

The New Testament

OVERVIEW:

Something very strange was happening. It began in Jerusalem on Pentecost day when a bunch of uneducated followers of the crucified Jesus burst out of a locked room. As if on fire, they began boldly preaching about his resurrection in every language imaginable. That day 3000 were baptized in Jesus' name and began to meet, eat, pray and share everything they owned with the poor. Next, the chief enemy of the church, Saul, was blinded by a vision of Christ. He became a Christian and launched out to witness to the risen Christ beyond Jewish lands.

The original disciples of Jesus were martyred one by one, but the power of their message swept like wildfire across the Roman world, merely fanned by the persecution of the church.

How did this happen? Where did this happen? Why did this happen? And how can what happened 2000 years ago strengthen, grip, prepare and equip a young person today to live with such radical faith, hope and love that they change their world?

Journey with your groups through this amazing story in this 10-theme set. Then send the learning home for family discussion and devotion time with the "New Testament" FAITH5 Home Huddle.

Included "The New Testament" Lesson Themes:

- **New Testament Overview** (*Hebrews 1:1-5a*)
The New Testament is the most amazing, world-changing book ever written. It tells of a God who became human to save you for eternity. Challenge your groups to explore it every night in every home as the "READ" part of their FAITH5 check-in.
- **The Holy Spirit Comes** (*Acts 1:8*)
Do your groups need some power in their lives? Are they interested in making a positive impact in their world for God? The book of Acts is an amazing historical adventure of revolution, suspense, drama and humor as the early church is born. It tells of a world set on fire by a small group of people who had witnessed Jesus' death and resurrection and were filled with a power the world had never seen before. This same Holy Spirit power is available to all who follow Christ today. They only need to ask, seek and knock.
- **Peter and the Early Church** (*Acts 2:37-39a*)
On Pentecost day, Peter was gripped by the Holy Spirit's power. He preached a convincing sermon to Jews who were gathered in Jerusalem from all over the world. That day 3000 people were baptized and the church was born. After that, the Christian church grew through the loving acts and bold witness of Jesus' followers.

- **The Damascus Road** (*Acts 9:4-5*)
 No matter who you are or what you've done, God is waiting to forgive, restore and send you out to witness to God's grace. Don't let anyone leave the session without being confronted by this blinding truth: In spite of your sin, God bought your forgiveness and freedom with the blood of Jesus Christ.
- **The Journeys of Paul** (*Philippians 3:8-9, 13b-14*)
 After Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, he traveled the world witnessing to the Risen Lord. Wherever Paul went he was met with both acceptance and stiff resistance. He endured shipwrecks, stoning, beatings, imprisonment and death squads hunting him down. In spite of it all, he pressed on to tell everyone he could about the amazing grace of God in Christ. His tireless efforts to witness to the Risen Christ planted the seeds for the growth of the Christian church, shaped our understanding of God, and changed the face of the world.
- **The Letters of Paul** (*II Corinthians 5:17*)
 Paul's encounter with Jesus turned him from a hate-filled persecutor of the church into a powerful witness to the grace of God. He wanted everyone to know that same transforming power. Through Paul's 13 letters, God has encouraged and guided the church through the centuries to live in the faith, hope, love, joy, and power of the Living Lord.
- **The Letter to the Hebrews** (*Hebrews 4:15-16*)
 Jesus, our great High Priest, has opened the door to the grace and mercy of God. Because of Jesus, we can go to God with boldness and complete confidence in God's love for us.
- **The Universal Letters** (*I Peter 2:24*)
 We're now connecting the "people of the promise," Jesus as prophet, priest, and king, and the witnesses of faith following the resurrection of Jesus. These are a great cloud of witnesses and they continue to this day because Jesus remains the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this thought: We have an opportunity to explore what kind of followers we are. Ask yourself, "Who have been the most powerful witnesses in my life? Why? Have I felt the call, the tug, to be a witness myself?"
- **The Revelation to John** (*Revelation 1:10-11, 5b-7*)
 The vision of St. John is more than a vision. It is a powerful statement of hope to every generation. But what does it say to those of us who have it easy? Jesus is calling from the other side. Will you turn down the iPhone and silence the distractions long enough to hear him? Remember: Jesus is knocking on the door of your life.
- **The Bible and My Life** (*II Timothy 3:16-17*)
 We are living in a time when many people are searching for blueprints and guides for living. They are turning to diverse sources, and some are turning to the Bible. While the Bible can give us all sorts of advice and information, its primary purpose and its central concern is that it bears witness to Jesus Christ and justification by

grace through faith in Him. Whatever you do in this session, make sure the bottom line is this relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament

OVERVIEW:

Talk about “Mission: Impossible!” Abraham was nearly 100 and Sarah was no spring chicken, herself, when the angel told them the unbelievable news. God wanted them to pack their bags, move to a land God would show them, and start trying to make a baby! Not only that: if they would make this journey of faith, their descendants would outnumber the stars and the whole world would be blessed through them. What happened next? Travels. Intrigue. Suspense. A baby! Wars. Slavery. Testing. Miracles. Freedom. Seduction. Death. Redemption. Exile. Hope.

Explore the beginnings of our faith (and the origin of every movie plot ever made) in this 10-theme set. Then send the learning home for family discussion and devotion time with the “Old Testament” FAITH5 Home Huddle.

Included “The Old Testament” Lesson Themes:

- **Old Testament Overview** (*Psalm 25:4-7*)
The Almighty, all powerful God of the universe created the world and everything in it. This God wasn't content to put it in place, then remain hidden. God came to a particular people and claimed them, blessed them and told them to be a blessing to the world. Sometimes they obeyed; sometimes they disobeyed. Always God stayed faithful to the promise. What does this tell you about God?
- **Creation** (*Psalm 8:1-6*)
God is the Creator. All this awe and mystery and beauty belongs to God. Everything we have, are, and will one day be is a trust from God. The whole world is on loan. The forests, the rivers, the air, my family, my talents, my life—all of it belongs to God. So what? What does this mean to a teenager entering the third millennium? Ask the question, “How will it affect my life? My actions? My stewardship? How will it affect the way I treat God? The way I treat myself?” Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted with this essential Question: “It all belongs to God. So what now?”
- **The Fall** (*Genesis 3:1b, 3b, 4-5*)
Rebellion against God's good and gracious plan for my life brings shame, blame, and pain to me and the world. So what? Death is the “so what.” Lives of misery, isolation and pain are the “so what.” Eternal separation from God is the result. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted with this thought: “I have sinned. I am on the road to death. God has provided Christ to take my place.” What does this mean?
- **People of the Promise** (*Genesis 12:3*)
Abraham and Sarah were called from their homes to a cloudy future. They had next to nothing—no land, and no people to their name. They couldn't have children of

their own. The only thing they really had was the promise of God. God promised them they would have a son and all the families of the world would be blessed through them. Because of this couple's faith, a child was born and through their descendants Christ came to the world. We are heirs to this same promise. God is still calling us to venture out in faith, live boldly and bless the world. So now what?

