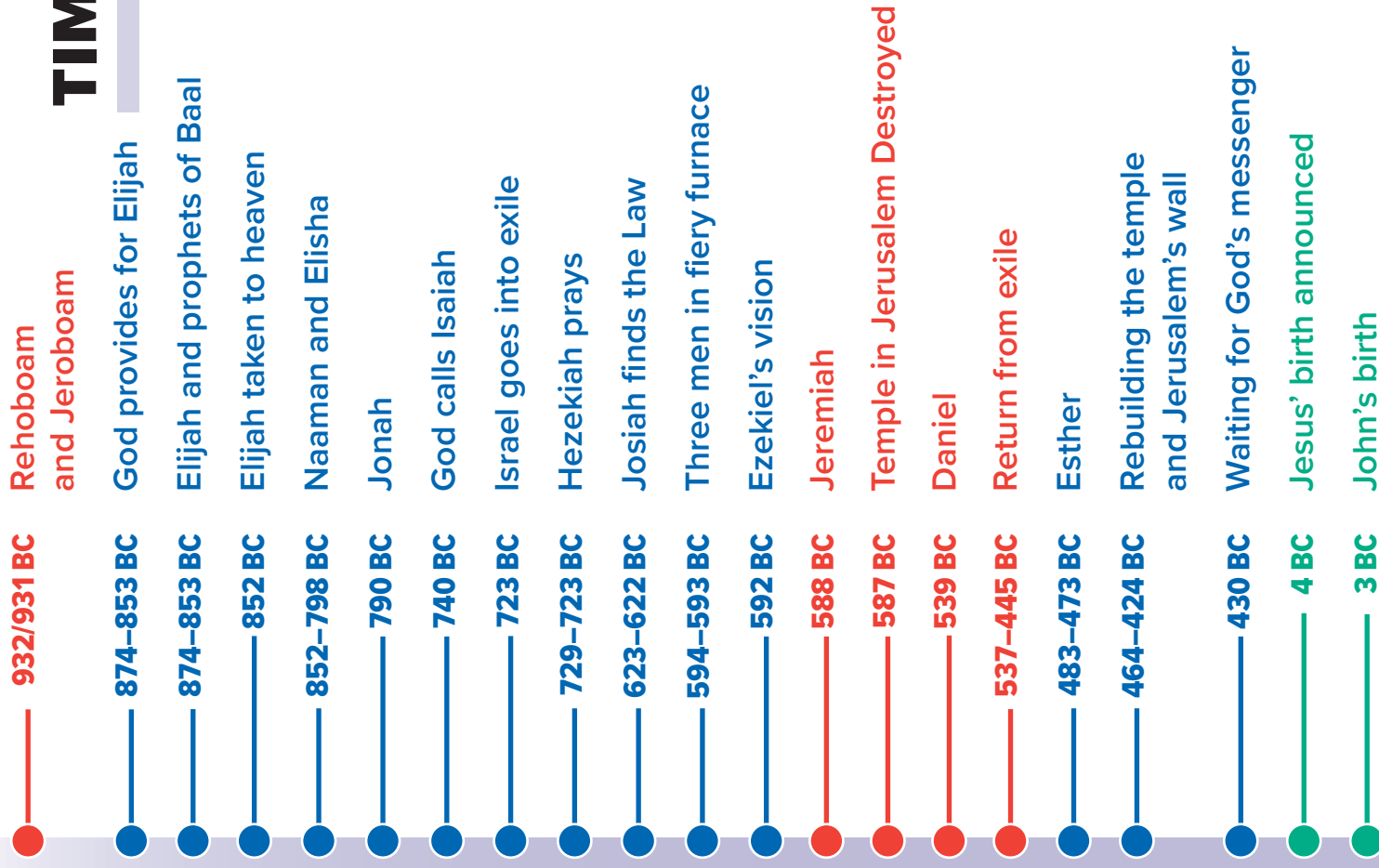


YOUTH LEADER GUIDE

Unit 7: Jesus Comes for Us



TIMELINE B



First Greek city-states established
900 BC

Iron Age societies develop
in Germany and Austria
800 BC

First recorded Olympic games
in Greece
776 BC

Celts begin to settle in Ireland
500 BC

Work begins on
Great Wall of China
220 BC

Han Dynasty restored in China
AD 23

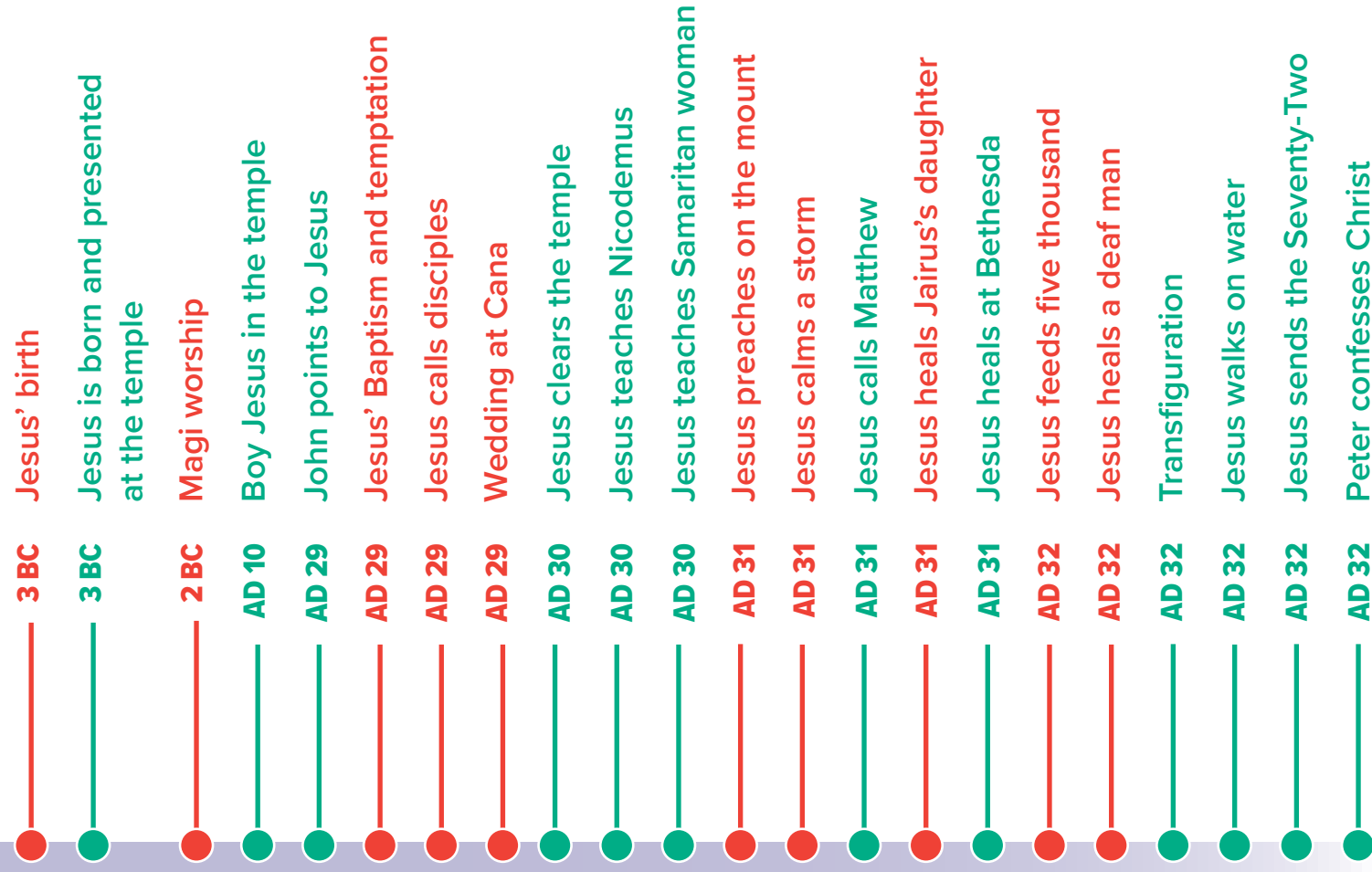
KEY

Bible Survey

Old Testament
Exploration

New Testament
Exploration

World History



ENDURING FAITH BIBLE CURRICULUM

OVERVIEW

The Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum features a Christ-centered, three-year chronological survey of Bible history with uniform outlines across all levels. The materials have been designed to help you teach the Christian faith in age-appropriate ways, with the goal of helping your students grow deeper in their understanding of God's Word.

- Year 1 is an overview of the Bible and its major themes, tracing God's plan of salvation from Genesis to Revelation.
- Year 2 looks at the Old Testament in depth.
- Year 3 looks at the New Testament in depth.
- There are three units per year, with fourteen lessons per unit; this allows for a seasonal lesson in each unit. Teachers can choose to teach the seasonal lesson when Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter occurs, or disregard it if they wish to stick with the chronology.
- There are four overlapping levels as well as materials for a one-room classroom. Here is a handy chart that shows the focus of the levels and how all the levels connect:

Level	Age Range	Objective	Summary Word
Early Childhood	Preschool through grade 1, nonreaders	Discover the account	Know
Elementary	Grades 1 through 6	Explore the context	Grow
Youth	Grades 6 through 12	Defend the faith	Go
Adult	Grade 11 through adult	Equipped to teach	Show
One-Room Classroom	Preschool through grade 6		

FEATURES OF THE *DEFEND JOURNAL* FOR YOUTH

You will need one journal per student.

Page 1

- "The Big Picture" gives an overview of the Bible narrative.
- Thoughts, questions, and images guide youth as they study and discuss the Bible text.

Page 2

- "Christ Connection" shows how Jesus' work of redemption is central to every lesson.
- An open-ended question helps youth take the Bible text to heart as they consider what it means for their lives. Learners have space to write their own thoughts and questions in their journal as they discuss with others.
- A final thought, question, or prompt leads youth to take what they've learned and put it into action.
- A Bible verse sums up the truth of the lesson.

