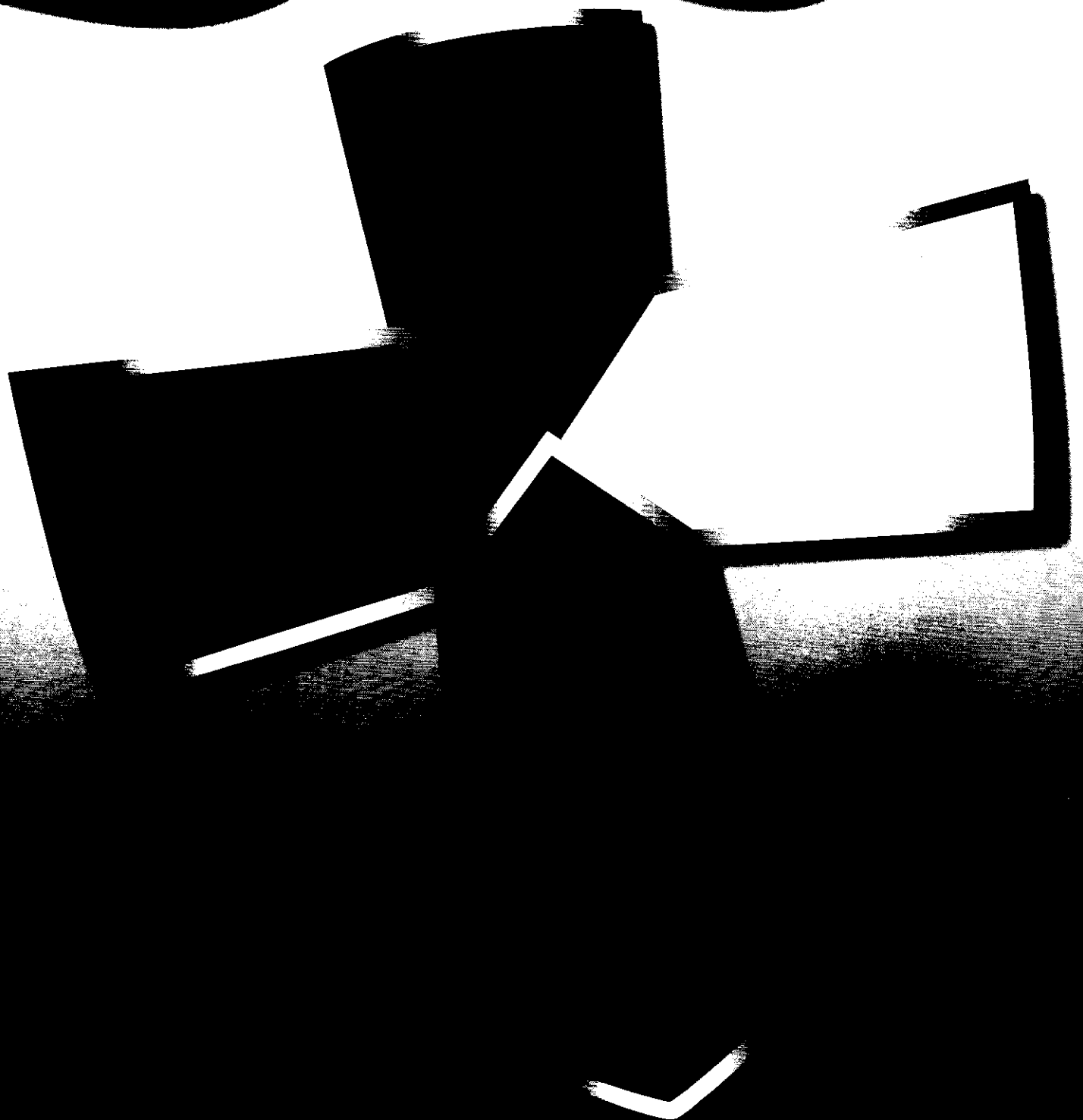


God and Life



Created for Protestant and Independent Christian Churches for use with young people in grades 9-12.

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NOTE: This program requires that students have original workbooks and present their work to the pastor for final approval.

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Welcome and Thank you!

Welcome to the *God and Life* program, and thank you for your commitment to help young people grow in their Christian faith. YOU are an important component in this *God and Life* program. Resources and curriculum cannot replace the impact that a dedicated Christian adult can have on the lives of young people. Thank you for your gift of time and self.

PART I

Understanding the *God and Life* Program

What Is the *God and Life* Program?

The *God and Life* program is the fourth program in the P.R.A.Y. Series. The P.R.A.Y. Series is a program of the church. Its objectives are to help young people grow in their understanding of the Christian faith, to help young people see how other people have translated belief into action, and to provide young people with the opportunity for Christian service to others. A conscious effort has been made to develop each unit of the program without theological bias; yet each program is designed to permit the introduction of particular theological and denominational viewpoints on the material being studied. It is the responsibility of the counselor to provide this input. The P.R.A.Y. Series has been recognized by several national youth-serving agencies as the religious emblem program for Protestant and Independent Christian churches.

Curriculum Goals

The goals of this program are for young people to

- strengthen their relationship with Christ
- be open to God's calling in their lives
- make a plan for daily Bible reading
- experience the joy of serving others
- write a statement of commitment

Components of the *God and Life* Program

The outline for the *God and Life* study is based on the life of the apostle Paul as recorded in Acts 9:1-31. This is a brief account of Paul's encounter with Christ. Five "events" out of this story will be highlighted and used as the focus for the five different sections in this program. Each section will contain the following components:

Look Back: To review previous lessons

Opening Activity: An activity or exercise to set the stage for presenting the lesson

More about Paul: To become familiar with the life and teachings of the apostle Paul

Other Men and Women in the Bible: To study the examples of other men and women in the Bible and what their lives teach us about being open to God's will

What about You?: To apply the Bible lessons to your own life

Reflect: To summarize an important insight gained from the lesson

Service Project: A required service project at the end of every unit

Who Is the Counselor?

The counselor is the pastor. Or the counselor may be a person appointed by the pastor, such as a parent, Sunday school teacher, church lay leader, or so forth. The counselor should be someone who likes and relates well to young people. And especially for the *God and Life* program, the counselor should be someone who has great respect for young people and who will not only serve as a resource for them but will encourage and tap their potential. Regardless of who serves as the counselor, the final review must be done by the pastor.

Setting Up a Program

The *God and Life* program can take place in many types of settings. You may be working with one young person or with twenty, or you may be conducting a class for one or more mentor pairs. Your class may be made up of youth from one denomination or from many. You may be meeting once or twice a week or only once a month. It is impossible to provide a separate counselor guide for each situation, and we would not want to suggest only one format in which the program could be completed. Therefore, it is our intent to provide you with a guide that you can use and adapt as needed. This guide is designed with a class setting in mind. This does not mean that a class setting is preferred over a one-on-one teaching situation. Individuals can participate in this program by working at their own pace and meeting with their counselor as needed. The counselor can adapt the lesson plans and activities for one-on-one teaching situations.

Consider whom you will invite to participate in your class. Will it involve only youth from Boy Scouts? Camp Fire? Girl Scouts? American Heritage Girls? Will it be open to all high school students from your congregation? from your denomination? from all Protestant and Independent churches in your area? Sample letters and newsletter articles can be found at www.praypub.org.

Consider if you will ask parents to serve as mentors. A mentor is an adult (usually a parent) who works side by side with his or her child in the program. The mentor completes the Mentor Workbook and attends meetings with the student. The mentor program is a wonderful option for parents, encouraging them to share their faith with their children. If you will be working with one or more mentor pairs, you will need to review the material in the Mentor Workbook.

The mentor does NOT take the place of the counselor. The mentor is a student alongside the child, and both the mentor and child need to report to the counselor. The adult mentor is eligible for special recognition items found in the back of the *God and Life Mentor Workbook*.

A typical schedule for completing this program will include an introductory session and ten meetings to complete the five lessons in the Student Workbook for a total of eleven meeting times. Each session will require 1–2 hours each, depending on which activities are completed at home and which are completed in class. This Counselor Manual makes the assumption that all work (except for the service projects) will be done in class. However, you, as the counselor, may choose to set up your program differently. Perhaps you want the Bible lessons to be completed at home before coming to class. Or you may want to plan a field trip for the students to complete a joint service project. Whatever you decide, communicate your expectations very clearly to your students and families. A sample “Schedule and Assignments” sheet is provided on page 28 (it is also available on the P.R.A.Y. Web site at www.praypub.org if you want to download it and make changes to it). This sample schedule includes class time for group projects as well as requiring individual service projects. You may want to consider adding a free week to the schedule for makeup work or to allow students to work on their service projects.

How to Use this Counselor Manual

Lesson plans are provided for you. Each session starts with the objectives for the lesson, materials needed, review questions, and opening activities. These items are then followed by the actual lesson from the Student Workbook: the introductory paragraphs, the questions, and the choices for the service projects from the Student Workbook are copied word-for-word in the Counselor Manual. The answers and suggestions that are given throughout the lesson will appear in italics. Please become familiar with this format: when you come to the actual lesson, anything in italics does not appear in the Student Workbook.

Service Projects

Some of your service projects may be done as a group. If your group chooses to do something together, be sure that all individuals are involved and contribute to the group effort.

The curriculum requires that the students complete five separate service projects, one after each of the five lessons. However, you may allow your students to choose one continuous project that will extend the duration of the entire program. Perhaps there’s an extended fix-it project for the church, or your students may volunteer to be part of the planning board for a youth retreat. You, as the counselor, may approve such service projects to challenge your students.

Other Considerations

- **Final Review:** The final review must be done with the pastor. This is an opportunity for the young people to get to know their pastor and to share what they have learned. The final review with the pastor can be done as a class (perhaps at the last session). Or if you have students from different congregations, you may require that they arrange for a final review with their own pastors. Be sure to communicate your expectations and include instructions on your class schedule. Do not allow students to wait until the last minute to make appointments with their pastors. Sample questions to help the pastor conduct the final review are found on pages 29-30.
- **God and Life Party:** A party is a wonderful way to conclude your program. Plan something simple, such as an ice cream social. It could be a separate meeting or part of the last meeting. You could celebrate with just the class members or invite the pastor, families, and so on. Consider asking parents to take charge of the party. You will want to make some decisions yourself before offering the class any options. A class party is optional.
- **Award Ceremony:** With the pastor, plan a recognition ceremony to honor the young people in a church setting (a morning worship service, a church dinner, or other congregational event). Invite all students to participate in the award ceremony. However, if some students belong to other congregations, encourage them to arrange presentation ceremonies in their congregations with their own pastors. Consider attending such ceremonies if your schedule permits and the students want you to do so. Your class schedule should include dates, deadlines, and specific instructions for the award ceremony.
- **Four Star Recipients** – A “Four Star Recipient” is someone who has earned all four levels of the P.R.A.Y. Series, (i.e., *God and Me*, *God and Family*, *God and Church*, and *God and Life*) and is then eligible to receive special recognition. See awards on page 35.

Planning the Award Ceremony

The award ceremony is an important celebration for the students who have completed the *God and Life* program. Whether there are twenty students or one, this is a time for the student(s) to share what has been learned. The recognition that they receive will be a way for them to witness to their faith. The counselor should meet with the pastor to arrange for a time when students can share their achievements with the congregation. Remember to allow enough time after the last meeting to order and receive the awards through the mail. Awards cannot be ordered until the students have met with their pastor for the final review.

After you have determined the date of the award ceremony, you will need to set two other dates (these dates are especially important if your students belong to different congregations): the deadline for students to indicate whether or not they will be participating in the ceremony and the deadline for students to turn in award application forms.

A sample presentation ceremony will be sent with each order. This sample presentation ceremony is also available on the P.R.A.Y. Web site at www.praypub.org. Be sure to involve the students in planning this special day. Encourage them to share what they learned. They may want to

- read their statement of commitment
- host the coffee hour
- design the cover for the bulletin
- sing a song
- provide information so that other families can learn about the *God and Life* program

Counselor Tips

- Observe appropriate counseling techniques. Provide proper adult supervision at all times.
- You may be working with a group that includes both church and unchurched youth. Take care to explain terminology and concepts (i.e., salvation, resurrection) completely in a way that makes sense to them. The sections on "Other Men and Women in the Bible" may require that you provide additional background material for unchurched youth.
- The curriculum will sometimes require that students study the history, worship, and ministry of a local congregation. If students do not belong to or are not active in a local congregation, talk to their parents and find out which congregation will serve as "home church" for their children to study.
- Encourage questions from all participants and be comfortable in saying, "I don't know, but I'll look for an answer" if you are unable to provide an answer right away. Be sure to follow through. Involve the pastor if you need to.
- Encourage discussion as much as possible. Possible responses to discussion questions are listed after each question. The possible responses (in italics) do NOT appear in the Student Workbook.
- In the course of class discussions, feel free to require a written response to a discussion question that has been particularly meaningful.
- Any time that a Bible verse is mentioned or referred to in the Student Workbook, take the time to look up and read the actual passage with your students.
- Whenever the word *parent* or *parents* is used, it indicates the adult or adults heading the student's family (parent, foster parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt, etc.).
- It is essential that you read through each lesson plan (more than once!) prior to the class. You may need (or want) to adapt activities to best fit your group. You will also need to know which options you will be using and that you have all the supplies for the lesson.
- Visit P.R.A.Y.'s Web site (www.praypub.org) for additional resources (i.e., sample newsletter articles, assignment schedules, project ideas, presentation ceremonies, etc.). Feel free to contact P.R.A.Y. via the Internet. We also hope that you share your success stories with us.