- **The Promise Continues** (*Genesis 32:24, 25a, 26-28*)
In spite of sin, human weakness, or terrible circumstances, God can, does, and will continue to be faithful to those who cling to faith. What does this mean when you know you have sinned and don't deserve God's love? What does this mean when you are facing a possibly hopeless situation? Does this matter? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted with these thoughts: "God will never give up on you" and "God is bigger than your biggest problem."
- **Moses and the Wanderings** (*Exodus 3:11, 12-14b, 4:1, 10b, 12-13*)
There's an old saying, "God doesn't call the gifted. God gifts the called." When the Almighty calls, God isn't looking for excuses, perfection or talent. It's not your power, intelligence, or status that will make you a "sacred agent" of God—it's your availability and willingness. Are your small groups willing to boldly act when everyone else around is expecting everyone else to act? Moses was a reluctant "sacred agent" at first, but God didn't take "no" for an answer. He told Moses: "I will be with you. Now go!" When Moses finally went to Pharaoh, things started to change. By answering God's call, Moses found God's power unleashed through him.
- **Of Tents and Kings** (*Joshua 1:9*)
When called, Samuel was willing to listen and, thus, became the catalyst for a new era. Later, when the people wanted a king, Samuel (and God) suggested otherwise. The people made their demands, got what they wanted and paid the price. Ask your groups a Question: Are they willing to listen to the warning voice of God and say "thy will, not my will be done?" Years later, God was faithful to David for the sake of the promise, not because there was something special about him or his descendants. That promise became the means by which the ultimate blessing came to the nations: Jesus, son of David. Don't let anyone leave without being confronted by the main point: God wants to speak to me. God wants to protect me from things that would harm me. God wants to use me, in spite of my sin, to bless the world.
- **The Psalms** (*Psalms 103:1-5*)
If in this session you can encourage a growing standard of spiritual living by teaching a psalm, you have added immeasurably to the gross national standard of spiritual living. One young person captured by the experience of solitude in the presence of God can change their world. Challenge your guests to turn off the iPhone, talk to, and listen to God. Will they dare?
- **Wisdom Literature** (*Proverbs 15:16, 16:3*)
It may seem obvious to adults (some, anyway) that the Bible is full of good insight and deep practical advice. However, does a teenager realize it? Here is a chance to help a young person discover the issue of trust in the Lord and the challenge of relying on God's insight rather than their own. Don't let anyone leave this session

without being confronted by this truth: If our life is measured by stuff, our spiritual standard of living will always be below the poverty level. We need to be guided beyond our wants and desires. We can have a deeper dimension to our lives—a spiritual dimension—when we tap into the wisdom of the loving God of the universe. God is still speaking. Will you listen?

- **Voice of the Prophets** (*Amos 3:7-8, 4:13*)

God has chosen people throughout history to speak out against injustice, to take a stand for the poor and powerless, to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. Don't let anyone leave the session without being confronted with this truth: Age is not the primary ingredient in receiving spiritual insight—the primary ingredient is the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit is calling them to speak out and live out God's will. With the Spirit's power, they can both know what God's will is and be given incredible power to speak it out. So now what?

The Ten Commandments

OVERVIEW:

Rules, rules, rules! Who wants to live with all these rules? Honor your parents? What, are you crazy? Paying for songs and movie downloads for my iPhone? Why should I when I can get them all free? Stop gossip? That's no fun. Waiting for sex until marriage? You've got to be joking!

What does a dusty old set of rules for a nation of wandering slaves have to say to a teenager today and why should I care? It's my life, I can do what I want with it, right? Is religion simply a set of rules and God here to only stop my fun?

Engage your teens' hearts and minds with the good and gracious will of God through this challenging and intriguing 10-theme set. Then send the learning home for family discussion and devotion time with the "Ten Commandments" Home Huddle.

Included "The Ten Commandments" Lesson Themes:

- **Gods and Idols** (*Exodus 20:2-3, 4-6*)
We are called to fear, love and trust this God above everything else. So, what does this mean to a teenager today? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this thought: There is only one God. All other "gods" will leave us high and dry. This God who commands us to obey is the only God who can carry us to eternity. What does this mean in a world where many other "gods" crowd the true God out of our schedule, thoughts and dreams?
- **Name in Vain** (*Exodus 20:7*)
We are commanded to keep God's name holy, special and sacred. So what? God doesn't want us to treat God's name as a common, low, or meaningless word. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We are commanded to use God's name in prayer, praise and thanksgiving—never to curse, swear, lie or deceive. So, what does this mean to God's people in a world where cursing is common?
- **Sabbath** (*Exodus 20:8a*)
We are commanded to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. So what? What does this mean in a world where jobs, sports and everything else crowd God out? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this thought: The God who gives us seven days to live each week commands that we save one out of seven to worship, rest, focus and remember who we are and whose we are. So what will we do with this command?
- **Honoring Parents** (*Exodus 20:12*)
We are commanded to honor our parents. So, what now? What does this mean in a world where teenagers are expected to rebel, where most portrayals of parents on

television are stupid and where some parents don't act in very honorable ways toward their own children? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We are commanded to honor our parents. This is not a suggestion, but a command of God. Only this commandment comes with a promise specifically attached. We are to honor our parents "so that the days may be long in the land the Lord gives us." So, now what?

