

How to Know Christ Is in Your Life

Topic: Assurance of Salvation

Purpose of this study:

To make the new Christian sure of five facts concerning asking Christ into his life.

- Christ has indeed come into his life;
- He has been reborn as a whole new creation;
- All his sins - past, present, and future - have been forgiven;
- A new relationship has been established between him and God;
- He will never again be separated from God.

Motivation for teaching this study:

You've just lead someone to Christ! Wonderful! But now what do you do? A brand new Christian is in a terrible vulnerable state. Satan is trying to convince him that "praying that prayer" was really insignificant. He is trying to kill the seed before it starts to grow. Your job is to explain the truth of what really happened and what to expect in the new believers life from now on. While you may not be able to be 100% sure of your new disciple's faith, you must take him or her at their word and tell them how to take the next step in their new walk with Christ.

Introducing the Lesson:

You may want to begin by asking the question: "What thoughts ran through your mind when you prayed that prayer to invite Christ into your life?" Or, "What did you feel like when you first believed in Christ?" Then you can say, "Today we want to talk about how to know Christ is in your life".

Teaching the Bible study:

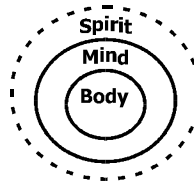
Have the students circle the correct percentages that best describe their relationship with Christ at this point. There are no right answers and you should not act surprised if someone is unsure of their relationship with Christ. By carefully observing the percentages circled, one should have a feel for how confident students are of their salvation.

Explaining each point:

Point #1 - Stress that Christ has said He would come into their lives and that God cannot lie or mislead them (Numbers 23:19). Therefore, they can have certainty that Christ is in their lives.

Point #2 - Born again means to be *born again spiritually*. A new birth has taken place. This can be illustrated by drawing the following diagram:

First draw the body, followed by the mind.
Then draw a dashed line enclosing the other two to symbolize the spiritual dimension coming to life when a person believes in Christ.



Point #3 - Emphasize that all of our sins, past-present-future, have been forgiven by Christ. Jesus as a high priest has forgiven the sins of all time by his one offering on the cross and now God views us as white as snow.

Point #4 - Here you should strive to cover two truths. First, your disciple should grasp that he really was lost before his conversion. Second, he should know that the reasons behind his lostness are gone now, and things are totally different between him and God.

Point #5 - Stress the security of being in God's hand. Basically, Jesus has said that nothing can take us away from out of his hand - even ourselves! Once you're in, you're IN!

Father-Son Relationship - You will always be a son or daughter of your earthly father. Even if you run away and declare that you disown your parents and they disown you, your father will always be your father. He was the one who gave you life and nothing will ever change that. It's the same with God. Once we born into his family (John 1:12), we are born again and no one can take this life from us (John 3:1-8).

Closing the Lesson:

Encourage them to thank God as a group or individually that He has come into their lives. Set a time to meet again as a group.

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask a new Christian after you have had some input into their lives about their assurance of salvation. Do not ask all of these questions, just pick a couple you feel are relevant.

- If you were to die tonight and stand before God, and He were to say, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" what would you say?
- If someone were to ask you, "How can I be sure I'm a Christian?" what would you say?
- What are some things you can do to make yourself worthy of God's love? (Trick question. The right is answer is nothing. But, you can tell what they are trusting in by how they answer the question.)
- Do you really think you are good enough for God to save you? (Trick question. "No" is the right answer, but this also reveals how well they understand their sinful condition before God.)

* Many concepts in this study are from *Personal Disciplemaking* by Chris Adsit. Visit www.ccci.org/disciplemakers or call 888-342-2235.

The Way We Were vs. The Way We Are

Topic: Scope and Significance of Salvation

Purpose of this study:

To help the new Christian understand in greater detail the scope and significance of what occurred when he invited Christ into his life. This should produce a deeper commitment and a greater motivation to go on with Christ.

Motivation for teaching this study:

There is no way that a new Christian can possibly grasp all the things you shared with him about his salvation the last time you met with him. He needs time to evaluate his decision and let it sink in what has taken place. This study will give him a clear picture of what actually occurred when he believed, and it should motivate him to continue to seek God for his further growth.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask "How have things been going since our last meeting? Have you noticed any changes in your life since you have believed in Christ?" Be prepared for some heavy-duty questions. Remember just like a new born baby, he will probably have some immediate felt needs to be met first before you can get into his real needs.

Teaching the Bible study:

This study is divided up into two parts: the condition before one received Christ and the condition after one received Christ. To best convey this truth, have the students fold their papers in half to cover one side at a time before opening up the sheet and contrasting the two sides.

The Way We Were

#1 - Having a correct definition of sin is extremely important. Sin in Romans 3:23 is described as "missing God's perfect mark." The glory of God is being perfect before Him in all that we think and do. No one can meet this standard and everyone stands condemned before God.

#2 - Simply communicate that our sins have separated us from God. Ask them if before they received Christ, did God seem silent and far away? This verse explains why.

#3 - When a person believes in Christ, his name is written in the Book of Life. During the Final judgment day, Jesus will cast those whose names are not written in the Book of Life into eternal fire, hell. This passage may be severe but the truth of their former condition before God must be clearly communicated.

#4 - Ask "Were there times before you were a Christian, that you looked at your life and thought, 'I'm not such a bad guy after all. My good far outweighs my bad. I should go to heaven when I die.'" Regardless of how good we may have thought we were, all of our deeds were like filthy rags to God. We were born evil (Romans 3) with a sinful nature. Emphasize that even though God still loved us before Christ, God viewed our works as filthy rags before we believed in Christ.

The Way We Are

#1 - When a person trusts Christ, God transfers the penalty for their sin over to Christ's account and declares them righteous.

Judge Illustration: Pretend that someone in the group is caught for burglarizing a house. The judge tries them, finds them guilty, and sentences them to 2 years in jail or \$10,000. Since the person you picked is a student, he is unable to pay the fine and must go to jail. However one of the burglar's friends (someone else in the group) approaches the judge and says he will go to jail for two years in place of his friend. That is what happened when God saved us. Jesus approached God's bench and paid the penalty for our sins. Now we are clean with no marks on our record before God.

#2 - Redeemed means to *buy back or purchase out of the market place*. Christ redeemed us when he brought us back from Satan's kingdom by shedding His blood.

Story of the boy with the toy boat: There once was a little boy who loved boats. When he was older, he decided to make a model sail boat. He labored for weeks on it, working out every detail of the vessel. Finally, his boat was ready to go on its maiden voyage. While the boy was watching his boat float on a big lake, a strong gust of wind caused the string to come loose from the boat and drift away. The boy was very sad. A few days later he went with his parents to the other side of the lake and entered a toy store. In the window, he saw his boat. He told the store owner that the boat was his, but the man would not believe the boy. The man told him he would have to pay for the boat just like everyone else if he wanted it. For several weeks, the boy worked hard until he finally saved up enough money to buy the boat back. Once the owner of the store took the money and handed the boy the boat, the boy began talking to his little boat. "Now you're mine twice: once because I made you, and once because I bought you." Jesus buys us back to God through his redemption.

#3 - Eternal life is a present possession the moment we believe.

Dollar in Book Illustration: Grab a book and put a dollar in the middle. Close the book and hand it to someone in the group. When that person takes the book they take the dollar with it. The book represents Jesus and the dollar represents eternal life. They go together.

#4 - God now views us as heirs and beloved children in His kingdom. We inherit everything that Christ has for us (i.e. eternal life, heaven)

Closing the Lesson:

Open up the sheet and summarize and contrast both sides. This should produce a real clear division between the before and after.

Evaluation: Use questions at your discretion.

1. How did God view us before we knew Christ?
2. Is it enough to just be trying hard to be a good person? Can that person be considered a Christian?
3. What do you think it means to be reconciled to God? In what ways were we at odds with God before we knew Christ?

