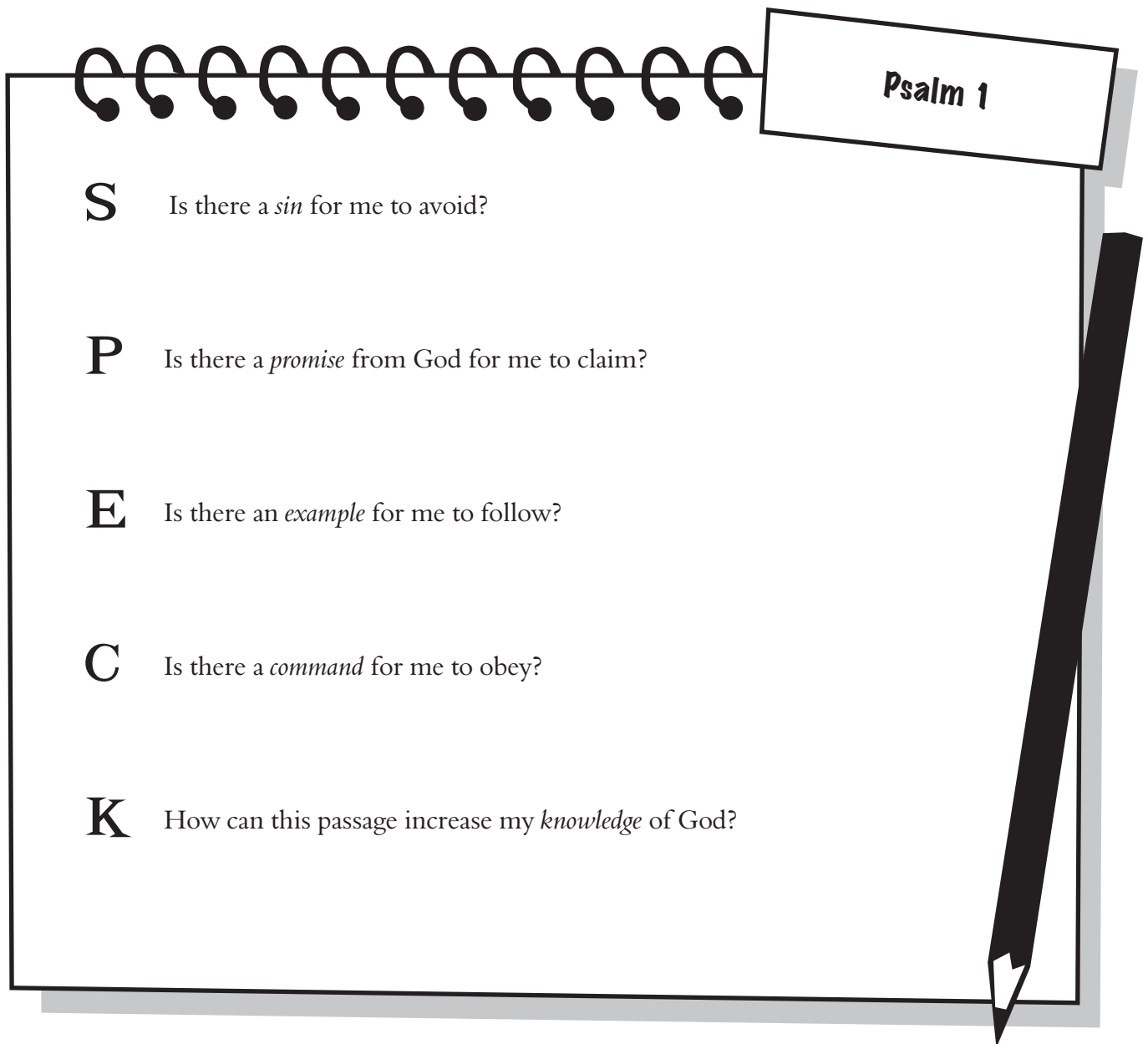


# Time with God—SPECK...

This Bible reading method gives you cues for learning from the Scripture you're reading. When you use this Bible reading method during your time with God, first pray and ask God to teach you as you study his word. Then read a passage of Scripture.

- S** Is there a *sin* for me to avoid?
- P** Is there a *promise* from God for me to claim?
- E** Is there an *example* for me to follow?
- C** Is there a *command* for me to obey?
- K** How can this passage increase my *knowledge* of God?

You might want to write in a journal or notebook the things you learn. End your time by praying that God would help you remember what you learn and let it become a part of your life. Look up the passage below, and answer each of the questions. Be prepared to teach others what you learn.



The image shows a spiral-bound notebook with a pencil resting on the right side. A label in the top right corner of the notebook reads "Psalm 1". The notebook page contains the following questions:

- S** Is there a *sin* for me to avoid?
- P** Is there a *promise* from God for me to claim?
- E** Is there an *example* for me to follow?
- C** Is there a *command* for me to obey?
- K** How can this passage increase my *knowledge* of God?

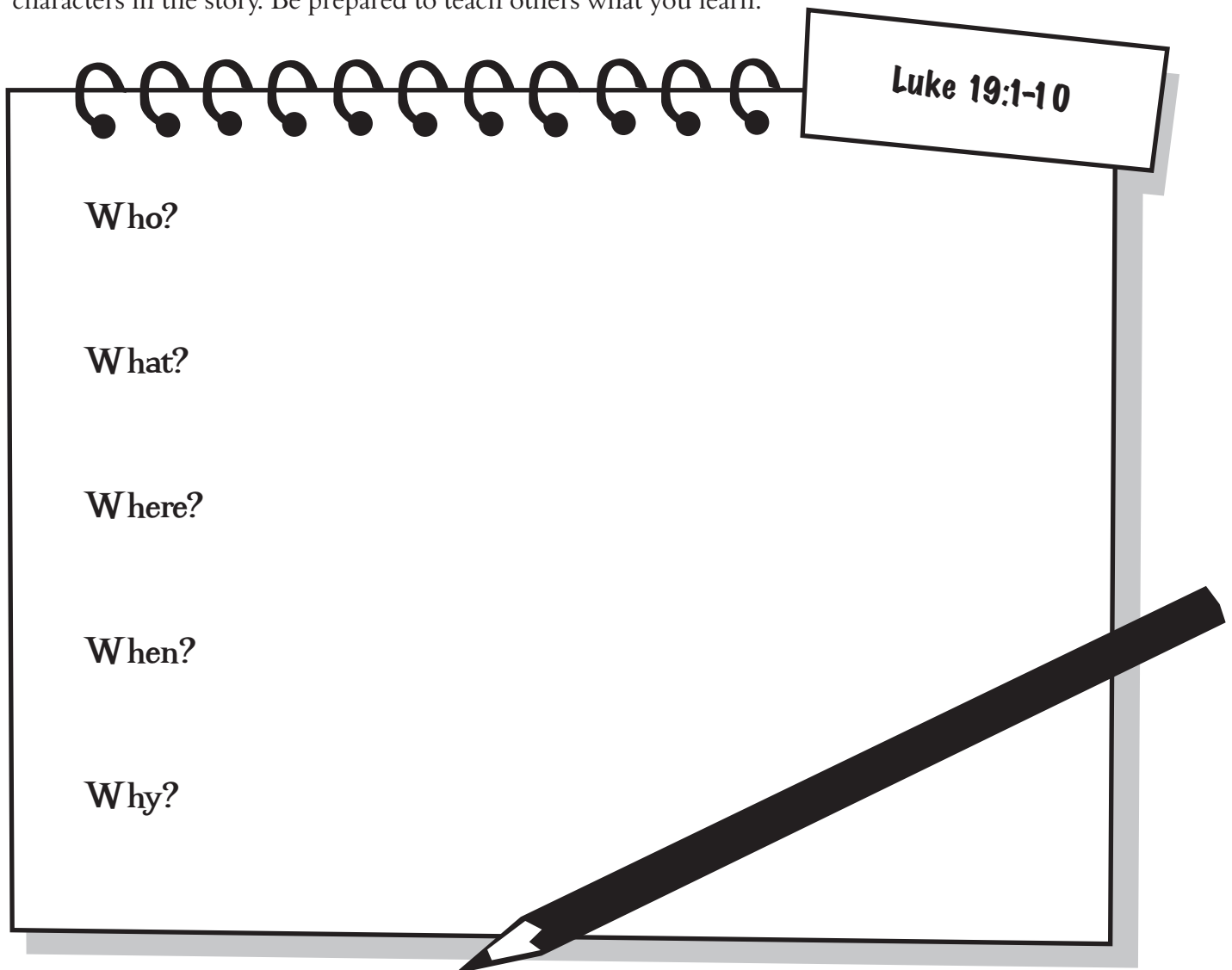
# Time with God—Reporter...

When reporters go to the scene of a news event, they ask particular questions that help them understand the whole picture.

- Who?** Who are the people involved?
- What?** What has happened?
- Where?** Where did the event take place?
- When?** When did the event take place?
- Why?** Why did the people do the things they did?

As you read put yourself into the situation, and imagine: What might the Bible characters have been thinking and feeling? What would I have felt or thought if I had been present? How can I identify with these people? Write down in a journal or notebook your responses to all of the questions you've asked yourself.

Read the passage below, then answer the “Who?” “What?” “Where?” “When?” and “Why?” questions in the spaces provided. Also imagine what the characters thought and felt, what you would have thought and felt had you been in that situation, and how you identify with each of the characters in the story. Be prepared to teach others what you learn.