- **Killing** (*Exodus 20:13*)

We are commanded not to murder/kill. So, what now? What does this mean in a world where children and parents kill each other with looks, language and actions? What does it mean in a world where corporations pollute oceans, rivers and forests to make a buck? What does it mean in a world where a baby can be shaken to death, the elderly can be abandoned and mistreated, and "collateral damage" from both terrorists and those fighting the war on terror is deemed acceptable? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We are commanded not to harm others in any way, but instead, we are to help them in all their physical needs. So, now what?

- **Adultery** (*Exodus 20:14*)

We are commanded to keep all our words and conduct pure and honorable with regard to marriage and sex. So, now what? What does this mean to a teenager living in a world bombarded with sex? What does this mean in a world where blatant sexuality is a mouse-click (or e-mail In-Box) away, and many married people say that there is nothing wrong with an occasional affair? Even if you're too young to be thinking about marriage, what does it mean to be "true" to one another in relationships? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We are commanded to be "true" and save ourselves for our spouse—no one else. So, now what?

- **Stealing** (*Exodus 20:15*)

We are commanded not to steal. So, what now? What does this mean in a world where even the brightest students cheat on tests while their parents are cheating on their income taxes? What does it mean in a culture where gambling is gaming, shoplifting is rampant and everybody is either looking for a quick fix or thinking the world owes them a living? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We are commanded to fear and love God so that we do not take anyone's money or property or get them in any dishonest way. Instead, we are to help them improve and protect their property and means of making a living. So, now what?

- **False Witness** (*Exodus 20:16*)

We are commanded not to bear false witness against anyone. So, what now? What does this mean in a world where people betray, slander and lie about others every day to make themselves look good? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We are commanded to tell the truth and to defend others, speak well of them and explain their actions in the kindest ways. So, now what?

- **Coveting** (*Exodus 20:17*)

We are commanded not to covet our neighbor's relationships or possessions. So, what now? What does this mean in a world where people conspire to entice each other's friends, loyalties and possessions away? Helping guests discover how their desires can ruin their lives is a great angle to take with this theme. Attempting to distinguish healthy dreams and desires from those that become covetous is the key. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We are commanded not to tempt or coax anyone away from their friends or their spouse. God's people are not to scheme to take anything away from their neighbors.

- **Ten Commandments Review** (*Psalm 22:27, 29-31*)

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, he made it clear there were two: Love God above all else and love your neighbor as yourself. Everything else falls into these two categories. The only law a Christian needs to worry about is love.

The Lord's Prayer

OVERVIEW:

Does God even care about what goes on in my life? Is it okay to pray for a good grade on a test if I didn't study? If I don't forgive that jerk at school for tripping me in the cafeteria, is it true God won't forgive me? Does God ever lead a teenager into temptation? Does God really care if I say "Oh God" as a passing comment? Why should I have to pray for God's will to be done? Can't God take care of that?

Discover how the richest prayer in history can enrich the lives of teens today with this 10-theme set on Christ's model prayer. Then send the learning home for family discussion and devotion time with the "Lord's Prayer" FAITH5 Home Huddles.

Included "The Lord's Prayer" Lesson Themes:

- **Our Father** (*Matthew 6:9a*)
Jesus says God is "Our Father." So, what now? Our Father? How could anyone in Jesus' day dare to address God as Father? People didn't even risk saying the word for God (Yahweh) out loud for fear of taking God's name in vain. Instead, they called God words like "Lord" (Adonai) and other terms of reverence, but never Father! To Christ, God wasn't a distant god at all. Nor was God simply a generic Mother Nature. To Jesus, God was a loving parent who knew him, knew his needs, and wanted to give good gifts to all the children of the world. If God is really my loving parent, how will it affect my life? My fears? My decisions? My relationships with others? My prayer life? My worship schedule? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: God is as close to you as a loving parent, and always ready and willing to hear your prayers and help.
- **Hallowed** (*Matthew 6:9b*)
A great person's name deserves respect. If they have done something wonderful, astounding, or unusually sacrificial, they deserve to have their name treated with the highest esteem. Honor, even.
There is one name that calls for more respect and reverence than any other name in the universe. It has been spoken throughout history in every language on every continent, though sometimes the name takes on different forms. That name is God's name. God's name by its very nature is great. It speaks of hope, love, power, creativity, majesty and forgiveness. It sometime begs, sometimes demands, but always needs to be treated with respect.
- **Kingdom Come** (*Matthew 6:10a*)
Society will never be perfect, but we can still work for the kingdom. We can never know God fully on this side of eternity, but we can catch a glimpse of the kingdom if we ask the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts. Our families, communities, and relationships are broken, but they can be enriched, strengthened and enhanced

when we pray for, yearn for and work for God's reign in our lives. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: God's reign enters our world when first the Holy Spirit enters our hearts. The kingdom comes when first we pray "Come, Holy Spirit." So, what now?

- **Will Be Done** (*Matthew 6:10b*)

"Have it your way." This old Burger King slogan could sum up American life. It's all about us and what we want. How do you convince teens (and parents) weaned on advertising messages that "our way" is a dead end? How do we teach our teens to open themselves up for God's will in their lives? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: We can have it our way, or we can have it God's way. Our way leads to death. God's way leads to life. Any questions? So, what now?

- **Daily Bread** (*Matthew 6:11*)

The Children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness without food. God told Moses not to worry. There would be bread from heaven every morning and quail for meat every night. The next morning, they woke, looked out on the fields and exclaimed, "What is it?" (Manna in Hebrew literally means "What is it?") Manna was the daily gift God sent—the first bread from heaven. God gave them just enough for each day. If they collected too much and tried to hoard the manna, it became wormy, rotted and started to smell. The Provider was training them to literally trust in God one day at a time.

God gives life one day at a time. The joys, pains, challenges and struggles all come in bite-size chunks. Don't spend your time worrying about tomorrow. You will miss out on today. Let tomorrow's worries be tomorrow's worries. Today is all you have. Don't waste it. It is too precious a gift to lose.

- **Forgive Us** (*Matthew 6:12*)

Unforgiven sin is an infected sliver, festering beneath the surface of our lives. A grudge is a ravenous worm eating at the root of your health. Unless we deal with the problems in our hearts, they will deal with us. Unless we attempt the radical surgery of confessing the sin, anger, or grudge, those evils within can only lead to trouble. Expecting God to forgive us without our willingness to forgive others will only lead to callousness, poisoned relationships, and death. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: The Fifth Petition is a dangerous prayer. We are asking God not to forgive us unless we are willing to forgive others. So, what now?

