

you give...



God Saves
Leading Children and Youth to Christ



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you give—GOD SAVES is a resource published to assist officers and children and youth ministry workers in leading children and youth to Christ.

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*I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants,
but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters
who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow...
What makes them worth doing is the God we are serving."*
1 Corinthians 3:6-8 (The Message)

As children and youth ministry workers you do many things, but most importantly you give. You give:

- + your time
- + your love
- + yourself
- + your witness
- + the invitation to know Christ

you give... God Saves!

The purpose behind all we do in church ministry should be to lead people to Jesus Christ and deepen their relationship with him. Without this purpose our ministry can become nothing more than pointless activities.

This resource contains a variety of topics all related to presenting the gospel message to a variety of age groups. It will get you thinking about the diverse issues involved in leading a child to Christ and the importance of follow-up.

While the majority of this resource focuses on children, a separate section has been put together for teenagers. This will be helpful for youth leaders that work with teens. This section clearly recognizes that teenagers, while still not being adults, are definitely at a different level than children.

The most important thing that any worker needs to do is make sure their own heart is prepared for the task of leading children and youth to Christ. God can only use you if you are ready for it. You will need to have a clear understanding of the gospel message and your own relationship with Jesus before you can guide a child in this matter.

Our hope is that you find this a useful and life-changing tool for the very important task of bringing children and youth to Christ. Thank you for all you give!

Children and Youth Ministries Team
Canada and Bermuda Territory



A Child's Viewpoint

PRESCHOOLERS (Ages 2-4)

Children at this age will base their understanding of God on their relationships with significant adults. They can start to understand what it means to love, trust and obey God based on how this happens in their significant relationships. In teaching preschoolers about God, it is best to focus on general truths such as God made everything, God loves me, God takes care of me and I can talk to God.

When talking about Jesus, children can generally understand many things about him based on stories of his life. They can understand: Jesus as God's son, Jesus as a friend, Jesus as the baby born at Christmas, and that God sent him as a special person. It is important for the children to understand that Jesus was special and not just a person like you or me. Be careful about what words you use in talking about Jesus. Children may pick up the terms like Messiah or Saviour but not actually understand what these terms mean.

Salvation is a complicated term at this age. The death of Jesus is hard to understand for these children. You should try to keep the story as simple as you can. They won't need to hear the gory details of how Jesus was beaten and crucified, etc. Simply state he was nailed to a cross to die. Focus on the joy of Jesus coming back to life. Some children may find it hard to understand why Jesus died when he did many good things and loves everyone.

Explain in simple terms how Jesus died for everyone's sins, although at this age it is unlikely children would understand their need for Salvation. That doesn't mean that a child at this age could never sincerely make a decision for Jesus, but they generally cannot understand what it means. It is important to lay a strong basic foundation about God and Jesus that will be added to as they get older. Try to ask lots of questions to determine what they are thinking. Never assume that children are understanding things you are telling them.

KINDERGARTEN (Ages 4-5)

This age is very similar to preschoolers. Although the children will likely be further along in their understanding, they are still concrete thinkers. God is still seen for what he does as Creator of all and One who cares for all people and things. Children at this age can develop a more general understanding of God as being all powerful, wise and loving.

Jesus will be understood more clearly as God's Son but they still may not understand how he was to provide salvation for the world. They can clearly understand that Jesus was

special. They won't have any problem understanding Jesus being in heaven and with us in our lives because they can understand that Jesus was God and therefore would be as powerful as God.

At this age they will begin to have a better understanding of right and wrong but still may not be able to fully understand sin. They will think of right and wrong as specific things and will not be able to generalize. They may start to ask more questions about the death of Jesus but if they are not asking questions, you won't need to be overly descriptive about these events for this age. Again it can be more important to build the foundation of basic beliefs about God and Jesus at this age than having them understand their need of salvation. They may want to pray for salvation and genuinely feel the need for it at this point, but it will need to be explained in as simple terms as possible. Pray with the child and know their understanding will grow with age if their faith is properly developed.

If they are asking lots of questions, which is typical of this age, try to answer these simply. If the question is too difficult to explain in simple terms, explain to the child that some things about God are too hard for anyone to know. Focus the child on truths about God that you can tell them simply and clearly.

GRADES 1-3 (Ages 6-8)

At this age children are starting to gain more knowledge and understanding of many things. Their concept of God is growing but is still focused on personal experiences. It is best to not push the child into accepting new ideas of God until they are ready. Introduce new concepts of God but allow the child's questions to guide how far along they go. Concepts such as the holiness of God, the forgiveness of God, God as the one we pray to and God who we can rely on to help us are generally understandable at this age on certain levels. These children are still concrete thinkers and will relate to specific things that they have experienced. Children may start to become more curious at this age about things that are happening beyond their context, so be ready to answer their questions.

Grades 1-3 children will see Jesus as being God. He is more easily understood as being the Saviour for each person, and as being the example to follow and someone to rely on in life at this age. Children will be able to develop an understanding of what the different names given to Jesus mean. They may be very upset by Jesus' death because they will see it as unfair. Explain as simply as possible that God is concerned about fair treatment. Jesus had to die to take the punishment that we should get for all the bad things that people have done. Children at this age may be fascinated with knowing all the details of the Crucifixion. Answer any questions as clearly and simply as possible.

This age group in most cases will understand the idea of salvation. They have a clearer understanding of sin and the idea of forgiveness than in previous years. It will still be important to be clear and concrete in talking to them. Too much symbolism can be confusing. Whether talking to a group or only one child is important to stress that the decision to become a follower of Christ is between each child and God. It is not made because someone else is doing it or because the teacher wants you to.

GRADES 4-6 (Ages 9-12)

At this age, children who have been raised learning about God will generally have a fairly clear understanding of who he is. Most will still ask lots of questions because they are trying to re-evaluate what they have learned at a younger age in greater detail. Children are generally starting to think more abstractly now, so they will be trying to understand God in a deeper way. They will gain further understanding of God in images of him as king, lawgiver, authority and judge. They can begin to develop an understanding that God has a purpose and plan for their life. As the teacher, you may not know something about God and it's important to be honest with children at this age. They will learn from you that it's okay to struggle and work through questions about God and our relationship with him. This age is only the beginning of adolescence, and many children may struggle to gain a personal understanding of beliefs they have been taught their whole life or struggle to find something to believe in if they haven't been taught anything.

Jesus is more clearly understood as Saviour. Children can make this a very personal thing. They can understand that he is their Saviour and their Lord. He is the ultimate hero that we want to be like. This age group can understand in better detail the events of Jesus' death and resurrection. They will be able to grasp further why Jesus had to die on the cross as their abstract thinking develops.

Salvation is understood more clearly now than previously. If they have a solid foundation in their understanding of God then they will be able to accept salvation and what it means. If you are working with children at this age that haven't understood what love is and don't trust or obey anyone or anything, then you will have to start over with some basic ideas before they can understand the concept of salvation and a loving God.

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER...

When is the right time for children to be saved?

There is not a right or wrong time for children to be saved. Each child will vary because salvation is a personal issue between an individual and God. Just because a child is not saved yet does not mean that God cannot work in their lives. Of course our desire is for children to be saved and then grow in their faith. But we cannot rush the work of God.

**SALVATION IS THE SPIRITUAL WORK OF GOD.
WE MAY BE THE PRIVILEGED HELPERS OF GOD IN
LEADING SOMEONE TO CHRIST, BUT THE REAL WORK IS
DONE BY GOD.**

A person's understanding of God, Jesus and salvation will be developing their whole life. Even as adults we can stumble upon new revelations that we have somehow missed for years.

Get to know the children you are working with personally

We need to provide every opportunity without overdoing it. You will know when and how to present the gospel to those you are working with by knowing who they are. If you

have children who are from families permanently involved in the church or who are regular attendees, you should be able to keep track of their faith life and know whether they have made a decision. But if you have a high turnover and many visitors, then you may want to give opportunity for decisions more often. You will only know this by knowing the children you work with on a personal basis. Also by spending time with the children you work with they will have the opportunity to see Jesus in your life. Invite your kids to go shopping with you, get the car washed or do some baking together, welcome them into your every day life. Allow them to see God at work in your life, in the good and difficult times.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

If you work with children then you likely know this principle. Children can surprise you in so many ways. There are some generalizations you can make about children but you will always find exceptions somewhere. Just when you think you have them figured out they'll probably do the exact opposite of what you expect. So be prepared and love them all as individuals.

TAKE TIME TO KNOW WHAT THEY UNDERSTAND

If you want to try to help children understand all they can, take the time to do this. A child may need you to go through things more than once. You could talk them through the steps of salvation slowly. You could stop and pray about one point and then talk some more and pray again. This may take extra time for you but every child is worth your time.

SPEND TIME IN PRAYER FOR THEM AND WITH THEM

Pray for the young people you minister to. Ask God to make them receptive to the good news about Jesus. Invite others to pray for your group of kids, especially when you know that you are going to be presenting the gospel message to them. Get together with other workers and pray for each other and each other's group of kids. Also invite your young people to pray with you and for you. Allow the young people the opportunity to see God at work through their prayers and yours.



Partners With God

Leading a child to Christ can be one of the most rewarding aspects of working with children. If you have had the privilege of this experience, thank God for it. If you have not had this privilege, be prepared, you never know when it could happen. Either way there are some things to keep in mind when going through this process. It is a good idea for you to think about these ahead of time so that you are as prepared as you can be to partner with God in bringing a child or teen to Christ.

STRESS A PERSONAL DECISION

When presenting the gospel story or a challenge to follow Christ, you should allow for an individual time of decision. You may present the idea of salvation to a group but it is best not to lead a whole group to salvation together. God can use what you do in a group but it is more ideal to have time with a child individually to help her/him understand all of what salvation means.

Stress to the child that the decision to follow Jesus is an important one and needs to be made between God and her/him. It is not something to do because a friend wants you to or because a parent or teacher wants you to, but because you want to.

BE AWARE OF NEEDS

Confusion can arise when talking about Jesus and God's love to children with difficult life situations. A child may reject or question the existence of God or his love for them if they are living in a difficult or abusive situation or have lost a family member. It is hard for them to grasp how God loves them when their world has fallen apart around them. If we want them to discover that God's love for them is real it may require that we take steps to intervene. A child who is facing a difficult situation or who has lost a family member to death, divorce or separation will need extra care and concern. It may be that this child needs to be referred to a Christian counsellor. Be willing to take time to listen carefully and give support to such hurting children. It is also important, especially in a camp setting, that we link the young person to a church where they can receive further encouragement and discipleship.

Children who are coming from an abusive situation also require intervention. It is imperative that you are aware of The Salvation Army's Ministry Screening Process and that you follow proper protocol.

DON'T RUSH

Take your time with the child to help him/her understand what salvation means. Ask questions as you go through the plan of salvation to ensure that a child has some understanding of each part. Allow the child time to express themselves and how they are feeling. Ask them to explain what you are saying in their own words. You can slow things down by alternating talking and praying about things. You could talk about God's love and pray about it, then talk about sin and pray about that and so on.

You share the plan of salvation and the child may not seem sure if they want to pray and make a decision. Don't push them into it. Suggest they think about it some more and send them home with a pamphlet or tract that they can look at on their own. It could be that a child needs more time to understand what salvation is about. This is especially true for the introverted child who needs time to process information on their own. Pray for the child in the following weeks.

BE CAREFUL WITH SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE

When talking with children about salvation be careful of the symbols you may use. Children are generally concrete thinkers and up to 11 or so, they may struggle to understand symbolism. Children under seven will particularly struggle with this. Think about how you are going to present the idea of salvation with your age group. If you are using any symbolic language, be sure to ask the child how he/she understands what you have said. For instance, a younger child may think that to say Jesus lives in our hearts that there literally is a little person who lives inside our bodies. You should be aware of how children interpret what you say. You may find that children, and especially non-churched children, will connect best to salvation terms such as "becoming a part of God's family" or asking Jesus "to take charge of your life".

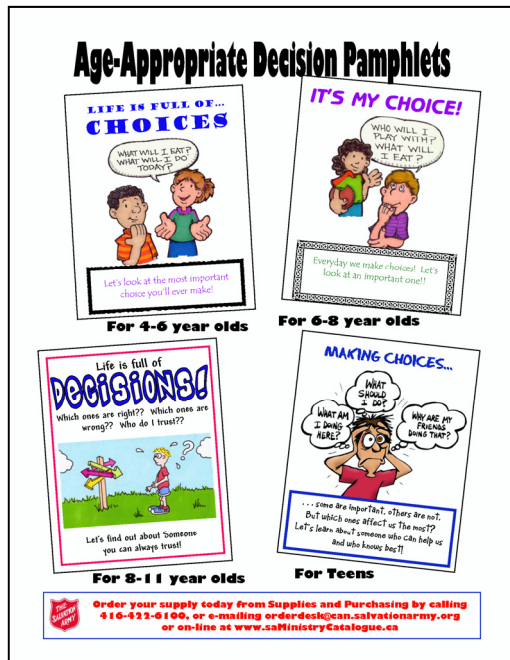
USE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

When leading a child to Christ be sure to ask lots of open-ended questions. Don't just ask questions that a child can answer by saying yes or no. For example, when talking about God's love instead of asking, "Do you know that God made you and loves you?" you could ask "Who did God make?", "What did God make?", "How does God feel about people in the world?", and "How does God feel about you?" Or when talking about sin ask the child, "What is sin?", "How does God feel about these things?", and "Have you done anything that has made God feel sad?" The questions you use should help you discover what the child understands.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

The witness of your personal life can be a great example to a child in deciding to follow Christ. Children watch the adults and older youth around them all the time and learn from them behaviours to follow. If they see you demonstrate a relationship with God then they will want to know what it's about. As you talk about salvation with a child you could talk about how you understand salvation including how you have been a sinner who believed in what Jesus did and now have a relationship with God.

USE AGE-APPROPRIATE DECISION PAMPHLETS



The territorial children and youth ministries department has developed age-appropriate decision pamphlets that are very helpful in presenting the salvation message to various age groups. There are four different pamphlets starting with one for ages 4-6, then 6-8, 8-11 and teens. These pamphlets all present the gospel but use age-appropriate words that will help each child understand. Keep these pamphlets on hand to use at any time a child makes a decision. Become familiar with the pamphlet before using it. They are available through the on-line catalogue at www.saMinistryCatalogue.ca or from the Supplies and Purchasing Order Desk at orderdesk@can.salvationarmy.org.

USE THE BIBLE

When reading scripture verses have your Bible on hand to read from. This will let the children know that what is being said has come from the Bible. It is helpful for children to know right from the start that we believe the Christian faith comes from the Bible. Children can begin to see the importance of the Word of God when they see us reading it and using it on a regular basis. Even a young child that cannot read on their own can start to understand that the Bible is a special book because it tells us how to be saved. You will not find the plan of salvation in just anything.

ENCOURAGE PERSONAL PRAYERS

Try to avoid having the child use “repeat after me” prayers. Encourage them to make their prayers personal by suggesting they use their own words. Give them direction by saying “tell Jesus what you believe about him” or “ask Jesus to forgive your sins.” Making their prayers personal will help reinforce that the decision they are making is a personal one. It is important for children to learn that what they have to say is important to God and that they can say it in their own words.

HAVE THE CHILD TELL OTHERS

When a child has made a decision encourage them to tell other people right away. They should tell any friends, family or other leaders that are around. This will help to make it an even more personal decision. You should encourage them in their decision to tell others (particularly parents), but don't take the child around telling everyone for them. Use Romans 10:9-10 to encourage children in the importance of confessing Jesus is Lord with their own mouth.

TALK TO THE FAMILY ABOUT THE DECISION

Talk to the child's family about the decision. Let them know that the child has made a decision to follow Jesus. If the family are not Christians, this could be an open door to share the gospel with them. You may need to be sensitive to any hostility there may be from a parent over their child's decision. You may need to approach some parents with caution if there is concern for what kind of treatment the child may receive.

If the parents are Christians you can suggest resource to help them to encourage their child in their decision. Some parents may feel awkward and unsure about how to talk to their children. Be sensitive to this and be ready to give some suggestions for the parents if they are unsure. Suggest they write a card or note to acknowledge what their child has done. Hopefully the parents will be a strong part of the follow-up in these cases. Offer to help the parents with ideas for building a strong faith in their child. There are many good books available to assist parents such as:

Raising Kingdom Kids by Tony Evans, Focus on the Family, 2016 (ISBN 9781589978805). A resource to challenge and equip parents to understand their position under God and help them fulfill their role in parenting the children given to them.

It's Just a Phase-So Don't Miss It: Why Every Life Stage of a Kid Matters and at Least 13 Things Your Church Should Do About It by Reggie Joiner and Kristen Ivy, The reThink Group Inc., 2015 (ISBN 9781941259436). A phase is a timeframe in kids' lives when we can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. That means the whining toddler, the dramatic fifth grader, and the stressed-out tenth grader are not just "going through a phase" that should be wished away; rather, they are transitioning through critical periods that we are called to discover, celebrate, and navigate strategically with them. It's Just a Phase presents a challenge to churches to treat every kid who breathes like they are made in the image of God.

Children Demand a Verdict (Answering questions about what we believe and why we believe it) by Josh McDowell and Kevin Johnson, Greek Key Books, 2006 (ISBN 1600980120).

Revolutionary Parenting: Raising Kids to Become Spiritual Champions by George Barna Tyndale House Publishers, 2010 (ISBN 9781414339375). Barna reveals surprising information about popular parenting tactics and shows you how to instill a vibrant commitment to Christ in your kids.

Faith Begins at Home (The Family Makeover with Christ at the Centre) by Mark Holmen, Bethany House, 2007 (ISBN 0764214926). This book is filled with inspirational stories and practical ideas that families can begin implementing today to bring Christ and Christ-like living into the centre of their home.

Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids by Dr. Kara E. Powell and Dr. Chap Clark, Zondervan, 2011 (ISBN 0310329329). Empower parents with positive and practical ideas to nurture within their kids a living, loving faith that lasts a lifetime.

The Sticky Faith Guide for Your Family: Over 100 Practical and Tested Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Kids by Dr. Kara E. Powell, Zondervan, 2014 (ISBN 0310338972).

Raising Kids with a Faith that Lasts (6 session DVD and CD-Rom) Focus on the Family, 2011 (ISBN 9781589976047). Authorities like Dr. Tim Kimmel, Mark Holmen, and Larry Fowler introduce you to one of your greatest privileges—helping your child begin a relationship with God. Discover how everyday conversations, family fun, and purposeful projects build spiritual foundations your child can rely on for a lifetime.

Parents Guide to The Spiritual Growth of Children (Helping Your Child Develop A Personal Faith) by John Trent, Rick Osborne and Kurt Bruner, Tyndale House, 2003 (ISBN 9781589971431).

Talking with Your Kids About God by Natasha Crain, Baker Books, 2017 (ISBN 0801075521). This practical resource gives parents the confidence of knowing what to discuss with their children and how to discuss it in order to facilitate impactful conversations that will form the basis of a lifelong faith.

Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey (Nurturing a life of faith) by Catherine Stonehouse, Baker Books, 1998 (ISBN 0-8010-5807-4).

Ready for Life (40 practical life skills your kids will need to stay afloat) eBook edited by David R. Veerman, eChristian, Inc., 2012 (ISBN 978168431035).

Rock Solid Kids: Giving Children a Biblical Foundation for Life by Larry Fowler, Bethany House, 2015 (ISBN 978-0764220159). Advice for parents and children’s workers to help teach children about Christian faith.

Faith Training (Raising kids who love the Lord) by Dr. Joe White, Thomas Nelson, 1996 (ISBN 1561794414). Practical advice on how to “train up a child in the way he should go” following the model presented in Paul’s letter to Timothy.

Sharing God’s Big Love with Little Lives: A Can-Do Guide for Parents and Caregivers by Jean Thomason, Worthy Publishing, 2017 (ISBN 978-1617958625). In this guide for parents, grandparents, and caregivers of little ones, Jean Thomason, uses Scripture, humorous anecdotes, and insightful research, to equip you with fresh ideas and enthusiastic encouragement to help guide your kids as they grow into all God has created them to be. This book is a spiritual toolkit you can refer to again and again.

