were no God to take care of you? Tell about it. Do you think God has the power to take care of you? Do you think He wants to take care of you? Explain.*
- B. *Read and discuss what Jesus said about this to His followers centuries later in Matt. 6:25-34. How would you summarize Jesus' message? What did He tell them about our Heavenly Father? What promise do you want to remember from this passage? How would you say verse 33 in your own words? Discuss how to seek God's Kingdom and righteousness.*
- C. *Discuss in your small groups the things that are worrying you now. Pray about them together. Thank God for the ways that He has provided for your needs in the past and ask Him for the faith you need to leave your worries with Him.*
- D. Begin memorizing James 1:2-3. Complete Lesson 22 in the Discovery Journal.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## **23 GOD GIVES THE LAW AND THE PEOPLE REJECT IT**

### **ON YOUR OWN**

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Exodus 19:1-19; 20:1-21; 32

Supporting Passages: Mat. 22:34-40; Rom. 13:8-10; Heb. 10:26-31

Memory Verse: Rom. 3:23-24

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God gave His law to the Israelites because He had chosen them to be His “treasured possession” (19:5), a holy nation (19:6).
- God required a distance between Himself and the people, and designated Moses as a mediator between Him and the people.
- Amidst a dramatic display of His power and holiness, God gave a special set of laws that would distinguish them from the other nations.
- Moses explained the purpose of this terrifying display of God’s awesome holiness (20:20): because the people were not yet motivated by love for the Lord, they needed a proper reverence for Him so they would be motivated to obey His commandments.
- The laws were given to guide the relationships of the people to God and to each other.
- The people soon disobeyed God’s laws and God showed how serious He was about those laws, punishing His people severely for their unfaithfulness.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that God was offering a very special gift of grace (unearned and undeserved) to the Israelites: they would be set apart as His very own people.
2. consider the possibility that God gave laws commanding their respect out of fear because He knew they were not yet capable of obeying Him out of love.
3. identify the commandments that governed the people’s relationship with God and those that governed their relationships with each other.
4. recognize the laws demand reverence for God and respect for people.
5. consider the possible motives of the people for creating their own “gods” by analyzing the motives behind their own idolatry (placing anything else in the highest position of honor and affection that belongs to God alone).
6. acknowledge that sin deserves death.

### **WITH THE LEARNERS**

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask volunteers to share what worries they have entrusted to God. Ask them what promises they wanted to remember from what Jesus said in Matt. 6:25-34. Review James 1:2-4, Heb. 11:6, Eph. 2:4-9.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Write on the board any of the 10 Commandments the learners can tell you from memory.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

**Tell the Story**

Assign three good readers to read the three passages, one after another.

**Retell the Story**

Have the readers read their passages again, but this time, stop after each passage to discuss it before going on to the next part of the story.

**Guide the Discussion**

1. Ex. 19:1-19: *What are your observations about the interactions between God and the Israelites in this part of the story? What was God offering them? What was He requiring of them? What words express His love for them?*
2. *Pretend you are Israelites and tell this part of the story from your perspective: what did you see and hear? How did you feel?*
3. *What do you think was the purpose behind the preparations the people were to make and the boundary limits that God required? What do you think God was trying to communicate to the people about Himself? About the commands He was about to give?*
4. Ex. 20:1-21: Have the learners identify the 10 Commandments that God spoke to the people. Summarize and list them on the board or large sheet of paper. Ask the learners to identify which laws were given to guide the peoples' relationship to God. Draw a vertical arrow (↑) next to each of those. Draw a horizontal arrow (↔) next to the laws that were to guide their relationships to one another.
5. *Are the 10 Commandments relevant to us today? Explain. Which ones are most often ignored in today's world? What word would you use to summarize the attitude toward God these laws require? (Help the learners see that the first 4 laws demand REVERENCE for God.) What word would you use to summarize the attitude required toward each other? (Help the learners see that the last 6 laws demand RESPECT for each other's lives and property.)*
6. *Read Mat. 22:34-40 and Rom. 13:8-10. How did Jesus summarize the commandments? What should be the motive behind our reverence for God and respect for people? What should be the primary expression of obeying the law?*
7. *What do you think motivated God to frighten the people so badly? Do you think fear was necessary? What was Moses' explanation in v. 20?*
8. Ex. 32: *Try to imagine yourself in the place of the Israelites. What could account for why they disobeyed so soon? Why do we sin even when we know it's wrong?*

**Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *We know God is loving and merciful and has accepted Jesus' death as the payment for our forgiveness, so sometimes we forget how awesome and holy God is and how important it is to give Him the reverence and obedience that is due Him. Even though He loves us, He hates our sin. Read and discuss Heb. 10:26-31. Explain v. 29. How should this lesson influence our view of God? How will it change the way we live?*
- B. Memorize Rom. 3:23-24. Complete Lesson 23 in the Discovery Journal.

**Evaluation Notes:**

## 24 THE TABERNACLE: THE PLACE TO MEET WITH GOD

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passages: Exodus 25:1-9; 39:42-43; 40:17-38; Lev. 1:1-9; 4:27-31; 17:11

Supporting Passage: Hebrews 10:1-23, Romans 3:23-25a

Memory Verse: Romans 3:25a

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God requested an offering of specific items to be given willingly, not forced.
- The items offered were to be used to construct the tabernacle and all the items that would be used in it, all according to His specific instructions.
- The tabernacle would be the place where God would live among them, where Moses and the priests would meet with Him.
- The people gave willingly and followed God's instructions.
- The tabernacle was constructed and God's presence settled on it like a cloud.
- God then gave instructions for how to perform the ceremonial rituals and sacrifices that were to take place there in order to maintain fellowship with Him.
- The importance of blood for making atonement (peace with God) was made clear.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize God's longing for fellowship with His people.
2. see that the people's willing giving and obedience resulted in blessing.
3. understand that the sins of the people still separated them from fellowship with God.
4. understand that God intentionally provided ways for the sins of the people to be forgiven and their guilt covered so they could be in fellowship with Him.
5. acknowledge that the blood of Jesus has made animal sacrifices no longer necessary.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Have the learners review the 10 Commandments and share any thoughts or decisions they have made regarding Lesson 23. Review Rom. 6:23, 1 Cor. 10:13 and Rom. 3:23-24.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Ask the learners to tell a story about a time when they sacrificed a lot just to be with someone. *Who was it? What did you sacrifice? Was it worth it? Why? In today's story we will learn what the people of Israel were willing to sacrifice to have God dwell among them, and what God was willing to sacrifice in order to live among sinful people.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

The story comes from several passages intended to help the learners understand the purpose of the tabernacle and the sacrifices that would be offered there. You will need to be well prepared to tell the story smoothly since it comes from several chapters. If you



wish, you can take the time to give more detail regarding the parts and furnishings of the tabernacle found in Ex. 25-30. Many illustrations are available online.

### **Retell the Story**

Have the learners volunteer what they heard as the main ideas in the story. Guide them as they recount the instructions and events in order.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *What do you notice about God's request for offerings in Ex. 25:1-9? Was the offering required? Which would you appreciate more, a voluntary gift someone was happy to give, or one that someone was forced to give when they didn't want to? Why? What is the desire of God's heart, as revealed here? (Guide the learners to see that God wants voluntary, not forced, offerings from His people. He wants them to voluntarily express their desire for Him to live among them. He wants to live with them in a harmonious relationship.)*
2. *The Israelites did give generously and prepared everything for the tabernacle just as God had commanded. What was the result of their generosity and obedience? (Note Ex. 39:42.)*
3. *Ex. 40:17-38 mentions all the parts of the tabernacle and items that were to go in it. The Ark of the Covenant and its atonement cover were especially important because God told Moses to put the stone tablets on which the commandments were written inside this special box. (See Ex. 25:10-22 for details.) He said He would meet Moses there above that atonement cover to give him commands for the people. This ark was to stay inside the tabernacle behind the "shielding curtain" which created a private space where Moses could meet with God. (See Ex. 26:31-33. No one but Moses, and later the high priest, was allowed to enter that holiest space. Even though He would now live among them, God's holiness still required this separating curtain. How did the people know that God had accepted their work? How did God use this cloud to teach the people to depend on Him?*
4. *What did you learn about burnt offerings and blood sacrifices? What was the purpose of them? What's so important about blood? What does it represent?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Now read Heb. 10:1-23. Who is the "he" referred to vv. 5-14? What points is the author making? Make a list on the board and then decide what was the main point the author wants us to grasp. What does that mean for us personally?*
- B. *Memorizing Rom. 3:25a. Note that it is a continuation of the previous memory verse and practice saying vv. 23-25a all together. Complete Lesson 24 in the Discovery Journal in small groups.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 25 THE PEOPLE REJECT THE LAND GOD PROMISED

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Numbers 13:1, 2, 17-21, 26-34; 14

Supporting Passages: Psalm 27:1

Memory Verse: Psalm 27:1

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- This story describes one of the saddest days in Israel's history: God's people rejected the land He had been promising for generations.
- In spite of all the wonders they had seen God perform, they feared the inhabitants of the land more than they trusted God's power to give it to them. In essence, they were saying "We know better than God does what is good for us."
- God forgave the nation as a whole for this lack of faith, yet there were severe consequences for those who had doubted and grumbled against Him: they were not allowed to enter the land He had intended for them to enjoy.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that fear and doubt (lack of faith in God's power and goodness) kept the people from trusting and obeying God.
2. recognize that the people's refusal to enter the land was an insult to the One who had led them out of captivity to the land He had promised them.
3. observe that lack of faith leads to fear, rebellion and sin.
4. understand that when we lose sight of who God is and fail to revere His awesome power, we begin to fear people and doubt God's promises.
5. acknowledge that dependence on our own ability for our salvation is an insult to the One who has provided the only way to salvation.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Ps. 121:1-2, Heb. 11:6 and Rom. 3:23-25a. Ask the learners to recall God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then have them recall all the ways God took care of the people of Israel from the time He rescued them from Egypt.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*The Israelites had finally arrived at the edge of the land God had been promising them since Abraham. If you were one of them, how would you be feeling now? What do you expect God will do for them now?*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Tell the story as it happened in chapter 13, then read chapter 14 aloud.

### Retell the Story

Write on the board the following headings: The Exploration, The Report, The Rebellion, God's Response, Moses' Plea, and The Consequences. Have the learners follow this outline to collectively retell the story. Help them recall important points.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *What observation can you make about the exploration of Canaan? Whom did Moses send? What kind of information was he looking for?*
2. *What facts did the leaders report when they returned? What feelings did they convey to the people? What was Caleb's perspective?*
3. *Ex. 14:1 says all the people wept that night. Why do you think they cried? Why did they even consider returning to Egypt? What had they forgotten? How did this make God feel? Direct the learners to see that the Israelites were terribly afraid. They seemed to have forgotten all the mighty works God had done for them in rescuing them from Egypt. They feared people more than they feared (revered) the Lord. This was a terrible insult to God.*
4. *What reasoning did Joshua and Caleb use to try to change their minds? Think about the history of this group of people. Is it surprising to you that Joshua and Caleb were unable to persuade them? Why or why not?*
5. *Either the people's view of God was too small, or they doubted the goodness of His heart toward them. By refusing to believe His promise to give them the land, the Israelites rejected the help of Almighty God. They lacked the most important trait necessary to please God. What is that trait? (Faith)*
6. *What happened to the leaders who gave the bad report? Why was their punishment more severe? Why didn't God kill all of the Israelites for their rebellion? Which of the people did God say would never enter the land of promise? (Reread 14:21-23.) What would happen to them? What consequences did the children suffer because of their parents' unfaithfulness?*
7. *In 14:40 we see that the people confessed their sin, but tried to fix the problem themselves. What happened? Can we undo or make up for our own sin?*
8. *What do we learn about God from this story? Describe the Israelites. Are people very different today? (Add to the GOD and US circles.)*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. Discuss: *Let's try to see ourselves in this story by thinking of things that God has asked us to do that require courage and faith. Why is it hard to do those things? What are we afraid of? What do you think Caleb and Joshua would say about it?*
- B. Assign to be read aloud: Prov. 3:4-5; Mic. 6:8; Mat. 18:15-16; Mat. 22:37-39; Mat. 28:18-20; Luke 6:27-31; Luke 17:3-4; Rom. 13:7; 2 Cor. 9:7-8 and 1 Pet. 3:15. *Which of these require the most courage and faith? Why? Tell of a time it has been difficult for you to trust God and do the right thing.*
- C. Begin memorizing Ps. 27:1. Complete Lesson 25 in the Discovery Journal.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 26 JOSHUA REPLACES MOSES AS ISRAEL'S LEADER

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Joshua 1:1-11; 2

Supporting Passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-12; 7:1-9; 9:1-6; 10:12-21; 30:17-20; 31:7-8

Memory Verse: Luke 6:27-28

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- After leading the Israelites through 40 years of wandering in the desert, Moses presented a final message to the people, then passed the leadership to Joshua.
- Having been commissioned by Moses and empowered by God, Joshua prepared the people to enter the land God was giving them.
- God used an unexpected person to assist and protect the spies that Joshua sent to spy out the land: the prostitute Rahab.
- Rahab had heard enough about the God of the Israelites to know that she should fear Him more than her own king. Her faith in God caused her to depend on His people to save her from destruction.
- God used Rahab to encourage the spies and rewarded her faith by protecting her.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize the importance of knowing God's Word, teaching it to our children and obeying it.
2. Learners will understand that God's mercy and love extended to all people who placed their trust in Him, even if they were not descendants of Abraham.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review memory verses Eph. 2:4-9, Heb. 11:6, Ps. 27:1. Ask the learners to recall what happened to the Israelites when they heard about the people living in Canaan. *What happened when they took their eyes off God's unlimited power and considered only their own strength? What was the result of their rebellion against God?*

#### **Engage the Learners**

*It's been 40 years now since the Israelites lost their chance to enter the land of Canaan. If you had been one of the Israelites who got sent back into the desert for 40 years, how old would you be now? Would you still be alive? (They should just add 40 years to their age. Those age 20 and older would be dead by now.) Now they are back at the edge of the land God promised their forefathers. Only Moses, Joshua, Caleb and those who were under 20 years old the last time they were here are still alive. Moses was 80 years old when he led the people out of Egypt to this place the first time. How old is he now? God has told him he will not enter the Promised Land. He has one last chance to teach the people before he, too, will die and they will cross over the Jordan River into Canaan.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

### **Tell the Story**

Have someone pretend to be Moses giving his final speech to the people. Use the passages from Deuteronomy listed above to create the speech. You can cut and paste them together in one document from an on-line Bible such as <http://www.angbible.net>. Allow the learners to make observations and reflect on Moses' speech. Did they hear anything new or unexpected? Then tell the story from Joshua 1 and 2.

### **Retell the Story**

Have 2 volunteers retell the story from Joshua, taking turns and helping each other.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *What did you learn from Moses' speech? What strategies did Moses suggest for remembering God's commands? Which of those strategies could we use to help us remember God's Word?*
2. *According to Moses, why was God giving them the land of Canaan? (See Deut. 7:8-9, 9:4-5, 10:15. Guide the learners to see that it was not because of Israel's righteousness—they certainly had not earned it. Rather it was an expression of God's love for them and faithfulness to His promises to their ancestors. It was also a judgment on the occupants of the land for their wickedness—they were not innocent victims.)*
3. *Read Deut. 10:17-19. What do you think is the difference between the Canaanites that they are supposed to kill and the foreigners that they are supposed to love? Think about Rahab. How was she different from the rest of the people in Jericho? (Note that because she feared the LORD, she helped His people—faith in action. See Heb. 11:31.) We will see later that, because of her faith, God was gracious toward Rahab. She eventually came to live among the Israelites, was loved and accepted and even became the great-great grandmother of King David, an ancestor of Jesus!*
4. *What do we know about Joshua? (Remember that he was one of the ones, along with Caleb, who trusted God and wanted to enter the land the first time.) In your own words, what message did God clearly communicate to him? Why do you think God was so insistent and repetitive in His charge to Joshua?*
5. *What similarities and differences do you see between this time and the last time spies were sent into the land? What do you think was Joshua's objective? Do you think it was just by chance that the spies arrived at Rahab's house? Explain.*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *What have we learned today that we can apply to our own lives? What principles did Moses teach the people that we can adopt even though we are not Israelites? What have we learned about God's mercy and grace? To whom is it available?*
- B. Memorize Luke 6:27-28. Complete Discovery Journal Lesson 26 in small groups.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 27 CROSSING THE JORDAN

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Joshua 3-4

Supporting Passages: I Cor. 11:23-26; Psalm 145:10-12

Memory Verse: Psalm 145:10

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God performed another demonstration of His mighty power on behalf of His people.
- He wanted the people to recognize Joshua as their God-appointed leader.
- He also wanted them to remember what He had done for them, so He gave instructions for a memorial to be created as a visual reminder to them and succeeding generations.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that it was because of God's power that Israel was able to enter the land of the promise.
2. understand that, by once again demonstrating His mighty power on their behalf, God continued to try to teach the Israelites that they could trust Him.
3. construct a visual memorial to God's power demonstrated in their own lives.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Rom. 3:23-25a, Ps. 27:1, Luke 6:27-28. Have someone tell the story of how God rescued His people at the Red Sea (Lesson 22, Ex. 14). *Had this generation of Israelites seen that miracle? How do you know?*

#### **Engage the Learners**

Ask the learners if they have any souvenirs. Ask why they keep those souvenirs. Ask the learners to tell about any memorial statues or monuments they have seen. If possible, prepare a short presentation showing statues and monuments found in the Philippines, such as the EDSA People Power, Rizal, and Memorare Manila Monuments. Images are available online. Discuss briefly what each of the monuments was intended to commemorate. Ask: *What is the purpose of a monument?*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Learn the story so you can tell it from memory, or assign it ahead of time to a learner. Try to obtain an illustration of the Ark of the Covenant so they can imagine this event.

#### **Retell the Story**

Have the group act out the story as someone narrates what happened.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *What similarities do you see between this incident and the crossing of the Red Sea? What differences? What has replaced the cloud as the representation of God's presence and power with them?*
2. *To accomplish God's plan that day, what were the Israelites required to do? Did crossing the Jordan require any great skill or power on the part of the people?*
3. *What was accomplished by this act of God? (Not only did this miracle transport the Israelites from one side of the river to the other, but it provided another prepared to go to war. In addition, it raised Joshua's status to that of Moses in the eyes of the people. See 4:14.) Was this miracle just for the Israelites? (See 4:24.)*
4. *God told them to collect 12 stones. What is the significance of that number? (Make sure the learners know that the 12 tribes of Israel descended from the 12 sons of Jacob. Joseph is not listed as a tribe; rather his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are called half-tribes, as seen in verse 4:12.)*
5. *What were they supposed to do with the stones? What was the purpose of the stones? Why was this necessary?*
6. *Can you think of other memorials the LORD gave the people to observe to remind them of what He had done? (The rainbow, circumcision, the Passover feast, other feasts and rituals that were to remind them of His covenant with them.)*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *What memorials, monuments or traditions do we observe that remind us of what God has done? (Examples: the parol and other visual representations of the birth of Christ, the celebration of Christmas, a crucifix, the observance of Holy Week, Resurrection Sunday, etc.) When we observe these things do we think about the purpose behind them? Do we use them to pass on from generation to generation the memory of what God has done?*
- B. *God knew it would help the people remember to pass on what they had seen and learned if they had a visual reminder. Jesus used this technique as well. Read 1 Cor. 11:23-26. What is the Lord's Supper/Communion commemorating?*
- C. Discuss together what God has done for you as a group or as individuals. Allow learners to tell stories of things God has done for them and their families. If they have trouble thinking of personal stories, ask them to think of stories from the Bible or other sources that clearly display God's awesome greatness. Provide materials for creating some sort of visual representation of these memories. (Suggestions: clay, smooth river stones and permanent markers, paper for cutting out "stones" that can be written on and hung on the wall, etc.) Encourage the learners to use them to remind themselves to praise God for how His power has been shown to them, but also to help them share it with others.
- D. Begin memorizing Psalm 145:10-12. Allow the learners to work alone or in small groups to complete Lesson 27 in the Discovery Journal.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 28 TWO BATTLES, TWO OUTCOMES

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Joshua 6:1-25; 7; 8:1

Supporting Passages: Joshua 21:43-45; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 6:10-18; Prov. 28:13

Memory Verse: Psalm 145:11

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- When the Israelites showed reverence for the Lord and followed His instructions, things went well for them in battle.
- Jericho was clearly conquered by the power of God.
- Rahab and her family were rescued as promised.
- When even one person failed to obey God's specific commands, God withdrew His power and they failed in battle.
- In addition to reminding us again of how serious sin is in the eyes of God, this incident also illustrates how one person's sin can bring negative consequences on the whole group.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. create a chart comparing the battle of Jericho with the battle of Ai.
2. acknowledge that God sees and knows everything: it is impossible to hide anything from Him.
3. acknowledge that a person's sin has negative consequences that impact others as well.
4. recognize they are in a spiritual battle that requires faith in God's power.
5. acknowledge and confess their sins and give thanks for God's mercy.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review 1 Cor. 10:13, Luke 6:27-28 and Ps. 145:10-12. Have someone review what it has taken for the Israelites to finally arrive in the land God promised Abraham. Remind the learners that God was building a holy nation of people to fulfill His special purposes for the whole earth, just as He promised Abraham. According to the Rescue Plan that He has been carrying out, it is time for God to fulfill His promise to give this nation their own land. It's a great blessing, but also a great responsibility. This will be their homeland for the rest of history. It will be the place where God's glory will dwell and from which His Kingdom will eventually spread to the rest of the world. But every day is a test of whether the people will obey the Source of their hope and power. When they do, things go well for them, but when they don't, they regret it.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Have you ever heard someone say, "It's only wrong if you get caught"? What do you think about that? Do you agree or disagree? Why? In our story today we will hear about someone who found out that you can't hide anything from God.*



## Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit

### Tell the Story

Try to tell the story from memory, but consider reading word-for-word the dialogue.

