

Youth Sabbath School

The standard Youth Sabbath School materials for the topic “Law Meets Love” contains a Student Lesson and a Teacher’s Guide. In addition to these materials provided by the General Conference Sabbath School Department, the North American Division Youth Department is providing supplemental materials you may choose to add to this lesson. Think in terms of your specific setting and the young people at your Youth Sabbath School. As you seek to involve them in the study and application of the Bible for this week, prayerfully pick and choose the components that will form the Youth Sabbath School for your young people. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as you make your plan, and then continue to be sensitive for the Holy Spirit to guide you during the Youth Sabbath School.

Session 2 Law Meets Love (Jan. 12, 2019)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Genesis 3

OVERVIEW

What humans lost by choosing to live apart from God, God restores because of his relentless love.

Read the *Student Lesson* as well as the *Teacher’s Guide*. This may provide everything you need to teach the Youth Sabbath School lesson.

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CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
 JANUARY 12, 2015

law meets love

flashlight
 He [God] took the angels back to be in accord with the plan that his father had accepted, and again that, through His death, fallen man could be reconciled to God. Then joy, responsible joy, filled heaven. The glory and blessedness of a world redeemed outshone all the angels and saints of the Prince of life! (Johnstone and Hopkins, p. 35)

key text
 “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:8, 9, 10)

Student Lesson

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
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law meets love

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
 The perfect atmosphere of Eden provided Adam and Eve with an abundant life. However, every good quality—beauty, beauty, influence that neither possessed in heaven became a tool for the devil, purpose of his well-deserved vengeance. The Tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the only place that Satan was permitted to interact with Adam and Eve. It was enough. The deceiver intrigued Eve not only to doubt God’s word but also to mistrust His motives. Satan tempted Eve to suspect that God forbade them to eat the fruit because He didn’t want them to become like Him. Eve took the bait, and Adam empty loved Eve more than He loved God.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity
 Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration
 Share this illustration in your own words. Only grow up in a small town with friends who played music, and completed on the baseball team. When Cindy turned 16, he became interested in cars.

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Teacher’s Guide

Following are additional components that you can pick and choose, use “as is” or adapt to your specific Youth Sabbath School. These supplemental ideas provide more options for this topic. Here’s a brief description of the seven supplemental materials:



1. **Opening activity**

An icebreaker or something to get people focused as you begin.



2. **Video clip and follow-up questions**

A short video clip and an idea for you to create your own video on this week’s topic, plus a few questions to follow up with discussion.



3. **Music**

It’s best if you create your own and choose what’s best in your setting. We are not endorsing a particular style or even a specific song. Select songs related to this week’s lesson. We’ll suggest several different songs with lyrics that relate to the topic for this week. Sing along with a prerecorded track (YouTube is a good source) or better yet, ask youth with musical talent to play instruments and lead the singing.



4. **Bible study guides for Scripture for this lesson**

This is another approach to the same topic found in *Teacher’s Guide*, but approached from a different angle. Expect activities to illustrate the topic, followed by some questions.



5. **Application ideas for living out this lesson this week**

Let this spark your ideas to move from talk to action by living out the lesson in practical ways in your life this week.



6. **Youth leader tip for the week**

This bonus is just for the youth leader—a quick tip and an illustration to enhance your youth leadership. You may already know this, or you may learn it through trial and error. Here’s a way to get it with a quick infusion.



7. **Teen Q & A**

Here’s a question one teen is asking, with a response from a youth pastor. This might be a question your teens are asking. Use the response to springboard into a discussion with your Youth Sabbath School participants.

And here are those seven supplemental materials in more detail for this week’s lesson: “Law Meets Love.”

Opening activity

OPTION 1: “HAND SLAP” (2 OPTIONS)

Get in pairs (2somes) and have each pair face their partner. Choose one (the person who is taller, for example), and have that person extend both hands partway in front of them, palms facing DOWN. The partner facing them also extends their hands partway in front of them, palms facing UP, and just slightly under the hands of the first partner, lightly touching their partner’s hands.

This second partner will try to swiftly slap the top of the hand(s) of their partner. As the first person sees or feels their partner is about to slap their hand(s), they should move their hands in an attempt to not be slapped.

Give the first partner either 3 attempts or 5 attempts to slap their partner’s hand(s) (slapping either one hand or both hands counts the same—one hit).

Then give the second partner the same number of attempts, reversing their hand positions and actions.

The person who has the most hits (out of 3 or 5 attempts) is “the winner.” If it’s a tie, neither is the “winner” or you can do a sudden death determination with one attempt—if you hit, you win; if you miss, the other person wins.

You can end this opening activity here, or continue with winners competing against winners and those who didn’t win competing against others who didn’t win.

Here’s a brief home video with youth ministry veterans Scott Ward and Tyler Craft demonstrating this opening activity.

OPTION 2

For this second “hand slap” option, one of the partners extends both hands in front of one’s self, with the palms touching like an extended prayer position.

The other partner stands with hands lightly touching one’s sides (as if ready to pull a six-shooter gun from an imaginary holster). This partner can swing with either hand or with both hands to try to hit either hand of the first partner (the one with the extended prayer hands). However, that first partner can drop the hands down, bring them up, or move them to the side to avoid being hit.

Once again, give 3 or 5 attempts to hit the hand(s) of your partner and then reverse roles.

Score the same way as Option 1.

Here’s a brief home video with teens John Suani and Kai Corpuz, Sacramento Adventist Academy students, demonstrating this opening activity.

TRANSITION: As we consider “Law Meets Love” today, think about how quick you are, how quick others are, and when it’s good to be quick as well as when it’s better not to be so quick. Is God quick? Is God quicker or slower than you? Does it vary? Does it matter?



Video clip and follow-up questions

A short video clip and an idea for you to create your own video on this week's topic, plus a few questions to follow up with discussion.

Create a video clip that shows humans running or hiding from God and/or God going in search of humans. Ask someone in advance to create follow up questions based on these video clips.

You can opt to use the following YouTube video clip "Two Trees" (About 4 minutes) and the follow up questions provided (or create your own questions for "Two Trees").

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. Why did God create the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
2. How have you changed from when you were a baby? When you were a child? How might you change in the future?
3. How do you know what to choose now? How can you tell the difference between good and evil? How did you know the difference when you were younger? How will you know when you are older?
4. Why do we have access to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but we don't have access to the tree of life?
5. Do you think you stand between the same two trees as Adam and Eve (the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil)? Which one do you choose? Why?