**Luke 19:1-10**

**Who?**

**What?**

**Where?**

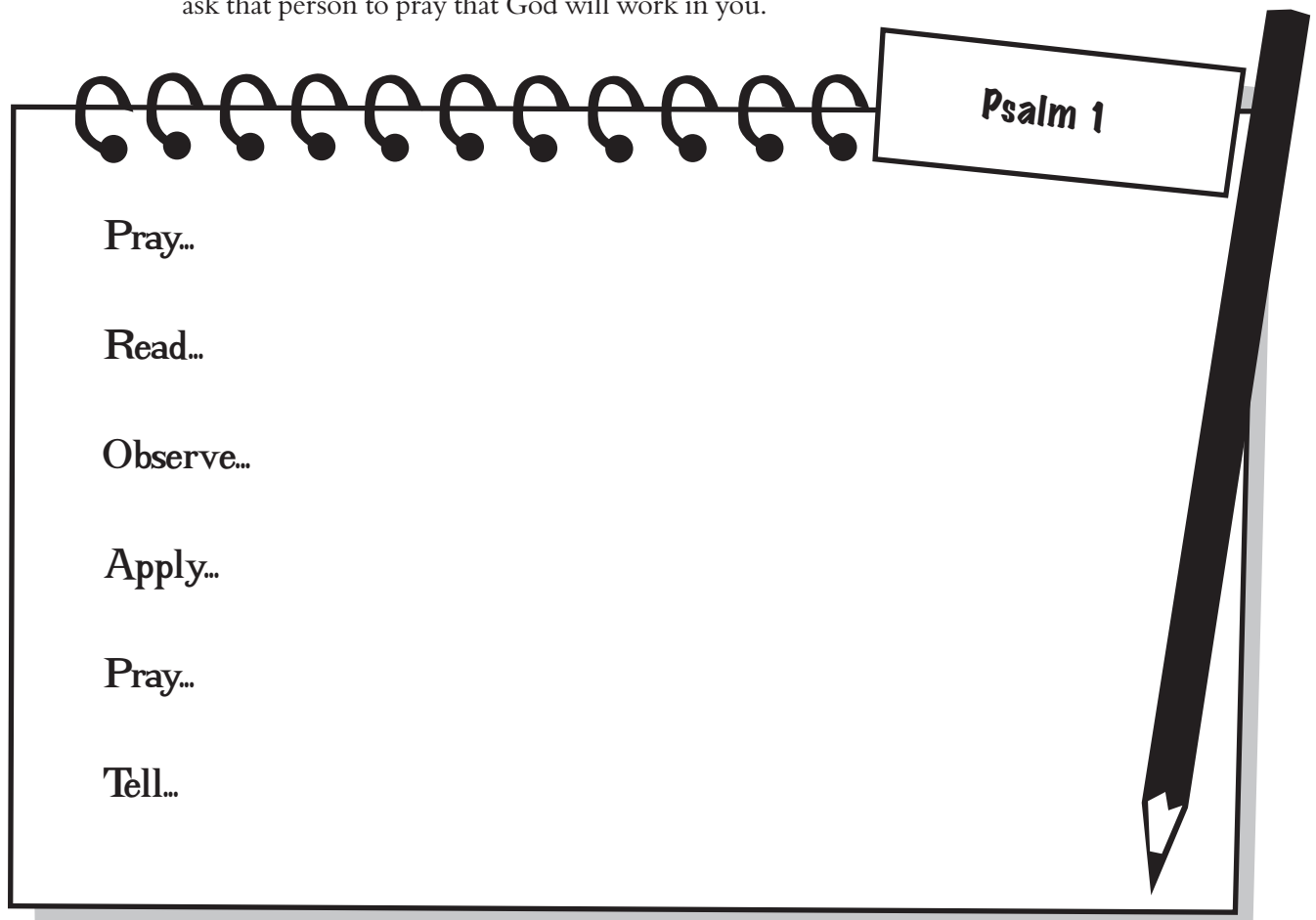
**When?**

**Why?**

# Time with God—PROAPT...

This Bible reading method gives you cues for learning from the Scripture you're reading. When you use this Bible reading method during your time with God, first pray and ask God to teach you as you study his word. Then read a passage of Scripture.

- Pray** Ask God to guide you as you read through the passage.
- Read** Read the passage through twice—once quickly then once slowly.
- Observe** Look carefully over the passage and take note of what you see, such as people, events, special circumstances, things that seem confusing or hard to understand, difficult words, actions that take place, and anything else that stands out to you. Ask yourself questions such as, “What is the author emphasizing?” and “What did the first hearers of this word think about it?”
- Apply** Think about what you've read, and ask yourself how it might hold true for you. Ask yourself questions such as, “What does this passage say to me about my life?” “Can I identify with anything these characters have experienced? If so, what and how?” “Does this passage point to any changes I need to make in my life such as habits I need to drop or new attitudes I need to adopt? If so, what?”
- Pray** As you think about your answers to the questions in the “Apply” section, ask God to help you make whatever changes you need to make. None of us can change alone; only by God's strength and power in our lives can we become the people he wants us to be. Invite him to do his work in your life.
- Tell** Now that you've made some new discoveries about God and what he wants to do in your life, tell someone. Share your new discoveries with a close friend, parent, or mentor, and ask that person to pray that God will work in you.



Psalm 1

Pray...

Read...

Observe...

Apply...

Pray...

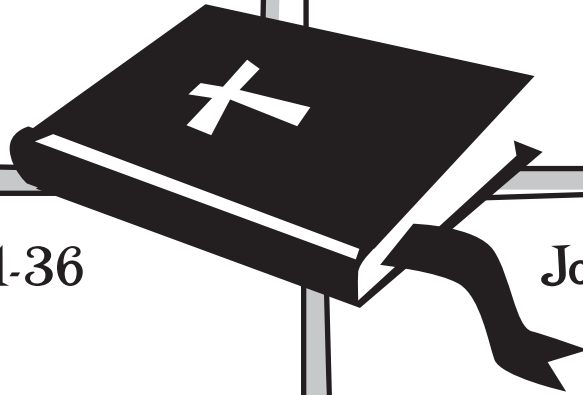
Tell...

# God's Awesome Promises...

Look up the Bible verses below. In the spaces provided, write words or phrases that best describe the benefits of reading and obeying God's word.

Psalm 119:11

Psalm 119:105



John 8:31-36

John 15:11

John 16:33

John 17:17

# Christmas Discovery

Original author unknown



One cold Christmas Eve night a mother and her children were about to leave the warmth of their farmhouse for a church service. She begged her husband to come with her and the kids, but he refused.

“I don’t believe in that Jesus stuff,” he said. “It’s a nice story, but God would never come as a baby.”

He laid back on his recliner and began to read the paper. His family headed out into the blustery night, leaving him at home.

A while later the man heard a thump on the window. It was followed by another and yet another. He got up out of the chair and looked through the window. Outside he could see swirls of snow blowing around the house. Suddenly, a small bird came crashing into the window. It fell to the ground. Other birds did the same. They were trying to get into the warm house but were injuring themselves against the glass.

The man knew if he didn’t do something they would soon all die. Pulling on his coat and boots he headed out into the cold night. The wind bit into his face and his breath blew around his head like a cloud. He headed out to the barn and turned on the light. Next he threw open the doors. Trudging back through the snow he began trying to shoo the birds toward the warm barn. But no matter how hard he tried, they kept smashing into the window. Several birds were now laying motionless in the snow. The man became desperate. He got some grain and made a path to the barn, but the birds would not follow.

In his frustration he looked up into the star lit sky and shouted, “What do I have to do for you to understand? You are all going to die! Do I have to become a bird to show you the way?”

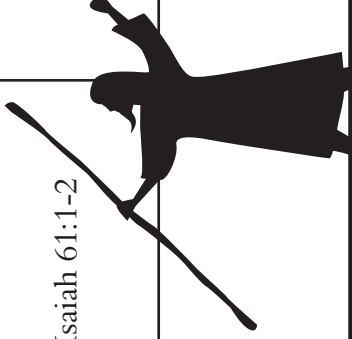
Suddenly he was struck by the truth of his own words and he fell to his knees in the snow. He looked up into the night sky, tears streaming from his eyes. “Thank you Jesus,” he said, “now I understand.”





# The Waiting Is Over...

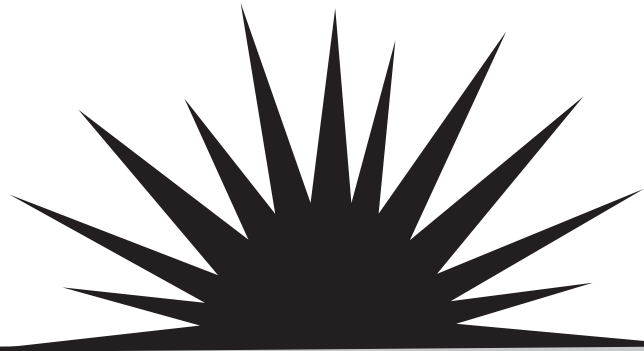


Gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Text	1:18-25; 2:1-12 ★	1:2-3; 2:1-12	1:26-33, 38; 2:1-20; 4:16-21 ★	1:1-5, 14, 23
★ NT Story				★
OT Prophecy	Micah 5:2 Isaiah 7:14	Isaiah 40:3	Isaiah 61:1-2 	Isaiah 40:3
Perspective				

# Dream Day...

Use the outline below to plan out your dream day, according to the guidelines described by your leader. Be prepared to discuss what you learn.

## Morning



## Afternoon



## Evening





# What a Concept!

READER ONE: God. The God, who thought up creation and made mountains from nothing. The God who thought up gravity and electricity and nuclear fusion and  $e=mc^2$ . The God, who thought up armadillos and English sheepdogs and killer whales. The God, who is everywhere and knows everything and is all powerful. That God made people—because he wanted to. God made them in all colors and sizes, and God gave them the ability and the choice to love him. But people chose not to love God. They chose to love themselves.

READER TWO: God is life. Without God there is no life, only death.

READER THREE: “I will come to them in a way they understand,” says God the creator. “I will come to them in a way they can see and touch and love,” says God the almighty. “I will come as one of them,” says God the adventurer and the savior.

READER ONE: The Creator becoming a part of creation? God as a human? But what if humans don’t accept God as their creator and savior? What if they don’t recognize God? What if they hurt God? What if God dies?

READER TWO: God the magnificent had a plan. God prepared the way, then God made the move: from God the all-powerful to God the baby. And they named him Jesus.

READER ONE: Why God the baby? Why God the child? Why God the teenager? Why God the human?

READER THREE: “I will come to them in a way they understand. I will come to them in a way they can see and touch and love. I will come to them as one of them, and I will live their life and die their death and take the punishment for all their sins.”

READER ONE: Why?

READER THREE: “That’s simple: because I want to, because I made them, because I love them.”





# Jesus Understands

When Jesus came to earth, he experienced many of the same things we experience every day. Check out these Bible references and write down what Jesus was experiencing.

Mark 4:40: Luke 9:41

Mark 4:38: John 4:6

Matthew 12:22-24:  
Luke 19:6-7

Matthew 4:1-4 (5-11):  
26:39-41

Matthew 19:13-14:  
John 12:1-3: 21:7-10

Matthew 16:21-23:  
Luke 2:48-50: John 18:22-23

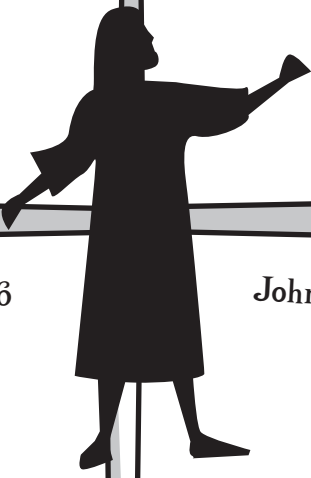
Mark 11:13-14:  
Luke 4:28-30: John 12:37

Luke 2:51: John 2:3-7

Mark 6:1-4: Luke 19:6-7

Mark 6:31, 45-46

John 11:33-36



# John the Baptist IQ Test...

How much do you know about John the Baptist? Circle the correct answer to each multiple choice question below without looking in your Bible.