### Retell the Story

Have volunteers retell the story to the group or have each person tell the story to a partner.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *This story includes two very different battles. Make a chart comparing them. (See Resources.)*
2. *What do you observe about the first battle? What was the people's part? What was God's part? How do you think the people felt when that battle was over?*
3. *What was the warning Joshua had given them about the devoted things? (See 6:18.) Describe how Joshua felt before he understood why they lost the battle at Ai. Do you hear any wrong-thinking expressed in his prayer in 7:7-9? How do you think he felt after God explained to him why they lost?*
4. *What can you say about what Achan did? What do you suppose he was thinking? Do you think he knew God very well? Why or why not?*
5. *How many people died because of what Achan did? How do you feel about his punishment? Why do you think the punishment needed to be so harsh?*
6. *Achan finally did confess his sin, but only after he had been identified as the culprit. Read Prov. 28:13. Do you think his fate might have been different if he had truly repented for what he had done and confessed to Joshua as soon as they lost the battle? Explain your answer.*
7. *What can we learn about God from this story? What about ourselves? Are we ever like Achan? Tell about a time when you did something similar.*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *Joshua and the Israelites faced many battles in Canaan, but by God's power, they went on to conquer the land (see Josh. 21:43-45). Today the battle for the growth of God's Kingdom is being fought not in a physical battle, but a spiritual one. Read 1 Pet. 5:8-9 and discuss it. According to this passage, who is the enemy?*
- B. *From the beginning, Satan has been trying to keep God's Rescue Plan from reaching the world. How? (Possible answers: wounding God's people with discouragement, deceiving them with lies, and distracting them with temptations, trying to destroy their faith, etc.) Now read and discuss Eph. 6:10-18. Make a poster showing the kind of "armor" and "weapons" we need to wage this war. Label them and then discuss how you think each piece would help in the battle against Satan.*
- C. Complete Lesson 28 in the Discovery Journal. Continue memorizing Ps. 145:10-12.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 29 GOD SENDS JUDGES TO RESCUE ISRAEL

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 1; 3:1-10, 19-21

Supporting Passages: Judges 2:6-19; Deuteronomy 4:9, 10, 25-28

Memory Verse: Psalm 145:12

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- After Joshua died, the Israelites failed to pass the knowledge of the LORD on to their children so succeeding generations began serving the gods of the neighboring nations.
- The LORD was angry with them for rejecting Him, and sent enemies to punish them.
- God never stopped loving them, so whenever they were suffering oppression, He would send a judge to lead and rescue them, but when the judge died, they would return to their wickedness and rebellion against the LORD.
- Finally, in answer to a woman's prayer, God raised up someone who could lead the nation in the way of the LORD: Samuel.
- In faith, Hannah made a vow and when God granted her request, she faithfully kept it.
- God prepared Samuel for a very important ministry: at a young age he learned to hear and obey the voice of God.
- Samuel was recognized by Israel not only as a judge but as a prophet of the LORD.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. understand the importance of passing on God's Story.
2. realize the great advantage it is to have the written Word of God.
3. understand the importance of translating the Bible into every language.
4. demonstrate a desire to share God's Story by making a plan to do so.
5. recognize that God sometimes allows difficulty in our lives because, in the end, it will accomplish His overall plan.
6. Learners will desire to hear and recognize the voice of the LORD.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Have the learners review what they have learned about God so far in the Story. What seems to be important to Him? Review 2 Cor. 12:9, Jam. 1:2-3 and Ps. 145:10-12.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Demonstrate the difficulty of passing truth from one generation to another. Choose one of the earliest stories from *Exploring God's Story* and ask a learner to tell it from memory. Was it difficult? How much did the story change? What important details were lost? Explain that this was the problem of the Israelites. Moses knew how forgetful the people were and warned them about it. Read Deut. 4:9-10. Ask: *What did the Israelites need to do?* Now read vv. 25-28. *What did Moses say would happen if they failed to pass on what they had seen and heard?* Summarize the details of Jud. 2:6-19 as an introduction to the story of Samuel. Explain that the period of the judges lasted

between 300 and 400 years so it's not surprising that the Israelites forgot their history. The 15 judges were to be a reminder to each generation that God had not forgotten them.

### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

The story from 1 Sam. 1 and 3 would be a good one for a group of learners to present as a drama. Assign it ahead of time so they can prepare.

#### **Retell the Story**

Have learners retell the story as they understood it. Fill in any important details that might have been missed.

#### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *What observations can you make about the Israelites during the time of the Judges? Had God given up on His people? How do you know? Had everyone forgotten the LORD? How do you know?*
2. *Describe Hannah's relationship with Elkanah and Peninnah. Compare Hannah to the other barren women we have learned about in God's Story (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel). Do you think Hannah's barrenness was a necessary part of God's plan? Explain.*
3. *Girls: if you were Hannah, how would you feel when Eli accused you of being drunk? How would you feel when you found out you were pregnant? How would you feel when it was time to make good on your promise to the LORD and take Samuel to Eli? Do you think you would have been able to keep your promise?*
4. *How would you describe Samuel? What was God doing in this story?*

#### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Is Moses' warning for us, too? How can we pass on God's Story? To whom?*
- B. *What big advantage do we have today for passing the Story from one generation to the next that the Israelites did not have? (The Bible, Bible study materials, Bible story books and videos, etc.) How did it happen that we have all these? (Once the Story was written down, it was passed from one people group to the next by Bible translators. We would not have the Bible in our language if it had not been translated by others. Bible translation, a necessary part of fulfilling Christ's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, is still happening today in places that do not yet have God's Story in their language. If possible, show a video about Bible translation, such as [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FE3xnhd\\_Pls](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FE3xnhd_Pls) or [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N\\_xJ1TDq1V0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_xJ1TDq1V0).*
- C. *Finish memorizing Ps. 145:10-12. Complete Lesson 29 in the Discovery Journal. You may want to assign a judge to each small group to complete the assignment. Afterward, have the groups share and compare what they learned.*

#### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 30 THE LAST JUDGE AND THE FIRST KING

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 8; 10:17-25; 15:1-31

Supporting Passage: 1 Samuel 13:1-14

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 15:22

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Samuel served as a respected prophet, priest and judge over Israel his whole life.
- When he was old, the people began asking for a king like the nations around them.
- Though this was rejection of God as their King and Defender and would have many disadvantages, God allowed it and selected Saul.
- Unfortunately, Saul was not committed to obeying the word of the LORD: he acted foolishly, and when confronted, he defended his behavior.
- Saul learned that obedience is better than trying to appease God through sacrifice.
- Though he remained in office, God removed the monarchy from Saul's family line.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. understand that, in demanding a king, the Israelites were rejecting God as their king.
2. consider which is better: to be ruled by God or by a human.
3. demonstrate that they understand the meaning of Samuel's admonition in 1 Sam. 15:22 by explaining it in their own words.
4. recognize ways people try to appease God through sacrifices today.
5. repent of their tendency to sin intentionally with the hope of buying forgiveness afterward.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

*Discuss the time of the judges. What do you think it would have been like to live during that time? What made it difficult? What might have made it better? (Help the learners imagine how difficult it would be to function as a nation without an organized government or modern forms of communication.)* Review Ps. 27:1 and Ps. 145:1-12.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Perhaps you've heard the saying "It's easier to ask forgiveness than to get permission." What does that really mean? What do you think God would have to say about that attitude? Our story today is about someone who tried that philosophy and found it didn't work out too well.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Prepare to tell the story yourself or assign 7 readers: Samuel, Saul, the LORD, 3 to read together to represent the elders/Israelites, and a narrator.

### Retell the Story

Ask volunteers to retell the story.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *What was Samuel's concern about the people's request for a king? Why did they want a king? What would be the disadvantages of having a king? Which would you prefer: to be ruled by God or by a person? Why?*
2. *Why do you think God allowed them to have a king?*
3. *Describe Saul. What were your first impressions of Saul when God chose him to be the king? How did your opinion of him change by the end of the story?*
4. *What were Saul's first responses when Samuel accused him of disobeying the LORD? (Note that first he tried to blame it on the soldiers, and then he tried to make it sound like what they had done was actually good, as though all along they had been planning to sacrifice all the animals to the LORD.)*
5. *Explain 15:22 in your own words. What important lesson was Samuel trying to teach Saul? When did Saul finally confess his sin and beg for forgiveness? (Note that it was after Samuel had already told him God had rejected him as king. Up to that point he had just made excuses.)*
6. *This was not the first time that Saul had displeased the LORD. (If you have time, read and discuss 1 Sam. 13:1-14. Saul disobeyed Samuel's instructions and took on himself the role of priest, trying to gain God's favor in his own way.) What lasting consequence did Saul suffer because he did not fully obey the LORD's command? Compare Saul's sin and the consequences with Achan's sin and the consequences. (Note that God allowed Saul to reign for many years, but the monarchy was removed from his family line. In our next lesson we will learn about the one God chose to take Saul's place as king—the one through whom God would continue His Rescue Plan.)*
7. *What other observations can you make about this story? What have we learned about God? People?*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *Tell your own story: Are you like Saul? Have you ever "played the blame game" to get the focus off yourself? Or pretended that something you did was actually a good thing when in reality it was wrong and your motives were also wrong?*
- B. *We don't sacrifice animals as burnt offerings to the LORD like the Israelites did, but in what ways do we try to appease or manipulate God now? In other words, what "sacrifices" do people make to try to gain God's forgiveness or blessing after they have intentionally sinned? How do you think God feels about that?*
- C. Memorize 1 Sam. 15:22. Complete Lesson 30 in the Discovery Journal.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 31 DAVID: MAN WITH A HERO'S HEART

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Sam. 7:1-16; 12:1-14

Supporting Passages: 1 Samuel 17; 18:6-12; 2 Sam. 5:1-4; 11; Ps.51

Memory Verse: Psalm 51:16-17

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Outward appearance is not as important as what God sees on the inside.
- David's confidence was in God and he gave God the glory for his victories.
- Many years passed between the time David was anointed and when he became king.
- God promised David an everlasting kingdom.
- Even godly people sometimes fail: David gave in to sexual temptation and in trying to cover up his sin, he committed murder.
- When confronted, he did not try to defend himself; rather he confessed and repented.
- God forgave David's sin but the consequences remained.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that God is more interested in the condition of our hearts than in our outward appearance.
2. find evidence that David's heart was devoted to God.
3. discover that David receive God's promise of a permanent kingdom.
4. acknowledge that even those most devoted to God need His forgiveness and mercy.
5. compare David's response to Saul's when confronted with their sin.
6. desire a heart that is devoted to God.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review Rom. 3:23-25a and 1 Sam. 15:22. *Up to this point in God's story, to whom had God promised an everlasting inheritance of blessing? (See Gen. 17:7-8, 26:3-4, 28:13-14 if needed for review.) What had the descendents of these men inherited so far? (The promised land of Canaan; they had multiplied greatly.)*

#### **Engage the Learners**

*When you apply for a job and go for an interview, what are some of the things the employer is looking for? When the people elect a president, what qualities do they look for? How about "pop stars?" What are their most important qualities? Today we will find out how Samuel goes about finding someone to replace Saul as the king of Israel.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Tell the story from 1 Sam. 16:1-13 first and discuss question 1. Hopefully the learners are somewhat familiar with the story of David and Goliath because it won't be fully

included in this lesson. However, it should be mentioned to help illustrate David's heart for God. After briefly summarizing 1 Sam. 17 and 18:6-12, explain that after many years, Saul was killed in battle and the people put David on the throne. Nathan's prophecy in 2 Sam. 7 shows the next step in God's Story: God's promise to David. Explain that, even though David loved God and was the best king Israel ever had, he was not perfect. He committed adultery and eventually had a man killed in an effort to cover up his sin! Tell what happened when God confronted him through Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. 12:1-14).

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Explain how Samuel went about choosing the next king. According to the LORD's word to Samuel in v. 7, what does God look at when choosing a person for an important position? What does that mean? What does the heart represent?*
2. *David was unlike his brothers and he was unlike any of the other soldiers in the army of Israel. Read what David said to their giant enemy, Goliath, in 1 Sam. 17:45-47. What does that tell you about David's heart?*
3. *David was a great warrior and became a national hero. He was a good king and brought peace to the land. Once the wars were over and he was settled in his palace, what was David concerned about? What did he want to do? Why? What was God's response?*
4. *What did God promise to David? What does it remind you of? Has this promise been fulfilled? Does Israel have a descendent on the throne of Israel today?*
5. *Read the words of the angel to Mary found in Luke 1:31-33. Who is the descendent of David mentioned here? In future lessons we will see how King Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this promise.*
6. *What was the story that Nathan told David? What was the meaning of the story? How did David respond? Compare the responses of David and Saul when they were confronted with their sins. What does this tell us about their hearts?*
7. *Do you see yourself in David? What can we learn of God through David's story?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. Draw a large heart on the board or piece of paper. Give small slips of paper to the learners and have them write words on them that describe the heart of a true hero. Have them attach their words to the heart.
- B. Discuss in small groups: *What does God see when he looks at our hearts? What would we like Him to see?*
- C. Read Psalm 51, written by David after he was confronted about his sin. *What part of this psalm speaks most to you? What part would you like to pray to God?* (Encourage the learners to take turns praying the part they chose out loud.)
- D. Begin memorizing Ps. 51:16-17. Complete Lesson 31 in the Discovery Journal.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 32 SOLOMON: THE WISE AND FOOLISH KING

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: 1 Kings 2:1-4; 3:1-14; 11:1-13

Supporting Passages: 1 Kings 4:29-34; 9:1-9; 11: 26-43; Prov. 1:1-7

Memory Verse: Proverbs 1:7

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Before he died, David passed God's promise and the throne on to Solomon.
- Solomon loved and obeyed the LORD and asked for wisdom to rule the nation well.
- God was pleased with Solomon's request and blessed him with wisdom and much more besides: he became famous and well respected by the surrounding nations.
- Solomon had a major weakness that led him to forsake the LORD for other gods.
- Solomon's sin was detestable to God and the judgment was severe: most of the kingdom would be removed from Solomon's family line, but because of God's promise to David, the tribe of Judah would remain with his descendants.
- The punishment was delayed until the time of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and from then on, the kingdom was divided: Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. see that God doesn't hold a grudge; His forgiveness is complete.
2. understand that God was pleased with Solomon's request because it honored Him.
3. commit to marrying a believer.
4. propose strategies for remaining faithful to the LORD throughout life.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review James 1:2-4, 1 Sam. 15:22 and Ps. 51:16-17. Review the incident of David and Bathsheba. *What were the consequences of David's sin? Do you think God completely forgave David? In today's story we will see evidence that He did.*

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Do you remember how many wives Jacob had? His family life was complicated! David had twice as many wives and had serious conflict in his family, too. Marrying princesses was part of foreign policy for David's son, Solomon, but they led to his downfall. Guess how many wives Solomon had. (Have the learners write down their guesses. When you get to the part of the story found in 1 Kings 11:3, check to see who was closest.)*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

David had many sons, but the one he chose to succeed him as king was Solomon, the second son of Bathsheba. God approved of the choice and blessed him greatly. Read David's charge to Solomon in 1 Kings 2:1-4, then tell the story from 3:1-14 and



summarize the description of Solomon's fame from 4:29-34. Explain that he wrote 3 books of the Bible known as Wisdom Literature: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. For most of his life, he was a very good king. Read God's word to Solomon from 9:1-9. Tell the story from 11:1-13, then briefly explain that because of his sin, Solomon lost 10 of the 12 tribes to another ruler. However, because of His promise to David, God allowed 2 tribes, Judah and Benjamin, to remain under the rule of his family line. From the time of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, the Kingdom of Israel was divided. The 10 northern tribes were known as Israel and the 2 southern tribes were called Judah.

### **Retell the Story**

Have volunteers recall what Solomon did that was wise and the consequences of his choices. Have others tell what he did that was foolish and the consequences of that.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *David and Bathsheba should have never been together. David committed adultery with her and had her husband killed so they could be together. But David truly repented of his sin. Read 2 Sam. 12:24. What does it tell you about God that he loved and accepted and blessed their second son, Solomon? If God can forgive something like that, what does it mean for any sin you or I might commit?*
2. *Why did Solomon ask for wisdom? Do you ever feel the same need? Why did God granted so much more than Solomon asked for?*
3. *Was God's promise to Solomon clear? What would happen if Solomon walked faithfully with the LORD? What would happen if he or his descendants turned away from the LORD to other gods?*
4. *Why had God commanded the Israelites not to intermarry with the nations around them? What does this suggest to us about whom we should marry? (Help the learners understand that it's not wrong to marry someone from another nationality, but it is wrong to marry someone who could pull you away from following the LORD. You may want to refer to 2 Cor. 6:14.)*
5. *Do you think Solomon's punishment was just? Why? Was it merciful? How? For whose sake was the punishment less than it could have been?*
6. *What is God doing in this part of His Story? Do you think Solomon's sin ruined God's Rescue Plan? Why or why not?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *If God said to you, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you," what would you say? Why? Do you think God would be pleased? If you were president of the Philippines, how would you answer God's question? Would your answer be different? If so, why?*
- B. *Solomon's wisdom did not keep him from turning away from God. What's more important than wisdom? Discuss ways to keep our hearts faithful to the LORD.*
- C. Memorize Prov. 1:7. Complete Lesson 32 in the Discovery Journal.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 33 THE PROPHETS SPEAK OF JUDGMENT AND HOPE

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: 2 Kings 17:21-23; Jer. 7:1-15; 2 Chron. 36:9-21; Jer. 29:1, 4-14;  
Jer. 31:1-3, 31-34; Jer. 33:14-16

Supporting Passages: Luke 22:19-20

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 29:11

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Beginning with Jeroboam, all the kings of Israel disobeyed the LORD and led the people to reject the God of their fathers.
- Judah had several good kings, but many were wicked and led the people astray.
- God sent prophets to proclaim dire warnings of judgment, but also a message of hope if they would repent and the promise of a brighter future.
- Because they refused to obey and honor the LORD, God fulfilled His promise of judgment: first Israel and then Judah were conquered and taken away into captivity.
- Even severe punishment had a limit and a purpose: after 70 years God would restore His people to their homeland and change their hearts.
- God's love for His people is everlasting and His plans are for their good.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. acknowledge God's patience and love as well as His anger and justice.
2. understand that God allows consequences for sin in order to change us.
3. understand that the New Covenant through the blood of Christ is to give us a new heart that truly knows the LORD.
4. believe that, because God has kept His promises, we can know He will keep the promises that are yet to be fulfilled.
5. desire to seek God and His plan for their lives with all their heart.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Review what turned Solomon's heart away from the LORD and the things that tend to turn our hearts away from the LORD. *What happened to the nation of Israel because of Solomon's sin?* Review 1 Cor. 10:13, Ps. 51:16-17 and Prov. 1:7.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Have you ever tried to warn someone of something but they didn't listen? What happened? How did you feel?*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Use 2 Kings 17:21-23 to summarize what happened to the northern tribes: from the first to the last, over a period of hundreds of years, every king of Israel led the people away

from the LORD until finally God allowed the Assyrians to conquer them, just as He had warned through the prophets. Explain that the southern tribes of Judah observed this, and though some of their kings were good and God sent many prophets to remind and warn them, they too strayed from the LORD. Have one of the learners “preach” God’s message to Judah from Jer. 7:1-15. Use 2 Chron. 36:9-21 to show what happened because the people would not listen to the prophets. Have someone read the remaining passages from Jeremiah to show that God predicted more than judgment and doom; He also gave a message of hope for the future.

### **Retell the Story**

Have the learners summarize what happened to Israel and Judah and tell in their own words the message of God through Jeremiah.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *In Jer. 7:1-15, God accused the people of misplacing their trust. What were the people depending on for safety? (Facilitator: note that they were trusting in the Temple of the LORD, assuming that God would always protect His holy Temple.) What was God asking them to do instead of relying on the Temple to save them?*
2. *According to the story in 2 Chron. 36:15-16, how did the people respond to God’s messengers, the prophets? After hundreds of years of warnings, what did God finally allow to happen because of their persistent rebellion?*
3. *What hope did God give to the people in Jeremiah 29:4-14? What did He promise to do? What were the people supposed to do while they were in captivity? Why?*
4. *What emotions do we hear God express through the messages of the prophet Jeremiah? According to Jeremiah 31:3, what emotion was in the heart of God from the beginning? How is God’s love described in verse 3?*
5. *In Jer. 31:31-34, the LORD speaks of a new covenant. Why was a new covenant needed? What would it do? Read what Jesus said in Luke 22:19-20. What is the basis for the new covenant?*
6. *To what reign do you suppose the LORD was referring in 33:14-16? Do you think this prophecy has been fulfilled? (Facilitator: note that this prophecy was partly fulfilled when Christ came and established God’s Kingdom, but His physical reign in Jerusalem is yet to come. See the Discovery Journal exercise.)*
7. *What is God doing in this part of His Story? What was the purpose of the captivity? What was His overarching goal for His people?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *What can you say about the character of God? About the human heart? What similarities do you see between the people of those days and people today in the way they respond to God’s message? What can we do about it?*
- B. Discuss whether Jer. 29:11-13 applies to us today. Begin memorizing it.
- C. Optional: Allow the learners to work with a partner to complete the Discovery Activity found in Resources. Complete Lesson 33 in the Discovery Journal.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 34 GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO OTHER NATIONS

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Daniel 3; 6

Supporting Passages: Daniel 1; 2:26-28, 47-48; 4:29-37

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 29:12

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God had a purpose for His people, even in captivity.
- Through the testimony and firm convictions of those who remained faithful to Him, God revealed Himself to the nations where His people were taken captive.
- God performed mighty miracles for Daniel, Hananiah, Meshael and Azariah that proved His sovereignty to the Babylonians, Medes and Persians.
- God has ways of changing the hardest heart for His glory.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that God is with His people, wherever they are.
2. recognize that God uses the faithful to glorify Him before unbelievers.
3. acknowledge that God will do amazing things to reveal Himself to people.
4. gain a desire to honor God through the testimony of a faithful life.
5. decide on a plan to cultivate faith in their own lives.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

If you assigned the Discovery Activity from Lesson 33, check the answers and discuss the questions at the bottom of the page. If not, ask the learners to give an example of a time when experiencing a punishment or negative consequence from sin brought about a positive result in their life. Review Psalm 145:10-12 and Jer. 29:11-13.

#### **Engage the Learners**

(Note to facilitator: you may want to do some on-line research of the persecution of Christians in North Korea today.) *Imagine that North Korea conquers the Philippines. It is announced that Christianity is outlawed. Churches are burned and priests and pastors are killed. Bibles and all Christian literature are confiscated. The only way to do business is by joining the Communist party and vowing allegiance to the “Supreme Leader.” People caught praying and worshipping together are publicly tortured and executed. (This happens today in North Korea.) If this happened and you were asked to renounce your faith and bow before the “Supreme Leader” or die, what would you do?*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Read Daniel 1 and 2 on your own and introduce the story by giving a summary of the background of Daniel, Hananiah, Meshael and Azariah (whose names were changed to

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego). Mention how Daniel was able, by God's power, to interpret a troubling dream for King Nebuchadnezzar. Include Daniel's testimony in 2:17-18 and the king's response in 2:47-49. *Tell* the story by summarizing 3:1-15, then *read* the response of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in 3:16-18. *Tell* what happened to them from the rest of chapter 3. *Read* the king's response in v. 28. Introduce Daniel 6 by explaining that, during the time of Nebuchadnezzar's son, Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians and Darius the Mede was king. Daniel was now serving in his administration. *Tell* the story by summarizing 6:1-18 then *read* verses 19-27.