ADDITIONAL LEADER HELPS

YOUR ROLE AS YOUTH LEADER

As a youth leader, you have the opportunity to challenge your group of learners to become critical thinkers who embrace God's Word as truth and connect it to their lives, empowering them to *defend* their faith. Your role is to be a positive, encouraging, nurturing guide who listens and facilitates discussion as you share the saving truth and love of Jesus Christ.

Building positive relationships with and between youth is very important. When you create a safe, nurturing environment where everyone shows care and respect for one another, youth will feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, ideas, and questions.

Make your classroom a place where students can talk openly and share struggles. Remind students to respect one another's privacy. Tell them you will not share their stories outside of class. However, if a student shares something that is potentially dangerous to self or others, you have the responsibility to take it to your pastor for guidance.

Most likely, you will have a group of learners with varying degrees of familiarity with the Bible. Make it easier for everyone to find Bible verses by providing Bibles in the same version and writing down page numbers. Or bookmark pages ahead of time with sticky notes. Explain book, chapter, and verse numbers as needed.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Additional resources are available in the online digital resource center at cph.org/digitalcontent, including the Planning Guide, Pastor Guide, Unit Planner, Leader Devotions, Lesson Openings, Social Media Helps, and music resources. Ask your coordinator for access to the online digital resource center to get these materials.

DEFEND THE FAITH: SOCIAL MEDIA HELPS

Engage with your students and their families outside the classroom! The youth level of this curriculum includes two images per lesson as well as some discussion helps.

1. Use the Prep Question post before class, preparing youth and their families with a topic for discussion.
2. Use the Follow-Up post after you meet, equipping families to talk about the lesson this week.

You can share these images from a church social media account. With your post, include the discussion helps found in the online digital resource center. If you prefer, you can use the content in an email, pasting the images there. Adapt the content to make it your own.

MAKE YOUR OWN LIBRARY OF CPH RESOURCES

Throughout the teacher-preparation sections, we have pointed to some key resources that would benefit you to have on hand as you prepare your lessons.

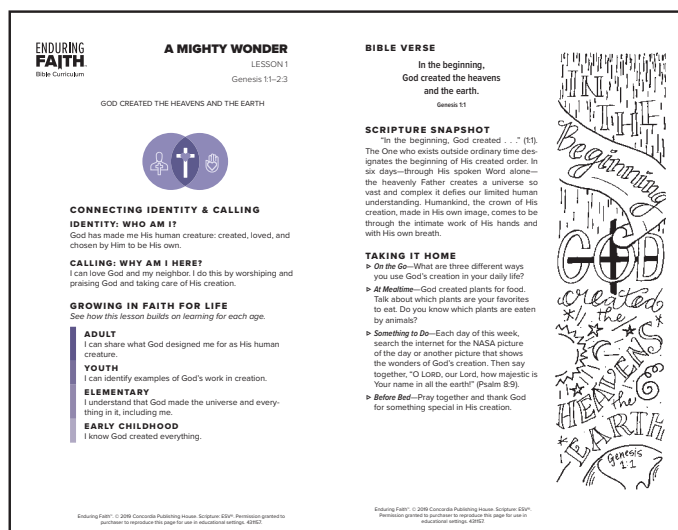
The Lutheran Study Bible (CPH, 2009), also referred to as *TLSB*

Lutheran Service Book (CPH, 2006), also referred to as *LSB*

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (CPH, 2017)

ENDURING FAITH PAGES

Enduring Faith Pages are reproducible take-home resources that summarize each Bible lesson and provide suggestions for “taking home” Bible truths from the lesson. Each page also has an illustrated version of the day's Bible verse, perfect for coloring. Ask your coordinator for access to the Enduring Faith Pages from the online digital resource center for copying.



HOW TO USE THE YOUTH LEADER GUIDE

OVERVIEW

The Overview lets you see the biblical foundation of each lesson at a glance. All levels share the same Bible Truth, Bible Verse, Law & Gospel, and Scripture Snapshot, allowing families to learn together. The Learner Goal is unique to each level.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON Check this list for items you will need specifically for this lesson.

FOR EVERY LESSON Use this checklist as a reminder of items that you need on hand for every lesson.

PAGE 1 LEADER GUIDE

ENDURING FAITH
Sunday School • Midweek Bible Curriculum

A MIGHTY WONDER

Creation
Genesis 1:1–2:3
Beginning of time

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH
God created the heavens and the earth.

BIBLE VERSE
In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

LEARNER GOAL
I can identify examples of God's work in creation.

LAW & GOSPEL
We forget or even refuse to believe that God is our Creator and Redeemer. He created and saves us.

God gives us faith to believe that He created the heavens and the earth and that He continues to provide us with all good things, especially life and salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT
“In the beginning, God created . . .” (1:1). The One who exists outside ordinary time designates the beginning of His created order. In six days—through His spoken Word alone—the heavenly Father creates a universe so vast and complex it defies our limited human understanding. Humankind, the crown of His creation, made in His own image, comes to be through the intimate work of His hands and with His own breath.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Genesis 1:1–2:3 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read “Apologetics Helps” on the back page in preparation for the “Live” section.

