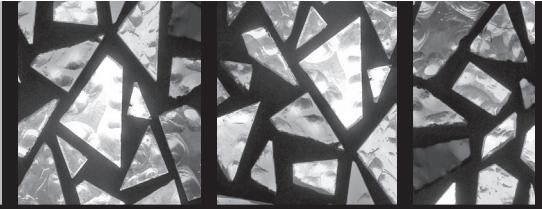




# Walking With God and His People



Sample Lesson



# Walking With God and His People

## Know, Believe, and Live

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Within the elements of each lesson we will be using a head/heart/hands key to indicate an area of focus with the students. Look for the icon or combination of icons shown below as a quick identifier of the area of focus.



KNOW



BELIEVE



LIVE



KNOW & BELIEVE



KNOW & LIVE



BELIEVE & LIVE

# Introduction

## Our Opportunity

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Christian teachers have a unique opportunity to introduce students to who God is, what he does, what he is like (his personality), and to share with them his desire for relationship with us. God wants us to know him and enjoy him now and forever! As students study how God interacted with people in biblical times, they begin to understand the character and nature of God as revealed to us in creation, in the Scriptures, and in the person and work of Jesus Christ. They see that the Big Story of God says “I made you” and “I love you,” “I want a relationship with you,” and “I want you to be a part of my work in my kingdom which has already begun but has not yet fully come.”

We invite students to participate in this ongoing story by entering into a personal relationship with this God through faith and repentance and by learning to obey and serve him throughout their lives. We are encouraging students to journey with God: to learn of him and his ways, to be in constant conversation with him, to accept his offer of salvation, and to commit all aspects of their lives to him. How do we best approach the Story of our world and God its author? How can students understand the Story that began in the beginning and unfolds even to the present moment and on into eternity? How can we nurture belief in our students and embolden them to live this Story?

## Our Hope

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One answer to the “how” question is to provide a sound Bible curriculum as a guide to Christian teachers. What do we hope to accomplish with this Bible curriculum? Our hope is that students will respond with their hearts and minds to God and his world. We want to enable teachers to reach the heads, hearts, and hands of students so that their lives may be changed for today and for eternity to the glory of God.

We want students to be “thoroughly equipped for every good work” and deeply grounded in biblical understanding (2 Timothy 3:16–17). As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe it is only by the study of the Word of God, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, that we understand who we are and grasp our connection to the Story of God reaching out to his people over the centuries. We desire that our students live their lives out of God’s Story and learn to find their place in that Story. We want students to understand the God with whom they are in relationship, to make authentic connections between the stories of God’s people and their own lives, and to understand what

responding to God means. Furthermore, we believe that a deep understanding of the Bible is foundational for understanding all other discovery of God's truth revealed in creation. Our hope for our students is that by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word they will better understand what it means "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

## Encouraging Student Faith Development

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Understanding God through his world, his Word, and his Son should involve the process of developing students' faith in ways that engage the whole person. So what does connecting the head, heart, and hands of a student mean and how is this accomplished? How do we encourage faith in our youth through the study of God's Story and nurture their walk with God and his people in that Story? The faith we seek to encourage in students involves knowledge/wisdom (head), conviction/choosing (heart), and living/serving (hands). Knowledge is based on conviction in order to be effective. Conviction without knowledge is like shallow seed that grows quickly but then dies from lack of grounding. Action without conviction or knowledge is weak and misguided. Students need all three: deep understanding that goes beyond knowledge to wisdom, desire and conviction that lead to deep commitment, and service that reflects the biblical call to bring forward the kingdom of God. We must maintain a delicate balance between an academic focus (knowing) and an application to life focus (believing/living), all the while connecting intellect, imagination, and identity within students. It is our comfort to be able to rest in the fact that the Holy Spirit is at work in our students' hearts and minds; our calling is to be obedient servant-tellers of the Story (2 Timothy 2:2).

Each lesson within this curriculum includes lesson steps specifically identified with head, heart, hands, or some combination of these areas of focus with the students. We indicate this by the use of icons throughout the lessons keyed to the words *Know* (head), *Believe* (heart), and *Live* (hands) as descriptors for those icons. Not every lesson will involve all three areas of head, heart, and hands, but throughout the units students will have ample opportunity for their heads, hearts, and hands to be involved and engaged.

## Understanding the Bible as a Connected Whole

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The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is one book telling one Story. In the many individual books and passages written by different people, in different centuries, for various reasons, we hear in one voice the unique story of God's salvation for the human race. In a time when much of life and culture as we know it is fragmenting and many are opposing the truth that the Bible reveals, the following points remind us of the importance of understanding why and how the Bible is a connected whole.