Music

There are options!

1. It's best to do live music in your own setting, even if people are just learning.
2. Tap into CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing International) to access Christian music legally. Your local church might already be doing this. If not, we recommend that you start. Here's the website to get you going: <https://us.ccli.com>
3. Sing along with existing music. You can type in song titles on YouTube and see how others are doing the songs you choose. If you need lyrics, you can Google the song title and find the lyrics.
4. Here are 10 songs we think fit in with this week's Youth Sabbath School topic "Law Meets Love." Feel free to choose from these for your group:
 - Lord I Need You
 - You Are My All In All
 - Lord Reign in Me
 - You are My Strength
 - Standing on the Promises
 - It Is Well With My Soul

- Strong Enough
- Our Father
- His Strength is Perfect
- You Raise Me Up

5. "It's Your Love" is an original song, written specifically for this week's lesson. You can download the lyrics, music, and video from the Youth Sabbath School Ideas website to learn and teach this song in your Youth Sabbath School. Learning new songs usually takes several times before people catch on. You may want to have a few get familiar with it in advance so they can lead the rest of the group.



Bible study guides for Scripture for this lesson – “Law Meets Love”

Another approach to the same topic as the *Teacher's Guide*, but just a different way of looking at it. Expect activities to illustrate the topic, followed by some questions. There are four options here.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Law Meets Love (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12, 15–20; Romans 6:23; Luke 15)
- Sin and Salvation (Genesis 3:9, 15; Romans 5:12, 15–21; Romans 6:23)
- Where are You? (Genesis 3:9; Luke 15)
- Lies and Half-Lies (Blame Game) (Genesis 3:1–13)
- The Silence of Adam (Genesis 3:6–7)

Sin & Salvation

(BASED ON GENESIS 3:9–10, 15;
ROMANS 5:12, 15–21; ROMANS 6:23)

Read aloud Genesis 3:9–10, which describes what happened shortly after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden: “But the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’” (Genesis 3:9–10, NIV)

This tells us the reaction after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, but this part of Genesis 3 doesn't tell us how Satan deceived them through the serpent,

described earlier in the chapter. Several things are coming clear in this story:

- Actions are part of “sin,” but not the only part. Thoughts, motives, deception, temptation, and other factors frequently play a part in what leads to these actions.

HERE'S ONE WAY OF STUDYING THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cell phone
- Plant and clipper to cut off a branch
- Sheet of paper with the “Romans 5:15–21” handout on one side and the “Romans 6:23” handout on the others side; pen/pencil per person

The sin of eating from this tree was not just about food. There was more behind the action, even though the action was wrong.

- Sin changes things. Adam and Eve saw each other in a new way, and it wasn't good for either one of them.
- Sin cuts you off. Adam and Eve found themselves hiding from God rather than going to God. They threw others "under the bus" to protect themselves. Later they were cut off from the Tree of Life and the entire Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23–24).
- What seemed like "more" turned out to be "less." Here's another way of saying it: Sin over-promises and under-delivers. Adam and Eve were smitten by the possibility of knowing not just good, but both good and evil. That sounded like so much more than what they had at the time. In one sense, it was more, but it wasn't good to have evil. They lost so much of what they had previously. Parents often have this motivation when trying to shield their children from some of the evils in the world, even though their children may be drawn toward the evil.

QUESTIONS

- What are examples of sin as actions?
- What are examples of sin as a failure to act?
- What are examples of sin as thoughts, motives, attitudes, and even a selfish orientation?
- How have you seen sin change things?
- Where have you seen sin cut people off from one another?
- Where have you seen sin cut people off from God?
- How do you respond to the statement: "Sin over-promises and under-delivers"?

While sin can be extremely negative, let's try a lighter side by playing a game that gently excludes people. You may have played it before. It's called "Zip, Zap, Zop."

You need a minimum of three people to play this game. It works well with 10-15 people. If your youth group is large, you may want to split into smaller groups of 10–15 people. Form a circle with your group(s).

Have the group repeat after the leader, "Zip, Zap, Zop." Do this several times. Add a motion of extending your arms with palms together (praying position) as you say each word and then bend them back to your chest. As you extend your arms, point directly to someone in the circle.

Now you're ready to try this in the sequence. The leader points directly to one person in the circle and says, "Zip." That person then points directly to another person in the circle and says, "Zap." Then that person then points directly to another person in the circle and says, "Zop."

This continues, following the sequence of Zip, Zap, Zop, until either somebody says the wrong word or there is too long of a pause. The leader determines this (feel free to be strict so you eliminate people). When somebody messes up, they take a step backward because they are now out of the circle (they "sinned"). Start again with the last person who said one of the three words correctly, and start by saying "Zip" as you point directly to someone in the circle.

Speed up the cadence when you want to make it more difficult. Continue until you have two people square off and see which one messes up first. The other person is declared the overall winner. Once you have a champion, invite everyone back to the circle and do it again, or just move on in the lesson.

QUESTIONS:

- How did you do in this game?
- What did it feel like to be eliminated?
- What happened to your interest level when you were eliminated?
- Did you find yourself pulling for someone in particular, or against someone in particular? What causes that?
- What does the champion get by having everyone eliminated?

A silly game like this can provide a lower risk and smaller consequences than experimenting with sin, or worse—going hog-wild when it comes to sin.

Many people think of sin in rather limited terms. Often what comes to mind is a bad action, such as punching a person, gossiping about a person, stealing something, lying, vandalizing, or putting down somebody. The way to stop bad actions is to “Just say, ‘No’” to sinful actions. Sometimes that might work, but frequently we just go ahead and do it anyway.

We usually think of sin as a bad action, but rarely do people consider a lack of action as possibly being “sin.” What about ignoring somebody in need, failing to follow through on a promise, not doing what you’re supposed to do, or not providing encouragement to someone who might be down? Not doing something can also be “sin.” The way to overcome this type of “sin” is to simply do good, or be more of a “do-gooder.” How do you know when you’ve done enough good to no longer “sin”? It seems like there is always more, much more good that could be done.

Both doing bad and not doing good can be considered little “sins” (no caps). The much more serious thing is “SIN” (all caps). “SIN” is what is behind all “sins.” “SIN” is what causes each “sin.” “SIN” is what we are born with, and because we have it from the start, we do all kinds of various “sins.”