### **Retell the Story**

Ask a group of learners to dramatize the story of what happened to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Have another group dramatize the story of what happened to Daniel. This can just be impromptu, unrehearsed, as they remember it from the story.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Was God limited to the land of Israel? Where did He show up in today's story?*
2. *How would you describe Daniel and his three friends? Do you remember another young man from God's Story who served a foreign king? In what ways are Joseph and Daniel similar?*
3. *The king tried to convert those young men into loyal Babylonians by teaching them the language, educating them with the literature of Babylon, treating them to the best of his food and wine and giving them high positions in his service. Did it work? Explain your answer.*
4. *It seemed that, after Daniel interpreted his dream, King Nebuchadnezzar had recognized the sovereignty of the LORD over all other gods and kings (see 2:47). But apparently it wasn't a true faith. How do we know this? Based on his demands in chapter 3, who would you say was Nebuchadnezzar's god?*
5. *Even after his expression of reverence when God rescued Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Nebuchadnezzar forgot again about who was truly the LORD of all. But God was not finished with Nebuchadnezzar. Read Daniel 4:29-37. What can we learn about God from this? (Note that God worked dramatically to display Himself as the Most High God before Nebuchadnezzar and all the Babylonians. They were part of His plan, even though they were not Israelites.)*
6. *Imagine that you witnessed these miraculous rescues from the furnace and lions. How would you respond?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *What can we learn from the lives of Daniel and his three friends? What did they believe? What disciplines did they observe that strengthened their faith?*
- B. *Is there something about those men that you would like to see in your own life? What can you do to make that happen? Write your action plan in your Discovery Journal.*
- C. Complete Lesson 34 in the Discovery Journal. If there's time, allow them to share with their small group if they wish. Continue memorizing Jer. 29:11-13.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 35 RETURN TO ISRAEL

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Ezra 1:1-8; 7:10-28; Neh. 1; 2:1-8; 6:15-16

Supporting Passages: Mal. 3:1-3

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 29:11-13

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Prophecies were fulfilled when, 70 years after their captivity began, the kings of Persia (previously Babylon) began allowing the Israelites to return to their homeland.
- The Persian kings provided leaders, provisions and protection so the people could rebuild the Temple, the walls of Jerusalem and a new life back in their homeland.
- Among those who returned were Ezra, who had carefully studied the Law and knew God's expectations, and Nehemiah, a man of faith and action.
- Through the prophet Malachi, God reminded the people of His expectations and of the messenger who would bring the new covenant.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize that God is capable of influencing the hearts of rulers in order to fulfill his promises.
2. recognize that God uses different sorts of people to accomplish His purposes—not everyone is called to be a preacher but we are all called to serve Him.
3. desire to be used by God in what He is doing in the world.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

*What prophecies have we seen fulfilled to this point in the Story? (Both Israel and Judah have been conquered, devastated and the survivors taken into captivity.) Recall God's promise through Jeremiah's prophecy. According to Jeremiah 29:10, when would He bring the people back to their homeland? Review Jeremiah 29:11-13, Psalm 27:1 and Psalm 51:16-17.*

#### **Engage the Learners**

Divide the learners into two or more groups. Have a contest to see who can build a sturdy (safe) human pyramid the fastest using all of their members. Afterward, discuss why the winning team was able to finish first (size, strength, strategy, leadership, etc.)

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Assign in advance to different learners the following passages to be read while you are telling the story: (1) Ezz. 1:2-8; (2) Ezz. 7:11-26; (3) Neh. 1:5-10; (4) Neh. 2:1-8.

*When the 70 years was over, God moved King Cyrus to send the people back to their homeland. (Call on reader 1.) Many Israelites (now called Jews) returned to Jerusalem*

*and began rebuilding the temple. A few years later, King Artaxerxes sent out a similar proclamation. (Call on reader 2.) Ezra praised God for this provision, gathered people and supplies and went to Jerusalem to teach the people and restore the temple worship ceremonies as written in the Law of Moses. A few years after that, also during the reign of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, an Israelite (Jew) who worked as the king's cupbearer, got bad news from the homeland (summarize Neh. 1:1-4). (Call on readers 3 and 4.) Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, inspected the condition of the wall, skillfully planned the reconstruction, organized the people. In spite of huge opposition from their enemies, they rebuilt the entire wall of Jerusalem in just 52 days! Conclude by reading Neh. 6:16.*

### **Retell the Story**

Have the learners retell the story by drawing 5 large circles on the board. Write one name in each circle: Ezra, Nehemiah, Cyrus, Artaxerxes and God. Have the learners write in the circles whatever they can remember about that person and what they did.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Cyrus and Artaxerxes were Kings of the Persian Empire. What do you find unusual or remarkable about their proclamations? According to Ezra 1:2, what was King Cyrus's motivation for sending the people back to their homeland?*
2. *What aspect of Jewish life did King Artaxerxes seem most interested in restoring? What seems to be his motive for restoring worship at the LORD's temple in Jerusalem (see Ezra 7:23)? What did Artaxerxes seem to believe about God?*
3. *Read Ezra 7:10. What was Ezra passionate about? What did he go to Jerusalem to do? Nehemiah was a competent, high-ranking servant in the king's court. What was he passionate about? What did he go to Jerusalem to do?*
4. *Both Ezra and Nehemiah eagerly did what God had placed on their hearts and prepared them to do. What do you think: was Ezra's work more important or pleasing to God than Nehemiah's? Explain your answer.*
5. *Based on what we hear in his prayer in Neh. 1:5-11, what did Nehemiah believe about God? According to both Ezra and Nehemiah, who was responsible for making these kings favorable toward their requests (Ezra 1:1, 7:27; Neh. 2:8)? What does this part of the Story tell us about God?*
6. *Around this time, God sent the prophet Malachi to once again remind the people that sin brings judgment but obedience brings blessing. He also reminded them of something else. Read Mal. 3:1-3. To whom do you think Malachi is referring?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *The Persian kings, Ezra and Nehemiah all saw that God was doing something during their time, and they were willing to join Him. They all had different roles and responsibilities. What is God doing in our time? How can we join Him? What preparations do we need to make in order to do so? Ask Him to show you.*
- B. *Complete Lesson 35 in the Discovery Journal. Finish memorizing Jer. 29:11-13.*

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## **36 THE RESCUE BEGINS: JESUS IS BORN!**

### **ON YOUR OWN**

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Luke 1:26-35, 37-38; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 2:22-40

Supporting Passages: Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 1:46-55; John 1:1-5, 9-14

Memory Verse: John 1:14

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- The time had come for God to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David and the things He had foretold through the prophets about the One who was to come.
- God selected a humble young lady through whom He would fulfill His promises.
- Both Mary and Joseph willingly submitted to God's amazing Rescue Plan.
- God used angelic messengers and some godly, old people to make it clear that this Baby was indeed the Promised One.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. recognize the evidence that Jesus was indeed the One God had promised since the beginning of His Story.
2. recognize the significance of Jesus' birth: God's Rescue Plan involved coming to live with us!
3. be ready to receive Him by believing what the prophets and angels claimed about who He was—the Messiah, the long-awaited Savior, Immanuel.

### **WITH THE LEARNERS**

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Read Matthew 1:1 aloud, then ask the learners to look at Jesus' ancestors in Matt. 1:2-17. Ask them to find names they recognize from God's Story and tell briefly something that they remember about that person. Review John 1:12, John 3:16 and Jer. 29:11-13.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Use the activity for this lesson found in Resources.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Assign segments of the story to four learners in advance and coach them as they prepare to tell their part of the story: (1) Luke 1:26-35, 37-38; (2) Matt. 1:18-25; (3) Luke 2:22-35; (4) Luke 2:36-40. Introduce the story by saying: *Since the prophecy of Malachi, 400 years had passed and Israel had fallen under Roman rule. It was time for God to put His Rescue Plan in motion. This is how it happened.*

#### **Retell the Story**

Allow 4 learners to retell the parts of the story from the perspective of the character involved, as if they were Mary, Joseph, Simeon or Anna telling what happened.



### Guide the Discussion

1. *Was there anything in this telling of the birth of Jesus that was new or that you hadn't noticed before? Anything that was of particular interest to you?*
2. *How would you describe the way Mary became pregnant? (Miraculous, unique—nothing like this ever happened before or since.) Mary was shocked, but she knew the prophecies and that, through her, God was fulfilling His promise to Abraham (as evident in her song of praise, Luke 1:46-55). What was her response to the angel? Read Luke 1:46-49. How would you describe Mary's attitude?*
3. *What have we learned about Joseph? What kind of man was he? (Facilitator: make sure the learners understand that, under the Law God gave through Moses, Joseph had every right to break the engagement when he discovered Mary was pregnant by someone other than himself. Help the learners see that Joseph was such a kind and merciful man that he did not want to shame or hurt Mary, so he was trying to figure out a way to keep the break-up quiet. He was also submissive and obedient to God—he did what the angel said to do—and a man of self-control—he did not have sex with his new wife until after the baby was born.)*
4. *Describe Simeon. What does the story say he was waiting for (Luke 2:25)? What does that tell us about him? (He knew the prophecies and believed God's promises.) Look again at Simeon's prophecy, Luke 2:29-32. Had this child come to save Israel only? What do you think he meant by his words to Mary in verses 34-35?*
5. *Describe Anna. Once she had met Jesus, what did she do (v. 38)? Why? Read Luke 2:15-18. What did the shepherds do once they had seen Jesus? (See v. 11 to find out what the angel told them about him.)*
6. *In your opinion, are Simeon and Anna important to the Story? Explain. Why do you think Luke included them in his account? What would you say is the main point of today's part of God's Story?*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *Since Adam and Eve's sin, God had been pursuing the people He had created, but most of them turned away from Him. We've seen that there were some, however, who were eagerly anticipating the arrival of the Promised One. Read John 1:1-5, 9-14. Compare Jesus with the prophets who had spoken for God in the past: in what way was He the same (see v. 11)? In what way was He unique (see v. 1)? What could Jesus do for those who received him that no prophet could do (see v. 12)?*
- B. *Are you one of those who has rejected Jesus, or one who has received Him? According to v. 12, how does a person receive Him? What does that mean, to believe on His name? (Help the learners remember some of the names for Jesus that were mentioned in the Story and what those names actually mean. Do they believe that He is the Savior the prophets and angels foretold?) Who needs to hear about this?*
- C. Complete Lesson 36 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize John 1:14.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 37 JESUS DECLARES HIS IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Luke 4:16-21, 38-44; John 10:7-10, 14-16, 24-33

Supporting Passages: John 3:16-17

Memory Verse: John 3:17

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Jesus publicly declared himself as the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. 61:1-2).
- Jesus fulfilled the prophecy by healing all kinds of illnesses and disabilities, freeing people from bondage to sin and demons and by preaching the good news of the Kingdom wherever He went.
- Jesus healed people, but said the reason he was sent was to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God.
- He came to lay down his life in order to give his “sheep” eternal life.
- Jesus said His sheep are the ones who believe in and follow Him.
- Jesus infuriated his enemies by claimed equality with God.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will

1. recognize that Jesus identified Himself as the promised Messiah.
2. believe that Jesus is God’s Son, equal with God the Father.
3. understand that Jesus came to gather people into His Kingdom.
4. believe that Jesus came to earth to die so that His people could have eternal life.
5. share the good news about Jesus and His Kingdom with someone.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask the learners to recall the things that were miraculous about Jesus’ birth. Review John 3:16 and John 1:12, 14 and 29

#### **Engage the Learners**

Write two headings on the board: *Jesus’ Identity* and *Jesus’ Purpose*. Ask the learners to share who they think Jesus is (His identity) and what they think He came to do (His purpose). Ask them to listen closely to the story to try to identify what Jesus had to say about who He was and why He came. Suggest that they take notes so they can remember what they hear.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

*In spite of the miracles surrounding Jesus’ birth, most people didn’t recognize Him as the Son of God or Messiah while He was growing up. It wasn’t until he was about 30 years old that Jesus began showing and telling people who He really was. Tell the story from Luke 4:16-21, 40-44. Ask the learners to report on what they heard about who Jesus is*

and what he came to do. Write their responses on the chart on the board. Proceed to tell the story from the passages in John 10. Again, allow the learners time to report what they heard about Jesus' identity and purpose and write their discoveries on the board.

### **Retell the Story**

Allow the learners to retell the two parts of the story, using the notes on the board to remind them of what they heard.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Who did the Jews believe the prophet Isaiah was writing about in the passage Jesus read? (The Anointed One—the Messiah.) What did Jesus mean when He said the prophecy had been fulfilled?*
2. *According to Isaiah, what did the Anointed One come to do? Did Jesus do those things? (Note that vv. 38-44 give examples of how Jesus fulfilled that prophecy.)*
3. *The demons knew who Jesus was, but it seems He did not want His identity announced by demons. What did they call Him and why did He silence them (Luke 4:41)?*
4. *According to v. 43, what was Jesus' purpose while He was on earth?*
5. *What did Jesus mean when He said He was the gate (John 10:7)? What is He the gate to? According to John 10:10, what did He come to give?*
6. *Jesus compared Himself to a shepherd and people to sheep. What was the Good Shepherd willing to do for His "sheep"? What do you think Jesus meant when He said He had "other sheep who are not of this sheep pen"? Jesus was talking to Jews. By "other sheep," he probably meant Gentiles (non-Jews), because Jesus came to be the Savior of the whole world, not just the Jews (see John 3:16-17).*
7. *What are the characteristics of Jesus' sheep (vv. 25-28)? Note that Jesus' sheep are the ones who believe that He is the Messiah and follow Him. He has given them eternal life and no one can take them from Him.*
8. *What made the Jews so angry that they wanted to stone Jesus? What is the meaning of the word blasphemy? What is the evidence that Jesus was telling the truth about who He was (John 10:25)? What does v. 33 tell us about those Jews who accused Him of blasphemy? We can conclude that they were not Jesus' sheep because they did not believe He was God. They did not accept the good news of the Kingdom, so they were not included in it.*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Think of someone who is not yet included in Jesus' "sheep pen"? Discuss how you could use today's lesson to share the good news of the Kingdom with them. What would you say are the most important points to communicate? Which verses would you share? Pray for each other and the ones with whom you will share the good news. Pray that the Holy Spirit will speak through you and prepare their hearts for the truth.*
- B. Complete Lesson 37 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize John 3:17.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## **38 JESUS INVITES FOLLOWERS TO KINGDOM LIVING**

### **ON YOUR OWN**

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Luke 5:1-11, 8:4-15

Supporting Passages: Luke 9:1-6, 23-24;

Memory Verse: Eph. 2:10

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Jesus began preparing His new disciples to trust and obey Him.
- After demonstrating who He was by His supernatural power, Jesus invited Simon Peter, James and John to join Him in what He was doing.
- Following Jesus requires denying our own desires and expectations and, when necessary, suffering for His sake.
- He taught His disciples what to expect when they shared the message of the Kingdom with others, and then He sent them out to preach the Good News.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. identify with Peter's response to the miraculous catch of fish: amazement, repentance and a desire to follow Jesus.
2. be able to explain the parable of the seed and soil to someone else.
3. desire to be true followers of Jesus Christ.
4. personalize what it means to "deny themselves" and "take up their cross daily."

### **WITH THE LEARNERS**

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask the learners to share what happened when they carried out their Action Plan from Lesson 37. If they have not yet had an opportunity to share, encourage and pray for them. Review Eph. 2:4-9, John 1:14 and John 3:16-17

#### **Engage the Learners**

Have the learners talk about what they know of farming: What does it take to prepare a plot of land for planting? What does the farmer need to do to make sure the seeds will germinate and grow? What circumstances threaten the seeds and young plants that might keep them from yielding a good crop? What can the farmer do to lessen the risks?

Compare the work of a farmer with the work of a pastor: How is helping a crop grow similar to helping a church grow?

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Assign the two parts of this story to two learners so they can prepare in advance to tell the story with expression. Between the two parts of the story, explain that Jesus did a lot of His teaching by telling short stories called parables. A parable is a kind of analogy that uses a simple story about familiar subjects to communicate a deeper spiritual message.

### **Retell the Story**

Have four learners role play the parts of Jesus, Simon Peter, James and John to retell the first part of the story. Have a volunteer retell the parable of the seed and soil and another volunteer tell the meaning of the parable as Jesus explained it.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Describe Simon Peter's initial response when Jesus told him to go out to the deeper water for a catch of fish. What do you suppose he was thinking? Why was that huge catch of fish so amazing? Where do you think all those fish came from?*
2. *Try to imagine yourself in the place of Simon Peter. What was his reaction toward Jesus when he saw the huge number of fish? Why did he react that way? Why did the miracle make him feel so ashamed in Jesus' presence? What do you think Jesus was trying to teach Simon Peter through this event?*
3. *What did Jesus mean when He said, "from now on you will fish for people"? What did Simon Peter, James and John give up in order to follow Jesus? (Their livelihood and their way of life.) Why did they do that? (They now trusted Jesus.)*
4. *Read what Jesus told His followers in Luke 9:23-24. Do you trust Jesus enough to give up your way of life in order to follow Him? In what ways have you already done that? Is there something you still need to let go of?*
5. *Sometime after the fish miracle, Jesus was again teaching a crowd. After he told the parable of the farmer planting seed, Jesus explained to His disciples why He taught in parables. What do you think He meant in Luke 8:10? Why would He want some to understand and some not? (Jesus was explaining that the meaning of the parables was for those whose hearts were open to His message, but not for those who had rejected Him.)*
6. *Discuss the meaning of the parable. Which kind of soil best represents your own heart? Explain. What does it mean to persevere (v. 15)? What do you think Jesus was trying to tell His disciples about life in the Kingdom of God?*
7. *Read Luke 9:1-6. What was the assignment Jesus was giving His disciples? What sorts of things must they deny themselves? Why would the parable of the seed and soil be important for them to understand? What kind of "soil" should they be looking for as they spread the Word of God?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Followers of Jesus need to be ready to give up their own plans if obeying Jesus requires it. We weren't called into God's Kingdom to please ourselves but rather to "bear fruit." According to Eph. 2:10, what were we created for? What are some of those "good deeds" God has given us to do? (One of them is to "fish for people.") What might we need to deny ourselves in order to do that? What "cross" might we need to bear? (Perhaps having a deep concern for others, as Jesus did, yet facing the possibility of being mocked and rejected by some of them, as He was.)*
- B. Complete Lesson 38 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize Eph. 2:10.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 39 JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES FOR HIS DEATH

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: John 13:1-17, 34-35; 14: 1-7, 16-19, 26-27; 15:4-5, 8-14

Supporting Passages: Matt. 20:17-19; John 16:1-4; 17:1-23

Memory Verse: John 13:34-35

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Jesus began talking about His approaching suffering, death and resurrection.
- The disciples did not understand this, so Jesus took time to prepare them alone.
- Jesus set an example for his disciples to follow: what loving one another looks like.
- Jesus explained he was going to leave for awhile but would return for them.
- In the meantime, He would send the Holy Spirit to help them.
- He encouraged them to abide in his love and love one another as he had loved them.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. acknowledge that what Jesus taught His disciples applies to us as well.
2. know that Jesus is the way to eternal life with the Father.
3. understand that loving one another involves action.
4. list practical ways to demonstrate Christ's love to each other.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask: *Has God has shown you anything you need to deny yourself in order to follow Him? Has He shown you any ways to bear fruit for His Kingdom? What happened when you shared your illustration of the seed and soil?* Review Eph. 2:4-10 and Jer. 29:11-13.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Think of a way to tangibly demonstrate servant leadership to your learners such as foot-washing, as Jesus did, or choose something that would equally demonstrate loving-kindness and humility to them. Afterward, ask them how it made them feel.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Prior to the lesson, distribute the following passages to 3 learners so they can prepare to read them: (1) John 14:1-7, (2) John 14:16-19, 26-27; (3) John 15:4-5, 8-14.

Introduce the story: *Jesus knew that the next step in the Rescue Plan would be painful for both Him and His followers. He began telling them that soon they would be going to Jerusalem where He would suffer and die, but three days later, He would be raised to life (Matt. 20:17-19). The disciples were troubled. They couldn't comprehend what He meant. When they got to Jerusalem, Jesus made time to be with just the 12 disciples to help them understand what was about to happen. He also had some final things He wanted to teach them.* Tell the story from John 13:1-17, 34-35.

### Retell the Story

Call on someone to tell what Jesus did. Ask others to recall what Jesus told the disciples after He washed their feet.

### Guide the Discussion

1. On a piece of cartolina or manila paper, write *Jesus' Final Message: Do Not Forget!* Explain that having your feet washed by a servant when you entered someone's house was part of the culture in that time. *What do you think Jesus was demonstrating by washing His disciples' feet? What point was He trying to teach them? What do you think Jesus actually wanted the disciples to do?* Help the learners see that washing each other's feet is just one way of putting love into action. He wanted them to show love for each other in active ways, so that it would be evident to others. Ask one of the learners to write what the group sees as the main point(s) under the heading on the paper.
2. *Jesus knew that, later that same night, He would be arrested and the disciples would run away in fright. He wanted to comfort them.* Call on the first reader to read John 14: 1-7. *In what way were Jesus' words comforting? Where was He going and how could they get there? What are the main things in these verses that Jesus wanted the disciples to remember? Add them to the list.*
3. *Jesus told them He would send them a "secret weapon" that would help them after He was gone.* Have the second reader read John 14:16-19, 26-27. *What was the "secret weapon"? How would the Holy Spirit help them? What are the main things they needed to remember? Add them to the list.*
4. *Jesus warned the disciples that people would hate them and even kill them, but they shouldn't give up their faith (John 16:1-4).* Ask the third reader to read John 15:4-5, 8-14. *What seems to be Jesus' main purpose for His disciples' lives? What did they need to do in order to bear fruit? How were they to remain in Him?* Help the learners understand that Jesus wanted their lives to be fruitful. This would be done by remaining in Him—obeying His command to love one another. He knew this would give them joy even if the rest of the world hated them. *What must the disciples remember? Add to the list.*
5. *Look at the list of points we've written. Do you think Jesus would say these things to us? Which are important for us to remember?* (Keep the list for future use.)

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *If you had to summarize Jesus instructions into one main point, what would it be?*
- B. **Brainstorming:** *Think of ways of humbly serving in today's culture that would be similar to foot-washing in Jesus' time. If you did that for someone, would it communicate Christ's love? What are some other ways Jesus' followers today can show love for each other? What can we do that would show others we belong to Him? Choose at least one of these ways and make a plan to do it.*
- C. Complete Lesson 39 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize John 13:34-35.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 40 DEATH CAN'T STOP THE RESCUE PLAN!