1. The Bible is a metanarrative—a grand, overarching, all-encompassing story that gives meaning and order to past, present, and future life. It tells the story of God's creation, the fall of creation into sin, and the redemption and restoration of all creation by Christ.
2. God reveals his desire for relationship with people repeatedly throughout the course of the biblical narrative.
3. The history of God's saving work illustrated in the Old and New Testaments culminates in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.
4. God desires an ongoing relationship with each person and through the work of the Holy Spirit moves people and history to achieve his sovereign and gracious purposes.
5. Our obedient response to God's love and claim over creation is to seek to help transform and restore God's created order, which was broken by the sinful disobedience of humankind.
6. When we enter into God's story we understand who we are, who is the source of all life, our purpose in life, and how we should respond to God's grace and claim on our lives. We are challenged to shift our focus from ourselves to God and to join in his kingdom work of redeeming creation.
7. It is important to view the Bible as a connected group of divinely inspired writings with purpose and interrelated integrity as a sequence of books, as events within particular books, and as texts within a certain book.
8. We believe that Paul's words to Timothy are instructive for our work with students: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

## The Task of the Teacher

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The teacher, of course, is a key influence in the delivery of this Bible curriculum. If we are to inspire students to know, believe, and live the truth of God, it is critical that teachers demonstrate knowing, believing, and living the truths of the Bible to their students and model a passion for God. In our *Teacher Guide for Bible* (1936) we find these succinct statements about what a teacher should know, do, and be (paraphrased):

1. The teacher must *have* before he or she can *give*. The teacher should know the Bible and related subjects.
2. The teacher must have a purpose, a carefully mapped out plan, and ask for divine guidance.
3. The teacher should be a living example of the kind of life we want every child to live. He or she must be a sincere lover of childhood and of the Master. Where there is no love, there can be no great teaching.

It is critical how you as a Bible teacher view this work—is it just an assignment or a life-changing opportunity? In the introduction to our *Revelation-Response* Bible curriculum (1974), these cautionary yet encouraging words were given:

If you consider Bible teaching only another one of your duties, the chances are that Bible learning will be only another duty for your students. If, on the other hand, you delight in it, you will create much enthusiasm in the classroom. Your faith, your enthusiasm about God, your love for each other, your experiences with God and his Word, and your participation in the Church will have a greater impact than any materials could have.

Be positive, thankful, imaginative, inventive, and open to the Spirit of God. Live and teach in such a way that even if each of your students lived only as effectively as you live, the Church and our society would benefit greatly.

Within their own classrooms, teachers need to create community where Christlike behavior becomes the norm. Students should be encouraged to live out being the body of Christ, which includes acceptance of all people as created in God's image, honoring each other's gifts, and the commitment to work through the brokenness that shows itself in daily life. Teachers need to seek shalom (peace and wholeness) within their classroom and in working together with colleagues. Authentically allowing the Spirit to mold us so that we model Christian community, inside and outside of the classroom, is a true witness to students of the power of Christ.

## **Walking With God and His People Development Process**

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The process used to develop this curriculum revision is a significant part of what makes this product unique. At CSI, we believe that classroom teachers are truly the experts in making the curriculum come alive with students and have the best understanding of student needs at a given grade level. We sought to have diverse representation among our writers and advisors, in terms of gender and geographic location, as well as of teaching situation.

1. **Writers.** Through an application process 20 writers were selected for grades P–8 curriculum revision work. CSI staff provided the revised curriculum scope and sequence expectations for the writers and guided the writing efforts.
2. **Grade level advisors.** Each writer was connected with one to three grade level advisors. These advisors are other classroom teachers who offered helpful feedback on their writing, suggested resources and teaching ideas, and led focus groups of teachers who reviewed sample lessons.
3. **Focus group participants.** Grade level advisors selected other teachers at their grade level to review sample lessons selected by CSI staff and writers for review and feedback. These participants met in groups or responded by e-mail. Their feedback was used for this current curriculum and ongoing development needs.

This curriculum demonstrates the biblical concept of community: the beauty of Christian teachers operating together as a body, each member contributing his or

her gifts for the good of all. Throughout this process we have attempted to honor the experience, training, and expertise of our teachers to bring about the best possible product for those we exist to serve: the students of our schools and their parents, who depend on our teachers to give sound biblical instruction to their children.

## Curriculum Implementation Suggestions

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1. This curriculum is very complete and offers multiple options within lessons. Each school using this curriculum has a unique set of instructional pacing circumstances in terms of time schedules, days in a school year, and academic focus. It is the responsibility and task of each teacher and each school to make professional judgments about the selection of lessons at each grade level and across a school program so that a guaranteed and viable curriculum is presented to students. To this end we recommend that you consider both the student outcomes and the scope and sequence overviews included here as you make these instructional decisions.
2. Bible memorization is a key instructional strategy for students to place God's Word in their heads and hearts. While we make memory work suggestions throughout these lessons, we also recommend that schools consider constructing a Bible memory work program that is both systematic across the grades and reasonable in terms of student expectations. Examples of such programs may be accessed from CSI via our Web site.
3. CSI will continue to add resources to enhance this curriculum year by year. These resources will be provided free through our Web site or for a fee through our online store. We also intend to continue identifying best instructional practices, strategies, and resources and to make them available to teachers using this curriculum.
4. We recommend that each student have access to the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, which has been used throughout this curriculum. We also recommend that teachers own a copy of both the *Songs for Life* (1994) and *Sing With Me* (2006) songbooks so that they can easily find the words and music referenced in lessons. Likewise, the curriculum was written with reference to the *NIV Textbook Bible* (1984) for students and the *NIV Study Bible* (2002) for teachers, both featuring updated color maps (© 2005). NIV editions with older maps may be used, but some adjustments for differing map numbers may be necessary. These and other NIV Bibles and songbooks are available for purchase through CSI.
5. Teachers may also find the articles and notes in the *Archaeological Study Bible* (2005) helpful in regard to understanding and explaining the Bible's archaeological, historical, and cultural backgrounds to students. It is illustrated with hundreds of color photographs of millennia-old texts and artifacts, ancient weapons of war, ancient children's toys, and so on. Also helpful as a literary guide to the entire Bible is the *Literary Study Bible* (2007), which explores in detail the Bible's story lines, characters, historical settings, literary genres, motifs, theological themes, imagery, and important terms.