- **Time of Trial** (*Matthew 6:13a*)

Life is filled with ample reasons to despair. If you're going to live, there will be times when you are tested, torn, and tempted. But you don't have to be defeated. The power of God is yours for the asking. And even when you can't hold yourself, Jesus can hold you. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: There is a power that can see you through any weakness; a light that cannot be extinguished by the deepest darkness. And that power is only a prayer away. So, what now?

- **Deliver Us from Evil** (*Matthew 6:13b*)

We know that the struggle against the Evil One, though ultimately won in Jesus' death and resurrection, remains a very real struggle from day to day. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: There is an evil that would destroy you and a power that would deliver you. There is an Evil One who would steal you away from God and a God who would die to set you free. So, what now?

- **The Doxology**

The Eternal Creator of the Universe has given us everything we are, see, feel, and possess. From the infinite glory of the cosmos to the love in our hearts, from the pulsing of the countless suns to the pulsing of the blood through our veins, all of this master creation bears witness to the master creator. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: The God who created the Universe and gave us life and breath calls us to praise God's glory. So, what now?

- **Lord's Prayer Review** (*Matthew 6:9b-13*)

The focus this week is to look back at the above key parts of the Lord's Prayer.

The Apostles' Creed

OVERVIEW:

Is there a God? How can there be? How can't there be? If there is a God, what does this God look like? What does this God want from me? For me? And why would this God care about an insignificant speck of cosmic dust like me sitting on a tiny spinning planet in an average solar system in an average galaxy? Would this God really care enough to visit us? Did this God really become human, then die and rise to show us the way to eternity? Is there a Holy Spirit whose power is available to me here and how?

And is there any point for a teen today to commit to living in a community of broken believers (the church) who are wounded but trying to heal the world?

Immerse your groups in this 10-theme set covering the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Then send the learning home for family discussion and devotions with the "Apostles' Creed" Home Huddles.

Included "The Apostles' Creed" Lesson Themes:

- **God the Creator** (*Isaiah 40:28a, 30-31*)
The eternal God of the Universe created you. So, what now? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this thought: There is a God who has given you everything you are and everything you have and everything you ever will know. How shall we treat the gifts? How shall we treat the Giver?
- **God the Provider** (*Colossians 1:16-17*)
Nothing we have is really ours. It is all a gift. In a world that tells us that we can provide for ourselves and challenges us to take control of our own lives, it's humbling and difficult to grasp that food, clothing, home, family, work and all we need from day to day come to us as a gift. These gifts are given to those who say thanks, and to those who don't. The sun shines both on those who acknowledge the giver of the gifts and on those who just keep on taking and taking. Which one are you?
- **God the Preserver** (*Nahum 1:7-8*)
God is like a life preserver, always ready and able to help us stay afloat in rough seas. So, what now? It's tough being a teen today. Traditional support structures (family, school, community, church) have eroded. At the same time, pressures have increased (drugs, sex, economics). It can easily seem like we're on our own. However, God has placed "agents of love" (parents, friends, pastors, teachers) in our lives, and promises to never leave us no matter how dark the night gets. Cling to God!
- **Jesus the Savior** (*John 3:16*)
The eternal, all-powerful Creator of the Universe was not satisfied to abandon us to

float alone out in space. So, what now? This God came down to earth in human form (remember God came to us—emphasize the direction), lived among us, showed us the Creator’s love in flesh, then died on a cross to take the punishment for our sins so that we could live eternally. So, what now? Don’t let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: Someone died in your place. Someone died to set you free. Someone died to buy you eternity. It was Jesus. So what does this mean?

- **Jesus the Redeemer** (*Colossians 1:13-14*)
Christ died to buy us back—redeem us—from death. So, what now? What does this mean to a kid who may be questioning his/her self-worth and value? Jesus’ death on the cross was not just an old story or a scene in a movie. Jesus died for you. Jesus knows you and loves you. He took your sins to the cross and you’re a precious part of God’s plan. Will you live for him? So, now what?
- **Jesus the Lord** (*Joel 2:28, 29, 32a*)
Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God. He said, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father,” and “I and the Father are one.” What does this mean for guests who may be sampling/comparing different religions and different religious leaders? Why is Jesus so special? Don’t let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: All other religious leaders died and turned to dust. Jesus rose from the dead and lives. Jesus is Lord. This means he is your Lord. That’s a fact.
- **The Holy Spirit** (*I Corinthians 12:4*)
Spirit, wind, breath. They are all the same word in Hebrew. Ruah. Spirit. Wind. Breath. At the beginning of time, it was the Spirit, wind, breath of God that called it all to life. When God blew into Adam the breath of life, it was the Spirit, wind, breath of God that made him a living being. When Jesus breathed his last, it was his spirit, wind, breath that returned to God. On Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the mighty Spirit, wind, breath of God. In essence, we too are enlivened, animated, brought to life by the very Spirit, wind, breath of God. We carry a small spark of eternity within us—a living soul. We carry a small wisp of the very Spirit of the Living God. So, now what?
- **Church and Saints** (*Romans 12:4*)
We are not outcast souls walking through time alone with our beating hearts. We are members of Christ’s body. We are precious to God. Don’t let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this thought: You belong. Jesus nourishes you and gives you unique gifts to build up the body. Will you share your gifts?
- **Forgiveness of Sins** (*I John 1:8-9*)
If we are willing to confess our sins, Jesus promises that God will forgive us and wash us clean. Holding grudges, hatred and anger hurts us more than it hurts other people. Challenge your groups with these questions: Will you be a forgiving and forgiven person? Will you forgive your parents? Your brothers and sisters? The people who have wronged you the most? Will you let go of the hatred and anger and replace it with the knowledge of the love that Jesus Christ has for you and for all those who believe?

- **Resurrection and Eternal Life** (*Romans 14:8, I Corinthians 15:51-52*)

Jesus promises you eternal life. He said he is preparing a place for you and you need not fear death. So, what does this mean? It's so easy to feel lost and alone. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: God promises to live with you in the present and to raise you from death to everlasting life. Will you trust in this promise?