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Luke 24:1-9, 13-39, 45-48; Acts 1:8-11

Supporting Passages: John 18, 19; Acts 1:3-5; Mat. 28:16-20

Memory Verse: Acts 1:8

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Everything happened just as Jesus said it would: he was arrested, tortured, crucified and three days later, raised to life!
- Jesus' followers were still confused about what they had witnessed.
- Before he ascended to heaven, Jesus spent 40 more days with His followers, helping them understand the connection between the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and what they had actually observed.
- Finally, before He ascended to heaven, Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit and commissioned them to take the Good News to every nation.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. demonstrate that they know from Scripture that Jesus is the Savior.
2. be able to explain what is necessary for salvation.
3. be able to testify to what has changed in their life since their salvation.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Allow the learners to share any experiences they had when attempting to apply the Action Plan from Lesson 39. What was the reaction when they intentionally served someone out of love? Review John 3:16-17, Eph. 2:10 and John 13:34-35.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Ask the learners if they know what the world's current population is, approximately. Show them the population growth meter found at <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>. This site has many interesting features that you may wish to explore as an educational activity. Scroll down to the section called "World Population by Religion" to show the learners the large numbers of people who don't know Jesus. Point out that, even in the parts of the world considered "Christian," many are not true Christ-followers.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

*On the same night He had washed the disciples' feet and prayed for them, Jesus was arrested. The next day, He was tortured, killed and, on the third day, raised to life again, just as He had told His followers. His purpose for coming, the heart of the Rescue Plan, had been to shed His blood for the salvation of all who would trust in Him, but now that it had been accomplished, the disciples were still confused. Tell the story from Luke*



24:1-9, 13-39, 45-48. *For forty days after His resurrection, Jesus remained with them and continued to teach them about the Kingdom of God. One day, He told them to stay there in Jerusalem until a very special event that He had been promising them: the coming of the Holy Spirit. Read Acts 1:8-11.*

### **Retell the Story**

Have groups of learners re-enact the three parts of the story from memory: the women at the tomb, the two men meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Jesus appearing to the whole group and then telling them His final words.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Why do you suppose it was so difficult for Jesus' followers to remember what He had told them? (Perhaps because things were turning out so different from what they had expected and their grief was clouding their thinking. A Rescue Plan involving the death of the Rescuer was just more than they could comprehend.) What had they been hoping for (Luke 24:21)? Why did Jesus call them foolish (v. 25)? (Jesus identifies the root problem as unbelief.)*
2. *Notice that Jesus listened to the men first before explaining things to them. Why do you suppose He did that? What was the purpose of His time with them? What can we learn from Jesus' example of teaching? (Note that it's important to let people talk first so it becomes clear what they actually know and believe. Then we can share what God's Word says in order to correct their misunderstandings.)*
3. *What did Jesus say would be preached to all nations (v. 47)? What is the meaning of repentance? What is the result of repentance?*
4. *Why did Jesus stay around for 40 days before ascending to heaven (Acts 1:3)? For what were the disciples to wait in Jerusalem? What would the Holy Spirit enable them to do?*
5. *At that point, no one outside of Israel knew that the Savior of the world had come. What was the next stage in the Rescue Plan? What is the definition of "witness"? What had the disciples and other followers of Jesus witnessed?*
6. *Read Matthew's account of what happened in Mat. 28:16-20. What specific instructions did Jesus give the 11 disciples before He left? (Have the learners add these to the list started during Lesson 39: Jesus' Final Message: Do Not Forget!)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *The disciples were eye-witnesses of Jesus' miracles, teaching, death, and appearances after His resurrection. Can we be witnesses for Christ even though we weren't there? How? What have you learned about Jesus? What is necessary for salvation? (Repentance and belief that Jesus is the One sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world.) How do you know that is true? Has anything changed in your life since you put your faith in Christ? If God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit are evident in your life, you can be a witness. Where will you start?*
- B. Complete Lesson 40 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize Acts 1:8.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 41 THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Acts 2:1-5, 22-24, 32-41; Acts 4:1-20

Supporting Passages: Acts 3; Luke 12:11-12; John 14:26; John 15:26-27

Memory Verse: Acts 2:38

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Just as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came as the disciples waited in Jerusalem.
- It was a dramatic event that drew the attention of the crowds who had gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost, a Jewish feast celebrated 50 days after the Passover.
- Though they were from different language groups, they all heard the message of the disciples in their own language, and thousands responded and were saved.
- The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to be bold witnesses to what they had seen and heard, just as Jesus had promised.
- In spite of persecution by the Jewish leaders, the disciples obeyed Jesus' command to be His witnesses.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will

1. acknowledge the necessity of the Holy Spirit's power for witnessing.
2. expect the Holy Spirit to remind them of what they know about Jesus.
3. desire to be bold witnesses for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Encourage the learners to talk about their experiences of sharing their personal testimony. Ask if they sensed that the Holy Spirit was helping them as they did so. Review *Jesus' Final Message: Do Not Forget!* Review John 1:14, John 13:34-35 and Acts 1:8.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Ask two volunteers to stand before the class. Tell them that they are on trial for their faith in Jesus Christ. Rapidly ask them questions in an intimidating voice, as if it was a crime to be a Christian. If they can't answer immediately, go on to the next question. E.g. *How did you hear about Jesus? What do you know about him? What did he say about himself? Where is he? Are you one of his followers? Why? What has he done for you?* Allow the learners to return to their seats. Ask them how this activity made them feel. Ask the others how they would have felt if they had been the ones questioned.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Assign someone in advance to practice reading with boldness Peter's words in Acts 2:22-24, 32-36, 38-39 and 4:8b-12, 19-20. Introduce the story: *After His ascension, the disciples waited in Jerusalem as Jesus had instructed.* Tell the story from Acts 2:1-14.

Ask “Peter” to read 2:22-24 and 32-36. You tell what happened in v. 37, and then have “Peter” read vv. 38-39. Tell the rest of the story from Acts 2:40-41. *In addition to powerful preaching, the Holy Spirit was enabling the disciples to do many amazing miracles. One day at the Temple, by the Holy Spirit’s power, Peter and John healed a man who had been lame his entire life. A crowd gathered around and Peter took the opportunity to preach again about how Jesus was the one who would fulfill God’s promise to Abraham, that through his descendants, all peoples on earth would be blessed. As Peter was calling the crowd to repentance, he was interrupted.* Tell the story from Acts 4:1-8a. Have “Peter” read 4:8b-12. Tell what happened in vv. 13-18 and have “Peter” finish by reading vv. 19-20.

### **Retell the Story**

Ask a volunteer to describe what happened on the day of Pentecost. Have others tell what they remember of Peter’s message and the result of it, what happened at the Temple and what happened after Peter and John were arrested.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Imagine being in the room with the disciples when the Holy Spirit came. What do you suppose was the purpose for the awesome sights and sounds of that event? Why do you think Jesus had them wait for this before they began preaching?*
2. *Who were the people in the crowd (2:5)? What was the miracle that the crowd observed? Why was this miracle needed? What was God doing?*
3. *What were some of the points that Peter made in his message? What was the central focus of Peter’s preaching? What was the response of the crowd?*
4. *According to Peter in v. 38, how does a person receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?*
5. *Why were the priests and elders so disturbed by what Peter and John were doing? (Note that these are the same leaders who had ordered Jesus’ crucifixion.)*
6. *Read Luke 12:11-12. What had Jesus told his disciples to expect? What made Peter, an ordinary guy, able to boldly answer the top Jewish leaders?*
7. *Review Jesus’ promise in John 14:26: what would the Holy Spirit help them do? If we are ever in a situation like Peter and John, being questioned about our beliefs, do you think we can expect that same kind of help from the Holy Spirit? Note that Jesus said the Holy Spirit would remind them of what He had said. The Holy Spirit didn’t give Peter any new information. Rather, He gave Peter the power to speak boldly what he already knew about Jesus. This is why it is so important for us to read and study God’s Word: so that the Holy Spirit can teach us from it and remind us of it when we need it.)*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *Read what Jesus said about the Spirit in John 15:26-27. What does the Holy Spirit do? When can we expect the Spirit’s help? How does it make you feel to know that you don’t have to witness alone? What is your response to today’s lesson?*
- B. Complete Lesson 41 in the Discovery Journal. Begin memorizing Acts 2:38-39.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 42 THE RESCUE PLAN IS FOR EVERYONE

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Acts 10

Supporting Passages: Matt. 8:5-13; Matt. 28:18-20

Memory Verse: Acts 2:38-39

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- God used a vision to prepare Peter to accept a new paradigm: believing Gentiles aren't any more "unclean" than believing Jews.
- This account marks an important point in the life of the Church: God made it very clear that the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ was not just for the Jews, but for people of every nationality!
- Peter wouldn't have been surprised by this had he recalled Jesus' response to the faith of a Roman centurion: faith is rewarded in anyone, no matter what their ethnicity.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. acknowledge that Christ's blood was shed for people of every nation.
2. understand that every people group will be represented in the Kingdom of God.
3. know that God's Rescue Plan is for all who place their faith in Jesus.
4. feel concern for people who have not yet heard of Jesus.
5. target someone with whom they can share today's story.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Again give opportunity for learners to talk about their experiences of sharing their faith with others, or other ways they have experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Review Luke 6:27-28, Acts 1:8, and Acts 2:38.

#### **Engage the Learners**

List the following animals on the board: camel, rabbit, pig, goat, oyster, tuna, shrimp, eagle, turkey, bat, dog, frog, rat, snake. *According to the Law God gave through Moses, the Israelites were allowed to eat only certain animals that the LORD deemed "clean." This was a way of setting them apart from the people groups around them, but also probably a way of protecting them from things that might harm them. Try to guess which are "clean" and which are "unclean."* (If time allows, refer the learners to Lev. 11 to check their answers. The only "clean" animals listed above are goat, tuna and turkey.)

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Tell the story from Acts 10. Make the story come alive by expressing the likely emotions of the characters as you quote them. As with the last lesson, you may wish to have someone read Peter's speech.

### Retell the Story

If possible, have a group of learners prepare in advance for a dramatic presentation of this story. If not, allow volunteers to retell what they remember of the story.

### Guide the Discussion

1. *Describe Cornelius.* (Explain that a centurion was an officer in the Roman army in charge of approximately 100 men.) *Why would Peter consider him “unclean”?* *From his behavior, what can we conclude about Cornelius?* (Perhaps that he was a man of faith, a seeker of the Truth. He knew and worshipped the true Creator God, even though he didn’t yet know Jesus.) *According to the angel who came to him, what did God think about Cornelius? How did God reward his faith?*
2. *What did God do in order to prepare Peter to accept Cornelius as a brother in Christ? What was the relationship between the vision of animals and Peter’s visit to Cornelius? What was the lesson Peter learned (vv. 29, 34-35)?*
3. *Jesus had tried to teach His followers this lesson before. Read the story of another centurion in Matt. 8:5-13. What can you say about this man?* (Also a Gentile, also a man of faith—he believed Jesus could do anything.) *What was Jesus saying about the Kingdom of God? What did Jesus mean when he said, “the subjects of the kingdom” would be thrown out?* (Jesus knew that most of the Israelites, to whom the Kingdom of God was originally offered, would reject Him. As a result, they would miss out on what God had intended for them, but instead God would accept people of faith from all over the world.)
4. *Peter hadn’t had time to prepare a sermon for the Gentiles. Do you think he had trouble thinking of what to say? Explain.* (Peter simply told what he himself had witnessed. In addition, the learners should remember that the Holy Spirit was there to help Peter in this situation as well.)
5. *Why did the Holy Spirit come on everyone that was listening?* (Note what Peter said in v. 42-43. Apparently, everyone listening understood what Peter was saying and believed in Jesus as the one who could save them from sin! The coming of the Holy Spirit showed that they had placed their faith in Him.)
6. *Finish this sentence: God’s Rescue Plan is for everyone who...*

### Develop the Action Plan

- A. *What do you think: is there some group of people that doesn’t belong in God’s Kingdom? Is there any people group that God is not willing to save? Read Rev. 5:9, from the vision of heaven that God gave John. Who has been purchased by the blood of Jesus? Review Matt. 28:18-20. Where did Jesus say disciples should be made? Has every tribe and nation heard of Jesus?* (For current information on unreached people groups, see [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net).) *If we are followers of Jesus, what is our responsibility? Think of someone with whom you can share today’s story.*
- B. Complete Lesson 42 in the Discovery Journal. Continue memorizing Acts 2:38-39.

### Evaluation Notes:

## 43 THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Acts 9:1-18; 11:19-26; 13:1-3

Supporting Passages: Acts 7:54-60; 8:1-4; Rom. 10:9-17

Memory Verse: Romans 10:14-15

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- The believers' popularity was increasing, but so was persecution by the Jewish authorities.
- After Stephen was killed, the believers were scattered all over the region but they took the Good News with them wherever they went.
- Saul started out as an enemy of the believers, but after a dramatic conversion, he became a great messenger of the Good News.
- Saul (Paul) and Barnabas were appointed as the first missionaries (sent ones) of the church (community of believers).
- The book of Acts records 3 extensive mission trips that Paul led throughout the Roman world, even as far away as Greece.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. acknowledge that God will allow difficult circumstances in the lives of His followers in order to accomplish His greater purposes.
2. understand the difference between a "witness" and a "missionary."
3. understand the challenge of making disciples in every nation.
4. have a desire to participate in world missions in some way.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Ask the learners if they shared the story of Cornelius with anyone. Ask them to share a way that God has changed their mind during the course of this curriculum. Review John 3:16-17, Acts 1:8, and 2:38-39.

#### **Engage the Learners**

Look at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net) or other sources available to you to find resources appropriate for educating your group about how the Great Commission is being carried out and the need that yet remains. If possible, show one of the videos found at <http://www.joshuaproject.net/unreached-videos.php>.

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

*Jesus' followers were becoming more and more respected by the people. Many believed their message and were saved. But the Jewish leaders were not happy about it. The believers were increasingly persecuted and finally, one of them, a godly man named*

*Stephen, was killed for speaking the truth about Jesus. The persecution of all the believers became so harsh that they had to move out of Jerusalem. Everywhere they went, they took the message of salvation with them. Saul was one of their biggest enemies, shutting down their gatherings and putting them in jail. But God had a plan for Saul. Tell the story from Acts 9:1-18, 11:19-26 and 13:1-3. Saul, later called Paul, conducted 3 extensive missionary journeys. God allowed Paul and his various companions to undergo all sorts of hardship and persecution, but He also showed his power through them in miraculous ways so the Good News spread to many new places. Paul also wrote many important letters that became a large part of the New Testament, so his teachings have gone much farther than he himself was able to go.*

### **Retell the Story**

Have the learners take turns retelling segments of the story.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *Is there anything good about persecution? What was the positive effect of the persecution of the believers in this story? How did this help them fulfill Jesus' command in Matt. 28:19-20? (Help the learners see that sometimes God allows painful things to happen to His followers because He has a greater goal in mind. In this case, pain and discomfort forced the believers to carry the Rescue Plan to people who would otherwise not have heard. Remind the learners of Luke 9:23. God is willing to sacrifice the comfort of His followers in order to reach the lost.)*
2. *Saul, a Jewish leader, thought he was serving God by trying to stop the Jesus-followers. How did God show him he was on the wrong track? What special assignment did God have for him (9:15)?*
3. *How did it happen that Saul was in Antioch? What was significant about the church in Antioch? If necessary, explain that this was one of the churches started as a result of the scattered believers sharing the Good News of God's Rescue Plan. The original church (group of believers) in Jerusalem helped strengthen this church by sending Barnabas. Antioch was where believers were first called Christians, and they became the first missionary "sending church."*
4. *Read and discuss what Saul/Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-17. What is the message everyone needs to hear? How will that happen where there are not yet believers?*

### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. Discuss the difference between a "witness" and a "missionary." All believers should be witnesses wherever they are, but missionaries are ones who are sent by the church to witness outside of their own country or culture.
- B. *What does it take to send someone to another country or culture to preach the Good News?* Discuss that, in addition to those who go, there are those who train them, those who provide financial support and those who pray for them. Discuss your church's involvement in missions and what ways you and your learners can be involved.
- C. Complete Lesson 43 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize Rom. 10:14-15.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## 44 THE RESCUE PLAN COMPLETED: JESUS WILL RETURN

### ON YOUR OWN

#### **Prayerfully Study the Bible**

Core Bible Passage: Mat. 24:3-44; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 21:1-8, 22-27; 22:1-5, 20

Supporting Passages: Acts 1:9-11; John 14:1-3

Memory Verse: Hebrews 9:27-28

#### **Carefully Consider the Key Concepts**

- Jesus described events that would precede his return and encouraged His disciples to remain alert and ready for his return by faithfully doing his will.
- John was given a remarkable view into the throne room of the Lord God Almighty, a vision of the New Jerusalem, a beautiful and perfect city reserved for those whose names are written in the book of life, and a preview of the judgment and destiny of those whose names are not found in the book of life.

#### **Focus on the Primary Objectives**

Learners will:

1. learn some of the signs that will precede the return of Christ.
2. know how to distinguish the return of Christ from false messiahs.
3. joyfully anticipate Christ's return and the home He has prepared for us.
4. articulate the essence of the Rescue Plan as found in God's Story.

### WITH THE LEARNERS

#### **Review Previous Lessons**

Follow up on the Action Plan from Lesson 43. If the group made any decisions about their involvement in missions, what's the next step? Review Acts 2:38-39 and Rom. 10:14-15. Discuss how these verses relate to Christ's commission in Matt. 28:18-20.

#### **Engage the Learners**

*Recall the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8. What happened right after Jesus said these words? What did the angel say to the disciples (Acts 1:11)? Do you remember what Jesus told His disciples about His "Father's house"? What did He promise in John 14:1-3? Today we'll learn more of what Jesus said about His return and the place He's preparing.*

#### **Pray for the Leading of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Tell the Story**

Today's lesson is difficult to "tell" as a story because it's a lot of description and explanation rather than action. Therefore, it might be best to assign the passages to good readers. *Before He left, Jesus answered some of the disciples' questions about the future. Read Matt. 24:3-13, 23-27, 36-42. Go to **Retell the Story** first, then continue with the following: In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul addressed the subject of Christ's return as well. Read 1 Thes. 4:13-18. But what will this place Jesus is preparing be like? Jesus' disciple, John, was given a preview of what is to come. John had a vision of what our new home with Jesus will be like. Read Rev. 21:1-8, 22-27; 22:1-5.*



### **Retell the Story**

After each segment from Matt. 24, ask the learners to recall what Jesus said would happen prior to and during His return. If you wish, have the learners list them in order on the board. Continue this list after 1 Thes. 4:13-18 is read. After the passages from Revelation are read, have them create a list of phrases describing the New Jerusalem.

### **Guide the Discussion**

1. *From the list of things Jesus said would precede His return, which ones have already happened? (Help the learners identify some “false prophets” whose names might be familiar to them, such as Apollo Quiboloy, “the Appointed Son of God.”) In what ways will Jesus’ return be distinct, unlike the appearance of false messiahs? Do you think it will be possible to miss that event? Explain.*
2. *To what past event did Jesus compare His return? In what ways will it be like the great flood of Noah’s time? What will determine who will be taken and who will be left behind when Christ returns? (Be sure the learners understand that those who are watching for Him are those who believe in Him as their Savior and by faith are expecting His return. If needed, review Eph. 2:8-9. When Jesus returns, we want to be found living lives that are pleasing to Him, but it is not our deeds but rather our faith that will determine whether we will be taken or left behind.)*
3. *According to Paul’s letter, what will happen with the Christians who have already died? Describe what will happen at the time of Christ’s return.*
4. *Read Heb. 9:27-28. What does this tell us about all people? What does it say about what Jesus has already done? About what He is returning to do?*
5. *Which of the phrases describing the New Jerusalem is of most interest to you? What are you looking forward to? Is there anything here that concerns or worries you? (Be attentive to any who might be worried about whether they will be among those for whom Jesus returns and be accepted into the New Jerusalem.)*
6. *Look again at Rev. 22:1-3. What references are there to how things began in Genesis? Notice that the curse is no longer in effect and the tree of life is now for everyone to enjoy! That’s something to celebrate!*

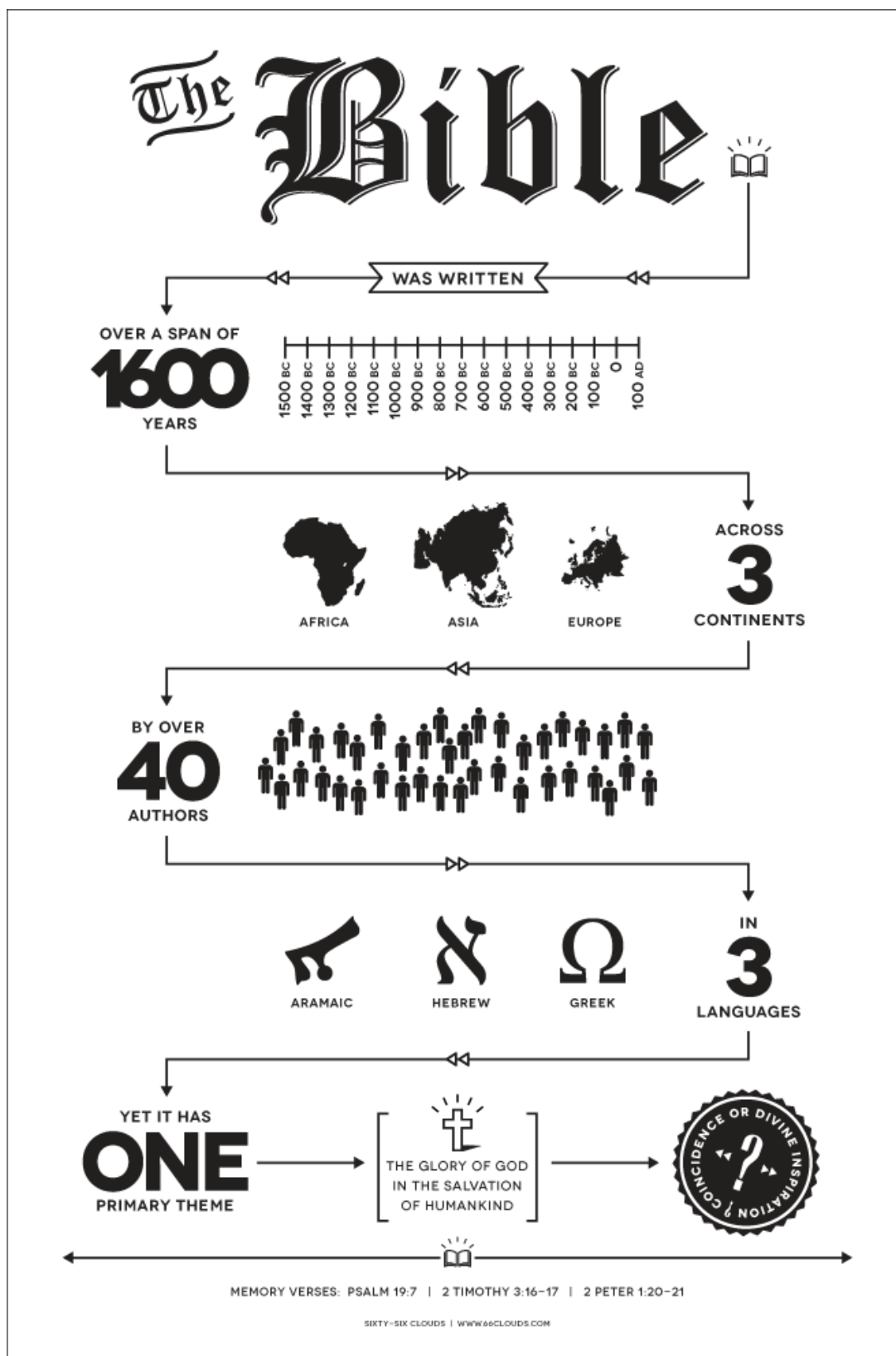
### **Develop the Action Plan**

- A. *What is your response to today’s part of God’s Story? Read John’s response in Rev. 22:20. Is that the cry of your heart as well? Do you believe these prophecies will come true just as all the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah came true?*
- B. *Now that you’ve learned God’s Rescue Plan, do you feel that it is important enough to share with others? Plan your strategy. What parts of God’s Story must be included in order to explain the Rescue Plan? What are the key concepts that need to be communicated? (Encourage the learners to remember back to the early lessons that made it clear why a Rescue Plan was needed.)*
- C. Complete Lesson 44 in the Discovery Journal. Memorize Heb. 9:27-28.