- 1** John was the son of...
- a. Simeon and Anna
  - b. Zechariah and Elizabeth
  - c. Homer and Marge
  - d. Abraham and Sarah

- 2** John recognized Jesus as the Messiah because...
- a. they were classmates
  - b. he saw Jesus on TV
  - c. Jesus's sandals were untied
  - d. he saw the Spirit descend on Jesus

- 3** Before John was born...
- a. his mother nearly died
  - b. he jumped for joy
  - c. he began to speak
  - d. his father lost his sight

- 4** John's job was to...
- a. introduce Jesus to Herod
  - b. introduce Jesus to the Temple
  - c. introduce Jesus to Israel
  - d. eat locusts

- 5** John baptized people...
- a. in the Mediterranean Sea
  - b. in the pool of Siloam
  - c. in the Sea of Galilee
  - d. in the Jordan River

- 6** John baptized Jesus because...
- a. Jesus told him to
  - b. he was next in line
  - c. Jesus needed to repent
  - d. the heavens opened

- 7** John referred to Jesus as...
- a. my second cousin, once removed
  - b. the Light of Heaven
  - c. the Lamb of God
  - d. the carpenter's son

- 8** John was...
- a. Presbyterian
  - b. Baptist
  - c. Jewish
  - d. Covenant

- 9** John had a diet rich in...
- a. fish and bread
  - b. bugs and sweets
  - c. dates and nuts
  - d. grapes and figs

- 10** John...
- a. retired after Jesus came
  - b. identified Jesus as the Messiah
  - c. wanted all of the attention
  - d. was with Jesus at the Last Supper

- 11** John's clothes were...
- a. inconspicuous
  - b. of the finest purple cloth
  - c. hairy
  - d. worn by priests

- 12** When John crossed Herod, he...
- a. was flogged and released
  - b. had to leave the country
  - c. lost his head
  - d. continued preaching near Jerusalem



## Guest Appearance

**M**y name is John. No last name, just John. Today you'll be learning about the day Jesus was baptized. I want to tell you my version of the story. It started before I was born. My father was Zechariah, a priest. An angel visited him, telling him I was coming. What a surprise! You see, my parents were both pretty old, well past the point they thought they would have children. The angel told my father that God was sending me to do a special job—to tell the people of Israel that the Messiah was coming.

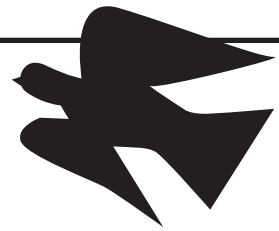
Without any brothers or sisters, I grew up sort of alone. I like being on my own. Some people think I have strange habits. I like to think of them as unique. *[John grabs some raisins, squirts a little honey on them, and pops them into his mouth.]* Like eating these locusts—really quite tasty if you put a little honey on them.

When I grew older, God told me to preach to the people of Israel to repent of their sins and be baptized, so I did. I stirred up quite a bit of controversy because I told the people they were sinners and needed to repent. Then I told the religious leaders that they needed to repent as well.

They didn't know what to make of me. *[John smiles and pops another few locusts.]* Some of the leaders asked me if I was the Messiah they had been waiting for. I told them that I wasn't even close to that! I just came to get their attention so that when the Messiah did show up they would be ready for him.

Then God talked to me again and told me that the Messiah would soon come. I didn't know who the Messiah was, but God assured me that I would know him when I saw him. He told me that the Holy Spirit would come and land on the man. So I'm thinking, "Okay, I wonder what that's going to look like."





I just kept preaching and baptizing people, and then one day it happened! I was standing, waist-deep in the Jordan River with people all around, and Jesus appeared. He walked over to me. Now plenty of people needed to repent and be baptized, but I knew Jesus wasn't one of them! This guy was so good and kind and honest that he put me to shame.

"No way!" I told him. "I can't baptize you. You should baptize me!" But Jesus insisted. He said it was something we had to do because it was right. Well, Jesus stepped into the water, and I baptized him. And as he came out of the water, all of a sudden, out of nowhere the Spirit of God descended on Jesus like a dove. I wondered if this could be the sign I was looking for! My heart began to pound in my ears, and then I heard another sound—a voice coming from nowhere...and everywhere. It was a full and strong voice like I had never heard before, and it said, "This is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him." *[John starts to reach for another locust but stops because he is more interested in remembering.]*

You know, that was the most awesome moment in my life. There in the Jordan River was God the Son, God the Father with the great voice, and God the Spirit as a dove. God was totally there, and God was saying, in effect, "Okay, Israel, your Messiah is here!" *[John looks off in the distance with a glazed look for about five seconds.]*

So, that's what I did for the rest of my life. I told the story about God coming to save people like me. *[John eats a locust.]* And that's why I've come to you today. I want you to know that God didn't just come to save Israel. He came to save everyone who loves him and believes that Jesus took our punishment for sin.

*[John starts to leave and then stops.]* Oh yeah, one more thing. The Spirit that came down to Jesus is available to all of you too. The Holy Spirit will come and live in you if you ask, and help you be like Jesus. Is God good or what! *[John exits.]*



# Temptation in the Wilderness...

Jesus's baptism was the beginning of his ministry. Yet waiting around every corner lurked a very real yet unseen enemy. The devil wasn't about to let Jesus redeem the fallen world! So, immediately following his baptism, Jesus found himself alone facing Satan.

**Alone!**

Read aloud Luke 4:1-13, then consider the following questions:

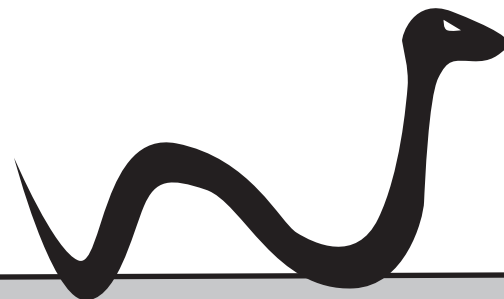
- 1) What is the longest you have ever been alone?
- 2) Was Jesus alone? Explain.
- 3) What condition was Jesus in at the end of the forty-day fast?
- 4) What do you think was the purpose of Jesus's forty-day fast?
- 5) How many times did Satan tempt Jesus?



**What Truly Satisfies?**

Read Luke 4:3-4 and Deuteronomy 8:3. Discuss this first temptation together and answer these questions:

- 1) What would be so wrong with doing what the devil proposed?
- 2) How did Jesus respond?
- 3) What does this teach you about Jesus?





## Whom Shall We Worship?

Read Luke 4:5-8 and Deuteronomy 6:13. Discuss the second temptation together and answer these questions:

- 1) What deal did the devil offer Jesus? Was it a good deal? Why or why not?
- 2) If Jesus had given in, what would he have gained?
- 3) What does this teach you about Jesus?



## In Whom Shall We Have Faith?

Read Luke 4:9-12, Psalm 91:11-12, and Deuteronomy 6:12. Discuss the third temptation and answer these questions:

- 1) What kind of example would Jesus set if he had chosen to test God rather than to have faith that God was with him?
- 2) Have you ever faced a dare? Why do you think it is better not to give in to a dare even if you could do it?
- 3) What does this teach you about Jesus?

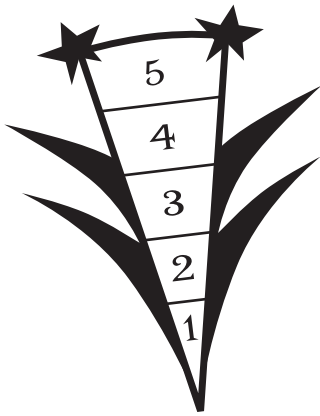


## The Aftermath!

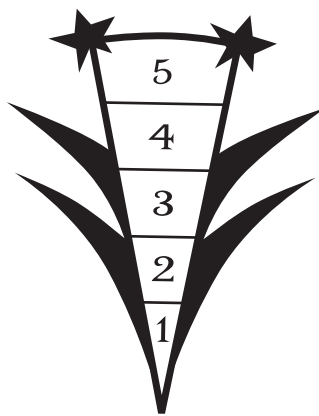
“When the Devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came” (Luke 4:13, NLT).

# The Friendship Meter...

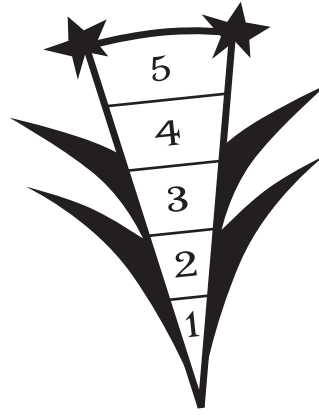
Read through the following qualities of friendship and rate yourself on a scale of one to five, one signifying that you don't exhibit that quality, five signifying that you reflect that quality totally.



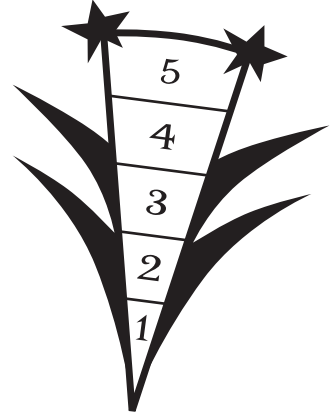
I listen when my friends have good news.



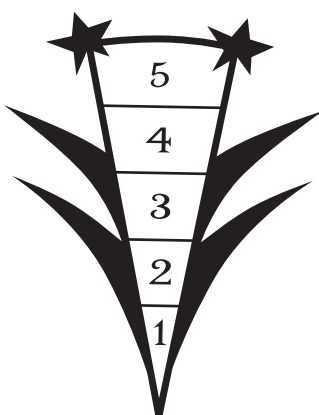
I pray for my friends.



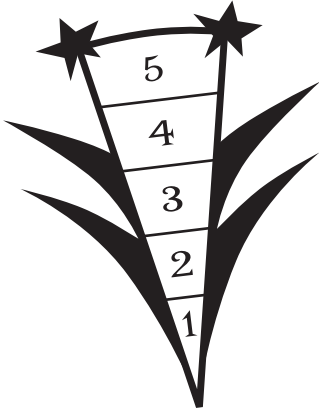
I stick up for my friends when they can't defend themselves.