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So Nobody's Perfect

Topic: The Nature and Extent of Sin

Purpose of this study:

To provide a clear understanding of the nature of sin and effects upon mankind.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Most people today, including Christians, do not understand the seriousness of sin and its far reaching effects upon them. Sin is a watered-down term in our culture. The church, as a whole, is growing less concerned with sin and more obsessed with victimization and self-help books. We have become more concerned with denying our guilt and putting the blame on someone else than in dealing with our sin before a holy God. Teenagers need, more than ever before, a clear and concise knowledge of the depth and consequences of their sin before God. Only when sin is truly seen for what it is, can the rest of the Gospel even make sense.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask your students what comes to their minds when they think of sin? Or, divide your students into groups of 2-3 and see who can come up with the longest list of sins in three minutes.

Teaching the Bible study:

As the students share their responses on the true or false section, ask them to give Biblical support for their views. Be prepared to give Biblical support yourself for your answers. These questions should stimulate some good discussion on sin and should lead you into covering the four basic points concerning sin below.

Defining Sin - Originally the word sin was a Greek archery term. The Greeks would shoot their arrows at a target and then measure the distance between where the arrow hit and the bulls-eye. That distance was called the 'sin' of the arrow. Spiritually before God the bulls-eye is complete perfection and righteousness. Emphasize that sin is equally as dangerous in our thoughts as in our actions. All sinful actions begin as sinful thoughts, and God requires holy thoughts as well as holy behavior.

The Source of Our Sin - It is important to identify where sin originated in man and the chain reaction in men since then.

President Analogy - Suppose the president decided to declare war on Russia tomorrow. He appeared on TV warning everyone to go to the nearest bomb shelter and await further instructions. Suppose you woke up tomorrow and decided you personally didn't want to be at war with Russia and that you were going to take a trip to visit Moscow. Would you be in danger? Yes of course since even though you personally did not decide to declare war on Russia, the president decided for you. Because you are a citizen of the United States, the president makes decisions nationally which affect you. It doesn't matter how you feel about the issue personally. As a leader of the United States, the president has decided for you. Adam, as the leader and representative of the human race, decided to sin against God and pay the consequences. So everyone born after him is a sinner.

The Extent of our Sin – (Psalm 53:1-3) Emphasize that all men do not naturally seek God. Since they have inherited a fallen, corrupt nature from Adam, they all hate God and turn away from Him. This may be a hard truth for your Bible study to swallow and you may have to spend additional time trying to communicate this to them. The next two scripture passages describe how deep sin really is within us. Tell them it is not our outward actions that make us sinful before God, but our sinful hearts that produce the sinful actions that God hates.

The Consequences of our Sin - Romans 5:12 is a key verse to understanding the true consequences of our sin. In the Bible the sin equation looks like this: SIN = DEATH. EVERYONE SINS > EVERYONE DIES. Remember to tell them that this equation is without Christ and His forgiveness. They must understand the seriousness of their sin before God to really grasp all that Christ has done for them. The three parts of death show that all types of death are the direct result of sin.

Closing the Lesson:

Read Romans 5:8 to make a transition to God's forgiveness at the end of this study. Have someone in the group close in prayer thanking God for His forgiveness of all of our sins through Christ.

Evaluation:

The following are questions to ask once this study has been completed.

1. Define sin and give some examples of actions and thoughts that are considered sin by God.
2. How did Adam and Eve's sin affect us today?
3. Do people sin because they are sinners, or are we sinners because we sin?
4. How has sin affected the human race?

Outside Activities:

Have students find examples of people in the Bible who sinned, and report next week on how their sins were dealt with, and what resulted.

Experiencing God's Love and Forgiveness

Topic: Confession of Sin

Purpose of this study:

To teach the disciple how to deal with his sin.

Motivation for teaching this study:

The average Christian in the United States does not experience the wonderful abundant life Jesus spoke of. Why not? Probably because no one has told them how to deal with their sin or they are not confessing their sins immediately after they have committed them. In either case they are living lives of defeat and impotence because they either will not or do not know to deal with their sin. This study is part one of a learning how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If your disciples are going to stumble anywhere in their walks, it is probably going to be in learning how to deal with their sin. That's why it is essential that you cover this topic thoroughly and clearly.


Introducing the Lesson:

You may want to start by asking the question, "What do you do when you have blown it spiritually?" or "What do you do in your relationship with God when you know something is wrong in your walk with God?"

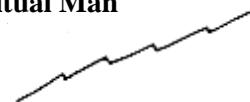
Teaching the Bible study:

Begin by having them turn to I Corinthians 2:14-3:3 to learn about the three types of people. You should then illustrate these three types of people by drawing the following diagram under each type:


1. Natural Man

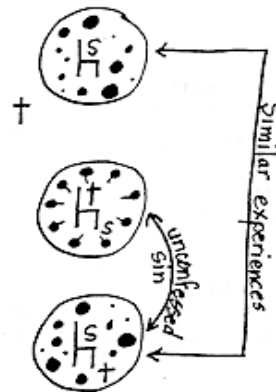

He has up and down experiences
He is not a Christian

2. Spiritual Man


Experiences constant spiritual growth

3. Carnal Man


He has up and down experiences



Spiritual Breathing

Explain spiritual breathing as being like physical breathing. In physical breathing, we must exhale the bad and inhale the clean air. Spiritually, we must exhale or confess our sins, and inhale the filling and control of the Holy Spirit. There are five steps to confession. I strongly suggest doing these five steps with your group the first time you go through this exercise.

Triangle Diagram: This diagram explains the relationships between God, ourselves and other people involved. I John 1:9 deals with our relationship to God when we sin while Acts 24:16 says we should have a good conscience toward all other men. Our forgiveness to others can help in drawing them to Christ.

Closing the Lesson:

Have group members each make a list and confess their sins to God by themselves.

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask after you have finished teaching the lesson.

1. Why is it important to confess our sins to God?
2. How often should we confess our sins to God?
3. What happens if we don't confess our sins to God?

Outside Activities:

Have them read through the booklet, "Have you Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-Filled Life?"

The Holy Spirit? What does He do?

Topic: The Holy Spirit

Purpose of this study:

To give students a basic understanding of who the Holy Spirit is and what role he plays in their lives.

Motivation for teaching this study:

This study is preparatory to the next lesson on the filling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the least understood person of the Trinity. Yet, His importance cannot be overlooked. In this age, God has chosen to speak to us through His Word and through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We cannot assume that our students have a basic understanding of the Holy Spirit even though they may have been Christians for some time. These truths are foundation to a lifetime of being one with God through His Holy Spirit.

Introducing the Lesson:

You may want to begin with a couple of questions about who they think the Holy Spirit is. While some in the group may have a good understanding, others may have no idea who or what you are talking about. Or you can ask them, “*Have you ever made a New Years Resolution or a decision to change some area of your life?*” “*Was it easy to change?*” Then transition into saying, “*As Christians we have someone to help us make Christian resolutions in our lives.*”

Teaching the Lesson:

Who is He?

Here you just want to communicate a very basic understanding of the Trinity. You can use illustrations such as: The Trinity is like water in three forms: ice, liquid, and vapor; or an egg: the shell, egg, and yolk; or perhaps three different roles you play: father, husband, son. Remember to keep it simple and not spend too much time on this area. You may want to ask your students how the Holy Spirit is different from “The Force” in Star Wars (there is a huge difference by the way!)

When did you receive the Holy Spirit?

Stress that God gives us the Holy Spirit when we believe as a pledge or deposit (NIV) that He will later come back and redeem us to Himself. Some other scriptures saying that the Holy Spirit indwells believers are I Corinthians 3:16 and Romans 8:9.

What does the Holy Spirit do in your life?

Here you might want to not only identify what the Holy Spirit does in the believer’s life but also come up with some specific examples of how this happened in your own life. Try to personalize it and even encourage your students to share examples of these things happening in their own lives.

What does the Holy Spirit do in non-Christian lives?