# Scope and Sequence Overview

1. Grades P & K are arranged chronologically by Bible characters and Bible themes.
2. Grade 1 concentrates on the Old Testament connections between testaments.
3. Grade 2 concentrates on the New Testament connections between testaments.
4. A flexible epistle unit is included at the beginning for grades 1–6 to assist students in responding to and applying God’s Word.

	<i>Genesis</i>	<i>Exodus, Deuteronomy</i>	<i>Joshua</i>	<i>Judges</i>	<i>Ruth</i>	<i>1 &amp; 2 Samuel</i>	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes</i>	<i>1 &amp; 2 Kings, 1 &amp; 2 Chronicles</i>	<i>Prophecy</i>	<i>Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther</i>	<i>Ezra, Nehemiah</i>
<b>P</b>												
<b>K</b>												
<b>1</b>												
<b>2</b>	R	R	R	R		R			R	R	R	R
<b>3</b>												
<b>4</b>	R	R	R									
<b>5</b>	R	R	R	R		R						
<b>6</b>												
<b>7</b>	R	R	R	R	R	R		R				
<b>8</b>												

R = Review of core curriculum

5. Grades 3–6 study the entire Bible over four years rather than three years.
6. Grades 7 & 8 shift to primarily a thematic study with a secondary chronological emphasis. E.g., Grade 7 has primarily OT material and Grade 8 has primarily NT material with additional thematic units at each grade.

In Grade 6 the Epistles are studied in depth and, as in Grades 1–5, Colossians is the “featured” epistle book at the beginning of the year.

# CSI Bible Curriculum Student Outcomes

- \* Standards 1–6 focus on Bible literacy and Bible study
- \* Standards 7–10 address worldview/doctrine: God, truth, creation, people
- \* Standard 11 addresses application

	<b>K–2</b>	<b>3–5</b>	<b>6–8</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Students know key biblical passages, characters, and events.</b>		
1.1	Retell and respond to Bible stories	Retell and respond to Bible stories	Retell and respond to Bible stories
1.2	Sequence Bible stories, characters, and events	Sequence Bible stories, characters, events, and eras	Sequence Bible stories, characters, events, and eras
1.3	Recite identified Bible passages	Recite identified Bible passages	Recite identified Bible passages
1.4		Identify relationships between characters and/or events	Explain relationships between characters and/or events
<b>2.</b>	<b>Students know the historical and cultural context of the Bible.</b>		
2.1		Explain Old Testament events	Explain the history of God's people from creation through the Book of Acts
2.2	Tell how God was visibly with his people in Bible times as he is today		
2.3	Identify Israel as God's chosen people	Identify characters and events in history that impacted the history of God's people	Explain characters and events in history that impacted the history of God's people
<b>3.</b>	<b>Students understand various Christian and non-Christian religious views.</b>		
3.1	Differentiate between God's chosen people and pagan nations	Describe the influence of false religions on God's people	Identify fundamental biblical beliefs
3.2		Describe and compare ancient and contemporary religious practices	Describe and compare the beliefs of various Christian churches
<b>4.</b>	<b>Students understand how geography and culture impacted the biblical story.</b>		
4.1	Describe Jewish worship and how worship changed because of Jesus	Describe the Jewish and Middle Eastern cultural practices	Describe ways in which the Jewish religious culture impacted the relationship of the people of Israel to God
4.2	Identify key locations, including Israel	Identify key geographic features of the land of Israel and the Mediterranean world	Describe the impact of geography on Bible stories