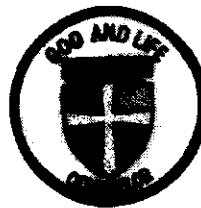
Counselor Recognitions

A special pin and embroidered emblem are available for the counselor. These items may be ordered in advance and worn by the adult while teaching the class. Having the award visible will provide incentive to the participants.



Counselor Pin

- Approximately 3/4 inch in size
- Worn on non-uniform clothing



Counselor patch

- 3" embroidered patch
- Worn on non-uniform clothing
- May be worn as a temporary patch on the front of the BSA uniform

Call P.R.A.Y. at 1-800-933-7729 or visit www.praypub.org for information or to place an order.

Please note that these counselor items are also listed on the award application form in each participant's Student Workbook. Sometimes the students' families will order a pin for the counselor as a way to show their thanks and appreciation.

Notes, Ideas, Thoughts

PART II

Teaching the *God and Life* Curriculum

INTRODUCTION: Welcome to the *God and Life* Program!

Objectives

Students will

- become acquainted with the counselor and with one another
- become familiar with the schedule and expectations of the *God and Life* class
- read Acts 9:1–31 and preview the five “events” that serve as the basis for the five lessons in this study
- make a plan for daily Bible reading

What You Will Need

Name tags, *God and Life* Student Workbooks, pencils, handouts of schedule, Bibles

Optional: Bible name cards (see Opening Activity Option 1), Student name cards (see Opening Activity Option 2), Agree/Disagree signs, posters of Bible verses (Isaiah 43:1, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Peter 1:10, Romans 11:29), sample plans for reading the Bible, notebooks to be used as prayer journals

Opening Activity

As students arrive, ask them to make name tags. Plan some activities to get acquainted with one another and to introduce the *God and Life* program. Choose one or more of the following activities as time allows:

Option 1: Bible Names

Make individual cards (you can use half sheets of paper) with the name *and its meaning* for at least thirty different men and women in the Bible. For example, the name Habakkuk means “Embraced by God,” and Nehemiah means “The Lord Comforts.” (Visit the P.R.A.Y. Web site for sample cards.) Spread the cards out on a table. Ask students to find a name that is meaningful to them. When everybody has chosen a name, have students take turns telling what name they chose and why. For example, “I chose Habakkuk because I liked the image of living my life in God’s embrace.” Or “Nehemiah, because there have been times when I have really needed God’s comfort.”

Option 2: Students’ Names

This activity is possible only if you have registered the students ahead of time and know their names.

Make cards (you can use half sheets of paper) with only the meanings of the names of each student on them. (The P.R.A.Y. Web page provides links to Internet sites that list names and their meanings.) Spread these cards on a table. Randomly pair up students and ask them to work together to try to find the matches to their names. Partners must then “interview”

each other to (a) find out if the partner was named after anybody in particular, (b) find out how the partner thinks the meaning of the name applies (or does not apply) to him or her, (c) come up with an adjective or trait that best describes the partner, but the adjective must begin with the first letter of his or her name (e.g., Caring Christine). After the interviews, have everyone introduce their partners to the group and share what they know about their partners. Briefly discuss the importance of names and how our names may not tell everything about ourselves, but that God, who calls us by name, knows us even better than we do.

Option 3: Agree/Disagree

Read the following statements (or make up your own). Ask students to share whether or not they agree or disagree with each statement. You may post AGREE/DISAGREE signs on opposite ends of the room and require that students start in the middle and move from one side to the other to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Have students volunteer to explain why they agree or disagree with each statement.

- I believe God loves me.
- I want to grow stronger in faith, but I just don’t seem to get anywhere.
- I believe that God has a purpose for my life.
- I have a hard time understanding how God could use a person like me.
- The way I live shows that God has top priority in my life.
- I know I’m supposed to read the Bible everyday, but I just don’t get it.
- I’m looking forward to discovering God’s plan for my life.
- I’m so confused and uncertain about my future, I don’t like to think about it.
- I want to live my life open to God’s will.
- I know God has a calling for me, but I just don’t know what it is.

Introduction

(STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 3)

Start by reading 1 Samuel 3:1–10. Then read the introductory paragraphs (copied below) from page 3 in the Student Workbook. Emphasize that we need to be like Samuel, learning to recognize God’s call in our lives, and then stopping to listen. This study will help us do that.

These introductory paragraphs refer to several Bible verses. You may want to look up these verses and make small posters to display in your classroom. Take the time to read each verse when it is mentioned.

The Bible tells the story of a young person named Samuel who heard someone calling his name. Samuel thought that it was Eli the priest calling him, so he went to him. But it wasn't Eli. This happened three times. Finally, Eli realized God was calling Samuel. The next time God called, Samuel was ready. Samuel responded by saying, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Often we are like Samuel in this story, not recognizing God's call in our lives. And other times we're not enough like Samuel: after hearing God's call, we don't stop to listen.

This *God and Life* program will help you understand God's call in your life and in the life of the church. The Bible teaches that God has called you by name and that you belong to God (Isaiah 43:1). God's call is not an impersonal call. You are a child of God, and God knows you and loves you. God calls his children into a relationship with Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9). You are to grow strong in your calling (2 Peter 1:10) for God's call is permanent and irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

The outline for this *God and Life* study is based on the life of the apostle Paul as recorded in Acts 9:1–31. This is a brief account that describes how Paul became a Christian. Five chronological "events" out of this story have been chosen for the five different sections in this program. Each section will illustrate a key element in learning how to live one's life for Christ.

Read Acts 9:1–31. Then read the outline below. Find the verse or verses for each of the five sections. Choose what you consider the "key" verse(s) for each section.

Acts 9:1–31 is the basis for this God and Life study. Students will need to read this account more than once. You may want to let students work in small groups or with a partner to find the verse or verses to match each of the five "events." Be aware that students may choose different verses. Expect your students to explain their answers. Sample key verses are listed below.

1. Before his conversion, Paul persecuted Christians.

Theme: God calls all kinds of people

Key Verse(s): _____

v 1-2: Paul persecuted Christians.

v 3-6: Jesus calls Paul.

v 15: The Lord calls Paul his "chosen instrument."

2. Paul was helped by Ananias and Barnabas.

Theme: God doesn't expect us to do it on our own.

Key Verse(s): _____

v 10-11: Ananias is instructed to help Paul.

v 17: Ananias helps Paul.

v 26-27: Barnabas helps Paul.

3. Paul was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Theme: Each of us must make a personal response to the call of God.

Key Verse(s): _____

v 17-19: Paul is baptized.

v 11: Paul is praying and waiting for the Lord's guidance and leading.

4. Paul faced many difficulties and endured much pain.

Theme: God gives strength to face adversities.

Key Verse(s): _____

v 16: The Lord reveals that Paul must suffer.

v 23-25: There is a conspiracy to kill Paul.

v 29: Another attempt to kill Paul.

5. Paul's faithfulness was a tool God used to strengthen and grow the church.

Theme: God can accomplish great things through those who are willing to do God's will.

Key Verse(s): _____

v 20-22: Paul preached that Jesus is the Son of God.

v 27: Paul preached "fearlessly."

v 31: The church grew in strength and numbers.

Daily Bible Reading

One of the requirements of this program is that you read the Bible every day for at least three months. It is suggested that you read the book of Acts and some of the letters written by the apostle Paul. Your counselor can suggest several plans for you to choose from. Start your plan for daily Bible reading now. You may want to keep a written record or journal as well.

The Student Workbook makes the suggestion that the student read the book of Acts and some of the letters written by the apostle Paul. A simple Bible reading plan could be to read Acts, Galatians, Ephesians, and Romans (reading the shorter books Galatians and Ephesians before Romans may be more encouraging for students). For other suggestions, please visit the P.R.A.Y. Web site at www.praypub.org.

It is best to require your students to keep a written record (perhaps they can use a calendar to record the days they read). However, you may want to challenge them to keep a journal to record their thoughts and responses to the scripture that they have read. If your students do not have mentors, you may want to suggest that they find "partners" as they begin this three-month assignment. Reading partners can be fellow students or maybe an adult in the congregation. Remind students that developing a new habit is difficult. Talk about the pitfalls they should expect. Encourage them to find a time and place for their daily Bible reading. Make it a point to encourage them every time you meet together. You, as the counselor, should follow the same reading plan and keep a written record as well.

SECTION 1

God Calls All Kinds of People

Objectives

- Learn about Paul's background before his encounter with Jesus
- Understand that God calls ordinary people with all their doubts and feelings of inadequacy
- Make personal application of the Bible lessons and consider how God is calling you

What You Will Need

Optional: simple drawings (Opening Activity Option 1), note cards or small slips of paper (Opening Activity Option 2), background information or reference material on the twelve disciples

Look Back

- See if the participants remember one another's names.
- Who was Samuel? What are two lessons that we can learn from Samuel?
- Check your students' progress on their daily Bible reading plans. If everybody is following the same plan, ask a few questions about the scripture that was read.

Opening Activity

Two options are presented here (in case you have scheduled two separate sessions for this lesson).

Option 1:

Play a simple game of "telephone" – Form a circle; one person starts by whispering a phrase or sentence into the ear of the person seated next to him or her. The phrase is passed along to each person. Each person hears the phrase once only. The last person tells what he or she thinks was whispered. Usually the phrase has "suffered" a bit by passing it along.

Play a variation of "telephone" – Form a line. Show a simple picture (e.g., smiley face, flower, rainbow, etc.) to the person at the end of the line and ask him or her to use a finger to "draw" that picture on the back of the next person. Make sure no one else sees the picture. Each person then takes a turn in passing the picture along the line (someone will draw a picture on his or her back, and then he or she draws the picture on somebody else's back). The last person draws the picture on a chalkboard or paper for the group to see. Compare the original with the end result. Discuss how easy it is to misinterpret what another person is saying to us. Is it possible that we also misinterpret what God is saying to us?

Option 2:

Guess who? Ask each student to write down on a piece of paper a little-known fact about him- or herself (the more unusual, the better). Collect the written statements, read them out loud, and have everyone guess who it is. Talk

about the many different talents and experiences within your group. What surprised you the most?

Introduction

(STUDENT WORKBOOK PAGE 4)

As you introduce Paul in this lesson, be sure to highlight the fact that Paul was acting out of his religious zeal. Paul was very religious and lived a righteous life. But being "religious" is not the same as being in a relationship with Christ. Pray that your students will encounter Christ, not just gain knowledge about him.

The apostle Paul is without a doubt one of the greatest missionaries the church has ever known. The church owes a great deal to Paul. Paul's preaching and traveling helped the early church grow and become strong. And Paul's letters help explain some of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith even today.

But even though Paul is one of the greatest Christian role models that the church has ever had, the fact remains that Paul wasn't always a Christian. Even worse, Paul persecuted Christians in his early life. He went out of his way to hunt down Christians and throw them into prison.

This fact about Paul's life illustrates an important principle for us as Christians: God calls all kinds of people, regardless of past performance, training, or occupation. We are all part of God's creation, and any one of us may be chosen by God to fulfill God's plan.

God does not call perfect people. God calls ordinary people like you and me and then promises to be with us. Like Paul, we too may have things that we are ashamed of in our lives, but God makes change possible.

Many of the great men and women of the Bible had their doubts and feelings of inadequacy, but they accepted God's plan for their lives and allowed God to work through them.

More About Paul

1. Paul seemed an unlikely choice for God to call. Read Acts 7:58–8:3, 22:4–5, 26:9–11, and Galatians 1:13–14 to discover his attitude toward Christians before his conversion. What did Paul do to Christians? Write down some of the verbs that describe Paul's actions and the intensity of his actions.

*Approved the stoning of Christians
Began to destroy the church
Dragged off men and women
Put them in prison
Persecuted them*

Arrested both men and women
Threw them in prison
Opposed the name of Jesus
Put many of the saints in prison
Cast his vote against them
Tried to force them to blaspheme
Had an obsession against them
Went to foreign cities to persecute them

DISCUSS: Have you ever felt the same intensity or passion that Paul demonstrated? When or in what circumstances?

As students share their experiences, help them realize how passion can be expressed in both good and bad ways. What makes the difference?