The main point is that God convicts non-believers of guilt or sin. The purpose of this conviction is to draw them to the Savior for their repentance. God does this in every believer’s life, regardless of their outward appearance. Some respond to God and become Christians while others continue to resist Him and become hardened (Romans 1:18-32).

How important is our relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Emphasize that God’s Spirit doesn’t work on a percentage basis - so that you do as much as you can and He makes us for the rest. God says here that He does it all - 100%.

Closing the Lesson:

Encourage your students to identify areas of their lives where they are attempting to live their lives on their own without trusting God. Tell them that next week you will talk about how to learn to give God control of their lives.

Evaluation:

Again here are some questions to ponder:

1. How is the Holy Spirit different from the “The Force” on Star Wars?
2. Is it possible to be a Christian and not have the Holy Spirit living within you?
3. Why do we need the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers?
4. What happens when we try to live the Christian life on our own? Why?
5. Who is responsible to produce fruit in our lives?

Living Like A Christian

Topic: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Purpose of this study:

To give a basic understanding of the Spirit-filled life and to motivate the disciple to learn how to yield to the Holy Spirit each day, moment by moment.

Motivation for teaching this study:

With both Billy Graham and Bill Bright saying that 90 percent of the Christians in the United States are carnal, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out the importance of learning how to be a Spirit-filled Christian. Without the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, we will not grow as believers or see any spiritual fruit take place whatsoever. This may be the single most important thing you teach your students about how to live the Christian life. Understanding and practicing this truth separates the spiritually mature from the immature.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask them "How many people do you think would claim to be Christians in your school?" "How many of those people actually live like they are Christians?" Then follow with, "Why is it so hard to live a godly life?" Try to keep the focus on living the Christian life as opposed to judging other people who do not measure up.

Teaching the Bible Study:

The way it's supposed to be... Jesus promised us an abundant and fruitful life in John 10:10. But most Christians (including adults) are not living that kind of life.

The way it can be... Try to come up with an example to transition between why Christians are not living the abundant life. Maybe an example from your own life of "trying to do it yourself" would be helpful here. The Apostle Paul in Romans 7 describes the struggle that goes on between the flesh and the spirit inside all of us.

The way it should be... Under being filled with the Holy Spirit, you can use many illustrations to make your point. For example when one is filled with the Holy Spirit, he simply lets God be in the "driver's seat" of his car. God controls the direction and has complete control over the car. Remember this is *part two* of spiritual breathing - the inhaling portion. Spiritual inhaling is merely asking God in prayer to fill and control us with His Holy Spirit. This can only be done when we have first confessed all our known sin. While there is no "formula" for being filled with the Holy Spirit, the main idea should be stressed of letting God have control our lives.

In Ephesians 5:18, we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is not an optional command and it applies to every believer. God promises to answer us if we pray according to His will in I John 5:14-15. Therefore since God promises to fill us with His Spirit when we ask him to, we can know by faith that He has answered our prayer.

How do to it. This prayer is only a suggested prayer. One need not say this or any other certain prayer but merely yield control up to God. Encourage your students to pray with you and spiritually breathe.

How do you know you are filled? This is very important, as your students may not feel any different after they have prayed. Changes will happen in their life as they continually to practice spiritual breathing. A person need to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day and as often as they sin and take control of the throne of their lives. Practicing spiritual breathing every day is part of walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

Closing the Session:

Students should be encouraged to breathe spiritually by confessing their sins (exhaling) and then by asking God to take control of our lives again (inhaling).

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask to see if your students have fully understood the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1. What is the difference between having the Holy Spirit in you and being filled with the Holy Spirit?
2. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
3. What happens if someone experiences no signs or accompanying emotions, after asking to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Your Identity in Christ

Topic: Identity in Christ

Purpose of this study:

To give a basic understanding of a person's new identity in Christ and the struggle that exists between his old nature and his new nature.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Some Christians experience drastic changes in their lives when they believe in Christ. For others the changes are not so dramatic. In fact, they find that they continually have to deal with sin and temptation throughout their entire lives even though they are a new creation in Christ. Why is this? It is because as a new creation in Christ, we still have an old sin nature that battles for control of our minds. In order to truly live a godly life, your disciple needs to know and understand the relationship between his two natures and the Holy Spirit. This study communicates the basic knowledge needed to walk with Christ.

Introducing the Lesson:

You could ask the following questions: *"Since inviting Christ into your life how has your Christian life been going? Have you been able to live in obedience before God all the time? Why not? Let me show you an illustration to help you understand some of the struggles you may have been facing..."*

Teaching the Bible study:

This diagram illustrates the new believer's identity in Christ. When used in context with the scripture it will serve in providing a format for understanding our two natures. This diagram should be drawn in three parts:

1. Draw the first well to the right of the house with its shaft sunk into an underground stream.

Then you can begin explaining the illustration like this: The way you were before you became a Christian could be represented by this well. The farmer who owned this well drew water from it all the time. The trouble was, the water that came out of it was contaminated. The underground stream that fed it ran under a toxic waste dump, and his family always felt weak and ill. (Blacken the underground stream to show that it is a bad stream). But since they had drunk from that well all their lives, they didn't even know they were sick. This is how the natural man is, how both you and I were before we met Christ. The farmer represents your mind, the underground stream represents your old self or your old nature, and the contamination represents your sinfulness. Read the two verses and summarize them in a one- to three-word phrase of the passage. The scriptures to read are Mark 7:20-23 and Ephesians 2:1-3.

Just as the farmer only had one well to go to, and wasn't aware of the contamination, so we had only one character to draw on, and it was contaminated. And just as the farmer and his family were headed for an early grave, so we were headed for an eternal grave. Paul tells us about the kind of behavior that this contaminated well produces in Galatians 5:19-21 [the works of the flesh]. Isaiah tells us in Is. 64:6 that the best we could be in this condition was like filthy rags to God.

One day a man from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) came and tested the farmer's well, and he alerted the farmer to the contamination. Of course, the farmer immediately stopped using his well, but he still needed water. He consulted some well-drilling experts and they informed him there was a crystal-clear underground stream on the other side of his property. He sent down another well shaft and sure enough, the water there was perfectly pure.

2. Draw another well way over on the other side of the paper, along with its shaft and the underground stream.

This new underground stream represents your "new man" or new nature, and it has no contaminating sin nature. Second Corinthians 5:17, says that God made you into a whole new creation, with a whole new character or nature. Galatians 5:22-23 talks about the kind of behavior that will come out of this "pure well." This new man is the opposite of the old man. Romans 8:1-2 talks about how the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death, just like the pure water of this well set the farmer and his family free from the sickness and death of his contaminated well.

Sometimes we decide to go back to the old well and draw from it. The farmer may, from time to time, think it's too far to walk all the way over to the new well. After all, the new well is over this hill, through these bushes across this ravine and down this hill, while the old well is right outside the door. (Draw each of these obstacles as you mention them).

Or, sometimes he may doubt the EPA man's test. Or, he may rationalize that "just a little of this contaminated water shouldn't hurt." In the same way, our minds may find it easier to draw from our old man. Or, we may be so used to following the dictates of our old man that we don't even think about listening to our new man. We forget. For thirty years, when the farmer wanted water, he went out his front door and turned left. It may take him a while to get used to turning right.

3. Now draw arrows coming out of the farm house, one going toward the old well, one toward the new.

Paul talks about this in Roman 7:18-25. Just as the farmer truly wants to quit drinking the contaminated water, so Paul wants to quit following the dictates of his old nature. But it's not easy. In fact Paul even calls it a "war" (verse 23). In the end, Paul says that the only way he will be able to do it is with God's help (verse 25). This is where the ministry of the Holy Spirit comes in. He's like a big neon sign planted right outside the farmer's front door flashing "TURN RIGHT!" (Draw a box underneath the two arrows coming out of the farmhouse with the word TURN RIGHT! in it.)