	<b>K–2</b>	<b>3–5</b>	<b>6–8</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Students know how the Bible is organized, the types of literature the Bible includes, and how to read the Bible.</b>		
5.1	Identify that the Bible is divided into Old and New Testaments and into books	Identify the sections of the Bible, including the Pentateuch, books of prophecy, Gospels, Epistles, etc.	Identify where key events and passages in the Bible are located in terms of books and section
5.2	Recite the books of the Bible		
5.3	Identify poetry and narrative	Identify the characteristics of various genre and apply them to a passage	Use the characteristics of various genre to determine the meaning of a passage
5.4	Read Bible stories with appropriate oral expression	Use understanding of the passage's purpose to read expressively	Use understanding of the passage's purpose to read expressively
<b>6.</b>	<b>Students use a variety of reference materials.</b>		
6.1	Use maps	Use various reference materials appropriately, for example, maps, Bible dictionaries, concordances, online, etc.	Use various reference materials appropriately, for example, maps, Bible dictionaries, concordances, online, etc.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.</b>		
7.1	Describe God in terms of his attributes	Identify which of God's attributes a Bible story reveals	Use Bible stories and life experiences to describe attributes of God
7.2	Identify the persons and work of the Trinity	Recognize the persons and work of the Trinity in Bible stories	Give Bible evidence for the Trinity and the work of each person in the Trinity
<b>8.</b>	<b>Students understand what the Bible teaches about truth.</b>		
8.1	Identify the Bible as the infallible Word of God	Explain that the Bible is the infallible Word of God	Defend the Bible as the infallible Word of God
8.2	Identify what the Bible teaches about faith and behavior	Explain how the Bible guides us in matters of faith and behavior	Defend the Bible as the guide for faith and behavior
8.3	Understand biblical values, including shalom, justice, mercy	Explain biblical values, including shalom, justice, mercy	Understand biblical values, including shalom, justice, mercy
8.4		Recognize a variety of valid biblical beliefs with the Christian community	Describe a variety of valid biblical beliefs with the Christian community
8.5	Identify how Bible characters responded to culture	Identify Christian responses to culture (separation, identification, transformation, incarnation)	Explain Christian responses to culture (separation, identification, transformation, incarnation)
8.6	Identify what we learn from God's creation	Explain what we learn from God's creation	Defend general revelation as a way of knowing truth

	<b>K–2</b>	<b>3–5</b>	<b>6–8</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Students understand what the Bible teaches about God's creation.</b>		
9.1	Identify God as the Creator	Give examples of God's attributes revealed in creation	Describe what creation teaches us about God
9.2	Identify God's promises about creation	Describe God's covenant with creation	Explain God's covenant with creation
9.3	Retell the stories of creation, fall, and redemption	Explain creation, fall, redemption, and restoration	Explain how Christians should respond to creation, based on creation, fall, redemption, restoration
9.4	Explain how people were created to take care of creation	Explain the biblical concept of stewardship in terms of taking care of God's creation	Defend the biblical concept of stewardship in terms of taking care of God's creation
<b>10.</b>	<b>Students understand what the Bible teaches about people.</b>		
10.1	Retell how people are created in God's image	Describe how people are God's image bearers	Explain that as God's image bearers, people are inherently religious
10.2	Tell how people have sinful hearts	Identify the nature and consequences of sin resulting in separation from God and death	Explain how sin has alienated people from God, creation, others, and themselves
10.3	Tell how people, by God's grace, can have a relationship with him	Identify God's grace and the plan of salvation	Explain God's plan of salvation
10.4	Explain the idea of covenant related to Bible characters	Recognize covenants in Bible stories	Explain the implications of the covenant relationship
10.5	God's plan for man has a start and a finish	Understand time line of biblical events	Defend the idea that creation has a starting point and an ending point

	<b>K–2</b>	<b>3–5</b>	<b>6–8</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Students apply biblical teaching to all of life and learning.</b>		
11.1	Identify personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus	Explain personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus	Defend personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus
11.2	Identify the fruit of the Spirit	Explain the fruit of the Spirit	Analyze a case study as an opportunity for application of the fruit of the Spirit to the scenario
11.3	Identify God and the Bible as the key sources for making decisions	Recount a process of Christian decision making	Analyze a process for Christian decision making
11.4	Identify what the Bible teaches about behavior	Explain what the Bible teaches about behavior	Use Bible teaching to defend personal behavior choices
11.5	Respect and love themselves and others as being created in God's image and having certain gifts	Respect and love themselves and others as being created in God's image and having certain gifts	Respect and love themselves and others as being created in God's image and having certain gifts
11.6		Use biblical teaching to constructively examine community/cultural values and practices	Use biblical teaching to constructively examine community/cultural values and practices
11.7	Retell what the Bible teaches about an issue	Explain what the Bible teaches about a issue	Explain a biblical response to a perspective and/or social issue
11.8	Retell how service opportunities are designed to help others	Identify how service opportunities are designed to help others	Explain how service opportunities are designed to help others
11.9	Retell Bible teaching about leaders	Identify ways Christians can demonstrate servant leadership	Explain how Christians demonstrate servant leadership
11.10	Explain how conflicts can be resolved in Christian ways	Explain how conflicts can be resolved in Christian ways	Apply biblical principles of conflict resolution to case studies