2. Paul's "former life" was in sharp contrast to his calling. How did his former life impact Paul? (1 Corinthians 15:9–10) How did his former life impact his ministry? (Galatians 1:23–24)

Paul considered himself the least of all the apostles because he had persecuted the church. He also knew that it was by the grace of God that he was saved.

People praised God when they found out that the person who used to persecute Christians was himself now a follower of Christ.

3. God called Paul for a special purpose. Tell how Paul described his calling in Galatians 1:11–17.

Paul said that God himself revealed his Son to him and that the gospel Paul preached was received by revelation from Jesus Christ. God had chosen Paul even before Paul was born, and God called Paul through God's grace.

4. Although Paul seemed an unlikely candidate, God saw his potential. Read Acts 22:3 and Philippians 3:4b–6. How was Paul's background and training perfect for God's calling?

Paul was trained in the law under Gamaliel (one of the leading teachers of that day); he was circumcised and of the tribe of Benjamin; he was a Pharisee. Paul understood and lived the "legalistic righteousness" that he would later preach against.

DISCUSS: What life experiences are preparing you for serving God?

Encourage students to talk about more than going to church and attending youth group or Sunday school; how do other life experiences teach us discipline, compassion, empathy, determination, etc.

Other Men And Women In The Bible

1. Read how Jeremiah was called by God to be a prophet in Jeremiah 1:4–10. Why did Jeremiah feel inadequate? What was God's response?

Jeremiah protested that he was only a youth. But God didn't accept Jeremiah's excuses: God touched Jeremiah on the mouth and put God's word into him. God told Jeremiah not to be afraid.

DISCUSS: Describe a time when you felt the way Jeremiah did. How does 1 Timothy 4:11–12 apply to you?

Students shouldn't have any trouble thinking of times when they felt old enough for something that their parents thought they were too young for. What about the reverse? Use this Bible verse to challenge your students. Challenge them, despite their youth, to be living examples for others.

2. Moses was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, where they were being kept as slaves. Moses tried to resist God's calling. List the excuses that Moses used in trying to refuse God's call in Exodus 3:11–14, 4:1–5, 4:10–17. How did God respond to Moses? Was God's response what you would expect?

Who am I to go to Pharaoh?

What if they ask me who sent me? (What if they ask for your name?)

What if they don't believe me?

Moses protested that he wasn't eloquent enough.

Moses finally asked for God to send somebody else.

God was patient and encouraging and answered each one of Moses' excuses. God didn't let Moses off the hook. God gave Moses signs to perform to prove that God had sent him. Even when God got angry with Moses (after his fifth excuse), God provided for Moses' every need in response to his concerns.

DISCUSS: Tell about a time when you tried to make excuses to get out of doing a job you didn't like. What happened?

Be prepared for two different kinds of stories: stories in which the students were able to get out of doing something (their excuses worked), and stories in which they were "busted" (their excuses backfired and they got into hot water). In either case, be sure to compare their stories to the story in Exodus. Point out God's infinite patience and wisdom when dealing with human beings.

3. The twelve sons of Jacob became the twelve tribes of Israel. These were the same sons who sold their brother Joseph into slavery. Judah received special blessing and honor (Genesis 49:8–12), for it was from this tribe that the Messiah sprang. Judah did not receive this distinction from personal merit (his past was anything but perfect), but through God's mercy. Read about Judah's sin (Genesis 37:25–28). More importantly, read about Judah's repentance (Genesis 44:14–34). How do you know that Judah was truly repentant?

Judah was the brother who suggested that they sell Joseph into slavery. Years later, when Benjamin was facing slavery (after the silver cup was found in his sack of grain), Judah knew that his father Isaac would die of a broken heart, so Judah asked to take Benjamin's place. Judah wanted to suffer the consequences so that Benjamin might not be separated from his father. This showed Judah's repentance.

[Depending on the maturity level of your group, you may also want to read Genesis 38 to find out about Judah's adultery against his daughter-in-law Tamar. Read about his sins, but also read about his repentance. Again, depending on the maturity of your group, this may be an opportunity to talk about how we are called to live a pure life and the challenges (and rewards) we have in doing so.]

DISCUSS: How does it feel knowing that God uses imperfect people?

Some possible answers: surprise, disbelief, comfort, encouragement. Use this story to offer encouragement to your students. In the same way that God chose Judah (who had once sold his brother into slavery) to be the head of the tribe from which the Messiah would descend, God can choose your students, too, with all their imperfections and inadequacies.

4. Peter is the disciple who denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:54–62). Later, when Jesus appeared to the disciples after his resurrection, Jesus did not focus on Peter's weaknesses. Read their conversation in John 21:15–17. What is the key issue? What does Christ require in order to use us for his purposes?

After Peter had denied Jesus three times, Jesus asks Peter not if he had learned his lesson but if Peter loved him. Jesus asked Peter three times if Peter loved him, and Peter responded three times that he did. Love is the key issue. Jesus asks Peter to take care of his sheep because of Peter's great love for Christ.

DISCUSS: Tell of a time when a friend (or family member) denied knowing you, or when you felt betrayed by somebody. How did that impact your relationship? How did you overcome that betrayal?

Make sure that students are sensitive in the telling and hearing of their stories. Being "betrayed" by someone is very painful. Hold Jesus up as the example to follow.

5. List two other Bible heroes who were ordinary people with human flaws and yet were called by God to do God's will. Tell why each person is considered a "hero," despite his or her shortcomings.

See if your students can include men and women, young and old, and from both the Old and New Testament. Here are some examples: Matthew was a former tax collector and probably very unpopular for his greedy and dishonest means, and yet he went on to write one of the books of the Bible; James and John were disciples who were especially close to Jesus, and yet they

asked to sit on either side of Jesus in the new kingdom; the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair was a known sinner, and yet she is remembered for her loving and repentant actions.

DISCUSS: Describe an ordinary person you know who has flaws and yet is called by God.

Do you have any examples of young people that you can share with your group?

What About You?

1. God calls all kinds of people. God does not disqualify us from discipleship because of our weaknesses. Instead God sees our potential and focuses on our strengths. Reflect on your own life. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What do you think other people see when they look at you? What have you done that you are proud of? What are some of the things about yourself that you would like to change?

It might be easy for your students to focus on their shortcomings rather than their strengths. Be sure they give a balanced appraisal.

2. Think about the power of God's forgiveness. Moses had committed murder, and Peter had denied Jesus, yet both were called by God. In Romans 3:23–24 Paul writes that we are all sinners, but God offers us forgiveness and sets us free. Paul was a sinner and he knew it. But he also knew of God's forgiveness and grace. Read 1 John 1:9 and put it into your own words.

Some students may need to hear the part about confessing our sins. God's grace does not give us free license to do whatever we want. We need to be repentant of our sins and confess them to God. Other students may need to focus on the fact that God doesn't keep track of our sins on a tally sheet. When God forgives our sins, God wipes the slate clean.

DISCUSS: How is forgiveness a part of your life? Do you hold a grudge against somebody and need to ask for forgiveness? Has somebody hurt you, and you need to forgive him or her?

After sharing your stories, you may want to have some prayer time asking God for the strength to ask for forgiveness from other people and/or to forgive other people their wrongdoings.

3. Consider the people whom Jesus chose as his disciples. These twelve men were all very different people. Some were fishermen, and one was a tax collector (tax collectors were very unpopular). Jesus deliberately recruited different types of people with unique talents and strengths. Even though the disciples had different personalities and occupations, they all shared a common "vocation": they were called to serve God. Think of two people in your youth group, Sunday school class, or Scouting group. Name some

ways you are different. Name the ways you are the same. How does variety strengthen your group? How is a common "vocation" essential to the group?

Discuss the meaning of "vocation." Vocation is more than just an occupation or trade. It is more of a calling. All Christians share in their service to God, no matter what their occupation.

Option: If time permits, it might be helpful to spend some time on the twelve disciples to introduce their unique talents and strengths.

4. Read the list of activities below. Which ones haven't you ever done? Why? What if God were to call you to do those specific activities? How would you respond? Would you trust God to have your best interests in mind? How could God use you and your specific gifts?

- Teach Sunday school
- Be a leader at youth group
- Play special music
- Lead a Bible study
- Speak out on issues at school or with peers
- Visit people in the hospital or in nursing homes
- Participate in a prayer group
- Speak of Jesus to another person
- Pursue a vocation/career not directly related to a church or religious group

Your students may agree that God has a calling for them. However, they may not realize that God may call them out of their comfort zone to do something entirely out of character. Or if they have a future vocation in mind (one not related to ministry), ask them how they will serve God and others through their vocation. Depending on your group, you may need to add other items to the list.

5. God has a calling or a plan for your life. Read Psalm 139. How does this make you feel? Write a prayer thanking God for God's guidance in your life and asking God for discernment in knowing God's will for your life. Continue to lift up this prayer to God, knowing that God is faithful and will reveal God's purposes to you.

Ask for volunteers to share their prayers aloud with the group.

Reflect

Look back over Section One and review what you have learned. What stands out for you? What was God saying to you through this lesson? Write a few sentences in the space below.

This is an opportunity for students to look back over the lesson and to reflect on what was most meaningful to them. It may be a passage of scripture, a life lesson learned from a Bible character, or maybe new insight into their own lives. Their responses do not need to be lengthy – two or three sentences should be sufficient.

Service Project

(STUDENT WORKBOOK PAGE 8)

Choose one or more of the following service projects. Record the results in the space provided.

- Think of somebody you know who would make an effective witness for Christ. What qualities does he or she have? What potential do you see in this person? Encourage this person by sharing your thoughts with him or her.
- Interview your pastor and another member of the clergy (you may even write to a missionary serving overseas). Find out how each person decided to go into the ministry. How did God call them? How did they respond? What doubts did they have? What help or assistance did God provide for this calling? How do they continue to know God's will? What special challenges do they face? What do they find most rewarding about their work? After both interviews are completed, compare the experiences of the two individuals. What similarities can you find?
- Make a colorful worship banner or bulletin board on the theme, "God Calls All Kinds of People." Be sure to share your plans and design with your pastor before starting your project. Explain your completed banner by writing an article for the newsletter or by making a formal presentation to the congregation.
- Design your own project that will reinforce the theme, "God Calls All Kinds of People." Your service project must be approved by your counselor.

What I did: _____
What I found difficult: _____
What I enjoyed: _____
What I learned: _____
Date completed: _____
Signature: _____

Students may choose their own projects to be completed on their own time. Or you may plan a group service project to be done together. For example, you may want to arrange for a pastor or other clergy to attend one of your sessions for your students to interview. Be sure to allow time for students to report on their projects. The follow-up and review are just as important as the actual service hours.

Closing

- Review the schedule and have students write in any assignments or things that they need to bring to the next meeting.
- Remind students to continue their plan for daily Bible reading.
- Remind students to work on Project 1.
- Close with prayer.

SECTION 2

God Doesn't Expect Us to Do It on Our Own

Objectives

- Learn how Paul received help from others
- Learn how Paul nurtured and served as mentor to others
- Understand that God wants us to work in fellowship and relationship with one another
- Be challenged to find ways to help others

What You Will Need

Blindfolds, objects for a simple obstacle course

Look Back

- Name some Bible characters who were reluctant to heed God's call. What were their excuses?
- Why was Paul an unlikely choice? Why was Paul a perfect choice?
- Check your students' progress on their daily Bible reading plans.
- Have students report on their projects.

Opening Activity

Two options are presented here (in case you have scheduled two separate sessions for this lesson).

Option 1:

Turn your classroom into a simple obstacle course. Pair up your students and hand out blindfolds. One person puts on the blindfold, and the other person must guide him or her through the obstacle course, giving only verbal instructions while standing off to the side. For added challenge, you may have more than one pair try at the same time. The people with the blindfolds will have to concentrate on the correct partner's voice and not get distracted by the other players.

Option 2:

This works best outside on a grassy area (the more level the better). Ask your students to find a partner. Hand out one blindfold to each pair of students. One person puts on the blindfold and then holds hands with his or her partner. The partner who can see will then lead the blindfolded person on a slow walk. At your instruction, they will change to a fast walk, a jog, and then (if possible) a fast run. Then have partners swap blindfolds and repeat. Take extra precautions to keep your students safe.

INTRODUCTION

(STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 9)

One's faith is considered a very personal matter, and yet it is all but impossible to live the life of a faithful Christian without the help and fellowship of Christian believers. As you study Paul in this lesson, reinforce this important truth to your students. Pray that these teenagers and young adults find strong fellowship within the church body.

Paul was an "enemy" to all Christians. He persecuted them, and he had them imprisoned. All that changed after Jesus appeared to Paul on the Damascus road. But who would have believed it? The early Christians feared Paul too much to risk including him in the community of believers.

But when God calls people into service, they aren't expected to be able to do it alone. God first sent Ananias and then Barnabas to Paul. Both were believers who reached out in Christian fellowship and welcomed Paul into the community of believers.