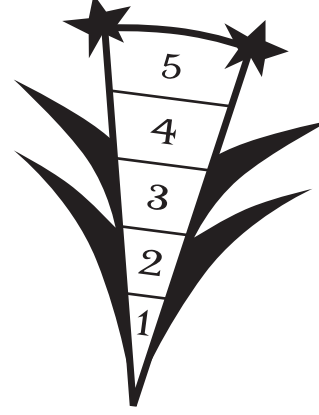
I listen when my friends are sad.



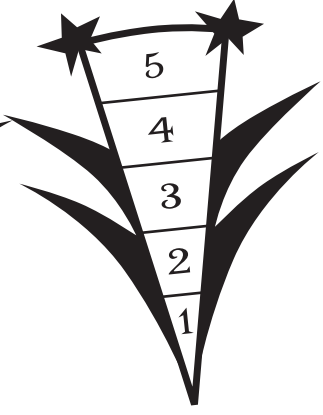
I don't gossip about my friends.



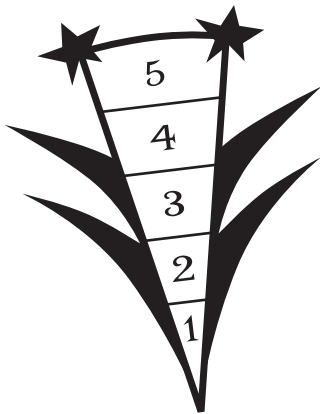
I apologize when I'm wrong.



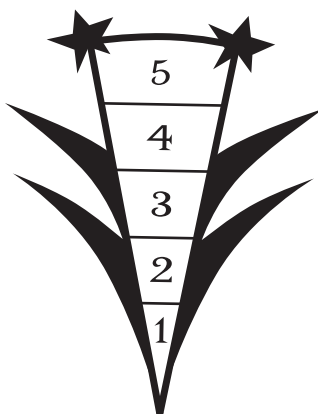
I help my friends make good decisions.



I forgive others when they're wrong.



I ask my friends for help.



I keep my friends' secrets.



I lend things to my friends.



I share my faith with my friends.

# The Disciples of Jesus

Look up the following verses and be prepared to share what you learn.

**Simon Peter** Matthew 14:28; 15:15; 16:16; 17:1, 24; 18:21; 19:27; 26:33; Mark 1:16, 29, 36; 3:16; 5:37; 14:37; Luke 5:3; 9:32; 22:31; 24:34; John 1:41; 6:68; 13:6, 24; 18:10; 20:2; 21:2; Acts 3:1; 4:1; 8:14

**Andrew** Matthew 4:18; 10:2; Mark 1:16, 29; 13:3; Luke 5:10; John 1:40; 6:8; 12:22

**James** Matthew 4:21; 10:2; 17:1; Mark 1:19, 29; 3:17; 5:37; 9:2; 10:35, 41; 13:3; 14:33; Luke 5:10; 8:51; 9:28, 54; Acts 12:2

**John** All of the references for James, except Acts 12:2, and the following: Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49; John 19:26; 20:4; 21:7, 20; Acts 3:1; 4:1; 8:14

**Philip** Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; John 1:43; 6:5; 12:21; 14:8

**Bartholomew** Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; John 1:45; 21:2  
(Nathanael)

**Matthew** Matthew 9:9; 10:3; Mark 2:15; Luke 5:27  
(Levi)





**Thomas**

Matthew 10:3; Mark 11:16; 14:5; 20:24;  
21:2; Acts 1:13

**James**  
(Son of Alphaeus)

Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15;  
Acts 1:13 (Noted in lists only)

**Simon the Zealot**  
(or Cananean)

Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15;  
Acts 1:13 (Noted in lists only)

**Thaddaeus**  
(Judas, Son of James)

Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:16;  
John 14:22; Acts 1:13

**Judas Iscariot**

Matthew 10:4; 26:14, 25, 47; 27:3;  
Mark 3:19; 14:10, 43; Luke 6:16; 22:3, 47;  
John 6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26; 18:2; Acts 1:16

**Mary Magdalene**

Matthew 8:2; 27:55-61; 28:1-10; Mark  
16:9-11; Luke 8:1-2; 23:49, 55; 24:1-11;  
John 19:25; 20:1-3, 11-18

**Joanna**

Luke 8:1-3; 24:1-10

**Susanna**

Luke 8:3

**Martha**

Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-5, 19-45; 12:2

**Mary**  
(Sister of Martha)

Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-5, 19-45; 12:1-8



# God's Kingdom...

Look up each of the passages below, then answer the questions under each passage. Be prepared to teach others what you learn.

## Boundaries

- 1) Read Luke 17:20-21 and 1 John 18:36. What are the boundaries of the kingdom? Where does it exist?
- 2) Read 1 John 5:3-5. Does the kingdom expand by force or something else?



## God Ushers in the New Kingdom

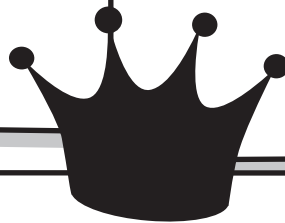
- 1) Read Matthew 4:12-17, 23 and Luke 4:16-21. How does Jesus usher in the new kingdom? What is it like?

## Parables about the Kingdom

- 1) Read Matthew 13:31-32 and 13:44. What do these parables tell you about the kingdom?

## Becoming a Part of God's Kingdom

- 1) Read Mark 2:13-17. Who is God's kingdom for?
- 2) Read Luke 18:16-17 and John 3:16-17. How do we become part of the kingdom?



## Living in God's Kingdom

- 1) Read Matthew 5:43-48; 6:31-33; and 25:34-40. What is it like being in God's kingdom? How shall we live?

# Upside Down—What To Do?

Fill in the blanks below to the best of your ability. Be prepared to discuss what you learn.

What I want to do...

What Jesus says to do...

When a person is my enemy.

When a person curses me.

When a person wants something of mine.

When an untrustworthy person wants to borrow something.

When a person has wronged me.

When a person hates me.

When a person hurts me.

When a person takes something of mine.

When a person does things I don't like.

When a person has something wrong in his or her life.



# Loving Like Jesus...

Take a few minutes to answer each of the questions below. Be prepared to discuss what you learn.

1) What kind of upside-down things might Jesus tell you to do as a citizen of God's kingdom?

2) What creative, constructive ways could you show love to these people this week?

a) Your mom and/or dad?

b) Your brother(s) and/or sister(s)?

c) Your friend?

d) The person you like least?

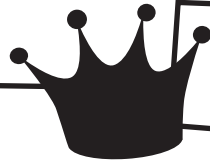
e) A person who has hurt you?

f) God?

3) Which one of these things will you do this week?

# The Miracles of Jesus...

Jesus's miracles demonstrate different things about God and Jesus. Look up each of the passages below, then answer the questions under each passage. Be prepared to teach others what you learn.



## Part One— Jesus's Authority

1) Read Matthew 9:1-8; 11:2-6; 12:22-28. What does Jesus have to say about miracles?

2) Read Matthew 8:23-27; 14:22-23. What do these miracles demonstrate about Jesus?



## Part Two— God's Character

1) Read Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 3:1-5; 7:31-37; 10:46-52; Luke 7:11-17; 8:26-39; 8:40-42, 49-56; and John 5:2-18; 9:1-38. How do these miracles show that all people have worth to God?

2) What do they tell you about the character of God?





A short  
story  
that  
illustrates  
a truth,  
principle,  
or  
moral  
lesson.



# An Invitation from Jesus...



## Jesus Invites the Children

Read Mark 10:13-16.

- 1) Why do you suppose the disciples acted the way they did toward the children?
- 2) What was Jesus's response to children?
- 3) Do you think some people today still think of children as a nuisance? Explain.
- 4) What does this story tell you about who Jesus invites into God's kingdom?

## An Unexpected Guest

Read Luke 7:36-50.

- 1) Why do you suppose Jesus went to eat at the Pharisee's house?
- 2) Why did the woman act toward Jesus in way she did?
- 3) What is Simon's preconceived notion as to who belongs in God's kingdom?
- 4) What does this story tell you about who Jesus invites into God's kingdom?

## Invitation to an Outcast

Read Luke 19:1-10.

- 1) What was Zacchaeus's attitude toward Jesus?
- 2) What was the attitude of the crowd toward Zacchaeus?
- 3) What does lost mean and who are the lost?
- 4) What does this story tell you about who Jesus invites into God's kingdom?

## "Nic-at-Night"

Read John 3:1-21.

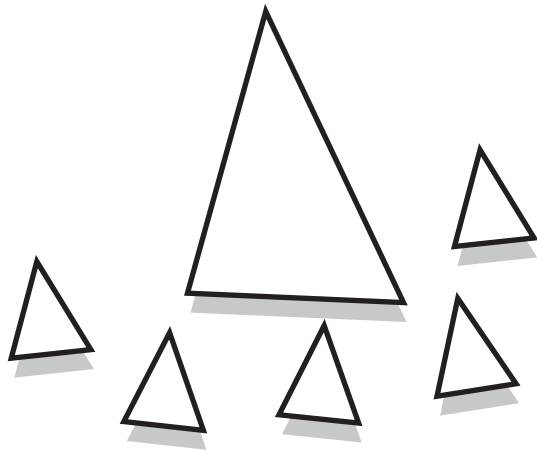
- 1) Why do you suppose Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of darkness?
- 2) Who does Jesus tell Nicodemus God's kingdom is for?
- 3) How are you born into God's kingdom?
- 4) What does Jesus's willingness to spend time with Nicodemus tell you about who Jesus invites into the kingdom?

# Jesus's Invitation to Matthew

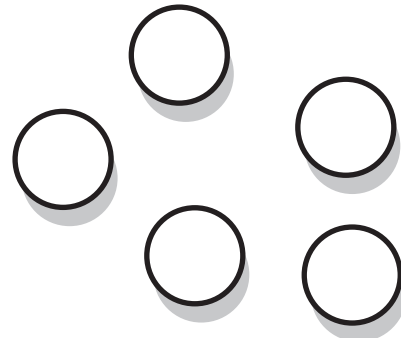
Read Matthew 9:9-13



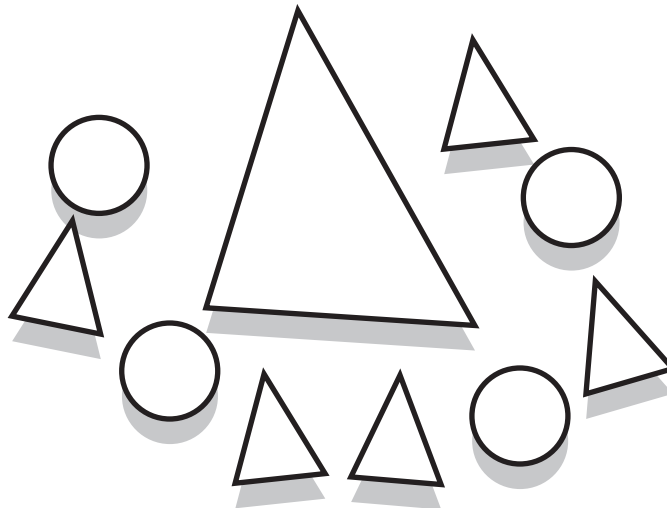
Follow me.



