

# How do we learn, apply, and use God's Word?

## Background

Our Christian faith is often challenged. Sometimes the challenges are small, as when another Christian asks you what your denomination believes. Sometimes, though, the challenges are bigger, as when your faith is attacked by an unbeliever. *Apologetics* is the term for defending your faith. “In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). The key to this defense is in “always being prepared.” The best way to be pre-

pared is to be in the Word, to know not just what it says but also how it pertains to your personal life. There are several tools that can be helpful in this training. Using a good study Bible with application notes is helpful to understanding not only what Scripture says but also how it relates to your faith life. As you read Scripture, ask yourself questions: How does what this verse says relate to my faith? What does this passage mean to me personally? Reading the proof texts in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* will help you see the connection between Scripture and faith.

## Devotions

Mr. Clark owned “Fuel-Up,” a local gas station with a small convenience market. Almost every day, Charlie stopped by to fuel up with a cup of coffee while his car fueled up with gas. And every day the two friends would talk. One day, Mr. Clark said, “Hi, Charlie. What's new? You look kind of grumpy.” Charlie replied, “I'm feeling worse than grumpy. Remember that financial investment I told you about? Well, it went bankrupt and I lost all the money I put into it. I just don't understand why God lets bad things happen to me.” The next day, a happy Charlie came in, whistling a tune. Mr. Clark said, “Hey, Charlie; what's going right in your world today?” Charlie said, “I am doing better than fine! You know I interviewed for that special project? Well, I got the approval! Let

me tell you, I really impressed them—I know how to look good and talk smooth to get what I want.” Mr. Clark interrupted, “Stop right there, Charlie. I think you've got things turned around. Yesterday you blamed God when things went wrong. And today, when things are going good, you take the credit for yourself. If you ask me, your bad investment was your own fault, not God's. Everyone warned you that it was risky. But this good news seems like a blessing from God.” Charlie looked very ashamed and said, “You are so right. I may be a pastor, but I'm sure not perfect.”

The Bible is more than a message—it is a message that has power to change hearts and lives. Hearing the words is not enough (even the devil knew about God's Word). God desires

that His Word take action in our hearts and in our lives—guiding who we are and what we do. Sing together “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus” (*LSB* 685; recorded as *Hymn of the Month for grade 5, September*). Pray Luther's Morning Prayer.

## Central Truth

The study of God's Word involves more than factual knowledge; comprehension of it involves our hearts and our lives, trusting faithfully in Jesus as He saves us from sin and guides our life of faith.

## Objectives

- Realize that it is not enough to “know about Jesus,” because that is just head knowledge; we need to “know Jesus” as our Lord and Savior—anything less is not a matter of faith.
- Give thanks that God comes to us, calling us to be His own dear children and members of His family, through Jesus.
- Live for the one to whom we belong.

## Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 8
- Hymnals and music CDs

## Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references prior to class time.

- Matthew 4:1–11
- Deuteronomy
- Matthew 6:33
- Acts 5:29
- Luke 9:25

# INTO the lesson

## Why Study God's Word?

Discuss the first section of the Student Book. Point out that **the main purpose of studying God's Word is to see Jesus as our Savior who takes away our sins, with the result that someday all believers will live eternally in heaven.** This is the most important concept of Scripture; in the diagram, you can see it represented by the past and the future. Sometimes we are tempted to end the discussion there. But justification is not all there is to God's action in our lives. It is foremost; but as we are justified, the Holy Spirit works in us to sanctify us—this is an ongoing task that changes how we live right now. **Sanctification follows directly “on the heels” of justification. They are consecutive, but they also are inseparable. As stated in James 2:17, “Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” Sanctification does not save us, but the justification process is incomplete in us without sanctification. So let's learn more about applying God's Word to the here and now of our daily lives.**

## God's Word: A Weapon/A Tool

We learned in Ephesians 6 (Lesson 3) that God's Word is like a weapon that fights temptation and sin. Today, we will hear how Jesus used God's Word as a tool to win victory over the devil. Discuss the three thought bubbles in the Student Book. Emphasize that temptations don't come to us from a guy in a red suit with a pointy tail and pitchfork. The devil is sneakier than that. Most of the time, he uses our own thoughts to influence us and to tempt us. That is why what we *think* is so very significant. Ask students to use their own words to suggest what we need to consider when we are tempted to do wrong.