Acts 9:10–19 tells how Ananias was sent by God to visit Paul while Paul was still blind from his encounter on the Damascus road. It took courage for Ananias to approach Paul, but Ananias obeyed God. He went to Paul, placed his hands on him, and restored his sight. Paul was baptized and then filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of Ananias' visit.

Paul immediately started preaching that Jesus was the Son of God. He was bold and very convincing. But when Paul went to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, they wouldn't have anything to do with him. The disciples were afraid of Paul. But Barnabas was sent by God to intervene on Paul's behalf (Acts 9:26–28). It was because of his example that the disciples welcomed Paul into their midst.

We are all like Paul, needing and receiving help from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

More About Paul

1. Paul was destined to be a great apostle, but he started in a lowly state, received by an obscure disciple named Ananias. Nothing is really known about Ananias except what is stated in Acts. Why do you think God chose Ananias to minister to Paul? If Paul was supposed to be such a great apostle, why didn't God send somebody else, like Peter or Philip?

(Acts 22:12 has the other reference to Ananias.)

Allow students to offer their answers. Here are some possible responses: Ananias was already there in Damascus; perhaps an obscure person would be less threatening; Ananias needed to be stretched and challenged in his own spiritual journey; God's using Ananias emphasized that ministry is the responsibility of all of us and not reserved for the more prominent people.

DISCUSS: What might have happened if Ananias had not done his job? Is it possible for Christians to refuse to answer God's call? How does this make you feel?

God's plan cannot be thwarted by the failings of one individual. But without Ananias, Paul would have been denied such quick

welcome into Christian fellowship and comfort from his afflicted state. It is possible for Christians to turn their back and refuse God's call. Students may react in different ways. The fact that God can use ordinary people for such important jobs may make them feel important, scared, uncomfortable, etc.

2. The Bible tells us more about Barnabas than it does about Ananias. You have read how Barnabas was instrumental in introducing Paul to the disciples. But Barnabas did more. Read Acts 11:19–30. What circumstances prompt Barnabas to go fetch Paul? Why did he choose Paul?

There were so many new believers in Antioch that Barnabas needed help. Barnabas probably chose Paul for his gift in teaching. Paul had the training that would make him an effective teacher to the new converts.

DISCUSS: Describe a time when you were “pushed” or encouraged by a teacher, parent, or friend to get involved. Maybe they “volunteered” you. Perhaps you didn’t feel ready, but because of their encouragement, you discovered what they knew all along: that you were perfect for the job and able to help. How do we “push” each other in ministry? Who can you encourage?

Perhaps your students were “pushed” into taking this God and Life class.

3. After being helped by Ananias and Barnabas, Paul seems to have returned the favor by helping other people in the Christian walk. Paul was never a “solo” act. He surrounded himself with people who partnered with him in ministry. Name some of the companions who helped Paul on his second missionary journey. How did they help him?

Acts 15:36–40 – Silas became Paul’s partner when Paul and Barnabas each took separate journeys.

16:1 – Timothy was Paul’s “disciple” and had special gifts as missionary evangelist.

16:14–15 – Lydia was connected with the trade of dyed goods; she was probably of considerable wealth; she opened up her home to Paul.

18:1–3 – Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, shared the same trade as tentmakers with Paul and opened up their home to him.

18:7 – Titius Justus gave lodging to Paul.

4. In addition to the many people who are named in the Bible, there are many unnamed believers. The account in Acts refers to the “brethren” and the “disciples” and does not list specific names. How was Paul helped by these unnamed believers (Acts 9:25, 30)?

The unnamed believers helped Paul escape by hiding him in a basket and letting him down over the wall. Later some more unnamed brethren in Jerusalem heard of another plot against Paul’s life and got him out of the city and sent him off to Tarsus. They probably helped Paul at great risk to themselves.

DISCUSS: What does this say about being faithful in service regardless of personal gain? What kind of priorities are we to have? Who are the “unnamed” people who help you?

We are to be faithful in our Christian service without worrying about getting “credit” for it. Our priorities are to do God’s work, not promote our own gain.

Encourage your students to think about the “unnamed” people in their lives. For example, can they name the cafeteria workers at their school, the custodians at church, the people who helped start their youth group or Scouting group?

5. You have studied how Paul was helped by many faithful believers, and have learned how God doesn’t expect us to do it on our own. Read 2 Timothy 4:16–18 to discover a time when Paul found himself completely deserted. What was Paul’s strength?

This passage reminds us that our greatest strength is God’s constant presence in our lives. Yes, God will send Christian believers into our lives, but it is the Lord at our side who is our sure defense. Read also Philippians 4:13. Paul is reminding his young disciple Timothy that God doesn’t expect us to do it on our own, but through our strength in Christ.

Other Men And Women In The Bible

1. Acts 8:26–40 tells the story of how Philip was able to help the Ethiopian by interpreting the scriptures for him. Read this story in Acts, and take the time to visualize it in your mind. What social status did the Ethiopian hold? How do you think Philip would have initiated conversation with him? How long do you think they journeyed together? What impact might Philip’s conversation have had after the Ethiopian returned home?

The Ethiopian was in charge of the treasury of the queen and so held a position of high honor and trust. He was a person of authority. Ask students to describe their mental pictures of this setting. (How ornate was the chariot? Did he have many servants? How could you tell the Ethiopian apart from the others he was traveling with?) Apparently the Ethiopian was reading aloud from the Bible, so Philip had to have come fairly close alongside the chariot. Perhaps Philip walked along and drew closer and closer. He was probably noticed by the Ethiopian and then took the opportunity to ask him if he understood what he was reading. Philip could have spent the greater part of the day with the Ethiopian. It appears that the Ethiopian was eager to learn and wanted someone who could teach him and answer his many questions. Philip obviously had an impact on the Ethiopian – he baptized him. Considering his high status, the Ethiopian, in turn, could have had a huge impact upon return to his home country. He was in a position of influence and was probably very vocal in sharing his faith.

DISCUSS: Is it possible to sense when someone is seeking for the truth in his or her spiritual journey? How would you

initiate conversation with such a person? What help would you be able to offer this person? Read 1 Peter 3:15. How does this verse speak to you?

Talk about how we can tell when other people are worried, scared, or preoccupied with something. Sometimes people aren't ready to talk right away, but other times their biggest need may just be to have someone listen. A simple question or statement of observation can open up the door to conversation (e.g., "You seem worried about something. Do you want to talk?" "You seem interested in what the speaker was saying. What was it that you really liked?"). We should always be prepared to give an answer for the hope within us, 1 Peter 3:15 says. This verse could be encouraging to some. Some might be encouraged to continue going to church and Sunday school and to keep reading the Bible. To others it might be a little daunting that they're not at the point yet to be able to teach someone as Philip did. Emphasize that we are to have a willingness to share our faith and that we are to learn and grow in order to strengthen our witness to others. Perhaps it would be beneficial to take the time to role-play some simple situations and help your students think through their responses. Here are some sample situations: a friend tells you he quit going to church after junior high school and asks you why you keep going; a friend is having a hard time after her grandma died and asks you about death and dying; someone comes to youth group for the first time and says he won't come back because he knows some of the kids and they're hypocrites and he thought Christians were supposed to be better than that. Talk about how the focus is not on "preaching" or correcting other people; it is on sharing your own personal experiences to explain your convictions.

2. Read the story of Deborah and Barak in Judges 4:4–10. Why do you think Barak demanded that Deborah go with him? Was this a difficult request to make of Deborah? Explain.

Some might say that Barak's faith was weak and so he needed Deborah to go with him. Others might say that Barak knew his strength depended on God and that God's instructions would come through Deborah. Barak cared more for this than for getting the credit for the victory.

This was probably a difficult request to ask of Deborah or of any woman at that time. Travel was not easy, nor would it have been easy for a woman to be in battle situations.

DISCUSS: Tell of times when you needed the physical presence of friends or family to comfort or reassure you. When has your presence been a source of strength to other people?

Reinforce the principle that the need for human companionship is not a weakness.

3. Moses was the leader of the Israelites when he received some advice from his father-in-law, Jethro. Read Exodus 18:13–27. What was Jethro's advice to Moses? Do you think it was hard for Moses to accept his advice?

Jethro told Moses to stop shouldering all the responsibilities by himself and to share the work with trusted and trained representatives. Some might think that Moses would find this advice easy to accept because he was burning out from all the work. Others might think it would be difficult advice for Moses to accept because it would be hard for him to give up his responsibility and share it with others. It might also be difficult for him to accept advice from his father-in-law.

DISCUSS: Can you benefit from Jethro's advice? How well do you manage your time? How well do you accept help from other people?

Allow your students to share all the different things that place demands on their time and how they handle these demands. Then talk about accepting advice or help from others. What kind of advice do they tend to accept? From whom do they accept advice?

4. Read about Apollos in Acts 18:24–28. What were his strengths? Who were Priscilla and Aquila? How did they add to Apollos' strength?

Apollos was learned, eloquent, well trained in scripture, and spoke with fervor. Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers and friends of Paul who heard Apollos speak. They helped Apollos by sharing with him what they knew about Jesus. They added to his knowledge.

DISCUSS: Sometimes it is hard for less experienced people to make suggestions to more experienced people. This was not the case with Priscilla and Aquila. They recognized the special gifts within Apollos (gifts that they themselves did not have), and helped take his ministry to another level. Do you know anybody like Priscilla and Aquila?

Also point out that Apollos had to be willing to listen to Priscilla and Aquila, two tentmakers who lacked his education and training.

5. Mark 2:1–5 tells the familiar story of the paralytic who was lowered down through the roof by four friends. These friends obviously carried the paralytic to Jesus, but in the end they gave him a much greater gift. Read Mark 2:1–5. Why did Jesus heal the paralyzed man?

Jesus healed the paralytic because of the faith of his four friends.

DISCUSS: Is your faith apparent to others in the ways you interact with your friends? Is your faith a gift that you share with your friends? Explain.

Do we try to "hide" our faith from our friends or give it as a "gift"?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

1. From the very beginning, humankind was not created to be alone. Read Genesis 2:18–24. Give examples from your own experiences of how people crave human companionship. Then read Acts 17:27, which states that people seek relationship with God. How do you find this to be true in your own life?

Perhaps participating in this God and Life program is an example of seeking relationship with God.

DISCUSS: In our society we value strength and independence. We do not want to be dependent on anybody. How is this self-reliance unhealthy? When have you tended to isolate yourself from others? from God?

Talk about how when we encounter problems, we want to hide them and keep them to ourselves, and yet this is the time we need others the most.

2. God often prefers to mold God's chosen servants through the hands of ordinary men and women. Have you ever been in a position to reach out and befriend someone? That person may have been someone as detestable as Paul was to Ananias. How did you respond? How will you respond in the future? You may not be called to be an apostle like Paul, but you may be called to reach out and encourage someone in the same way Ananias encouraged Paul.

Usually there is a window of opportunity when somebody needs help. Encourage your students not to let those opportunities pass them by.

DISCUSS: Can you think of some people whom you have been reluctant to befriend? If God has deliberately placed them within your field of influence, how does that make you feel? What attitudes stand in the way of God's using you more effectively?

Students might feel more inclined to help others, be more responsible for them, if they consider that God has deliberately placed them in that situation. Others may be intimidated by such an obligation or scared that they might not be able to fulfill their responsibilities. Different attitudes may be involved: pride, insecurity, fear, feelings of inadequacy, etc.

3. Think about Ananias and his part in the conversion of Paul. His role seems small compared to what others have been called to do, but he was vital to God's ministry. Consider your own congregation or community of believers. How do people help one another? Consider the "small" roles that are vital to fellowship and ministry. How is every person needed?

Challenge your students to define their roles in the church and to embrace and expand upon them.

DISCUSS: It is easy to want to help someone who you know is going to become as influential as Paul became. How can you foster a willing spirit to help others, regardless of their future status or accomplishments?

Use Christ's teaching in Matthew 25:34–40.

4. Notice the long list of names in Romans 16:1–16. Paul did not take people for granted. He valued them and cultivated and appreciated their gifts. Name some of your own "partners" in ministry.

Partners can be parents, aunts, uncles, teachers, coaches, friends, etc. If you haven't already assigned prayer partners, this would be a good time to do so.

5. Paul served as a mentor to many young Christians, such as Timothy and Titus. Paul wrote letters of encouragement and strengthened them in their devotion to God. Identify your own mentors. What impact or influence have they had on your life?

Be prepared to share your own story on how you have been affected by a mentor.

DISCUSS: Name some ways in which you can serve as a mentor to your peers, younger children, family, etc. Discuss how your everyday actions and words influence other people.

Reflect

Look back over Section Two and review what you have learned. What stands out for you? What was God saying to you through this lesson? Write a few sentences in the space below.

This is an opportunity for students to look back over the lesson and to reflect on what was most meaningful to them. It may be a passage of scripture, a life lesson learned from a Bible character, or maybe new insight into their own lives. The response does not need to be lengthy – two or three sentences should be sufficient.