“Why does Jesus eat with sinners?”



Asked the Pharisees, who were watching.



“I have come to call not the righteous, but sinners.”



# Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Luke 19:28-40, 45-48 (adapted from the NIV)

READER ONE: After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,

READER TWO: “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

READER THREE: Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them,

READER FOUR: “Why are you untying the colt?”

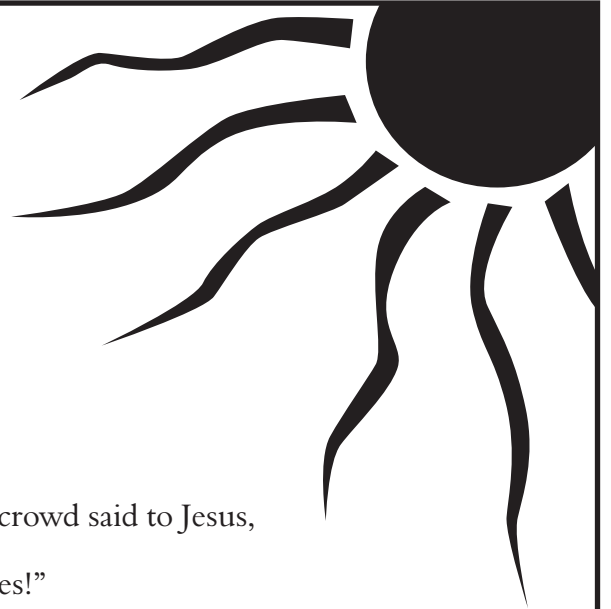
READERS FIVE and SIX: “The Lord needs it.”

READER THREE: They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

READER ONE: When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

ALL (except TWO): “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”  
“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”





READER THREE: Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,

READER FOUR: “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

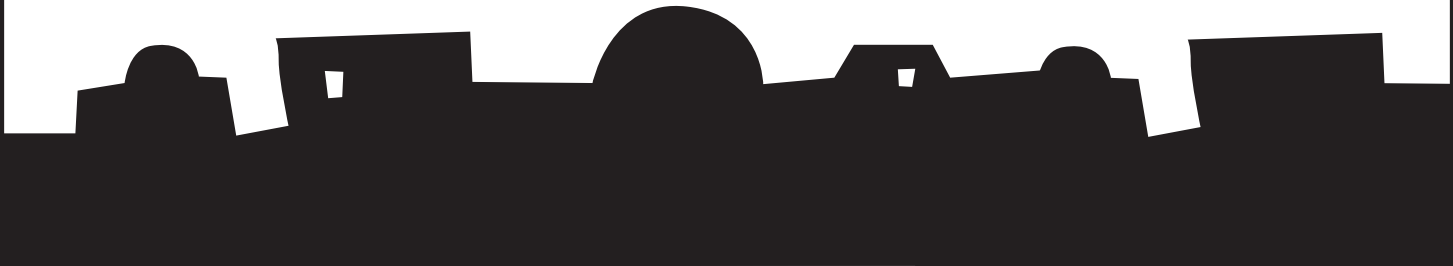
READER TWO: “I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

READER ONE: Then he entered the Temple area and began driving out those who were selling.

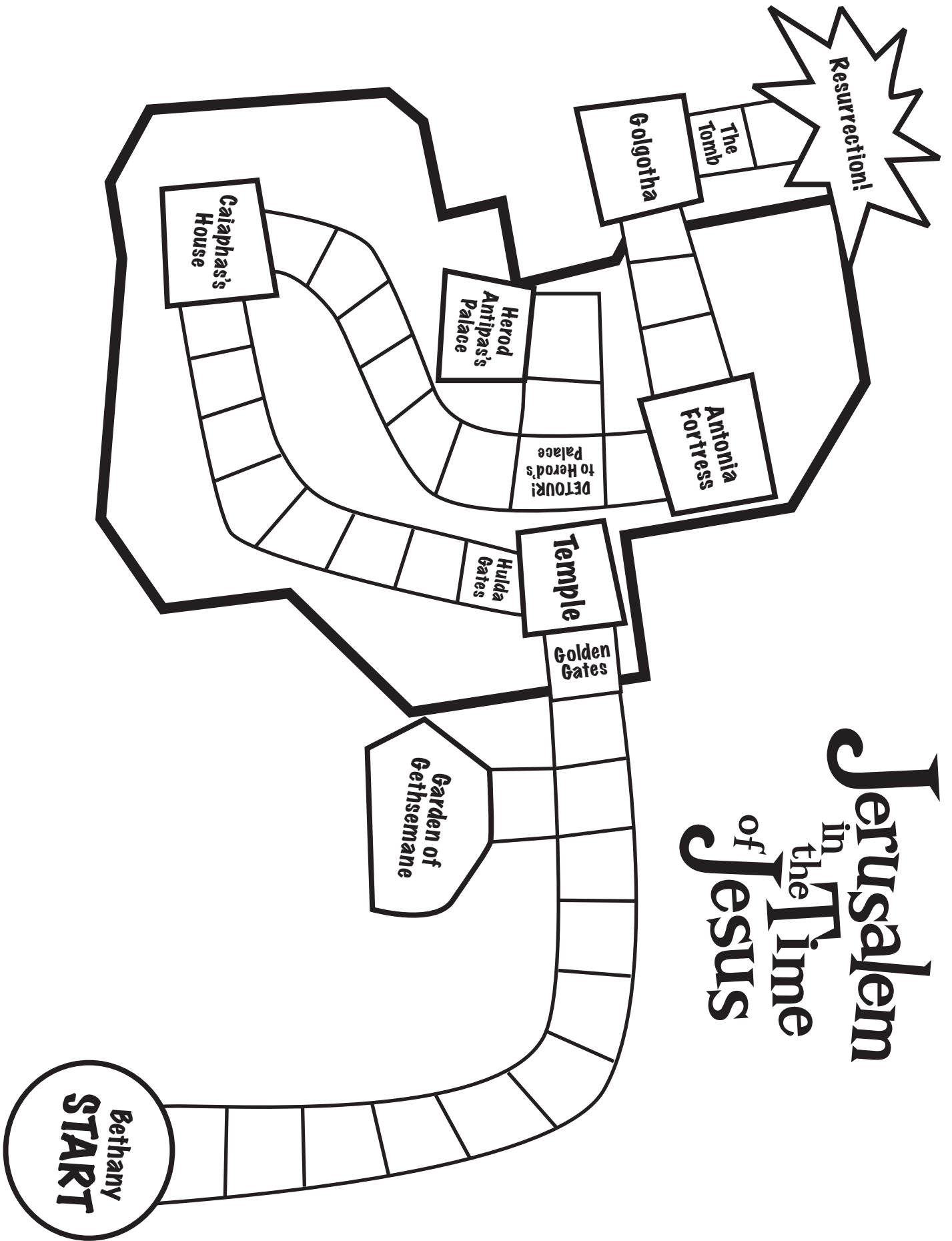
READER TWO: “It is written ‘my house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

READER THREE: Every day he was teaching at the Temple.

READER ONE: But the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people listened closely to his words.



# Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus



## Game Rules...

- 1) Every group member rolls the die once. The player who rolls the highest number begins the game. The player who rolls the lowest number is the Pharisee and asks questions of the rest of the players (if you're only playing one game, the leader can be the Pharisee so all students can compete). If two people roll the highest (or lowest) number, they need to roll again until one person rolls a higher (or lower) number.
- 2) All players place their game pieces at the designated starting point (if you're using colored pencils, each player draws a dot of his or her color at the starting point.)
- 3) The Pharisee takes the "From Bethany to the Temple" handout (or whichever handout the leader provides in future games) and will be responsible for asking players questions during the game; he or she will not play the game.
- 4) The player with the highest number then rolls the die again.
  - a) If the player rolls a 1, 2, or 3, the Pharisee asks him or her any question from the handout. If the player answers correctly, he or she moves his or her game piece three spaces (or draws a line three spaces on the game board in the appropriate color). If the player answers incorrectly, he or she doesn't move his or her piece. This player may look up the correct answer in the Bible in case the Pharisee asks the question again.
  - b) If the player rolls a 4, 5, or 6, he or she moves his or her game piece (or draws a line) one space (this player doesn't have to answer any questions).
- 5) Then the person to the first player's left goes, and play proceeds clockwise around the game board.
- 6) If the Pharisee asks all the questions on the handout before the game is over, he or she asks the questions again.
- 7) The winner is the player who reaches the end first.



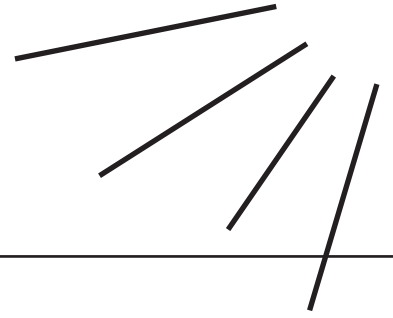
## From Bethany to the Temple...

As a Pharisee, you are an expert and teacher in Scripture. During the game, you'll ask one of the following questions each time a player rolls a 1, 2, or 3. The answer to each question is in italics after the question, as is the Bible reference for that answer. Answers are from Luke or Zechariah.

- 1) When Jesus went to Jerusalem, from where did he walk? *Bethphage or Bethany (Luke 19:29).*
- 2) What was unusual about the colt Jesus rode into Jerusalem? *It had never been ridden (Luke 19:30).*
- 3) What did the colt's owner ask the disciples? *"Why are you untying our colt?" (Luke 19:33).*
- 4) What was laid on the colt before Jesus sat on it? *The disciples' garments (Luke 19:35).*
- 5) What did the people put on the road as Jesus rode by? *Their cloaks and branches (Luke 19:36).*
- 6) What did the followers do as they walked with Jesus? *Shout, sing, praise God (Luke 19:37).*
- 7) What did the people say when Jesus arrived? *"Bless the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38).*
- 8) Why were the Pharisees upset during Jesus's entry into Jerusalem? *They did not like what the crowd was saying (Luke 19:39).*
- 9) What did Jesus say would burst into cheers if the crowd stopped praising him? *The stones along the road (Luke 19:40).*
- 10) What did Zechariah prophesy the people would do when Jesus entered Jerusalem? *Rejoice (Zechariah 9:9).*
- 11) Who did Zechariah say would come into town? *Jerusalem's king (Zechariah 9:9).*
- 12) How did Zechariah describe the characteristics of this coming king? *Victorious, humble, and riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).*
- 13) What did Jesus do in the Temple? *Drove out merchants (Luke 19:45).*
- 14) What did Jesus say the Temple should be? *A place of prayer (Luke 19:46).*
- 15) What did Jesus do daily? *Taught in the Temple (Luke 19:47).*
- 16) How did the people respond to Jesus's teaching? *They listened to every word (Luke 19:48).*



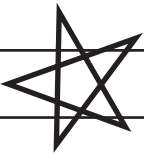
# Letter from Jesus...