# Grade Eight Overview

Unit	Focus	Bible Memory	Time
<b>1. The Early Church</b> Why a New Testament? (1) At Just the Right Time (2) The Gospels (3) The Law and the Prophets Fulfilled (4) Preparation for Jesus' Ministry (5) Who Is Jesus? (6) The Apostles (7) Jesus the Teacher (8) The Kingdom of God (9–10) The Seven Last Words of Jesus (11) The Great Commission (12) Acts (13) The Holy Spirit (14) The Powers (15) Unit Review (16)	The plan of salvation unfolds throughout both the Old and New Testament with the Old Testament events setting the stage for the birth of Christ. Jesus is God's Son, the Christ who came to fulfill God's law. This unit outlines themes found throughout the New Testament, that prepare the world for the kingship of Jesus and the kingdom of God as the Church is established. The New Testament gives direction, purpose, and encouragement to those who are members of the kingdom of God. The sorrow of the death of Christ, gives way to gladness, as Christ is risen. Discipleship carries certain requirements and we are to make disciples of all nations. The book of Acts and the power of the Holy Spirit equip us to live for Christ.	Matthew 5:1–11 Acts 1:8 The Last Seven Words of Jesus: Luke 23:34 Luke 23:43 John 19:26–27 Mark 15:34 John 19:28 John 19:30 Luke 23:46	4 weeks
<b>2. Themes of the New Testament</b> The Church's Birthday (1) Pressures from Within and Without (2) The Persecuted Church (3) Into All the World (4–6) No More Chains (7) Faith and Works (8) The Territory Expands (9–10) Leadership within the Body (11) Priesthood in the Body (12) Apocalyptic Literature (13) The Role of the Church (14) Genesis to Revelation (15) Unit Review (16)	This unit focuses on various themes of the New Testament starting with a review of the new church and how the Gospel spread throughout most of Asia Minor, Greece and Rome through God's choice of Paul. Paul's travels look at his various teachings and writings of Christianity taught by him (and his teams). This unit ends by tying together the progression of plans and problems begun in Genesis to completion in Revelation.	Galatians 5:13–18	5 weeks
<b>3. The Long Walk Home</b> Apathy versus Passion (1) Spiritual Disciplines (2–12) Ups and Downs (13) Come Together (14) Soon and Very Soon (15) Unit Review (16)	This unit reflects that the means of spiritual growth are obtained through training oneself to be disciplined in the faith. The unit begins and ends with encouragement to grow spiritually. The lessons take students through a series of contemplative exercises in order to stretch their thinking. The Christian life entails an intentional practice set up by individuals to fit their personality and lifestyle but also to stretch them in spiritual growth. The goal of this unit is to help students first learn what these practices look like and then begin to implement them.	Matthew 4 Matthew 14 Mark 1 Luke 4 2 Corinthians 9:6–7 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 Philippians 1:29 Philippians 2:4–11 Philippians 2:12–16 Philippians 3:12–14 Colossians 2:6–7 Colossians 3:1–2 Colossians 3:5–10 Colossians 3:16–17 Colossians 3:23–24 Colossians 4:2 Hebrews 10:24–25	3½ weeks

Unit	Focus	Bible Memory	Time
<b>4. Church History—Part 1</b> Why Study Church History? (1) What Is Church? (2) Paying Attention in Church (3) Symbols in the Early Church (4) The Church's Beginnings (5–6) Persecution (7–9) The Apostolic Fathers (10) The Apologists (11–12) Persecutions, Martyrdoms, and More Persecutions (13) Forming the New Testament Canon (14) Part 1 Review (15)	Church history is a giant-sized story of God's redemption of his people through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's coming on Pentecost marked the birth of the New Testament Church. The Early Church was marked with suffering and persecution but God sovereignly and providentially provided the church with the right people at the right time.	Books of the Bible	3 weeks
<b>4. Church History—Part 2</b> Constantine and the Church (16–17) The Rise of Monasticism (18) Is Jesus God? The Council of Nicaea (19) Athanasius against the World (20) Cappadocians and Constantinople: A Study of the Trinity (21) Ambrose, Jerome, and Chrysostom (22) Augustine (23–24) The Two Natures of Christ (25) The Middle Ages (26–30) Anselm and Aquinas (31) The Reform before the Reformation (32) Part 2 Review (33)	Under Emperor Constantine, the Church and Christianity became "popular"—both a blessing and a curse. Even though fewer Christians were dying for their faith, Christianity was becoming heavily influenced by the Roman state. The Roman Catholic Church established itself as the supreme Church in all of Christendom and continued the process of elevating tradition above Scripture. The fall of the Western Roman Empire thrust Christianity into the medieval time period as Islam rose to be a dominant force for them to deal with.	Nicene Creed	3½ weeks
<b>4. Church History—Part 3</b> Martin Luther (34–35) Breaking Bread without Rome (36) The Radical Reformation (37) We Are Not Our Own (38) We Are God's (39) Open the King of England's Eyes! (40) Reformation by Way of a King (41) God's Man for God's Work in God's Time (42) The Catholic Counter-Reformation (43) The Middle Way (44) The Doctrines of Grace (45) <i>Semper Reformanda</i> (46–47) Part 3 Review (48)	God used Martin Luther to provide a needed crack in the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Luther started the Reformation, a sleeping giant of theological truth that had largely been overshadowed for nearly a millennium. Other men such as Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, John Knox, William Tyndale, and the Puritans all had major roles in bringing about a Reformation that still is represented today in Protestant churches across the world.	Psalm 46	3 weeks
<b>4. Church History—Part 4</b> Resolved (49) True Friendship (50) What Is True Revival? (51) Missions Bring Worship (52) A Politician and a Preacher (53) The Rise of the Cults (54–55) What in the World Is a Worldview? (56) Issues in the Church Today (57–62) What Should the Church Look Like? (63) Part 4 Review (64)	After the Puritan movement came a movement of rationalism and empiricism that led many to reject orthodox Christianity and embrace deism. Because of their dedication to the Word of God, Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, along with the Wesley brothers, were able to bring a great awakening to the New England colonies. The 20th century Church drifted into theological modernism and into post-modernism in the 21st century. Even though we face times of theological shallowness, God providentially rises up men and women who faithfully fight for the faith as taught in the Old and New Testaments. A true church should have certain biblical marks that set it apart from the world.	"Amazing Grace"	3 weeks