Service Project

(STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 13)

Choose one or more of the following service projects. Record the results in the space provided.

- Write down the names of all the people who have helped you in a special way. Write letters to at least two of them to thank them for what they have taught you and how much they mean to you. Give specific instances and examples of how that person has had an impact on your life.
- Learn about a mentoring program such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. Find out its mission, its history, how it affects lives, and who can volunteer. Share this information with a Sunday school class, youth group, or Scouting group.

SECTION 3

Each of Us Must Make a Personal Response to the Call of God

Objectives

- Learn about baptism
- Learn about the Holy Spirit
- Become more aware of the working of the Holy Spirit in your life
- Make personal application of the Bible lessons and consider how you can respond to God's calling

What You Will Need

Opening Activity Option 1: Small jar with lid filled with beans or rice and small ball. Opening Activity Option 2: a simple prize (candy or dollar), 3 boxes wrapped with "junk" inside (empty candy wrapper, Band-Aid, one sock)

Look Back

- Who was Apollos?
- Who was Barak?
- What was the name of Moses' father-in-law?
- Check your students' progress on their daily Bible reading plans.
- Have students report on their projects.

Opening Activity

Two options are presented here (in case you have scheduled two separate sessions for this lesson).

Option 1:

Find a jar with a lid and a ball that will fit in the jar and almost fill it (depending on the size of your jar you may need to use a golf ball, tennis ball, or baseball). Then use something such as beans, rice, macaroni noodles, or gravel to fill the jar as full as you can and still get the lid on. Then empty the jar. Try filling it again but reverse the order. This time put the filler (beans, rice, macaroni noodles, or gravel) in first. Then add the small ball at the end. Can you fit everything back in it? Are you able to put the lid on? Think about what happened. If the jar represents your life and the ball represents God, what does the "filler" represent (give specific examples from your personal life)? What does this say about responding to God and putting God first in our lives?

Option 2:

Put on a game show with your class. Select a contestant by picking a name out of a hat. Give the lucky winner a prize (such as a lollipop, one-dollar bill, or pack of gum). Then offer to make a deal. Show the contestant three boxes and offer to swap the prize for any one of the boxes. The boxes should be attractive with fancy wrapping but not contain anything of value (such as an empty candy wrapper, Band-Aid, or one sock). Talk about the thrill of making a deal and wanting to strike it rich versus the guaranteed prize already in hand. How do we respond to God's offer of salvation? Do we hold tight to it or trade it away?

Introduction

(STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 14)

Paul had a personal encounter with God on the Damascus road. As a result, he was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 9 records this event in Paul's life in very simple terms. It is very matter-of-fact and does not go into great detail. But the importance of this event in Paul's life must not be overlooked. Paul answered God's call and was baptized. God appears to all of us, but how we respond is up to us. Led by the Holy Spirit, each person needs to decide whether to accept and follow God. The response is ours to make.

More About Paul

1. Acts 26:12–14 records that when Paul was blinded on the Damascus road, he heard a voice saying how hard it was to "kick against the goads." What is a goad? Use a Bible dictionary or commentary to find out what is meant by this phrase.

A goad is a sharp stick for driving cattle. The oxen would sometimes get headstrong and kick against the goad, sometimes injuring themselves. In this passage, Paul was accused of kicking against the goads or going against God's plan for his life.

DISCUSS: How do you think Paul was kicking against the goads? What stabs of conscience do you think he might have suffered?

Paul might have felt the Spirit stirring in his life. Paul could have been impacted by the testimony of Stephen and other Christians who were willing to die rather than denounce their faith. Paul probably heard a lot about Jesus and his teachings. Perhaps he was curious about Jesus.

2. When a person turns to God, it is never by an act of his or her own willpower or choosing. The Holy Spirit is always there prompting or "goad" us. On our own we can do nothing. Read Romans 8:26–27. How does this passage offer comfort to you?

Ask students to think of situations when "sighs were too deep for words," when they had been troubled but not able to put into words their concern. The Spirit helps us in our weakness, when we don't know how to pray, when we don't know how to put our feelings into words; it is comforting to know we have someone interceding on our behalf.

DISCUSS: Describe times when you have felt the gentle nudging of the Spirit in your life.

3. God reaches out to us, and we need to respond in faith. Paul describes his response in Acts 22:12–16 and tells how he was baptized by Ananias. Consider how baptism is a part of God's plan. Read each scripture passage below and identify what it says about baptism.

Mark 16:16 – *People who believe and are baptized are saved.*
Acts 2:38 – *When we repent and are baptized, we receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
Titus 3:5 – *We are washed and renewed by the Holy Spirit.*
Galatians 3:27 – *We “put on” Christ and are united with Christ.*
1 Corinthians 12:13 – *We become one body in Christ.*

DISCUSS: Discuss Holy Baptism and how your congregation practices it.

Be sensitive to your students who have not been baptized. Be prepared to answer all their questions. Is it possible to attend a service with a baptism?

4. Ananias was sent so that Paul might regain his sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Paul knew that the Holy Spirit was to saturate the Christian life. Read the following passages to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, and summarize the scriptures in the space provided.

Ephesians 4:4 – *There is only one Spirit. The Spirit gives unity to the body.*
John 14:26 – *The Holy Spirit or “Counselor” is sent by God and is sent in the name of Jesus. The Spirit is charged with teaching us and bringing to mind all that Jesus taught us.*
1 Corinthians 3:16 – *The Holy Spirit dwells in us; we are temples of the Holy Spirit.*
Galatians 5:22 – *The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives will evident by its fruit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control).*

Other Men And Women In The Bible

Study other examples of men and women in the Bible who responded in faith and followed God.

1. Read the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42. This is the story of two sisters who responded very differently when Jesus came to their home for a visit. What key words describe each sister? Do you associate yourself with Mary or Martha? Explain.

Mary: sat at the Lord's feet, listened, chose what was better
Martha: was distracted, worried, and upset

DISCUSS: This story challenges us to find time each day “to sit at the feet of Jesus” and listen to his teaching. Even though we are to “do” the work of the Lord, we also need quiet time with God. What makes this so difficult? How well have you done this in the past? How can you do better?

This would be a good time to talk about the daily Bible reading plan and how the students are doing. Use this opportunity to encourage your students. Help them see that they're not just reading to complete an assignment, but to spend quiet time with God. Share your own struggles to spend time with God as your schedule fills with activities and work.

2. Responding to God means giving total control of our lives to God. God demands that we walk by faith, not by sight. This is difficult for us. When Moses sent spies into the land of Canaan, God had already promised to give that land to the Israelites. But the spies returned with conflicting reports. Read Numbers 13:1–3, 17–20, 25–33. How did the majority of the spies allow outward circumstances to undermine their faith in God? What does it mean to walk by faith and not by sight? Why is it so difficult to put our total trust in God?

The majority of the spies saw only obstacles (the large stature of the inhabitants, the fortified cities). They did not take into consideration the fact that God was on their side and that God had already promised the land to them. Walking by faith means that you put your focus and trust in God, knowing that God will overcome all obstacles for you. This is difficult to do because we like to be in control, we like to take action, especially when we're facing very real obstacles. It's hard not to think only in realistic human terms.

DISCUSS: When have you allowed “the majority” to change your mind about what was right?

3. Sometimes pride gets in the way of faith. Naaman was a commander of the army of Syria when he got leprosy. Naaman appeared before the house of Elisha to ask Elisha to cure his leprosy. Elisha did not even greet his visitor. He only sent word through a servant telling Naaman to go and wash seven times in the River Jordan. Read 2 Kings 5:8–14. What was Naaman's response? What advice did Naaman receive from his servant? Why was it hard for Naaman to accept?

Naaman was enraged that he was received only by the prophet's servant (he thought Elisha should have greeted him). He thought it was beneath him to bathe in the Jordan. Naaman's servant pointed out that if Elisha had required a difficult task of bravery, Naaman would gladly have attempted it. The servant gently persuaded Naaman to do the simple task of bathing in the river. Naaman was a man of action and would much rather have attempted a heroic deed and have his fate resting in his own hands than to trust a message delivered by a servant.

DISCUSS: How has pride interfered with your personal faith journey?

4. Jesus was crucified, died, and was raised to life. This is the crux of our faith, but even the disciples had a hard time believing it. Read Mark 16:9–19. When the disciples were told about Jesus' resurrection, how did they respond? When Jesus finally appeared to the eleven, what did he say to them?

The disciples were told by Mary Magdalene, and then again by two others, that Jesus was alive. The disciples refused to believe it. When Jesus finally appeared to the eleven, he rebuked them for their lack of faith. He basically called them stubborn for their refusal to believe the other witnesses.

DISCUSS: The disciples believed after they saw Jesus. When have you “seen” Jesus? When have you known his very presence? How can you live your life so that others can see Jesus in you and so believe?

5. God calls us, and we are to respond in faith. Read the faith responses of Isaiah, Mary, and Peter. Copy their responses in the space provided:

Isaiah 6:8 – *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”*

Luke 1:38 – *“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “may it be to me as you have said.”*

Matthew 16:16 – *Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah [or Christ], the Son of the living God.”*

What does it mean to respond in faith? Read 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Romans 10:9–10, 13 and put them into your own words.

To respond in faith means that we will confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior and believe in our hearts that he rose from the dead to bring us back into relationship with God. When we respond in this manner, we are saved.

6. Jesus himself was baptized. Read the account of his baptism in Matthew 3:13–17. Why was Jesus baptized? What was its significance?

Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. Only sinners were baptized. But Jesus was sinless, and yet he submitted to the baptism of repentance to identify with us. Later on the cross, he who knew no sin would become sin for our sake (2 Corinthians 5:21).

DISCUSS: How is the Holy Trinity revealed in Jesus’ baptism?

The Trinity or “three-in-one” is present in this scene. The voice from heaven was from God announcing that Jesus was the Son of God. The Holy Spirit descended in the shape of the dove and came to rest on Jesus.

What About You?

1. Saying yes to God is as simple as accepting the invitation of Jesus to be Savior of our lives. There isn’t anything we can do to “earn” our salvation. For many people this sounds too easy. There are those who want to believe that there must be something that they can do to earn their salvation. But salvation is by faith alone. Summarize the following verses:

Ephesians 2:8–9 – *Salvation is through faith (not anything we do). We are saved through God’s grace.*

Titus 3:5 – *We are saved through God’s mercy, not through the righteous things that we do. The Holy Spirit is working in our lives to wash and renew us.*

Romans 5:1 – *We are justified through faith and are able to be at peace with God.*

DISCUSS: Why is it so hard to accept that we can do nothing to earn our salvation? What would you tell someone who sincerely wants to become a Christian?

There are many reasons that we try to “earn” salvation: we want to have everything under our own control and on our own terms; we want to be the ones taking action; we don’t want to be in debt to anybody; we think it has to be difficult or based on merit, etc.

2. You have read how Isaiah, Mary, and Peter made personal responses to follow God and do God’s will. Are you able to make a similar response? How have you felt the Holy Spirit working in your life?

For church youth, this is an opportunity for them to reconfirm their faith. For unchurched youth, this is an opportunity to talk about responding in faith.

3. Talk to a couple of people in your church. What doubts have they encountered in their spiritual development? How did they deal with their doubts? How can being honest about your doubts actually serve to strengthen your faith?

You may want to talk to some people ahead of time so that you can suggest some names to your students.

4. There are many examples of God being revealed to men and women in the Bible: God appeared in the burning bush to Moses; an angel was sent to Mary; and Jesus appeared as a bright light to Paul. Our personal encounters with God do not have to be so spectacular. Perhaps you have felt closest to God out in nature on a campout. Perhaps you have felt God’s presence in the singing of a favorite hymn at church. Describe a time(s) you have felt close to God.

These times are personal times. Ask for volunteers to share their experiences, but only if they are comfortable doing so. Make sure you maintain a caring and respectful atmosphere in your class.

5. Think of how your faith has developed. Make a graph or time line showing the highs and lows of your faith. Include important events such as your baptism or confirmation. Identify periods of doubt and despair as well as periods of joy. Think of how you want your faith to grow in the future. Discuss with your counselor how you have served God in the past and how you can serve God in the future.

SECTION 4

God Gives Strength to Face Adversities

Objectives

- Learn that all Christians will face adversity
- Know that God gives strength to face adversity
- Know that God can make good come from bad situations
- Understand that God can use bad situations to prepare us for greater service

What You Will Need

First aid kit (Opening Activity Option 1), shoes with laces (Opening Activity Option 2)

Look Back

- What does it mean to “kick against the goads?”
- Who was Naaman?
- Describe the baptism of Jesus and tell its significance.
- Tell what you learned about the Holy Spirit.
- Check your students’ progress on their daily Bible reading plans.
- Have students report on their projects.