What is this serious and heinous thing called “SIN”? Some people consider it to be rebellion or a bent to evil or a drive to destruction. At its most basic level, “SIN” is selfishness. For little children, it shows itself by being a “me-me”—it’s all about me. As people mature, they find ways to mask the obvious ugliness of selfishness by conniving, coercing, using others, working behind the scenes, manipulating, re-imaging—whatever it takes to end up getting what you want, because that’s all that matters.

While some seem to excel beyond others, all of us are born selfish and often choose to feed that drive. In fact, some might reward you when you’re selfish (especially if they get something out of it, too). This is true in school, at home, where you work, and even church.

QUESTIONS:

- What are examples of “sin” you’ve seen in terms of doing something bad?
- What are examples of “sin” you’ve seen in terms of not doing something good?
- What do you think “SIN” is? Is it selfishness, rebellion, evil, a drive to destruction, or something else?

- What is the difference between “sin” and “SIN”? What is the relationship between them?
- Which is worse: “sin” or “SIN”? Why?

A common reaction is to shout, “It’s not fair!” when a person finds out that we’ve been born with this overwhelming handicap called “SIN.” Indeed, we weren’t in the Garden of Eden like Adam and Eve who made that fateful choice that has impacted the history of this world ever since. Why couldn’t God have just forgiven them on the spot and gone on? Why has this whole drama had to play out?

Here’s how Romans 5:12 (NLT) describes it: “When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.”

Talk about a downer! When Adam sinned, God couldn’t just wink and pretend it didn’t happen. There were too many witnesses. They had played right into Satan’s purpose, and the mystery of sin in God’s universe had spread from Lucifer and his fallen angels to God’s new creation: Earth. God chose not to immediately overpower sin on earth, just as he hadn’t chosen to do that with Lucifer and his followers in heaven. It takes time for this to play out and to show itself in ways that will forever be unmistakable. Just as God has warned, sin resulted in death. So, we’re all bound for death, for two reasons:

1. We inherited “SIN” from Adam.
2. We choose to “sin” repeatedly with our own deliberate choices.

It doesn’t take much to observe that everything on this earth dies. Yes, sin has entered the world. We know from what people do and why they do it and we also know because everything ends in death on earth right now.

If we keep reading in Romans 5, we find that God had an amazing and unthinkable response to Lucifer’s, as well as Adam and Eve’s, “SIN” and “sins.” Verses 15-21 repeat God’s response. Let’s take it one verse at a time. We’ll see what gets repeated or re-phrased, and take note of anything added to the message. Are you ready? Follow along in whatever Bible translation you choose. Here it is from the New Living Translation:



Hand out the sheet with Romans 5:15–21 on one side and read it aloud. You may prefer to take turns having different people in your group read a verse or two. When you are finished, take some time for each person to go through this passage one verse at a time, noting the repetition and any new perspectives in each progressive verse. At the bottom there is room for a summary statement for the passage. Expect to have dialogue through these verses. Often if people will write down a few things first, they will have more to share in the group than if they go immediately into discussion. Writing first gives deeper thinkers an opportunity to put down some of their thoughts instead of only hearing from the vocal or quick-thinking participants.

“SIN” is powerful, persistent, and pernicious (“pernicious” means having a harmful effect, especially in a gradual or subtle way). While behavior modification or a strong will may help you manage “sin,” the only antidote to “SIN” is God. You need to have God in you in order

to change your "SIN" which is what leads to all different kinds of "sins." This is why David, after some of his most hurtful sins cried out (Psalm 51:10–12, GNB),

*Create a pure heart in me, O God,
And put a new and loyal spirit in me.
Do not banish me from your presence;
Do not take your Holy Spirit away from me.
Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation,
And make me willing to obey you.*

In addition to hurting others and hurting ourselves, "sin," caused by "SIN" also cuts us off from God and makes us run FROM God instead of running TO God. That's what Adam and Eve did in the Garden, and that's what we do in so many different ways today. Instead of running TO God, we run FROM God.

The antidote to this double whammy from "SIN" and "sin" is to repent. It's not popular and it seems to be harder for some than for others. This is what David was doing in the Psalm quoted earlier. Read all of Psalm 51 for his entire prayer of repentance. It starts with:

*Be merciful to me, O God,
Because of your constant love.
Because of your great mercy
Wipe away my sins!
Wash away all my evil
And make me clean from my sin!*

It's valuable to start your day asking God to empower you to follow Him rather than the natural "SIN" within you that will cause you to do all sorts of "sins." It's a great habit to end your day by turning to God in prayer and repenting of any "sins" and "SIN" in your life for that day.

QUESTIONS:

- Do you think "SIN" is powerful, persistent, and pernicious? Why or why not?
- What is the antidote to "sin"? What is the antidote to "SIN"?
- On a scale of 1 (easy) to 10 (hard) where do you put yourself when it comes to repenting?
- When are you likely to run FROM God? When are you likely to run TO God?

All of this talk about "sin" and "SIN" can be terribly depressing. Yet, it's part of our world. We face it in our individual lives as well as when we interact with others. Some people try to ignore it, but it keeps popping up in unmistakable ways.

We're born naturally selfish, and then we feed the beast even as it destroys us and others. Because both "sin" and "SIN" separate us from God AND push us to run FROM God instead of TO God, it can seem like we're in a helpless situation. We might survive for a while, but it won't last forever.

It's like having your cell phone fully charged, but then not being able to recharge for a week.



Pull out a cell phone to illustrate.

You may do a few things to try to save some of your battery power, but without connecting with the power source, the charge you have gradually goes until you're left with nothing but a dead phone. Something powerful has then become impotent.

Before cell phones, people could see the same cause-and-effect relationship.



Place a plant in front of the group and prepare to cut off a branch.

This plant draws its energy from the soil, sun, and water. That's what makes it live and even grow. However, if part of the plant gets cut off from the plant, it dies.



Go ahead and cut off part of the plant.

It certainly doesn't look dead, but all of us know that it's just a matter of time and it will shrivel, change color, become brittle, and die. It's been cut off. That's what "sin" and "SIN" do to us.



Keep the cut off branch and show it as a reminder next Sabbath School.

We do this with people, too. An extreme example is taking a criminal to prison and locking them up in solitary confinement. We do it in much milder ways when we cut people off from our friendship or our group, and they shrivel up and die in various ways and to different degrees. Have you done it to others? Has someone else done it to you?