# How Constantine Changed the Church

UNIT  
4-2  
LESSON  
17

## Bible References

Matthew 22:15–22; Acts 5:27–29

## To the Teacher

This lesson continues to explore Constantine's enormous impact upon the church. As the state bestowed upon the church certain financial, material, and legal advantages, it also gave it a new set of problems. Of course, the issue of the relationship between church and state remains very much alive. The first part of this lesson introduces students to the problem and gives them an opportunity to begin to think about the issues involved.

The second part of the lesson traces some changes in worship practices and in the church's life. Buildings became more splendid, and worship was characterized by a greater emphasis on pomp and liturgy. One group that rebelled against the wealth and security of the church was the hermits, who withdrew from the world to meditate and live lives of self-denial. These monastics will be covered in greater detail in a later lesson.

## Preparation/Materials

- \* Activity sheets 1 and 2, one each per student
- \* Art books or prints showing basilicas and early Christian mosaics (optional)
- \* Glue (optional)
- \* Colored paper or small colored tile chips for mosaics (optional)

## Lesson Highlights

- \* Constantine's favor conferred upon the church immense advantages, but in the process the church lost some of its integrity, as well as its freedom to make and enforce its own decisions.

- \* Christianity gradually emerged from equality with other religions in the empire to becoming the official state religion.
- \* The church's wealth and prestige were mirrored by changes in its worship services.
- \* Changes in the church's understanding of baptism and the addition of the practice of penance led many to postpone baptism until late in life.
- \* The relationship between church and state remains a complicated and often thorny issue in North America.

## Background

The effects of Constantine's conversion and of his championing of the Christian church can hardly be overestimated. Christian influence upon Roman law and government, growth in church membership and material assets, widespread debate over doctrinal issues, and increased interaction among churches and political leaders empirewide were some of the benefits—or mixed benefits—of Constantine's conversion.

But favored status came with a stiff price. Along with state aid came state control. The precedent set by Constantine's civil enforcement of the decision of the Council of Nicaea (Lesson 19) would embroil church and state in an ongoing struggle for supremacy for several hundreds of years.

# Lesson Steps



## Bridge

1. Explain or elicit from students the meaning of the phrase “separation of church and state.”
2. Discuss the relationship of church and state in Islamic countries. In Iran, for example, church leaders also rule civic affairs. Japan before and during World War II is another example. Shinto was the state religion, and the emperor was considered to be a god. Standard ceremonies were mandated at all shrines for national festivals and other state occasions. During World War II kamikaze pilots who died for their country were celebrated as religious martyrs. To be a Christian was to be un-Japanese.
3. Explain that in this and the next lesson students will study the ramifications of a close relationship between state and church after Constantine’s conversion to Christianity.



## Scripture Link

1. Have students turn in their Bibles to Matthew 22:15–22. Read the passage together as a class.
2. Ask students, “What did Jesus mean when he said, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s?’” (He meant that we should honor the governing authority over us, so long as its mandates don’t conflict with commands from God.)
3. Have students turn to Acts 5. Have a student read Acts 5:27–29 aloud.
4. Ask students, “Under what circumstances might you have to disobey a human law in favor of remaining obedient to God?” (Answers will vary.)



## Student Activities

1. Read “Imperial Favor,” “Favor for a Price” (page 102), and the sidebar “From Outlaw Religion to State Religion” (page 103) in the student text.

### IMPERIAL FAVOR

Constantine had given Christians complete freedom of worship, but his favor didn’t stop there. He generously supported the church, constructing church buildings all over the empire and erecting shrines to martyrs. He gave the church official buildings and even palaces for its use. He also passed a law bequeathing to the church the property of anyone who died without an heir. Constantine’s generosity was making the church wealthy.

Under Constantine, the church developed formidable influence in public life. Christians filled high government positions, and bishops wielded increasing power as advisors to the emperor. One result was that Constantine created laws that Christians wanted, such as:

- Sundays and Christian festivals were made holidays.
- Divorce was made more difficult.
- Prisoners could not be starved to death, and they were entitled to sunlight once a day. Clergy could visit the prisons.
- Gladiatorial fights and crucifixions were outlawed.
- Killing babies was against the law.
- Breaking up the families of slaves was illegal.
- Slaves could be set free on the basis of reading a statement of allegiance before a member of the clergy.