### **Evaluation Notes:**

## **PART 3: RESOURCES**

Introduction Lesson: Diagram for review found in **Develop the Action Plan**



The Bible Infographic, used by permission from [www.66clouds.com](http://www.66clouds.com).

**Lesson 5:** Sample Narrative for **Retell the Story** from Genesis 6:5-22, 7:1-5 (NIV)

The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.

The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.

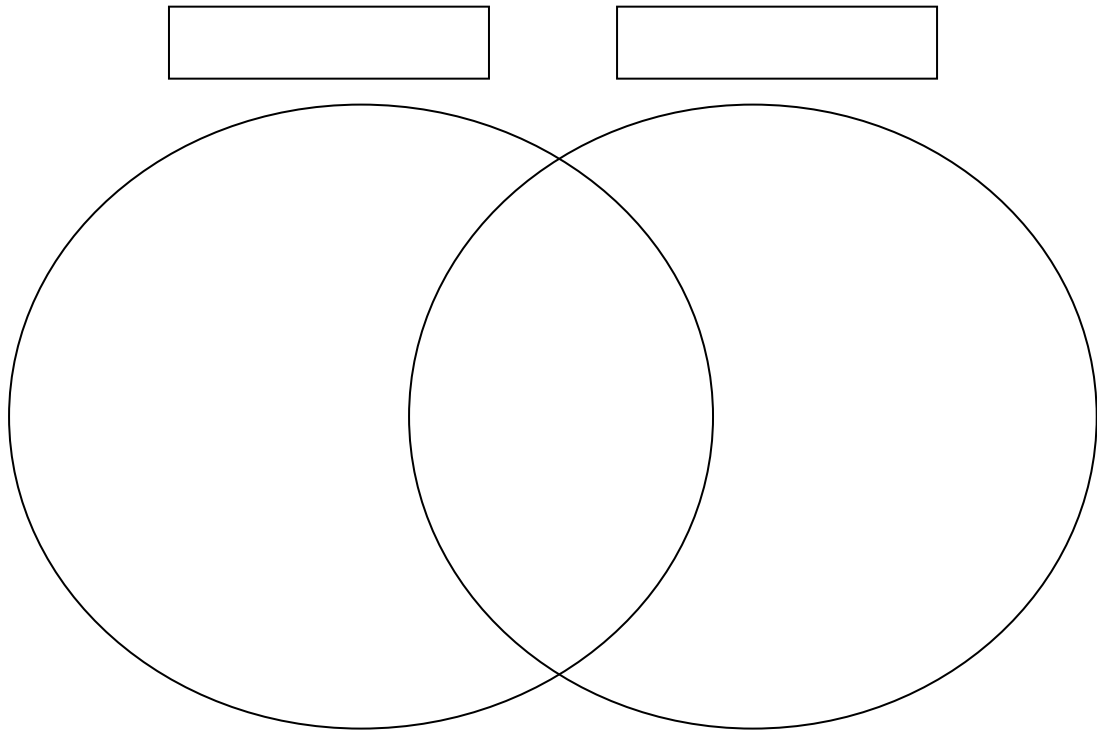
I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.

You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.” Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

The LORD then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth.

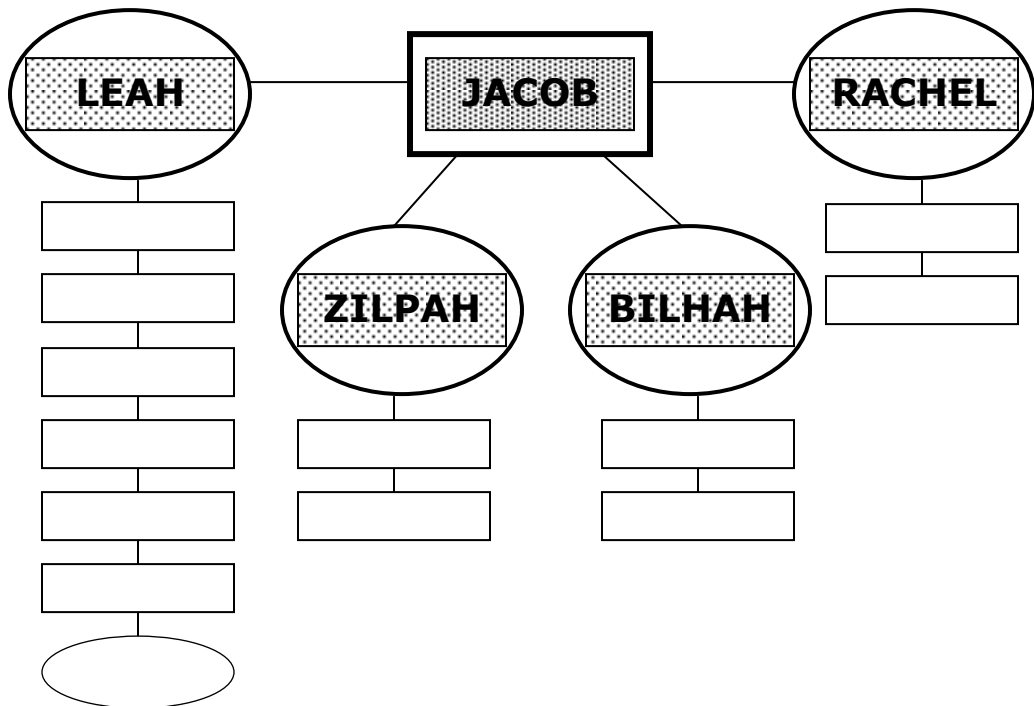
Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.” And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

**Lesson 9: Sample Venn Diagram for Guide the Discussion**



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**Lesson 14: Sample of Jacob's Family Tree for Tell the Story**



**Lesson 16:** Sample “That’s Good, That’s Bad” Story from Gen. 39 for **Retell the Story**

<u>Storyteller</u>	<u>Audience</u>
Joseph was a young man whose father loved him very much.	Oh, that’s good.
No, that’s bad, because Joseph’s older brothers were so jealous of Joseph that they wanted to kill him!	Oh, that’s bad!
No, that’s good. Joseph’s brothers decided not to kill him. Instead, Joseph got to travel to a foreign country!	Oh, that’s good!
No, that’s bad. They sold Joseph to slave traders going to Egypt.	Oh, that’s bad.
No, that’s good. The Lord was with him and he was bought by one of Pharaoh’s important officials, Potiphar.	Oh, that’s good.
No, that’s bad. Joseph had to work really hard because Potiphar put him in charge of his entire household.	Oh, that’s bad!
No, that’s good, because God blessed Joseph with success in everything he did, so Potiphar entrusted everything he owned to Joseph.	Oh, that’s good!
No, that’s bad. Because he was in charge of the household, Joseph had to be around Potiphar’s unpleasant wife a lot.	Oh, that’s bad.
No, that’s good, because she finally noticed what a great guy Joseph was.	Oh, that’s good!
No, that’s bad. She began trying to seduce Joseph to make love to her. She tried to tempt him into her bedroom day after day.	Oh, that’s bad!
No, that’s good, because Joseph didn’t give in and it gave him an opportunity to prove himself trustworthy to Potiphar and faithful to God.	Oh, that’s good.
No, that’s bad, because Potiphar’s wife trapped him and lied about him so that Potiphar had him thrown in prison!	Oh, that’s bad!
No, that’s good. God blessed Joseph with success, even in prison. The prison warden put him in charge of the entire prison!	Oh, that’s good!

**Lesson 18:** A Reader's Theater Script from Genesis 42-46:4 for **Tell the Story**

Cast: Narrator  
 Jacob (the father, also called Israel)  
 Jose (eldest son of Jacob and Rachel)  
 Ruben (eldest son of Jacob and Leah)  
 Juda (son of Jacob and Leah)  
 Simeon (son of Jacob and Leah)  
 Levi (son of Jacob and Leah)  
 Alipin ni Jose  
 Katiwala ni Jose  
 Faraon ng Egipto

Introduction (adapted from Genesis 41:54-57)

*Narrator:* Mayroon nang malubhang taggutom sa buong Egipto. Nang wala nang makain ang mga mamamayan, binuksan ni Jose ang mga kamalig at pinagbilhan ng trigo ang mga taga-Egipto. Lumaganap din ang taggutom sa ibang mga bansa, kaya't ang mga mamamayan nila'y pumunta sa Egipto upang bumili ng pagkain kay Jose.

Genesis 42

*Narrator:* Nang mabalitaan ni Jacob na maraming pagkain sa Egipto, sinabi niya sa kanyang mga anak na lalaki...

*Jacob:* Ano pang hinihintay ninyo? Pumunta kayo sa Egipto at bumili agad ng pagkain unpang hindi tayo mamatay sa gutom. Balita ko'y maraming pagkain doon.

*Narrator:* Pumunta nga sa Egipto ang sampung kapatid ni Jose upang bumili ng pagkain. Si Benjamin, ang tunay na kapatid ni Jose, ay hindi na pinasama ni Jose sa takot na may masamang mangyari sa kanya. Kasama ng ibang taga-Canaan, lumakad ang mga anak ni Jacob upang bumili ng pagkain sapagkat laganap ang taggutom sa buong Canaan. Bilang gobernador ng Egipto, si Jose ang nagbebenta ng pagkain sa mga tao, kaya't sa kanya pumunta ang kanyang mga kapatid niya, ngunit hindi siya nagpahalata.

*Jose:* (mabagsik) Taga-saan kayo?

*Ruben:* Taga-Canaan po. Naparito po kami upang bumili ng pagkain.

*Narrator:* Nakilala nga ni Jose ang kanyang mga kapatid ngunit hindi siya namukhaan ng mga ito. Naalala niya ang kanyang mga panaginip tungkol sa kanila, kaya't sinabi niya...

*Jose:* Kayo'y mga espiya, at naparito kayo upang makita ang kahinaan ng aming bansa, hindi ba?

*Ruben:* Hindi po! Kami pong mga lingkod ninyo'y bumibili lamang ng pagkain.

*Juda:* Magkakapatid po kami, at kami'y mga taong tapat. Hindi po kami mga espiya.

*Jose:* Hindi ako naniniwala. Naparito kayo upang alamin ang kahinaan ng aming bansa!

*Simeon:* Ginoo, kami po'y labindalawang magkakapatid; nasa Canaan po an gaming ama. Pinaiwan po ang bunso naming kapatid; ang isa po nama'y patay na.

*Jose:* Tulad ng sinabi ko, kayo'y mga espiya! At isinusumpa ko sa ngalan ng Faraon, hindi kayo makakaalis hanggang hindi ninyo dinadala rito ang inyong bunsong kapatid. Umuwi ang isa sa inyo at kunin siya; ang iba'y ikukulong dito hanggang hindi ninyo napatutunayan ang inyong sinasabi. Kung hindi, mga espiya nga kayo!

*Narrator:* Tatlong araw niyang ikinulong ang kanyang mga kapatid. Pagsapit ng ikatlong araw, sinabi ni Jose sa kanila...

*Jose:* Ako'y may takot sa Diyos; bibigyan ko kayo ng pagkakataong mabuhay kung gagawin ninyo ito: Kung talagang nagsasabi kayo ng totoo, isa lamang sa inyo ang ibibilanggo; ang iba'y makakaalis na at maaari nang iuwi ang pagkaing binili ninyo para sa inyong mga pamilya. Ngunit pagbalik ninyo'y kailangang isama ninyo ang bunso ninyong kapatid. Dito ko malalaman na kayo'y nagsasabi ng totoo, at hindi kayo mamamatay.

*Narrator:* Sumang-ayon ang lahat. Pagkatapos, ang sabi nila sa isa't isa...

*Juda:* Nagbabayad na tayo ngayon sa ginawa natin sa ating kapatid.

*Levi:* Nakita natin ang paghihirap ng kanyang kalooban noon ngunit hindi natin pinansin ang kanyang pagmamakaawa. Kaya tayo naman ngayon ang nasa kagipitan.

*Ruben:* Iyan na nga ba ang sinasabi ko. Nakiusap ako sa inyong huwag saktan ang bata, ngunit hindi kayo nakinig; ngayon, pinagbabayad tayo sa kanyang kamatayan.

*Narrator:* Hindi nila alam na nauunawaan ni Jose ang kanilang usapan, sapagkat gumagamit pa ito ng tagasalin sa wika kapag humaharap sa kanila. Iniwan muna sila ni Jose dahil sa hindi na niya mapigil ang pag-iyak. Nang panatag na ang kanyang kalooban, bumalik siya at ibinukod si Simeon. Ipinagapos niya ito sa harapan nila.

Iniutos ni Jose na punuin ng trigo ang kanilang mga sako at ilagay doon ang salaping ibinayad nila. Pinabigyan pa sila ng makakain sa kanilang paglalakbay. Nasunod lahat ang utos ni Jose. Ikinarga ng magkakapatid sa mga asno ang kanilang biniling pagkain, at sila'y umalis. Pagsapit ng gabi, tumigil sila upang magpahinga. Binuksan ng isa ang kanyang sako upang pakainin ang asno niya at nakita ang salapi sa loob ng sako. Napasigaw ito...

*Juda:* Ibinalik sa akin ang aking salapi! Heto sa aking sako!

*Narrator:* Nanginig sila sa takot at nagtanong sa isa't isa...

*Ruben, Judah, Levi: (together)* Ano ang ginagawang ito sa atin ng Diyos?

*Narrator:* Pagdating nila sa Canaan, isinalaysay nila kay Jacob ang nangyari sa kanila. Sinabi nila...

*Ruben:* Ama, napakabagsik pong magsalita ng gobernador sa Egipto. Akalain ba naman ninyong pagbintangan pa kaming mga espiya!

*Juda:* Sinabi po naming mga tapat na tao kami at hindi mga espiya. Ipinagtapat pa naming kami'y labindalawang magkakapatid na lalaki at iisa ang aming ama. Sinabi po namin na patay na ang isa naming kapatid, at ang bunso nama'y kasama ninyo rito sa Canaan.



*Levi:* Pagkatapos po naming sabihin ito, akalain ninyong susubukan daw niya kung kamy'y nagsasabi ng totoo! Pinaiwan po si Simeon, at pinauwi na kaming dala ang pagkaing aming binili.

*Ruben:* Ngunit mahigpit po ang bilin niya na bumalik kaming kasama ang aming bunsong kapatid bilang katunayang kami'y nagsasabi ng totoo. Kung magagawa namin ito, nangako po siyang palalayain si Simeon at pahihintulutan kaming manirahan at magnegosyo sa kanyang bansa.

*Narrator:* Nang isalin nila ang kani-kanilang sako, nakita nila ang salaping kanilang ibinayad. Kaya't pat si Jacob ay natakot. Sinabi niya...

*Jacob:* Iiwan ba ninyo akong mag-isa? Wala na si Jose, wala rin si Simeon, ngayo'y gusto pa ninyong isama si Benjamin? Napakabigat namang pasanin ito para sa akin!

*Ruben:* Ama, kung hindi ko maibalik sa inyo si Benjamin, patayin na ninyo ang dalawa kong anak. Ipaubaya ninyo sa akin si Benjamin at ibabalik ko siya.

*Jacob:* Hindi ko papayagang sumama sa inyo ang aking anak, patay na ang kanyang kapatid at siya na lamang ang nasa akin. Sa tanda ko Nang ito, kung siya'y masasawi sa daan, hindi ko na ito makakayanan; mamamatay akong nag-dadalamhati.

### Genesis 43

*Narrator:* Lalong tumindi ang taggutom sa Canaan. Nang maubos na ng pamilya ni Jacob ang pagkaing binili sa Egipto, sinabi niya sa kanyang mga anak...

*Jacob:* Bumili uli kayo kahit kaunting pagkain sa Egipto.

*Juda:* Mahigpit po ang bilin sa amin ng gobernador doon na huwag na kaming magpapakita sa kanya kung hindi naming kasama ang kapatid naming bunso. Kung pasasamahin ninyo siya, bibili po kami ng pagkain doon. Kung hindi ninyo pahihintulutan, hindi po kami maaaring humarap sa gobernador.

*Jacob:* Bakit kasi sinabi ninyong mayroon pa kayong ibang kapatid? Ako ang pinahihirapan ninyo sa nangyayaring ito.

*Ruben:* Inusisa pong mabuti ang ating pamilya. Itinanong sa amin kung mayroon pa kaming ama at iba pang kapatid. Sinagot po lamang naming ang kanyang mga tanong. Hindi po naming alam na pati si Benjamin ay pipiliting iharap namin sa kanya.

*Juda:* Ama, mamamatay tayo sa gutom. Pasamahin na ninyo si Benjamin at nang makaalis na kami. Itinataya ko ang aking buhay para sa kanya. Ako po ang bahala sa kanya. Kung hindi ko siya maibalik nang buhay, ako ang buntunan ninyo ng lagat ng sisi. Kung hindi ninyo kami pinaghintay nang matagal, marahil ay nakadalawang balik na kami ngayon.

*Jacob:* Kung iyon ang mabuti, sige, payag na ako. Ngunit magdala kayo ng handog sa gobernador, kaunting balsamo, pulot-pukyutan, astragalo, laudano, alponsigo at almendra. Doblehin ninyo ang dalang salapi, sapagkat kailangan ninyong ibalik ang salaping nailagay sa inyong mga sako. Maaaring isang pagkakamali lamang iyon. Isama na ninyo ang inyong kapatid at lumakad na kayo. Loobin nawa ng Makapangyarihang Diyos na kahabagan kayo ng taong iyon upang mabalik sa akin si Simeon at si Benjamin. Kung hindi man sila maibalik, handa na ang loob ko.

*Narrator:* Nagdala nga sila ng mga kaloob at salaping dapat dalhin, at nagbalik sa Egipto, kasama si Benjamin. Nang makita ni Jose si Benjamin, iniutos niya sa aliping namamahala sa kanyang tahanan...

*Jose:* Isama mo sila sa bahay. Sila'y kasalo ko mamayang pananghalian. Magkatay ka ng hayop at iluto mo.

*Narrator:* Sinunod ng alipin ang utos ni Jose at isinama ang magkakapatid. Natakot sila Nang sila'y dalhin sa bahay ni Jose. Sa loob-loob nila...

*Levi:* Marahil, dinala tayo rito dahil sa salaping ibinalik sa ating mga sako nang una tayong pumarito. Maaaring bigla na lamang tayong dakpin, kunin an gating mga asno, at tayo'y gawing mga alipin.

*Narrator:* Kaya't nilapitan nila ang katiwala ni Jose at kinausap sa may pintuan ng bahay nito.

*Ruben:* Ginoo, galing na po kami ritong minsan at bumili ng pagkain. Nang kami'y nagpapahinga sa daan, binuksan namin ang aming mga sako at nakita sa loob ang lahat ng salaping ibinayad namin sa pagkain. Hindi po namin alam kung sino ang naglagay ng mga salaping iyon sa mga sako namin.

*Alipin:* Huwag kayong mag-alaala. Huwag kayong matakot. Ang inyong Diyos na siya ring Diyos ng inyong ama ang naglagay ng salaping iyon. Tinanggap ko na ang inyong kabayaran sa binili ninyong una.

*Narrator:* Pagkatapos ay inilabas ng katiwala si Simeon at isinama sa kanila. Sila'y pinasok ng katiwala sa bahay ni Jose, pinaghugas ng mga paa, at pinakain ang kanilang mga asno. Pagkatapos, inilabas ng magkakapatid ang kanilang handog para ipagkaloob kay Jose pagdating nito. Narinig nilang doon sila magsasalu-salo. Pagdating ni Jose, yumukod silang lahat sa kanyang harapan at ibinigay ang dala nilang handog. Kinumusta sila ni Jose at pagkatapos ay tinanong...

*Jose:* Kumusta naman ang inyong ama? Malakas pa ba siya?

*Ruben:* Ginoo, buhay pa po siya at malakas.

*Narrator:* Lumuhod at yumukod muli sila sa harapan niya. Pagkakita ni Jose kay Benjamin, siya ay nagtanong...

*Jose:* Ito ba ang sinasabi ninyong bunsong kapatid? Pagpalain ka ng Diyos, anak!

*Narrator:* Hindi mapaglabanan ni Jose ang kanyang damdamin, at halos siya'y mapaiyak dahil sa pagkakita sa kanyang kapatid. Kaya't siya'y pumasok sa kanyang silid at doon umiyak. Nang mapayapa na niya ang kanyang kalooban, naghilamos siya, lumabas, at nagpahain ng pagkain. Si Jose ay ipinaghaing mag-isa sa isang mesa, at ang kanyang mga kapatid ay sa ibang mesa. Magkakasalo naman ang mga Egipcio, sapagkat ikinahihiya nilang makasalo ang mga Hebreo. Kaharap ni Jose ang kanyang mga kapatid na sunod-sunod ang pagkaupo ayon sa gulang. Nagkatinginan sila at taking-taka sa gayong pagkakaayos ng kanilang upo. Idinudulot mula sa mesa ni Jose ang pagkain nila, at limang beses ang dami ng pagkaing idinulot kay Benjamin. Masaya silang kumain at nag-inuman.

Genesis 44

*Narrator:* Inutusan ni Jose ang kanyang katiwala...

*Jose:* Punuin mo ng trigo ang kanilang mga sako at bago mo isara ay ilagay mo ang salaping ibinayad nila. At sa sako ng pinkabunso, ilagay mo pa ang aking kopang pilak.

*Narrator:* Ginawa naman ng katiwala ang iniutos sa kanya. Kinabukasan, maaga pa'y umalis na ang magkakapatid, sakay ng kanilang mga asno. Hindi pa sila nakakalayo sa lunsod, inutusan ni Jose ang kanyang katiwala...

*Jose:* Habulin mo ang mga taong iyon, at sabihin m osa kanila, "Bakit naman ginantihan ninyo ng masama ang kabutihang ipinakita namin sa inyo? Bakit ninyo ninakaw ang kopang pilak ng aking panginoon? Iyon ang iniinuman ng aking panginoon, at ginagamit din niya iyon sa panghuhula. Napakalaking kasalanan ang ginawa ninyong ito!"