Leading Little Ones to God by Marian M. Schoolland, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995 (ISBN 0802851207). A classic Bible storybook that helps children learn about who God is, why Jesus came to earth, and how we should act today.

www.KidsOfIntegrity.com (from Focus on the Family Canada). This website provides parents with tools to help grow Godly characters.

Know God: A 28-Day Devotional Experience for Kids, The rethink Orange Group, Inc., 2016 (ISBN 978941259757). A 4-week, interactive journal designed to start kids on a

journey of everyday things they can do to know God better: hear, pray, talk, and live.

Case for Christ for Kids by Lee Strobel, Zonderkidz, 2010 (ISBN 0310719909). Written in kid-friendly language that gives you all the answers this book is packed full of well-researched, reliable, and eye-opening investigations of some of the biggest questions you have. Case for Christ for Kids brings Christ to life by addressing the existence, miracles, ministry, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Case for Faith for Kids by Lee Strobel, Zonderkidz, (ISBN 0310719917). Case for Faith for Kids is a must-read for kids ready to explore and enrich their faith.

The WonderBook Devotional Pack from Child Evangelism Fellowship. These six books are attractive, affordable daily devotional books. Each book contains two month of devotionals. Copies can be ordered from the CEF Ontario Web Store at: <https://cef-ontario-web-store.myshopify.com/products/wonder-devotional-pack>



The Gospel Message

Here are a variety of ideas to quickly present the gospel message to children you are working with. These are good ideas to have on hand for a last minute opportunity. If you work with a program that has a high turnover rate or a number of visitors on a regular basis then these ideas will be particularly helpful. These presentations will work with a group or individual children. They are adaptable to a variety of ages. Use simpler details and fewer ideas with younger children.

COLOURS OF SALVATION

This idea uses five colours to present the gospel story. You can present this as a book with different coloured pages, beads on a bracelet, circles put together or whatever format is easy for you to keep on hand. The colours to use are as follows:

Dark colour (Dark blue or Dark purple—not black) – The dark colour is used to talk about sin. Explain in an age-appropriate manner what sin is. Talk about how this separates us from God using verses such as Romans 3:23 and 6:23.

Red – The colour red represents the blood of Jesus. Explain how God provided us with a way to have a relationship with him through Jesus dying on the cross. Use verses such as Romans 5:8 and I Corinthians 15:3 to help you. You can tell the Easter story if you feel it's appropriate.

White – This colour is to explain how we are made clean by Jesus' blood. When we ask for forgiveness our lives are made new because of Jesus. So instead of the dark colour we now are white and clean. Use I John 1: 7, 9 to help you in explaining this.

Yellow – This colour represents Heaven or eternal life. When we believe in Jesus and have prayed for forgiveness, we will go to live with God forever. Use verses such as John 1:12; 3:16 and any from Revelation 21:4-23.

Green – The colour green is used to talk about growing as a Christian. You can talk about this as much as you feel is appropriate at the time. Suggest things such as prayer, going to Sunday school and church, reading the Bible, etc. If the child prays for salvation, spend some time talking to them about their spiritual growth. See the section on follow-up for ideas relating to this.

If you are using coloured beads on a bracelet, then you could have supplies for children to make their own bracelet to keep as a reminder. Children could also make their own book.

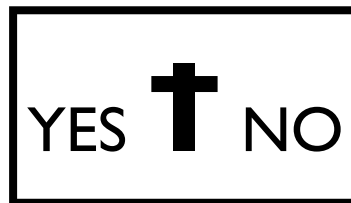
SIN—IT'S YOUR CHOICE

For this idea you will only need to have "S I N" written out on a piece of paper and a marker to add to the word. Write the word with the letter "I" being larger than the other two and space between the letters as shown below.

Show the word sin to your group and discuss what it means. If your group doesn't know explain it as clearly as possible talking about the wrong things we do and how all people have done things that God doesn't like (Romans 3:23).

Tell them that even though God doesn't like sin, he loves all people. He wants us to have a relationship with him but our sin has to be dealt with. He could have punished us, but instead he has provided a way for us to come closer to him. Draw a line across the "I" to make it into a cross. Ask if they know what the cross represents. Talk about Jesus dying on the cross for our sins (Romans 5:8). Tell the whole Easter story, that Jesus is alive and in Heaven.

Tell the children that we have a choice to make. If we want to have a relationship with God then we can say "yes" to Jesus. Write out the letters "YE" in front of the "S" to make the word yes. If we understand that we have sinned, we need to ask for forgiveness and believe in Jesus dying for our sins then we will have a relationship with God (1 John 1:9). There will be no end to that relationship because we will eventually be with God in heaven forever. Or we can say "no", write the letter "O" after the "N" as you say this. You won't have a relationship with God if you say no to him. The choice is up to you.



GIVE THEM A HAND

Use your hand to tell children the story of salvation. Start by holding out your hand with your fingers straight out and your thumb pointing up. Talk about how our thumb is separated from the fingers. Tell how we are separated from God because of sin in our lives (Romans 3:23).



Next point your first finger up while clamping down your other fingers and thumb. (like the Army salute to God) Ask the children why you would be pointing up. Talk about God and how he loves us. He wants to have a relationship with us. To do this he had to provide a way to deal with sin (Romans 5:8).

Then hold up your first three fingers holding down your little finger with your thumb. Tell the Easter story using your fingers as the three crosses. Tell about the two other men on the cross and how one believed in Jesus and one did not.

After telling the whole gospel story go back to the part about the thief who believed in Jesus and to whom Jesus said “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Make an OK sign with your hand. Tell the children how this thief had chosen to believe in Jesus and so he would be OK with God.

Explain to the children that we need to believe in Jesus and ask for forgiveness to be OK with God (1 John 1:9). When we do this we will have a relationship with God and live with him forever (John 1:12, 3:16).

CANDY CANE GOSPEL

This is a good idea to use around Christmas time. You should have a candy cane to hand out for each child at the end of your time together. For this idea you will need candy canes with red and green stripes. If you can only get ones with red stripes, simply eliminate the paragraph on the green stripe.

Turn the candy cane upside down to look like a letter “J”. Ask the children if they know whose name starts with this letter. You could ask whose birthday we celebrate at Christmas. Tell the children Jesus was God’s gift to us. Explain how we were separated from God because of Sin (Romans 3:23). But Jesus was God’s gift to us, so that we could have a relationship with him (Romans 5:8). Talk about how he did this by dying on the cross.

Point out the red stripe in the candy cane. Tell the children this can remind us of the blood of Jesus and how he took the punishment for our sins. Then Jesus defeated death when he rose again. When we believe in him and ask forgiveness we are made clean. Point out the white in the candy cane. This reminds us that we are made clean when we have Jesus in our lives (1 John: 1:9).

Then point out the green stripe in the candy cane. Explain to your group that once we have chosen to follow Jesus we need to grow in him. We need to learn what Jesus wants us to do. The green reminds us to grow in Jesus as we grow up.

You could also tell the children how the candy cane is like a shepherd’s staff when held upright. Explain how Jesus is our shepherd and will guide us and take care of us like a shepherd looks after his sheep (John 10:11-14). Another suggestion is to read to the children from the book, Legend of the Candy Cane, by Lori Walburg and James Bernardin from Zonderkidz, ISBN 0310212472.

GOSPEL STORY BOX

For this idea you will need to gather four items together in a box or bag ahead of time. The items are as follows:

A small world map or mini globe – Talk briefly about the world and different countries. Perhaps you or the children have travelled to different countries or know missionaries in different countries. Talk about how God created the whole world and everyone in it. God loves everyone in the world and he wants to have a relationship with each one.

A small mirror – If you are doing this with more than one child you may want to have more than one mirror. Otherwise, have the children take turns. Tell the child to look in the mirror and ask who they see. Of course they will see themselves. Tell them “God created you and loves you very much. He wants to have a relationship with you because you are his prized creation.” (Psalm 139)

A baby food jar or small food jar filled with dirt and water – Explain to the child that there is something keeping us away from God. Ask if he/she knows what that is. Talk about sin. Use the dirty water to explain how sin pollutes our lives and prevents us from being close to God (Romans 3:23).

A small gift box with a bow on it – You will need to place a gift certificate or coupon inside this box ahead of time. The gift certificate or coupon should be for an ice cream or fast food restaurant that the child will enjoy. On the back of the coupon write the word “grace”. Explain how God has provided a way for us to have a relationship with him. Explain that he has given us the free gift of grace through Jesus. Explain how Jesus died for our sins so we could be forgiven (Romans 5:8).

Explain to the child that if we want to accept God’s gift all we have to do is believe in Jesus and ask forgiveness for our sins (1 John 1:9). Once we do this we will have a relationship with God.

If a child is saved through this illustration, plan to meet with them in the next week or so. Use the coupon or gift certificate to take them and a friend out for a treat and be sure to clear this with the parents. Use this time as follow-up to talk with the child about how they can grow as a Christian.

THE STORY OF JESUS FOR CHILDREN

“The Story of Jesus for Children” DVD makes it possible for children to see and understand the true story of Jesus. Adapted from the Gospel of Luke, the video has been produced by the makers of the JESUS film. This film can be shown to children of all ages in 15 languages spoken in the USA. It also concludes with an opportunity for children to make a choice to invite Jesus to live with them and in them. The video is produced by The Jesus Film Project. You can order a copy from CEF Ontario Web Store: <https://cef-ontario-web-store.myshopify.com/products/the-story-of-jesus-for-children>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Other resources that are available to help you share the gospel message with children are:

- ◆ The Evangecube—available from www.e3resources.org. The Evangecube is an easy-to-use puzzle that brings the gospel of Jesus Christ to life. Available in the eCube classic format or in the newer Kids’ EE-Cube.
- ◆ Kids EE BIG Cube—from www.e3resources.org. A colorful, fun, interactive visual tool that flips and folds to reveal a clear Gospel message that equips kids to share with others. At nearly 3-times the size of the Kids EE-Cube, the Kids EE-Cube-BIG folds out to 16” tall. Captivate your kids while you share the Gospel with simple, clear images they can relate to.

- ◆ eBand—available from www.e3resources.org. Silicone wristbands provide a simple and fun evangelism tool. Using the five colors, you can simply share an effective Gospel message. Wear it and Share it!
- ◆ eBall—from www.e3resources.org. The eBall is a tournament quality Size 5 soccer ball that's been completely designed and built to stand up to rough playing conditions. Using the five colors, you can simply share an effective Gospel message that connects with hearts around the world. Includes a pump, and outreach instructions.
- ◆ The Gospel Flipper-Flapper—from Child Evangelism Fellowship (home of the Wordless Book). You can order copies from www.cefpres.com. You simply flip the flaps to reveal the Gospel message.
- ◆ The Gospel Plane—from Child Evangelism Fellowship. Order your copies from www.cefpres.com. This plane can be a fun, interactive way to share the Gospel with children.
- ◆ The Gospel Bookmark—from Child Evangelism Fellowship (home of Wordless Book). You can order packets of 25 from www.cefpres.com. Bookmark provides the Gospel at your finger tips plus “Getting to Know God Better” points to encourage Christian growth.
- ◆ www.letthelittlechildrencome.com is a website that provides evangelism tools that are more than simple children's tracts. Check out:
 - “Where's Everybody Going?” animated tract
 - “I'm Jumping for Joy” animated tract
 - The Gospel Plane
 - Gospel Button Flip-About
 - The Wordless Bracelet kit
 - The Wordless Footbag (Hacky Sack)
 - and other Gospel tools and resources based on the wordless book
- ◆ www.WordlessMessage.com—from Ron Wheeler of www.cartoonworks.com. This is a 4½ minute animation that wordlessly shares the most important message ever told. You can pass it from individual to individual, or you can project it onto a big screen before a large group of people. Link to this site or download the actual animation to any electronic device and use it to spread this life-changing message around the world. There is no cost whatsoever, and there is no sign-up involved.
- ◆ www.PocketGospelIllustration.org—from André Kole of André Kole Productions ©2003 to 2014. This string and bead tool can be used to present the Gospel message to kids, and help to visually and mentally reinforce the essence of the message. You will need to purchase your own string and beads as the kits are no longer being sold.



Every Day is Decision Day

God chooses when he is going to work in individual lives to bring people into a relationship with him. We need to be sensitive to realize that this could happen at any time. The best way to do this is to know your children. If you know that all the children you work with have already made a decision then you can focus more on continued spiritual growth, but be sensitive to any visitors or new children who join your group.

If the children you are working with to your knowledge have not made a decision or you deal with a high turnover and irregular attendees, then you will need to remain sensitive to a variety of opportunities that God may use to reach an individual. Certain lessons, special days or life events may trigger a child's curiosity about salvation or bring them to an understanding of their need of salvation. Your only work is to be sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit and to be prepared to take the time to talk with the child.

The information below presents a variety of times when you could present the gospel. It doesn't mean you need to use all of these ideas; you will know what ways work best for you and your group of children.

USING LESSON MATERIAL

Good lesson material will generally cover a variety of topics that are age-appropriate for the children you are working with. Take the time to get to know the material you will be using so that both you and your group will get the most out of it. Lesson material can provide opportunities to speak about salvation. Some lessons may specify this because of the topic for that day. Many lessons can be a good opportunity to talk of salvation regardless of the topic, simply because your children are growing in their understanding and God may be bringing them to the point of salvation. Be sensitive if the children are asking specific questions; you may want to take some extra time to speak with each child about questions they have.

The important thing is to allow the freedom for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of children. Give yourself opportunity to talk with the children on a personal level so you can determine what they are understanding and can further them in their faith. Your lesson material will be a resource for teaching your children many principles and foundations of the Christian faith. Take the opportunities connected with the lesson material to speak of salvation if you feel it's appropriate for your group.

SPECIAL DAYS

Special days such as Easter or Christmas can provide good opportunities to present the gospel to your children. Easter focuses on the gospel and this is probably the greatest time to speak of salvation to the children. It is naturally a part of the story of Easter. Christmas focuses on the gift of Jesus which brought us the gift of salvation, which is another great way to share the gospel. If you are talking about love in February you can focus on the ultimate love that comes from God and how he sent Jesus to be our Saviour. As a part of Thanksgiving, you can be thanking God for giving us Jesus so we can have a relationship with God.

There are a variety of ways to relate the gospel to special days. This doesn't mean that you will need to relate salvation to every holiday. Just realize the opportunities to do this.

LIFE EVENTS

Life events can deeply impact a child's growth and understanding in many ways. Events that are tragic can leave them angry, upset and questioning God, although many children can maintain a stronger belief in God as they go through tragedy than some adults. Exciting life events can bring the child to greater appreciate good things that God gives them. **Be aware of what is happening in the lives of your children.**

The death of a loved one can cause a child to question what happens to someone after death. This can be a good opportunity to talk about the gift of living forever with God and understanding that when we know Jesus as our Saviour this is where we go. This can also bring up the topic of where people go if they don't believe in Jesus. You will need to approach this with caution. The idea of hell can scare children and even adults, so try to focus on the idea of Heaven. Be sure to help the child understand that a relationship with God is needed to live with him forever. Don't lead a child in false belief that someone is in heaven regardless of how they lived their lives. This can lead to confusion later in life. Death of a child's pet could also start a discussion of this nature.

The birth of a new baby can create excitement and wonder at God's creation. Use this opportunity to talk about God as Creator. You could discuss with the child how he/she was a baby and is a special creation of God. Use Psalm 139 in this discussion. This can lead to helping the child to understand that we are created to have a relationship with God. Or if a child is doing well at a particular sport or something in school you could talk about God given talent and how we need to thank God for what he gives us. The best way to thank God is to give our lives to him.

Be aware of any events, good or bad that may be happening in a child's life. They can be open doors to discussion. It is very important to be sensitive to any difficulties children face. This will effect how they understand God. For example, a child that lives with parents who are abusive or don't show love to the child, cannot understand God as a loving parent who takes care of them.

SCHEDULED DECISION DAYS

A decision time can take a variety of focuses depending on the group you are working with. If you know that all of the children you are working with have already made a decision then you may want to focus more on a celebration for those decisions or use it as an outreach to friends. Or, a decision time can be a part of a larger theme you are using that gives opportunity for children to come to Christ. You will have to determine how best to include decision times in your ministry setting. Here are some ideas that may be helpful for you in planning your next decision day.

Why Have A Decision Day

The main reason to have regularly scheduled decision days is to help fulfill our mandate in our ministry with youth. The Orders and Regulations for Work Among Young People issued by IHQ states:

“The supreme aim of Salvation Army work with young people is to bring them to a living faith in Jesus Christ.” (1997)

The purpose behind all that we do is to bring children and youth to Christ. This involves attracting youth to what we do, allowing God to work in their life to bring about salvation, and nurturing growth in their Christian faith. Decision Days are a part of this.

A Celebration Time For Decisions Made

If the children you are working with have been making decisions in their own smaller groups such as Sunday school classes then you may want to focus your decision day more as a celebration. Use it as an opportunity to celebrate those children or youth who have made decisions in the last few months. You will need to be in close contact with all leaders to know where the children are in their spiritual life.


You can do this during open Sunday school with a specific theme. As a part of your time together, acknowledge in some way those who have made the decision to follow Christ. This could be done by having those who have made a decision in the last six months stand and pray for them, give them a bookmark or something small with a Scripture verse encouraging them to continue in their Christian faith. You may then want to acknowledge those who have made decisions in other years in the same manner. Be aware if there are visitors or those who have never made a decision and provide an opportunity for them to do so. A good theme for a day like this could be “Running the Race” using Hebrews 12:1-2 as your focus. These verses talk about endurance as a Christian but also present the gospel. Or, you could use a birthday theme, to celebrate everybody’s “birthday” of being born again in Christ.

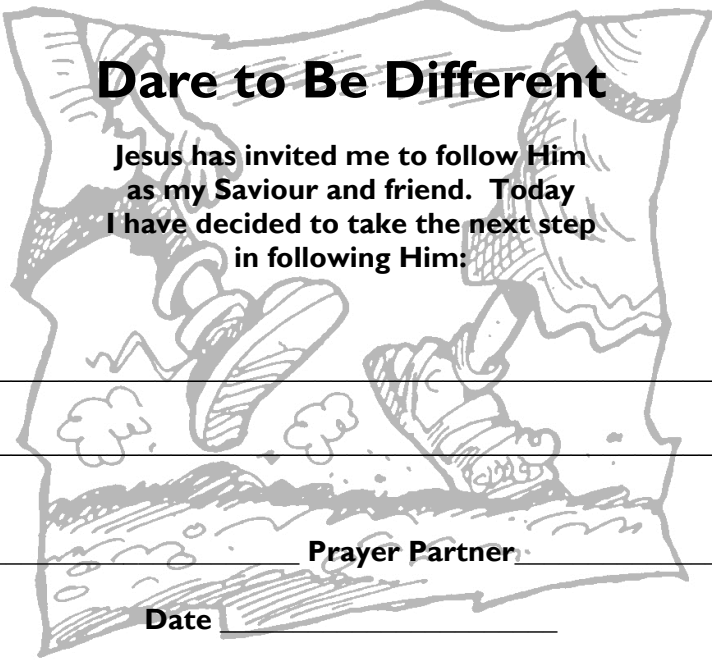
Recommitment and Assurance Time

This idea can also work in a setting where you know the majority or all of your children have already made decisions. You could focus your decision day as a time of recommitment. Instead of using decision pamphlets you could design small recommitment cards. You could use the examples given on the next page or make your own. Allow opportunity for children to sign these cards and pray about further growth in their life as a

Christian. Again you would want to be sensitive if there are any visitors or children who have not made a commitment. Allow opportunity for this.