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,



This is an invitation for you to join me in the Lord's Supper. I established this meal to help my friends remember me. I want you to participate in my



Supper for the following reasons (review Luke 22:7-20 for ideas):

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)



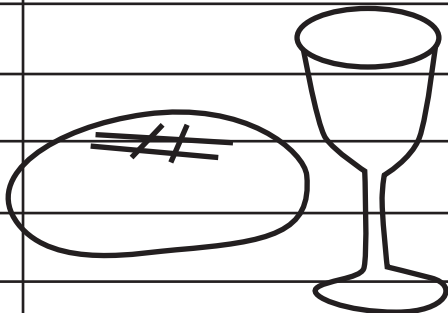
It is important to remember that I extend this invitation only to people who have accepted me as Savior and Lord; that is, they believe in me. If a person doesn't have this faith, he or she should not participate for the following reasons (for more information see 1 Corinthians 11:27-30):

- 1)
- 2)

I hope to see you at the Table.



Love,



*Jesus*

## From the Garden to Golgotha...

As a Pharisee, you are an expert and teacher in Scripture. During the game, you'll ask one of the following questions each time a player rolls a 1, 2, or 3. The answer to each question is in italics after the question, as is the Bible reference for that answer. All answers are from Luke.

- 1) What did Jesus tell the disciples to do in the garden? *Pray (Luke 22:40).*
- 2) What does Jesus ask of God? *"Please take this cup of suffering away from me" (Luke 22:42).*
- 3) How did Jesus end his prayer? *By saying, "Yet I want your will, not mine" (Luke 22:42).*
- 4) What were the disciples doing when Jesus returned to them? *Sleeping (Luke 22:42).*
- 5) Why did Jesus tell the disciples to pray? *So temptation would not overpower them (Luke 22:46).*
- 6) Who betrayed Jesus with a kiss? *Judas (Luke 22:47).*
- 7) Where did the leaders take Jesus after they arrested him? *To the high priest's house (Luke 22:54).*
- 8) What did Peter say when a servant girl accused him of being Jesus's disciple? *"I don't even know the man" (Luke 22:57).*
- 9) What happened after the third time Peter denied knowing Christ? *The rooster crowed (Luke 22:60).*
- 10) Who attended the high council meeting to convict Jesus? *The leading priests and teachers of religious law (Luke 22:66).*
- 11) What statement did they want Jesus to respond to? *"Tell us if you are the Messiah" (Luke 22:67).*
- 12) Where did Jesus say he would soon be sitting? *At God's right hand in the place of power (Luke 22:69).*
- 13) Who was Pilate? *The Roman governor (Luke 23:1).*
- 14) What did the council accuse Jesus of doing? *Telling them not to pay taxes and claiming to be the Messiah, a king (Luke 23:2).*



## From the Garden to Golgotha...(cont.)

- 15) Why did Pilate send Jesus to Herod? *Jesus was from Galilee, Herod's jurisdiction (Luke 23:6-7).*
- 16) Why did Herod want to see Jesus? *He wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle (Luke 23:8).*
- 17) What did the religious leaders do while Herod questioned Jesus? *Shouted accusations (Luke 23:10).*
- 18) What did Herod and the soldiers do to Jesus? *They mocked, ridiculed, and put a robe on him (Luke 23:11).*
- 19) What happened to Herod and Pilate that day? *They became friends (Luke 23:12).*
- 20) Why did Pilate want to release Jesus? *Because he found Jesus innocent (Luke 23:14).*
- 21) Who did Pilate release instead of Jesus? *Barabbas (Luke 23:25).*
- 22) Why did Jesus ask God to forgive the people? *Because they didn't know what they were doing (Luke 23:34).*
- 23) What did the sign on the cross say? *"This is the King of the Jews" (Luke 23:38).*
- 24) What did the Roman soldier say about Jesus after Jesus had died? *"Surely this man was innocent" (Luke 23:47).*
- 25) Who stood at a distance watching? *Jesus's friends (Luke 23:49).*
- 26) Who asked for permission to bury Jesus? *Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish high council (Luke 23:50-52).*
- 27) Why didn't the women bring their embalming spices to the tomb right away? *Because by the time they had finished preparing the spices, it was the Sabbath, the time to rest (Luke 24:55-56).*

If you've asked all the questions before the players have finished the game, start asking questions from the beginning again.





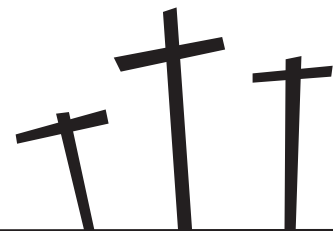
# The Trial and Death of Jesus...

Select three characters who played a part in or witnessed Jesus's trial and crucifixion (the third character is yourself as a member of the crowd). List their names below, one in each of the small boxes, and identify what each character might have thought or felt as the events unfolded.

**Name:**

**Name:**

**Your Name:**

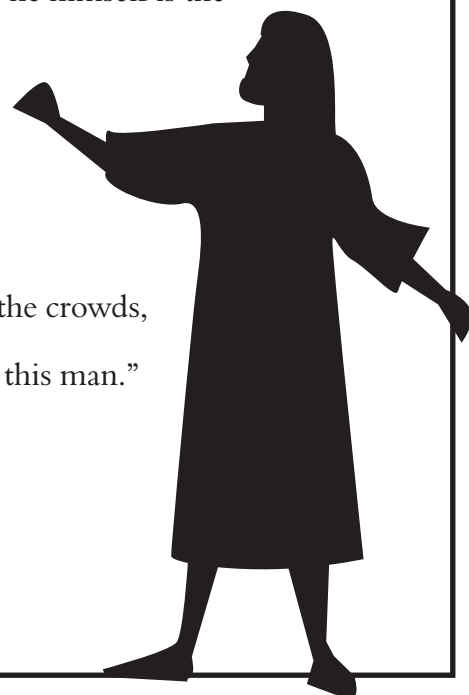


# The Death of the King

Luke 22:66–23:56 (adapted from the NRSV)



- READER ONE: When day came, the chief priests and scribes gathered together, and they brought Jesus to their council.
- READER TWO: They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us.” Jesus replied,
- READER THREE: “If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”
- READER ONE: All of them asked,
- READER TWO: “Are you, then, the Son of God?”
- READER THREE: “You say that I am.”
- READER TWO: Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!”
- READER ONE: Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying,
- READER TWO: “We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.”
- READER ONE: Then Pilate asked Jesus,
- READER FOUR: “Are you the king of the Jews?”
- READER THREE: “You say so.”
- READER ONE: Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds,
- READER FOUR: “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.”



READER TWO: “He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.”

READER EIGHT: When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.

READER FIVE: When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign.

READER SEVEN: He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer.

READER SIX: The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate.

READER FIVE: That same day Herod and Pilate became friends; before this they had been enemies.

READER ONE: Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them,

READER FOUR: “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people, and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him.”

ALL (except READERS THREE and FOUR): “Away with this man! Release Barabbas for us!”

READER FIVE: Barabbas had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.

READER ONE: Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting,

ALL (except READERS THREE and FOUR): “Crucify, crucify him!”

READER ONE: A third time he said to them,

READER FOUR: “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.”

READER SIX: But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed.

READER SEVEN: So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

READER EIGHT: As they led Jesus away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.

READER ONE: A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said,

READER THREE: “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”



READER FIVE: Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right, and one on his left. Then Jesus said,

READER THREE: “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

READER ONE: And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by watching; but the leaders scoffed at him saying,

READERS ONE and FIVE: “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!”

READER FIVE: The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”

READER ONE: There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

READER EIGHT: One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying,

READER SIX: “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

READER FIVE: But the other rebuked him, saying,

READER SEVEN: “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, or we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom,”





READER THREE: “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

READER ONE: It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then, Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said,

READER THREE: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

READER FIVE: Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said,

READER EIGHT: “Certainly this man was innocent.”

READER SIX: And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts.

READER SEVEN: But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

READER EIGHT: Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning.

READER SEVEN: The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they went home, and prepared spices and perfumes.

READER ONE: On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

# Easter Is the Answer...

We can use the word “EASTER” to help us remember how a person can become a Christian. Each letter in the word begins a verse that tells us something about how we can live forever with God.

**E**

**EVEN** while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 2:5).

**A**

**ALL** have sinned and all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

**S**

...**SAVE** the world, through him [Jesus] (John 3:17).