IN DEPTH Read the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed, its explanation, and questions in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ 6 paper clips for each person
- ☐ Watch or timer
- ☐ Large sheets of paper or a whiteboard
- ☐ Markers or dry-erase markers
- ☐ Masking tape (if using large paper)

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Shareable images from digital resource center
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities

LESSON PREP

Use these suggestions for your own Bible study as you prepare to lead this lesson.

BASIC Begin here—read the full Bible text.

MORE TIME Prepare for questions youth may ask.

IN DEPTH Gain a deeper understanding of the narrative and its context.

DIGITAL DOWNLOADS

Digital images with Prep Question and Follow-Up prompts are available to download and share with youth and families before and after each lesson. See the online digital resource center.

PAGE 4 LEADER GUIDE

APOLOGETICS HELPS

Defend the Faith helps youth and leaders look at faith issues from doctrinal, biblical, historical, and scientific viewpoints.

Frequently Asked Questions support discussion as leaders guide youth through questions about faith and life.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

Look here to find a variety of creative ways to complement, add to, or extend the lesson.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH
Scientists can't explain how everything came together in the perfect way to support the land, plants, animals, and human life. The only reasonable answer is that an intelligent Creator made and finely tuned our earth, solar system, galaxy, and universe.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Are the six days of creation literally “days”?
 - The Hebrew word for “day” is *yum*, which means a twenty-four-hour period, especially when you read the context of “evening and morning” for each of the six days of creation.
 - Other sections of Scripture, such as Exodus 20:9–11, refer to a six-day creation.
- How old is the earth?
Although we can't accurately date events before the time of Abraham (2166 BC), Moses described what may be called a “young earth.” The age of the earth is closer to thousands of years than an immense period of time.
- What do we know about evolution?
 - Microevolution is the observable limited variation among individuals of a species that produces variety (such as types of dogs).
 - Macroevolution is the theory that one kind of organism changes into an entirely different organism (such as reptiles changing into birds). This has never been observed or proven.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?
God has made me His human creature: created, loved, and chosen by Him to be His own.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?
I can love God and my neighbor. I do this by worshipping and praising God and taking care of His creation.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE
See how this lesson builds on learning for each level.

ADULT
I can share what God designed me for as His human creature.

YOUTH
I can identify examples of God's work in creation.

ELEMENTARY
I understand that God made the universe and everything in it, including me.

YOUNG CHILDREN
I know God created everything.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

EVOLUTION CHAT
10–15 minutes
Discuss student experiences when evolution has been presented as a truth. Then discuss why evolution is a theory, not a proven fact. Encourage youth to speak the truth in love when talking with others about creation and evolution.

CREATION VIDEO
15–20 minutes
Look online for a short video that describes scientific reasons for believing in creation instead of evolution. Preview the video beforehand to make sure it is biblically sound. Afterward, let youth share ideas for how they can talk with others about creation and evolution.

STAR-WATCHING
Outside of class
Sponsor a star-watching evening. Invite local stargazers to assist, and use telescopes, if possible. Invite friends, family, and other church members. Read psalms that rejoice in God's creation, such as Psalm 8, 33, 147, and 148.

CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

This section speaks to the universal questions of “Who am I?” and “What is my purpose in life?” from a biblical, Christ-centered viewpoint.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how the level-specific Learner Goals articulate each lesson's Bible Truth in a developmentally appropriate way.

PAGE 2 LEADER GUIDE



LEADER NOTE
If you're short on time, ask the youth to describe the most incredible creation they've ever seen, either natural or man-made.



DEFEND JOURNAL
Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 1.



LEADER NOTE
Some people appreciate time to think before speaking. Give time for learners to write responses before discussing.



BONUS ACTIVITY
Give youth some food for thought with "Creation Video."



LEADER NOTE
Divide into pairs or trios and assign a day or two of creation for each group to visualize.

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION
What's the best thing you've ever made?

CREATORS
Give each person six paper clips. Tell learners they have two minutes to create a sculpture. After two minutes, call "stop" and ask learners to tell about what they made.

SAY What kind of sculpture could you make with no materials?
Lead the discussion to how God created the universe out of nothing.

PRAY Lord God, thank You for the beautiful world You created for us. Guide us as we read Your Word and learn more about You and Your creation. Amen.

LEARN

READ "THE BIG PICTURE" AND TALK IT OUT
► What does the account of creation tell you about God?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- God is powerful—He created all things with His Word.
- God is orderly—He created ways to measure time and space, then a place for His creation to live, then the creation, and finally the caretakers of the creation, humans.
- God is creative—think of the variety of landforms, plants, and animals God made.
- God is loving—God planned for care of humans through His creation and also for the care of creation through the humans He made.