The new freedom also gave the church unlimited opportunity to teach and preach the gospel. Christians wondered whether this was the time when the whole world would be converted.

Constantine's favor had brought immense advantages to the church.

### **FAVOR FOR A PRICE**

But these advantages were not free. Constantine was the emperor, and he made it clear that the bishops did not rule him. Quite to the contrary, he ruled the bishops. For example, he took them along to battles in order to guarantee that God's power was on his side.

Constantine also concerned himself with church affairs. Because his main interest was his empire's peace and unity, he disliked disagreements within the church. He did all he could to help resolve these problems.

Sometimes the church asked him to intervene. Beginning in 313, the churches in Africa asked Constantine to help them settle a problem. A difference of opinion had resulted in two sets of rival bishops in many cities. Constantine placed the problem before bishops' meetings in both Italy and France. They ruled against one of the bishops, Donatus. When his followers refused to accept the verdict, Constantine sent his soldiers to remove the bishops from Donatus's group from churches where they were in residence.

The church and the state had become intertwined. One hand washed the other. Constantine expected the church to bless his policies and wars, while the church looked to Constantine to advance its cause.

### **FROM OUTLAW RELIGION TO STATE RELIGION**

Constantine's edict in 313 gave Christians equality with other religions. All were legal within the empire. But Constantine soon demonstrated that he favored the Christian faith above paganism. That change made it possible for people who had sacrificed to the gods only as a patriotic duty to quit the practice. Traditional paganism still had strength in many parts of the empire, however.

Then as Christians gathered more power, laws unfavorable to the old religions were passed. In 319, for example, Constantine outlawed several magical practices. According to his ruling, "Ceremonies of a bygone perversion" could not be openly conducted.

By the time Constantius, Constantine's son, became emperor (337–361), Christians outnumbered non-Christians in some parts of the empire. Now Christians began doing the persecuting, as they urged the emperor to outlaw paganism altogether. Not all

Christians agreed with this move. But in 356 Constantius passed a decree forbidding sacrifices to pagan deities and threatening capital punishment to those who disobeyed. Many pagans resisted the law, and Constantius didn't strongly enforce it.

In 380 Emperor Theodosius went so far as to make being a Christian the law of the empire with this edict: "It is Our Will that all peoples we rule shall practice that religion that Peter the Apostle transmitted to the Romans. We shall believe in the single Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Now paganism had become illegal. The power of the state had switched sides. Religion was still the foundation of the empire, but now the religion was Christianity. By the beginning of the fourth century, Christianity had changed from an outlaw religion to a state religion.

Sad to say, Christians thought they had the right to use violence against pagans. Most were only too happy to have the state enforce their wishes.

2. Have pairs or small groups of students list the positive and negative aspects for the church associated with Constantine's favor.
3. Discuss the student lists. Many of the positives were indeed important—for example, giving Christians influence to help make the society more humane. But the price was high, and as time went on, it became higher.
4. Discuss the following topics.
  - Summarize Christianity's evolution from legal religion to state religion.  
Point out that when Constantine assumed power, he had no desire to impose Christianity upon the empire. His edict gave the Christian faith equality with other religions, so his reign started out with freedom of worship. But from 313 to 381 Christianity gained power, became the majority religion, and finally had enough influence to advance to the status of state religion.
  - Also note that from 313 to 381 Christianity suffered certain setbacks.  
Emperor Julian (361–363), for example, sought to restore the glory of paganism, organizing a pagan priesthood similar to that existing in the church and ordering massive sacrifices of hundreds of animals at a time. But the people mocked his ceremonies. Julian also tried to stop the advance of Christianity by ridiculing it. Although he didn't order persecutions, some local officials felt comfortable in doing so.
  - The church's misuse of power in the name of God during the following centuries kept (and still keeps) some people out of its doors.
5. Distribute activity sheet 1. Help students grapple with the question of the often complex relationship between church and state. Read the directions on the activity sheet. Assign one or more of the suggested laws to groups or pairs of students. Have spokespersons from the groups present their findings to the whole class for discussion.

Alternatively, students can individually complete the activity sheet. Then have students with opposing opinions on an issue hold impromptu debates.

**Imagine this scenario:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Your country is called a Christian nation. At least 65 percent of the people are Christians. Being in the majority, they have elected a Christian legislature and are able to pass whatever laws they want. Read each of the following laws. Should a Christian majority pass this law or not? Give the reason for your opinion.

1. The prime minister/president and vice president shall be Christians and members of a church.

**Answers will vary.**

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Judges on all levels of the judicial system must be Christians. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. All schools in the country must begin each day with prayer to God. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Christian instruction is to be given weekly in all schools. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Good Friday will be a national holiday. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. All businesses must be closed on Sundays (including airlines, restaurants, gas stations, and grocery stores). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. All TV programs and films must reflect Christian values. A national committee of Christians will be set up to enforce this law and censor offending materials. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**LAWS OF A CHRISTIAN NATION**

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8. A new tax will be assessed that will take two percent of each person's income for support of Christian schools and clergy. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. All abortions will be banned. Doctors performing abortions will receive a minimum 10-year prison sentence. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s”*  
(Matthew 22:21b).