**T**

**TURN** from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed from your sins (Acts 3:19).

**E**

**EVERYONE** who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

**R**

**RECEIVE** the promised Holy Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14).





# The Love of Jesus...

Now and Forever

**Jesus loves everyone.**

Agree  Uncertain/Neutral  Disagree

**Jesus's love is forever.**

Agree  Uncertain/Neutral  Disagree

**Jesus is with us now.**

Agree  Uncertain/Neutral  Disagree

**Jesus is in heaven.**

Agree  Uncertain/Neutral  Disagree

**Jesus has promised to return.**

Agree  Uncertain/Neutral  Disagree

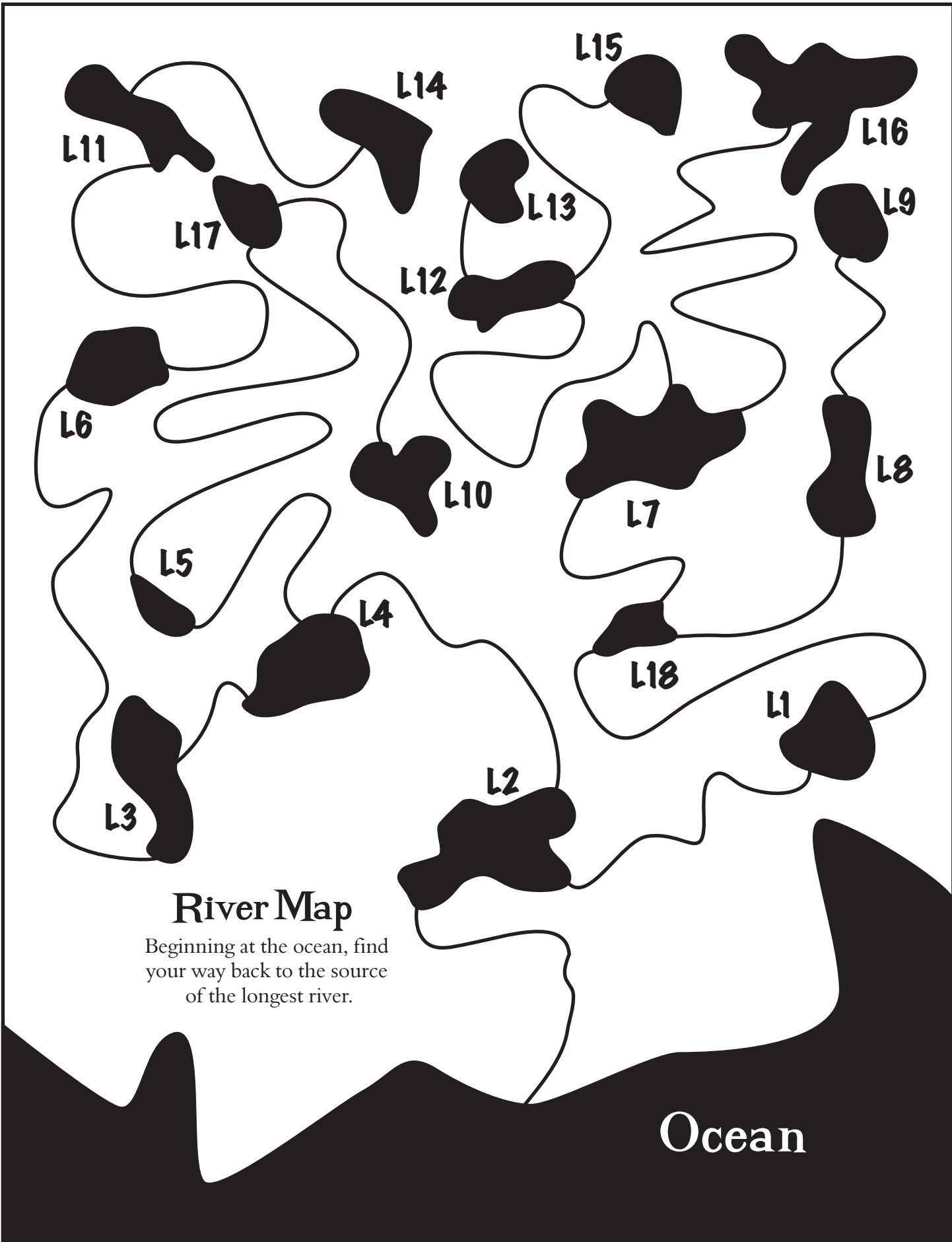


**We know exactly when Jesus will return.**

Agree  Uncertain/Neutral  Disagree







### River Map

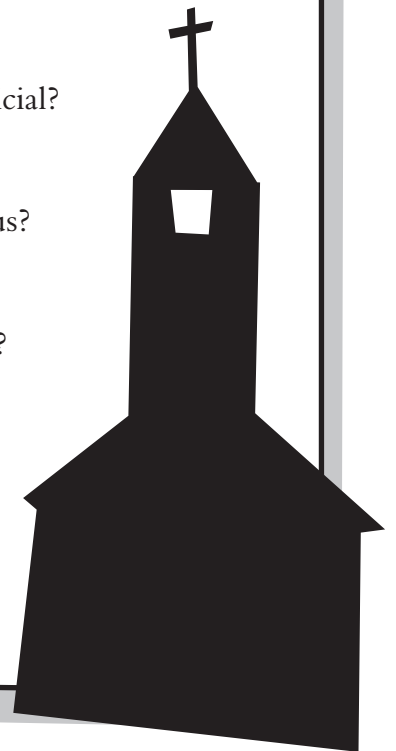
Beginning at the ocean, find your way back to the source of the longest river.

# Reaching Out, Expanding the Church...

Look up the passages below, then answer the following questions. Be prepared to teach others what you learn.

**Acts 8:26-40;  
10:1-48**

- 1) What was each disciple doing before God called him to reach out to someone new?
- 2) What obstacles did Philip need to overcome so he could communicate the good news with the Ethiopian official?
- 3) What obstacles did Peter need to overcome so he could communicate the good news with Cornelius?
- 4) How are these obstacles like the obstacles you face in relating to the person you find most difficult to reach at your school?
- 5) How did God prepare the Ethiopian official's heart before Philip arrived on the scene?
- 6) How did God prepare Cornelius's heart before Peter visited him?
- 7) How did the Holy Spirit enable Philip to talk with the Ethiopian official?
- 8) How did Peter need to change before he could reach out to Cornelius?
- 9) What was the result of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian official?
- 10) What was the result of Peter's encounter with Cornelius?





## Bring My World To Christ

“So we are ambassadors for Christ. Since God is making his appeal through us.”—2 Corinthians 5:20

Everyone I know is looking for someone to accept them for who they really are. True acceptance and love are found only in a relationship with God. We were created to have this relationship but have broken it by choosing our own way. God calls us back to himself, into a relationship that is never going to end. He calls us through the work of Christ. Jesus has bridged the separation between you and God. He is the only way across!

It’s God’s desire that each of us partner with him in showing others the way to the bridge. He wants every person—each friend and family member to understand what Jesus did. God shows himself to others through us, creating a desire in them for a relationship with him. In a very real way, God is calling us to be small bridges which direct them to the one true bridge, Jesus.

God will work through your prayers. I urge you to start praying specifically for people you love who are lost and searching, that they might find true acceptance and hope in Christ. Ask him to create opportunities to get to know them better. Wherever you’re at, be a bridge which leads to the true bridge.

### Bringing My World to Christ

This is your opportunity to list the names of people you will commit to pray for throughout this year. First, list individuals. Then think of a group (i.e. the soccer team), you’ll commit to pray for regularly.

“Lord these are names representing the relationships I commit to you this year.”

NAME(S) OF FRIEND(S):

---

---

---

GROUP(S):

---

---

”In Jesus name. Amen.” (Let it be so.)



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NAME(S) OF FRIEND(S):

---

---

---

GROUP(S):

---

---

”In Jesus name. Amen.” (Let it be so.)

# Growing Closer to God...

1) What is my relationship with God like right now?



2) How can I allow the Holy Spirit to help me grow closer to God?

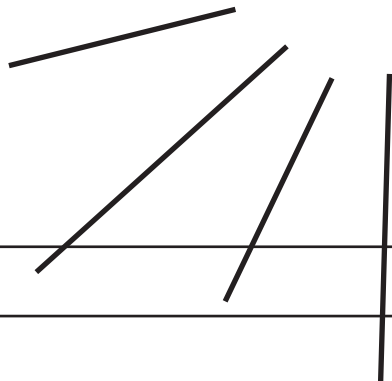
3) Am I seeing fruits of the Spirit in my life? If so, which ones? How do they show?

4) Are there any fruits of the Spirit that I need to ask the Spirit to help me develop? If so, which ones? How might I see them in my life?



5) Review pages 120 and 121 in your student journal. How am I doing related to the goals I set? In light of today's discussion how do I need to adjust my goals?

Letter from God...



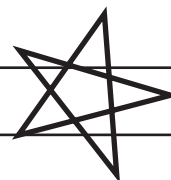
Dear \_\_\_\_\_,



(What is God thankful for in my life right now?)

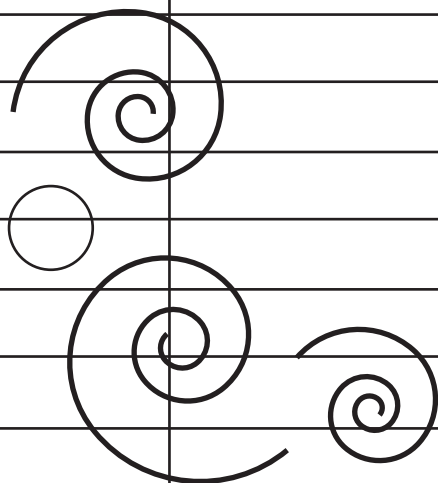


(What are the areas in which God wants to encourage me?)



(What behaviors does God want me to change?)

(How does God want me to respond to this letter?)



Love.

God

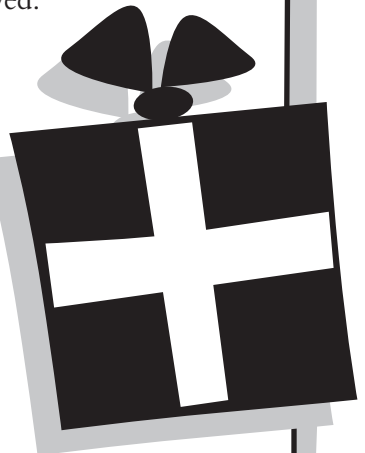
# God Has Given Us Gifts...

There are many spiritual gifts referred to in many Scripture passages. This is a list of some of them. As you read through this list, identify the ones that apply to you or to people you know.



- Serving** I like to help others meet practical needs by doing behind-the-scenes work. I enjoy offering my help to people.
- Giving** I like to share my belongings and give gifts. I enjoy responding to people in need.
- Mercy** I hurt when I see other people hurting, and I feel compassionate to those who suffer. I want to show God's compassion to others.
- Leadership** I am able to identify a vision, set goals, and inspire others to work toward those goals.
- Encouragement** I have an optimistic perspective on life. I enjoy speaking words that bring out the best in others. I like to give people hope.
- Wisdom** I can help people handle situations in ways that honor God. People often ask me for advice.
- Faith** It is easy for me to trust in God's promises. When situations seem bad, I know God will come through for me and for others.
- Evangelism** I like to share the good news of Jesus Christ in a clear and convincing way.
- Healing** I pray for those who are struggling spiritually or need spiritual strength. I trust God to bring assurance, comfort, and healing.
- Hospitality** I enjoy making people feel welcome and part of the group. I like to meet new people.
- Craftsmanship** I like to use my hands and imagination to create things or repair things. If there is a work project at church, I am involved.

**My Talents**



# Reconciled to God...

Read Romans 6:23, then answer the questions in each section.

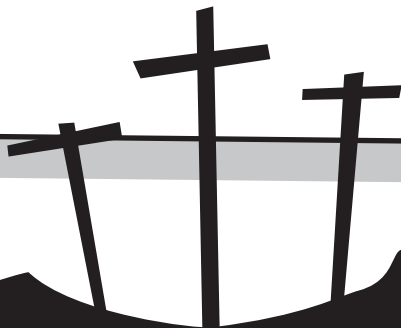
1) What sins do I struggle with?