*Narrator:* Inabutan sila ng katiwala, at gayon nga ang sinabi sa kanila. Sumagot naman sila...

*Juda:* Ano pong ibig ninyong sabihin? Bakit kayo nagsalita ng ganyan? Ni sa isip ay hindi naming magagawa iyan!

*Ruben:* Nakita naman ninyo, nakarating na kami sa Canaan, gayunma'y ibinalik pa rin naming sa inyo ang salaping nakita naming sa loob n gaming sako. Bakit kami magnanakaw ng pilak o ginto sa tahanan ng inyong panginoon?

*Juda:* Ginoo, kung makita po ninyo sa sinuman sa amin ang kopang sinasabi ninyo ay dapat mamatay, at alipinin ninyo kaming lahat.

*Katiwala:* Mabuti. Kung kanino makita ang kopa, siya ang gagawing alipin' makakalaya na ang iba.

*Narrator:* Ibinaba nila nag kanilang mga sako at pinagbubuksan. Isa-isa itong hinalughog ng katiwala mula sa pinakamatanda hanggang sa pinakabata, at natagpuan ang koba sa sako ni Benjamin. Pinunit nila ang kanilang damit sa tindi ng kalungkutan, ikinargang muli sa asno ang kanilang mga sako, at bumalik sa lunsod. Nasa bahay pa si Jose nang magbalik si Juda at ang kanyang mga kapatid. Pagdating doon, sila'y yumukod sa kanyang harapan. Sinabi ni Jose...

*Jose:* Ano itong ginawa ninyo? Hindi ba ninyo alam na marunong akong manghula? Wala kayong maitatago sa akin!

*Juda:* Wala na po kaming masasabi. Wala po kaming maikakatuwiran sa mga pangyayari. Diyos na po ang nagbunyang aming pagkakasala. Kaya, hindi lamang ang kinakitaan, kundi lahat kami'y alipin na ninyo ngayon.

*Jose:* Hindi! Hindi ko gagawin iyon. Kung kanino nakita ang kopa, siya ang gagawin kong alipin; ang iba ay makakauwi na sa inyong ama.

*Narrator:* Lumapit si Juda kay Jose.

*Juda:* Nakikiusap po ako, ginoo, kung inyong mamarapatin. Huwag sana ninyong ikagagalit. Ang turing ko sa inyo'y para na kayong Faraon. Ginoo, tinanong ninyo kung mayroon pa kaming ama at kapatid. Ang sabi po nami'y may ama kaming matanda na at bunsong kapatid na anak niya sa katandaan. Patay na ang kapatid nito at siya lamang ang

buhay na anak ng kanyang ina, kaya mahal na mahal siya ng aming ama. Iniutos ninyong dalhin naming siya rito upang intong makita. Ipinaliwanag po naming mahirap ilayo sa aming ama ang bata sapagkat maaaring ikamatay niya ito. Ngunit ang sabi naman ninyo’y hindi na ninyo kami tatanggapin dito kung hindi naming siya maihaharap sa inyo.

Ang lahat ng ito’y sinabi namin sa aming ama nang umuwi kami. Muli kaming inutusan ng aming ama na pumarito upang bumili ng kaunting pagkain. Ipinaalala namin sa kanya na hindi ninyo kami tatanggapin kung hindi kasama ang bunso naming kapatid. Sinabi po niya sa amin, “Alam naman ninyong dalawa lamang ang anak ng kanilang ina. Wala na ang isa; maaaring siya’y niluray ng mabangis na hayop. At kung ang natitira ay isasama pa ninyo, maaaring mamatay ako sa dalamhati.”

Ang buhay po ng aming ama ay karugtong na ng buhay ng bata, kaya kung babalik kami na hindi ito kasama, tiyak na siya’y mamamatay. Kapag nakita niyang hindi namin kasama ang bata, malalagutan siya ng hininga dahil sa kalungkutan. Ang isa pa’y itinaya ko ang aking buhay para sa bata. Sinabi ko po na kung siya’y hindi ko maibabalik, ako ang buntunan niya ng sisi. Kaya kung papayag kayo, ako na ang alipinin ninyo sa halip na itong aking bunsong kapatid. Pahintulutan na ninyong isama siya ng iba kong mga kapatid. Hindi po akong makakauwi kung hindi kasama si Benjamin. Hindi ko po makakayanan ang matinding dagok na darating sa aming ama, kung iyon ang mangyayari.

#### Genesis 45

*Narrator:* Hindi na mapigil ni Jose ang kanyang damdamin, kaya pinaalis niya ang kanyang mga tagapaglingkod na naroon. Nang sila na lamang ang naroon, ipinagtapat ni Jose sa kanyang mga kapatid kung sino siya. Sa lakas ng kanyang iyak, narinig siya ng mga Egipcio, kaya’t ang balita’y mabilis na nakarating sa palasyo.

*Jose:* Ako si Jose! Buhay pa bang talaga ang ating ama?

*Narrator:* Nagulantang sila sa kanilang narinig at hindi nakasagot.

*Jose:* Lumapit kayo. Ako nga si Jose, ang inyong kapatid na ipinagbili ninyo sa Egipto. Ngunit huwag na ninyong ikalungkot ang nangyari. Huwag ninyong sisihin ang inyong sarili sa ginawa ninyo sa akin. Ang Diyos ang nagpadala sa akin dito upang iligtas ang maraming buhay. Dalawang taon pa lamang ang taggutom, limang taon pa ang darating at walang aanihin sa mga bukirin. Pinauna ako rito ng Diyos upang huwag malipol ang ating lahi. Kaya, hindi kayo kundi ang Diyos ang nagpadala sa akin dito. Ginawa niya akong tagapayo ng Faraon, tagapangasiwa ng kanyang sambahayan at tagapamahala sa buong Egipto.

Bumalik kayo agad sa ating ama at ibalita ninyo na ako ang pinapmahala ng Diyos sa buong Egipto. Sabihin ninyong pumarito agad siya sa lalong madaling panahon. Doon siya titira sa lupain ng Goshen para mapalapit sa akin. Ang lahat niyang mga anak, mga apo, mga tupa, kambing, baka at lahat ng inyong ari-arian ay kanyang dalhin. Doo’y mapangangalagaan ko kayo. Limang taon pa ang taggutom, at hindo ko gustong makita ang sinuman sa inyo na naghihirap. Kitang-kita ninyo ngayon, pati ikaw, Benjamin, na ako talaga si Jose. Ibalita ninyo sa ating ama ang taglay kong

kapangyarihan dito sa Egipto, at ikuwento ninyo ang lahat ng inyong nakita. Hihintayin ko siya sa lalong madaling panahon.

*Narrator:* Umiiyak niyang niyakap si Benjamin, at ito nama’y umiiyak ding yumakap kay Jose. Patuloy siyang umiiyak habang isa-isang hinahagkan ang ibang kapatid. Nakarating sa palasyo ang balita na ang mga kapatid ni Jose ay dumating. Ikinatuwa ito ng Faraon at ng kanyang mga kagawad. Sinabi ng Faraon kay Jose...

*Faraon:* Pakargahan mo ng pagkain ang mga hayop ng iyong mga kapatid, at pabalikin mo sila sa Canaan. Sabihin mong dalhin dito ang inyong ama at ang buong sambahayan nila. Ibibigay ko sa kanila ang pinkamatabang lupain upang malasap nila ang masaganang pamumuhay rito. Sabihin mo ring magdala sila ng mga karwahe para magamin ng kani-kanilang asawa at mga anak paglipat sa Egipto. Huwag na nilang panghinayangang iwanan ang kanilang ari-arian doon, sapagkat ang pinakamabuting lupain dito ang ibibigay ko sa kanila.

*Narrator:* Sinunod ng mga anak ni Israel ang utos na ito. Binigyan sila ni Jose ng mga sasakyan, gaya ng utos ng Faraon, at pinadalhan din ng pagkain sa kanilang paglakbay. Ang bawat isa’y binigyan ng tig-iisang bihisan, maliban kay Benjamin. Lima ang kanyang bihisan at pinadalhan pa ng tatlong daang pirasong pilak. Pinadalhan niya ang kanyang ama ng pinakamabuting produkto ng Egipto, karga ng sampung asno. Sampung asno rin ang may kargang trigo, tinapay at iba’t ibang pagkain upang may baon ang kanilang ama sa paglalakbay. Inutusan ni Jose na lumakad na ang kanyang mga kapatid ngunit bago umalis ay sinabi sa kanila...

*Jose:* Huwag na kayong magtatalu-talo sa daan.

*Narrator:* Umalis nga sila sa Egipto at umuwi sa Canaan. Pagdating doo’y sinabi nila kay Jacob...

*Ruben, Juda, Levi:* Ama, buhay pa po si Jose! Siya ngayon ang namamahala sa buong Egipto!

*Narrator:* Natigilan si Jacob, at halos hindi siya makapaniwala sa balitang ito. Ngunit nang maisalaysay sa kanya ang bilin ni Jose at makita ang mga karwaheng ipinadala ni Jose, sumigla ang kanyang kalooban.

*Jacob:* Salamat sa Diyos! Buhay pa pala ang aking anak! Pupuntahan ko siya bago ako mamatay.

#### Genesis 46:1-4

*Narrator:* Naglakbay nga si Israel, dala ang lahat niyang ari-arian. Pagdating sa Beerseba, naghandog siya sa Diyos ng kanyang amang si Isaac. Pagsapit ng gabi, tinawag siya ng Diyos sa isang pangitain, “Jacob, Jacob!”

*Jacob:* Narito po ako.

*Narrator:* “Ako ang Diyos, ang Diyos ng iyong ama,” sabi sa kanya. “Huwag kang matakot na pumunta sa Egipto. Doon, ang lahi mo’y magiging isang malaking bansa. Sasamahan ko kayo roon at ibabalik muli rito. Nasa piling mo si Jose kapag ikaw ay namatay.

Adapted from Genesis 41:54- 46:4, Bagong Magandang Balita Biblia, [www.angbiblia.net](http://www.angbiblia.net).

**Lesson 28: Sample Battle Comparison Chart for Guide the Discussion**

	Jericho	Ai
Fortification/ strength of the city		
Preparation for battle		
Way the battle was fought		
Outcome of the battle		
Reason for success or failure		

### Lesson 33: Discovery Activity

**Introduction:** Through the prophets that He sent to Israel and Judah, God foretold some details about the Messiah who would come some day to rescue them. Jesus' disciple, Matthew, intentionally included those details in his account of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection. He wanted everyone to understand that Jesus was the one the prophets had told about!

**Instructions:** Try to match the prophecies with their fulfillment found in the Gospel of Matthew. To make it easier, read the passages in Matthew first and make a note of the main idea. Place the letter of the passage in Matthew in front of the passage it fulfills from the Old Testament.

Old Testament	Gospel of Matthew
___ Psalm 22:1	A. 1:1 _____
___ Psalm 22:18	B. 1:20-23 _____
___ Psalm 31:13	C. 2:1-6 _____
___ Psalm 69:21	D. 4:12-17 _____
___ Psalm 109:25	E. 11:2-6 _____
___ Isaiah 7:13-14	F. 12:18-21 _____
___ Isaiah 9:1-2	G. 21:4-9 _____
___ Isaiah 26:19	H. 26:14-15 _____
___ Isaiah 35:5-6	I. 26:28 _____
___ Isaiah 42:1-4	J. 26:31 _____
___ Isaiah 50:6	K. 26:67 _____
___ Isaiah 53:7	L. 27:1 _____
___ Jeremiah 23:5-6	M. 27:12-14 _____
___ Jeremiah 31:31	N. 27:34 _____
___ Micah 5:2	O. 27:35 _____
___ Zechariah 9:9	P. 27:39 _____
___ Zechariah 11:12-13	Q. 27:46 _____
___ Zechariah 13:7	R. 27:50-54 _____

**Discuss:** What did you learn from this activity? Why do you think Matthew wrote down his gospel? Why do you suppose he referred so often to the Old Testament prophecies? To whom do you think he was writing?

For the Facilitator Only

Discovery Activity Correction Key:

Psa. 22:1	Q. Matt. 27:46
Psa. 22:18	O. Matt. 27:35
Psa. 31:13	L. Matt. 27:1
Psa. 69:21	N. Matt. 27:34
Psa. 109:25	P. Matt. 27:39
Isa. 7:13-14	B. Matt. 1:20-23
Isa. 9:1-2	D. Matt. 4:12-17
Isa. 26:19	R. Matt. 27:50-54
Isa. 35:5-6	E. Matt. 11:2-6
Isa. 42:1-4	F. Matt. 12:18-21
Isa. 50:6	K. Matt. 26:67
Isa. 53:7	M. Matt. 27:12-14
Jer. 23:5-6	A. Matt. 1:1
Jer. 31:31	I. Matt. 26:28
Mic. 5:2	C. Matt. 2:1-6
Zec. 9:9	G. Matt. 21:6-9
Zec. 11:12-13	H. Matt. 26:14-15
Zec. 13:7	J. Matt. 26:31

Discussion: Guide the learners to recognize that Matthew was writing primarily to the people of Israel, the ones who knew the Law and the writings of the prophets God had sent to their ancestors. He wanted them to see how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Promised One and believe in Him.

Resource

This activity was created with help from the following website:

<http://www.newtestamentchristians.com/bible-study-resources/351-old-testament-prophecies-fulfilled-in-jesus-christ/>

(Accessed 9 January 2014)



**Lesson 36: Christmas Quiz Activity for Engage the Learners**

Facilitator: Make a copy of this page, cut on the lines to separate the statements and distribute them to the learners. Write the headings Bible Fact and Church Tradition on the board. Have the learners attempt to place the statements under the correct heading. (Alternate method: make two or more sets of the statements, divide the learners into groups and have them compete to see which group can identify the most correctly.)

.....  
1. Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem due to a census.

.....  
2. Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem.

.....  
3. Jesus was born on December 25.

.....  
4. Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

.....  
5. After he was born, Jesus was placed in a manger.

.....  
6. All sorts of animals were there to see the newborn baby.

.....  
7. Mary was still a virgin when Jesus was born.

.....  
8. Joseph was a descendant of David.

.....  
9. Mary remained a virgin her entire life.

.....  
10. An angel told some shepherds to find a baby in a manger.

.....  
11. Three wise men came to visit Baby Jesus.

.....  
12. A star led the wise men to the stable where Jesus was born.  
.....

**Answer Key:**

Bible Fact

- 1. See Luke 2:1-4
- 4. See Luke 2:5-6
- 5. See Luke 2:7
- 7. See Matt. 1:24-25
- 8. See Luke 2:4
- 10. See Luke 2:8-12

Church Tradition

- 2. There is no mention of a donkey in the Bible.
- 3. There is no record of the date of Jesus' birth.
- 6. There is no mention of animals in the Bible.
- 9. Mary had other children. See Matt. 13:53-56.
- 11. The Bible does not say how many wise men.
- 12. Jesus was no longer in the stable (Matt. 2:9-11).

**PART 4: DISCOVERY JOURNAL SAMPLE**

**Exploring God's Story**

**Discovery Journal**

***A Workbook for the Learner***

## EXPLORING GOD'S STORY DISCOVERY JOURNAL

### Introduction Lesson: The Bible is God's Story

**Action Plan:** Complete the sentences below based on what you learned in today's lesson about the Bible.

*The Bible is...*

---

*The Bible is useful for*

---

*so I want to...*

---

**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 119:105.  
Write it here:

### Lesson 1: The Story Begins (Gen. 1:1-31, 2:1-3)

Read Psalm 8. What amazes you about God's creation?  
Express your thoughts in a prayer or a song to the Almighty  
Creator God:

**Action Plan:** Write down in detail what you and your class  
have decided to do in response to this lesson.

After you carry out your Action Plan, write what happened  
here:

**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 19:1. Write  
it here:

### Lesson 2: Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:4-25, 3:1-8)

How does today's lesson influence your view of yourself?

How does today's lesson influence your view of marriage?

According to Gen. 2 and Matt. 19:3-9, what is God's definition  
of marriage?

**Action Plan:** If you made a decision today, write about it here:

**Something to think about and remember:** Revelation 4:11.  
Write it here:

Lesson 3: Sin has Consequences (Gen. 3:8-24)

Adam and Eve failed to believe that what God had said was really best for them. They chose to believe the serpent instead. Their unbelief led to doing something God had forbidden—sin. Rebellion against God (doing something He has forbidden or failing to do something He has required) is sin.

**Action Plan:** God doesn't walk with us as He did with Adam and Eve. We can't see Him physically, but He can see us. Think of something you've done that would cause you to want to hide if you saw God in person today. Write about it.

Read 1 John 1:8-10. These verses say that, rather than hiding or denying our sin, should \_\_\_\_\_ it to God.

Write a prayer confessing that thing you're ashamed of to God:

Did He forgive you? Of course He did! If you have accepted God's gift of eternal life, He has removed ALL your sin. Thank God for His mercy and forgiveness and ask for strength to resist the temptation to do it again in the future.

**Something to think about and remember:** Rom. 6:23. Write it here:

Lesson 4: Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16)

Think about it: Are you mostly living your life to please yourself or to please God? \_\_\_\_\_

Which option do you think will have the better outcome? Explain your answer.

When are you most likely to get angry?

What is it about that situation that causes you to become so angry?

**Action Plan:** Write the name of someone with whom you will share this story: \_\_\_\_\_

After you have done this, write about what happened here:

Write the name of someone you need to apologize to for things you have said or done in anger: \_\_\_\_\_

Make the apology and then write what happened below:

**Something to think about and remember:** 1 John 3:11. Write it here:

Lesson 5: Righteous Noah (Gen. 6-7)

God had a plan to use Noah’s life for a special purpose. Noah believed God, so he was able to take part in God’s Rescue Plan for creation.

**Action Plan:** Do you believe God has a plan for your life? How might God use you in His Rescue Plan for the world? Write your ideas here:

On the opposite page there is a psalm (song or poem from the Bible) in English that you will begin memorizing in your own language. Use the verses to fill up the chart.

On which side of the chart are you living right now? Explain your answer.

- Are you interested in knowing God’s plan for your life?
- Do you think it’s possible to know?
- How do you expect to find out?
- Does Psalm 1 give you any clues?

**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 1:1-2. Write it here in the Bible version that your class is using:

**Psalm 1 (TEV)**

- <sup>1</sup>Happy are those who reject the advice of evil [people], who do not follow the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God.
- <sup>2</sup>Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the LORD, and they study it day and night.
- <sup>3</sup>They are like trees that grow beside a stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do.
- <sup>4</sup>But evil [people] are not like this at all; they are like straw that the wind blows away.
- <sup>5</sup>Sinners will be condemned by God and kept apart from God’s own people.
- <sup>6</sup>The righteous are guided and protected by the LORD, but the evil are on their way to their doom.

**What does this psalm say about...**

...the righteous person?	...the wicked person?

Lesson 6: God Destroys, yet Rescues, His Creation (Gen. 8, 9:1-15)

Your life is of great value to God. He's provided a way to save you. On the final judgment day, where will you be: safe in the "ark" (Jesus), or outside, drowning in the consequences of your sin?

**Action Plan:** If you are sure that you are safe from God's judgment, explain how you know that you will not suffer the consequences of your sin.

If you are not sure that you are safe, speak with your group leader or Instructional Manager about how you can know that you will be rescued from the consequences of your sin.

Do you know others who are not safe in the "ark"? There are people all around us who don't understand that they must place their trust entirely in Jesus death and resurrection to save them. You can be part of God's Rescue Plan for someone. Think of someone who needs to hear today's lesson. Write their name here:

Begin praying for an opportunity to share this story with them.

**Something to think about and remember:** John 3:16.  
Write it here:

Lesson 7: God Chooses Abram to Father a Nation (Gen. 15-16)

Sometimes we pray as though God is our servant, there to grant our wishes and keep us happy. Instead, we need to see ourselves as part of His overall plan, created to do His will for His glory. What does it mean that God is "sovereign"? If you don't know, find out, and write your answer here:

What does God's sovereignty mean for your life?

**Action Plan:** Did God bring to your mind an action you need to take related to this lesson? Do you need to change your plans to bring them in line with God's plan for you? Write about it here:

**Something to think about and remember:** Ephesians 2:8-9.  
Write it here:

Lesson 8: God Makes a Covenant and Keeps His Promise  
(Gen. 17, 21:1-7)

Has there been any change in your “love life” since you put your faith in Christ?

If it were illegal to be a Christian in the Philippines, would there be enough evidence of God’s love in your life to convict you? Give an example.

**Action Plan:** If you have put your faith in Christ, you are a child of God and God is your loving Father. Ask Him to help you love Him and others as a demonstration of your faith in Him. Think of someone you have trouble loving. How could you show God’s love to that person?

Carry out your action plan and then write about what happened here:

**Something to think about and remember:** Galatians 5:6.  
Write it here:

Lesson 9: God Judges Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18, 19:1-29)

Lot had a choice about where he would live and raise his family. Because he chose to live among the wicked, he was very nearly destroyed along with them. Because of God’s mercy, he was spared. We don’t always have a choice about where we live. But we do have a choice about *how* we live. Are there things that happen in your neighborhood that you should avoid getting involved in? Give some examples.

**Action Plan:** Sometimes we need to avoid certain people in order to stay out of trouble. Is there a person or group of people you need to avoid so that you will not be tempted to do evil?

Is there anything you can do to help others avoid getting involved in activities or behaviors that are harmful and displeasing to the Lord? Describe your action plan:

Look back at Psalm 1, printed in Lesson 5.  
Where do you find yourself in those verses now?

**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 1:3-4.  
Write it here:

Lesson 10: Abraham Passes the Faith Test (Gen. 22:1-18)

Did today's lesson bring to mind anything that is taking God's place in your life? What do you love more than God?

Perhaps the hardest thing to give up is being in control of our own lives. We love doing our own thing more than we love obeying God. It's difficult to let God be the boss. Even though He is the King of all creation, He isn't the King of our lives until we give up and allow His Holy Spirit to be in charge. Can you trust Him to do that? Write your thoughts here:

Read James 2:14-24. What's the main point James is making?

Based on these verses, answer the following True or False:

\_\_\_\_\_ We are saved by our good deeds.

\_\_\_\_\_ It's possible to do good deeds without true faith.

\_\_\_\_\_ It's possible to have true faith without doing good deeds.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our actions show whether we have genuine faith.

**Action Plan:** Look back at what you wrote above. How can you put your faith in action?

**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 1:5-6.

Write it here:

The answers to the True or False questions above are: F, T, F, T. We are not saved by our own actions (review the memory verse from Lesson 7). But our faith is expressed by our actions. Because we believe, we obey. No action is evidence of no true faith.

Lesson 11: God Blesses Isaac (Gen. 24, 26)

Just like Abraham, Isaac was not a perfect person and his trust in God wasn't perfect all the time. But God was patient with Isaac, and was faithful to His promise to Abraham. Because Isaac acknowledged the LORD as his God and went wherever God told him to go, God blessed him. Who got the credit for Isaac's success? (See Gen. 26:28-29.)