Opening Activity

Two options are presented here (in case you have scheduled two separate sessions for this lesson).

Option 1:

Find a first aid kit with at least as many items in the kit as the number of students in your group. Ask each student to identify one item and tell when and how it is used. Use this exercise to make the following points: we always try to avoid accidents, but we need to be prepared in case of emergencies; we Christians likewise need to be prepared to face adversity and understand how God can use adversity for good and to prepare us for greater service.

Option 2:

Ask your students to tie a shoe using just one hand. It is possible, but it is frustrating. It takes longer, and the knot might not be as tight. This exercise should force your students to rethink something that is probably very automatic for them. Use this exercise to explain that adversity does the same thing: it usually prompts us to examine ourselves and to rethink our priorities.

Introduction

(STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 19)

Paul was a “chosen instrument” of God (Acts 9:15). As such, one might think that Paul would enjoy a long life of comfort and of ease. Not true. It was declared that Paul would preach God’s name before kings; in the same breath it was also declared how much Paul was to suffer for the sake of God. It would seem that the greater the calling, the greater the trials and tribulations.

After his conversion, Paul preached that Jesus was the Son of God. This was a complete reversal for Paul, who once persecuted Christians. Because of his preaching, Paul made many enemies who wanted him dead. Paul’s life was never the same; he lived in constant danger and suffered greatly. Despite his suffering, Paul grew in service and in devotion to God. This illustrates an important concept for us as Christians today: Living a Christian life does not mean living a life free from difficulty and suffering. On the contrary, the times of difficulty and suffering may strengthen our dependence on God and prepare us for greater service. God does not guarantee an easy life, but God does promise to be with us. God will give us the strength to face our adversities and not be overcome by them.

More About Paul

1. Paul was baptized and immediately started preaching in Damascus. And so it was in Damascus that his difficulties began. Read Acts 9:23–25. Paul was a new convert. How do you think he felt as he was being lowered in the basket?

Paul might have felt relieved at getting out of Damascus, afraid that the Jews would find him or try to follow him, doubtful about the ministry he found himself in, indebted to the unnamed disciples who helped him escape, scared about this new lifestyle for him, humbled that he had to resort to sneaking out of town in a basket, thankful to God.

DISCUSS: Paul was on his way to Damascus because he intended to storm the city and strike fear in all the Christians. In actuality, how did Paul enter the city? How did he leave it?

Paul entered the city “blinded” and at the mercy of his fellow travelers, who had to lead him. He left the city in a basket (lowered over the city wall). It was anything but what Paul would have anticipated. Paul had planned to apprehend the Christians and drag them back to Jerusalem. When Paul left Damascus, his life was in the hands of the very Christians he had intended to apprehend.

2. Before Jesus started his public ministry, he was baptized and led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. The wilderness represents time away from the crowds and an opportunity to immerse oneself in God and to grow in faith. Paul appears to have had his “wilderness” experience, too. Read Galatians 1:15–18. Where did Paul go after his baptism in Damascus? What purpose did this serve?

Paul went to Arabia. It is not known what he did there, but Paul is very explicit in his explanation that his understanding of the gospel did not come from the apostles or any person. Paul’s years in Arabia were time spent with God.

DISCUSS: How is time alone with God an important part in preparing for public ministry?

The challenges of public ministry cannot be met without a deep, personal relationship with Christ.

3. When Paul was imprisoned in Rome, he was literally chained to a guard. Read Philippians 1:12–14. How did these circumstances have a positive impact on the spread of the gospel?

Paul shared his faith with every guard he was chained to. The whole palace guard (the elite of the soldiers) heard his testimony. Paul's example served to encourage other believers and make them more bold in sharing the gospel.

4. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23–27 to discover all that Paul suffered over his lifetime. Why does Paul list all his sufferings? What is he trying to prove?

Paul wanted to show how sincere a follower of Christ he was. In 2 Corinthians 1:8–10 Paul writes that his many hardships helped make him rely on God, not on himself. Paul does not mention these things out of personal pride, but out of his humility that he could suffer for the glory of God. In this particular letter, Paul has had to defend himself to the Corinthians. In order to prove his ministry, he mentions his sufferings.

DISCUSS: Of all the things that Paul endured, which ones frighten you the most?

5. Besides enduring many hardships, Paul also suffered from a “thorn in the flesh.” Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10. Why was this thorn given to Paul? When Paul prayed to have it removed, what was God’s response? Explain the paradox, “when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Although the thorn in the flesh is never revealed, Paul does explain the reason for this thorn: to keep him from becoming conceited. There is nothing like physical pain to bring you down to earth and keep you humble. Paul asked three times to have the “thorn” removed, but God’s response was, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” A paradox is a seemingly contradictory statement. In this case, Paul is saying that when he is weak and admits that he cannot do something on his own, then he is strong because he is relying fully on God and depending solely on God’s strength.

DISCUSS: Does God cause bad things? Who caused Paul’s thorn in the flesh? God can use bad things to bring about good results. Tell of a time when a painful experience produced an unexpected blessing.

God’s sovereign power is beyond our understanding. He is all powerful, and yet has given us free will. These are often hard to reconcile. The Bible says that the thorn in the flesh was a “messenger of Satan,” therefore with intent to do evil. But God overruled it for good, and allowed Paul to suffer from it so that Paul might not succumb to pride.

Other Men And Women In The Bible

Study the lives of other men and women of the Bible who have suffered for their beliefs and discover how good can come from suffering and how suffering can serve as preparation for service.

1. The Bible records that after the stoning of Stephen a “great persecution” arose against the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Read Acts 8:4 and describe the good that came of this.

When persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, all the believers were scattered – they were forced to flee Jerusalem. This resulted in the spread of the gospel because the believers preached Jesus Christ wherever they went.

2. Hannah suffered from infertility and was tormented by Pininnah, the second wife of Hannah’s husband. Read the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:1–20, 24–28. How did Hannah respond in the midst of her agony? How were her prayers answered? How did Hannah give thanks to God?

In the midst of her greatest agony, Hannah “wept much and prayed to the Lord,” She turned to God and was no longer downcast. Hannah’s prayers were answered when she became pregnant. Hannah acknowledged God’s goodness to her in the naming of her son and in keeping her promise to dedicate her firstborn to God (she brought Samuel to the temple and left him with Eli the priest).

DISCUSS: What can you learn from Hannah? How do you respond to antagonism?

Hannah teaches us that when things are at their worst, we need to turn to God in prayer. People respond to antagonism in different ways with anger, retaliation, defensive mechanisms, quiet hurt, etc. The most difficult is responding to antagonism with loving kindness and compassion.

3. Read the story of Lazarus in John 11:1–45. Why did Jesus purposely delay going to Bethany? What did he hope to accomplish through this miracle?

After Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, Jesus waited two more days before going to Bethany. He knew that God’s glory would be revealed in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It would show God’s power over death.

DISCUSS: If Jesus knew that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, why did Jesus weep?

Jesus wept, not that Lazarus had died, but because of his great compassion toward Lazarus’ family – he felt their grief.

4. Jesus himself endured great suffering. Read about his physical suffering in Mark 14:65, Matthew 26:67–68; 27:27–31, and John 19:1. What pain did he submit to? More importantly, why did he submit to it (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:6)? Then read about the suffering of Christ beyond human suffering in Isaiah 53:4–5 and Matthew 27:46. In addition to physical torment, what did Jesus suffer?

Jesus was spit upon, beaten while blindfolded, slapped, taunted, repeatedly struck on the head with a staff, forced to wear a crown of thorns, flogged, crucified. Jesus became sin and gave himself up as a ransom for us. Jesus did this because of his great love for us. Besides the physical torment, Jesus was "smitten by God" and felt separated from God. This was greater agony.

What About You?

1. What are some of the challenges that you face? Share them with your counselor. Ask God to use these difficult situations to draw you closer to God.

2. Read the Bible verses below. Choose one that is meaningful to you and write it down.

You may want to ask your students to memorize one of these verses.

Romans 8:38-39, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 or Matthew 11:28-30

3. Name some adults in whom you feel comfortable confiding. Why is it important to have older adults to talk to? Why is it important to have Christian mentors?

Christian mentors are one of the greatest assets that young people can have. Encourage these relationships. Let these adults know how important they are to these students.

4. Sometimes we think that our prayers have gone unanswered by God. When Paul prayed for his "thorn in the flesh" to be removed, God answered his prayer, but not in the way Paul wanted. God never removed the thorn, but instead gave Paul the strength to deal with it. When have you prayed and not gotten what you asked for? Was God's answer as you expected? How was God's way better?

If your students are keeping prayer journals, use this time to encourage them in their efforts. Perhaps some of them would be willing to share things that they have learned from keeping a journal.

5. What plans do you have for after high school? No matter how much preparation and thought you have put into your plans, you will undoubtedly encounter some difficult experiences. Are difficult times a form of punishment? What purpose do difficult times serve? Write a note to remind yourself that when you encounter unexpected difficulties, that they are opportunities to grow strong in the Lord.

Refer to James 1:2-5.

Reflect

Look back over Section Four and review what you have learned. What stands out for you? What was God saying to you through this lesson? Write a few sentences in the space below.

This is an opportunity for students to look back over the lesson and to reflect on what was most meaningful to them. It may be a passage of scripture, a life lesson learned from a Bible character, or maybe new insight into their own lives. The responses do not need to be lengthy – two or three sentences should be sufficient.

Service Project

(STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 23)

Choose one or more of the following service projects. Record the results in the space provided.

- Do an act of kindness for somebody going through a tough time. Can you visit somebody in the hospital? plan an outing with a younger sibling? spend time with a parent? help a neighbor? Describe what you did. How did it make you feel?
- Learn about a crisis agency, support group, or peer group in your community. Visit the agency and gather as much information as you can. Make plans to share this information with a Sunday school class, youth group, or Scouting group.
- Call on a member of your church who is unable to attend worship services. Bring a copy of the worship bulletin and perhaps a videotape or audiocassette of the service. Talk about what is happening in the life of your church, and enjoy some moments of fellowship together.
- Design your own project that will reinforce the theme, "God Gives Strength to Face Adversities." Your service project must be approved by your counselor.

What I did: _____

What I found difficult: _____

What I enjoyed: _____

What I learned: _____

Date completed: _____

Signature: _____

Students may choose their own projects to be completed on their own time. Or you may plan a group service project to be done together. For example, you may want to plan a field trip to one or more crisis agencies and develop a service project from there. Be sure to allow time for students to report on their projects. The follow-up and review is just as important as the actual service hours.

Closing

- Review the schedule. Have students write in any assignments or things that they need to bring to the next meeting.
- Remind students to continue their plan for daily Bible reading.
- Remind students to work on Project 4.
- Make appropriate announcements about the final review with the pastor and the award ceremony.
- Remind students to finish any make-up work.
- Close with prayer.

SECTION 5

God Can Accomplish Great Things through Those Who Are Willing to Do God's Will

Objectives

- Learn that God uses ordinary people to accomplish mighty deeds
- Understand that what God requires is a willing heart and complete trust in God
- Be aware that God has chosen you for a very special purpose

What You Will Need

Pipe cleaners (Opening Activity Option 1), cards with names of the Bible characters studied in the *God and Life* program (Opening Activity Option 2), envelopes

Look Back

- What was Paul's thorn in the flesh?
- Who was Hannah?
- Who was Stephen?
- What purpose do difficult times serve?
- Check your students' progress on their daily Bible reading plans.
- Have students report on their projects.

Opening Activity

Two options are presented here (in case you have scheduled two separate sessions for this lesson).

Option 1:

Give everyone a pipe cleaner. Tell your students to make something out of the pipe cleaner that represents a personal accomplishment or special achievement they are proud of. Have your students show what they made and explain what it represents. (You may want to make it a guessing game and try to identify what students made with their pipe cleaners. You can have fun with the pipe cleaners, but treat seriously the accomplishments that they represent.)

Option 2:

Make signs with the names of the different Bible characters from this *God and Life* study (signs are available at www.pray-pub.org). Post these signs on the walls around the room. Ask students to stand under the name of a Bible character who they consider accomplished something great in his or her life. Take turns explaining why they chose that Bible character.

Introduction

(STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 24)

Paul was chosen by God for a very special purpose. The early church faced a crisis. Many of the early followers of Christ believed that Jesus had come to be the Messiah of Israelites only. They believed that they were God's chosen people and that the Gentiles were not included. Paul had a unique ministry. Paul preached the gospel to Israelites and to Gentiles.

Unlike many followers of Christ, Paul was very well educated. He was trained in the intricacies of religious law and he was able to argue that Christianity was for all people.

Acts 9:31 tells us that the church grew in strength and in numbers. It is amazing that someone such as Paul, who had once persecuted Christians, was instrumental in this growth. God worked through Paul and used Paul to help the church grow. God can accomplish great things through those who are open to God's will.

More About Paul

1. Paul was a learned man. He was a great teacher and preacher. His writings help provide the foundation for many of the tenets of Christianity. How many books of the New Testament did Paul write?