However, the farmer can still choose to disregard the sign. In the same way, you can still disregard the direction of the Holy Spirit. That's why ultimately it's going to be up to you to choose which well you draw from. God will help you, but you make the decision. That's why Paul said in Ephesians 4:20-24 that we should "put off" our old self and "put on" our new self. It requires an act of our will. Every day. Every time we are tempted. And in Romans 12:1-2, Paul urges us to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind." Our minds have to be re-taught to draw upon the supernatural resources of our new man instead of the contaminated sewage of the old man.

Closing the Lesson:

Give the printed diagram to your Bible study to take home. Encourage them to share it with one other person in the coming week.

Evaluation:

Here are some good questions to ask yourself once you have completed this study:

1. What did you receive from God when you believed in Christ that you didn't have before? (A New Nature)
2. How can you explain we are new creations in Christ, but, we still have a tendency to sin and act like we used to before we knew Christ?
3. How can we keep from continually drawing from the old well?
4. What activities help you to draw from your new well and forget about the old?

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The Wheel Illustration

Topic: Basic Growth Principles

Purpose of this study:

To provide students with a basic understanding of spiritual growth principles.

Motivation for teaching this study:

After the last study your students should be motivated to draw from the new well and live in the power of the Holy Spirit. This lesson will get them moving on to the “to do’s” of how to actually grow in their faith. While none of us can cause our own spiritual growth, there are certain activities that we can engage to produce spiritual growth in our lives. This Navigator illustration (in simple form) communicates those basic growth principles of the Christian life. It shows how they interact in a balanced fashion to keep your students rolling along toward spiritual maturity.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask them, “*Last week we talked about drawing from the new well. How is that going for you? Today we want to look at some ways we can make the path to the new well a little smoother. We want to look at some specific things we can do to help us grow spiritually.*”

Teaching the study:

Draw a wheel without filling in any of the words of verses. Draw the wheel so that it takes up about half of the paper, leaving room to write the verses above it and below it.

Hub Illustration: Then say, “*This wheel represents your life. A wheel gets its power or driving force from its hub. What would you say is the power source in your life, now that you’re a Christian?*” Let your students answer. Christ is the hub of the wheel (write Christ in the center) for the Christian. Next share two verses that illustrate the importance of Christ being at the center of our lives. Write the references and a two- or three-word summary for each verse on the side of the paper next to the wheel (as in diagram).

Ask: *What happens if Christ is not the center of your life?* Point out that just as in a car or bike wheel, if the hub is missing, the wheel will have no power, and the vehicle won’t go anywhere. For the Christian, if Christ is not at the center of his life, or if the Holy Spirit isn’t on the throne, the Christian will not experience God’s power in his life and won’t be going anywhere either!

Ask: *What are some things you can do to make sure that Christ is always at the center of your life?* (Good place to review the filling of the Holy Spirit).

Spokes Illustration: Continue by saying, “*Just as with a regular wheel, power is transferred from the hub to the rim through the spokes. There are four main activities in the spiritual realm through which power is transferred from Christ to our daily lives.*” One by one share what each of the four spokes are, supplying two verses for each spoke. The two vertical spokes represent our “vertical” relationship with God through the Word and Prayer. God speaks through His Word, and we speak to Him in prayer. The two horizontal spokes represent our “horizontal” relationships with other people through Fellowship and Witnessing. We fellowship with Christians and we witness to non-Christians. Share that as we engage in these four activities, Christ’s power becomes operative in our lives.

Outer Rim Illustration: The outer rim represents “The Obedient Christian in Action,” and you should now write that around the rim. These four spokes represent four ways that Christ’s power can be made available to the Christian but they count for nothing if the Christian does not choose to obey what God has told him to do through those spokes. Disobedience will give your wheel a flat tire every time. Notice it says here, “The Obedient Christian **in** Action.” In order to experience God’s power, you have got to be in action. There is no need for God to send His power your way if you are not going anywhere. God works in us and through us as we are **in** action.

Now comes the key to the whole illustration.

Ask: *What do you think would happen, if I knocked out one of these spokes? Or what if one of the spokes was about 2 inches shorter than all the rest?* **Answer:** It wouldn’t run as smoothly, a bumpy ride. If one of our spokes is missing or short or bent, our lives will not run as smoothly. **Reply:** *Let’s say that I read my Bible every day, I’m pretty faithful about sharing my faith with others, I go to church every Sunday, but I only pray about one minute a week. How do you think my life would be rolling along?* Emphasize that we need to keep our lives in balance on these four activities so that Christ’s power can flow through us and we can be going somewhere in our Christian life.

Ask: *What spoke is the most difficult for you to maintain? Which one is the easiest?*

Closing the Lesson:

Encourage your students to share this illustration with someone in the next week.

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask to see if your students have this information down pat!

1. If I were a brand new Christian, could you explain to me how I could grow in my relationship with God?
2. If Christ is not on the throne of your life, would it still be helpful to stay involved in prayer, Bible study, fellowship and witnessing?
3. Why is obedience so important in this illustration?

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Growing as a Christian

Topic: Basic Growth Principles

Purpose of this study:

To give students as basic understanding of spiritual growth principles as they relate to time, adversity, and the sovereignty of God.

Motivation for teaching this study:

After having given some specific activities to help your students grow in the last session, you can be sure that they will want to practice these new disciplines. However it does not take long before one begins to figure out that it isn't as easy to grow spiritually as one thinks. There are many factors that must be added into the equation to help us understand how God works in our lives. Rather than getting frustrated at these supposed "obstacles," we should welcome them and know the value of them. This study is designed to give some perspective on spiritual growth from a Biblical point of view.

Introducing the Lesson:

Explain: *In our microwave-instant society today, we expect everything to happen immediately. However in the spiritual realm, God is in control and He works in ways that are very different than we might expect. Today, we want to look at three ways in which God helps us to grow spiritually.*

Teaching the Lesson:

The time factor

In all three examples under point one, God is shown as having taken his time to develop His leaders for His purposes. Stress that God is in no hurry to develop us and He wants us to learn things that are deep and permanent in our lives. Students should not expect to become a "Super Christian" within a couple of weeks or even a couple of years for that matter. You might also want to think of some examples in your life of how long it took for God to teach you important Biblical truths.

The hard times factor

God allows us to go through adversity because He knows it will make us stronger and prepare us for greater things down the road. He always allows discipline and adversity into our lives, not because He is unable to control things, but so that we can share in His holiness and righteousness in our lifestyles. Encourage your students to share how going through hard times has made them stronger in some area.

The sovereignty of God factor

Nothing happens by accident in our lives that God cannot control. Everything always has a purpose even though we may not always know exactly what it is. Emphasize that God desires all believers to be like His Son Jesus in their character, perspective, and actions.

Dentist Illustration: Even though we don't fully understand all that the dentist does in our mouths when he is filling a cavity, we know it is good for us despite the temporary discomforts. In our Christian walk with God we must trust God that He knows what He is doing even though it may not make any sense to us at all.

Closing the Lesson:

These three factors all produce a more mature understanding of how growth takes place in our lives. But, all three factors require us to trust God by faith that He is in control. Have your students identify one area where it is really hard for them right now. Encourage them to decide to trust God by faith in that one area. God is pleased when we put our faith in Him and His word even though we do not understand fully what is going on (Hebrews 11:6).

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask to see if your students understand this objective:

1. What should our attitude be when we encounter hard times in our life?
2. What if we are having a tough time in several areas? Could that mean that God temporarily lost control of our lives?
3. How long do you think it will take for you to become spiritually mature?
4. Should we be concerned if we do not know exactly what God is doing in our lives at the present moment?

* Many concepts in this study are from *Personal Disciplemaking* by Chris Adsit. Visit www.ccci.org/disciplemakers or call 888-342-2235.

Just the Facts, Please!

Topic: The Bible

Purpose of this study:

To give students a basic understanding of the importance of biblical input and to encourage them to begin reading the Bible on their own.