One of those short verses in the Bible that is a favorite for many people relates to this whole sin thing and how we might obtain hope from this seemingly hopeless trajectory for our lives. It's found in Romans 6:23. Choose just about any version of the Bible. Here's how it reads in the NLT:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

This short verse provides a contrast. I'd like for you to paraphrase it, both the first part and the second part. How would you put this into your own words?



Provide the handout "Romans 6" and something to write with. If participants need help putting it into their own words, dialogue with them about the verse to increase their understanding and personal meaning. When you're done, have people share their versions. Ask for feedback from others, then you may choose to add some yourself.

Some people are so frustrated or bothered by “SIN” that they end up denying or simply giving in to it. Some consider it so unfair to be born with such a strong drive toward selfishness (as though life is fair in all things). It’s our reality, whether it’s fair or not.

Notice the difference between “wages” and “gift” in Romans 6:23. Wages are what we earn. We may be born selfish, but we’ve added enough of our own to this monster. Yes, we’re guilty. How fair is the gift? If it’s a gift, then it stands in contrast to being earned. This is not that silly game of “since I gave you a gift, now you owe me a gift.” When it comes to the gift of God being eternal life through Jesus, this is probably the most unfair thing that ever has been.

Here’s a paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 5:21 (Phillips), which says something similar about this gift from God through Jesus: “God caused Christ, who himself knew nothing of sin, actually to be sin for our sakes, so that in Christ we might be made good with the goodness of God.”

Because “sin” and “SIN” cut us off from God, Jesus came and took what we deserve (death forever). That’s what made Christ’s death so much more than just dying like everyone on earth eventually dies. Christ’s death was the “death forever” that he took in our place. That’s not fair; but it certainly is good—for us! And that’s not all; with Christ in us, we are made good and connected with God.

This is why people get so overwhelmed by God. This gift is called “grace” and it’s undeserved. Because of that, some people refuse it. They will take only what they earn. How tragic! They will never be able to earn salvation, but they can accept the gift.

This is where some people remember another verse in Romans that relates to this. The second half of Romans 5:20 in the old King James Version reads, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” The paraphrase of this from The Message reads, “Sin didn’t, and doesn’t, have a chance in competition with the aggressive forgiveness we call grace. When it’s sin versus grace, grace wins hands down.”

QUESTIONS:

- Which is more unfair: being born with SIN or being given GRACE?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to accept grace from God?
- When have you been overwhelmed by God’s grace?
- When do you give grace to someone else?

SUMMARY

Since Adam and Eve’s fateful choice in the Garden of Eden, all people are born with a bent to SIN (selfishness). Not only does it come to us naturally, but we add to it by choosing a variety of actions that could be considered “sins.” However, “sins” include both bad actions and a failure to do good actions. How overwhelming! How unfair.

God’s actions for us are even more overwhelming and unfair. He gives us the gift of eternal life AND the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives so we can live for God rather than be controlled by SIN. Both are God’s grace!

Where Are You?

(BASED ON GENESIS 3:9; LUKE 15)

Read Genesis 3:9 (NIV): "But the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?'"

ACTIVITY

We're going to play a game from childhood. How long has it been since you've played "Hide-and-Seek"? (Feel free to get responses.) It's probably not a good idea to play it in the entire church facility right now while other groups are meeting here. So, we'll limit ourselves to this room.

However, that won't work very well unless we change the rules a little. Here's the rule change. It won't be just the person who is "it" who has to close their eyes; everybody will play with eyes closed. Take a good look around the room now so you don't bump into things or so you know the boundaries before you put on a blindfold.

We'll need to decide who is going to be "It."

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Blindfolds



You can choose how you want to select this person. You can assign it to someone, draw straws, ask for a volunteer, pick the oldest youth in the group, or whatever you choose.

We'll have the person who is "It" count aloud to 25 while you hide somewhere in this room. When the person who is "It" taps you, you have been caught. We'll do this until everyone has been caught or when 3 minutes have passed—whichever one comes first. When you have been caught, you can take off your blindfold and sit in your regular place. Are you ready to put on your blindfold and hide?



Hand out blindfolds and help participants put them on. Be sure the person who is "It" is also blindfolded. Once everyone is blindfolded, have them begin hiding as the person who is "It" counts aloud from 1 to 25. While they count, gently remove the blindfold from that person and give a "thumbs up" or other motion for the person to not say anything about now being able to see. Have them continue counting until they get to 25 and then shout out, "Ready or not, here I come." It should be pretty easy for the sighted "It" to locate the blindfolded people who are "hiding." Be sure to hold your finger over your mouth in a "shush" position as those tagged take off their blindfold so they are less likely to say aloud, "Hey, you don't have on your blindfold." After the game, debrief with questions like the ones below:

QUESTIONS:

- Describe what you did, and then what happened.
- Was it “fair” for the person who was “It” to be able to see? Was it fair for you to not be able to see?
- When God called out to Adam and Eve, “Where are you?” did God not know where they were? Why did God ask them “Where are you?”
- Where is a good place to hide from God? (Another Bible example of trying to hide from God is Jonah—see Jonah 1)
- Why does God go in search of us?
- What is your response when God “taps” you?
- It’s not equal when you’re blindfolded and God isn’t. How does God preserve your power of choice when He’s so much more powerful than you? Would you do the same thing when you’re in a power position?
- What are you blind to?
- Do you want God to find you? Explain.

When young children hide, their brains figure that if they can’t see you, then you can’t see them. They might hide only partway behind a tree or partway around the side of a building, with half of their body in plain sight. However, because their eyes are behind the tree or building and they can’t see you, they figure that you can’t see them either. It’s cute with little children, but not so cute at your age.

Some people say they can’t see God anywhere in this world. Are they like the little children who hide behind a tree or building and figure that since they can’t see God, then God doesn’t exist, or God can’t see them? What would you say to such a person?