There may also be children who need further assurance. They may have made a decision before and aren't sure if they are saved. It is fine to go through a decision pamphlet with them again or have them sign a recommitment card. It may be important to tell these children some particular verses such as Romans 8:38-39, Isaiah 49:15b-16a, John 10:27-29 and I John 5:12,13. Explain how these are promises to us from God that when we choose to live our lives for him, he will be with us.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... Love your neighbour as yourself. Matthew 22:37, 39	I have acknowledged the sin in my life. I do believe in Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I do believe he died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead three days later. Because of this I have received forgiveness and will live with God forever. I will choose to live my life for God.
I Dedicate my life to you Lord...	
Today I sign this card as a further commitment to grow in my Christian faith.	
	_____ Signature
	_____ Date

 <h2 data-bbox="529 1276 1040 1331">Dare to Be Different</h2> <p data-bbox="542 1360 1027 1499">Jesus has invited me to follow Him as my Saviour and friend. Today I have decided to take the next step in following Him:</p> <p data-bbox="412 1598 1159 1604">_____</p> <p data-bbox="412 1675 1159 1682">_____</p>	
Signed _____	Prayer Partner _____
Date _____	

Outreach

You could plan your Decision Day as an outreach day. Build it up as a day to invite friends. Have a contest to see who can bring the most friends. Have the contest for one day or hold it over a couple of weeks with the last Sunday being a decision day. You could encourage the visitors to keep coming each week so they will be there on the last day. This can be a great opportunity to teach your children about evangelism. If the children have made a decision for Christ then this will encourage them in sharing the gospel with their friends. If you are doing this, follow-up will be very important. You may need extra help from parents and other leaders for this.

Group Setting

It is very important that a decision to follow Christ is made by each individual child. So, if you are presenting the salvation message to a group of children, you need to combine that with a personal decision time. How this is handled will depend on your setting. If you have all the children together in one large group as the gospel message is presented you should have it planned out how children will be spoken with on an individual basis. You should try to have extra leaders around to talk with children who want to make a decision or are there to be with those who are waiting while others are making decisions.

Traditionally in Salvation Army services we have a mercy seat for those wanting to make a decision to come forward and pray. This can be used effectively, making sure that children are spoken with individually by leaders as they come forward. We must be careful though to take the time to make sure each child clearly understands what salvation means. Just because they come to the mercy seat does not mean that they completely understand what they are doing. It may even require you taking the child to a separate area if you feel that a lengthy discussion is necessary.

You could send children to their Sunday school classes to talk about the message after the large group presentation, and if any of the children would like to talk about making a decision it could be done from there. You would need to make sure to have more than one leader with each class. While children are making decisions, another leader can have a prayer time with the other children and then have a quiet activity for them to do.

You could ask anyone who wants to talk about what the message they have heard means, to stand up or raise their hands. Have leaders take the children out in pairs. Once on their own, a leader can talk about the gospel message and what the child understands. The remaining children can be led in prayer, singing and a quiet activity or be dismissed if they have parents to look after them or somewhere else to go.

Decision day could be done in smaller groups such as the Sunday school classes. You may still benefit by having extra leaders involved so children can be talked to individually. Just be sure that all your leaders are prepared and trained to do what is necessary on the given day.

RECORD KEEPING

If you have a decision day or decision time during a Bible lesson and young people make a first time commitment be sure to let your YPSM or corps officer know about it for the corps' records. These records are useful for the follow-up on decisions including contacting parents to make sure they understand the decision and to ensure that the young person has the opportunity to participate in an age-appropriate follow-up course.

Instructions for recording decisions in SAMIS:

Junior Seekers – 1st Time are those who have made a decision to follow Jesus Christ and allow Him to have lordship over their life for the first time. **Junior Seekers – Other** include those who have made a recommitment or commit to deeper holiness. While generally Seekers are counted as those who make this commitment during a Decision Sunday, seekers can also be counted when commitments are made regular programming such as Decision Sunday, Vacation Bible School, or other special events.

The boxes for entering the number of seekers is recorded on the Activity being run. The examples below identify where to record seekers for Sunday School and Kids Club. All other YP activities also include similar boxes.

Enter Statistics for: Sunday School - Sunday

Program Detail	Totals	Save	Clear
# Attendance - Meetings	0		
# Meetings	0		
Junior Seekers - 1st Time	0		
Junior Seekers - Other	0		
Members Added	0		
Members Removed	0		

Enter Statistics for: Kids Club

Program Detail	Totals	Save	Clear
# Attendance - Meetings	0		
# Meetings	0		
Junior Seekers - 1st Time	0		
Junior Seekers - Other	0		
Members Added	0		
Members Removed	0		



Decision Day Ideas

DECISION DAY THEME IDEAS

Glow In The Dark

Use the theme verse, “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

John 8:12 You could also use other verses about Jesus related to his “I am...” statements, such as John 6:35 or John 14:6.

Decorate with bright fluorescent colours. You could do activities that relate to light such as making a candle or writing out the Scripture verse in lemon juice on paper, so that when it dries and is placed near a light bulb, the words will show up once heated.

For the devotional time gather together a variety of glow in the dark items. You can usually find a number of inexpensive items from the dollar store. Have them placed in a paper bag so that they won't glow until you charge them in light. Have all or most of the lights out in the room. Talk about darkness and light. Use John 3:19-20 to talk about sin and darkness. Then talk about John 8:12 and how Jesus came as light to the world. Talk about how we can't see in the dark, we need light. Then tell the children you have some things to show them that are supposed to glow in the dark. Pull them out or have volunteers help you. When they won't work have the lights turned on. Ask the children if they know why they won't work. (They need to be exposed to light first). Talk about John 8:12 again. Ask how we can glow in the darkness of the world with the light of Jesus. Turn the lights out and show how the glow in the dark items will glow now that they have been exposed to light. Turn the lights on again and ask if anyone needs to get charged with the light of Jesus because they never have been. Or, if they have made a decision before, perhaps they need to be recharged to glow again if they have been in the dark too long.

You could use songs like “This Little Light of Mine”, “Shine, Jesus Shine”, “Light of the World” (Hillsong Kids) or “This Little Light” (Steve Fee).

Colours of Salvation

Use colours as your theme for decision time. You can use the colours of salvation to present the gospel story. (You can find this on page 15 of this resource in “The Gospel Message” section). Base all of your activities around colours. You could do activities such as: play twister, play tag with “IT” wearing a certain colour, or teach a memory verse by having the words written out on a variety of colours that will be matched with colours

that have been placed on the wall to put the verse in order. Have the children make a take home craft using the colours of salvation such as a bracelet, necklace or key chain with coloured beads or a caterpillar made out of coloured pompoms.

Nothing Fishy About Fishing For Jesus

Use Matthew 4:19 as a theme verse for the lesson, “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” Decorate with fish, nets, rods, etc. Plan activities with a fishing theme. You could have the memory verse written out on paper fish with paper clips. Attach a small magnet to a string and rod and have children fish out the memory verse. You could have sharks, boots or some other items put in the same box as the fish so more children will have turns as they try to fish out the memory verse. For your devotions, explain how God first “fishes” for us, catches us when we decide to follow his line, then asks us to “catch” other people to help his family grow.

Sports Theme

A variety of sports could be adapted to this. The overall idea is that in Christ we have victory and a goal to obtain, like in sports where there are goals to reach. Encourage children to come dressed in their favourite sports gear or team shirts. Decorate with whatever sports items you can find. You could plan activities related to only one sport or mix and match. Terms like, touchdown, goals and homerun could all be used to represent success as a Christian. This first begins by deciding to follow Jesus, then living for Christ and eventually reaching Heaven. Strike-out, foul and penalties are terms you can use to refer to negative points in life such as failing to obey God would cause us to strike-out. Use verses such as 1 Corinthians 9:24 to talk of the prize we can all receive when we run our lives for Christ or 2 Timothy 4:7-8 and talk about how the apostle Paul lived his life for God. 1 Corinthians 15:54b-57 is a good verse to talk of the victory we can have. We have the victory of eternal life through Christ. You could also talk about how we need training to have success in our Christian life just as an athlete needs training to succeed in sports. If using this theme for a decision day, a good follow-up to use with a general opening time with your group could be the “Spiritual Fitness Training Camp” from HELPS On-Line (www.saMinistryHelps.ca/Toolkit). This is a five week theme covering topics like prayer, obedience to God and loving others.

Gifts or Outer Appearances

This is a theme that challenges us to consider if we are really right with God on the inside. You can use the theme of Gifts. Decorate with ribbons, paper and wrapped packages. You could wrap up every item that is going to be done that day so children can take turns unwrapping things to see what will be done next. Focus on the gift that God sent us through Jesus, the gift of eternal life. Use John 3:16 and Romans 6:23 as your main verses. Wrap up three boxes for different volunteers to open. The first one would be empty, representing how we are empty without Christ. The second one would have garbage in it representing that if we fill our lives with sinful things we are full of garbage. The last box would have a picture of Jesus and a Bible representing the gift of Jesus and eternal life we can have by knowing him. Use the Bible in this gift to look up the scripture.

You could also approach this theme using 1 Samuel 16:7b “man looks at the outward

appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” You could use the above three gifts to show how although they all look the same on the outside, they were different on the inside. Explain how we might be like one of these gifts, and look nice on the outside but are really empty or full of garbage inside like these gifts. We should all want to be like the last gift, where we have Jesus and the word of God in our life. You could also wrap up other gifts to emphasize how appearances can be deceiving—such as an old wallet with a \$20 bill in it. When you first pull out the wallet ask how much everyone thinks it would be worth. When they say, “not much”, show them the money and it will be worth something they couldn’t see to start with. It was what was inside that gave the true value to this gift.

For more themes or ideas to use with a Decision Day, check out H.E.L.P.S. On-Line – an on-line resource website maintained by the territorial corps ministries department. If you have ideas that have worked for you, and someone else could use them, please send them to us so we can share them with others (program_helps@can.salvationarmy.org).



SALVATION'S KEY

PREPARATION: A large plywood or fibreboard door is needed. Make it so that when the door is opened a large picture of Jesus is seen. Put a padlock on the door and have six keys, only one of which will open the lock. On the various keys tie pieces of coloured ribbon as indicated, and have large corresponding keys made of coloured paper.

Blue - Goodness

Pink - Parents' Salvation

Green - Church Membership

Gold - Money

Silver - Character and deeds

Red - Blood of Jesus

APPROACH: Have you ever been locked out? It's an awful feeling, isn't it? But we are all locked out right now - locked out of this door. (*Lift the padlock to show them it is locked*). There is just one thing we need. What is it? Yes, we need a key. Once I was locked out of my own car. I had been downtown shopping and before I realized, it was almost time for supper, and I was late. That meant I had to hurry, but the door of my car would not open. I worked and worked, and worked with my key. I pushed and kicked and jiggled, and still it would not open. Finally a man who had been watching me from across the street came over to help. He thought it would be easy, but he too worked hard over it. Then he asked, "Have you tried any of these other keys?" "Oh no," I replied. "That's the only one that will open it." "Let's try another one anyway," he said, and slipped another key into the lock.

Click, the door came open! Was I embarrassed! Working all the time with the wrong key! **So it is mighty important that we have the right key, isn't it?** Especially if it is important with this door, for this door represents the door to heaven. But, you say, that door ought to be open all the time. Why would God shut the door to heaven? Why should he lock it? I'll tell you why. He had to lock it because of your sin and mine. If God left the door unlocked and allowed us to come in with our hearts and lives full of sin, it wouldn't be heaven at all. It would be the same old thing all over again that is going on down here, hatred and wars, and bloodshed, sickness and suffering and death. No, God had to lock the door, but there is a key that will open the door. I have several keys here, and I'm going to give them out. (*hand out keys*) When I ask you, come up and see if you can open the door with the key you have.

PRESENTATION: One of our keys stands for **GOODNESS** - being just plain GOOD. Did you ever have anyone say to you, "If you are a real good girl or a real good boy, you'll go to heaven." Maybe if we are truly good and sincere from now on we shall go to heaven, maybe that key will open the door. That one is the blue key. (*Hold up the paper representation of the key - the child who has the key with the blue ribbon attached will come forward and tries their key in the lock.*) No, our goodness will not open the door to heaven, for God says that all our goodness - that is "our righteousness" - is "as filthy rags." (Isaiah 64:6)

But perhaps since my mother is such a fine Christian, because she is such a godly woman, I as her child would be allowed in to heaven. You know, to be a Christian means a lot, and

since I'm her child, why shouldn't this key which stands for my **PARENTS' SALVATION** open the door for me? (*Child tries key with pink ribbon attached and fails*)
No! I can't enter in just because my mother and father can!

Perhaps you say that you go to church regularly, and I do all that I am asked to do. Well, let us try the key of **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP** (*Hold up the green one*). That one failed too, no matter how sincere 'John' was when he came up here to try it.

Surely this next key will open the door, for they say, "money talks". (*Hold up the gold key*)
We're going to talk about it before we try it. **GOLD AND RICHES!** That's what this stands for. Now if you had plenty and you gave it all to the poor and needy or to build great hospitals and libraries, surely God would open the door of heaven to you. Shall we try that key? It too fails, and I'm glad it does, for if we had to have money to open the door to heaven, not many of us would get in.

But a fine character and noble deeds even the poorest man or woman, boy or girl, may have and do. During war or times of crisis there have been many heroes - rich and poor alike. They have shown their strength and heroism in deeds that we have all admired. Some have even given their lives. Would not God open the door to all of them? This silver key stands for **STERLING CHARACTER AND NOBLE DEEDS**. (*Child tries it*)
No, it does not open the door, either. There is only one key that will open the door for all men everywhere.

We want to try that key now. It is the key that represents the **BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST**. One day over 2000 years ago they took him, the Lord of Glory, the One who had made them - they took him and placed a crown of cruel thorns upon his head and they nailed him to a cross. As he hung there he was suffering for you and for me. He was dying for your sins and for mine. The red key stands for his blood. Shall we try it? (*The open door reveals the picture of the Good Shepherd, and on the back of the door, the words: I AM THE DOOR.*)

CHALLENGE: There is only one key, there is only one entrance. But anyone may enter, anyone may have the key. Christ died for all that any one who wants to may come. They don't all come. Some try to get in another way. Some try to use other keys, just as we did today. As you bow your head in prayer I want you to ask yourself this question: "Have I been trying to use some of these other keys?" If you have, the Lord now offers you the one and only key: The blood of Jesus Christ. You may say, "Yes, Lord, I believe you died for me and rose again that the door might be open." Will you say it?

PRAYER CHORUS For God So Loved The World
(*To be sung slowly and prayerfully*)

PRAYER PERIOD

(*If so desired young people may go to their classes where the teacher can speak to them personally.*)

(It would be nice to make a key for every student to take home. Use pattern below and cut it from red construction paper and write a suitable Scripture on it.)



THE GOSPEL SHIRT

PREPARATION: Announce one week in advance to all who attend Sunday school that you would like them to wear their favourite T-shirt next week. Encourage them to wear a T-shirt with a slogan or picture. (You wear one too!)

Song - God's Way To Heaven (see page 35)
(reproduce copies or make into a power point slide)

Use the patterns provided on pages 36-39; enlarging them if needed. You could add colour or make them into a power point slide. If you want to use Joe as a poster, put double-sided tape on the pieces you will be attaching to Joe's t-shirt. Be imaginative and use real T-shirts if you want.

PROGRAM: Preliminaries should be held prior to the illustrated lesson. Realizing that each corps have special choruses they like to sing, I would suggest that these choruses be used to bring about a unity of Spirit.

Scripture - Matthew 18:2, 3 (LB)

Jesus called a small child over to him and set the little fellow down among them, and said, "Unless you turn to God from your sins, and become as little children, you will never get in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Announcements and Offering

Message

The Gospel Shirt

Much of what we do centres around advertising. Today the shirts you are wearing are a form of advertisement. Let's talk about your shirts for a moment. (*Permit the young people to display the shirts they have worn, but the comments should be controlled.*) Following comments about the shirts which have been worn proceed with message.

I would like you to meet my friend Joe. He has quite a collection of T-shirts. Let's take a look at what he is wearing today and what we can learn about him.

(Place illustrations 1 and 2 as you speak.)

Joe attends junior high school and loves football. I am sure he must be very proud of his school just as you are of yours. Another T-shirt I often see Joe in is this one. Can you imagine the exciting time he must have had riding the roller coasters at his favourite amusement park. (*elaborate about the rides and the sites he may have seen*) But one shirt he wears you may be surprised about because it has a message for you.

(Use illustration 3)

GOLD SLEEVES *(Place on Joe)*

“In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:2, 3)

Sing verse 1 of God’s Way to Heaven

We only live here on earth for a very short while. God, through Jesus, has something very special planned for us if we live for him.

BLACK STRIPE *(Place on Joe)*

“Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.” (James 4:17)

Sing verse 2 of God’s Way to Heaven

Each of us have things in our lives that tempt us to do wrong. If we choose to yield to what we know is wrong then that becomes sin in our life. Are you aware of what sin is? *(Permit a child to express what he feels sin is by giving an example.)*

RED STRIPE *(Place on Joe)*

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Sing verse 3 of God’s Way to Heaven

Isn’t it wonderful how much God loves us? He loves us even when we are doing wrong, but he hates the wrongs we are doing. When we want to make right the sin in our life, he even loves us enough to have died for our sin. It is only as we believe that Jesus can live in our hearts that our sins can be forgiven and forgotten by him.

WHITE STRIPE *(Place on Joe)*

“The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other so that you do not do what you want.” (Galatians 5:17)

Sing verse 4 of God’s Way to Heaven

When you recognize that you have sin in your life it is not always easy to just stop what is wrong. However, Jesus living in us will make us righteous and able to live above our wrongs, by trusting him to help us be overcomers.

(Place illustration 4 on Joe)

“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...” (Galatians 5:22)

Sing verse 5 of God’s Way to Heaven

When you give your life to God, he wants to see a change in you. As you grow in Christ, show him by living his way. Your life can be HIS MESSAGE. (extend an invitation for those in attendance to make a decision.)

(Close by placing illustration 5 on Joe. Just to remind everyone that God is preparing a place for them.)

Sing chorus “I Want to Live Right”

God’s Way to Heaven (Tune: Jesus Bids Us Shine)

- Verse 1 God has made a Heav’n for his own we’re told,
Where the street is fashioned of the purest gold.
Everyone is happy in that land so bright,
For there is no sorrow, no death or night.
- Verse 2 In God’s home on high there can be no sin;
All must be accepted who would enter in,
But the Bible tells us all have sinned we know,
There is no one worthy in earth below.
- Verse 3 God so loved the world that his Son he gave
On the cross to suffer, guilty souls to save.
Through the blood of Jesus we may be made clean,
For he bore the burden of all our sin.
- Verse 4 Jesus died for all, but each one must come
As a guilty sinner to God’s blessed Son,
Trusting him to cleanse us from sin’s awful stain,
And to make us righteous through his dear name.
- Verse 5 When we are redeemed by his precious blood,
We must live to please him as a child of God,
Growing in his likeness every passing day,
Witnessing to others along life’s way.