Motivation for teaching this study:

By now your students should be at least a little bit familiar with the Bible. Our goal in this study is not just to give them some basic information about the Bible, but to provide them with some incentive and motivation to begin reading it on their own. Just as a physical baby must learn to walk, feed himself and communicate on his own, so our students need to learn to starting moving toward being self-feeders. These next two studies are designed to encourage them to get in the Word themselves and begin the greatest adventure of their lives learning to daily meditate on the scriptures.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask. “Where would you go if you wanted to learn about Michael Jordan?” Then you could **ask**, “What if you read or heard something about Michael Jordan and you really wanted to know if it was true?” **Explain:** Sooner or later you would have to go to the source to find out the absolute truth. As Christians we have a “source of absolute truth” to turn to. Does anyone know what that is?

Teaching the Bible study:

Pay attention to the “What do you think?” section to find out what your students think about God’s Word. Do not try to always tell the right answer but merely listen for their ideas and opinions.

What is it exactly?

While this material may be very basic and even boring to some kids in your group, do not skip it because it is foundational to grasping the “big picture” of the Bible. Help your students remember how many books are in the Bible by **asking** them, “What is the last chapter number in the Book of Isaiah?” The Bible also has sixty-six books.

On #2 you may want to **ask** your students “How does the Bible show God revealing Himself to man?”

Who wrote it?

In this section, you could stress that although the authorship of the Bible is so diverse and broad, the Bible has incredible unity. If you were to gather five people from three continents together and ask them to write on topics such as God, heaven, love, and salvation, do you think they would all agree? Probably not. Yet, the Bible has incredible unity and such harmony as can only be explained by its divine inspiration.

Why should I read it?

There are many benefits to reading the Bible. The verses chosen are appealing on the surface for a student to read the scriptures.

Where should I start reading?

Help your students find a place to start reading the Bible. Maybe give them an index card or some other bookmark to help them keep their place as they read in their Bible.

When will you begin to read the Bible?

Having a set time each day to begin reading the scriptures will help your students to discipline themselves and set that time aside. Brainstorm with them for some possible reading times they could have.

Closing the Lesson:

Reading the Bible is not supposed to be drudgery, but a joy of reading God’s love letter to each one of us.

Evaluation:

Use questions as necessary:

1. Why is it so important to read the Bible? (see again I Peter 2:2)
2. Do you have a plan for reading God’s Word every day?
3. What should a person do when he or she reads the Bible?
4. Where would be a good place to begin if you have never read the Bible? Why would that be a good place?

The Word Hand Illustration

Topic: The Word

Purpose of this study:

To give students a visual illustration of how they can go about assimilating the Word of God into their lives.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Having covered some of the general characteristics of the Bible in our last study, we want to move on toward helping our students to assimilate the Word into their lives. Just like physical babies need to learn to walk, communicate and feed themselves, so spiritual babies must learn to feed themselves from the Word of God. The sooner you can teach them this the better off they will be. This Navigator illustration helps kids see that merely hearing and reading the Word are not enough. In order to really get fed they need to memorize and meditate upon the truths of scripture themselves.

Introducing the Lesson:

Begin with a game of trying to take away an object from a person (such as a small ball of some sort) with only two fingers. Then try three fingers, four fingers until you work up to two hands. Stress that it is important to hang onto a ball with your entire hand if you want to have a firm grip on it. Say, "Today we want to talk about having a firm grip on God's Word."

Teaching the Study

Begin by passing around blank sheets of paper to your students. Then have them do exactly as you do on their sheets. Trace your hand outline on your sheet of paper and draw a Bible in your hand's grasp. Then label each finger appropriately. Go through the fingers one by one and look up the Scripture verse that back up each method of grasping God's Word. Then explain that, if we want to get a strong grip on an object, we use all our fingers. If we try to hold on with only two or three fingers, the object is easily grabbed away (demonstrate this as you talk about it). In the same way, we should use each of these methods of biblical intake if we want to get a firm grasp on the Word of God. We need to hear, read, study, and memorize it.

Point out that just as our thumb opposes (and can easily touch) each of our fingers, meditation should touch each of the other activities: We should meditate on what we hear, meditate on what we read, meditate on what we study, and meditate on what we memorize. It does little good if God's Word goes in one ear and out the other. We need to let it sink down into our hearts through meditation. You may want to pick a short verse or passage to meditate upon with the group. Your students may not know how to meditate upon scripture.

You'll notice that, in the illustration, the bigger the finger, the harder its corresponding activity is. It's easier to listen than to read, easier to read than study, etc. However, it's also true that the bigger the finger, the more effective the activity is. Experts tell us that after a 24-hour period, we can recall only about 5 percent of what we hear, 15 percent of what we read, 35 percent of what we study, and 100 percent of what we memorize. Since this is true, we would be wise to give special attention to the more effective activities.

Then Ask: How firm of a grasp do you personally have on God's Word? What are some ways to meditate on what you hear, read, study, and memorize?

Closing the Lesson:

Encourage your students to have a set time everyday to get into the Bible for themselves. Maybe you could suggest or pick a passage of scripture to study or memorize together as a group.

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask to see if your students have really understood the study.

1. How much time do you think a Christian should spend reading the Bible? Every day? How long each day? Why?
2. Have you ever studied the Bible or tried to look up some verses on an important topic? What happened?
3. What does it mean to meditate upon God's Word?
4. What happens to Christians over time if they do not have a firm grasp on God's Word?
5. What does God promise to do in our lives if meditate and obey His Word?

* I purposely put the instructions on how to teach this illustration on the front of the study so students could take this home and practice this illustration on a friend or family member.

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Fellowship Time with Christians

Topic: Fellowship

Purpose of this study:

To give students a basic understanding of the importance of Christian fellowship and to encourage them to begin attending Christian functions.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Once a student invites Christ into his or her life, they become part of the body of Christ. This body of Christ is composed of all those who are believers and who name Jesus as their Lord. This lesson should be taught with two ideas in mind. First to teach your students about fellowship and second to motivate them to be involved in fellowship themselves. Without fellowship, a new believer, or for that matter any believer will shrivel up and die. However with fellowship, one can grow and experience all the benefits of being part of the body of Christ.

Introducing the Lesson:

You may want to begin by asking the question, "In what place have you felt the most love and acceptance by people since you have been a Christian?" After they answer you can say, "Today we want to talk about fellowship and what the Bible has to say about how Christians should relate to each other."

1. The importance of love in fellowship. Stress that this is the single most important ingredient in true fellowship. It is the basis by which we are to relate to one another as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. The four matching verses all uncover benefits from being involved with other believers.

2. Why we should fellowship. Here you may want to turn to I Corinthians 12:12-26 to illustrate the similarities between how the human body works and how the body of Christ should function. No one part is superior or inferior but all parts are essential. You could ask them how life would be different without an eye or a liver or a knee cap!

The log illustration: When all the logs are together they burn continuously until there is nothing but ashes. However if take one log away by itself, it will quickly lose its fire. To keep the fire burning all the logs must be huddling close together for mutual strength. So it is in the body of Christ - we must all work together to keep ourselves on fire for God.

3. What we do in fellowship. These are some of the best verses in the Bible encouraging Christians to experience true fellowship. Ephesians 4:15-16 shows how the body should grow up by each member speaking the truth in love to the other members. However there are two extremes we can fall into. One is that we can just speak the truth without love, which is very damaging, or we can merely speak love without being truthful, which can be equally damaging over the long haul. We need to have both aspects, love and truth, in our communication with one another to really build up the body of Christ.

Questions to consider... Here I am trying to get at the nature of true fellowship and where it actually takes place. Hopefully your students will recognize the difference between just doing things with their Christian friends versus having real genuine fellowship. The last question will help you discover how your students are doing in terms of experiencing true fellowship.