In Luke 15, we can find a trio of stories Jesus told on a theme related to this question: “Where are you?” The three parables are three stories about the lost. They are:

1. The lost sheep
2. The lost coin
3. The lost son(s)

Parables can be powerful stories that reveal realities we might not see any other way. We can mine the story for additional truths besides the main truth, but parables aren’t meant to “walk on all fours.” Not everything in the parable might relate to the message of the parable or be true if taken by itself. For example, with the story of the lost sheep, only one of the ninety-nine was lost. Does this mean that only 1% of people in the world are lost? The story says little or nothing about the 99 left in the open country while the shepherd goes in search of the lost one. Shouldn’t the shepherd have put them in a safe pen or first arranged for a person to oversee them in his unknown length of absence? Does this mean God doesn’t care about the ninety-nine? With parables, it’s a good idea to look for the main point, appreciate nuances of the story, but be careful to not make everything in the story have a matching part or meaning outside of the story.

We’ll take these three stories one at a time, looking at similarities and differences. We’re doing this from the perspective of the question from Genesis 3:9, “Where are you?”

The first two verses of Luke 15 give us the context for this trio of parables:

“Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!”

These stories Jesus told came in response to Jesus being with “sinful people” in contrast to those who postured as “not sinful people.” Instead of staying away from sinners (those who were “lost”), these stories have Jesus going in search of those who are lost (“sinners”). That’s why it’s so easy to find Jesus with sinners—Jesus is successful in finding the lost! That raises questions such as: Do you separate yourself from sinners? Do you join sinners and become just like them? Are you in search of those who are lost? Do you find them? How do you respond when you find them?

The first parable is Luke 15:3–7: The Lost Sheep.



Read it aloud or take turns having people in the group read a verse or two.

QUESTIONS:

- Who is lost?
- Do you have any idea how the lost sheep got lost in this story?
- Why doesn’t the lost sheep return?
- Who goes in search of the lost?
- What does the shepherd give up by looking for the lost?
- What is the response when the lost is found?
- How is heaven affected by this?

The second parable is Luke 15:8–10: The Lost Coin.



Read it aloud or take turns having people in the group read these few verses.

QUESTIONS:

- Who/What is lost?
- How did it get lost?
- Why doesn’t the lost coin show where it is or return on its own?
- Who goes in search of the lost?
- What does the woman give up by looking for the lost? (The 10 coins may have been a headband the woman wore that was part of her marriage dowry—a little bit like a wedding ring. Does that provide any additional meaning to this parable?)
- What is the response when the lost coin is found? Isn’t that more expensive than what the coin is worth?
- How is heaven affected by this?

The third parable in this trio is the most famous of all three. Found in Luke 15:11–32, it is much longer and more involved than the first two.



Ask a volunteer to tell the story from memory; then read it verse-by-verse—either one person, or, better yet, taking turns reading a few verses each since it is a much longer passage than the first two parables.

QUESTIONS:

- Who is lost? (Hint: The older brother is “lost” because he is “slaving” at home while the prodigal is “lost” as he loses everything in a far country.)
- How did he get lost? (Be sure to apply this to both brothers)
- Why didn’t the father go in search of the prodigal son?
- What did it take for the lost to be found in this parable?
- What does the father give up by not going in search of the prodigal?
- What is the response when the lost returns?
- What would be your response when the prodigal returns? Why?
- Should the prodigal have been given time before being fully restored as a son, just to be sure it was for real and the dad wasn’t being played by him again? Should the dad have maybe put the prodigal on probation for a period of time? Explain.
- How is the older brother affected by this?
- If the party is heaven, where is the father? The prodigal? The older brother? Where would you be?
- How is heaven affected by this?

Three successive parables, with similarities and differences. Let’s recap these three and make some personal applications to our own lives.

QUESTIONS

- What similarities did you see with these three parables?
- What differences did you notice with these three parables?
- Have you ever been lost, or do you know someone who was/is?
- Which story of the lost do you identify with the most?
- What is the story of how you were found?
- Who are you searching for at this time?
- What do you do when someone lost is found?

SUMMARY

The simple childhood game of “Hide-and-Seek” happens where the stakes are much higher—life on Planet Earth. All humans are born lost, and they add to that by hiding from God in many different ways. However, God goes in search of and finds those who are lost.

Jesus told a trio of parables about God seeking the lost. These can be found in Luke 15—lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son(s). Not only God, but all heaven rejoices each time someone lost is found. Where do you fit in these parables? How do you live this out in your world?

Lies and Half-Lies

(BASED ON GENESIS 3:1–13)

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

The first lie in Scripture comes in Genesis 3. We know the source. When Jesus was on earth he told the religious leaders, who kept framing him in negative ways: You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44–45 NIV)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A copy of the handout "Blame Game" and something to write with—for each person.

Those are pretty strong words. And we thought we're the first ones who have to relate to "alternate facts" and "fake news." Somebody is simply lying. Our tendency today is to just tap into the one source we want and resist, ignore, or denigrate anything but the news we want to keep feeding our brain. How can that be truthful?

It's happening today; it happened in Jesus' day; and it happened in Genesis 3. Let's go back to Genesis 3 and pick out the lies that Satan used to deceive Adam and Eve. Keep in mind that frequently mixing truth and falsehood together or rephrasing things is more effective than outright lies, although straight up lies are used sometimes, too (even with a straight face).

One previous president of the United States took the counsel of one of his advisors when he had to confront the media and the public about something he didn't want to admit to. Here's the advisor's counsel: Look the people straight in the eye and say, "I didn't do it." That's exactly what the president did, and the public believed him. That is, they believed him until he later came out and admitted the truth when his denials could no longer be denied. Sometimes the facts, or more facts, come after the lie(s). At that point you have to either admit you were lying, or simply continue to lie more and more.

Back to Genesis 3. Look at the first 13 verses of Genesis 3 in the following five sections and pick out the lies and the partial lies that the serpent (Satan) used to deceive Eve and also Adam.

1st Section

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" (compare with Genesis 1:29–30; Genesis 2:9, 15–17)

2nd Section

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" (compare with Genesis 2:9, 15–18)

3rd Section

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

(compare with Genesis 2:17; the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” was indeed something that included “good and evil.” God knew both, but Adam and Eve knew only good. Why would a person want to know evil? Would it be because they wanted to be like God? Are there other reasons? [like the person who has to touch the hot stove rather than hear somebody say, “Don’t touch the hot stove because it will burn you!”])

4th Section

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

(An immediate result of Adam and Eve’s disobedience was the truth that they knew evil in addition to good. The results were loss and embarrassment. They hadn’t figured that into their choice. They hadn’t considered all the consequences, nor had they been told all the consequences, or they hadn’t listened when they were told.)