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6. Use topics such as the following for a closing discussion (or for student writing).
  - Do you think governments should promote all religions equally, no religions at all, or one or more religions but not others?
  - Is it possible to force someone to be a Christian? (No. Christianity is a matter of the heart, and only the Holy Spirit can regenerate hearts.)
7. Direct students to read “Changing Worship and Church Life” (page 104) in the student text.

**CHANGING WORSHIP AND CHURCH LIFE**

When ordinary Christians attended worship services, they couldn't help but notice the emperor's influence on the church. Worship had become more splendid, and some of the trappings of emperor worship had been introduced. Incense, a sign of honor for the emperor, now filled the church. The services began with a procession,

choirs did much of the singing, the clergy wore grand robes, and the Lord's Supper was celebrated with great pomp.

Baptism had always been taken seriously by the church as the sacrament marking a person as part of God's family. But now many church attendees received only the most basic instruction in the faith, were "marked with the sign of the cross," and then considered themselves Christians. Many, including Constantine himself, who was baptized while on his deathbed, put off being baptized until they were very old or were about to die. (Note that the painting on page 99 is an inaccurate depiction of Constantine's baptism.)

But why? The church at this time taught that all sins were forgiven at baptism. If a person died after baptism, how could his or her later sins be forgiven? Well, the church had taken that into account. It allowed a person to do penance (make acts of atonement) for sin, but only once in a lifetime. It only made sense, then, for people to wait as long as possible to make a commitment. After all, no one wanted to die with unforgiven sins hanging over his or her head. So the situation was essentially the church's fault. The church was allowing, and even encouraging, a person to be considered a Christian and yet escape the responsibilities of Christian living.

Other changes were visible in the church buildings, which had become much larger and much more elaborate. The church in Dura-Europos, the oldest Christian church building archaeologists have discovered, was simple and unassuming. In contrast, many of the churches erected under Constantine and later emperors were large and magnificent basilicas (named for their basic rectangular plan).

Inside were polished marble and rich tapestries. And in many churches the walls were covered with mosaics (artwork made from very small pieces of colored stone or glass). Usually the mosaics depicted Christian symbols or scenes from the Bible.

Another development was the construction of churches at places where martyrs had been buried or at other "holy" sites. The idea was that worshiping in these places had a special, mystical effect.

Constantine's mother, Helena, who had made a pilgrimage to Palestine, had developed a keen interest in the places connected with the events of Jesus' life and had persuaded Constantine to build churches in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The Church of the Nativity was placed over the cave where Jesus was believed to have been born and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher over the purported site of Jesus' tomb.

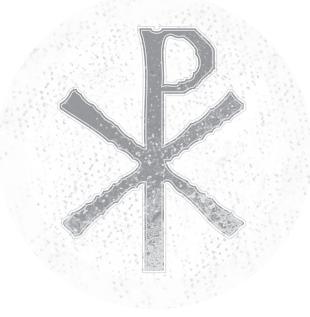
There could be no doubt that Constantine's conversion had made an enormous impact upon the church, which now had to struggle with the question of how to be obedient within this new environment. How could Christians remain faithful to Jesus Christ in a church of wealth and power?

- 8.** Distribute activity sheet 2. Have students complete it individually.
- 9.** Go over student answers on both activity sheets with the class.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CHANGING WORSHIP AND CHURCH LIFE

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UNIT 4-2 LESSON 17-2

1. List at least four ways that worship services changed under Constantine. More pomp in services; use of incense, processions, choirs; luxurious clothing for clergy; elaborate Lord's Supper rituals

2. How did the idea of baptism change from that of the early church? Since the church taught that at baptism all sins were forgiven, and that penance was a one-time occurrence, many people put off being baptized until they were on their deathbeds.

3. In what way was this idea of baptism unbiblical? Answers will vary but should touch upon/incorporate the following: Baptism symbolizes the washing away of sins and the inclusion of a believer in God's family, but it isn't a magical rite that does away with sin. Sin continues to mar Christians' lives, but God forgives us in Christ when we repent.

4. Why did worshiping at holy places become popular? People thought that the saints had special influence with God, so worshiping in these places held special meaning.

**10.** (Optional) In collaboration with the art teacher, have students create mosaics, possibly of Christian symbols or of biblical phrases/scenes. Another idea is to have students create “political” cartoons relating to the lesson (they could focus, for example, on the relationship between the bishops and Constantine).

## Enrichment

- \* As a class, take a closer look at current church and state relations in your own country. Collect and discuss articles from newspapers or magazines dealing directly or indirectly with the topic. If appropriate, have students write their responses in letters to the editor.
- \* **Art.** Make a study of the architecture of a basilica. Show slides or art prints of famous basilicas (you may want to consult an art teacher for sources). Students could also sketch out the basic floor plan of a basilica.
- \* Research the function and architecture of the baptistery, a separate building located near a basilica.
- \* Research penance in the third and fourth centuries, using sources on the resource list at the beginning of the unit.



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