So, what should we think about? Look at the Bible verse to remember on the next page. Look up the reference in Scripture and write the missing words in the blank speech bubbles to indicate the kinds of things we should think about (as we are enabled by the Holy Spirit working through God's Word).

### LESSON 8

## How do we learn, apply, and use God's Word?

### Why Study God's Word?



### God's Word: A Weapon/A Tool

What advice would you give someone (or yourself) when tempted in these ways to do wrong? Before you respond, look on the next page to learn how Jesus handled temptation.

<p><b>I'm looking for the easy way.</b></p> <p><i>The easy way is not always the right way. God's way should be our priority.</i></p>	<p><b>I'm looking out for number one.</b></p> <p><i>Putting yourself first is selfish. It is God's will that we serve others.</i></p>	<p><b>I'm looking to get whatever I want.</b></p> <p><i>Are you at the center of your life or is God? Getting what you want is wrong if what you want is contrary to what God wants (God's will).</i></p>
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### Review

What do people want? Give examples.

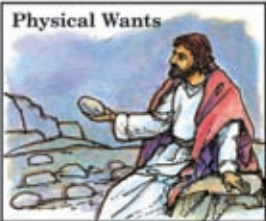


Physical, material things	Lots of clothes, toys, video games, and electronics
Fame, to be well-known	To be recognized as "the best" or "the coolest"
Fortune, money, wealth	To have "more" money than others

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## Word Review

The activity lists three major types of things that can become temptations. Point out that wanting these is not always wrong. It becomes wrong, however, if you covet them and come to the point of doing something wrong to obtain them or set them as priorities above the will of God or the welfare of other people. These are the same types of wants that the devil used to try to tempt Jesus to do wrong; but Jesus used God's Word as a tool and weapon against the devil.

## Tempted, but Didn't Fall (Matthew 4:1-11)

TEMPTED BY	RESPONSE	A VERSE FOR YOU
 <p>Physical Wants</p>	<p>Matthew 4:4 Based on Deuteronomy 8:3</p>	<p>"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:33</p>
 <p>Fame</p>	<p>Matthew 4:7 Based on Deuteronomy 6:16-17</p>	<p>"We must obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29b</p>
 <p>Fortune</p>	<p>Matthew 4:10 Based on Deuteronomy 13:4</p>	<p>"What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" Luke 9:25</p>

### Remember

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8)



❖ BOTTOM LINE: IT'S NOT THE METHOD; IT'S THE MAN.

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## INTO the Word

### Tempted, but Didn't Fall (Matthew 4:1-11)

Together, work through the three rows of the chart. Look at each picture and consider the type of temptation the devil used. Next, read Jesus' response in Matthew and also read the Old Testament verse that Jesus was referencing. Then have students look up and write down the New Testament verse that can serve as a good weapon in their own lives.

## INTO our lives

Connect the Student Book chart to the lives of the students today. The first column refers to the types of temptations the devil used with Jesus and uses with us today. As you read the Bible verses noted in the second column, note that Jesus used Scripture from the Old Testament as His weapon against temptation. The third column gives additional related Bible verses to use in your own life. Point out the BOTTOM LINE at the bottom of the page. While this lesson has focused on the method of using God's Word to fight temptation, the bottom line, the most important factor, is Jesus Christ Himself. In all situations, we can rely only and totally on the power of Jesus in our lives. He is the one who has won the victory and He is the one who has given us the victory! Read aloud 1 Corinthians 15:57. Then sing about our total reliance on Jesus in the hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (LSB 656; recorded as *Hymn of the Month for grade 3, October*; or LSB 657; recorded as *Hymn of the Season for grade 3, Reformation*). Also, see "Critical Thinking" on the next page.

### Words to Store in Your Heart

Job 1:9 Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Psalms 18:2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalms 37:7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

Psalms 139:1-2 O Lord, You have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar.

Psalms 139:9-10 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

Isaiah 40:31 They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 41:13 For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

Isaiah 43:1b Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine.