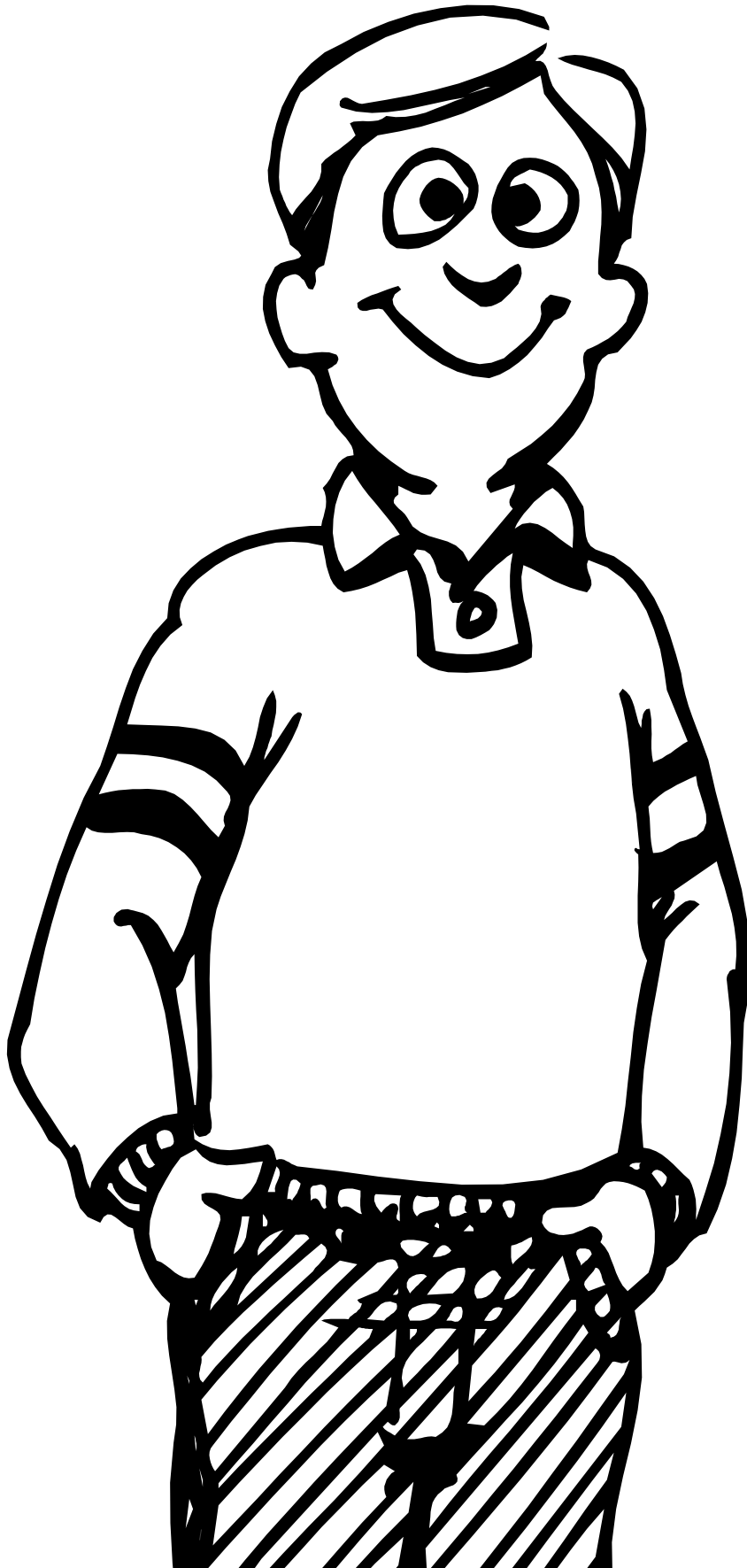


Illustration 1

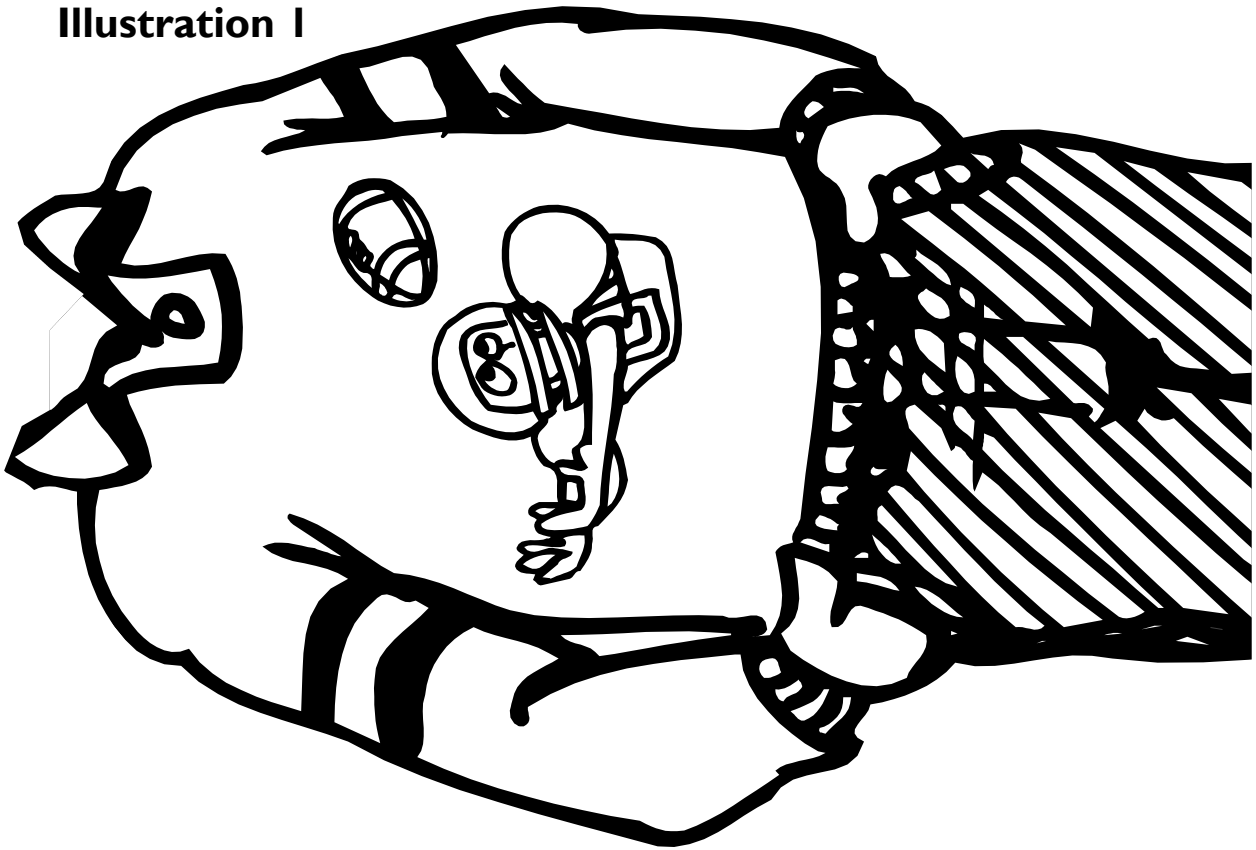


Illustration 2

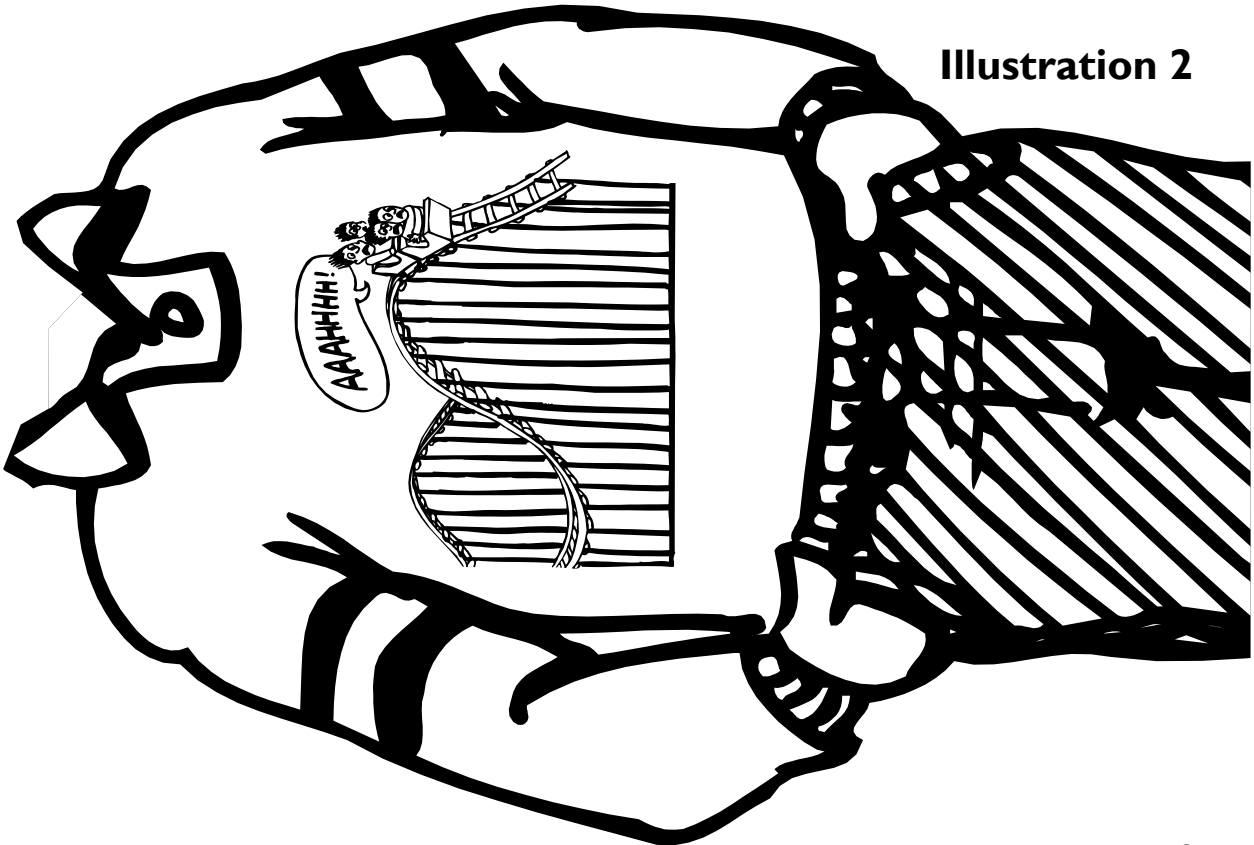
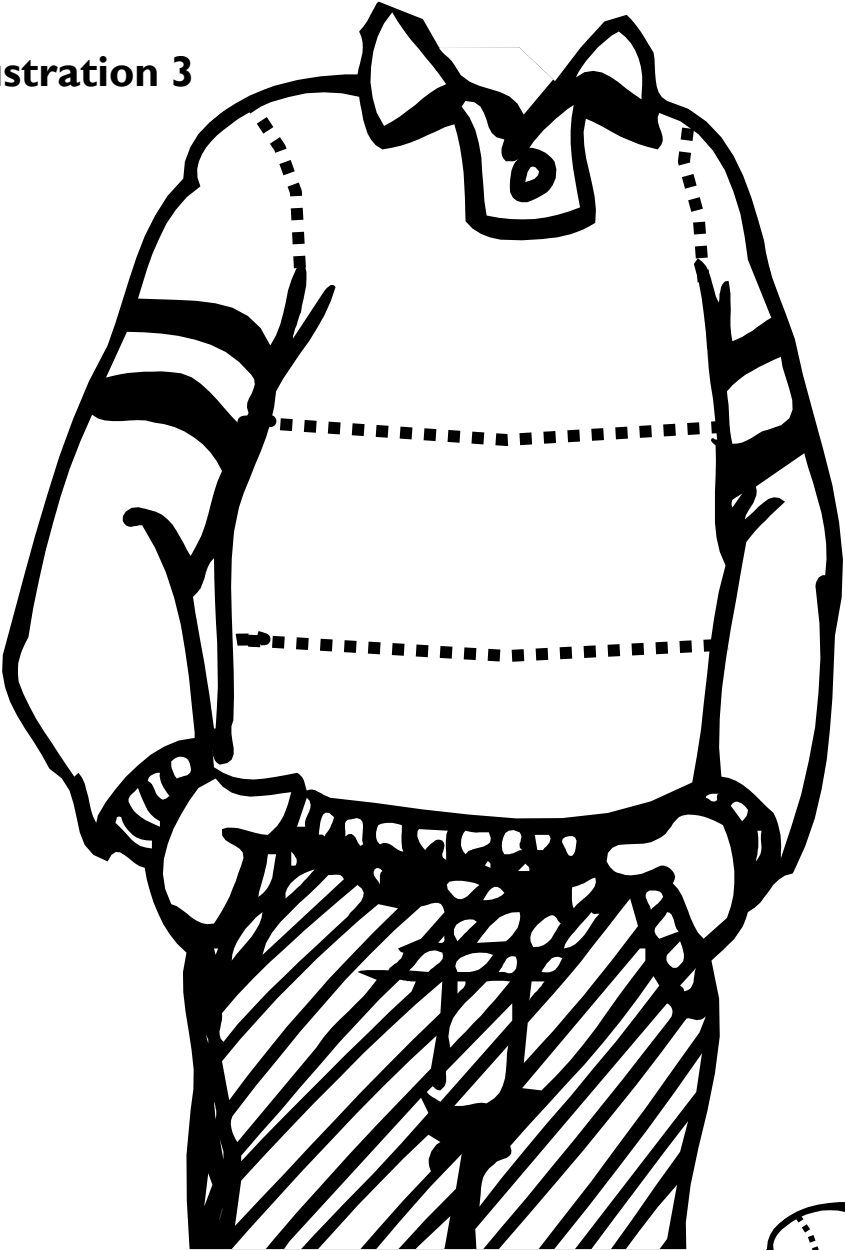


Illustration 3



Colour the above shirt as indicated. Then cut shirt along dotted lines to separate the colours.

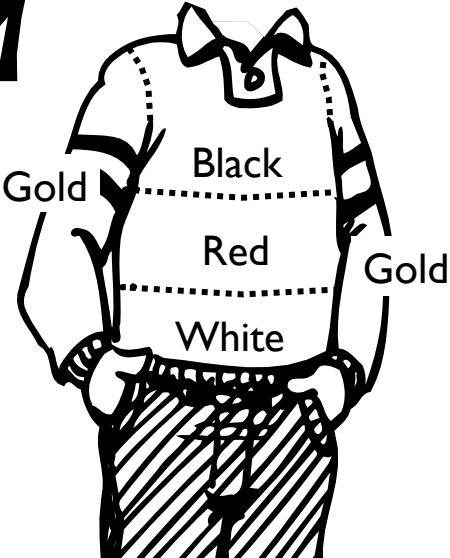


Illustration 4

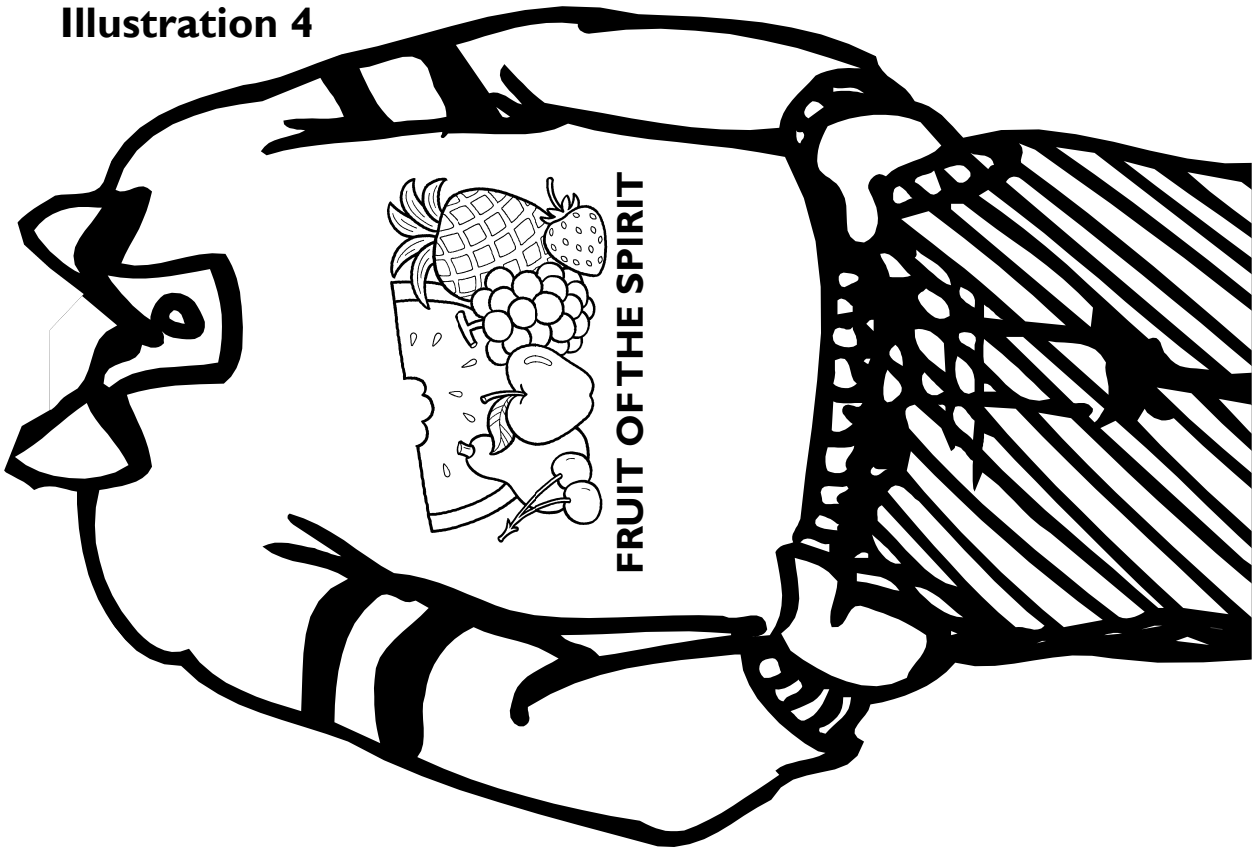
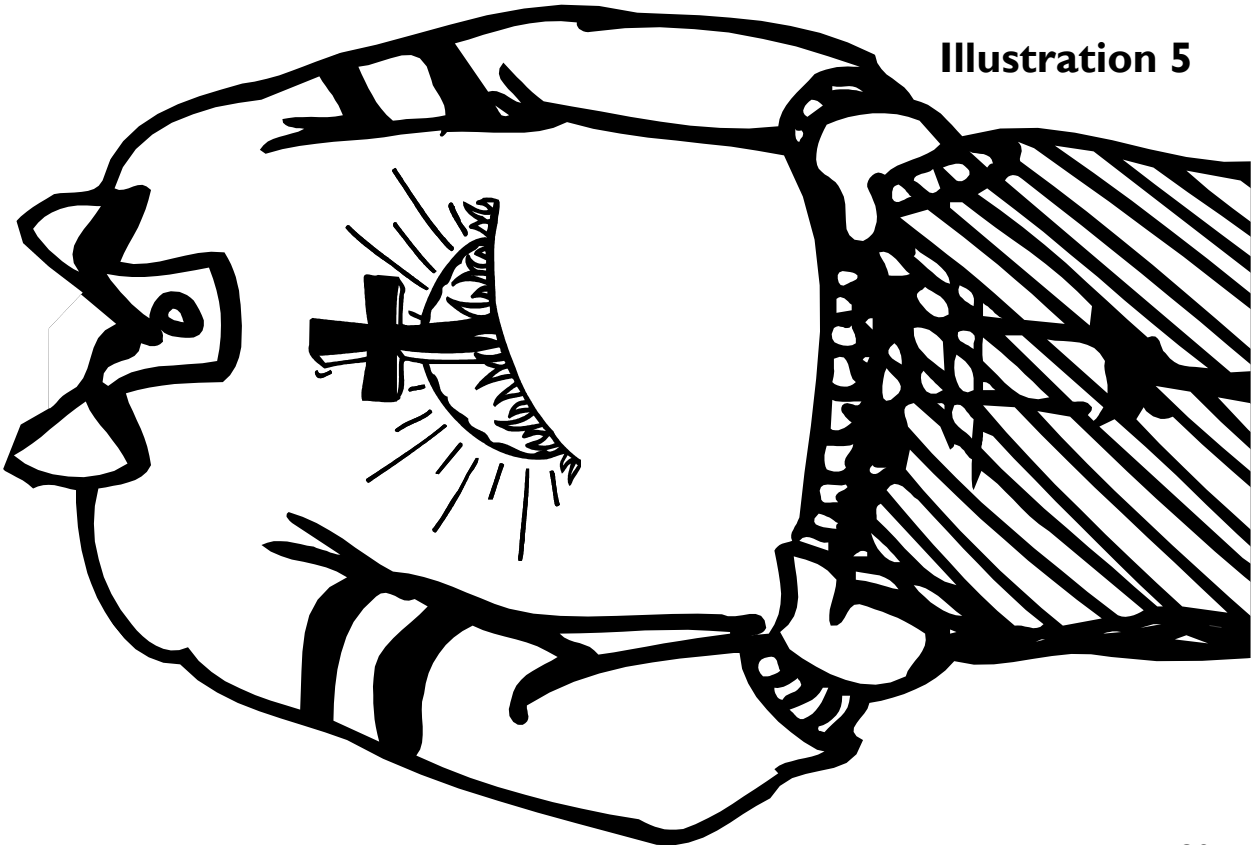


Illustration 5



THESE SHOES WERE MADE FOR...