LEARN ABOUT "THE WONDERS OF CREATION"
Read and visualize what God made each day on large sheets of paper or a whiteboard. Or have youth write and draw in their journals.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- **Day 1: Genesis 1:1–5** God made matter (heavens and earth) out of nothing; the earth was empty and formless, with darkness over it; God created light and separated it from darkness.
- **Day 2: Genesis 1:6–8** God created an expanse (heaven/sky) to separate the waters under it from the waters above it.
- **Day 3: Genesis 1:9–13** God created dry land (earth) by gathering the waters (seas); He also created plants and trees.
- **Day 4: Genesis 1:14–19** God created lights (sun, moon) in the expanse (heavens) to separate day from night and for signs and seasons; He also created stars.
- **Day 5: Genesis 1:20–21** God created and blessed sea creatures and birds.
- **Day 6: Genesis 1:24–31** God created and blessed land animals (livestock, creeping things, beasts) and humans, who were made as male and female in God's own image.
- **Day 7: Genesis 2:1–3** His work finished, God rested.

When time is up, gather everyone together to share their work.

► What questions do you think people have about the creation of the world?

Jot down questions and concerns to discuss later in the lesson or at another time.

LAUNCH

Walk-In Question helps youth build relationships as they share.

Launch sets the stage for the lesson with a fun, interactive opening that gets youth thinking.

Prayer calls upon God's name and asks for His guidance throughout the lesson.

LEARN

The Big Picture section, found in the *Defend Journal*, gives an overview of the narrative. Read and discuss together.

Learn about the Bible narrative as you study Bible texts with learners and talk together.

Discussion Points guide your discussion and highlight biblical truths.

SIDEBARS

Notes in the sidebars provide options to help you individualize the lesson to fit your group.

Leader Notes give options and helps.

Defend Journal shows when to use the *Defend Journal*.

Christ Connection points to Christ in the narrative.

Bonus Activity suggests options for adding to or extending the lesson.

Shareable Download is a reminder to download the shareable images from the online digital resource center and send them to youth and families.

PAGE 3 LEADER GUIDE

LIVE

DISCUSS "THE WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE"
Turn to the journal section "The Wonders of the Universe." Give time for learners to consider the question there and below. They may want to write their own questions, thoughts, or concerns prompted by the lesson. See the back page of this guide for tips to help equip the youth for some frequently asked questions.

► How do we know that God really created the universe?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Many scientific facts of planet Earth point to a divine designer. When you look at the complex workings of our universe, the theory of evolution is even more unbelievable.
- Earth is the only planet in our solar system to have liquid water, and it has the perfect amount to sustain life.
- Earth sits a perfect distance from the sun to keep it from burning or freezing up.
- Earth's magnetic field shields it from solar wind and cosmic rays. Earth's atmosphere contains oxygen and other gases essential to life. It protects Earth from the sun's harmful rays, burns up meteors headed for Earth, and keeps temperatures even.
- In contrast, the "Big Bang" theory states that hot gases from a huge explosion cooled to form our present universe. This idea breaks the second law of thermodynamics (the law of decay), that things in our universe go from a state of order to disorder.
- While facts prove many aspects of Scripture, we do not base our faith on validation of facts. Instead, the Holy Spirit leads us to believe the Genesis account of God's creation. God's Word is without errors.

CONSIDER "IN THE BEGINNING"
We often talk about God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, as the Creator. But who was there "in the beginning"? Why is this important? Look up the following verses. Which persons of the Trinity are mentioned?

Genesis 1:1–2
John 1:1–3, 14

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The "Spirit of God" in Genesis 1:2 is the Holy Spirit.
- In John 1, "the Word" is the Son of God. All things were made through Him. The Word became flesh; He is our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.
- The Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—was there at the beginning of our created universe. Our triune God is eternal, without beginning or end.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING
Check for understanding by asking youth to finish this sentence: I see God's work in creation through . . . Thank those who share.

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1.
Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



CHRIST CONNECTION
Our true God created all things, including the crown of His creation, humankind. Human sin destroyed the perfect world God created, but God sent Jesus, the Word made flesh, to redeem us and restore our relationship with Him.



LEADER NOTE
Use "Apologetics Helps" on the back of this leaflet for support as you discuss this question and related topics of interest.



BONUS ACTIVITY
Use "Evolution Chart" to equip youth to defend what they believe.



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD
Connect with youth before and after the lesson by using the shareable images from the digital resource center.

LIVE

Discuss shows how faith intersects with life through an open-ended question and youth-led discussion.

Consider leads youth to take what they've learned and put it into action.

Check for Understanding helps you gauge how youth are learning.

LEAVE

Bible Verse sums up the truth of the lesson—a straight-from-the-Bible takeaway.

Prayer encourages youth to lift up requests to the Lord and thank God for love and new life in Jesus.

AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES

Jesus' Birth
Foretold
Luke 1:26–56
4 BC

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God promised to send His Son.

BIBLE VERSE

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Luke 1:46–47

LEARNER GOAL

I can describe the importance of the angel's message that Mary would bear the Son of God.

LAW & GOSPEL

Like Mary, I deserve nothing from God because of my sinfulness.

God gives me unmerited grace and favor because of His Son.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Mary receives an angelic announcement telling her that, despite her virginity, she will give birth to the long-awaited Savior. The child in Elizabeth's womb leaps within her when the mother of the promised Messiah approaches. Elizabeth rejoices in the reaction and welcomes Mary to stay with her for a time. Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat, resounds in the Church to this day.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Luke 1:26–56 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read “Apologetics Helps” on the back page in preparation for the “Live” section.