Compare yourself with Isaac: in what ways are you...

ALIKE?

DIFFERENT?

In what way would you like to be more like Isaac?

**Action Plan:** Isaac was a man of peace. He did not want to make trouble with the people around him, so he was very gracious, even when they were unkind to him. How can you be a person of peace in your home or community?

Think of someone you can share this story with. Tell them the story, discuss it with them, then write about what happened here:

**Something to think about and remember:** Romans 12:17-18.

Write it here:



Lesson 12: A Family Divided (Gen. 25:19-34; 27)

Have you ever thought to yourself, “God and religion are for old people. I have too many things I want to do while I’m still young. If I get all godly and holy, I won’t be able to do my own thing anymore. I’ll just wait until I’m old and don’t have anything better to do”? That was the sin of Esau: living for the moment without regard for the long-term consequences.

Have you ever used deception to get your own way? Sometimes we feel like we need to steal and lie and cheat just to make things work out alright in the end. We don’t trust God to work things out for us. This was the sin of Jacob and Rebekah.

Which character in today’s story is most like you? Explain.

Will God forgive you every time you confess your sin?  
(What does 1 John 1:9 say about that?)  
If you are trusting in Christ, God has forgiven all your sins.

**Action Plan:** If this lesson reminded you of a sinful pattern in your life, talk to God about it. Confess it and ask the Holy Spirit to help you see when you are about to do the same kind of thing again so you can make God-honoring choices in the future.

Tell someone else today’s story and what you’ve learned from it.

**Something to think about and remember:** Ephesians 2:4-5.  
Write it here:

Lesson 13: The Promise Goes to Jacob (Gen. 28)

Jacob experienced both God’s **mercy** and His **grace**. But in some of our stories, we have seen His **justice** displayed. (Remember what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah and the people of Noah’s day?) Complete the definitions below:

*Getting the punishment we deserve is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Not getting the punishment we deserve is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Getting a blessing we do not deserve is \_\_\_\_\_.*

The Bible says that *all* have sinned (Rom. 3:23) and that *no one* can be righteous on their own (Rom. 3:20). We all deserve punishment. But praise God! What does Eph. 2:4-5 say about God?

Maybe you don’t know whether or not you are one of the ones God has chosen for His purposes. If you are worried that you might not be, it’s a good sign that you are! If you were not one of God’s chosen children, you wouldn’t even care about it. The Bible says *no one* seeks for God on their own (Rom. 3:11) so if you are seeking Him, it means that He is drawing you to Himself (see John 6:44). His love, mercy and grace are for you!

**Action Plan:** Have you received Him (Jesus)? It’s time to bear fruit! Tell someone else how they can know they are one of God’s chosen people. Write what happened here:

**Something to think about and remember:** John 1:12. Write it here:

Lesson 14: Jacob's Brides (Gen. 29, 30:1-24)

God allows us to experience trials as a way of disciplining us, helping us to mature into the people He created us to be and equipping us with what we need for the future. According to Proverbs 3:11-12, why does God discipline us?

According to James 1:2-4, what should our attitude be toward trials?

Why?

What might God be doing through the trials He's allowed in your life?

How might changing your attitude toward those trials affect your family life?

**Action Plan:** Think of one trial you are facing in your family life. Write it here:

Until now, what has your attitude been toward that trial?

From now on, what will your attitude be?

How will that change your actions towards your family member(s)?

**Something to think about and remember:** James 1:4. Write it here:

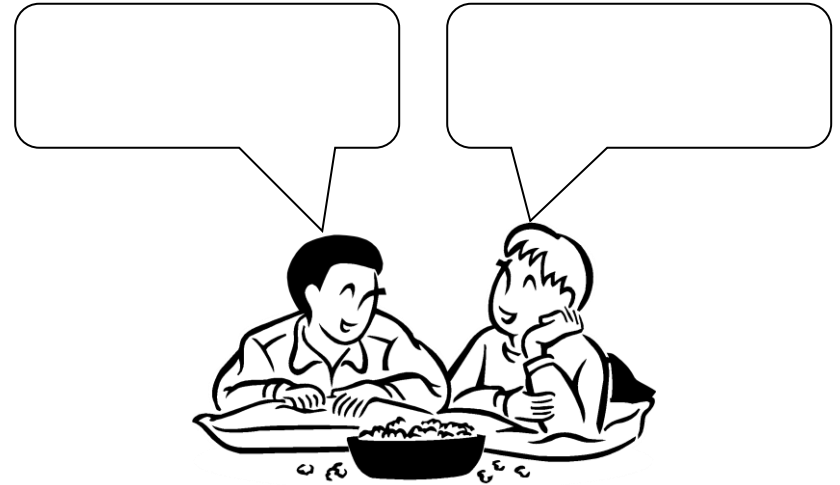
Lesson 15: More Trouble in Jacob's Family (Gen. 37)

Which person in today's story is most like you: Joseph or one of the other brothers?

Has favoritism caused trouble in your family? Explain.

Even if there hasn't been favoritism, has jealousy and hatred been a problem? Explain.

**Action Plan:** Is there something you could do to bring healing to the family? (Do you need to apologize to a family member, or forgive someone in your family?) Imagine talking to that person. What would you say? How do you think they would respond? Pray about it first and ask God to open the way.



**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 121:1-2. Write it here:

Lesson 16: Joseph Resists Temptation (Gen. 39)

People sometimes think that they can keep sexual sin a secret and that as long as both people involved want to do it, then it doesn't hurt anyone. That's not what God says about it.

Proverbs 5, 6:20-35 and 7 has a lot to say about sexual sin. Read those chapters and write 3 or more things you want to remember from them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Prov. 5:15-20 uses metaphors to talk about finding sexual satisfaction in your own husband or wife. Sexuality is something to be preserved for the enjoyment of a married couple for the rest of their lives. Sexual involvement with others outside of marriage diminishes the blessing that God intended sex to be. But if you have already failed in the area of sexual purity, God's mercy and grace are there to give you a fresh start. The consequences of sin won't all be erased, but the sin itself can be (remember 1 Jn. 1:9?). God can heal the wounds and soften the scars that sexual sin can leave behind.

**Action Plan:** Write your commitment to your spouse or future spouse here:

**Something to think about and remember:** 1 Cor. 10:13.  
Write it here:

Lesson 17: God Rescues Egypt through Joseph (Gen. 41)

Perhaps you feel like you don't have much and have nothing you can use to bless others. But not all blessings are material.

- Do you have a smile that can cheer someone up?
- Do you have the strength to help someone with a task?
- Do you have a mind that can help solve problems?
- Do you have the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom?

**Action Plan:** Write down one thing God has given you that you can share with others:

If you are in an ALS program, you are receiving a second chance at education. Are you faithfully and responsibly using the opportunity that God has given you? How might passing the A&E test be a blessing to others as well as yourself?

If you are studying *Exploring God's Story*, you have the opportunity to know God and His message and grow in your relationship with Him. If you now belong to Him through Christ, you are greatly blessed! Read Ephesians 1:3-14 and look for the blessings you have received. Write them here:

How can you share those blessings with someone else?

**Something to think about and remember:** Eph. 2:6-7. Write it here:

Lesson 18: God Rescues Israel through Joseph (Gen. 42-45)

Joseph is a great example of someone who trusted God, honored God in what he said and did, and represented God's love and mercy to others. What was your favorite part of Joseph's story?

Read Luke 6:27-36. Jesus gave some very radical commands in order to make a point. Why would He say such crazy things? What do you think is his main point?

Jesus is teaching his followers how to live in a way that is different from the rest of the world so that people will recognize that they are children of God. When we are kind and merciful to evil people, we show others what God is like. But this does not mean we need to stay in an abusive situation. God is a just God and does not take evil lightly. If you are in a place where someone is repeatedly abusing you, it's OK to get away and get help. Seeking protection and pressing criminal charges against a perpetrator is not the same as taking personal revenge.

**Action Plan:** Is there someone who has hurt you and you've been waiting for the opportunity to take revenge?

Determine whether the situation calls for criminal justice or for Jesus' plan of loving, blessing and doing good to them. Pray for them, then plan a way that you could bless them so that they will see God's loving-kindness in you:

**Something to think about and remember:** Romans 12:19.  
Write it here:

Lesson 19: God Rescues Baby Moses (Ex. 1:1-2:10)

Think about the dangers for children in society today. Here in the Philippines we have illegal abortions, human trafficking of children, child prostitution and other forms of dangerous child labor, begging syndicates, drug addiction and overdose, and child soldiers—all of which can easily lead to injury and death. Rescuing children from these practices is risky, but every child's life is precious in God's sight. What should we do? We've seen that God uses ordinary people: midwives, mothers, sisters, daughters, and, of course, boys and men as well, to accomplish His will. In today's story we saw how God rewarded some women who, in faith, took big risks in order to rescue babies. God gave them wisdom, courage and success.

**Action Plan:** Is there anything happening in your community that is placing babies or children at risk? Describe it here:

What can you do to stop it?

1. Pray. Ask God for wisdom and courage to do the right thing. Trust Him to work things out.
2. Make sure the child's parents or guardians are aware of the risky situation the child is in.
3. If the child's parents are part of the problem, tell another adult whom you trust and believe can help (perhaps your own parents, pastor or Instructional Manager).
4. If other adults have been unable or unwilling to help, inform your barangay officials of the situation. It is their duty to bring you to the police or the DSWD to file a report if they think you or someone else needs immediate protection.

**Something to think about and remember:** Hebrews 11:6.  
Write it here:

Lesson 20: God Calls Moses to Rescue His People (Ex. 3-6)

In our lesson today we learned that Moses was fearful and hesitant to obey God. He used his inability as an excuse for why he wasn't the right man for the job. If you were in a similar situation, what excuse would you give to God?

What if God simply asked you to give the message of His Rescue Plan to a family member, neighbor or friend? Would you still make an excuse? What would it be?

Look back at the memory verse from Lesson 19. According to Heb. 11:6, if we are relying on our own abilities rather than on God, what are we lacking?

God knows you. He knows your strengths and weaknesses. He knows everything about you because He made you. He did not choose you because you are so great. He chose you because He loves you and wants your life to reflect Him to others.

Look at 2 Corinthians 12:9 again. What was God's response when Paul asked God to take away his weakness?

**Action Plan:**

1. Admit your weakness and doubts to God.
2. Ask Him to overcome your weakness with His power so that everyone will know that He is the Lord of your life.
3. Share with someone the message God has given you.
4. Be ready to share what happened with your classmates.

**Something to think about and remember:** 2 Corinthians 12:9. Write it here:

Lesson 21: God Reveals His Power and Plan (Ex. 7-12)

In the space below, draw a doorframe, then draw spots on the doorframe where God instructed the Israelites to put the blood of the Passover lamb.

Why do you think God had them paint the blood of the lamb on the doorframe in that particular way?

Draw a cross, like the one where Jesus' blood was shed, on the picture of the doorframe, matching His bloodstains with those of the Passover lamb.

**Action Plan:** Work with one or two classmates using the words of the songs in Rev. 5 to make a rap song of your own. Practice it and prepare to present it in worship to the Lord. If music isn't your thing, write a poem or draw a picture of the scene described in Rev. 5. Share it with the class.

**Something to think about and remember:** John 1:29. Write it here:

Lesson 22: The People Complain yet God Provides (Ex. 14-17)

From time to time throughout our Christian lives we will experience a lack of faith. Every struggle and crisis we encounter in life will test our faith, sometimes in new ways. Right now you might be thinking, “I trust God. I know He is powerful and cares for me, so everything will be fine.” But will you remember that the next time something really bad happens?

We are all at least a little like the Israelites. When really bad things happen, we feel helpless, hopeless and afraid, as if God had vanished. It’s true that God allows us to go through some bad experiences, but He never abandons those who belong to Him. He has His reasons for what’s happening. He wants us to learn to trust Him. As we’ve seen in His Story, sometimes the reason is much bigger than just us and involves a lot of people who need to see that He is the Lord of all and give glory to Him.

What is another reason that God allows trials, according to James 1:2-3?

To persevere means: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_!\*

**Action Plan:** Read Mark 9:17-27. When the man’s faith faltered, what was his request to Jesus in verse 24?

What is worrying you?

If your faith is weak, right now you can pray the same prayer that man prayed. And \*don’t give up!

**Something to think about and remember:** James 1:2-3. Write it here:

Lesson 23: God Gives the Law and the People Reject It (Ex. 19, 20, 32)

Did any of the 10 Commandments speak to you? Which one got your attention and why?

An idol is someone or something that gets a higher place of honor and affection in your life than God.

Do you have an “idol”? If yes, what is it?

Do you have any images that you worship?

Do you ever use God’s or Jesus’ name disrespectfully?

Do you forget to honor God by having a day of rest?

Do you ever show disrespect to your parents?

Have you ever been tempted to kill someone?

Have you had sex with someone other than your own husband or wife?

Have you ever taken something that doesn’t belong to you?

Have you ever lied about someone else to get them in trouble?

Have you wished that you had what belongs to someone else?

**Action Plan:** Everyone can say “yes” to at least a few of these. We are all law-breakers and deserve the death sentence. Take time to confess to God your sins of irreverence toward Him and disrespect toward other people. Then read Rom. 13:8-10. What word sums up obedience to the law?

**Something to think about and remember:** Rom. 3:23-24. Write it here:

Lesson 24: The Tabernacle (Ex. 25:1-9; 39:42-43; 40:17-38; Lev. 1:1-9; 4:27-31; 17:11)

In today's lesson we learned that God required some offerings and sacrifices from the people so that He could come and live among them. What did the people willingly give up for the building of the tabernacle? (See Ex. 35:4-9, 20-29)

Because they were sinful people, what did they have to do in order for a holy God to continue to live among them?

The tabernacle and animal sacrifices were only a temporary part of God's Rescue Plan. Read Heb. 10:1-18. Verse 1 says these requirements of the law were "a shadow of good things to come." What do you think that means?

Verses 16 and 17 are quotes from the Old Testament book of Jeremiah. Through Jeremiah, God predicted a time when sacrifices would end. According to v. 18, why would they no longer be necessary?

Review Rom. 3:23-25a. What did God sacrifice so that our sin could be entirely forgiven and removed?

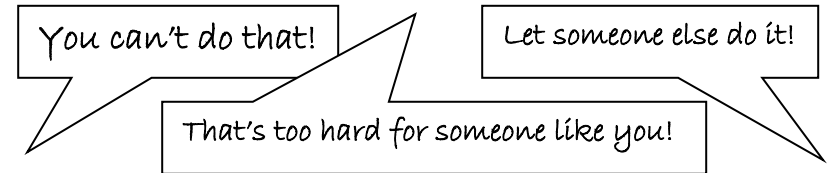
According to v. 25, who receives this forgiveness?

**Action Plan:** Have you put your trust in the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of all your sin? If not, would you like to do that now?

**Something to think about and remember:** Rom. 3:25a.  
Write it here:

Lesson 25: The People Reject the Land God Promised (Num. 13-14)

We learn when we are young what is expected of us. Parents, teachers and even friends say things like...



Just like the Israelites, we become afraid of failure and only attempt what we can safely accomplish ourselves. As a result, we miss out on the fulfilling life God has prepared for us. Can you think of something good you once wanted to do but you were told not to try it because it would be too difficult for you?

In 2008, a pair of teenaged brothers published a book entitled *Do Hard Things: A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations*. Their goal was to challenge young people to overcome the low expectations society has for teens and do hard things for the glory of God. It's another way of saying what is attributed to the famous missionary of the late 1700's, William Carey: *"Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."*

**Action Plan:** This image was found at <http://thirdwayliving.org/2011/10/choosing-faith-over-fear/>. Create a poster of your own design to remind you that faith in God overcomes fear.



**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 27:1. Write it here:

Lesson 26: Joshua Replaces Moses as Israel's Leader (Joshua 1:1-11; 2)

Back in Genesis 15:13-16, God told Abraham what was going to happen to his descendents. He predicted the 400 years of oppression in Egypt, and how He would rescue them and judge that nation for their cruelty. But He also explained that it was not yet time to give to Abraham the entire land of Canaan. What was the reason stated in v. 16?

Now read Leviticus 18 to find out what kinds of things the Canaanites were doing that was so detestable to God. Note especially v. 21. Molech worship was prevalent in Canaan. Central to the worship of Molech was placing babies and young children in the hands of the idol which was heated like a furnace and burned them to death. According to Lev. 20:1-5, how did God feel about the worship of Molech?

We have seen how prone the Israelites were to unfaithfulness. Even though it seems brutal, killing the Canaanites was a necessary part of God's Rescue Plan. But what does this mean for us today? Do you think God wants us to kill people who might lead us into sin?

**Action Plan:** Read Luke 6:27-35. What did Jesus say about how we should treat our enemies?

What enemy do you need to love? How will you do it?

**Something to think about and remember:** Luke 6:27-28.  
Write it here:

Lesson 27: Crossing the Jordan (Joshua 3-4)

Read Heb. 1:1-3. Jesus' life on earth was, in many ways, like a memorial stone. His birth, ministry, death and resurrection are all memorable and well recorded in the New Testament. He showed the world what God is like, His awesome power and His loving-kindness, and he gave us many illustrations to remember. What stories can you remember from Jesus' life that have helped you understand what God is like?

The last thing that Jesus commanded his disciples before He left the earth to return to His Father is found in Matt. 28:18-20. What symbolic ritual is listed there that is supposed to be observed by disciples throughout the earth?

Baptism was intended to be an illustration or memorial. Read Rom. 6:3-5. What does baptism memorialize?

What does it represent or illustrate in our own lives?

Why do you think Jesus commanded baptism?

What might we forget if Christians stop observing baptism?

**Action Plan:** If you are trusting in Christ but have not been baptized and want to be, discuss it with your IM or pastor.

**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 145:10-12.  
Write verse 10 here:



Lesson 28: Two Battles, Two Outcomes (Joshua 6-7)

When a doctor finds a cancerous tumor in someone, what does he or she do?

What happens if not all of the cancer is removed?

Sin is like cancer. If you ignore it, it grows and spreads. In the case of Achan, God was doing drastic surgery to remove sin from among His people. The people needed to know that it was not just OK to directly disobey the command of the LORD. What would Achan's sin look like today? Can you think of an example from current events where one person's selfishness caused many people to suffer?

How does society bring justice in that kind of situation?

Write an example from your own life experience where one person's sin brought pain and suffering to many others.

Was justice served or did they get away with it?

Do you think there are any sins that don't hurt anybody? If so, what would they be?

**Action Plan:** Perhaps you are the one who caused pain and suffering to others. Like Achan, we have all sinned and deserve death. But, thank God, we don't have to be stoned to death! Read Prov. 28:13. Confess that sin to God and thank Him for His mercy, then try to make it right with those you have hurt.

**Something to think about and remember:** Ps. 145:10-12.  
Write verses 10-11 here:

Lesson 29: God Sends Judges to Rescue Israel (Judges 2:6-19; 1 Samuel 1; 3:1-10, 19-21)

The book of Judges has some amazing stories in it. Warning: most of them contain a lot of violence! The judges were mostly brave warriors that God used to rid Israel of their enemies. The most famous judges are probably Deborah, Gideon and Samson. You can read about them in Judges 4, 6, 7, and 13-16. Choose one of these judges and answer the questions below.

Name of the judge:

Israel's enemy at that time:

Description of the judge:

How God showed His power through that judge:

How the Israelites were rescued from their enemies:

**Action Plan:** What did you learn from the life of this judge that you can apply to your own life?

**Something to think about and remember:** Ps. 145:10-12.  
Write verses 11-12 here:

30 The Last Judge and the First King (1 Samuel 8; 10:17-25; 15:1-31)

Write about a time when you decided to do something, even though you knew it was wrong. Perhaps you thought “I’ll just ask God for forgiveness later” or “Tomorrow I will do this or that so God will forgive me.”

How do you feel about that now after hearing Saul’s story?

**Action Plan:** What needs to change in your life now that you know God isn’t interested in “sacrifices”?

Read Romans 6:1-2, 12-18 and summarize it in your own words:

What do you think it means to live “under grace”?

Who needs to hear today’s story? \_\_\_\_\_  
Tell it to them as soon as possible. Be sure to include today’s memory verse.

**Something to think about and remember:** 1 Sam. 15:22.  
Write it here:

31 David: Man with a Hero’s Heart (1 Sam. 16, 17, 18; 2 Sam. 5, 7, 11, 12)

David played an important part in God’s Rescue Plan. He established a righteous rule in Israel that became the standard for all those who succeeded him. Many prophecies were made about the future of his kingdom. Read the prophecy of Isaiah in Isa. 9:7. What kind of ruler would eventually reign over David’s kingdom?

During Jesus’ ministry on earth, people sometimes called him Son of David (see Mat. 9:27, Mat. 15:22). Calling Jesus Son of David was the same as calling Him Messiah, the Promised One they had been expecting because of the prophecies.

**Action Plan:** Read Mat. 21:8-11, 15. How did the priests and teachers of the law respond when they heard the people call Him that? Why do you think they reacted that way?

Jesus was not what they expected. They were expecting someone who would restore David’s kingdom and free them from foreign rule. But that was not God’s Rescue Plan.

Read Psalm 23, perhaps David’s most famous psalm. Even before Samuel anointed David, God knew everything that would happen to David and his kingdom. In your opinion, why did God choose David over everyone else to be Jesus ancestor?

In what way would you like to be more like David?

**Something to think about and remember:** Psalm 51:16-17.  
Write it here:



34 God Reveals Himself to Other Nations (Daniel 1-4, 6)

There is an old English poem, entitled “The Hound of Heaven” (Francis Thompson, 1893), about a person who thought that God would ruin all his attempts at happiness and fun. He tried everything to hide or flee from God. Finally, ruined by failure and grief, he realized that God’s love is the true source of hope and happiness.

The poem compares God to a hound, a hunting dog used to track down wild animals or missing people, that refuses to give up the pursuit. We’ve seen in God’s Story how, generation after generation, God has continued to lovingly pursue His people, in spite of their unfaithfulness. But sometimes that loving pursuit had to be harsh and painful so they would pay attention. In today’s lesson, we saw how He pursued a wicked, arrogant king (who was not a descendant of Abraham) until he finally realized there was no escape. Daniel 4 is Nebuchadnezzar’s joyful testimony to all the nations of God’s wondrous power and eternal kingdom (see 4:1-3).

**Action Plan:** Think about your own life. How has God pursued you? Has it been pleasant or painful? Why? Write about it here:

**Something to think about and remember:** Jeremiah 29:11-12. Write it here:

35 Return to Israel (Ezra 1; 7:11-28; Neh. 1; 2:1-8; 6:15-16)

If you read more from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, you will see that both were men of prayer, faith and action. Ezra was like a Bible professor studying and teaching God’s Word. Nehemiah was like an army general/construction contractor, managing human and material resources. Both trusted God to see their work accomplished. God had prepared them to be leaders and gave them special assignments. But there were many others who joined them and participated in God’s work.