Suggested Choruses:

1. Be Careful Little Feet Where You Go
2. Follow, Follow (Junior Action Accompaniment CD, CD I, Track 8)
3. We Want To See Jesus Lifted High
4. Walk, Walk In The Light
5. Silver and Gold Have I None
6. Step By Step
7. Be Bold, Be Strong

(Before the selected day for this meeting, obtain some large pairs of men's shoes and several pairs of high heel shoes. Allow the young people to put these shoes on during the chorus sing and march in them while singing the choruses.)

Prayer	Litany of Praise	YPSM
Leader:	Come let us praise the Lord; his works are wonderful!	
GROUP:	WE PRAISE YOU, LORD	
Leader:	For seeing eyes and hearing ears	
GROUP:	WE PRAISE YOU, LORD	
Leader:	For tasting tongues and arms to fling	
GROUP:	WE PRAISE YOU, LORD	
Leader:	For toes to wiggle and lips to purse	
GROUP:	WE PRAISE YOU, LORD	
Leader:	For hard teeth that crunch apples	
GROUP:	WE PRAISE YOU, LORD	
Leader:	For elastic lungs, inhaling and exhaling	
GROUP:	WE PRAISE YOU, LORD	
Leader:	For hips to spin hoola hoops	
GROUP:	WE PRAISE YOU, LORD	
Leader:	For legs that take us where we want to go	
GROUP:	FOR ALL THE PARTS OF OUR BODIES, WE PRAISE YOU, LORD.	

Song	Trust and Obey	A Teacher
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Quiz

Polishing Up On Our Shoes

1. Who had to remove his shoes because he was standing on holy ground?
2. Who took off his shoe so that he could marry Ruth?
3. Whose shoes did not wear out for forty years?
4. Whose shoes did John the Baptist say he was unworthy to untie?
5. Whose shoes provide “feet fitted with readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”
6. Where were the Israelites when they were told to eat lamb with their loins girded, shoes on their feet, staff in hand and in haste?
7. Who came home from a far land and his father put on him the best robe, a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet?
8. Whom did Jesus tell to go spread the gospel and take no bag, extra tunic, staff or shoes?
9. Who was deceived by the people of Gibeon when they carried mouldy bread, wore old clothes and old shoes?
10. Who did the Lord say would sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes?
11. Who helped a king win a battle and refused to accept even a thread or a shoe string (thong of a sandal)?
12. The Bible does not say “you need running shoes,” but it is implied. Who implied that we need running shoes?

Answers:

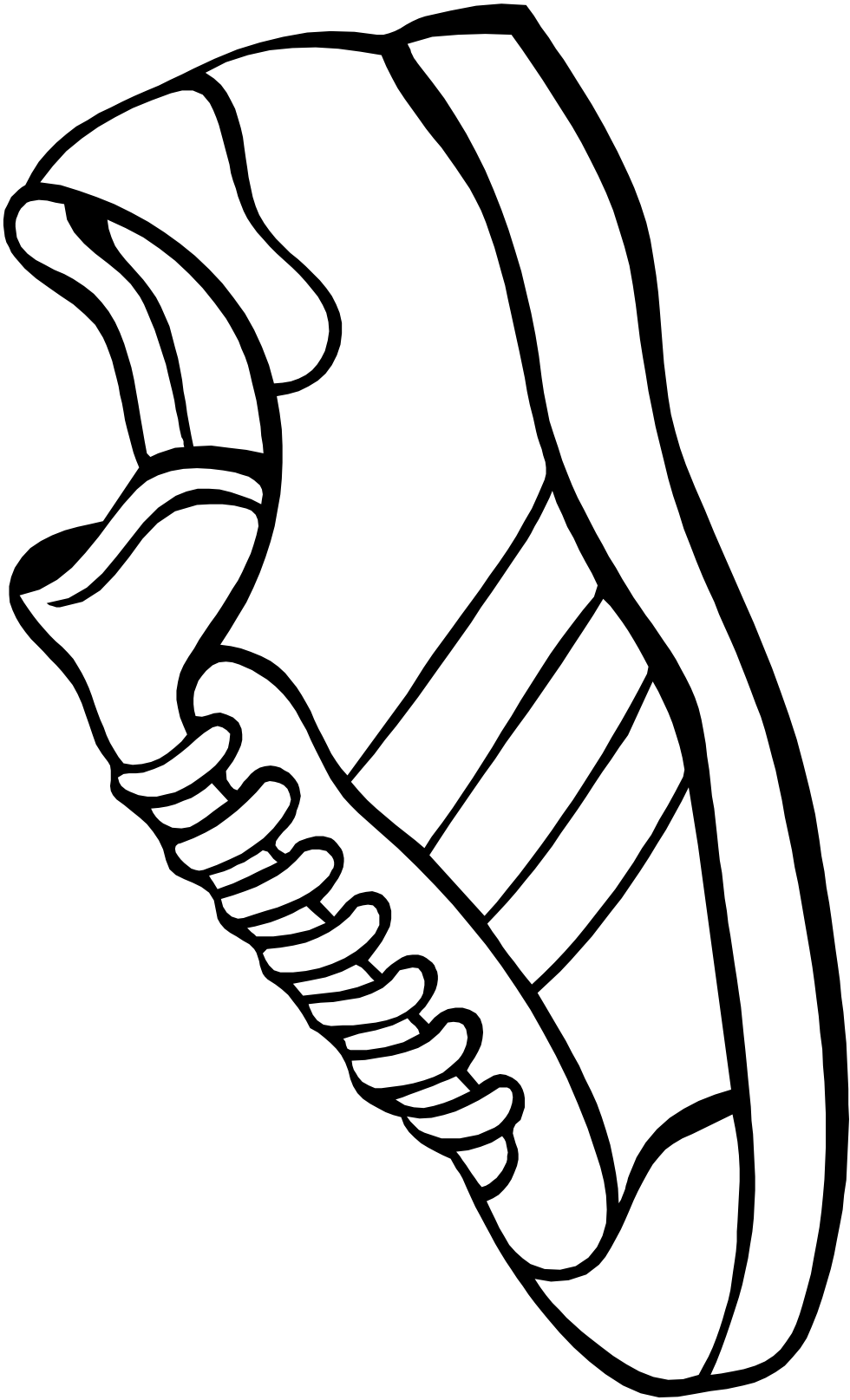
1. Moses (Exodus 3:4,5) or Joshua (Joshua 5:15) 2. Boaz (Ruth 4:8) 3. The children of Israel (Deuteronomy 29:1,2,5) 4. Jesus' (John 1:27) 5. The Christian's (Ephesians 6:10,11,15) 6. Egypt (Exodus 12:1,11) 7. The prodigal son (Luke 15:12,17-19,22) 8. Disciples (Matthew 10:5,10) 9. Joshua (Joshua 9:3-6) 10. Israel (Amos 2:6) 11. Abraham or Abram (Genesis 14:22-23) 12. Paul (1 Corinthians 9:24)

Scripture

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Reproduce copies of the running shoe pattern on page 42. Write one or two words of the Bible verse on each shoe. Have the young people put the shoes in the correct order. Use your imagination.



Object Lesson

Which Shoe?

Materials Needed: Have a suitcase filled with the following shoes: baby shoe, ice skate, slipper, running shoe, high heel. Bring one out at a time.

We enjoy shoes. Isn't it fun to buy a new pair of shoes? Today, we have shoes that can represent different times in our lives.

1. **Baby Shoe:** The baby shoe represents our times of learning. School lessons. Manners. Customs. Each of us have the opportunity to learn. We start out in baby shoes, not able to take big steps. But, we should always be curious about life — especially God's Word.
2. **Ice Skate:** Ephesians 4:1 "...walk worthy of the calling with which you were called..." (NKJV) This is an interesting shoe to wear. How many have ever been on ice skates? You have seen people skating, and they do it easily. This skate can represent the talents God has given to us. Each of us have some special abilities that we were given. We should always use our talent for God.
3. **Running Shoe:** Hebrews 12:1 "...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." This shoe is familiar to everyone. We probably all have a pair of one kind or another. The running shoe can represent our activity. Where do we go when we have extra time? How do we spend it? We should be very careful how we spend our "free" time.
4. **High Heel:** Girls will understand better about wearing heels. They are a symbol of being grown up. But, they hurt your feet and legs. This shoe represents time in our lives when we feel uncomfortable about things we have done. Maybe we haven't used our activities in the right way. Or, we have done something we know isn't pleasing to God. We sin. We start to hurt inside. We know we must do something.
5. **Slipper:** Psalm 23:3 "He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." The slipper can represent comfort. We love to throw off our heavy shoes and slip on a loose, cozy pair of slippers. When we feel comfortable because of the things we have done wrong, we can come to the Lord and ask him to help us. To forgive us. And he will.

Lead into a time of decision, presenting the way of salvation.

Decision Time

Prayer Chorus

Be Still In The Presence of the Lord

Prayer of Dedication

Corps Officer

DIRECTIONS

Theme: Following God's directions for our lives.

Materials Needed: Various shapes of road signs, maps, compasses and a picture of the Bible. These items should be placed around the room to enhance the program.

Flyers: Should be developed and distributed during the week. The theme and key verse should be presented on the flyers and perhaps questions to be answered and returned on Sunday. Each person might be asked to bring something which gives direction; a small prize could be given out for the most unusual item.

An interest centre could be set up and used as part of the directions.

Songs: If a program is used, the choruses should be included. Be sure to have the words on PowerPoint slides to help those who are present to feel more comfortable with unfamiliar songs.

Scripture Verse: A large outline of the Bible the size of poster board could be prepared with the words of John 14:6 on it. Make a puzzle by cutting the poster into various size pieces. Those attending would be asked who could put the verse in the proper order.

Special Music: Making use of your young people is very important. If you don't have a special music group, have a class prepare in advance to use puppets to sing along with recorded accompaniment music.

Suggested Meeting Outline

Song I Am The Way, The Truth And Life

Prayer (include Lord's Prayer) Corps Officer

Song Every Move I Make

Illustrated Scripture Verses John 14:6
Jesus answered, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Special Music Jr. Band, Singing Company or Solo
(You might also try a special number with puppets)

Bible Drill

Travellers

Have two figures or team members. Make two roads the same distance in length on your board and mark off equal amounts of the road. Each time the individual or team answers a question correctly, you advance the figure.

The final destination is Heaven. The first one to reach the destination is the winner. The scripture verse should be printed on the picture of Heaven.

Questions:

1. Who went to a “distant country”, and wasted his wealth in wild living?
2. Who had to go into a far country because he murdered his brother?
3. What great man was directed by God to leave the home of his ancestors, and go into a land where God said, “I will make you into a great nation”?
4. Who, in the Bible, made three great missionary journeys?
5. What old man, and his seventy descendants, went on a long journey to another land, because of famine?
6. Who went on a long journey out of curiosity, and exclaimed: “Indeed, not even half was told me”?
7. Who rescued a traveller who was going from Jerusalem to Jericho?
8. What men travelled a long distance, following a star?
9. What father and mother and baby went on a long journey to Egypt to escape death?
10. Who was ordered by God to make a journey to Nineveh, and disobeyed?

Answers:

1. The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
2. Cain (Genesis 4:14)
3. Abram, later called Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)
4. Paul (Acts 13:13-14; 16:6; 18:23)
5. Jacob (Genesis 46:6)
6. The queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:7)
7. The good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)
8. The Wise Men or Magi (Matthew 2:1-12)
9. Joseph and Mary, and the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:13-15)
10. Jonah (Jonah 1:1,2)

Theme Song

I Am The Way, The Truth and The Life

Suggested Message Outline

Directions

Scripture: John 14:6

Introduction: Every day we are asked to follow directions. When we cross the street, go to school, or work at a job. The doctor gives us a prescription and we must follow directions. It would be silly to start a trip and not consult a map or program our GPS. Every good sailor knows the importance of having a compass along whenever he goes to sea. (Refer to the signs you have put up around the room.)

Jesus gives us direction for our lives in his Word. If we follow his directions, we will reach our destination. We will have confidence that our lives are pleasing to God and satisfaction that he is leading no matter what may happen.

A. Jesus said, “I am the way”

1. Matthew 7:13—way to destruction

2. Matthew 7:14—way of life
3. Example—of one who listened and followed God’s directions. Noah (Genesis 6-9)

B. Jesus said, “I am the truth”

1. Psalm 91:4—protection through his Word
2. Psalm 119: 30—once we have chosen the truth of Christ, we know he will lead us
3. Example—one who chooses not to follow the directions—Rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-30)

C. Jesus said, “I am the life”

1. John 11:17-44—story of raising Lazarus (Matthew 11)
2. John 3:36—choosing eternal life

Conclusion: Jesus wants everyone to follow his directions for their lives. He loves us and wants us to enjoy our walk through life and enter into the joys of Heaven.

Jesus loves us and tells only the truth. He would never lie. Listen to Jesus as he gives direction through his Word and as we talk with him. He only asks that we love and trust him and he will one day welcome us into his Kingdom. Remember what Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” He is speaking today. Are you listening?

Song

My Life Is In You Lord

Benediction

Corps Officer

(Dismiss for a short class time. This should be a time for the teachers to reinforce the decision time. The teachers should take attendance and record those who made a decision. This will assist in their personal follow-up.)

Traffic Signs (Decorations)

Decorate your meeting space with traffic signs.

Use the patterns below, enlarge and duplicate on poster board, construction paper or large sheets of coloured paper. Tape to wall, doors, windows or hang from the ceiling with string.



Chrissy: I meant to. But I guess I forgot. Here—let me get one together.

(Chrissy throws all sorts of things into the suitcase, muttering “I’ll need this, and this, and this...” Sloppily she shuts the suitcase, so that its contents fall to the floor. Meanwhile Brenda is getting very impatient.)

Chrissy: Oh, no!

Brenda: Come on, Chrissy! Here, let me help.

(Together, the two girls quickly pack the suitcase and head for the door.)

Chrissy: Let’s go.

Brenda: *(noticing Chrissy’s feet)* Chrissy, your shoes! Where are your shoes?

(Chrissy slips the shoes on the wrong feet and waddles quickly towards the door.)

Brenda: They’re on the wrong feet! *(Chrissy switches the shoes.)* Finally. Now, where’s your plane ticket? We don’t want to leave **that** behind!

Chrissy: I... well, uh... Can’t I buy one when I get to the airport?

Brenda: *(angrily)* No, you can’t. I can’t believe you! You’re just not ready. Forget it. I can’t wait around for you; I’m going by myself.

(Brenda exists in a huff.)

Chrissy: But... I really wanted to go to Disney World! I can’t believe I was so stupid. Now I’ll never get there!

Challenge

Are You Ready?

Materials Needed: Bible, travel brochures, and ‘plane ticket’ (or PowerPoint with these items illustrated).

Pretty silly, right? You wouldn’t plan to go to Disney World and not be ready when the time came to go, would you? No way!

But some people are all excited about going away to another place—and they aren’t ready to go. Do you know where that place is? That’s right—Heaven. And when Jesus comes to take us home, they’ll be left behind.

So how can we make sure we’re ready?

Well, I know that if I wanted to go on vacation, I'd read about the place where I'd be going. I'd probably get some travel brochures or google information (*display these*) to tell me all about how to get there, what there is to do there, and what the people are like there.

Do we have a "travel brochure" for Heaven? Yes, the Bible. (*Display Bible*) The Bible tells us how to get to Heaven and what God's kingdom is like. Most importantly, since we'll be with God in Heaven, the Bible tells us all about him.

But knowing about Heaven isn't the same as knowing you're going there. For that, you need a "ticket". (*Display "plane ticket" or "e-ticket"*.) If I have a ticket to go to Florida, I'll be allowed on the plane to get there.

What is our "ticket" to Heaven? Our ticket is found in our Scripture verse, John 3:16. Let's read it again. (*Do so.*) We must believe that God's Son, Jesus, died to pay the price for our sin. We must ask him to be in charge of our life. And we must continue to love and obey him every day.

Call for Decision

If you would like to do all of these things, Pray with me, this prayer:

Dear Father,

Thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross so that, by believing in him, we can go to Heaven. Please forgive me for the wrong things I've done, not just because I want to go to Heaven, but because I want to be your child. I promise to love you and obey you.

In Jesus Name, Amen.

Closing Chorus

Thank You, Lord for Saving My Soul

Closing Prayer



THE SEEKING CHRIST

Preparation: Draw a tree on a large piece of poster board. Make leaves out of construction paper and glue them on. Collect some real colourful leaves and iron them between the pieces of wax paper or cut leaves out of different colours of construction paper. Stick a chorus to the back of each leaf and place them on a tree. Also place other items to be included in the program on leaves and stick these leaves on the tree. (Each word from the memory verse is written on a leaf. These leaves can be scrambled up and placed on the tree. Children can take turns trying to unscramble the memory verse.)

Participants pick leaves one at a time and do whatever is on the back of the leaf. The program will not go in the usual order, which makes it interesting. (Save the story and decision time for last.)

Program Ideas

Choruses

Zacchaeus Was A Very Little Man
My God Is So Big
God's Not Dead
Stand Up And Shout It
He Paid A Debt
God's Love Is Like A Circle

Memory Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Scripture

Luke 19:1-10

Decision Time

Introduction: People will often do what they have to do in order to get what they want. Some kids get part-time jobs and work afternoons or Saturday mornings simply because they want a little spending money. Some kids will quit a good job because they want to go to camp. Some kids will clean their whole room so that they can stay up late to watch a special program or get some other privilege.

In our story, we read of a man who did what he had to do to get what he wanted. Zacchaeus was a tax collector and not well liked by other people. He wanted to see Jesus because he had heard about him. But Zacchaeus was too small. So he climbed a tree and not only did Zacchaeus get to see Jesus; but Jesus saw Zacchaeus, called him down from the tree and went to his house. Let's take a look at Zacchaeus and see what he did to receive salvation. First, we find Zacchaeus...

1. **Seeking Jesus**—Zacchaeus had probably heard of Jesus and all that he did: healing and helping others. So Zacchaeus wanted to see who this great man was. But, being so short, Zacchaeus wasn't able to see Jesus through the crowd. He could have given up—he had a good excuse. But he didn't! He did what he had to do! He climbed the tree and was able to see Jesus. **He did something—he made the effort.**

Illustration: Two boys wanted to play on a baseball team. One boy practiced with his brother and went to the tryouts and made the team. The other boy just thought about it and dreamed about it. He never practiced and he skipped tryouts. Naturally, he didn't make the team. One boy didn't do anything. The other boy did what he had to do. Just as Zacchaeus sought Jesus and the boy sought a position on the baseball team, we need to seek out Jesus. Revelation 3:20 says:

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

Jesus is waiting for us to open the door of our hearts to him and when we do...

2. **Jesus Comes To Us**—We don't have to wait for Jesus to come to us. He is already there waiting for us to invite him in. Jesus knows each one of us personally! When he got to the tree where Zacchaeus was sitting, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus come down immediately!” He didn't say, “Hey shortie—whoever you are...” He knew who Zacchaeus was. He also knows each one of us by our names and he knows all about us. We might have some things in our lives that no one knows about—not even our best friend. Maybe we've done something wrong or we've been mean and we never told anybody. But Jesus knows! He knows all about us. Jesus wanted Zacchaeus to know all about him. That's why Jesus wanted to go to Zacchaeus' home. **And Jesus wants us to know him personally.**

Illustration: If you've ever had a new kid in your class at school, you know that the only way to become friends and get to know him/her is to talk and spend time with him/her. That's how it is with our relationship with Jesus. We need to talk to him in prayer and read the Bible which contains his words to us. Jesus wants to have a **personal relationship** with each one of us so we see that...

3. **Jesus Brings Salvation**—When Jesus comes into our lives many things change. We don't get a new name or a new face, but we change on the inside and our actions change. When Jesus came into Zacchaeus' life, he changed. He was filled with joy—he was glad to have Jesus come to his house. And after years of cheating people and stealing tax money, Zacchaeus had a real change of heart. He wanted to pay back four times the amount he owed anybody! **When Jesus enters our lives, it should fill us with joy and make us want to change our ways.** Jesus wants to be the Saviour of every person. You don't have to be someone special. Salvation is for everybody.

Illustration: We are all different. Take a look around the room. Some are boys—some are girls—some have blonde hair or black hair or brown hair. There are blue eyes and brown eyes, big kids, small kids, short kids, tall kids. Everyone is different—but Jesus loves us all and wants to be our Saviour.