The Life of Jesus

OVERVIEW:

Who could have seen this coming? They were looking for a political savior and they found a wandering teacher. They were searching for a military messiah, and they were given a suffering servant. They were expecting a jeweled throne and a crown of gold, and they received only a rugged cross and a crown of thorns. In the end, they went to find a bloodied corpse, and they were slapped in the faith with an open tomb, an open invitation, and an open door to eternity.

Who was this Jesus of Nazareth? Where did he come from? Where did he go? And what does he want of a teenager's life today?

Encounter the life, teachings, miracles, and radical claims of Jesus Christ with this 10-theme set. Then send the learning home for family discussion and devotion time with the "Life of Jesus" Home Huddles.

Included "The Life of Jesus" Lesson Themes:

- **Gospel Overview** (*John 1:1-15, 10-12a, 14*)
Miracle of miracles! The God who created the universe came to earth as a human being to save us from sin and death. The New Testament begins with four "good news" eyewitness accounts of the life of the Savior—Jesus Christ. The Gospels are not simply biographies of Jesus, but testimonies by four different people sharing real-life experiences and perspectives of the Savior of the world.
- **The Birth of Jesus** (*Matthew 1:20-23*)
God had great plans for the pregnant teenager, Mary, and her future husband, Joseph. No one could see it, but in Mary's womb grew a miracle that would save the world. Young Mary and her perplexed fiancé just had to believe, receive, hold on, trust, and live out God's unseen plan for them. The God who came in Jesus has great plans for you, too. Will you let God's plans grow and show in you? Will you let Christ be born in you, then borne by you to the world?
- **Baptism and Wilderness** (*John 3:3*)
At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus went down to the Jordan River to be baptized. As he was coming up out of the water, God's spirit descended on him in the form of a dove and God announced to the world that Jesus was God's beloved Son. From that high point, Jesus went immediately into the wilderness to face three temptations. He didn't give in to those temptation or take the easy road in his ministry. Instead, Jesus went out from there to teach, heal, confront, comfort, and challenge all he met to be born anew and live in faith, hope and obedience to the will of God.
- **The Teachings of Jesus** (*John 4:13-14a, 15, 7:38b*)
Jesus is unlike any teacher the world has ever known. He didn't just teach about the

way to God. He is the Way. He didn't just teach about truth. He is truth. He didn't just teach about life and God. He is God.

- **The Miracles of Jesus** (*Luke 7:19, 22b*)

Some followers of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him if he was the Messiah they had been waiting for. Jesus told them to look at the results of his work. The blind received sight. The lame walked. Lepers were cleansed. The deaf could hear. The poor had God's good news brought to them. It was clear from his actions that he had God's power to make people whole. His actions spoke louder than words. Do you need some healing in your life? Do you need a miracle for yourself, for a friend, or in your world? Go to Jesus. Ask. Seek. Knock. Jesus has the power and the love to heal and help you. Today. Now.

- **The Hard Sayings of Jesus** (*John 14:6*)

Jesus came to save us from our sins, not our questions. Christ came to save us from our sins, not our brains. Don't let anyone leave this session without realizing that they don't need to be afraid of hard questions. Hard questions show they are thinking hard. God is big enough to handle their toughest questions. If they have serious doubts, maybe a serious search for God is in order. Having deep questions can lead anyone on a thoughtful and careful search for deep answers—if they don't let go and give up. Jesus promises all who seek will find. All who ask will be given what they need. All who knock will find doors opened.

- **The Last Commandment** (*John 15:12-13*)

The last command Jesus gave to his disciples was "love one another as I have loved you." This wasn't a suggestion. It wasn't mere advice. The church calls this day Maundy (Command) Thursday, because of this command. The Teacher wasn't just giving his students a "word" lesson on this. He put his love into action first by washing their feet. Later that evening he would give himself again, with the bread and wine, asking his friends to "do this in remembrance of me." Still later he would give himself again—literally laying down his life for his friends on a cross. His body would be broken. His blood would be spilled. For them. For us. For you.

- **The Passion** (*John 3:17*)

The wounded become the wounders. The healer becomes the victim. That is the story of Jesus. That is the central story of history—His Story. Those caught in the death trap lash out at their only Savior, even as he opens the trap to save them. And, in the end, the trap snaps shut on the Savior. The condemned run free. Evil appears to have won. God is dead. Even the sun refuses to shine. It is all over. Or at least it seemed that way...

- **The Resurrection** (*Mark 16:2-8*)

So, what happened with Jesus' disciples? The most startling and powerful evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not the Biblical witness. It is the historical record of what took place immediately following the event. People—hundreds of people—swore they had seen Jesus alive after his crucifixion. In the months and years that followed, thousands laid down their lives rather than deny what they had seen. The disciples knew it was true. They died for the truth. No one dies for a lie.

- **The Great Commission** (*Matthew 28:19*)

Just before ascending into heaven, Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on the mission. They were to go and make disciples of all nations. They were to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They were to remember he was with them always. Help your groups experience this call in their own lives. They don't have to wait until they are old to begin their calling!

Lutheran Life

OVERVIEW:

Denominational loyalty is a thing of the past. Most Lutheran adults don't know what Lutherans believe or why they believe it. Most Lutheran teens don't care whether they are Lutheran or not. As long as a church is caring, relevant, and real, they don't concern themselves with what "brand" name is written on the door.

This being the case, Lutheran leaders who love the church must ask themselves a basic survival question: Will there be anyone wearing the Lutheran label twenty years from now? Why would our children remain Lutheran? Why should they? And, if the church disappears from the fabric of the Christian movement, what will be lost?

The Lutheran faith carries a rich revolutionary history, a solid Biblical heritage, and a wonderful grace-filled message that is as relevant today as it was 500 years ago.

Our kids would greatly benefit from knowing this as they step out to meet the challenges, ambiguities and paradoxes of the post-modern world.

Drill deep into Lutheran sacramental theology, worship practices, and the unique Lutheran understanding of God's calling in this 10-theme set. Then send the learning home for family discussion and devotion time with the "Lutheran Life" FAITH5 Home Huddle.