5th Section

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” 11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” 12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

(Neither Adam nor Eve said, “Go away, we’re not here!” They responded to God’s question, “Where are you?” They told the truth (they hadn’t practiced much lying yet) and admitted they were afraid of God because of the change they had noticed in themselves (now naked—they had lost something they previously had). When asked by God if they had eaten from the tree that God commanded them not to eat from, both of them blamed someone else (Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent). Were Adam and Eve responsible for their personal choices or was it fair to blame someone else for their individual choices? What percentage of the responsibility would you give to them compared to the percentage you would give to the one they blamed?

QUESTIONS

- How much does the final product look like the original? Is this lying?
- You’re aware of this and expect it. Does it still affect you, perhaps without realizing it? Do you still expect women to look like the finished product even though the finished product isn’t real?
- What is the expectation for males?
- How does this relate to the media we are exposed to constantly? How does it relate to our expectations?
- Do we really need to take time to analyze or consider this?

Marketers used to come up with slick slogans or pleasing images to get people to purchase items. Think of the sports star’s endorsement of something completely unrelated to their

sport. Some endorse soda or underwear or a watch brand or a car brand. What does that have to do with their sport? Obviously, the company believes they will sell more of whatever they have by associating the familiar face with their product. We call this "celebrity branding."

Those who produce products like toothpaste, certain medications, or other saleable items find that having someone considered attractive will spur sales because consumers want to identify with the beautiful and they skip right over the fact that a person's attractiveness has nothing to do with the product they are selling. However, it works for the seller because we want to identify with beautiful people. Just imagine what life would be like if everyone who brushed with a Crest (product placement payment please or we'll change the name to Colgate) became beautiful!

Religion isn't exempt from this. There are plenty of lies that people believe and even share in the name of God. Name some that you have heard.



Give some time for people to share. Maybe start the sharing by naming some religious lies you've heard, such as "God will burn people in hell forever" or "God will give you prosperity if you obey him" or "If something bad happens to you it's because you've done something bad" or "You're not good enough for God to love you" or "You have to be good in order to go to heaven."

Here are seven common religious lies shared by "Beliefnet":

1. God likes my denomination the best
2. God is opposed to sex and sexuality
3. God hates us
4. God likes the same political party I do
5. God likes the religious establishment
6. God likes males more than females
7. God doesn't exist

Which of these would you put in the category of "common religious lies"? What would you add to this list? What would you remove?

Remember that after the serpent in the Garden (Satan) deceived Adam and Eve with lies and half-lies/half-truths, both Adam and Eve demonstrated the first blame game. We continue it today. It takes different forms of: It's not my fault; it's _____'s fault. Sometimes we name specific people (my parents, that person I don't like, my lousy teacher, etc.) and other times we name an institution or a nebulous "other" (the church, society, the media, culture, peer pressure, etc.). There may be some shared responsibility, but blaming others usually is an effort to take the heat off of ourselves. By redirecting attention, we hope to take the spotlight off of ourselves. It would be better to admit our mistakes, own them, repent ("I'm truly sorry AND I want to change so I don't do that again. Will you forgive me?"), and leave yourself at the mercy of God and those you have wronged. At least one of those (God) is sure to forgive you. The other might or might not, or might not right away.

I have a sheet of paper here called "Blame Game." It has seven circles for seven different people or entities that we often blame. Think of one of these and something you'd blame

them for. Then color in the circle the percentage that the blame goes to them, and leave blank the percentage of the blame that belongs to you.

For example, the first circle is "Parent's Fault." What's an example of a statement you might make for this circle? (Some examples might include: "The color of my hair" or "Not having enough money" or "Never feeling that I was good enough" or "The divorce that messed up my life," etc.) Come up with your own example and color in that circle for the percentage that it's that person's fault and leave blank the percentage that is your fault.

You can go on to the next one, "Sibling or Friend's Fault" or jump around in any order you choose. After taking a few minutes to color in these different circles after considering personal responses to specific examples, we can share in some broad ways without necessarily spilling our guts or anger over them.



Give participants time to consider these. It may take some time to think of something or you may need to spend some time dialogue about this. Individuals can choose how superficial or deep they want to go with this. Be sensitive to this when it comes time to share. You may choose to keep it light or general, or you may be prompted by the Holy Spirit to go deeper and deal with real hurts within your Youth Sabbath School and the blame that goes with that.

QUESTIONS

- How often is the blame higher than 50% for others?
- How often is the blame higher than 50% for you?
- What are the benefits of blaming others? What are the disadvantages?
- When blame is given, who needs forgiveness?
- What's the difference between public blame and private blame?
- What are things that other might blame you for? Would they be right?
- How do you correct things after you've participated in the Blame Game in real life?
- Do your friends encourage you to play this game or do they discourage you from doing it?
- Who plays the Blame Game more: You or your friends (or is it about the same)?
- How do you stop yourself from participating in the Blame Game?

SUMMARY

Sometimes it seems so easy to lie. Perhaps we only tell half lies; maybe we prefer to say we were telling the truth (halfway). There are many reasons we do this. Usually, it has to do with making ourselves look better than we really are.

When it comes out that we've lied, common reactions include denying it or blaming someone else. Repentance is the better response. We often opt to blame others, rather than taking the hit ourselves. Owning up to our own blame stops the "blame game" and opens the door to forgiveness.

The Silence of Adam

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

(BASED ON GENESIS 3:6-7)

Most of us have heard the story about the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Let's have two people tell the story the way they've heard it. (Ask for two volunteers. Have one go first and the second can tell their own version of the story. Don't make any corrections or comments; just let them tell their version of the story. Thank them when they are done.)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Ability to play a YouTube video for the group

Probably no two people will tell the story exactly the same way. Luckily, we have easy access to the Bible and can read it for ourselves. The story can be found in Genesis 3. We're going to focus on just one point in the story.

Here's the question: Where was Adam when the serpent tempted Eve?



Have participants respond. After some discussion, put it to a vote.

Most people think that the temptation between the serpent and Eve took place when Eve wandered off from Adam. This can shame females for wandering away from their man and being ill-equipped to handle temptation without a man being present. That would be the expectation if you grew up in a patriarchal system in which the males dominate and the females are subservient. That's still true in many places in the world today. If you haven't grown up in a culture like that, you might read Genesis 3 differently.