Application: Jesus came down from Heaven and lived and died for your sins because he loves you. He wants to come into your life and be your Saviour. He wants to forgive your sins—everything that you've done wrong and give you a new life. Won't you let Jesus change your life right now?

JESUS CALLS US TO SHINE

Materials Needed: Large pillar candle, A tapered candle for each student, cardboard squares (centre punched) to protect young people's hands from wax, matches.

Scripture:

John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Share: (If possible gather your young people into a circle, giving each of them a tapered candle to hold while the leader holds a lit pillar candle. Darken the room/space. Pause for a moment before speaking allowing the darkness to settle around the group.)

Our room is very dark. Think of our room as the world around us. The world can be a very dark place. There are many things that make our world full of darkness. What do you think makes our world dark? (Encourage responses.) Our world is full of darkness because of sin or our wrong doing. Each of us puts ourselves first, we are selfish and self-serving, and we do things that are disobedient towards God. When we are disobedient towards God we bring darkness into the world.

Look at the candle I am holding (if not lit be sure to light it now). See how this one light brightens our darkened room? This candle represents Jesus. Jesus is the light of the world. Listen to what he says in John 8:12 (read verse). Jesus is the light of the world. It is through Him that we can have our wrongdoing (our sin) removed from our lives so that we will no longer have to walk in darkness. Today I invite you to ask God to forgive your sin, to remove the darkness from your life and to be the light in your life. If you would like Jesus to be the light in your life come and light your candle from this Christ candle I am holding.

Not only is Jesus a light to us in our darkness but he calls us to shine His light into the world for others to see. (Read Matthew 5:16.) Perhaps you have already invited Jesus to be a part of your life so today I challenge you to let your light shine for others. I invite you to come and light your candle as a reminder to shine for Jesus. May we all be challenged to make decisions and take actions that will help others to see and know that God loves them and wants them to live in his light.

(After those who wish have lit their candles, have a time of prayer. Pray for the decisions that have been made and that each would call on God to help them shine His light in the world around them.)

Sing: Jesus Bids Us Shine.

WASHED CLEAN

Materials Needed:

Iodine
White Handkerchief
2 clear bowls
Photographic Fixer Solution (purchase from camera store; Henry's)
Water

Preparation:

Fill two bowls with one liter of water (in one bowl have approximately 150-200mls of photographic fixer solution)

Devotional Thought:

- Talk about wrong things – lying, disobeying, etc. (add iodine to first bowl).
- God calls those wrong things ‘sin’.
- Our lives become unclean (add handkerchief to iodine water; handkerchief will become soiled)
- Because God loves us, He gave us a gift – salvation through Jesus.
- “For God so loved the world ...” (John 3:16)
- Because of Jesus’ death on the cross and His rising from the dead, He can wash away (forgive) our sin.
- I John 1:9. When we confess our sin and ask God to forgive us (put handkerchief slowly into the bowl containing the fixer solution; handkerchief will turn white again), we become clean (‘pure’) again.
- Talk about Jesus wanting us to share the “good news” with others (put the now white handkerchief into the bowl of dirty water; dirty water will become clear). As we share His good news, others come to know Christ ... and their lives are transformed.

(Submitted by Major Carson Decker)



HE KNOWS YOUR NAME

Materials Needed: Items that clearly have your name written on them (sports jersey, binder, pencil case, books, key chain, etc.), strips of paper, permanent markers, and a wooden or paper cross near the front of the room.

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-3 CEV

“Descendants of Jacob, I the Lord, created you and formed your nation. Israel, don’t be afraid. I have rescued you. I have called you by name; now you belong to me. When you cross rivers, I will be with you, and you won’t drown. When you walk through fires, you won’t be burned or scorched by flames. I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, the God who saves you.”

Share:

(Be sure to wear or hold something that clearly has your name on it.) What is one thing you have that belongs to you and you alone? (Allow kids to suggest ideas) The one thing that is yours only is your name! It’s unique to you. It tells people who you are. Let’s hear your name or nickname. (Allow kids to stand up and tell you their name.) We also use our name to identify stuff that is ours? What do you notice about what I’m wearing (or holding)?

Your name is part of what makes you, you. When someone knows you they call you by name. How does it feel when people remember your name? (Encourage responses) When people remember our name we feel valued. We feel we are important to them.

Let’s read Isaiah 43:1-3 together. (Read aloud) What do we read about in verse one? God created Jacob and tells Israel not to be afraid. What do you think they might have been afraid of? What things are you afraid of? (Encourage responses) God tells Jacob and Israel not to fear for he has called them by name and they are his.

God not only calls Jacob and Israel by name, but he knows and calls each of us by name too. God goes on in verses 2 and 3 to promise that he will be with us as we go through difficulties – that he will protect us. God promises to walk alongside of us. God tells us that He is the Holy One and the one who saves us.

Today, God is calling out to each one of us. He knows my name. He knows your name. He is calling you by name into a relationship with him. You matter so much to God that He knows your name and calls you by it!

Will you answer when He calls your name? If you want to be in a relationship with God, I invite you to come and take one of these strips of paper and write your name on it and place it on (at) the cross. I invite you to come and answer God’s calling.

(Lead the children in a time of prayer, confessing our need for God’s forgiveness and inviting Him to remove our sin/wrong doing. Thank Him for His love and desire to know us and call us His children.)

Play: Music video for the song “Calling Us All by Name” by Paul Baloche or “He Knows My Name” by Tommy Walker.

HE CALLS YOU BY NAME

Materials Needed: Red plastic cups, string, scissors, permanent markers. (Poke a hole into the bottom of each cup. Cut lengths of string (approximately 24" in length). Tie a knot in the string and feed it through the bottom of the cup.



Scripture:

Isaiah 43:1-3 CEV

“Descendants of Jacob, I the Lord, created you and formed your nation. Israel, don’t be afraid. I have rescued you. I have called you by name; now you belong to me. When you cross rivers, I will be with you, and you won’t drown. When you walk through fires, you won’t be burned or scorched by flames. I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, the God who saves you.”

Isaiah 49:1 NIV

“Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother’s womb he has spoken my name.”

Share:

(Show plastic cup with string) Does anyone have any idea what this cup with a string might be used for? (Encourage responses) When I was a kid (or when my mom was a kid they used) we used to use cups on a string as pretend telephones. We’d use them to call and have conversation with our friends. Today we have better ways of calling and talking to our friends.

When we want to communicate with our friends how do we get ahold of them? (text, snap chat, email, phone, etc.) What way do you use most to contact your friends? (Encourage responses)

Listen to what the Bible says in Isaiah 43:1-3. (Read aloud) What do we read about in verse one? God created Jacob and tells Israel not to be afraid. What do you think they might have been afraid of? What things are you afraid of? (Encourage responses) God tells Jacob and Israel not to fear for he has called them by name and they are his.

God not only calls Jacob and Israel by name, but he knows and calls each of us too. We talk to our friends using text message, snap chat and maybe phone calls, but how does God talk to us? (Encourage responses) God talks to us in many ways as well. He might not phone us but we can receive “text messages” from him though the Bible, he whispers to us by giving us certain thoughts, he speaks to us through others and he talks to us through nature around us.

The problem with hearing God is that we need to be listening to God's talking to us. What things might get in the way of God talking to us or us hearing what God is saying? Interruptions to communicating with God can come through our own self-centredness and not listening. Our wrong doing, our disobedience or sin keeps us from hearing God. Our own desires or will can keep us from listening to God because we might not want to do what we think he is going to ask us to do.

God knows each of us by name. He's known us since before we were born. Isaiah 49:1 says "Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name." Before you were born God was inviting you to have a relationship with him. Before you were born he was calling you his. What about you? Can you hear God calling you by name? Are you willing to belong to him? Are you ready to listen to him?

Will you answer when he calls your name? If you want to be in a relationship with God, I invite you to come and take one of these cups and write your name on the inside. I invite you to come and answer God's calling.

(Lead the children in a time of prayer, confessing our need for God's forgiveness and inviting Him to remove our sin/wrong doing. Thank Him for His love and desire to know us and call us His children.)

Play: Music video for the song "Calling Us All by Name" by Paul Baloche.

(The following ideas were submitted by Karen Allington.)

In Jesus Steps

Materials Needed: Cutout of feet, enough for each child, and pens.

Scripture: John 12:20-32 (John 12:26); Matthew 9:9

Have footprint cutouts available. Invite the children to come and sign their name on a footprint if they want to follow in Jesus' steps. Post the cutouts on a wall or bulletin board as a reminder of their decision to follow in Jesus' steps.

Precious Gems

Materials Needed: A basket with plastic gemstones/shiny stones for each child, and pens.

Scripture: John 3:1-16 (Nicodemus) or Matthew 16:44-45

Place a basket with gemstones at the front of the room or at the foot of the cross. During your decision time teach the children that they are precious gemstones. Reminding them that the gems in the basket are symbolic, invite them to come and choose a gem if they have found their treasure in Jesus. The gemstone is a reminder that you have asked Jesus to be your special treasure.

Shredded Idols

Materials Needed: Paper, pens and a paper shredder (someone to watch the shredder).

Scripture: Judges 6 & 7 (Gideon) or Mark 10:17-27

During your decision time, invite the children to write down the idols they are tempted to worship other than God. These could include: sports, family, friends, television, time on devices, etc. Put the papers through a paper shredder symbolizing that you no longer want these things to have first place in your life. (You could also use this idea if teaching about worries (Matthew 6:25-34).)

Storm Conqueror

Materials Needed: A cross, sticky notes, pens and tape/thumbtacks.

Scripture: Psalm 107:28-29 (NLT); or Mark 4:35-41 or Luke 8:22-25; 2 Kings 6:8-23;

Psalm 46:1-2; Thessalonians 3:2-3; Isaiah 43:1-2

During your decision time invite the young people to write on the sticky notes storms (troubles) that they are facing. Have them come and attach their "storms" to the cross giving them over to Jesus.

Fish-Shaped Gifts

Materials Needed: Fish-shaped cut outs (enough for each child), pens and a basket.

Scripture: John 6:1-14; 1 Chronicles 29:10-18

Using the story of the boy with the loaves and fishes, invite the young people to take a fish and write down any special gifts, talents or abilities they have and offer them to Jesus. Encourage the children to pray and offer Jesus these "fish" that he might use them in a way that will honor Him, glorify Him and show others His love. Leave the fish in a basket at the mercy seat (or under the cross).



Follow-Up

The initial decision of an individual to follow Jesus is a life changing event. While this is very important, the follow-up to this decision will be critical. It could be said that the decision is 10% of effort while the follow-up is worth 90%. It is what follows the decision that will not only show the reality of the decision but will maintain a relationship with God. A decision made for God that does not change a life is not really a genuine decision. This does not mean that a believer must live a perfect life and will never fail; it just means that there is a consistent desire to grow towards God.

Although it is God who does the greatest works in a believer to grow as a Christian, we still have a responsibility to encourage each other in our Christian life. If we are working with children, there are a variety of things we can do as leaders to encourage them in their spiritual growth.

LIFESTYLE WITNESS

A child is greatly encouraged in their Christian faith through the example of other believers. If your life clearly demonstrates a Christian lifestyle then a child can learn and follow your example. Be aware of what examples children have in their lives. You may have children who are from a strong Christian family, and so you will know they have examples at home. These children will also need to see others outside of their family living what they believe. This means you if you are working with them and any other leaders and friends of the family they may know. If a child is fortunate he/she will have many strong committed Christians who clearly demonstrate their faith to them. This is not, however, the case in many situations.

Other children may only have contact with Christians through you and the group you work with. These children will need you to reach out to them in an even more purposeful way than the children described above. Try to involve these children with other Christians. The excitement of working with these children is the possibility of their lives impacting their family. It may be difficult for some children to have the freedom to discuss their decision to follow Jesus with their family, but it can be an opportunity to reach out to a new family. Just be aware of the child's situation and be sensitive to how their family and others impact their choices and their understanding of right and wrong.

Simply be aware of what sort of influences are in a child's life after they make a decision. If they are involved in a regular program or Sunday school then you are likely to have regular contact with them. This contact can be a great influence. If they are not connected to a

regular program or ministry try to get them connected. Otherwise, pray that God will bring people into each child's life to influence them. God will be faithful to look after a child that has truly reached out to him.

PRAYER

You may have spent a lot of time praying for a decision to happen, and now that it has, don't stop praying. Pray for children who have made a decision. Ask others to pray for specific children. Let the children know they are being prayed for either by directly telling them or through a short note or card.

If you are working with a specific group of children, encourage them to pray for each other. This is something to build up whether there have been decisions made or not. For ideas to encourage your children to pray, check out www.saMinistryHelps.ca/Toolkit. (This is a resource website produced by the territorial corps ministries department).

MENTORING

We can all benefit from mentors in our lives. A mentor is someone who is further along in their Christian life and can encourage someone else as they are trying to grow towards God. A good mentor would be an adult who is sincere in their Christian life, or you may be able to match up older teens with younger children in some cases. The mentor would be a prayer partner, a person to talk to, and a caregiver. Try to find specific mentors for children who have made decisions.

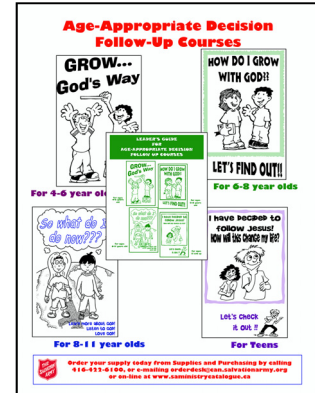
Mentors should be matched with two or more children so that he or she is not alone with one child. The mentor would take time to spend with the children on a regular basis to keep track of how they are doing. As a leader you could be a mentor to a couple of children, but you will need to be sensitive to all of the children in your group. It is good to get others involved with specific children so the children can have more contacts with other Christians. This doesn't have to involve a lot of time. It could simply be a five minute phone call during the week to see how they are doing or a card of encouragement letting them know they were prayed for. Of course, if there are any major things happening in a child's life, it is good if a mentor can take extra time with the child on these occasions.

The territorial children and youth ministries department has a pre-teen/teen mentoring program which follows the student connection planner journal. For more information about this program visit www.saMinistryResources.ca. Another great resource is Major Beverley Ivany's book, "Mentorship: A Guide for Developing Healthy Mentoring Relationships". This book provides conversation starters that will help participants get to know and trust one another, and explore the spiritual journey together. You can order Major Ivany's book from our online catalogue at www.saMinistryCatalogue.ca.

FOLLOW-UP COURSES

The Salvation Army has developed age-appropriate follow-up courses to use with children who have made a decision to follow Christ. Part of this course is to meet weekly for seven weeks with the children in a group. The other part is a take home booklet with daily activities for a six-week period. These booklets teach some basic Christian truths and

principles to help children learn about being a Christian. They are written for ages 4-6, 6-8, 8-11 and teens. They can be very helpful for you as a leader in assisting with some direct follow-up with children who make decisions. You should have parent's support in doing the take home booklets, particularly for the younger children. In some cases this may not work out well and you may want to adapt how you use the booklets. They can be ordered through the on-line catalogue at www.saMinistryCatalogue.ca or phone the Supplies and Purchasing orderdesk at 416-422-6100.



GOING BEYOND INITIAL FAITH: CONSIDER 2 PETER 1:5-8

Here are some general ideas for developing a child's faith with a Christian lifestyle based on 2 Peter 1:5-8 which states that because of our salvation we should:

"...make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (NIV)

Consider these characteristics in deepening a child's faith.

Goodness and Kindness: These characteristics are most clearly shown through concern for others. There are numerous examples of Jesus showing concern for others during his ministry and examples of God taking care of people. These can be used for teaching concern for others. Encourage children to show concern for others in their family, at church, and at school. Organize opportunities for children to help others practically by doing things such as: visiting seniors, helping with household chores, visiting someone who is sick, packing food hampers at a family services and serving food at a shelter. It is encouraging for children to do these things with a group so they can encourage each other in their actions.

Knowledge: Children's knowledge about numerous things will keep expanding as they grow. Develop their knowledge of God through teaching Scripture and through the natural world. Many children can learn through nature the power and majesty of God. It is important for all of us to constantly be learning about Scripture and what it says to us. It is the greatest teaching tool about God and our relationship with him.

Self-Control and Perseverance: These can be difficult issues for many people in a society that tells us to express ourselves and deal with things in whatever manner we want. We increasingly see random acts of violence expressing people's anger and disappointment. Outbursts of all sorts are expected and there are "rage" syndromes for everything from driving to using a computer. Children need to learn how to appropriately express themselves. The Bible has stories of people who acted out of passion or anger and experienced negative consequences. It also presents many examples of people expressing

themselves with self-control. Children can be taught the difference between these two extremes. Perseverance can be described as patience, where the circumstances of life are dealt with grace. It is accepting that things will happen that we won't like, but we can keep going because in the end there is a greater good. Children can start learning this through small inconveniences. Encourage them in dealing well with these, then as the issues become bigger they will be able to build on their past experience. Share your own personal frustrations with circumstances. If there are specific issues for a child, such as the death of a loved one or divorce, try to connect the child to others who have or are dealing with the same issues and hurts.

Godliness: This is the idea of being like God in how we live. This connects to all of the characteristics listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7. You can further develop the idea of service or ministry such as developing the importance of worship in a child's life. Encourage worship experiences through Sunday church services, Sunday school and in smaller group activities. Encourage the children to pray and praise God for all that he has done.

Love: This is the overwhelming theme of God's desire to have a relationship with us. As children learn about all the previously listed characteristics they are learning about love. God loves all people and wants us to do the same. We need to develop a love that is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Encourage children to love each other as God loves. God's love is clearly demonstrated in the Bible through a variety of passages, and is seen most clearly through the life and death of Jesus. Demonstrate this kind of love clearly in all that you do knowing that the children you work with are watching you and learning from your example.

These are some general principles to think about when working with children. It can probably not be said enough times that the greatest influence on a child's life is the personal example they will see through their leaders. If we are leading children, we need to build our own faith and Christian lifestyle to positively impact them.

IN CONCLUSION

A continued relationship with children and youth after a decision has been made is key for developing a mature Christian. It can be a time of great struggle for some as they try to understand what the decision means in their life. It is vital that as leaders we are concerned with a believer's spiritual life in all areas. We should not think that all the work is over because we have seen someone come to Christ. Some children may take a lot of their own initiative in developing their relationship with Christ while others will need more encouragement. Either way they will need nurturing from mature believers to help them develop their faith. We should not think that our efforts alone will ensure a child grows in the Christian faith. It is God who ultimately accomplishes all growth in believers. We are simply his helpers who need to remain faithful in all that we do for him.

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants, but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow... What makes them worth doing is the God we are serving."
1 Corinthians 3:6-8 (The Message)



What About Our Teens?

Working with youth ages 12-19 can be a great challenge. George Barna of the Barna Research Group Ltd. shared in his article “Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age” (November 17, 2003) that research has changed his “personal perspective on the importance of ministering to young children, but also clarified why churches struggle to have significance in our culture.” Barna’s research indicates that a person’s moral foundation is in place by the age of nine; that a person’s response to the meaning and personal value of Christ’s life, death and resurrection is determined before the age of 18; and that in most cases a person’s spiritual beliefs are irrevocably formed when they are pre-teens. “In essence” Barna says “what you believe by the time you are 13 is what you will die believing.” As children and youth ministry workers your job is to reach these young people and show them through your words, actions and relationships that Jesus Christ does have meaning in their lives. (For more information and clarification read Barna’s book [Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions](#), ISBN 0830732934 or check out his article at www.barna.org.)

As children enter this phase of life they are putting behind them many childish ways and beginning a journey towards adulthood. It is a time of many changes in life and much learning. Youth at this age can no longer be treated as children. They are growing up, wanting to take on more responsibility and understanding many things at a deeper level. Yet they generally cannot be treated as adults. They have much to learn about who they are and what it means to be an adult. At exactly what age a child becomes a teenager and a teenager becomes an adult can vary depending on the individual. Some children mature quicker than others. The exact age is not as important as recognizing the various changes they are going through and how they are developing physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. It is important if you are working with youth to have a basic understanding of what things they are going through as they are maturing. Some things you may be able to clearly remember from your own adolescence and other things you may have never faced. The following will give you some general ideas to help you understand the youth you are working with and how you can impact their lives with the gospel of Christ.