Closing the Lesson:

Ask your students to identify someone in their daily life who they could really encourage and strengthen in this next coming week. Encourage them to "do good to...the household of faith"

Evaluation:

Encourage your students to be involved somewhere where they are experiencing some real good fellowship. A church would be a great place but be sensitive to their family's religious preferences. Here are some questions to see if your students have grasped the fellowship concept:

1. Of all of the components of the fruit of the Spirit, which would you say should be the most evident in our relationships with other believers?
2. Do you think it's possible to love God and to not love our brother at the same time?
3. How can fellowshiping with other Christians keep us from getting "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin?"
4. Why do you think Christ was so concerned that His disciples be unified and so like-minded?

Prayer – Talking with God

Topic: Prayer

Purpose of this study:

To provide students with essential instructions about prayer and what to expect from God through prayer.

Motivation for teaching this study:

At its very foundation, the Christian life is a relationship between God and man. Relationships require two-way communication and prayer is our means to communicate with our heavenly Father. This study is designed to simply educate and stimulate young believers to pray and learn how to communicate with God. Hopefully this will be the beginning of a life-long dialogue of communicating and communing with God for your students.

Introducing the Lesson:

How you introduce this lesson will depend to a great extent, on how familiar your students are to the subject of prayer. If your students are relatively new to prayer, you could begin with, “God speaks to us through his Word, and we can speak to God through prayer.” If your students are already praying you could share how God recently answered (yes, no, or wait) one of your prayers and tell them you want to discuss the whole area of prayer as a group.

The three “scale” questions are designed to help you understand how much your students really grasp and apply prayer in their own lives. Don’t be afraid to ask your students to explain their responses.

The speeding scenario raises questions commonly asked when we pray to God as believers. Many people pray to God only in times of crisis or real genuine need and they wonder if God really hears them. The first question involves when can we ask for God’s help in our lives, particularly when we have transgressed the law ourselves. The second question centers on how God responds to us when we seek Him. The third dabbles with God’s response being dictated by who He is. Is He a gracious God when we come to Him in times of distress or does He merely let us experience the consequences of our own sin? You can go as deep as you wish here but the purpose of this section is to engage the students in thinking about prayer.

How should we pray explains the four types of prayer available to us. **When should we pray** encourages us to always have an attitude of prayer.

It would be helpful to have other illustrations of God answering prayer through “yes, no and wait.” This is a perfect opportunity to model prayer through sharing answers you have personally received from the Lord as you have sought Him.

God always grants requests for prayer according to His will. We can search God’s Word to discover many exciting aspects of God’s will for our lives. For example God desires that we rejoice always (1 Thes. 5:18), be holy in our conduct (1 Thes. 4:3), do not be bound together with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14), love God with all our being (Mk 12:30), and treat others as we want to be treated (Mt. 7:12). All of God’s moral commands in scripture are His will for our lives. Praying these for people will help them and even ourselves to live more Godly lives.

Closing the Lesson:

Encourage your students to have one point of application such as keeping a prayer diary, praying during their quiet times, or going to a special place to meet God in prayer.

Evaluation:

1. Do my students really grasp how important prayer is to their growth?
2. Are they praying on their own?
3. When they pray, do they reflect a good balance of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication?

Tell It Like This

Topic: Witnessing

Purpose of this study:

To give students basic motivation and rationale for learning how to begin to share their faith in Christ.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Most of us struggle when it comes to sharing our faith. We are afraid of what people will think or we think ourselves that people are not really interested in hearing about a personal relationship with God. Motivation for ongoing evangelism must come from our own personal walks with God and our decision to daily step out in faith and trust Him as we interact with people. Doing evangelism causes us to ask God to use us to do accomplish more evangelism. Think of the last time you felt when you knew God used you to help someone seriously consider what it means to know Christ.

Introducing the Lesson:

I would begin with something like, “Today I want to talk about one of the hardest but one of the most exhilarating things in the Christian life: telling others about God.” Many times this is what separates the common churchgoers from the on-fire growing Christian, a willing to share their faith. The three questions to consider are also a natural lead in to the subject.

When you ask one of your students, “What is the most important thing that has ever happened to you?” if they really understand all the previous material you have covered, they will typically they will respond with knowing Jesus as Savior and when they made that decision. Naturally this then becomes the most important thing they can do to help others.

To give witness means to give evidence or testify to what one has seen and heard. If you believe that most of your friends at school are not interested in hearing about Christ, it will be much harder to share your faith. Jesus said the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore there is never a problem with the harvest but with the shortage of laborers.

Why should I share my faith and tell others about Christ?

If you can personally illustrate any of these reasons for sharing one’s faith as being motivational for you personally, it will aid to your students catching your enthusiasm. For example, there are many things we can do to help people such as counseling, giving them money, being there for them, being a friend to them, etc., but there is only one thing we can do to eternally save their souls: sharing our faith with them.

How do I share my faith?

All of these are valid means to share one’s faith and certain students will gravitate toward particular ones. The most important thing is to encourage them as they are attempting to be a witness, not to say one form is better than another.

Witnessing is obviously a combination of both our life and our words. Witnessing with just our life is not enough in and of itself for someone must declare the gospel and witnessing with just our words without our lives can be perceived as hypocritical and can lose needed credibility.

What do I say?

While there are endless ways to point someone to the Savior, sooner or later someone must tell them the simple elements of the gospel if the person is to be saved. Telling our conversion story brings great glory to God every time we share it and is very difficult to argue with. You can do into as much detail here as you wish.

Who do I talk to?

Identifying people God has brought into your life to witness to is crucial to making a concentrated effort necessary to seeing someone come to Christ. For creative ideas on ways to share your faith see <http://www.evangelismtoolbox.com>.

Closing the Lesson:

Role play by providing your students with ways to transition a conversation to spiritual things or how to begin to be a witness at their school.

Evaluation:

1. Can my students explain the basic elements of the gospel to someone?
2. Can my students lead someone to Christ?
3. What’s the next step I need to do to encourage them to be a better witness on campus?

Dealing with Difficulties

Topic: Spiritual Warfare (Part One)

Purpose of this study:

To provide students with a fundamental understanding of adversity, temptation, Satan and sin.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Discipleship is a battle. Satan works overtime to discourage, take away and prevent God's kingdom from advancing on any front. Your students need to know that being a Christian is not a cakewalk or trip to Disneyland, but they are involved in warfare with the world, their own flesh and Satan. The Christian life is a marathon of learning to persevere in the midst of difficulties regardless of the cause or the cost.

Introducing the Lesson:

I might begin with an analogy from sports, "Have you ever been in a sports competition of any sort? If so did you win? Was it hard?" In order to win at sports repeatedly you have to practice and go through a lot of ups and downs in order to get in shape and become proficient at your sport. In the same way in order to grow in our Christian faith, we must endure many difficult and trying times. Today we want to talk about dealing with difficulties in your Christian life.

The top third of the page is designed to get your students involved in interacting with difficulties and why we have them. Don't try to answer every question of objection but use it primarily as a means of discussion starters.

The World

- a. Splurging, bulimia, lust, drinking, sex and drugs are just a few sins of the flesh.
- b. Fancy cars, having the "right" designer clothes, hoarding lots of money, and excessive collections (CD's, DVD's, etc.) are but a few of the lusts of the eyes for students.
- c. Becoming overly busy, membership in all the right clubs at school, and being overly popular are symptoms of the pride of life in student's lives.

The natural consequences of foolish decisions.

Thought provokers for foolish decisions: driving while under the influence, procrastinating writing your big paper until the last day, doing something foolish with your friends.

Thought provokers for good decisions: planning ahead, admitting you were wrong, saving your money for something

Great question to ask: Can you share a time when God brought good out of what obviously a "bad" situation, in the spirit of Romans 8:28?

Things God allows for our spiritual growth

God as a loving Father, disciplines us as children when we go astray. He disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness (Heb. 12:4-13). This discipline is unpleasant but it yields righteousness.

Allowing God to build endurance in our lives through trials is essential for spiritual growth. Rigorous training produces strong Christians.