Feel free to read the entire chapter to get more of the context, but I'm going to have us focus on just two verses in Genesis 3. These are the only two verses that indicate where Adam was when the serpent tempted and successfully deceived Eve. They are verses 6 and 7. Here's how it reads from the NIV:

"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."

You can compare this with other translations; you'll find pretty much the same thing. Let me repeat the earlier question, and now answer it based not on your memory of the story, but what you just read in Genesis 3. Here's the question: Where was Adam when the serpent tempted Eve?



Field responses again. Expect some possible surprises as well as people defending whatever they may have said previously. This may also expose a bent toward male domination or male decimation.

According to Genesis 3:6–7, after Eve ate the forbidden fruit, she gave some to her husband, WHO WAS WITH HER, and he ate it (caps added).

Now the question becomes, was Adam with Eve at the spot and moment of the temptation and deception OR was Adam simply in the same Garden of Eden and that's what's meant by the statement that he was "with her" (in the Garden of Eden, but not at the very spot as Eve at that very moment)? If Adam wasn't with Eve, how much time elapsed between Eve eating the fruit and Adam eating the fruit? (Give time for some responses.) The Bible doesn't specify answers to these questions.

If Adam was standing beside Eve when she was tempted and deceived by the serpent, this raises other questions, such as: Why didn't Adam say anything? Did he say something but the Bible doesn't record it? What could Adam have said? What should he have said? Would our lives be different today if Adam had spoken up?



Open this for more feedback and interaction/discussion in your group.

None of us were present in the Garden of Eden. We probably won't know the answer until we go to heaven and ask Adam and Eve ourselves. So what difference does it make?

The same type of thing happens today! It's not necessarily a Garden of Eden setting, but we still face temptations from Satan, and some of the people who are with us might say nothing. Maybe we're the ones who say nothing, and our friends go ahead and give in to Satan's deception while we stand by silently.

Before you were born (1995), a person named Larry Crabb wrote a book called *The Silence of Adam*. In it, he considered these verses in Genesis 3 and asked some of the questions I asked today. He challenged the assumption that Adam was not with Eve when she was tempted and deceived by the serpent. He considered the phrase "her husband, who was with her" to mean that Adam was standing by her side—that type of "with her."

The author (who is a counselor) has seen too many people, especially men, not stand up when faced with something that might be difficult or unpopular. By going silent, they didn't do anything wrong. But their silence left someone else feeling alone and they caved in to something they later wished they wouldn't have done. He challenged men in particular to stand up and speak up when they see something wrong or think it should be questioned. Instead of being silent, speak up; act up; show up and do something!

QUESTIONS

- Without knowing for sure, do you know think that Adam was standing next to Eve when she was tempted and deceived, or do you think he was simply somewhere in the Garden of Eden, but not immediately with Eve?
- What do you imagine Adam saying to Eve if he was with her and said something?
- What would you have said if you were Adam?
- If you were Eve, would it have made a difference to you if Adam had spoken up instead of leaving you to tangle with the serpent on your own?
- Where have you faced temptation without somebody who spoke up even if they might have been standing right beside you?

- When have you stood beside somebody facing temptation and you didn't say or do anything to stop them?

More than 60 years ago (1951) Solomon Asch conducted an experiment to see if people would go along with a group ("group think") or if they would be willing to go against the group, even if what the group was thinking was obviously wrong. He didn't call this "temptation" or "deception," but "conformity." Here's an overview of his experiment (which has been replicated with similar results since then).

- (For a 2-minute overview of the Asch experiment, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA-gbpt7Ts8)
- (For a 4-minute [this one is the one recommended], go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYlh4MkcfJA)
- (for a 6-minute version of the Asch experiment, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyDDyT1IDhA)

Amazingly, when a group of 6–7 people voted the matching length of a line and they were clearly and obviously wrong, more than one-third of the solitary person who didn't know the others were clued in to pick the wrong length actually went along with the group. Later, they gave two different types of reasons why they went along with the group:

1. The group must have been right and I was wrong (information conformity), or
2. I shouldn't make waves or upset anybody (normative conformity).

Just as amazingly, in the group of 6–7 who gave the wrong answer, it took only one person to give the right answer for the one not clued in to go with the right answer. A whopping 95% gave the right answer when just one other person had given the right answer before they were asked.

When asked if somebody who answered the same as them had helped them make their decision, the person not clued in said that person didn't influence them, but they did think positively about that person.

QUESTIONS

- Do you find these results easy to believe or hard to believe?
- If you're faced with something that everybody says is right, but you think it's wrong, how are you likely to respond? Can you think of specific times when this has happened?
- Does it make a difference to you if one other person stands for what is right, even when the majority doesn't?
- Are you more likely to be the person who stands for what is right, or are you more likely to stand for what is right after someone else goes first? Can you think of a specific time when this has happened?
- What does it take for you to stand up or speak up for what's right when nobody else has? What might you gain? What might you lose?

SUMMARY

Eve sometimes takes the full blame for “The Fall” of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. However, it’s possible that Adam was standing right beside Eve and simply said nothing as she disobeyed God. What could he have done? What should he have done?

We aren’t much different. The temptation to conform to a group often leaves us saying or doing something we know is wrong, but we give in to the group rather than standing up or speaking up for what we know is right and true.

Our motivation for living the truth must come from God, rather than preserving ourselves or depending on others for the truth and for acceptance.



Application ideas for living out this lesson this week

Let this spark your ideas to move from talk to action by living out the lesson in practical ways in your life this week. These four options correspond to the three Bible Study Guides above.

- A. Choose an accountability partner for this week. Together, pray for each other that’s God’s power will be greater in your life so that “SIN” won’t cause you to “sin” by either doing something bad or not doing something good. Talk honestly with each other about your motives that prompt your actions.

Each morning this week, make contact with your partner by text or some other means and pray for each other for that day that God’s power will lead you to live for Him.

Each evening this week, make contact with your partner by text or some other means to see what God did or didn’t do today, also sharing what you did right and what you did wrong. Pray for each other, celebrating God’s activity and repenting of any “SIN” that led to “sin.”