Included "Lutheran Life" Lesson Themes:

- **Baptism: One Lord, Faith, Baptism** (*Ephesians 4:4-6*)
We were baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We belong to the family of God and are inheritors of eternal life. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this challenge: In baptism you were adopted into the family of God, named and claimed, and sealed with the mark of Christ forever. This is good news! Will you tell others or keep it to yourself? Will you pass on the faith? What's next?
- **Baptism: Newness of Life** (*Romans 6:4*)
Before you were old enough to know what was going on, the God of the universe was so in love with you that you were adopted into God's family. You are a child of the King! An heir of all the riches of God. So, what now? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: By the water and the power of God's Word, you are a new creation.
- **Communion: Passover to Last Supper** (*Psalms 34:1-8*)
Jesus took the ancient Passover meal of remembrance and transformed it into a new meal of freedom, power and hope. When we share in the Lord's Supper today, we

receive the living presence of Christ, God's forgiveness and a glimpse of the full communion we will have with Christ in the life to come. So what now?

- **Communion: Taste and See** (*1 Corinthians 10:16-17*)
If baptism is the birth of a Christian, Christ's body and blood are the food that sustains us. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: Jesus Christ can truly be present in your heart, mind and soul. He offers forgiveness, life, and salvation in this meal. So, what now?
- **Worship: Gathering** (*Habakkuk 2:20*)
In a world where people are constantly bombarded by 30 second sound bites and 7 1/2 minute segments of television programming, staying focused in worship can be a challenge. But think of it this way: if you knew that a famous person (movie star, singer, athlete, etc.) was going to be present with you in worship, how tough would it be to stay focused, give your attention, and hang on every word that person said? Maybe the next time you slip into a pew and find yourself gathered in worship, you should remind yourself to focus on God. In worship, you are entering the presence of the most famous and wonderful being in the universe!
- **Worship: The Word** (*Isaiah 55:10-11*)
There are a million different books that hold knowledge which people could turn to, but Christians use the Bible as their main book for study and worship. Why? How does this one ancient text speak so powerfully to someone in the 21st century? The Bible is more than just a book—it is the real, living, Word of God. The Bible tells us that our story is God's story, and God promises to be with us. That's a pretty powerful book!
- **Worship: Meal and Sending** (*Numbers 6:24-26*)
When we share Holy Communion, we share in Christ's life, suffering, death, and resurrection. We come to the table confessing our sins and unworthiness. We kneel with the other vagabonds to take Christ's body and blood. We rise anew to live forgiven, forgiving lives. Then we part with a prayer and a blessing, asking Christ to send us into the world to find, feed, heal and bless the other drifters in his name, and to point them all to the open door and the feast that is waiting for them in Christ's church.
- **Confessing My Faith** (*Romans 10:8a, 9, 11*)
The disciples of Jesus swore to their deaths they had seen him raised back to life. Fifty days later, on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them with power and gave this rag-tag group of followers an urgency they had never known to witness to the world about Jesus. They went out from that place living like it mattered. That same Holy Spirit from God is available to you. That same living Christ and resurrection power is yours. Now what?
- **Confirming My Convictions** (*Psalms 61:1-5, 8*)
Your groups need to know that in baptism, God said "Yes!" to them. In confirmation, they say "Yes!" to God. Will this day be more than a one-time ceremony, a cake and a party to them? Will they affirm their baptism and mean it? On a more practical note, challenge your groups (and parents) to think about what confirmation is not—a

sacrament or graduation. Is the church guilty of making confirmation both of these things?

- **Claiming My Calling** (*Esther 4:14C, 8b*)

God has given all of us gifts. How will we use them? Will you just float through life marking time, or will you make a significant difference in the world? Will your life count? Will the world be a better place because you were here?

Luther and the Catechism

OVERVIEW:

The old world was falling apart. The new world, waiting to be born. Bibles were found only in museums, monasteries and libraries, written in languages only scholars could understand. People prayed to the dead and paid the church to guarantee their ticket out of hell. Faith was tied up in superstition and rules. The church owned a monopoly on kings, thrones, society, culture and personal life. It could ban you from Holy Communion, commerce and even heaven if you didn't follow the rules.

At this moment in history, one solitary monk took on the powers of popes and kings. Backed by his conscience, a Bible, reason, and a restless faith, Martin Luther put his life on the line, took a brave stand and birthed the movement that would usher in the modern world.

Follow the protesting professor's beginnings from his personal struggle to find peace with God, and on into the political storm that became the Protestant Reformation.

Learn about the life, theology, and legacy of Luther in this 10-theme set. Then send the reformation home for family discussion and devotion time with the "Luther and the Catechism" FAITH5 Home Huddle.

Included "Luther and the Catechism" Lesson Themes:

- **The Stormy Monk** (*Luke 1:78-79*)
Young Martin Luther grew up with a picture of God as a stern, angry judge demanding perfection from an imperfect person and waiting to send him to hell. Martin had a problem. He knew he was a sinner, but he also knew God demanded perfection. How could he find peace with God? Have any of your small groups thought of God in this way? How could anyone love a god like that?
- **The Protesting Professor** (*Romans 1:17, 3:22b-24*)
An insignificant monk stood up against the powers of church and state to tell them they had it wrong. You didn't need money for salvation. God's "righteousness" was a free gift given to be accepted by undeserving sinners through Christ. Translate this into the world of a modern teenager. Do they have a restless faith that drives them to learn more and ask questions about their faith and their church, or are they passive and disinterested?
- **Trouble, Trouble, Trouble** (*Haggai 2:4-5*)
The pope and his counsels had a problem of major league proportions brought to them by a minor league player. Martin Luther was prepared to stand firm in his belief and was beginning to create a stir. So, what does this mean to a teen today? Do

they feel strongly enough about anything in their lives to not only protest, but to remain firm in the face of backlash?

- **Heretic's Trial** (*Ephesians 2:8*)

On trial for what he believed, Martin Luther stuck to his beliefs (and to the Bible). Even though the powers-that-be threatened to discredit him, kick him out of the church, and in effect, sign his death warrant, he stood firm. His conscience told him that he couldn't do anything else. What does this mean for a teenager today? It's one thing to speak out. It's quite another to suffer for it. Is there anything in their lives they would hold so firmly in their hearts that they would pay the price for it?