Closing the Lesson:

Identifying the source of adversity in our lives is nearly half the battle. Once the source is identified, then we can know how to respond Biblically to our difficulties.

Evaluation

1. Do your students truly understand that adversity and difficulties are a normal part of the Christian life?
2. Can your students distinguish the source of their difficulties?
3. Do your students have a "game plan" for how to endure their present difficulty?

* Many concepts in this study are from *Personal Disciplemaking* by Chris Adsit. Visit www.ccci.org/disciplemakers or call 888-342-2235.

Running and Resisting

Topic: Spiritual Warfare (Part Two)

Purpose of this study: To help your students learn how to distinguish and overcome temptation and Satan.

Motivation for teaching this study:

How many times have each of us fallen and given into temptation and succumbed to Satan's strategies in our spiritual lives? Yet many times people speak of "resisting temptation" and "fleeing Satan." The Bible says the exact opposite! We are to flee temptation and resist Satan on every front. If you try to resist temptation in your own strength and flee from the devil (how can you run away from him?) you will repeatedly fail. Obedience can only come by having the right strategy to fight each foe.

Introducing the Lesson:

You might want to begin with either a personal story of how you dealt with a particular temptation or spiritual battle in your own life or you could begin with some questions. You might ask, "When you first learning how to drive, did you ever step on the gas instead of the brake? What happened? You know we can do the wrong thing at the wrong time in our spiritual lives and experience failure too. Let's look at how to deal with temptation and Satan in our Christian lives." Or you could go this route, "have you ever been frightened by a dog or another animal and tried to run away from it?" Talk about the flight or fight response we all have when encountering danger unexpectedly and the results of each.

The top portion is geared to help stimulate discussion. You can either have students write out their answers and discuss them or just share them openly with the group. Be careful not to get off track!

Proverbs 4:14-15 speaks of being influenced and persuaded by wicked or evil men (those who seek to do contrary to what God wants). In teenager terms this is negative peer pressure or going along with the crowd even when you know it's wrong. Wise people will avoid and flee from the way of those who do evil.

2 Tim. 2:22 encourages us to flee lusts and to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace. Do not forget to mention the end of the verse encouraging us to pursue these things with those who have pure hearts.

1 Tim. 6:10-11 is similar to the previous verse except the fleeing is to be in regards to the love of money, which leads to all sorts of evil. Perhaps you can illustrate this in the life of a Godly saint committed to God regardless of their salary.

Temptation typically comes to us through our desires such as our flesh, the lust of our eyes, or the boastful pride of life (1 Jn 2:16). It is critical that students can identify at least one area of temptation that **THEY** need to flee from in their own lives.

Satan seeks to devour Christians like a lion and our only recourse in this case is to resist him being firm in our faith. Notice in James it says that Satan will flee from us when we resist him not we will flee from him when he resists us! The devil attacks on many fronts such as fear (Luke 12:4-5, Acts 4:29), doubt (Eve in the garden), and pride (1 Tim. 3:4-6). We must be careful not to give him an opportunity in our lives by unresolved anger toward someone (Eph 4:27), lying (Ananias in Acts 5:3), or giving in to sin (Gen 4:6-8).

Illustrate the three principles of resisting the devil through imagining a burglar breaking into your house. **First** you must detect him "We are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11b); **second** you must empower yourself "Submit yourselves to God" (James 4:7); **third** you trap or confront "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7b); and fourth reinforce or praise God "Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8b).

Policeman illustration: When someone stands in the middle of the road directing traffic with a policeman's uniform, everyone stops and obeys. They do this not because a man is standing in the middle of the road ordering people around, but because the policeman has the delegated authority to control the traffic. By ourselves we have no authority over Satan, but because of our identification with Jesus Christ, we have delegated authority over Satan the demonic realm (Eph. 1:19-21).

Closing the Lesson:

Ask your students to identify one area in their lives where they need to flee. Then ask them, "How do you think Satan tries to work again you in your life?"

Evaluation:

1. Do you students understand the difference between fleeing temptation and resisting Satan?
2. Can your students identify specific areas and personal experiences in their lives where they can apply these truths?
3. How would you go about resisting Satan in a particular situation?

Making the Most of Time

Topic: Time Management

Purpose of this study: To help your students learn basic principles of wise time management and apply to to their lives.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Most of us at one point or another have struggled with time management. Scripture tells us to make the most of our time (Eph. 5:16) and that each of us will have to give an account of our lives to God (Rom. 14:12). Yet Solomon said there is an appointed time for EVERYTHING! If we or our students fail to manage our time, nothing else in our lives can or will be managed as well. This study is as much for you as a teacher as it is for your students.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask, “How many of you have ever struggled with not having enough time to get something done?” “Do you ever feel like people and the world has such high expectations of you that there’s just no way you could possibly get everything done?” Today we want to look at what the Bible says about how to wisely and effectively use your time.

Teaching the Lesson:

While most of us are aware of our lack of time management, we often fail to realize the cost of our own decisions regarding time. This simple exercise (feel free to substitute your own relevant activities your students would most likely do in this section) clearly communicates the importance of choices and priorities.

Life is short – have you ever heard an old person say, “Boy that went by quick.” It’s because they know that time can’t be stopped, stored or stretched. It is constantly running and if you waste it, you have wasted it forever. Not that only that but one day all of us will stand before God to give an account of how we have handled our time on earth (Rom. 14:12)

Loving God and others should be every Christian’s priority with their time. This may involve obeying and trusting God, learning more about God, worshiping Him and putting Him first which all require time. Loving others requires helping, encouraging, sharing, caring and praying for others in our lives. These are truly the best uses of our time.

In determining your priorities and goals, these are very basic time management techniques geared toward helping your students see the connection between priorities, setting goals, and time management. This exercise forces students to choose their priorities and see how much of their time is truly invested in accomplishing them. You can compare how time a student spends in a typical day doing typical activities (homework, job, sports, family, media, etc) with how much time they would plan and anticipate in order to accomplish their true priorities.

All of us can learn to more effectively manage our time according to our priorities. The purpose is not necessarily to convict people of that point but to make them aware that wise time management requires prioritizing and planning and not just simply letting things happen. Strongly encourage your students to think this through and choose two ways to better use their time this next week.

Closing the Lesson:

It is paramount that students understand the connection between wise planning and scheduling their time. Most teens are just learning the pitfalls of poor time management and therefore you should encourage them in little areas where they do well. Most youth typically need someone with more experience to guide them in their time management choices such as a parent or youth leader. Your job is help them begin to think on their own concerning managing their time according to God’s priorities.

Evaluation:

1. Are your students priorities centered around loving God and others or do they merely revolve around pleasing themselves?
2. Can your students formulate short-term goals that will help them achieve their long-range plans?
3. Are your students using some type of weekly or monthly planner?
4. Have you ever asked God to be in control of YOUR schedule and give you wisdom to do His will?

God's View for Your Life

Topic: Vision Part One

Purpose of this study: To help your students understand what God values as important and how they can begin to think and live accordingly.

Motivation for teaching this study:

This is part one of motivating your students to continue in a lifetime of walking with God. As your students begin to grasp the vision and big plans God has for them, they will hopefully be motivated to continue to seek and follow the Lord. While we can't make them grow, that's God's job alone, we can help create the environment that encourages and spurs on growth. By now your students should have seen or caught a little bit of your vision through your teaching, modeling and praying for them. These two studies are an attempt at helping them see and realize for themselves how God wants to use them in the future.

Introducing the Lesson:

I would begin with a true story like this: Once a wealthy Christian plantation owner invited John Wesley (A famous American preacher in the 1700's) to his home. The two rode their horses all day, seeing just a small part of all the man owned. At the end of the day the plantation owner asked, "Well Mr. Wesley, what do you think?" After a moment of silence, Wesley replied, "I think you're going to have a hard time leaving all of this." Many of us become attached to what we own or who we are (our title or position). Yet God views life differently than we do. Today we want to look at how God views life and how that affects His plans for our lives.