IN DEPTH Read over the Second Article (Part 1) with questions in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017) for more on Jesus' two natures.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Copies of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*
- ☐ Large sheet of paper or a whiteboard
- ☐ Markers or dry-erase markers
- ☐ Slips of paper

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Shareable images from digital resource center
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities



LEADER NOTE

If this unit falls at the beginning of a new Sunday School year, take some time to help youth get to know one another. Play a favorite icebreaker game or ask each person to anonymously write down one fact about themselves on a slip of paper. Make sure you write one too! Read slips and let group guess who it might be describing.



DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 1.



LEADER NOTE

Have learners work in pairs and think like reporters as they study each section in Luke 1. Ask them to write facts, thoughts, and questions in their journals.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Make a connection to learners' experiences with "It's a Boy!"

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION

What's the most humbling experience you've ever had?

HARD TO BE HUMBLE

Ask youth to make a list of celebrities, sports stars, and famous figures. Discuss whether each person seems to be proud or humble. Ask youth to give reasons for their opinions.

SAY It's hard to be humble when you're famous and have accomplished great things. It's incredible that our great God would humble Himself to come down to earth and be born a human creature.

PRAY Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us so much that You humbled Yourself to come down to earth to be our Savior. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

READ "THE BIG PICTURE" AND TALK IT OUT

► How would you have expected God to send the Messiah to the world?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Let youth share their thoughts. We're so familiar with Jesus' birth that we may not think about how incredible it is that our Savior came into this world as an infant.

LEARN ABOUT "AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES"

Luke, the author of this Gospel, was not an eyewitness, but he (led by the Holy Spirit) recorded the things he had heard and investigated from eyewitness (Luke 1:2-3).

Ask volunteers to read the sections in Luke 1 as others follow along in their Bibles. Ask pairs to write down important facts, thoughts, and questions in their journals. After each section, have pairs share what they wrote. Use the discussion points as a guide.

Read **Luke 1:26-38**.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Mary is a virgin, betrothed to Joseph, a descendant of David. "Betrothed" was similar to "engaged," but included a binding marriage contract. Couples didn't live together.
- Mary would conceive a son—not by Joseph, but through the Holy Spirit. Mary should call Him Jesus, which means "Yahweh (God) is salvation."
- Mary's baby would be "Son of the Most High," that is, the Son of God. The angel repeated the promise given to King David about his descendant in 2 Samuel 7:16: "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:33).

Read **Luke 1:39-56**.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The angel had told Mary that her old cousin Elizabeth was miraculously expecting a baby too. Seeing Elizabeth pregnant and hearing her message as she was filled with the Spirit would confirm the angel's message that Mary was pregnant with God's Son.
- Mary's song of praise to God describes how God works: He raises up the humble and brings down the proud. Because of Jesus, who humbly came to be our Savior, God takes our brokenness and makes us whole—He restores our relationship with God.

LIVE

DISCUSS “GOD AND MAN”

Ask your learners to discuss the question below in groups of three or four. Hand out a Small Catechism to each group (see Leader Note in sidebar). Have them write their thoughts on a whiteboard, large sheet of paper, or in their journals. After about five minutes, come together to share thoughts. The discussion points below, the Bible verses (ask youth to look them up or read them to the group), and the “Apologetics Helps” on the back page of this guide can also guide and support your discussion.

► Why did God become a man?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Encourage your learners to really think about the implications of God becoming a man. Jesus created the world. He is all-powerful. He is worthy to receive our praise. But because of His great love for us, He gave up all the glory of heaven to come to this corrupted earth and not only live among the creatures He made, but become one of them. That should be pretty mind-blowing.
- Jesus kept the Law perfectly in our place. Adam was the first to disobey the Law, and no person since him has kept the Law perfectly as God commanded. Jesus lived a sinless life to redeem us sinners. (See **Romans 5:19** and **Galatians 4:4–5**.)
- Jesus suffered and died in our place to pay the punishment we deserve for our sins. (See **Mark 10:45** and **Hebrews 2:14**.)
- Jesus conquered death so that one day we will be raised from the dead. (See **1 Corinthians 15:20** and **2 Timothy 1:10**.)
- Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament: He is the Offspring of Eve who would crush Satan (**Genesis 3:15**); He is the descendant of Abraham by whom all families of the earth would be blessed (**Genesis 12:1–3**); He is the Son of David whose kingdom will never end (**2 Samuel 7:12–16**).

CONSIDER “THE MAGNIFICAT”

Mary’s song of praise in Luke 1:46–55 is called *The Magnificat*, Latin for “[My soul] magnifies [the Lord].” The name is taken from the first line of the Bible text in Latin. Read this section again or have a volunteer read it. Ask youth to give an example of the way God raises up the humble and fills the hungry with good things (think spiritually).

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Check for understanding by asking youth to answer this question: **Why was it important that the Son of God become a man?**

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Luke 1:46–47

Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God’s promise to send a Savior was fulfilled for us in His Son, Jesus, who came down to earth and was born of Mary.



