

# God and Life

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

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## Eligibility Requirements:

- Be in grades 9-12 (or in Venturing)
  - Have original workbooks
- Present work to the pastor for final approval
- For Protestant and Independent Christian churches

NOTE: This program does not require that young people have official membership in a congregation, but it does require that they present their work to a pastor.

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# Introduction

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.

**1. Before his conversion, Paul persecuted Christians.**

*Theme: God calls all kinds of people.*

Key Verse(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Paul was helped by Ananias and Barnabas.**

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

Key Verse(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**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): \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Paul faced many difficulties and endured much pain.**

*Theme: God Gives Strength to Face Adversities.*

Key Verse(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**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): \_\_\_\_\_

## 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.

# 1

## Section One God Calls All Kinds of People

### Introduction

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.

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

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)

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

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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?

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

## 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?

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

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?

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

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?

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

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?

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**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?

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.

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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.

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

**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?

### 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?

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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?

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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

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

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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.

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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.

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# Service Project 1

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 \_\_\_\_\_



# 2

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

### Introduction

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?

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**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?

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?

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**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?

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. Read the Bible verses listed on the next page and name some of the companions who helped Paul on his second missionary journey. How did they help him?

Acts 15:36–40 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 16:1 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 16:14–15 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 18:1–3 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 18:7 \_\_\_\_\_

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)?

**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?

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?

## 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?

**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?

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.

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**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?

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?

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

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?

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**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?

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?

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**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.

## 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?

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**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?

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.

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**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?

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?

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**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?

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.

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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?

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**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.



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.

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## Service Project Two

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.
- Reach out to younger children and serve as a role model by volunteering to help teach Sunday school, present the children's sermon in church, or serve as counselor aide for a *God and Me* or *God and Family* class.
- Design your own project that will reinforce the theme, "God Doesn't Expect Us to Do It on Our Own." Your service project must be approved by your counselor.

What I did: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I found difficult: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I enjoyed: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I learned: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# 3

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

### Introduction

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.

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

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 "goading" us. On our own we can do nothing. Read Romans 8:26-27. How does this passage offer comfort to you?

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Acts 2:38 \_\_\_\_\_

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Titus 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

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Galatians 3:27 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Corinthians 12:13 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

John 14:26 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 5:22 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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?

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?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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?

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Luke 1:38 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 16:16 \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

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

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

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Titus 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

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Romans 5:1 \_\_\_\_\_

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**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?

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?

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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?

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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.

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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.



Look back over Section Three 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.

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## Service Project Three

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

- Many people respond to God's calling by going into the ministry. Research and make a list of the many occupations directly related to ministry. You may be surprised at how many there are. Choose at least two careers and find out more about them.
- Interview a Christian whose occupation is in a field other than "professional ministry." How does this person's occupation align with his or her vocation to serve God? Can the people this person works with recognize him or her as Christian? Find out about this person's job. What responsibilities does this person have? How is this job challenging to him or her? How is this job rewarding? What advice does this person have for Christians who work in non-ministry occupations?
- Plan and lead a devotion for your family, youth group, Sunday school class, or other group. Talk to your counselor about this experience.
- Design your own project that will reinforce the theme, "Each of Us Must Make a Personal Response to the Call of God." Your service project must be approved by your counselor.

What I did: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I found difficult: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I enjoyed: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I learned: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# 4

## Section Four God Gives Strength to Face Adversities

### Introduction

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?

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**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?

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?

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

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?

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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?

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**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.”

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**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.

## 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.

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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?

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

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?

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

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?

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## 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.

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

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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?

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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?

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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.

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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.

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## Service Project Four

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I found difficult: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I enjoyed: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I learned: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# 5

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

### Introduction

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?

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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?

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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?

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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.

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**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?

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**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?

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**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?"

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?

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

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**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?

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

## 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?

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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"?

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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?

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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?

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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 provided.

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# MY STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

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.

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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 Five

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

- 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 by the Pastor**

The last requirement is that you present your work to the pastor. This is a church program and must be approved by a pastor. This is not a "test" but an opportunity to share what you have learned. Be sure to bring your Student Workbook and any project materials to the final review and ask your pastor to sign your book.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE



**Notes, Ideas, Thoughts**

Lined writing area consisting of 25 horizontal lines.



Online ordering available at [www.praypub.org](http://www.praypub.org)

# God and Life Award Application Form

Incomplete applications will be returned. Submit one application per candidate (unless using the Multiple Order Form from the Counselor's Manual).