- **Martin Luther: A Legacy** (*Isaiah 40:8*)

A single voice protested and spoke up for God and truth, and a world was shaken. A man who desperately wanted to find peace with God searched the scriptures and discovered that it was faith in Christ—not faith in his own perfection—that brings peace with God. Does this mean anything for a teenager? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by the call to seek and proclaim truth against falsehood, grace against works, and Christ's call to risky, radical discipleship against a dull, noncommittal religion masquerading as Christianity.

- **Ten Commandments Overview** (*Psalms 119:11*)

The children of Israel were wandering in a foreign land. There were all kinds of dangers in this land including powerful enemies and strange religious cults. How would God's people stay strong and pure in the face of such temptations? So, what now? That was thousands of years ago. Life is much different today. Or is it? God gave the Ten Commandments as a gift of love saying, "Do this and you will live." Challenge your small groups to understand that if they want to know God's good and gracious will for their lives as they wander through this foreign land called the new millennium, God's gift of the Ten Commandments still applies.

- **Lord's Prayer Overview** (*Matthew 6:9-13*)

It's impossible to keep a relationship going if you never talk. Can you have a true friendship/relationship when you never communicate? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this thought: The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to talk with the all-powerful God of the universe. Our Lord gave them a rich and beautiful prayer. Will you regularly talk and listen to the God who loves you?

- **Apostles' Creed Overview** (*I Corinthians 13:11b, 12a, 13*)

The God who created the universe wasn't satisfied with setting it in motion and stepping away. So, what does this mean to a teenager today? Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this thought: this creed is much more than the words recited at church on Sunday. In an amazing act of love, God came down as Jesus to live, love, die and open the way to God. When Christ returned to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to call us to God, gather us into his body, enlighten us to God's truth and keep us in the true faith. God is three, yet God is one.

- **The Sacrament of Baptism** (*Titus 3:4-7*)

Baptism is the beginning of your life in the body of Christ. In baptism God names

you, claims you, and adopts you into an eternal relationship. You did nothing to deserve it. It is a gift. What now?

- **The Sacrament of Communion** (*1 Corinthians 11:26*)

On the night he was betrayed 2000 years ago, Jesus broke bread and lifted a cup, then gave it to his disciples telling them to “do this in remembrance of me.” So, what now? What does this mean to a teenager today? Don’t let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this promise: The living Son of God wants to be really present in your life today. You can experience God’s forgiveness, healing and power in your life as you come clean before the altar. You can encounter the living God in a holy spiritual mystery every time you take the bread and wine and you can walk away with a new life. So, what does this mean? Will you focus your senses to encounter God, or will you walk up, eat and walk away as if nothing happened?

Confirmation Promises

Capstone Theme Set

Included “Confirmation Promises” Lesson Themes:

- **Living Among God’s Faithful People** (Acts 2:42, 46-47)
Living among God’s faithful people doesn’t mean spending a day or a week with like-minded, homogeneous people. It means jumping into the diverse, beautiful mess of the world, stretching the muscle of your spirit. It means engaging with a world that doesn’t look like you or necessarily think like you and being present with a loving curiosity.

Objective: To help kids understand and experience this baptismal promise as an intention to live vulnerably, present, and attentive as a living sacrifice for the sake of our neighbor and the world.

- **Hear God’s Word and Share God’s Supper** (1 Corinthians 11:26)
The promise, “Hear the Word, Share in His Supper”, reminds us that, while God is ever present in creation, God promises to be present in the Word and sacred acts (sacraments) of the church. We find signs and stories of God’s continued promise in the Word. We experience the real presence of Jesus in the meal and receive the gifts of forgiveness, newness of life, and God’s redemption. The intention of the promise, then is to be responsive of these gifts to encounter the poor, marginalized, hungry, afflicted, and suffering to embody the same grace which has gifted us in the word and supper. When the world consumes your compassion, faithfulness, and heart – they experience God’s promised grace documented in scripture and offered in the elements of the supper.

Objective: To help kids understand and experience this baptismal promise as an intention to be a consumable gift of God’s grace inspired by God’s word, fueled by the holy meal.

- **Proclaim the Good News in Word and Deed** (1 Corinthians 1:25-27)
The promise, “Proclaim the Good News of Christ in Word and Deed”, reminds us that we live in both a political and partisan world. The Good News of Christ is not only a message of comfort but of conviction as well. Jesus provided an example that it is risky to speak on behalf of those who have no voice; to act on behalf of those who have no agency; to include those who are on the margins. Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi are modern day examples of bringing a convicting truth to the world on behalf of the marginalized.

Objective: To help kids understand and experience this baptismal promise as an

intention to live with the risks of speaking the truth to power as a messenger of Gospel for the sake of the world.

- **Serve All People, Following the Example of Jesus** (Matthew 25: 35-36, 40)
The promise, “serve all people following the example of Jesus”, reminds us that the gospel is meant to be lived with our whole selves. The transforming nature of God’s love is best understood when we put skin on it, movement to it, ourselves in it. Connecting the intellectual understanding of Christ’s life, death and resurrection with personal impact of living out the example of Jesus is the heart of this baptismal promise.

Objective: To help kids understand and experience this baptismal promise as an intention to follow the life of Jesus where lives are transformed, and Christ is made known in our service. Serving as Jesus serves brings us closer to Jesus, the one who did not come to be served but to serve.

- **Strive for Justice and Peace in the World** (Micah 6:8)
Striving for justice and peace in all the earth doesn’t mean viewing people as causes that can be managed with money, food, or clothing. It means jumping into the systemic brokenness of the world with empathy and curiosity; speaking truth to power, applying influence on imbalanced social systems, and challenging the church to align their words and practices.

Objective: To help kids understand and experience this baptismal promise as an intention to battle our own self-centeredness and the sinfulness of human institutions to work for God’s deeper and purer form of justice and peace for the sake of the world.

Hot Topics

OVERVIEW:

Is it true that “whoever dies with the most toys wins?” Does a Christian teen have to check their brain at the door when they come to church and their faith at the door when they go into a science class? Does God really care about how I treat sex, drugs and fast cars? Is there such a thing as a “just war” today? What happens to someone who commits suicide?

Explore the hottest topics in a teen’s life with this 10-theme set, then send the learning home for family discussion and devotion time with the “Hot Topics” Home Huddles.