Jeremiah 29:11 I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 31:33-34 Declares the Lord: I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. . . . For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:57 Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17, 21 If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. . . . For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ephesians 4:32-5:2 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Reproducible #  
Unit 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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# Lesson Support



## Faith in Action

There are many ways to “arm” ourselves with the “weapons” God gives us to fight temptation. Having Bible verses that are readily available can be very important. Psalm 119:11 says, “I have stored up Your word in my heart.” In other words, memorizing Bible verses keeps them close, available, and very portable. Another good method is to list your favorite Bible verses in the back inside cover of your Bible. As long as you know where your Bible is, you will always be able to quickly find verses that are especially meaningful to you. Here is a third method that can be very helpful. The bottom of all odd numbered pages in the Student Book always lists a Bible verse to remember. If you are looking for a significant verse, flip through the book, scanning the Bible verses, all listed in the same area. Teachers: Consider as one of your unit closing activities to have students select and vote on their favorite Bible verse to remember from that particular unit. Perhaps build a poster that gradually builds favorites over the school year. Another method is to list favorite verses that apply to a certain topic. Reproducible 8 lists possibilities.



## Curriculum Connection

God’s Word safeguards our lives. In Christ, we have spiritual safety and protection. Those who hear God’s Word and keep it will be blessed. In matters of physical health, there are safety issues too. Take a look at topics dealing with prevention in the Health volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide. These include section 5.1.2, Preventing Illness and Injury; section 5.1.3, Hygienic Activities; and section 5.1.10, Nutrition. You will discover many more ideas to put into practice.



## Sharing the Faith

God’s Word is to be shared. Ask students to bring in completely dry plastic soda bottles, enough so that each student can have one or two. On 3 × 5-inch pieces of paper, let students write favorite Bible quotations, such as Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; 7:7; and 1 Corinthians 2:9. Have students fold these papers so they can fit inside their bottles. Insert several quotations inside each bottle. Let students set the bottles adrift on the playground and watch the fun as another class has a Scripture-in-a-bottle hunt.



## Critical thinking

Jesus’ encounter with the devil isn’t merely a model for us to imitate. Though we surely should try to resist temptation and use Scripture as our defense, we fail constantly; and as sinners, we are doomed to continue failing. Simply put, we just aren’t Jesus. And that’s the big lesson here. He could do what we couldn’t. He could keep God’s Law, resist temptations, and obey His Father. As brilliant as Jesus’ methods were, the story isn’t recorded just so we can say, “so that’s all there is to it,” and trust in this step-by-step guide for foiling the devil. It’s not about trusting the methods; it’s about trusting the man, the God-man—who time and again stands between us and our enemies and protects us from evil. (Bottom line: it’s not the method, it’s the man.) If merely knowing the right thing to do were enough to save us and protect us, God would have stopped with the Ten Commandments. But it wasn’t, so Jesus came to do what we couldn’t do—to give us a victory we could never earn.



## Check it Out

The organization plan for looking at temptation in this lesson was based on physical wants, desire for fame, and desire for fortune. Here is another organizational plan to discuss and compare: the first was a personal temptation, the second was a public temptation, and the third was a temptation about power.

# How does the Holy Spirit keep us in the faith?

## Background

“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Faith is sustained in the same way. We hear the Word in the Divine Service, of course, but we also hear it through our personal and family devotional time. When choosing a devotional resource, evaluate the format and substance. Ask yourself, are these devotions written too simply? Are they too difficult or too abstract? Are they based on Scripture, or is a Bible reading just an afterthought? Do they contain a good balance of Law and Gospel? (The Law commands good works or

threatens punishment for sin. The Gospel declares God’s forgiveness, life, and salvation in Christ.) Decide when you will spend time in devotion. Make an appointment with yourself, and keep it! Plan where and how you will spend your devotional time. How much time will you spend reading Scripture? reading other sources? praying? journaling? Do you ever set aside quiet time in your classroom for personal reflection on God’s Word? Quiet time, for teachers and for students, is often a rare commodity!

## Devotions

(Use Web Resource 18a for this devotion, or refer to the “Word Study Review” in the Student Book.) **Today’s theme is “Continue to Grow.” Let’s think about *what* we should grow and *how*.**

(Set out a bowl of fruit. Click the slide show so definition 1 appears on the screen.) **This is one definition for *fruit*. Actually, we are not going to talk about apples, oranges, and bananas, but we will use these as symbols for growing in faith. This is not the definition for *fruit* we want today.**

(Click for definition 2.) **This definition is much broader. It includes things such as grain, nuts, vegetables, and any part of the plant that we can eat. We’ll use this definition when we read the parable, or story, that Jesus told about planting seeds to grow grain (which is the fruit of the wheat plant).**

**We need an even broader definition that applies to you and me as we continue to grow.** (Click for definition 3.) **Now we see what we are to continue: we are to continue growing in faith and in growing the fruits of faith. These fruits are the *results* that the Holy Spirit continues in us. What does a plant need in order to grow? (sunlight, water, good soil) What do we need in order to grow in faith and in our faith life? (God’s Word, Baptism, the Lord’s Supper) Today we will learn more about the *results* that God is growing in our lives. Let’s sing about them now.**

Sing “The Fruit of the Spirit” (AGPS 225; recorded on JPS) or “Renew Me, O Eternal Light” (LSB 704; recorded as *Hymn of the Season for grade 4, Pentecost*). Read together the explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed, which tells of the work of the Holy Spirit.