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Day contact: Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate's Information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Denomination (Church Body) \_\_\_\_\_ Check one:  BSA  GSUSA  CF  AHG  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check here and sign your name if you are a Four Star recipient (completing all four programs in the P.R.A.Y. Series) \_\_\_\_\_

**Church Information:** Please 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 \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who was responsible for coordinating and/or teaching the class? Who served as counselor?  
 Counselor's name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

I certify that the candidate has successfully completed the requirements for the *God and Life* program and has presented his/her work to the pastor for final approval.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

QTY	STOCK#	ITEM (see pictures on page 35)	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 <sup>1</sup>	\$10.00	_____
___	002L8	Counselor 3/4" Lapel Pin	\$5.50	_____
___	001LC	Counselor Patch	\$3.00	_____
___	CC1L9	Counselor 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	_____
<div style="background-color: black; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 100px; height: 20px; display: inline-block; margin-right: 5px;"></div> <b>TOTAL (Prices Subject to Change)</b>				_____

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) \_\_\_\_\_

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 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)** \_\_\_\_\_

**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](http://www.praypub.org) for explanation and fees.

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 2012 Printing

<sup>1</sup> 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)

# Tell Us What You Think

## Evaluation Form

Please take a few moments to let us know what you think about the *God and Life* program. Your comments are important to us! We would like to hear from you so that we can learn how to make the *God and Life* program even better. We also are looking for "success" stories and interesting projects to feature in our newsletter and on the internet. You may e-mail your comments to [info@praypub.org](mailto:info@praypub.org), or you may check our Web site at [www.praypub.org](http://www.praypub.org) for a response form. Thank you for sharing your comments with P.R.A.Y.!

### For the child to respond:

Tell about your favorite parts of the *God and Life* program. What do you remember best? Did you have a favorite lesson? What family project was the most fun? You can write your comments here. You can also draw a picture or include a photograph if you like. Attach additional pages if necessary.

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### For the parent to respond:

How has this program changed your child? Your family? \_\_\_\_\_

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I give permission for P.R.A.Y. to use the drawings, photographs, and/or quotes for publicity purposes for P.R.A.Y. I understand that any drawings and/or photographs that are submitted to P.R.A.Y. will not be returned.

Signature of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### For the counselor/pastor to respond:

Describe your program, i.e. How many times did you meet? How long was each session? Who did you invite to participate in your program? etc. \_\_\_\_\_

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Comment on the *God and Life* curriculum. What are its strengths? How can we make the curriculum better?

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I give permission for P.R.A.Y. to use the drawings, photographs, and/or quotes for publicity purposes for P.R.A.Y. I understand that any drawings and/or photographs that are submitted to P.R.A.Y. will not be returned.

Signature of counselor/pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

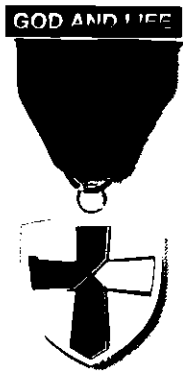
# God and Life Awards

Use the application form on page 33 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



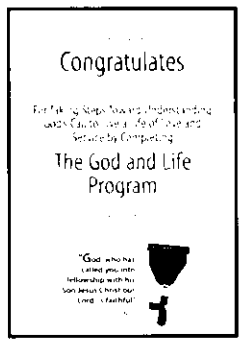
## Embroidered Patch

- 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!

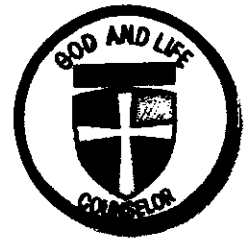
### Counselor Pin

- 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



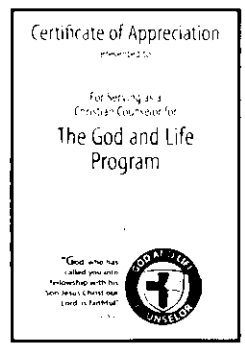
### Counselor Patch

- 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



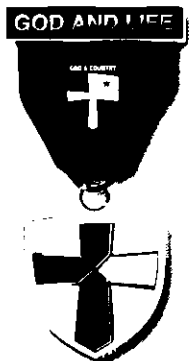
### Counselor Certificate

- 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

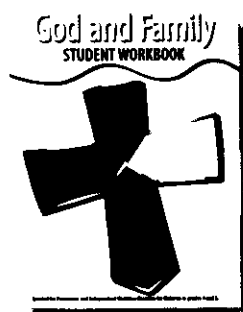
- A "Four Star Recipient" is someone who has earned all four levels of the P.R.A.Y. Series (i.e., *God and Me*, *God and Family*, *God and Church*, and *God and Life*) while in the appropriate grades.
- Four Star Recipients will receive a certificate of recognition from P.R.A.Y.
- Recipients may purchase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



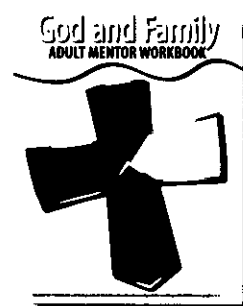
God and Church  
Counselor Manual  
(for the pastor)  
#33600



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  
Adult Mentor Workbook  
(for the parents)  
#33605

Catalog #33609



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