Thirteen. (Some scholars say that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews, and then it would be fourteen. Other scholars believe that some of the letters attributed to Paul were actually written by followers of Paul.)

2. Paul's public ministry was marked with power. Read about his work in Antioch with Barnabas in Acts 11:25–26. What happened in Antioch?

There were so many believers in Antioch that they were called "Christians" for the first time.

3. Read about the crisis that the early church faced in Acts 15:1–21. What was the issue with which the early church struggled? What was Paul's role in this struggle? What was the final resolution?

The church recognized that Christ came to save not only the Jews but also the Gentiles. But some people in the church wanted to require the Gentiles to adhere to Old Testament laws that required circumcision and certain dietary restrictions. This ran counter to what Paul was teaching. The issue was one of salvation: was salvation through the law of Moses or by faith through grace? Was Jesus' ministry a supplement to the law or a fulfillment of the law? Paul played a significant role at the Jerusalem council. Even before the council Paul and Barnabas took issue in Antioch with the circumcision requirement. They were then sent as representatives to the church council in Jerusalem, where they witnessed to the faith of the Gentiles and told of the many signs and wonders God did through them. Paul was effective in championing his cause. The final decision was to uphold that salvation was indeed through grace alone, and that although Gentile believers did not need to be circumcised, they could help keep peace in the family by not eating food offered to idols, refraining from sexual immorality, and avoiding blood and the meat of strangled animals.

4. The young man Saul was full of ambition. The seasoned missionary Paul was full of contentment. Read Philippians 4:11–13. Do you consider this a great accomplishment? Explain the change that Paul underwent, which Philippians 3:4b–11 describes.

Learning to be content is a difficult life lesson to learn. Paul learned contentment in Christ Jesus. This was a great accomplishment, especially considering that Paul once boasted in his legalistic righteousness.

DISCUSS: In what areas of your life do you find the most contentment?

Other Men And Women In The Bible

Study the examples below of other men and women of the Bible who glorified God through their lives.

1. Moses was considered one of the greatest prophets in Israel. This doesn't mean that Moses lived the perfect life, for Moses committed many grave sins, but Moses was willing to do God's will. Read Deuteronomy 34:10–12. What was Moses remembered for?

Moses was remembered for his mighty deeds leading the Israelites out of Egypt, but most importantly, Moses was remembered because the Lord knew him "face to face."

DISCUSS: What do you hope to accomplish in your life? What do you hope people will be able to say about you?

2. Elijah was a great prophet who was honored by God. God honored him by taking him up in a "whirlwind" to heaven. Elijah is well known for his showdown with the priests of Baal in 1 Kings 18:17–40. Compare his courage and power in this scene with his fear and despondency in 1 Kings 19:1–4. Being honored by God and accomplishing great things in God's name does not remove a person from the realm of human experiences. Read how God ministered to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:11–13a. What caused Elijah to cover his face?

Not the wind, earthquake, or fire caused Elijah to cover his face, but the gentle whisper did. Elijah knew he was in the presence of God and so covered his face.

DISCUSS: Have you immersed yourself in God's Word in order to hear that still, small voice? When have you experienced a "high" followed by a "low?"

Adolescents often ride an emotional roller coaster, especially in regard to spiritual experiences. Assure them that this is normal and has been happening since the time of Elijah and before. Emphasize the importance of daily Bible reading. God is always talking to us, but often we don't slow down to listen to God.

3. Being open to God and doing God's will form a lifestyle we have to adopt for ourselves. Read Mark 12:41–44. How did the widow's actions reflect a lifestyle bent on doing God's will?

The widow's actions showed her complete trust in God. She basically gave all that she had into the offering. Even in her poverty, she wanted to show her gratitude and thanksgiving toward God.

DISCUSS: Think of your own lifestyle. Are your actions and words a witness to God?

Christian giving is an important way we show our gratitude to God and acknowledge that all that we have comes from God. Encourage your students to "give back" to God.

4. One of the books of the Bible is named after Queen Esther. She is honored because she risked her life to save her people. There was a plot to commit genocide against the Jewish people, and Queen Esther intervened at danger to her own life. Read Esther 4:13–16. What counsel or warning did Queen Esther receive? Before she took action, what did Esther request of the Jews?

[If your students aren't familiar with the story of Esther, you may want to tell the complete story or at least provide more background on Esther (how she was adopted by her uncle Mordecai, how she ended up in the palace) and tell who Haman was.]

Mordecai warned Esther that just because she was in the palace didn't mean that she was safe from the danger threatening the Jewish people – she and her whole family could perish. He then motivated her by saying perhaps she was in that exact place at that exact time expressly for this purpose of saving her people from genocide. Esther requested that all the Jews fast for three days. Although it doesn't say it in the Bible, it is understood that they were to be in prayer and petition to God during that time.

DISCUSS: God uses people who surrender their will to God. From Esther we learn that God puts people in a specific time and place for a specific purpose. Have you ever felt that way? Do you trust that God will place you right where you need to be? Are you willing to let God use you, even at risk to your personal gain, reputation, or ambition?

5. God uses ordinary people. Read Acts 4:13. What was the rationale given for the power displayed in the ordinary, unschooled men?

The only explanation given is that these men "had been with Jesus." What an awesome testimony!

DISCUSS: Is it possible for God to accomplish great things through you?

Emphasis should not be placed on knowing "what" great things God will accomplish through each young person, but on knowing that God "will" accomplish great things through them. We may not know what God has in plan for us; it is more important to be open and willing for God to use us.

What About You?

1. God accomplished great things through Paul. Paul turned over his entire life for God's purposes, and God used every

part: his training, education, citizenship, and zeal. Have you turned over every part of your life to God? Are there things that you are holding back? What are they? How can you give them up to God?

Your self-esteem depends on knowing your own strengths. Developing strengths is a good thing, but boasting in them and taking all the credit for them is not. Everything about us belongs to God. We have to be willing to turn over everything (our athletic, academic, and musical abilities, our relationships, our accomplishments, our fears) to God.

2. Young children will often say that when they grow up, they want to be an astronaut or a ballerina, or they may say that they want to be rich or famous. Everybody wants to be successful. Everybody wants to be happy. Think in terms of your faith. How do you picture yourself in the future? What kind of person do you hope to be? Will you seek to answer God's call? When it comes to your faith, how would you define "successful"?

Challenge your students to aim at becoming people of faith, people with a heart for God, people following the will of God.

3. You have studied many examples of men and women in the Bible who have accomplished great things. Now think of the ordinary people you see every day. In your opinion, who are some of the quiet "heroes" in your family or community? Describe the accomplishments of these people. What do you admire about them? How have they lived their lives for Christ?

4. Evaluate your daily Bible reading plan from page 3. Was it difficult to do? What did you enjoy? What did you learn? How will you continue it in the future?

Reflect

Look back over Section Five and review what you have learned. What stands out for you? What was God saying to you through this lesson? Write a few sentences in the space below.

This is an opportunity for students to look back over the lesson and to reflect on what was most meaningful to them. It may be a passage of scripture, a life lesson learned from a Bible character, or maybe new insight into their own lives. The responses do not need to be lengthy – two or three sentences should be sufficient.

My Statement Of Commitment (PAGE 28)

The students should approach this Statement of Commitment very seriously. Encourage your students to set challenging, yet realistic goals. In turn, you as the counselor should take very seriously your agreement to follow through with it in four months. To make it easier, you may want to ask each student to self-address an envelope and put the statement into it; then you commit to mailing it to the students in four months and calling or visiting them.

As a high school student, you are facing many choices regarding your future—college, career, family, etc. Although you are facing many unknowns, one thing you do know: God has a

plan for you and God's plan is good (Jeremiah 29:11). What will you do to keep growing in faith? Write a statement of commitment detailing a plan to keep God first in your life. Include two or three goals towards nurturing your personal relationship with Christ, and two or three goals to help you grow in service to others. Share your plan with your counselor.

Signature: _____
Date: _____

I have reviewed _____'s Statement of Commitment. I agree to mail a copy of this commitment statement to him/her in four months and to arrange a time to discuss his/her progress and Christian growth.

Counselor's Signature: _____
Date: _____

Service Project (STUDENT WORKBOOK, PAGE 29)

Choose one or more of the following service projects. Record the results in the space provided. Do not do a group service project in this final section. Require that your students choose at least one project to do on their own.

- Invite someone to church, Sunday school, or youth group, or ask someone to join you in volunteering at a church or community service project. In the space below describe your experience. Whom did you invite? What impressions did he or she have of your church? What opportunities did you have to share your faith with this person? Will you invite him or her again? Are there others you want to invite?
- Earning a *God and Life* award is a great accomplishment. Share what you have learned by making a PowerPoint presentation. Your presentation should encourage others in their own faith journeys and challenge younger children to participate in the P.R.A.Y. program.
- Design your own service project to reinforce the theme, "God Can Accomplish Great Things through Those Who Are Willing to Do God's Will." Your service project must be approved by your counselor.

What I did: _____
What I found difficult: _____
What I enjoyed: _____
What I learned: _____
Date completed: _____
Signature: _____

FINAL REVIEW

The final review must be done by the pastor. This is an opportunity to connect with the pastor. It is also a good time for students to look back over the entire program. Help your students to process what they have learned. Their responses in the "Reflect" sections will be especially helpful.

God and Life Schedule and Assignments

Schedule: _____

Student Name _____

Date	Section	What we will cover in class	Assignments	What to bring
	Introduction	Page 3 Make Bible reading plan	Start Daily Bible Reading Plan	
	1. God Calls All Kinds of People	Pages 4-5-6 More About Paul Other Men and Women in the Bible	Finish "Other Men and Women in the Bible" What About You?	
	Continue Section 1	Pages 6-7 What About You? Reflect [Interview with pastor]	Service Project One, page 8	
	2. God Doesn't Expect Us to Do It On Our Own	Pages 9-10-11 More About Paul Other Men and Women in the Bible	Finish "Other Men and Women in the Bible" What About You?	
	Continue Section 2	Pages 11-12 What About You? Reflect [Preparing a Children's Sermon]	Service Project Two, page 13	
	3. Each of Us Must Make a Personal Response to the Call of God	Pages 14-16 More About Paul Other Men and Women in the Bible	Finish "Other Men and Women in the Bible" What About You?	
	Continue Section 3	Pages 16-17 What About You? Reflect [Career Panel]	Service Project Three, page 18	
	4. God Gives Strength to Face Adversities	Pages 19-20-21 More About Paul Other Men and Women in the Bible	Finish "Other Men and Women in the Bible" What About You?	
	Continue Section 4	Pages 21-22 What About You? Reflect [Community agency presentation]	Service Project Four, page 23	
	5. God Can Accomplish Great Things Through Those Who Are Willing to Do God's Will	Pages 24-25 More About Paul Other Men and Women in the Bible	Finish "Other Men and Women in the Bible" What About You?	
	Continue Section 5	Pages 26-27 What About You? Reflect My Statement of Commitment	Service Project Five, page 28 My Statement of Commitment, page 27	
	Final Review / Party	All make up work is due. Final review with pastor		

Other Important Dates:

- Field Trip #1: Place _____; Date _____; Time _____
- Field Trip #2: Place _____; Date _____; Time _____
- Party! Place _____; Date _____; Time _____
- Final review by pastor - Students are required to meet with their pastors for a final review, which must be completed by _____.

• Award Ceremony - All students who participate in this program are welcome to attend an award ceremony planned by the counselor/pastor. However, students who are members of different churches are encouraged to work with their pastors to arrange an award ceremony in their own congregations.

Date of award ceremony: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____
 Please notify the counselor if you will be participating no later than _____ (date)
 Signed award application/order forms (found in the Student Workbook) are due no later than _____ (date)

Please call the counselor if you have any questions about the *God and Life* program:
 Counselor's name: _____ Phone: _____ Best time to call: _____

Sample Questions for Final Review by the Pastor

These are questions that can aid the pastor in conducting a final review of the *God and Life* curriculum. Please do not ask all the questions. The intent of the final review is not to quiz or “stump” the young person, but to dialogue with the youth and help him or her express what has been learned. The questions below are to be used to discover what the youth is eager to share with you. Find the questions that resonate with the youth. The final review may be done with one student or with a group of students.

God and Life is based on the life of the Apostle Paul as recorded in Acts 9:1-31. This is a brief account that describes how Paul encountered Christ and was changed forever. Five chronological “events” out of this story were highlighted and used as the focus for the five different sections in this program. Each section illustrated a key element in learning how to live one’s life for Christ:

Section 1: GOD CALLS ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

- Describe Paul before his conversion. Why would God call somebody like that?
- Tell me about somebody else in the Bible who seemed to be an unlikely choice for God to pick.
- What about you? How do you feel knowing that God can call a young person like yourself?
- What stood out for you in this lesson? Read what you wrote in the REFLECT section on page 7.
- Tell me about your service project on page 8.