WHAT ARE THEY FACING?

To begin to understand what a teenager may be thinking you will need to remember the variety of changes they are facing. They are struggling with leaving behind childhood to grab a hold of adulthood. But this is not an easy process. If you find it hard to understand where they are at, remember that they are struggling to figure themselves out.

Physical changes: One of the most distinctive outward changes a teen faces is puberty. A teenager's body changes drastically as they develop from a child to an adult. This we can all remember because we all faced it. This physical growth makes most teenagers very self-conscious about their looks and their bodies. This is especially true for those who are considered early or late bloomers. They can feel very self-conscious if they feel that they have physically developed earlier or later than their peers. Most will experience emotional extremes as they are faced with these changes. It is important that teens have caring adults who love them as they are and encourage them as they accept who they are becoming.

Social understanding: As a teenager is striving to become more independent of their family, friends will take on a new importance. While a teenager will still want involvement with a caring adult, they generally will place a stronger emphasis on having friends from their own peer group.

Teenagers want to be accepted by their peers. They want to identify with a group of friends. For some this may mean going with the crowd and doing many things you wouldn't expect of them. For others this may mean dealing with rejection as they don't seem to fit in with their peers or they choose to be different. We need to recognize the role that their peer groups have in their lives.

Emotional changes: Teenagers face an onslaught of emotional extremes. Generally children who are raised in a stable healthy environment will be emotionally stable but as they reach adolescence they start on a roller coaster of highs and lows. The major changes they are facing have a direct impact on how they are feeling. A teenage girl could be bouncing off the walls because they are going to a movie with that special guy and then a minute later looks in the mirror to discover an acne outbreak that brings them to tears. Their emotions can lead to unpredictable behaviour as they struggle to deal with these extremes. The important thing is to have patience and to try to help teens to deal with their emotions positively. They will need to learn how to handle things in their lives. Little things to us can be huge to a teenager and it is only as they work through dealing with the little things will they be able to face the more important issues of life.

Intellectual development: Teenagers are developing critical and abstract thinking as they move beyond their previous childhood knowledge. This growth can stimulate many interesting conversations that would not have happened at a younger age. They will question things more and develop their own interpretation of how they see everything in life. Some may disregard most adults' input believing that they are wrong about most things. It is important to discuss a variety of issues with teenagers. Allow them to ask questions and let them know you value their opinion.

Spiritually: A teenager who has grown up with a belief in God will begin to question what they have believed. This questioning can lead to many struggles. Some teens may drift far away from their faith in their thinking and actions. While others may drift back and forth between maintaining a faith in God and considering other ideas. Some may only struggle in their thinking and build up a stronger faith through their questions. Whatever the case may be, teenagers who have grown up with a belief in God will question what that actually

means. Their questioning can be carefully guided into a deeper relationship with God. For teens who don't know God, this can be an exciting time to see God reach into and guide the development of a young life into adulthood. Teens can be more open to spiritual thinking than adults because they are not so established in their own belief system. We should be aware that this also means they are more open to many things beside God.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES IN THEIR LIVES?

In addition to the personal changes they are facing, teenagers deal with a broad number of cultural influences. The society in which they live is trying to draw their attention in numerous ways. Music and other forms of media promote a variety of values and ideas that say "anything goes". Society in general does not promote clear right and wrong behaviour. There is an attitude of "Just do what's right for you. What you think is true is fine and what I think is true is fine regardless if our views are totally opposite to each other." As a result we see behaviours that used to be on the fringe becoming more mainstream, such as body piercing and tattoos. Violence has been seen at it's worst in random school shootings where youth are killing their peers. Drugs and alcohol which have been an issue for a number of years are even more prevalent and children are experimenting at younger ages. Sex is used to sell everything from French fries to shampoo, and sex is becoming an issue at a younger age. Even with the fear of disease, sexual activity has not decreased. Suicide and depression are real issues for teens. Anorexia and bulimia are well known reactive disorders. There are youth crying out for attention because they come from homes where parents are divorced, abusive or simply don't have time for their children. These are some of the issues and pressures teenagers face but this isn't a complete list.

If you are working with youth it is important to become familiar with numerous issues. It does not mean that you will always find all these issues in the youth you work with. You will need to get to know your youth on a personal level so you can determine what outside factors are influencing their life. There are numerous valuable resources for youth workers and parents to help you understand youth culture. See suggested "Resources" on page 75.

HOW DO WE REACH TEENS WITH THE GOSPEL?

In order to relate the Gospel to teens keep in mind how varied they are and how often their tastes change. What works one week may not work the next. There are some key ideas though to keep in mind when working with youth. The main way to bring youth into a solid relationship with Jesus is building relationships with them.

Get To Know Them Personally

This will be a time consuming process, because building a relationship with a teen can take time and great effort. The end results of hard work will be worth it. To reach the maximum number of youth, you will need a maximum number of leaders. If you are working on outreach to teens who haven't grown up in the church, realize that you will not be able to build a strong relationship with everyone by yourself. David R. Veerman states in his 1996 edition of Youth Evangelism, "If you see 10 young people, you may get to know 4 or 5 of them and eventually have the opportunity to share the Gospel with 1 or 2" (Youth Evangelism, page 65). *One leader cannot reach all youth on a deep level.*

If you are working with teens who have grown up in the church, then your situation may be different. You may have some teens who have made commitments and their teen years will be a time of deepening their Christian walk. Or you may have teens who have never made a commitment for whatever reason even though they have been at church. Either way, these teens will still need personal relationships to help them along the way.

Teenagers will need a **greater** level of involvement of caring leaders and adults in their lives than they did at a younger age. Relationships play a huge role in their lives. They are looking for relationships with peers and with caring adults who place value on them as individuals. This relationship can only be built by spending time with them. Take two teens out for lunch or a drink after school. Take an interest in what they do. If they play sports go watch them, if they perform in a musical group go see them. Be involved in fun, casual activities with them as well as serious discussions. Think about how you would develop a strong relationship with a friend, and apply the same methods and principles in your relationship with a teen.

Small Groups

Some teenagers may need the security of peers to relax with your leadership. If you sense that in a teen, provide opportunities for small group activities. Invite 4-6 youth over for dinner, or take them all out for a pop or coffee after school. While this may seem more difficult in getting to know individuals, it will help with the same process. For some teenagers it will lead to breaking down a barrier that will lead to them being more comfortable with you as a leader.

Lifestyle Witness

If you are working with teens, they will be more critical and observant than anyone of what you are doing. If you are trying to lead them to Christ they will scrutinize your actions to see if you back up what you say with your life. It is often said that actions speak louder than words. In many cases they will. If you cannot clearly demonstrate in your life the message you speak, you will not have an impact on those around you. This does not mean you must present the picture of a perfect life. It just means you try to live how God wants you to and be honest and real with the youth. If you are losing a struggle with specific issues that could have a negative influence on the youth, you may want to reconsider your work with them. But if you are genuinely seeking God in all you do, then he can use you to influence teenagers for him.

Large Group Events

Big events that you either plan for your own group or take your group to can have a strong impact on teenagers. When teenagers see that they have peers who are excited about following Jesus, they can be more open to him or ready to be more bold in following Jesus themselves. Jesus gives us the example of speaking with large groups as he shared God's Word and vision for the people. Big events can place teenagers in an environment away from many pressures that distract them from hearing God's voice. The key thing to remember is that the "big events" need to be followed up with personal contact to develop relationship. Jesus also clearly demonstrated the need for close relationships. Youth weekends, retreats, and rallies can all be effective in reaching youth. It's just important to follow up these events with personal contact.

HOW DO WE HELP THEM MAKE A DECISION?

When it comes to the actual time for making the decision for Jesus, you should be prepared to lead the teen through a simple decision pamphlet or app. The territorial children and youth ministries department has produced a decision pamphlet for those over age 11. If you are working more with older teenagers closer to adulthood, you may want to consider other decision pamphlets such as “The Bridge to Life” or “The Four Spiritual Laws” or “The 4 Points”. Don’t just pull out the pamphlet at the last minute without having looked at it before. Be prepared for more detailed discussion with teens than children and give opportunity for questions. Encourage the teen to explain the gospel message to you in their own terms and to pray. If this is happening in a large group setting, be sure to stress that they are making a personal decision—especially if a group of friends are all together. Just be sure your heart is prepared for God to use you in this important step.

Another way we can help our teens make a decision is by directing them to some of the great websites or apps that seek to reach out to youth. Encourage your teens to check out:

- ◆ www.billygraham.org a Billy Graham site. Choose the link to “grow your faith” and then the link to “How to Know Jesus”.
- ◆ www.yfc.org is the Youth for Christ website that has great links on evangelism, especially for teens to share with other teens.
- ◆ www.cru.org is the Campus Crusade for Christ website that has Bible studies, how to know Christ helps, and leadership training.
- ◆ www.needhim.org is a great evangelism site because it allows people of all ages to hear the gospel in a variety of ways: text, audio, video, personal contact and sharing with others.
- ◆ www.dare2share.org is the Dare 2 Share Ministries site that mobilizes teenagers to relationally and relentlessly reach their generation for Christ.
- ◆ www.infinitumLife.com is a website that provides tools for those who follow Jesus and choose to live a life of love.
- ◆ www.WordlessMessage.com—from Ron Wheeler of www.cartoonworks.com. This is a 4½ minute animation that wordlessly shares the most important message ever told. You can pass it from individual to individual, or you can project it onto a big screen before a large group of people. Link to this site or download the actual animation to any electronic device and use it to spread this life-changing message around the world. There is no cost whatsoever, and there is no sign-up involved.
- ◆ www.p2c.com/p2c-student (Power to Change) is the Campus Crusade for Christ Canada website that has resources to help students grow in their faith and to share their faith with the world around them.
- ◆ Dare 2 Share App provides training and tools that will help you share Jesus’ message of grace with your friends.

- ◆ Life in 6 Words App is an interactive, engaging faith-sharing tool that provides you with a bridge for naturally initiating spiritual conversations. Use it to walk someone through an explanation of the gospel and invite them to put their trust in Jesus.
- ◆ Voke App from Campus Crusade challenges you to go deeper in your faith and friendships. Use it to inspire friends and talk about true hope.
- ◆ Infinitum App provides a daily question, challenge, prayer, Bible passage or quote to help you engage with the infinitum life.
- ◆ YouVersion Bible App offers the Bible in 1000s of versions in 100s of languages, 100s of Bible reading plans in over 40 languages, and lets you explore the Bible with your friends, sharing honest conversations about scripture.
- ◆ The New Life App is an easy-to-use app that gives short answers to questions on many topics such as: God's existence, purpose of life, what's truth, morality, the Bible, etc.

HOW DO WE PROVIDE FOLLOW UP AND ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

This is the key area for developing teenagers into mature Christian adults. Whether you are working with teens who have made a commitment as a child or who only made a commitment yesterday, they will need encouragement to grow and deepen their relationship with the Lord. As teenagers question and struggle to figure out what they believe personally and who they are, they will need deliberate involvement with people and things that will help them grow as a Christian.

Follow-up Course

When a decision has been made it is good to have a follow-up course to take a teenager or a group of teenagers through. The territorial children and youth ministries department does have a follow-up course for teens. It is certainly suitable for younger teens. If your teens are more mature then you may want to consider other options. There is a course called the "Alpha course" that is a basic introduction to the Christian faith. It has a youth version that will establish some basic understanding of the Christian faith. See the suggested resources at the end for information on these and other suggestions.

Discipleship

Teenagers will benefit from a deliberate effort to disciple them. This works best through a small group setting or one-on-one mentoring. Discipleship can take numerous forms. The point of it is to ensure someone knows the basics of following Jesus and how to deepen their spiritual life. Through discipleship they will learn things like how to pray, read their Bible and apply it to their life, make choices that honour God and learn how to serve others. This works best in a smaller setting to prevent those who may fall through the cracks in a larger group. Of course your situation may be that you won't have enough leaders to work with smaller groups. Just do the best you can and make it a prayer concern for more mature Christian influence. Part of the discipling process is establishing a mature Christian believer that can in turn disciple someone else. So if you start out small, it can be a goal to see those you start with move on to become leaders who can help you disciple new youth.

Ministry Opportunities

Providing youth with opportunities to minister to others in a variety of ways will develop a sense of their place in the Christian community. Ministry opportunities can be everything from overseas missions to leading a Bible study discussion. Plan opportunities for your youth to do practical things to help others such as pack food hampers, serve at a soup line, help seniors with yard work or look after children of single parents for free. Give them leadership opportunities such as reading scripture during a Sunday service, leading a prayer time at Bible study, being in charge of calling the youth group for events, being involved in a drama team, etc. Youth need to be encouraged to develop leadership skills, and to grow in their desire to serve others and understand their unique spiritual gifts that God has given them. These opportunities will develop a mature adult Christian who can continue building on their spiritual gifts. If you have teens who are shy or unsure, start them with small things. Encourage them to allow God to work in them to help them reach their full potential.

The territorial children and youth ministries department provides a resource to help develop all of these areas in the lives of young people. The six year Youth Discipleship Program is made up of Bible study, ministry training and mentoring. For more information on this program and each of the three components visit www.saMinistryResources.ca or contact christian_education_orderdesk@can.salvationarmy.org.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

If you are working with teenagers you do have a challenging task. It is vital that you prepare yourself for this task. This is only a general introduction to a variety of issues to consider and suggestions for leading teenagers to Jesus. You will need to ensure your own heart is prepared for this work. It will require a lot of love and patience. You should also take as many opportunities as possible to learn what you can about teenagers. Beginning on page 77 are suggested resources that you can get if you have not seen them already. Teenagers are a diverse group of individuals. There are generalizations you can make but you have to remember the differences and get to know your youth. Don't expect all youth to be the same. Be sure to consider their age (there is much more of a difference amongst teens who are a year apart than adults one year apart), where they are developmentally and any outside issues that are affecting them. Teens can bring both frustration and joy to your life, but God can use you if you are willing to partner with him.



Decision Ideas for Teens

The following ideas are devotionals designed to lead pre-teens and teens to make a decision for Christ. These can be used during a youth group event, at a Bible study class or a pre-teen or teen Sunday school class.

DOLLAR SERMON

Materials Needed: A \$5 bill and a \$10 bill, small papers with sins identified such as pride, lying, cheating, and stealing written on them, scotch tape, empty cigarette box, chocolate syrup and peanut butter sandwich (Be aware of any peanut allergies, use a tuna sandwich as an alternative).

Ask for a volunteer from the group, but don't tell them what they are volunteering for. Hold up the \$5 bill and ask them what it is. Of course they will say money. Say, "No! It is a life. Today we will decide what to do with our life. We could spend our life, waste our life, lose, invent, save, or give away our life." Elaborate on each point. Ask the young people what they want to do. Hopefully they will say give, if not, suggest it. "Who should we give our life to?" JESUS! Then tell the volunteer that he will be Jesus and you will be the person giving your life. When you go to hand it over say, "Jesus, I like a lot of this stuff, I think I'll give you this part." (Cut a small portion of the \$5 bill and give it to the volunteer.)

Then say, "I guess I'll give you my cigarettes" (hand over a part of the bill with the cigarette pack). Then hand over the paper with the word "pride" and a small piece of the bill, then give the papers labeled lying, cheating, stealing, etc. (Make up your own. I used overeating as a sin and put the piece of the bill in the PBJ sandwich. I coated my lies with chocolate syrup. Be creative!)

Then when you are done ask them what you have given Jesus. Not only are you dirty, torn up, thrown aside, but you are worthless to him too. Save a little part of the bill (the head) and say, "Not until we give ourselves totally over to Jesus can he use us." Give the last part of the bill. Say "Jesus is a redeemer!" and hand the volunteer some paper towels and scotch tape. Have them repair the bill while you are sharing a message about Jesus. After the bill has been repaired, say, "Something happens between the son and the Father when we give ourselves totally to Jesus. Jesus can present us whole and worthy to the Father." Have the volunteer trade the tattered bill for a \$10 bill sitting (hidden) on the altar. Say "Jesus goes to the Father and presents our lives to him, then he takes our lives and not only makes them whole, but worth far more than before."

Then have an altar call. Ask teens if they have parts of their bill, their lives, they would like to give to Jesus. In large groups, you can even have a coffin set up for the kids to bury their things. Have them write them on paper if they don't have the item with them or it is not tangible. (I have seen kids throw in cigarettes, secular music, drugs, necklaces from boyfriends, etc.) This is a moving illustration of what God can do with our lives.

(Submitted by Tony Nucaro, www.egadideas.com)

DECISION TIME FOR EASTER SEASON

Materials Needed: Video of Jesus' crucifixion with Bryan Adam's song "Everything I Do".

Play the song while the video shows Jesus being led to the cross.

(Submitted by Corey Bladen, www.egadideas.com)

ART SCULPTURES

Materials Needed: Enough small containers of Playdough for each student.

During your decision time, invite the students to come and take a container of playdough. Have them create something that represents them, their heart, their or something that they want to leave at the foot of the cross. When they are finished with their sculptures, invite students to leave their creations at the foot of the cross.

(Submitted by Kevin Slous.)

COLOURED CANDLES

Materials Needed: A supply of tea lights in different colours such as red, green, and yellow, a lighter.

Cluster your lights in three different areas across the front of the room. During your decision time invite the students to come and light a tea light. Encourage them to choose a light that represents the decision they are making today. A red light represents a first time decision, a green light represents some area that they want to grow in and yellow represent a decision to share Christ with someone else. If possible have a leader available at each colour cluster to pray with the young people as they come and light a candle.

(Submitted by Kevin Slous.)

COMPLETE FORGIVENESS

Materials Needed: Large bowl, water, pepper shaker, two sticks, and dish soap.

Using a large bowl of water, talk to youth about how this represents their life. It represents sports they are involved in, time at school, time they spend hanging out with friends, things they say, movies they watch, etc. Then take a pepper shaker and tell the youth that this represents sin. As you sprinkle the pepper over the bowl of water, talk about how it represents that lie they told last week, they gossip they passed onto a friend, or the way they disobeyed their parents. Share with the youth about the power of God's forgiveness and choosing to live for him. Using two sticks taped together like a cross, dip the end of the cross in dish washing liquid. Explain that the moment that we asked Christ

for forgiveness and we ask him into our hearts, he immediately washes away that sin. When you dip the soapy end of the stick into the bowl of water, it immediately sends the pepper to the edges of bowl, representing Christ's forgiveness of our sins! It is really

(Submitted by Beth, www.egadideas.com)

BURN YOUR IDOLS

Materials Needed: Paper bags, markers or crayons, lighter or matches, a safe place for fire.

Read the first commandment (Exodus 20:3-4). Read the account in Acts 19:1-20 where the people burned all the articles associated with their evil deeds, such as sorcery (witchcraft).

Ask if anybody has ever seen an idol in person. Then why is Exodus 20:3-4 in the Bible? And idol is anything we worship instead of God. As you say this, hand out paper bags and markers. Have the group or individuals make an idol that represents what they are most tempted to place in front of God. Each can explain what their idol is about.

Provide an opportunity to burn their idols if they are serious about keeping God first in front of these temptations.

(Submitted by James Finkbeiner, www.egadideas.com)

CARDBOARD TESTIMONIES

Materials Needed: Large sized scraps of cardboard, black permanent markers, music, Bible.

Preparation: Invite a group of young people to write about the changes God has made in their lives. On one side of the cardboard have the volunteers write a struggle or how they felt about themselves in just a couple of words. On the other side of the cardboard have them share what Christ has done for them, again keeping it to just a couple of words. Examples: alone/loved; lost in darkness/found in light; anxious/at peace; filled with shame/set free; without friends/Jesus calls me "friend"; etc. (Google cardboard testimonies for examples if needed)

Do: With music such as "How He Loves" by David Crowder Band playing in the background, have your volunteers come onto the stage (or front of the room) one at a time. Have them pause in the middle of the space, show side one of their testimony, pause, and then flip cardboard over to the second side. Have your volunteers step back and form a line across the stage with the second side of their cardboard showing.