LEADER NOTE

Hand out *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* to the groups to use as a guide as they discuss the questions in the “Live” section. Direct them to Questions 155–61 in the section “The Second Article (Part 1)” in the Explanation section of the catechism.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Listen to and sing **Luke 1:46–55** instead of reading it with “The Magnificat.”



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson by using the shareable images from the digital resource center.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH

The Annunciation of Our Lord (*annunciation* means “announcement”) is a feast day, a celebration day in the Lutheran Church. When this feast falls on a Sunday, the church celebrates with special readings and prayers. The Annunciation of Our Lord usually falls during the season of Lent (around nine months before Christmas), and gives Christians the opportunity to rejoice in the angel’s message to Mary that she would bear the Messiah.

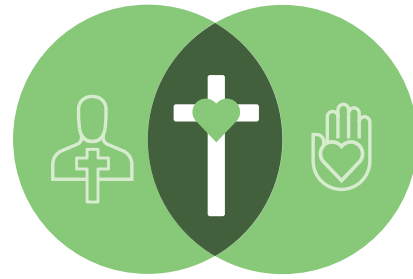
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

► Why was it important that Mary was a virgin?

God had promised through the prophet Isaiah that the Son of God would be born of a virgin: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). *Immanuel* means “God with us.” See also Matthew 1:23, where Matthew quotes this prophecy and proclaims its fulfillment in Jesus. Jesus is true man and true God. Jesus developed in Mary’s womb and was born of her, but conception did not involve Joseph—it was the work of the Holy Spirit.

► Did John really “leap for joy” in his mother’s womb?

Yes, we know that the words of the Bible are the inspired Word of God, and we believe them to be completely true. The Holy Spirit caused John to leap for joy in his mother’s womb as Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit and confessed the baby in Mary’s womb to be her Lord, the Promised One.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

Our God announces the coming fulfillment of His promise, given to Adam and Eve at the fall.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to keep His promises. He calls me to share this Good News with others.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can examine the text of the angel announcement for insights into how Jesus’ birth fulfilled God’s promise in Scripture.

YOUTH

I can describe the importance of the angel’s message that Mary would bear the Son of God.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God promised to send His Son, Jesus.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God kept His promise to send Jesus to be my Savior.

★ BONUS ACTIVITIES

IT’S A BOY!

5–10 minutes

Ask youth who have experienced the announcement of a new baby sibling or cousin to share the reactions of their family. Show a video clip of a baby gender reveal party, if desired. Parents, family, and friends usually react with surprise and great joy when they learn a baby will be born.

THE MAGNIFICAT

10–15 minutes

Search online for a recording of “The Magnificat *LSB* 248.” You can also look it up in *LSB* (p. 248). Listen to it and sing along if you like. Point out that these words, like many of the words in our Lutheran liturgy, come straight from God’s Word.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

15–20 minutes

Show online examples of birth announcements, then give pairs of youth paper and markers to make their own creative birth announcement for Jesus.

SILENCE BEFORE A SON

John Is Born
Luke 1:5–25,
57–66
3 BC

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God sent John as His messenger.

BIBLE VERSE

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people. Luke 1:68

LEARNER GOAL

I can show how John was God's promised messenger who pointed to Jesus.

LAW & GOSPEL

As a child of the first parents, Adam and Eve, I am sinful and in need of salvation.

John, and others who proclaim the Good News, point me to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Doubting the angel's announcement of his coming son, Zechariah finds himself silenced until the boy's birth. Upon writing, "His name is John," Zechariah regains his voice and prophesies concerning his son's work.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Luke 1:5–25, 57–66 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read "Apologetics Helps" on the back page in preparation for the "Live" section.

IN DEPTH Read the article "The Temple in Luke" in *TLSE*, page 1705.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Large sheet of paper or a whiteboard
- ☐ Markers or dry-erase markers
- ☐ Decorative paper
- ☐ Ribbon

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Shareable images from digital resource center
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities



LEADER NOTE

Search for “Pointing Game” online to find an example of this fast-paced, funny reflex game. Give other pairs a chance to play as time permits.



DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 2.



BONUS ACTIVITY

After reading the narrative, bring it to life with “Act It Out.”



LEADER NOTE

Discuss the last question together. It is not in the *Defend Journal*.

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION

Who points you in the right direction?

POINT . . . DON'T LOOK!

Ask for two volunteers. On the count of three, the “Pointer” will point in a direction; the “Responder,” trying to anticipate where the Pointer is going to point, will look in the *opposite* direction. Play until the Responder looks where the Pointer points.

SAY It's hard to ignore someone who's pointing you in a certain direction! God sent John to be His messenger, to point God's people to Jesus, the Messiah.

PRAY Heavenly Father, thank You for sending people to point us to our Savior. Help us to point others to Jesus too. In His name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

READ “THE BIG PICTURE” AND TALK IT OUT

► Compare this announcement with the announcement to Mary and the announcement of Isaac's birth to Abraham and Sarah. What's similar? different?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Mary responded with amazed belief and praise instead of unbelief; Sarah laughed in disbelief, but then laughed with joy when Isaac was born. Zechariah praised God when John was born. All announcements ultimately pointed to the Savior.