Teaching the Lesson:

Eternal is what will last forever according to God, while temporal includes everything else. As believers we live differently because we SEE differently. Though we may see the same facts, witness the same current events, eat the same food, and go to the same school, we interpret them in radically different ways and purposes.

Luke 9:23-25 – saving your life is living it for yourself; losing your life is giving it up to Christ and His kingdom. This passage does not refer to losing eternal life but to losing a quality of life that is available to Christians through Christ.

Heb. 11:24-26 – Moses had a decision to refuse the temporal in order that he might choose the eternal.

Only time spent in eternal things (God, Word of God, and people) will produce eternal rewards.

An old saying: Only one life twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.

God values the spiritual over the material

The rich man faired poorly before God since he stored up treasures for Himself and was not rich toward God. Financial counselors will tell you, "You can't go back at age sixty-five and snap your fingers to compensate for forty years of poor planning." Yet what is even more important is that you can't reach the end of the your life, snap your fingers and compensate for a lifetime of poor planning to meet God.

It is not wrong for a Christian to have material wealth on earth as long as he or she is willing to surrender it to the Lord for kingdom purposes (Luke 14:33). To "give up everything" as mentioned in Luke 14:33 does not necessarily mean giving it all away, but to give everything up to kingdom purposes to further God's cause.

God values availability over ability

In these verses, God's attitude toward the worldly-wise is that they are foolish since they do not consult Him and since in their wisdom they go away from God and not toward Him. God even deliberately chooses the weak things of the world to shame the wise such as using an ancient religious book written over 4000 years ago (Genesis) to shame a world renowned scientist who firmly adheres to evolution.

Closing the Lesson:

In order to have vision for our lives, we must understand what is important to God. Once we understand God's important things, we can realign our life and live accordingly.

Evaluation:

1. If God were to send you a divine email listing things on earth that needed fixing, what do you think would be on the list?
2. How is your life becoming more eternal and spiritual in what you do?
3. How can God use anybody who is available to Him even though they are not necessarily gifted or educated?
4. How could you tell if someone was putting the eternal over the temporal or the spiritual over the material in their life?

* Many concepts in this study are from *Personal Disciplemaking* by Chris Adsit. Visit www.ccci.org/disciplemakers or call 888-342-2235.

God's Plan for Your Life

Topic: Vision Part Two

Purpose of this study: To cast vision and hope into your students lives through trying to help them understand God's plans for their lives both here and in eternity.

Motivation for teaching this study:

It is often been said and proven that knowing one person who loves you and believes in you can make the difference between life or death. How much more difference then will it make knowing that the God of the universe has incredible plans for you in this life and even more in the next life. If God Himself is rooting for you, then what do you have to fear? In God's eyes, your students are extremely significant people and have the potential to be greatly used of God to further His kingdom here on earth. This study is designed to motivate your students to continue to walk with God for a lifetime, even when you are not there to be and guide them.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask them: Have you ever wondered what God's plans for your life include? Maybe not understanding all the detailed brush strokes of His plan, but being able to see the big picture and the big purposes of your life? You might be surprised to learn of all the phenomenal ways God wants to use in this life and what He promises you in the next life. Today we want to talk about vision, God's vision of how He wants to use us.

Teaching the Lesson:

God's plans for you in this life

While God does give us a detailed road map for our lives, he does tell us the final destination and the potential we have for leaving our mark. When you look at these first four points together, you see that God's plan for us in this life are positive, influential, purposeful, and fulfilling. Be sure to both internalize these truths and communicate your excitement about them to your students.

Realizing your potential – this section illustrates spiritual multiplication at work. No one truly understands their spiritual potential, but this little illustration gives you an idea on how God could multiply your investment into another person into many, many lives.

All four of these intentions of God are true throughout our lives and we will continue to fulfill them in greater and greater degrees as we mature in Christ.

His plans for you, for eternity

These are simply amazing promises dealing with where we will live, what we will do, what we will possess, and what we will look like. This should lead you and your students to get pretty excited about what God has in store for us.

What do you need to do to fit in with His plans?

Prov. 3:5-6 ask us to trust in God and not lean on our own understanding and then and only then will God make our way straight.

2 Cor. 5:10 is conditional in that the degree of God's future blessing on us (points 2-3 above) depends on our doing good deeds as believers here on earth.

2 Tim. 2:20-21 promises that if we cleanse ourselves from the pitfalls mentioned early in the chapter, we make ourselves more usable to God. God will use us but how He uses us is up to us.

Closing the Lesson:

Do everything within your means to help your students catch at least a little glimpse of how God wants to use them (God's vision for their lives). Hopefully this will motivate them to go beyond what you covered and become lifelong disciples.

Evaluation:

1. Do you student understand that it is within the plan of God to use them in a significant way to further His kingdom?
2. Do they understand that some of God's promises are "conditional" while some are unconditional?
3. Ask them: When you think of God looks at you, do you see yourself as just another face in the crowd, or do you see yourself with Him one on one, friend to friend?
4. Ask them: If everything went perfect you in this life, how much of an impact do you think you might be able to have on the world for Christ?
5. On a scale of one to ten, how motivated are you to carry on your spiritual development?

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What's the BIG Deal?

Topic: Church

Purpose of this study: To strengthen commitment to church involvement and to distinguish between parachurch and church involvement.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Many teens attend church simply because their family goes, yet they have no real commitment or understanding as to its importance. Once kids graduate from high school, the numbers of those still involved in local church drops significantly. Some students try to substitute involvement in parachurch or a Bible study for church involvement and never develop convictions or commitment to a local church. This study highlights the importance of a God-given institution, the local church, and attempts to distinguish it from other Christian groups.

Introducing the Lesson:

Today we want to conclude our Basics series talking about the church and why it is important in our lives. People have all kinds of ideas and thoughts about church so before we look to what the Bible says about the church, let's see what you think about it first.

Teaching the Lesson:

Please remember not to be critical of other denominations. You can share your views but remember that we must give an account before God for all of our careless words (Mt. 12:36). The first half this study is meant to give you an idea on what your students think and where they stand concerning their ideas of the church.

The church is both the universal body of believers, often called the universal church, and the local assembly of visible believers.

Eph 2:21-22 - Paul was excited that the Gentiles now could experience being a part of the spiritual building of the church.

Rom. 8:17 – since we are all children together and fellow heirs, we are all in the same family (Jn 1:12)

2 Cor. 11:3 – Paul saw the Corinthians as being married to Christ. See Eph. 5:26ff.

Rom. 12:4-5 – not only are we the body, but we function as a body together, locally and globally.

Why is it important to be involved in a local church?

These are wonderful aspects of the Christian life to share together as a church. As your students grow and mature in their faith and involvement in the church, they will value more and more these awesome benefits. Ask them if they have had any of these experiences already.

Student Venture, the high school ministry of **Campus Crusade for Christ**, is the parachurch group of which I am a part. Parachurch involvement should never substitute for church involvement. Every believer needs to be a part of a local church. Parachurch groups specialize in certain niches of ministry, while the local church is more holistic ministering to people from the cradle to the grave.

Typically people get out of church what they put into it and a person's involvement in their church can change with the seasons of life they go through. Remember you reap what you sow.

Therefore, encourage your students to be involved in their local church as much as possible.

Closing the Lesson:

Hopefully these lessons have laid a solid foundation in your student's lives. But it is only a foundation, and much more building needs to take place for them to come to maturity in Christ. That is why I concluded this series with a lesson on the importance of church involvement. God has chosen to use you for this season in your students spiritual growth and development, but there are many more seasons and years ahead. It is essential that before you end this study, you know where you want to encourage your students to go next in their spiritual lives.

Evaluation:

1. What's the difference between the church and the parachurch?
2. Ask your students to define the church in one sentence as to what they think it represents.
3. Do your students know and understand why they should be involved in a local church?
4. What's your plan for challenging your students now? (as a leader now that the Basics are finished)