Share: (After all have come in ask the rest of your young people) What do you think just happened? (Encourage responses). Our volunteers have just shared with us the change that has happened in their lives when they made the choice to stop living life their way and invited Jesus Christ into a real and loving relationship with them. The first side of their cardboard sign told us what they had been struggling with on their own. The second side tells us how their life has changed now that they've invited Jesus to be the one in control

of their life, once they've invited him to forgive them of the sin (wrong doing) that is in their life.

The cardboard signs show us what our lives are like without God and with God. Our volunteers have shared their struggles with us and how God has helped them. Perhaps you are facing the same struggle as one of our volunteers. Maybe the way you live your life has made a mess of it; maybe you have hurt and pain you just can't let go of; maybe you've gotten involved in activities that have left you struggling to survive; maybe you've bought the lie that you just aren't good enough; maybe you think your life's not so bad but you're searching for something to make it seem even better. Maybe, today, you are ready to admit you need to change the direction of your life. Maybe, today, you know it's time to invite God to change your life!

In **2 Corinthians 5:17** we read: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

Maybe you feel like you can relate to the first side of a sign but want your future; your "right now" to be like the second side. We invite you to come and make that change today. Today God invites you to throw off your old life, accept Christ's sacrifice for you, and to choose to become a new creation in Him.

Do: Lead your young people into a time of invitation and prayer. Afterwards invite the young people to write their own cardboard testimonies.

(Submitted by Valerie and Misha Pavey)

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Here are a couple of case studies you may want to use in helping teens respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Read the following scenarios. Imagine that you are experiencing what is being described. How do you respond? What do you do? Is there anything about the situation that bothers you? What does it make you realize about your faith?

Scenario #1

Jennifer is a lifeguard and she has many stories about her experiences while guarding. One day, she tells a very sad story about someone who needed rescuing, but wouldn't accept her help. "Can you believe it", she asks you, "I threw out the life preserver so that it was within inches of his reach, but he just continued to call out, "Help, help! And wouldn't grab onto the life preserver. It was the very thing that could save his life, but he just ignored it!" She blows a huge sigh and continues, "I knew there was an undertow, and so this was the best chance I had of saving him. There was nothing more I could do... he just wouldn't accept my help." She breaks down, sobbing, "There was nothing I could do to make him reach out and accept the only chance he had at survival." You feel very sad about the tragedy Jennifer has just told you about, and you try and comfort her. As you do, you think about how similar Jennifer's experience is to how God must feel when people refuse to accept his free gift of salvation. You've been waiting for a chance to witness to Jennifer. Do you?

Scenario #2

Mountain climbing is becoming a pretty popular sport these days. Even if you don't live anywhere near a mountain, there are gyms that feature "climbing walls," complete with harnesses, hand and foot holds, and experienced people to help you 'learn the ropes'. Last month, you and your friend tried out one of these gyms, and now you feel ready for the challenge of some real cliffs. You get ready, pack all your equipment and go out on a beautiful sunny day to tackle that mountain. Since you're feeling pretty confident (not to mention reckless, careless, foolish, all of the above), you and your friend decide to attempt the climb without your harnesses! You figure it's not too risky, since the mountain is really more like a hill, right? Anyway, you start up and things are going great, until your friend is about a metre away from the top, and she begins to slip. You aren't in a position to help her, since you need to hold on with everything you've got to avoid falling yourself! Miraculously, as if from out of nowhere, a voice calls from the top, "Do you need some help down there?" Your friend replies, "I'm okay, I can make it on my own." Then the voice calls out, "You'd better take my hand, it's a long way down from there. Let me help you." Still your friend refuses the offer of help. She's sweating profusely by this time and huffing and puffing, she says, "Go away! I don't need your help and I don't want your pity!" You can't believe what you're hearing, but you quickly scramble to the top and throw down a rope from out of your pack and tell your friend in no uncertain terms that she had better grab the rope, or else. The anger in your voice comes from your fear for her safety, but it's enough to persuade her to smarten up and let herself be rescued. After she's over the top of the cliff, you breathe a huge sigh of relief. Partly out of frustration, and partly out of inspiration, you decide to challenge your friend to think about the way she has been turning God away from her life, when all he wants to do is help her and give her a new life in Christ. You see the way her refusal to accept the rescuer's help is like her refusal to accept God's outstretched arm. How do you think she'll respond?

DONUT GOSPEL

Materials Needed: One dozen glazed donuts, one box of donut holes, two red jelly filled pastries, several paper plates, and maybe some food preparation gloves.

Directions:

1. Start with six donuts on paper plates where the kids can see all of the donuts. Also have the other six donuts on plates out of sight, along with the holes and pastries.
2. Read Matthew 22:36-40. Explain that we were made to be filled with God's love and to share that love with others. These are the great commandments that the whole Bible depends on.
3. Hold up a donut. Say "We are like donuts. We have a hole in the middle that we long to fill up. We were designed to be filled with God's love."
4. Using all six donuts, say "We often try and fill up our holes by using other people for popularity, power, money, greed, sex, etc." While talking, illustrate this by ripping off chunks of donut and stuffing it into the holes of the six donuts. The used, messed up

donuts illustrate sin and what it does to our lives. Tell the youth this, and ask if anyone wants the donuts after they have been ripped apart. Most will say NO. Use an illustration of how messed up we are in sin, when we try to fill ourselves up outside of God's plan. We are good for nothing except throwing away.

5. Then say, "But God does not want to throw us away. He loves us and wants to heal us and bring us into his love and his plan for our lives." Then hold up one of the jelly filled pastries. This pastry represents Jesus—God's only Son. He is perfect (no hole). Yet he gave his life and died for us so that we would not be thrown away (represent this by tearing the pastry in two, with red jelly spilling out). But he did not stay dead. He rose again from the dead to show us that there is hope beyond this world (bring up the second pastry, un-torn, to represent his resurrection).
6. Say, "If we trust in Jesus, we can be made new, and be forgiven of our sin and healed of our wounds." Put away the first set of six donuts, and bring up the six new, un-torn donuts. This represents new life and a fresh start in Christ.
7. Say, "Now if we believe in Christ, we can be filled with his love, and share his love with others, and he will keep re-filling us with his Holy Spirit." While saying this, use the donut holes to represent God's love and his Spirit. Fill the first hole with a donut hole, then give that donut hole to another donut, while re-filling the original hole with another donut hole of God's love. By using the donut holes, you represent the fact that God's love is perfectly fulfilling (it's a perfect fit), and that it is replenished as we give it to others. This is God's perfect plan for creation.

After all that, you can eat the illustration, and talk about how to accept the love of Christ and how to give it to others.

(Submitted by Nate Bostian, www.egadideas.com)



Resources

Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture: Bridging Teen Worldviews and Christian Truth by Walt Mueller was published in 2006. This is an excellent resource for parents and youth leaders. Youth Culture 101 also by Walt Mueller was published in 2007 and is an overview of popular culture for youth workers, parents and educators. It explores the dynamics of why kids are drawn into the culture and how it shapes their development. Walt Mueller is the president of an organization called Center for Parent/Youth Understanding. He is constantly updating his information to stay current with youth culture. They look at all aspects of current youth culture from a Christian culture. Check out these and other resources at www.cpyu.org. We also recommend their resource "The Space Between" (Insights on Adolescent Development), "Youth Culture Matters" (a CPYU Podcast) and "e-updates" (free weekly email resource with youth culture news).

Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World by James Emery White, Baker Books, 2017 (ISBN 9780801017018). Move over, boomers, Xers, and millennials, there's a new generation taking the stage---and they represent a seismic cultural shift! Born between 1993 and 2012, "Z" is the first truly post-Christian generation to come of age in America. White explores their defining characteristics and explains how the church must adapt in order to reach them.

4-Chair Discipling: Growing a Movement of Disciple-Makers by Dann Spader, Moody Publishers, 2014 (ISBN 9780802412072). Spader explains disciple-making as a *process* of moving people through four chairs, from someone seeking to know more about Christ to someone who makes disciples themselves.

The Seven Checkpoints for Youth Leaders: Seven Principles Every Teenager Needs to Know by Andy Stanley, Howard Books, 2001 (ISBN 9781582291772). Andy Stanley outlines the seven principles--the irreducible minimum--that teens need to maintain in their lives in order to be victorious in their faith. Through the pages of this powerful, interactive book, teens will learn how to keep each other accountable and encouraged in their quest to live out the "7" in their lives.

Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Their Church by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder and Brad Griffin, Baker Books, 2016 (ISBN 9780801072970). Packed with research and practical ideas *Growing Young* shows pastors and ministry leaders how to position their churches to engage a younger generation in a way that breathes vitality, life and energy into the whole church.

Creating a Lead Small Culture: Make Your Church a Place Where Kids Belong by Reggie Joiner, Kristen Ivy and Elle Campbell, The reThink Group, Inc., 2014 (ISBN 9781941259085). Strategy, best practices, training tips, and real-life stories from over 20 ministry leaders across the US and Canada: this book has what you need to create an effective small group culture in your church.

Lead Small: Five Big Ideas Every Small Group Leader Needs to Know by Reggie Joiner and Tom Shefchunas, The reThink Group, Inc., 2012 (ISBN 9780985411626). Lead Small clarifies the responsibility of the small group leader for those who work with children and youth. It establishes five common threads so that those who choose to lead in any size church can work off the same blueprint.

“YouthMinistry.com” is Group Publishing online resource website for leaders. It is an excellent resource for youth workers providing an endless stream of ideas, lessons, events, and service opportunities for the ever-transforming world of church ministry. Subscribe at <https://youthministry.com/group-magazine/>.

“Youth Specialties” is a youth ministry organization that has been equipping and resourcing youth workers for thirty years through a variety of conferences, training seminars, videos, numerous publications and a current web site. Look for their materials at your local bookstore. Their website www.youthspecialties.com is loaded with resources and ideas. Of particular interest is their youth culture update which features current statistics about important issues and quotes from well known people in youth culture.

One Verse Evangelism by Randy Raysbrook and Steve Walker, NavPress, 2013 (ISBN 0972902368). This booklet explains how to use a single Bible verse to share your faith in Jesus Christ. It also explains that “Love is simple” and that “Authenticity is more influential than perfection.”

Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry: 9 Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth by Doug Fields, Zondervan, 2013 (ISBN 9780310694854). presents foundational principles of youth ministry that help you develop the ministry that best meets the needs of students in your unique setting.

DECISION PAMPHLETS

A decision pamphlet for ages 11 and over, entitled “Making Choices” was developed by the territorial children and youth ministries department. It is available through the on-line catalogue at www.saMinistryCatalogue.ca or from Supplies and Purchasing: phone (416) 422-6100, or e-mail orderdesk@can.salvationarmy.org. You could also look at “The Four Spiritual Laws” or “Bridge To Life” tracts. These are decision pamphlets you can generally find at most Christian book stores or on-line. “The 4 Points” tract is available from www.the4points.com.

FOLLOW-UP

This is vital to any new Christian. There are a variety of resources you can use for this. Below are some suggestions.

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” (a follow up course for teens) is a six week course developed by the territorial children and youth ministries department. It involves daily quiet time devotions for use at home. It also provides a leader’s guide with suggested activities to use in meeting with the individual or group once a week. You may want to adapt these activities according to the age of the group. These are available through Supplies and Purchasing. (See under decision pamphlets for contact information.)

Alpha Youth Series reimagined in 2013 for today’s youth culture. It can be used to reach youth between the ages of 13-18 years old. It covers all sorts of basics such as: Jesus: Who is He? Faith: How Can I Have Faith? Prayer: Why and How Do I Pray? Bible: Why and How Do I Read the Bible? etc. There are 13 topics in all. It is designed to go through with a group, but is easily adapted to use with only one or two. Along with this course there is a book called Questions of Life (ISBN 1934564664) which can be a helpful resource. You can stream or download the videos by signing up at www.AlphaCanada.org.

There are also many good Bible studies to use that look at the basics of Christianity such as:

Your Life in Christ, by The Navigators, NavPress, 2006 (ISBN 1600060048). This is the first study in the Design for Discipleship Series. It looks at what it means to accept God’s love for you, and will help you keep Christ at the centre of your life, and how to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Growing Strong in God’s Family: A Course in Personal Discipleship to Strengthen Your Walk with God by The Navigators, NavPress, 2011 (ISBN 1615216391). This study will help you build a strong foundation for your Christian life through Bible study, scripture memorization and group interaction.

The Life: A Journey with God by The Navigators, NavPress, 2004 (ISBN 9781576836361). A five part Bible study where you will look at the heart of God, why Christ’s life changes the way you live and the purpose of the Holy Spirit.

The Story Devotional by Zondervan, 2016 (ISBN 9780310084754). 365 day devotional that shows how God weaves His plan throughout time. As you spend time with Him you’ll see how plan begin to unfold.

Foundation: Blueprints for Life by Power to Change—Students, 2016 (ISBN 1927514304). Building anything that is successful needs a strong foundation, so does a Christian life. This study will help students grow deeper in their relationship with God and develop an understanding of foundational principles for the Christian faith. This study looks at four aspects essential to building a gospel-centred life and experiencing all God has for you.

My Story: God at Work in My Life by Power to Change—Student, 2016 (ISBN 1927514320). A small group training series that will invigorate your evangelism through the powerful intersection of social media, your personal story and the gospel. This cutting-edge video training series will walk you from start to finish, launching you to reach your world.

Beginning the Walk by Mary Bennet, Ron Bennet and The Navigators, NavPress, 2018 (ISBN 9781631469244). Provides essentials you'll need along the way, including your identity in Christ, faith, the word, prayer, community, grace and the Holy Spirit's guidance.

The Word on the Basics of Christianity from the Youth Builders Group Bible Studies by Jim Burns, Gospel Light Publications, 1994 (ISBN 083071644-0). This 12 session high school study is a straight forward presentation of the gospel and will help young people come together on the solid ground of God's Word.

The Making of an Ordinary Saint: My Journey from Frustration to Joy with the Spiritual Disciplines by Nathan Foster, Baker Books, 2014 (ISBN 9780801014642). Creative new ways to practice the disciplines and discover that a vital, conversational relationship with God is within your grasp. You may just find that holy habits are truly possible for all.

Faith on the Edge (Daring to Follow Jesus) edited by Paul Tokunaga, InterVarsity Press, 1999 (ISBN 0-8308-2212-7).

The Case for Christ (Youth Version) by Lee Strobel with Jane Vogel, Zondervan, 2014 (ISBN 0310745640).

The Case for Faith (Youth Version) by Lee Strobel with Jane Vogel, Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2013 (ISBN 0310819474).

More Than A Carpenter by Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, Tydale Momentum, Revised ed. edition, 2009 (ISBN 978-1414326276).

Know God: A 28-Day Devotional Experience for Students, The rethink Orange Group, Inc., 2016 (ISBN 9781941259740). This book isn't about answering all of your questions. It's about taking a step, starting you on a journey to help you know God more as you hear, pray, talk, and live.

Foundations: A 260-Day Bible Reading Plan for Busy Teens by Robbie Gallaty, LifeWay, 2016 (ISBN 9781430064039). Students can read through all 66 books of the Bible in one year, with the flexibility of reading 5 days per week. Combined with supplementary devotional content, they can experience the reading and responding to the entirety of God's Word. By using the H.E.A.R. journaling method, students will be guided through Highlighting, Explaining, Applying, and Responding to passages, allowing for practical application throughout the year-long plan.

Experiencing God—Youth Edition Member Book by Henry Blackaby and Claude King,

LifeWay Church Resources, 2005 (ISBN 9781415826034). Lead youth in this exciting and compelling 9 week study of the Bible and help them: learn to hear when God is speaking; Find out how God is speaking; Find out where God is working and join him; and experience God doing what only He can do. (Leader's Guide and a DVD Pack)

The Mind of Christ—Youth Edition Member Book by T.W. Hunt, LifeWay Church Resources, 1996 (ISBN 9781767300001). Help youth put on the Mind of Christ as found in Philippians 2:5-11 with this 12 unit daily study book. They'll come to understand more of what Christ desires of them, while they're challenged to explore the truths of experiencing freedom in Christ, the virtues of Godly wisdom, the art of servanthood, living in the spirit and exalting God. (Leader's Guide also available)

Firsthand Faith: Discovering a Faith of Your Own by Josh Shook and Ryan Shook, LifeWay, 2013 (ISBN 9781415878231). Most young people between 16 and 26 experience a crisis of faith. This six-week study for will take students along of path of knowing Jesus personally and challenge them to live surrendered completely to Him. The result leads to a firsthand faith that is genuine and committed to relationship with Christ.

Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith by Andy Stanley, Zondervan, 2009 (ISBN 9780310324188). This small group Bible study establishes the biblical case for 5 things God uses to grow unshakeable faith in you. Imagine what it would be like to have PERFECT faith. Sessions include: Big Faith, Practical Teaching, Providential Relationships, Private Disciples, Personal Ministry, and Pivotal Circumstances.

Dare 2 Share by Greg Stier, Focus on the Family, 2006 (ISBN 978-1589973701). Provides young people with a plan for sharing the gospel with others. Also available as an app from the App Store.

God So Loved... A Student's Guide to Sharing Jesus at School by Lee Rogers, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016 (ISBN 1530444470). Schools are filled with diverse groups of people, all of whom need to hear about Christ. A practical guide to help students share Christ through serving and conversations.

The Seven Checkpoints Student Journal: Seven Principles Every Teenager Needs to Know by Andy Stanley, Howard Books, 2001 (ISBN 9781582291789). Life after youth group isn't all fun and games. Arm your young people for the battles they'll face with seven principles that will shape their lives for eternity! Boiling each essential truth down to its foundational idea, Stanley uses a helpful journal format to clearly outline *how* teens can incorporate them into daily, victorious living.

Enjoy the Silence: A 30- Day Experiment in Listening to God by Maggie and Duffy Robbins, Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2005 (ISBN 025986259914). Using humor and understanding insights your church youth will discover that the Bible is not a boring read. They will discover step-by-step how to initiate Scripture-based *quiet* times--and be ready to listen for the voice of the King.

Can I Ask That?: 8 Hard Questions about God & Faith [Sticky Faith Curriculum] Leader Guide Premier Edition by Jim Candy, Brad M. Griffin and Kara Powell, Fuller Youth Institute, 2014 (ISBN 9780991488001). As eight years of Sticky Faith research on teenagers has shown, it's not doubt or hard questions that are toxic to faith. It's silence. The trusted voice of the Fuller Youth Institute and proven best practices from churches around the country converge to provide you with tools both to start conversations about hard questions, as well as to lead students toward discovering their own faith convictions.

Good Reads for Students:

Be the Change: Your Guide to Freeing Slaves and Changing the World, Revised and Expanded Edition by Zach Hunter, Zondervan, 2011 (ISBN 9780310726111). Challenges readers to get involved in stopping the global slave trade and has some great questions at the end of each chapter to wrestle through. In this newly updated and expanded edition Zach features new stories of emerging abolitionists, provides updates on his organization, Loose Change to Loosen Chains, and shares practical advice to help you make revolutionary changes in the world.

This Beautiful Mess: Practicing the Presence of the Kingdom of God by Rick McKinley from Multnomah Books, 2013 (ISBN 9781601425690). Talks about the Kingdom of Heaven all around us NOW and the future fullness of the Kingdom. In this updated edition, McKinley encourages you to understand the tension of living in a broken battlefield *and* radically rejoice in the immediacy and reality of God's realm in the here and now. Includes a conversation guide, new preface, and appendix.

Start Here: Doing Hard Things Right Where You Are by Alex and Brett Harris, Random House, 2010 (ISBN 9781601422705). Blasting past mediocrity, the Harris brothers challenged teens to move beyond their comfort zones in Do Hard Things. In this follow-up to their bestseller, learn how to inspire others, stay motivated, discover what your hard thing is, and more, with stories from real-life rebelutionaries like you!

The Chase: Pursuing Holiness in Your Everyday Life by Jay Howver and Jerry Bridges, NAV Press, 2003 (ISBN 9781576834688). Shows students how "running as to get the prize" is not only possible, it's what life is all about.

Posers, Fakers and Wannabees: Unmasking The Real You by Brennan Manning and James Hancock, NAV Press, 2003 (ISBN 9781576834657). Looks at our true identity in Christ and not performance Christianity.

This is just a selection of possible resources. There are many more resources available. Check out www.gospel.com. From this site you can search through a variety of Christian web sites on all sorts of topics.