- B. Where are you? Put a Post-It note on your bathroom mirror for this week with the question: “Where are you?” Let this serve as a reminder to you regarding your position in relationship to God. Are you running FROM God or TO God? Pray for any correction needed and then choose to make the correction and rely on God’s power to make your choice and request a reality. Remember that both “SIN” and “sin” hurt you, including the downward spiral like Adam and Eve had of trying to hide from God.
- C. Take another copy/sheet of the “Blame Game” for your use this week. If/When something goes wrong and you’re ready to throw somebody or some group “under the bus” for how they did you wrong (and they certainly might do so), stop and consider what part you played in this rather than taking the cop-out pathway of simply blaming others (the way both Adam and Eve did). Without ignoring that others might be partly to blame, take responsibility for your own part because you can do something about that. If this is unclear to you, find somebody who will look at things differently than you do (a trusted adult who will be honest with you or a friend who is willing to be “brutally honest” with you).

This truth-telling can be challenging. Text these two quotations to the youth this week to remind them of this:

1. "Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy." Warren Wiersbe
2. "Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people." Spencer Johnson

Another way to apply the Bible study lesson this week is to "TELL IT LIKE IT IS!" Note lies and half-lies that you hear this week, including media swaying messages. Call it out for what it is by saying out loud to yourself (and to any others who might be with you), "That's a lie" or "That's not the truth" or "That's partly right and partly wrong." Then restate the message with the needed correction. This helps to rewrite the script for yourself as well as for others. Otherwise, what is false goes unchallenged and becomes the norm for us.

D. Spend some time in prayer asking God to impress upon you people and/or places where you need to speak up rather than remain silent. Don't be like a "Silent Adam" in the Garden of Eden.

By remaining silent, whatever is spoken or done becomes acceptable and the norm. By speaking up, you challenge that and offer another option that others may be waiting to see/hear so they can then take a similar stand. Of course, this will cost you something. Others may ridicule you or contest with you, but it's never wrong to stand for the right. That's likely to drive you back to prayer.



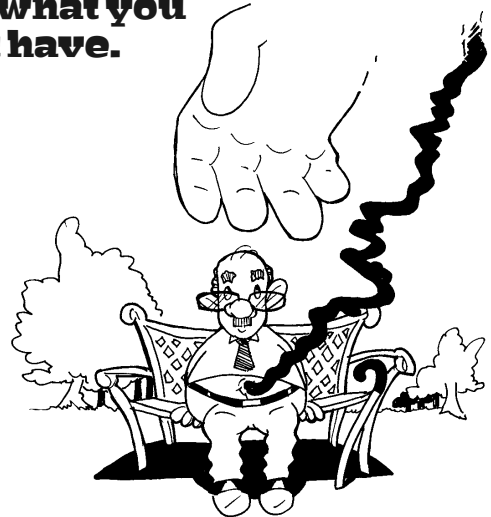
Youth leader tip for the week

This bonus is just for the youth leader—a quick tip, an illustration, and a short paragraph to enhance your youth leadership. You may already know this, or you may learn it through trial and error, or maybe you just need a reminder of something you already know. Here's a way to get it with a quick infusion.

A BIT MORE

It's easy for youth leaders to revert to their favorite topic or "hobby horse." Following a curriculum will take you (and the youth) into areas you might not have considered. This doesn't mean you can't make changes or adapt to something pressing or current at any given time. The way you do things will be your individual stamp, but it's best to follow a curriculum that meets your young people. It also provides purpose and direction for your group, and continuity when (or if) leadership changes from week to week.

1. Be sure you're connected to God! You can't give what you don't have.





Teen Q & A

Here's a question one teen is asking, with a response from a youth pastor. This might be a question your teens are asking, too. Use the response to springboard into a discussion with the young people in your Youth Sabbath School.

Question from a Teen: What does it mean to be "blessed"?

Answer from a Youth Pastor: It's good, very good!

I've heard some form of the word "bless" in a number of settings, such as:

- "Bless you" (after sneezing).
- "God bless you" (a form of "thank you," such as after you give a homeless person some food).
- "I feel really blessed" (I have it good).
- "It was such a blessing to be here" (I liked this!).
- "Bless me, my father, bless me" (Esau, feeling left out of getting the birthright for the firstborn).
- "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name" (a psalm of David's).
- "May the Lord be gracious unto you and bless you" (a benediction).
- "You'll be blessed" (Elton John lyrics).
- Bless the Beasts and Children (title of a book and a play, also a 1970s song by Karen Carpenter offering something for the underdogs or the weak in comparison to the strong).
- God bless America (I have strong feelings of patriotism and spirituality mixed together).
- "Bless this house, O Lord, we pray" (lyrics from an Irish blessing song and prayer that we sang at the dedication of our new house when we moved in).
- "I'm sure God will bless you" (you'll get a great payback from God).

Where have you heard someone mention something about "blessing"? When do you use it?

According to the dictionary, the word "blessed" comes from the old English word "blood," and it's used in consecration. It could mean to hallow or consecrate by religious rite or word, to hallow with the sign of the cross, to invoke divine care (bless your heart), to praise or glorify (bless His holy name), to speak well of, to confer prosperity or happiness upon, protect, preserve, endow, favor (blessed with athletic ability).

The meaning of "blessed" goes back to the Old Testament Hebrew words *barak* and *ashre* that get translated "bless." The New Testament Greek words *eulogeo* and *markarios* also get translated as "bless." Here are some examples that I found in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary:

God's blessing happens when God gives good gifts to someone (see 2 Samuel 6:11, 12; Job 42:12).

When people "bless" God, they are simply acknowledging God as the one who gives spiritual and material prosperity (see Psalm 63:4; 103:1-5; 145:2).

When one person blesses another, that person is expressing a wish that the other one will be given good gifts (see Joshua 14:13; 1 Samuel 2:20).

Blessed can mean happy or fortunate (see Psalm 1:1; 2:12; 32:1, 2; Matthew 5:1–12).

If every good gift has its origins in God (see James 1:17), then every blessing has its origins in God as well. The blessings we receive from God aren't merely for us. We are blessed in order to bless others, which has been God's intention from the beginning (see Genesis 1:28–31). He repeated it when He promised a blessing to Abram—a blessing that would reach everyone on earth through Abram (see Genesis 12:2, 3).

The same is true today. Every blessing that God gives us is for our benefit and for us to share with others. So, bless you! Oh, God has already done that? Well, He's doing it some more. Enjoy it, and pass it along by blessing others, too!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Use this question and answer as a springboard for your own Youth Sabbath School discussion. What makes sense to you and what doesn't? What would you add to this. What have you heard others say? What do you say? Why?

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