**Action Plan:** Which of the following kinds of people can honor and serve the Lord? Write yes or no.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| _____ farmer         | _____ beautician     |
| _____ business owner | _____ street vendor  |
| _____ pastor         | _____ jeepney driver |
| _____ teacher        | _____ politician     |
| _____ pro athlete    | _____ missionary     |

Of course, people in any of these occupations can honor and serve the Lord. Likewise, any of them could choose to dishonor the Lord and serve themselves instead. Circle the things below that are *necessary* in order to honor and serve the Lord:

- |           |                |                         |        |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------------|--------|
|           | College degree | Good health             | Prayer |
| Obedience | Good job       |                         |        |
| Faith     |                | Knowledge of God’s Word |        |

Through *Exploring God’s Story*, you are growing in your knowledge of God’s Word. Are you also becoming a person of faith, obedience and prayer?

What do you believe God might be preparing you for?

**Something to think about and remember:** Jeremiah 29:11-13. Write it here:

36 The Rescue Begins: Jesus is Born! (Luke 1:26-38; Matt. 1:1-25; Luke 2:22-40)

What **names for Jesus** did you hear in today’s lesson?

Matt. 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 1:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 1:23 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 1:32 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 1:35 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 2:26 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 2:30 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 2:32 \_\_\_\_\_

John 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

John 1:9 \_\_\_\_\_

**Action Plan:** According to Matt. 1:23, what is the meaning of the name *Immanuel*? \_\_\_\_\_

Think about that for a moment. What does it mean to you that Almighty God came to live on earth as another human being? Why did He do that?

Someone explained it like this: to communicate with ants, you’d have to become an ant and go to where the ants live. Likewise, in order to communicate His love to us in a way we could understand, God became a human and lived with us!

**Something to think about and remember:** John 1:14. Write it here:

37 Jesus Declares His Identity and Purpose (Luke 4:16-21, 38-44; John 10:7-10, 14-16, 24-33)

There are many religions (cults) that teach that Jesus was not truly God, but rather that He was just a good man or prophet who taught wonderful things. But we’ve seen that Jesus did claim to be God—that is why the Jews tried to stone Him and eventually crucified him. If He wasn’t truly God, then He was telling a lie. If He was lying about who He was, why should anyone believe anything else He said? And why would they consider a liar to be a good man? It doesn’t make sense.

What do you think? Was Jesus truly one with God the Father, as He claimed in John 10:30 or was He a liar? (See John 1:1-3, 14 and John 8:54-59 for more evidence.)

Why should we believe what He said about Himself? What proof was there that He really was God? (See John 20:30-31.)

**Action Plan:** Think of someone you know who needs to know Jesus the way you know Him. Imagine that Jesus has come to your barangay and you want to introduce that person to Him. What would you say?

What would you tell that person about Jesus to help them understand who He is and what He came to do?

Which verses do you think would be the most helpful? Why?

**Something to think about and remember:** John 3:17. Write it here:

38 Jesus Invites Followers to Kingdom Living (Luke 5:1-11, 8:4-15, 9:1-6)

The parable of the seed and soil presents an analogy of what happens when the Word of God is heard and the impact it has depending on the condition of people's hearts. In Jesus' story, what did the following items represent?

seed

soil

path

birds

rocky ground

thorns

good soil

crop/fruit

**Action Plan:** Draw a picture or series of pictures to illustrate the parable that Jesus told about the seed and soil. As you draw, think about how you could use the illustration(s) to teach someone else what the parable means. Then...

- Share your picture and the parable with someone.
- Explain the meaning of the parable to them.
- Ask them which kind of soil best represents the condition of their heart.
- Tell about the condition of your own heart, past and present.
- Offer to pray for them.

**Something to think about and remember:** Ephesians 2:10.  
Write it here:

39 Jesus Prepares His Disciples for His Death (John 13:1-17, 34-35; 14: 1-7, 16-19, 26-27; 15:4-5, 8-14; 16:1-4; 17:1-23)

That same night with the disciples, Jesus prayed an awesome prayer for them. You can find it in John 17. If you have your own Bible, read that prayer slowly and underline the parts that are most meaningful to you. Notice verse 20. Who is Jesus praying for?

**Action Plan:** Because those men and many people after them shared Jesus' message of God's Kingdom, we have heard it also. And if we have believed in Him, Jesus was also praying for us! Personalize Jesus' prayer by writing **your own name** in the places where He referred to his disciples:

"Father, you gave [me] authority over all people so that [I] might give eternal life to \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 2). I have made you known to \_\_\_\_\_. He/she belonged to you, and you gave him/her to me. He/she has obeyed your word (v. 6) ...and believes that you sent me (v. 7). [M]y glory is shown through \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 10). I am no longer in the world, but \_\_\_\_\_ is in the world (v. 11). Holy Father, keep \_\_\_\_\_ safe by the power of your name. I do not ask you to take \_\_\_\_\_ out of the world, but I do ask you to keep him/her safe from the Evil One (v. 15). I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ might be one with all those who believe...so that the world will believe that you sent me (vv. 21, 23). Father, you have given \_\_\_\_\_ to me, and I want \_\_\_\_\_ to be with me where I am, so that he/she may see my glory (v. 24)."

(Adapted from John 17:1-24, TEV)

**Something to think about and remember:** John 13:34-35.  
Write it here:

40 Death Can't Stop the Rescue Plan! (Luke 24:1-9, 13-39, 45-48; Acts 1:8-11)

You can be part of getting God's Rescue Plan to those who haven't heard that **Jesus** is the **Way** to the Father, the **Truth** that everyone needs to know, and the **Life** that breaks the curse of Adam and Eve's sin. Write one verse that helped you understand how to receive the gift of salvation:

**Action Plan:** Prepare your own personal testimony.

**Step 1:** Write what your life was like before you put your trust in Christ. Describe thoughts, feelings, actions and attitudes.

**Step 2:** Write about how you came to the point of trusting in Christ as your Savior and Lord. What influenced you?

**Step 3:** What changes did you see in your life right away? How have your thoughts, feelings, actions and attitudes been changing since then?

Practice sharing your testimony with a classmate, then share it with someone in your family or community.

**Something to think about and remember:** Acts 1:8. Write it here:

41 The Holy Spirit Comes (Acts 2-4)

Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit?

If you have repented of your sin and believed that God sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world, then you have received the Holy Spirit. According to 1 Cor. 6:19-20, where does the Holy Spirit now reside?

How does that make you feel to know that the Holy Spirit lives in your body?

When the writer, Paul, says that you were bought with a price, he means that you were bought back from Satan's kingdom by the blood of Jesus that was sacrificed for you on the cross. You don't belong to Satan anymore, and you don't really belong to yourself anymore. You belong to God. According to v. 20, what should you be doing with your body?

Now read Eph. 1:13-14. According to these verses, for what purpose has God put the Holy Spirit in us?

The Holy Spirit is there in you as a confirmation of God's ownership until Jesus comes back for you. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit is there to be your comforter, guide and helper so that your life will point other people to Jesus!

**Action Plan:** Think about the presence of the Holy Spirit in you. Write a prayer expressing your thoughts.

**Something to think about and remember:** Acts 2:38. Write it here:

#### 42 The Rescue Plan Is for Everyone (Acts 10)

Imagine that you are a modern-day Peter. You are a follower of Jesus. You have some old beliefs that God is changing through the Holy Spirit and His Word. What are some things that you believed in the past that you now realize are not true?

What did God use to change your mind?

One misunderstanding that many people believe is that you have to do enough good things to outweigh the bad things you've done so that God will accept you into heaven. What verses have you learned that would help you explain to someone the truth about how to be accepted by God?

**Action Plan:** Who might be your “Cornelius”—someone you avoided or disliked in the past, but now you realize needs to hear God’s Rescue Plan?

If you can’t think of anyone, begin praying that God would show you whom you’ve been overlooking or even avoiding. Ask Him to give you enough compassion for that person so that you are willing to share the Good News about Jesus with whomever He brings to your mind.

**Something to think about and remember:** Acts 2:38-39.  
Write it here:

#### 43 The First Missionaries (Acts 9:1-18; 11:19-26; 13:1-3)

According to the U.S. Center for World Mission (found at <http://www.joshuaproject.net/> on 28 January 2014), about 40% of the world’s population is still in unreached people groups. That’s almost 3 billion people who don’t yet have access to a Bible-believing church. That means thousands are dying every day without hope of eternal life. Just imagine that hopelessness.

Eternal death is not a pretty picture. Read the story Jesus told to explain what will happen to those who belong to the kingdom of Satan in Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43. How does he describe the punishment that awaits them?

John saw a vision of what it’s going to be like for Satan and his followers at the final judgment. Read Rev. 20:10-15. How is hell described here?

Right now, about 40% of the world is trapped in Satan’s deception because they haven’t even had a chance to hear the Rescue Plan. How does that make you feel?

**Action Plan:** What are you going to do about it? What part can you have in getting the Good News out to people who haven’t heard it?

- I want to help send someone!
- I want to pray for a people group or missionary!
- I want to GO!

What’s the first step? (Not sure? Ask your pastor or I.M.)

**Something to think about and remember:** Rom. 10:14-15.  
Write it here:



44 The Rescue Plan Completed: Jesus Will Return! (Mat. 24:3-44; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 21:1-22:1-5, 20)

Are you sure that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:27)? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think you can explain to someone else how they can be sure their name is written there? \_\_\_\_\_

Compare Rom. 6:23, our memory verse from Lesson 3, with Heb. 9:27-28. What do these verses have in common?

**Action Plan:** How could you use these verses to explain the Rescue Plan to someone else? Practice with a partner.

Read all of Rev. 21:1-22:5. Draw a picture that represents what you are most looking forward to in the New Jerusalem.

**Something to think about and remember:** Hebrews 9:27-28.  
Write it here:

Final Reflections on Exploring God's Story

Has this study of God's Word been helpful to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are the most important things you learned about...  
God?

What God is doing in the world?

Yourself?

How you fit in with God's plan for the world?

Write what you liked about this class:

Write what you did not like about this class:

Share what you have written with your Instructional Manager or facilitator. Thank them for guiding you through God's Story. Ask any questions that might remain on your mind about God and His Word. And share what you have learned with others!

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter gives a brief summary of the entire thesis project, a look at how the product of the thesis project has the potential to meet the felt needs and goals, and a discussion of modifications to the curriculum recommended by several ALS providers.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this project was to develop a Christian education curriculum that would assist Christian organizations using the Alternative Learning System to effectively integrate biblical education and spiritual formation into the educational service they provide. It was intended to complement the ALS curriculum by enhancing the ability of that program to provide a holistic education by applying adult learning methods to biblical content.

Through the assistance of a focus group consisting of experienced ALS providers, the educational and spiritual needs of the learners were explored and the felt needs of the providers themselves were determined. These findings confirmed my own observations of the ALS curriculum, urban out-of-school youth and a few ALS centers. This need profile, presented in Chapter 4, was considered in light of the research undertaken for Chapter 2, which supported the use of the Praxis Cycle as the learning model and chronological Bible stories as the content. The outcome was an adaptation of a discovery Bible study format exploring a series of forty-four Bible stories (see Chapter 5).

## Conclusions

While the curriculum resources have not been thoroughly tested, based on the responses of the ALS providers who evaluated samples of the materials, it seems the curriculum has potential to achieve the desired outcomes. The selection of stories from the Word of God and the discussion questions given have the capacity to address many of the needs revealed by the research, as shown in the table below.

Table 4. Correspondence of Perceived Needs of Learners with the Ways those Needs are Addressed by the Curriculum Resources

<b>Needs of Learners</b> as perceived by the researcher and focus group members	<b>Ways the Needs are Addressed</b> by the curriculum resources
1. Understanding of God's overarching plan of redeeming humanity from sin and death: salvation by God's grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not works.	The need for redemption is developed as learners are given opportunity to relate to the sinfulness of God's people, yet repeatedly the stories reveal that it is faith that pleases God and that from the beginning, He has had a "Rescue Plan" in place: Jesus. Eph. 2:8-9 is introduced in Lesson 7 and revisited repeatedly.
2. Life change, transformation, character development, values formation, Christian perspective	This need is addressed largely through repeated exposure to the truth of God's Word. These kinds of changes come as one's world view shifts from the prevailing cultural beliefs to God's perspective, as revealed in His Word. This takes time, repetition and analytical thinking in order to recognize the differences, so the curriculum provides resources to last for at least a year. Transformation also requires the work of God's Holy Spirit, which is why the facilitator is repeatedly encouraged to bathe the process in prayer.
3. Biblical view of personal identity and destiny, mission and vision	Stories were chosen with the intention of helping the learners see themselves as God sees them: though sinful, they are valued and loved by God who went to great lengths to provide for a relationship with them. The stories reveal that God has a plan for them in His kingdom. Discussion and application questions encourage them to explore what that means for them personally.

To a degree, however, the effectiveness of the curriculum is dependent on its implementation which, in turn, is dependent on the skill of the facilitator to present the story, guide the discussion and model the kind of dialogue-based, learner-centered inquiry called for in the Praxis Cycle. Ways to overcome this limitation should be explored.

Attempting to meet the needs of individual facilitators and learning centers was challenging. Facilitators vary widely in their capabilities in story-telling, leading a discussion and understanding English. Initially, the focus group indicated that, for the most part, their staff members were above average in their Bible knowledge, experienced and resourceful instructors, and most would be comfortable using an English curriculum guide. The feedback from those who reviewed the facilitator's orientation and sample lessons, however, suggested that the resources may be difficult for some IMs to use, either because they are not experienced with the instructional methods required or because of a lack of facility in English.

Because each ALS center has its own unique schedule and time allowances for "devotions" or "values education," it was not possible to cater to the "typical" situation in terms of format. The focus group suggested that a 30-minute lesson length would be appropriate for most situations. I found it impossible to incorporate all the elements I felt were essential for meeting the curriculum goals into a 30-minute per week time limit. Consequently, the feedback I received from centers that meet only once a week indicated that the curriculum could not be adapted to their program. The rest, however, felt that in one way or another it could be adapted for their use. My hope is that most centers, like

the one I have been involved in, will be able to allow for longer sessions once a week or 30 minute sessions more than once a week, dividing the material over two or more days.

Considered throughout the development of the curriculum were the five goals (found in Chapter 4) formulated from responses to the first survey of ALS providers and refined by the focus group. These goals influenced the selection of stories and, to a degree, the direction of the questions for guiding the discussion and developing the application. The specific objectives of each lesson came more as a result of allowing the selected Scripture to “speak for itself” about who God is, what He has been doing in our world and what that has to do with us. To encourage facilitators as well as the learners to do their own thinking in reliance on the Holy Spirit to illumine their study of the Scriptures, “correct” answers are rarely given for the discussion questions.

Although a conscious effort was made not to manipulate the Scripture to force desired outcomes, impose any specific doctrine controversial within evangelicalism or dogmatically predetermine the conclusions reached by the learners and facilitators as they apply the Praxis Cycle, undoubtedly my own interpretations and biases found their way into the material at some points. The lessons are clearly designed to point the learners toward entering into a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ and becoming active agents in His kingdom. Though it will be some time before there will be observable evidence of its efficacy in the lives of learners, feedback from the survey respondents indicated that the curriculum had the potential to accomplish all five goals in the lives of the learners.

In addition to these goals for spiritual formation, the curriculum resources were designed to reinforce the academic pursuits of the learners. Unfortunately, I failed to

illicit feedback from the focus group as to whether they believe these resources have the capacity to do so. While some of the content in the learner's *Discovery Journal* may support information in the ALS modules, this aim was addressed more directly by the instructional methods themselves than by the lesson content. For the learners to grow in confidence and gain analytical thinking and communication skills, the curriculum must be used correctly in a supportive environment. The learners must be allowed to analyze the content for themselves rather than being fed "correct" responses. They must be encouraged to speak in front of their peers, through both story-telling and stating their own observations and opinions, without fear of embarrassment. They must be given opportunity to express themselves through written response, either in the *Discovery Journal* or in their own blank notebooks. They must learn through experience how to formulate an individual or corporate Action Plan in response to what they have discovered. All of these are highly dependent on the willingness and ability of the facilitator to use the prescribed learning methods.

### **Recommendations**

A number of modifications to the curriculum were suggested or implied in the responses of the focus group on the feedback survey and listed in Chapter 5. They are abbreviated and considered as follows:

1. Filipino translation: I believe this is important and hope to pursue translation if the curriculum proves to be useful for the intended clientele. Most urgent is the translation of the *Discovery Journal*, which must be understood by the learners themselves, and should be pursued right away.

2. Include in the Orientation an example of how a lesson is to be used: I believe this would be better accomplished through a training workshop for facilitators rather than adding more explanatory words to the Orientation in the Facilitator's Guide. How these lessons are intended to be used needs to be demonstrated.
3. Eliminate excess words in the Lesson Outlines (e.g. Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit) to make them more succinct: These words were included intentionally to remind the facilitator of their importance and to help them develop a habit. I anticipate that there will be users facilitating the lessons who have not thoroughly read or memorized the Orientation materials. Furthermore, I do not believe that much is gained by removing them.
4. A training seminar for facilitators may be necessary if the curriculum resources will be implemented as designed: I heartily agree and intend to develop a training seminar.
5. Consider creating a demonstration video on how to facilitate a discussion: While facilitator training videos already available on the internet, creating one specific for the curriculum and particular clientele is an excellent suggestion and should be pursued.
6. Make the objectives more concrete and measurable: I made them measurable when I felt I could but this was rare because most of the desired outcomes are affective in nature. It is very difficult to measure changes in what a person truly feels and believes and often impossible to observe whether these changes are transferring to "real life" circumstances. We are dependent (1) on verbal and written responses to the lessons which the learners are consistently encouraged to make to the group and

- in the *Discovery Journal*, and (2) on observable changes in relationships, many of which need to happen at home if they are to be considered real changes. It is possible for the former to be produced out of a desire to impress others rather than true, permanent change in attitudes and beliefs, and the latter are often impossible for the facilitator to observe well enough to document. Modifications will be minimal.
7. Suggest a time allotment for each section of the Lesson Outline: Because of the nature of the Praxis Cycle, the varying needs and time allowances of the learning centers, and my expectations for the facilitators, I hesitate to do this. I want the facilitator to have as much freedom as possible to use the resources as he or she sees fit in the context of his or her own learning center. I would also hope that, when significant discussion is taking place, the facilitator would not feel compelled to curtail the work of the Holy Spirit because of a schedule. While I would prefer that time allotments be set by the facilitator, I will consider making suggestions in the Orientation material.
  8. Make the lessons simpler and the teaching time shorter or suggest ways the lesson could be divided into shorter sessions: I choose the latter option. Suggestions for dividing the lesson to be used over two or more days can be added to the Orientation.
  9. Give additional suggested activities for the facilitator to choose from: This recommendation is in direct opposition to the previous one which indicated the lessons are already too long. Again, it is my expectation that the creative and resourceful facilitator will supplement the material as he or she sees fit. The purpose of the Evaluation space at the end of each lesson is that the facilitator will accumulate ideas to be applied when that lesson is used in the future. If I have the opportunity to



learn from the experiences of these facilitators, as I hope to do in future interactions with i-Calls members, I will gladly consider adding helpful activities to the Resources section of the curriculum.

I am greatly indebted to God's faithful servants who are making a difference in the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands, by providing education and hope to out-of-school youth, and who contributed their time, wisdom and effort to this project. I intend to get drafts of the curriculum resources into the hands of as many iCalls members as possible within the year. After they have had a chance to implement it, I would like to solicit more feedback from them in order to make final revisions prior to publishing it for use nation-wide. It is my sincere hope that Christian ALS providers throughout the Philippines will find this curriculum to be a useful tool for expanding God's Kingdom.

## APPENDIX A

### INTEGRATING “VALUES EDUCATION” IN ALS Survey of Christian ALS Providers, August 2, 2012

Dear Co-worker in the Harvest,

If you are or have been an ALS service provider sponsored by a Christian organization or church, please take a few moments to answer the following questions. Your input will be a valuable resource for the development of a curriculum designed to address the spiritual and social needs of our ALS learners.

1. Other than academic assistance, what do you perceive to be the greatest needs of your learners?
2. In what ways has your ALS center endeavored to meet those needs?
3. Have you used a published values education or Christian education curriculum? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, what is the name of the curriculum?

Was it effective? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?

4. Do you perceive a need for a Christian education curriculum especially designed to be used by ALS providers? Explain.
5. If you were designing a curriculum specifically for meeting the spiritual and social needs of ALS learners, what would you include in it?

Thank you very much for your input. I will carefully consider your responses as I design the curriculum. In addition to the survey results, I will need an advisory group to assist in the curriculum development process. If you would be willing to meet with me once before I write the curriculum and once after the first draft is written to review it and provide feedback, please provide your email address. (Email is necessary, as it will be the primary way we will communicate.)

- Yes! I am willing to join the advisory group. Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- No, sorry. I'm not available to serve in this way.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your organization/ALS center: \_\_\_\_\_

The researcher, Elizabeth A. Eyestone, has my permission to use the above information for her master's thesis at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

## APPENDIX B

### Feedback Instrument for the *Exploring God's Story* Resource Sample Materials

Your responses to the following questions will be valuable for developing the curriculum. Please return the feedback form as soon as possible. The deadline is November 15. To fill out the form on computer, please underline or highlight your responses.

1. I have read the Facilitator Guide and the ten sample lessons.    *Yes*    *No*
2. I have implemented some of the lessons with ALS learners.    *Yes*    *No*
3. The Facilitator's Guide was: *very helpful*    *somewhat helpful*    *not very helpful*
4. What would make the Facilitator's Guide more helpful to the average IM? (Please give your suggestions for additions, deletions, changes, etc.)
  
5. Should the Facilitator Guide give more detailed instruction for developing story-telling and discussion leading skills or do these need to be learned in a different way? Explain.
  
6. Do the session plans appear easy to use for the average IM?  
           *Very easy*            *Somewhat easy*            *Somewhat difficult*            *Very difficult*  
           If difficult, please explain:
  
7. Does the curriculum appear to be adaptable to your learning center's schedule?  
           *Yes, readily adaptable*    *Yes, we can adjust it to fit*    *No, it won't fit our schedule*
8. Based on the few lessons you have seen, do you believe the curriculum will accomplish the following goals in the lives of the learners?
  - Expand their knowledge and understanding of God and His overarching plan for humanity. *Yes*    *Somewhat*    *No*
  - Enter into a personal relationship with God by faith in His plan of reconciliation and redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ. *Yes*    *Possibly*    *No*
  - Discover their God-given identity and destiny. *Yes*    *Possibly*    *No*
  - Develop their life mission and vision as active agents in the Kingdom of God.  
           *Yes*    *Somewhat*    *No*
  - Discover and apply to their lives the principles God has revealed in Scripture for life in His Kingdom. *Yes*    *Possibly*    *No*
9. Any other suggestions for making this curriculum effective for the majority of IMs?

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