2) What guilt have I felt?

3) In what ways have I separated myself from God?

Be assured that God loves you so much that he sent Jesus to free you from sin, take away your guilt, restore your friendship with God, and make you pure.

You can be freed from your sins today by giving yourself to Christ who loves you, who bears your sins, and who will be with you forever.



# The Church's Influence Grows...

Fill in the blanks using the words on page 361.



In 313, the \_\_\_\_\_ Emperor Constantine the Great declared Christianity a \_\_\_\_\_ religion, ending the time of persecution. When the Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century, the church was in a position to bring order and \_\_\_\_\_ to Europe.

During the early Middle Ages, the church became more organized and its influence spread. The bishop of Rome, the \_\_\_\_\_, grew in power. \_\_\_\_\_ went as far as England. Monasteries spread throughout Europe, where people meditated, \_\_\_\_\_, studied, and worked. The church became involved in the \_\_\_\_\_ structure of Europe as the pope became the spiritual head of governments.

Europe—at one time threatened by disease, famine, and warring barbarian tribes—was by the eleventh and twelfth centuries starting to thrive. At the \_\_\_\_\_ was the church. The church established universities and hospitals, built great \_\_\_\_\_, inspired and supported the arts. The barbarian tribes had almost all been evangelized. New monastic orders, such as the Franciscans and Dominicans, emphasized personal \_\_\_\_\_, care of the poor, holy living, and teaching.

The church faced great \_\_\_\_\_, however. Some were internal, some external, some a product of its success. In 1054 the church split into an \_\_\_\_\_ church—the Orthodox Church centered in Constantinople—and the \_\_\_\_\_ church—the Roman Catholic Church centered in Rome. The development and growth of \_\_\_\_\_ threatened the church in both the west and the east. As the church grew in influence, it became interested in the ways of the world. Popes established and sent large \_\_\_\_\_ to fight the Muslims in Jerusalem and to amass wealth and power. The church sold indulgences to raise \_\_\_\_\_. Some leaders of the church lived more like kings than like servants of Christ. People who criticized the abuses could be brought to trial and sentenced to \_\_\_\_\_.





## Voices for Reform...



Within the church there were calls for \_\_\_\_\_. John Wycliffe of England taught that the Bible, not the church, was the authority for \_\_\_\_\_ faith. He challenged the authority of church leaders. Jon Hus, a Bohemian priest, denounced indulgences and said that Christ, not the pope, was the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church. He was burned at the stake. Savonarola of Italy criticized Pope Alexander VI and called for church leaders to return to the simplicity of the \_\_\_\_\_. He too was killed.

By the sixteenth century, the western world was changing and the balance of \_\_\_\_\_ was shifting. The stage was set for reform. With the invention of the \_\_\_\_\_ press, books (Bibles, scholarly works, teachings of the reformers) could be produced quickly and distributed broadly. \_\_\_\_\_ was growing—people identified themselves as Germans, English, French. Secular rulers did not want to share political \_\_\_\_\_ with a religious leader in Rome. The \_\_\_\_\_ class was growing—people who were financially independent.

Martin Luther was a \_\_\_\_\_ and professor of theology who had strong concerns about the lavish lifestyles of some church leaders and the sale of indulgences to raise money for St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. He wrote and posted \_\_\_\_\_ thesis for debate, launching the Reformation. This led to another great split in the church, and created the \_\_\_\_\_ church.

armies  
authority  
cathedrals  
center  
Christian  
death  
eastern  
gospel

head  
Islam  
legal  
middle  
missionaries  
money  
monk  
nationalism

ninety-five  
political  
pope  
poverty  
power  
prayed  
printing  
Protestant

reform  
Roman  
stability  
threats  
western

# God's Way or My Way....

1) What struggles are you facing today in your relationship with Christ and the world?

Check one of the choices below:

- Being persecuted for my faith
- Trying to make my faith popular with others
- Pushing Christ out of my life
- Making Christ a priority in my life

2) List some examples:

3) Are you pleased with where you are in your faith? Why or why not? And if not, where would you like to be and what changes can help you get there?

4) How is your faith helping or hindering the goal of loving others in the name of Christ?



# The Streams of Influence

## Pietism

Emphasis on a personal relationship with Jesus

## Protestant Reformation

Salvation by grace through faith

## Hispanic Community

Hope not in economic prosperity, but in Christ

## Moravianism

The Christian life as a celebration

## Asian Community

Broadened view of the world and spiritual life

## African-American Community

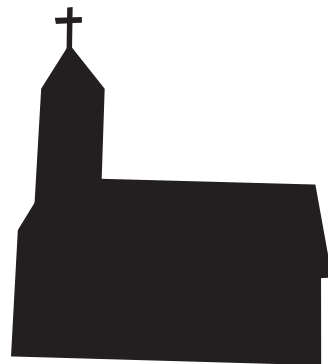
Justice, mercy, and diversity



# Evangelical Covenant Church

Est. 1885

# Contributions by African American Churches



**History.** The first African American churches to be a part of the Covenant Church were Oakdale Covenant Church in Chicago, Illinois, pastored by the Rev. Willie Jemison and Grace Covenant Church in Compton, California, pastored by the Rev. Robert Dawson. Oakdale transitioned from a predominately white congregation to a predominately black congregation during the 1960s with Pastor Jemison arriving in 1970 as the congregation's first black pastor. Grace became part of the Covenant in 1969. Other early churches included Community Covenant, Calumet Park, Illinois, pastored by the Rev. Donald Davenport, Gospel Way Covenant, Chicago, Illinois, pastored by the Rev. Bill Watts, and Fellowship Covenant, Bronx, New York, pastored by the Rev. Jerry Mosby. Since those early days, the number of African American congregations has grown substantially. Growth was slow at first, but has now continued to increase steadily. This is due in large part to a change in the denomination's stance from reacting to changing communities, to actively seeking to be ethnically inclusive. **Discuss: How can you and your church be more proactive in achieving ethnic inclusiveness?**

**Contributions.** The denomination often turns to black leaders to lead the way in the areas of justice and righteousness, developing sensitivity to diversity and worship. African American churches have helped create a deeper appreciation of the diversity of Christ's Church, an atmosphere of freedom expressed in worship, and a new freedom for the church to be more expressive and accepting of differences. African American churches give leadership to the denomination in being proactive on issues of justice within the larger community. **Discuss: What are some issues of injustice you are familiar with and how could the church actively respond to them?**

**Opportunities and Challenges for the Future.** There is still a struggle within the denomination to be fully sensitive to ethnic and cultural issues. But there is openness and willingness. There is a great opportunity for the face of the Covenant to look more like the kingdom of God. The denomination now faces a challenge—how will the church's organization, leadership, institutions, and denominational gatherings reflect our celebration of diversity? **Discuss: How do you think the growing diversity of our denomination should be reflected in our leadership, churches, and institutions?**

# Contributions by Hispanic Churches



**Theological Contribution.** We understand that the kingdom of God is not a reality to be delayed until the complete realization of the coming era, but a reality that encourages us to live in a full way on this earth. Our hope is not placed on economy or prosperity, therefore, but in Jesus Christ who helps us to live the gospel in the midst of the needs, poverty, and suffering of our peoples. **Discuss: Is this theological perspective different from that of many middle-class Anglos?**

**Diversity.** Having different Hispanic cultures, our presence adds practical ways of living with people from other backgrounds. Patience in the midst of the differences and appreciation of different styles of relating to God gives the church the opportunity to see God as the God of many peoples. The presence of Covenant Hispanic churches makes it a reality that the church is universal and not the church of just one ethnic group. **Discuss: Why is this important?**

**Worship.** The Hispanic culture empowers a sense of variety to worship God. Each situation we have to face promotes us to sing a new song to our Lord. Our choruses are not mere repetitive words, but continued affirmations of our trust in God's word and in the Lord himself. As did the psalmists, we sing songs in the midst of our reality, bringing the presence of God to that reality. **Discuss: Does the worship in your church reflect an appreciation for the cultures and age groups in your community?**

**Community Life.** The sense of community is a vital aspect of the Hispanics. We bring our neighbors and our families to worship God and we bring them to our homes. We grow up in our faith with others, not alone; therefore, we share our faith with no fear of invading the privacy of the other. We evangelize family and friends and we evangelize people that are not Christians. Our faith is communicated in our homes, on the streets, in supermarkets, and at work without any restrictions. We pray together, we suffer together, we enjoy together, and we cry together. **Discuss: How is your church's community life similar or different from that mentioned above?**

# Contributions by Asian Churches



**Who are Asian Americans?** The Asian-American Christian community is shaped by its experience as an immigrant community. The overwhelming majority of Asian immigration to the United States occurred after 1965 when the quota system that had limited immigrants from Asian nations was repealed. The large majority of the Asian-Americans are new to the nation and, therefore, relatively new to the Covenant. Most Asian-Americans are either first generation immigrants or second generation ethnics. **Discuss: What is the difference between immigrants and ethnics?**

The Asian-American population covers a wide range of people groups and languages. While they share a continent of origin, significant differences exist between East Asians (such as Chinese, Korean), Southeast Asians (such as Vietnamese, Cambodian), South Asians (such as Indian, Pakistani), and including Central Asians and Near East Asians. **Discuss: Where do you see the influence of Asian-Americans in your community and in your world?**

**Two Generations.** The Asian-American community has been undergoing a shift from the first generation immigrant church to the second generation ethnic community. The immigrant generation started ethnic specific immigrant churches out of the need to have worship and community in their own language and reflecting their home culture. As immigrants, first generation Asian Americans could only rely upon God and their church community to meet all their needs. This deepened their Christian faith and prayer life.

Second generation Asian-American Christians continue to work through their identity as an ethnic people group. The spirituality of the second generation is shaped by its bi-lingual and bi-cultural nature. As Evangelicalism confronts a changing demographic and cultural context, bi-cultural Christians (such as Asian-Americans) provide a spiritual insight and experience that will aid Christianity in navigating these cultural shifts. **Discuss: What problems would be important to address between these two generations? Why is it important to pay attention to cultural shifts?**

**Contributions.** Bi-cultural ethnic minorities have an ethos and a worldview that broadens how we view spiritual life. Asian-American Christians understand spirituality in the context of suffering and the passionate prayer life that corresponds to such suffering. Asian-American Christians understand the centrality of community in spiritual life as the church became the center of social and spiritual life for the recent immigrant. And Asian-American Christians understand the process of journeying through two different cultural worlds – yielding a spirituality that is both profound in its depth of experience and reflective in its understanding of cultural dynamics. **Discuss: What would it be like to “journey between two different cultural worlds?” What is your world view of the Kingdom of God? What has or can your church learn from Asian-American Christians?**