Section 2: GOD DOESN'T EXPECT US TO DO IT ON OUR OWN

- God didn't expect Paul to do it on his own. Describe how Paul was helped in his Christian ministry.
- What other men and women in the Bible stand out for you and teach you the importance of the community of believers?
- How difficult is this lesson for you? Do you tend to accept help from other people or isolate yourself and be self-reliant?
- What stood out for you in this lesson? Read what you wrote in the REFLECT section on page 12.
- Tell me about your service project on page 13.

Section 3: EACH OF US MUST MAKE A PERSONAL RESPONSE TO THE CALL OF GOD.

- Paul was baptized by Ananias. How is baptism a part of God's plan?
- Describe the work of the Holy Spirit. How have you felt the nudging of the Holy Spirit in your own life?
- What are some of the things that prevent us from responding to the prompting of the Spirit? What are some of the stories that you remember about the responses of some of the men and women in the Bible?
- What is your response to God? Show me the timeline that you made of your faith development. Explain it to me.

- What stood out for you in this lesson? Read what you wrote in the REFLECT section on page 17.
- Tell me about your service project on page 18.

Section 4: GOD GIVES STRENGTH TO FACE ADVERSITIES

- Describe the suffering and persecution that Paul endured. What purpose did it serve?
- Describe the suffering that other men and women in the Bible endured.
- What challenges have you faced? What pain have you experienced? What Bible verse did you choose for question 2 on page 21? Why is that meaningful to you?
- What stood out for you in this lesson? Read what you wrote in the REFLECT section on page 22.
- Tell me about your service project on page 23.

Section 5: GOD CAN ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS THROUGH THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO DO GOD'S WILL.

- Describe Paul's many accomplishments.
- How can you live your life open to God's will? What kind of person do you hope to become?
- Who were the everyday "heroes" that you described in Question 3 on page 26?
- What stood out for you in this lesson? Read what you wrote in the REFLECT section on page 27.
- Please read your Statement of Commitment on page 28. What will it take to keep this commitment? How can I support you?
- Tell me about your service project on page 29.

Note: Please consider writing some comments to the youth on page 30 of the Student Workbook. Highlight something that impressed you about the youth from the interview. Find a way to encourage the youth in their Christian walk.

Online ordering available at www.praypub.org

God and Life Multiple Order Form – Part A

Incomplete forms will be returned. Use this Multiple Order Form or collect the individual award application forms included in each of the Student Workbooks.

Shipping Address: Allow two to three weeks for delivery. Overnight shipping requires a street address & correct zip code.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (day contact) _____ Email _____

Church Information: Provide the following information for the church that sponsored the program or whose pastor reviewed the candidate's work.

Name of congregation _____
 Denomination (Church Body) _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Pastor's name _____ Email _____
 Who was responsible for coordinating and/or teaching the class? Who served as counselor?
 Counselor's name _____ Email _____

Certificate Of Copyright Compliance

I certify that each candidate had an original workbook in accordance with the regulations set forth in the program. I understand that a \$2.00 duplication fee must be paid for each booklet that was photocopied.

Signature _____ Date _____

Certificate of Eligibility: The pastor's signature is preferred; however, other signatures will be accepted.

I certify that the candidates have successfully completed the requirements for the *God and Life* program and have presented their work to the pastor for final approval.

Signature _____ Date _____

QTY	STOCK#	ITEM	PRICE	TOTAL
___	002L3	God and Life Medallion	\$10.50	_____
___	001LN	God and Life Embroidered Patch	\$3.00	_____
___	002L6	God and Life 3/4" Lapel Pin	\$5.50	_____
___	001L9	God and Life Certificate	\$1.00	_____
___	FS2L6	Four Star Pin ¹	\$10.00	_____
___	002L8	Counselor Pin	\$5.50	_____
___	001LC	Counselor Patch	\$3.00	_____
___	CC1L9	Counselor Certificate	\$1.00	_____
___	MM2L3	Mentor Pin	\$5.50	_____
___	MM1L5	Mentor Patch	\$3.00	_____
___	MM1L9	Mentor Certificate	\$1.00	_____
___		Duplication Fee (\$2.00 per photocopied booklet)	\$2.00	_____
___		Required Registration Fee per student	\$.50	_____
___		Required Shipping/Handling Fee per order*	\$4.00	_____

PRICES
 TOTAL (Prices Subject to Change) _____

Upgraded Shipping Options: By selecting an option below, you agree to pay special shipping fees, which will be added to your Grand Total.

- USPS Priority Mail 2-3 days not guaranteed (additional fees apply)
- Ground 3-5 days – No PO Boxes (additional fees apply)
- Expedited 1-2 days – No PO Boxes (additional fees apply)

FAX SERVICE 314-845-0038 All fax orders are assessed \$6.00. \$6.00
 Faxes received by noon CST will be processed and shipped that same day.
 The fax fee is assessed per shipping address (orders shipped together are assessed one fee).

GRAND TOTAL (amount of order plus special fees) _____

Registration continued on next page

All orders must be sent with payment in full by check, money order, or credit card (if credit card, please provide the following information)

Check one: Mastercard Visa Discover

Cardholder's Name _____

Acct # _____

Expiration Date: _____ CV2 Code _____

The CV2 code is the last three digits on the backside of the credit card located in the signature box.

Cardholder's Address _____

Phone (Day contact) _____

Signature _____

*** SHIPPING** – All orders are assessed a standard Shipping/ Handling fee per shipping address (orders shipped together are assessed one fee) and are sent via First Class Mail. To upgrade shipping, visit www.praypub.org for explanation and fees.

For current prices and information visit www.praypub.org or call 800-933-7729.
 Send this form and payment to:
P.R.A.Y.
 11123 S Towne Square, Ste. B
 St. Louis, MO 63123
 2012 Printing

¹ Four Star Pins may only be purchased by candidates who have earned all four programs in the P.R.A.Y. Series (see description on page 35)

God and Life Multiple Order Form – Part B

Recipient Registration Form

The following information must be provided for each candidate to ensure proper registration at church and agency headquarters. Incomplete forms will be returned. List youth recipients only (do not include counselors and mentors).

You may make additional copies of this form if needed.

	NAME First Last	ADDRESS Street, City, State, Zip	DENOM ¹	AGENCY ²	FOUR STAR ³
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					

1 Please indicate the denomination of each candidate (regardless of where the God and Life class was taught). You may use the following abbreviations:

AOG = Assembly of God; AME = African Methodist Episcopal; AMZ = African Methodist Episcopal Zion; BAP = Baptist; BRE = Brethren; COG = Church of God; CMA = Christian Missionary Alliance; CME = Christian Missionary Episcopal; CUM = Cumberland Presbyterian; DOC = Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); ELCA = Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; EPS = Episcopal; IND = Independent; LCMS = Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; LUT = Lutheran; MEN = Mennonite; NAZ = Nazarene; PCA = Presbyterian Church in America; PEN = Pentecostal; PRE = Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); PRO = no church affiliation; REF = Reformed; SDA = Seventh Day Adventist; UCC = United Church of Christ; UMC = United Methodist Church; WES = Wesleyan.

2 Agency Information: B = Boy Scouts of America; G = Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.; C = Camp Fire U.S.A.; H = American Heritage Girls; O = Other (please indicate if Sunday School or other agency membership)

3 Check only if candidate has earned all four levels of the P.R.A.Y. series (i.e., *God and Me*, *God and Family*, *God and Church*, and *God and Life*). Four Star Recipients will receive a letter and certificate of recognition from P.R.A.Y. Please print name clearly as it should appear on certificate.

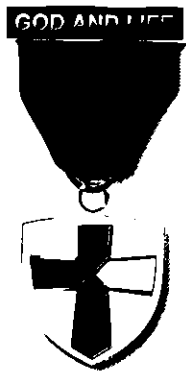
God and Life Awards

Use the application form on page 33 and 34 to order these awards.

The P.R.A.Y. awards feature a four-colored cross. The colors correspond to the four levels in the P.R.A.Y. series, i.e. *God and Me* (red), *God and Family* (yellow), *God and Church* (blue), and *God and Life* (green). The four colors converge into a point to create an “X” at the center of the cross. “X” is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ, and it is symbolic of how Christ should be at the center of our lives.

God and Life Medallion

- The official recognition for *God and Life* recipients!
- The shield with cross hangs from a green ribbon and bar. Green is the color for *God and Life*, but it also stands for new life and growth.
- For members of a scouting program, here is where you wear it on the uniform:
AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS – on the front of the vest or sash
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA – above the left shirt pocket
GIRL SCOUTS OF THE U.S.A. – below the membership stars
- Don't forget ... the award looks great in a frame!



Pin

- A popular item!
- Approximately 3/4 inch in size
- Worn on non-uniform clothing
- May be worn on the Girl Scout uniform
- Often presented to a parent
- May be used as a mother's pin



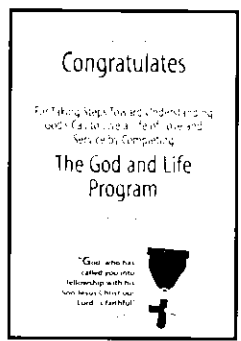
Embroidered Patch

- 3" embroidered emblem
- Sew it on a BSA brag vest or on the back of a Girl Scout vest
- Wear it as a temporary patch on the front of the BSA uniform
- Or simply add it to your patch collection!



Certificate

- 5x7" and printed in full color
- Certificates come “blank” – you add the recipient's name and secure appropriate signatures.
- Looks great in a frame, or add it to your scrapbook!



Say “Thank you” to Your Counselor!

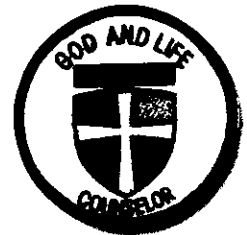
Counselor Pin

- Show your appreciation to your counselor by presenting him/her with a colorful pin
- Approximately 3/4 inch in size
- Worn on non-uniform clothing



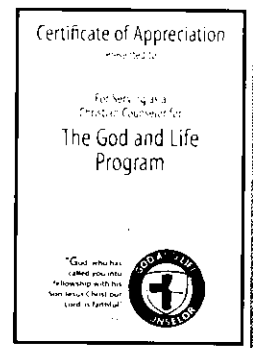
Counselor Patch

- 3" embroidered patch
- It matches the youth patch except it says “Counselor” on it
- May be worn as a temporary patch on the front of the BSA uniform



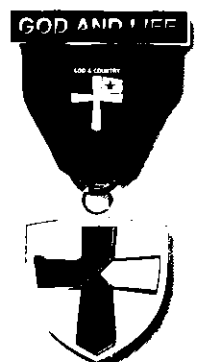
Counselor Certificate

- 5x7" and printed in full color
- Certificates come “blank” – you add the counselor's name and secure appropriate signatures (why not have the recipient sign it?)
- Great way to say “Thank You!” to your Counselor!



Four Star Pin

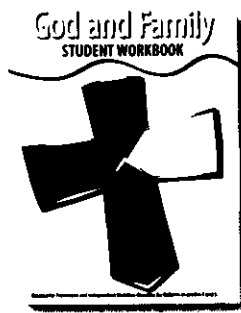
- A “Four Star Recipient” is someone who has earned all four levels of the P.R.A.Y. Series (i.e., *God and Me*, *God and Family*, *God and Church*, and *God and Life*) while in the appropriate grades.
- Four Star Recipients will receive a certificate of recognition from P.R.A.Y.
- Recipients may purchase a Four Star Pin at additional cost.
- The pin may be worn by itself or pinned to the ribbon of the *God and Life* Medallion.



The P.R.A.Y. Program



God and Me
Student Workbook
(grades 1-3)
#33604



God and Family
Student Workbook
(grades 4-5)
#33597



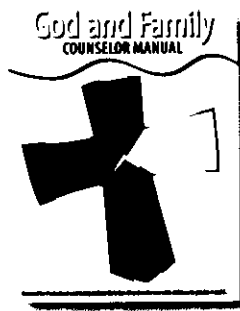
God and Church
Student Workbook
(grades 6-8)
#33599



God and Life
Student Workbook
(grades 9-12)
#33609



God and Me
Counselor Manual
(for the pastor)
#33603



God and Family
Counselor Manual
(for the pastor)
#33598



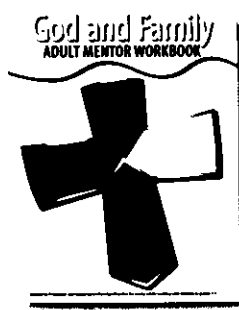
God and Church
Counselor Manual
(for the pastor)
#33600



God and Life
Counselor Manual
(for the pastor)
#33610



God and Me
Adult Mentor Workbook
(for the parents)
#33606



God and Family
Adult Mentor Workbook
(for the parents)
#33595



God and Church
Adult Mentor Workbook
(for the parents)
#609204



God and Life
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(for the parents)
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