Included “Hot Topics” Lesson Themes:

- **Sex and Love** (*1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13*)
Sex is dynamite. God invented it as a wonderful gift to us. Used in the way God intends, it can build, bond, and make babies. It can give pleasure, joy, and comfort. But like any power, it can also be used to destroy. It can harm, humiliate, abuse, and tear people apart. It all depends on how you use the gift.
- **Drugs: Your Body is a Temple** (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*)
The Bible says your body is a temple. You belong to God. You are not your own. The same is true of creation in general. What does this have to do with how guests handle alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, steroids, diet pills, or any other substances that could harm them, fry their brain cells, or trash their temple? What does it have to do with how we care for the earth? Don’t let anyone leave this session without this central truth: The Bible is clear: Your body is a temple. Creation is sacred.
- **Fast Cars and Other Risky Business** (*Genesis 3:8-9*)
People with life-threatening diseases sometimes spend everything they have to get healthy again. They know life and health is worth more than possessions. Some people who have lost a loved one would give everything they have for one more day, one more hour with the person they loved and lost. They know how precious life is. It’s a gift. It’s all good. It’s all from God.
- **Media and Materialism** (*Isaiah 55:1-3a*)
We live in a time of extremes. Some have everything they want, but still feel empty. We fill lives and garages and attics with gadgets that soon turn to clutter. Sometimes the more we have, the less we have. Sometimes the only thing we don’t have is more.
- **God and Science** (*Job 11:7-12*)
We live in a time when science and faith seem to be at odds. Some would say you have to check your faith in at the door when you walk into a science lab, and your brain at the door when you walk into a church. But is that how Christians should think? Is faith always blind? Is science always soulless? Does it have to be this way?

- **War and Peace** (*Romans 5:12*)

What did Jesus teach about peace, justice and revenge? What was his reaction to personal violence? How do Christ's words and actions contrast with the messages we will hear around us on a daily basis? The answers to these questions may be painful, prophetic and counter-cultural. They will certainly go against the crowd and may even go against common sense.

- **Suicide** (*Psalm 42:1, 5-6a*)

This is a tough, touch theme. The best thing you can do is to use these resources as a way of getting people talking, risking, listening and loving. Please consider hosting this theme event as a Cross+Generational conversation. The wisdom of the elder and the wonder of the child will enrich and enhance this important discussion in ways that can rarely happen with only one age group. As you wrap it up, be sure to gather every small group's thoughts. Close with the One strange and amazing thing about God's grace: Life is a gift. Every moment. Every second. Every breath. Each heartbeat. It is all God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift to God. So, how will you choose to live? God will give you tomorrow. Will you give that priceless gift to yourself?

Note: You might find it helpful to refer to Apostles' Creed lesson 10 "Resurrection and Eternal Life" for additional ideas on this difficult topic.

- **Stewardship of Time** (*Mark 12:28-30*)

Time is a great gift. It's also very easy to waste. So, what does this mean to a teenager today, especially when most see their time on earth as infinite? Please get across to your small groups that good use of time does not mean being constantly busy. Setting time aside to talk to God, serve others and recharge can be great ways to strengthen our relationship with God.

- **Stewardship of Talents** (*Matthew 5:3-10, 13a, 14, 16*)

Each one of us is on this earth with God-given abilities to serve God and each other in some way. The word "talent" often makes us think of only the very special and talented people in this world—musicians, scholars, athletes—but each one of us has been gifted by God and can serve God in some way. It may be difficult to believe, but we're each unique and can make unique contributions to the world. How will you use what God has given you to share the good news of Jesus? What now?

- **Stewardship of Treasure** (*Malachi 3:10*)

A Christian views money differently from the way the rest of the world views it. The "real world" tells us money equals success, so we should get as much money as we can. The more we have, the happier we should be. The Bible says something different. Money is ultimately meaningless. It can never satisfy people who love it. It brings with it not a better life, but a restless dissatisfaction and desire for more. All that we have is a gift from God; our life, our world, and our possessions. How will you use these gifts entrusted to you to share the good news of Jesus? What now?

John Wesley

Themes included in this set:

A Brand from the Burning (*Psalm 89:1-2*)

Young John Wesley thought he had a right relationship with God. He had grown up in the church, attended a church college and even served as a missionary on foreign soil. It wasn't until he experienced Jesus in a personal way at Aldersgate that he finally experienced his faith moving from his head to his heart. At that point of conversion, his entire life was changed. Don't let anyone leave this session without being confronted by this truth: God loves you. Christ died to take away your sins— even yours. He has saved you from the law of sin and death. Have you accepted this gift? Will you accept God's gift? What would stop you?

The World is My Parish (*Philippians 3:10-11*)

Wesley devoted his life to bringing Christ to the people of his time. He traveled to the mines, to the slums, to the fields and even preached on his father's grave to bring people to a living faith in Christ. What would you sacrifice for Christ?

Wesley: A Legacy (*John 15:4-5*)

John Wesley grounded his entire life in Christ. He dedicated his thoughts, actions, time and treasure to his Lord. As a result, lives were changed, the church was revived, a nation was spared from revolution and slavery was abolished. What great things could happen to your world if you and your friends would do the same?

John Calvin

Included Themes in this set:

Risky Business (*II Peter 1:19*)

Young John Calvin was on a track to please his father, studying to be a priest. He was living in a day where following the Bible (instead of the church) could get you burned at the stake. Calvin had a sudden conversion of faith. He went on to risk it all—even his life—to do what he felt God was telling him to do.

Christ Died for Us (*Romans 5:8*)

John Calvin wrote his Institutes first as a defense for French Protestants who were being persecuted. He wanted to clarify what they taught and believed. He went on to organize a complete practical system for living the Christian life in the heart, home and in society. His theology was based on the Scriptures and God's will. His greatness came from holding to a great God. What do you base your life upon? What solid things can you hold on to in changing times?

Calvin: A Legacy (*Philippians 1:27*)

John Calvin worked tirelessly to mold his world into compliance with the will of God and was run out of Geneva. When the city leaders invited him back, he spent the rest of his life and energies trying to create and direct a society where the Bible guided the church, government, personal decisions and behavior. How does this relate to life and government today? Would something like this be embraced? Challenge your groups to consider the church/state question.