LEARN ABOUT “SILENCE BEFORE A SON”

Ask volunteers to read **Luke 1:5–25** as others follow along. Ask a volunteer to write thoughts on a whiteboard or sheet of paper while others write in their journals.

► Point out words or phrases in this text that show how John will be a special messenger from God.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- “Many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord” (vv. 14–15).
- “He must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Spirit” (v. 15).
- “He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God” (v. 16).
- “He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah . . . to make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (v. 17).

Read **Malachi 3:1** and **4:5–6**.

► What are the connections between the verses in Malachi and the text in Luke 1?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- John is the messenger that God promised to send, the one who would prepare the way for the Lord. Malachi prophesied about John over four hundred years before he was born.
- John is the one who would come in the power and spirit of Elijah, as prophesied by Malachi (Malachi 4:5–6).

The name *John* means “the Lord has shown favor.”

► We've often talked about the special meaning of names. How is the meaning of John's name fitting? In other words, how did John show God's grace?

LIVE

DISCUSS “GOD’S MESSENGERS”

Turn to the journal section “God’s Messengers.” Before discussing the question below, have youth pair up and make a list of people who share the message of the Gospel today. Write the Bible passages from the discussion points on a whiteboard or paper and encourage pairs to look up and read them. After giving them a few minutes to consider the question, discuss with the whole group, using discussion points as desired. Find additional support for discussion on the back page of this guide.

► Does God send messengers today?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- John was the messenger that God promised to send to prepare the way for the Messiah—that prophecy has been fulfilled.
- God works through many people today to share His message of salvation: pastors, church workers, teachers, missionaries, and the “priesthood of all believers”—that is, all Christians.
- We need to beware of false messengers, people who pretend to have a message from God but have a different message that leads people away from Jesus and His Word.
- **1 Peter 2:9:** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.
- **Isaiah 52:7:** How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”
- **2 Timothy 4:2–4:** Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

CONSIDER “ZECHARIAH’S PROPHECY”

Read or listen to **Luke 1:67–80**. Work together to make a bullet-point list of God’s Old Testament promises and how God was fulfilling them.

- God visited and redeemed His people.
- God would raise up a “horn of salvation” through the house of David.
- God’s people would be saved from their enemies to serve God without fear.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Check for understanding by asking youth to answer this question: **How did John fulfill God’s promise to send a messenger to point to Jesus?**

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people.
Luke 1:68

Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God sent John to be the messenger who would point to Jesus, the Messiah.



LEADER NOTE

Give each learner a sheet of decorative paper and ask them to write a message from God’s Word on it. They can roll it up and put a ribbon around it, if desired, before giving their message to someone who could use some Good News.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Talk about ways to share the message of Christ with others with “The Messengers Series.”



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson by using the shareable images from the digital resource center.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH

The temple is an important theme in the Book of Luke. The Gospel of Luke begins at the temple with Gabriel's announcement of John's birth to Zechariah and ends with Jesus' disciples gathered at the temple for worship after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Many events in Jesus' ministry and passion happen at the temple. In the Old Testament, God displayed His presence with His people in the temple. In the New Testament, we see the body of Jesus as God's temple. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us.

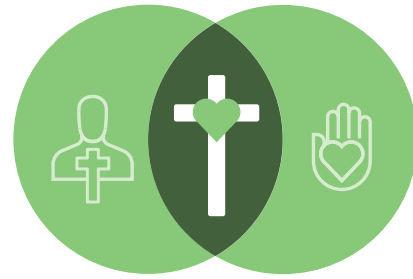
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

► How do I know if someone is really a messenger of God?

Only those who speak God's Word of truth from the Bible are His messengers. There are many people who claim to be God's messengers, but then say things that are not in line with God's Word, or are even contrary to it. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons, is one example of a false messenger. As Paul says in Galatians 1:6-7: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ."

► What if no one listens to me when I tell them about Jesus?

God has given us the privilege and responsibility to share the Good News with all people. But we can't force people to listen or to believe. God creates faith. St. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God sends His messengers to His people, and they bring His Word to all humankind.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust the promises given by God's messengers.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can describe how the events surrounding John the Baptist's birth relate to key Old Testament themes and promises of God.

YOUTH

I can show how John was God's promised messenger who pointed to Jesus.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God sent John as His messenger.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God sent John to get people ready for Jesus.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

ACT IT OUT

5–10 minutes

Ask for volunteers to be Zechariah, the angel, Elizabeth, and a narrator. As the narrator reads or retells the narrative, have volunteers act it out. You could also add props such as Bible-times robes, angel wings, and paper and marker for a "slate."

SIGNS

10–15 minutes

Give youth poster boards to create signs to help direct and encourage children and adults to attend Sunday School and Bible class. Encourage them to use creative wording that points people to the study of God's Word, such as "This way to hear some Good News!"

THE MESSENGERS SERIES

15–20 minutes

Look online for the book trailer of *The Messengers: Discovered* by Lisa M. Clark. Watch the trailer with your group. You may want to bring in the trilogy of these dystopian Christian novels to share with your group. Talk about how they can share God's message of salvation with others.