## Central Truth

God’s powerful Word and the Sacraments are the means through which God guides and encourages us in our daily Christian lives, guarding and strengthening our faith.

## Objectives

- Compare the different ways we can respond after hearing God’s Word.
- Give thanks that God’s Word and Sacraments strengthen our faith.
- Rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, while bearing fruit by sharing the Gospel and the love of Jesus with others, empowered by God’s Word.

## Materials

- The Basics
- Web Resource 18a
- Bowl of fruit
- Hymnals and music CDs
- Web Resource 18b
- Reproducible 18

## Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references before class time.

- Matthew 13:1–23
- Galatians 5:22–23
- Ephesians 2:8–9

## INTO the lesson

### Growing through the Means of Grace

Note: This activity is not an assignment; it's a graphic organizer used to guide classroom discussion. Together work on the Venn diagram of the Means of Grace in the Student Book. Ask, **What are the Sacraments?** Have students draw arrows from the word *Sacraments* to the portions representing Baptism and the Lord's Supper. **What is the key factor that both Sacraments have?** (The Word of God is connected to the visible elements in both Sacraments.) Say, **The Means of Grace are the tools or methods that the Holy Spirit uses to give us what? (To offer faith, forgiveness, life, and salvation through our Savior Jesus.)** Read the statement in the box together; draw a line from the box to the center of the diagram and to each of the Sacraments. Examine how the two Sacraments are different, placing the number of each statement into the correct circle. **It is through these Means of Grace that the Holy Spirit grows faith in our hearts and continues to grow the fruit or results of that faith in our lives.**

## INTO the Word

### Hearing the Word of God (Matthew 13:1-23)

Review that the Means of Grace are the tools, or methods, that the Holy Spirit uses to grow faith and to continue that growth in our lives. **Let's take a closer look at that essential part: the Word of God. Jesus told a parable—a story—to help His disciples, and us, understand these ideas.** Use the illustrations in Web Resource 18b to help depict the story Jesus told as you read or paraphrase the narrative from Matthew 13:1-9. Then point out, **After Jesus told the story, there is sort of an intermission in verses 10-17, because some people were confused or did not understand the story. Even "His disciples asked Him what this parable meant" (Luke 8:9). So in verses 18-23, Jesus explains that the seed is like the Word of God, which comes to different people (represented by different types of soil), who have different reactions to it.** Click, one at a time, on each of the four illustrations in Web Resource 18b to relate the parable to the meaning for our lives; clicking on a section will reveal a modern-day situ-

#### LESSON 18

## How does the Holy Spirit keep us in the faith?

### Growing through the Means of Grace



The Holy Spirit works through the Means of Grace to offer faith, forgiveness, life, and salvation through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

1. God's Word connects to the visible element of water.
2. By the power of His Word, Christ gives His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine.
3. An event a person celebrates often.
4. A one-time event that is remembered daily.
5. Usually reserved for older children and adults after instruction.
6. For any age, including infants.
7. Observed by Jesus at the beginning of His ministry.
8. Instituted by Jesus at the end of His ministry.

### Hearing the Word of God (Matthew 13:1-23)

The dry path represents people who hear God's Word but either ignore it or reject it, so God's Word never has a chance to take root and grow in their hearts and lives.

The rocky soil represents people who at first are glad to hear God's Word, but they are not firmly connected (rooted), so when troubles occur, their faith dries up and withers away.

The soil with weeds represents people who hear God's Word but have other things growing in their hearts too (such as the love of money and good times) until those things take over and choke out the Word.

Good soil represents the best growing conditions, in which the Holy Spirit is working through the Means of Grace; the faith and life of these people grow as they share good works for the glory of God.

### Review

1. Fruit: The sweet part of a seed-bearing plant.
2. Fruit: The edible part of a plant.
3. Fruit: Results that have been produced.

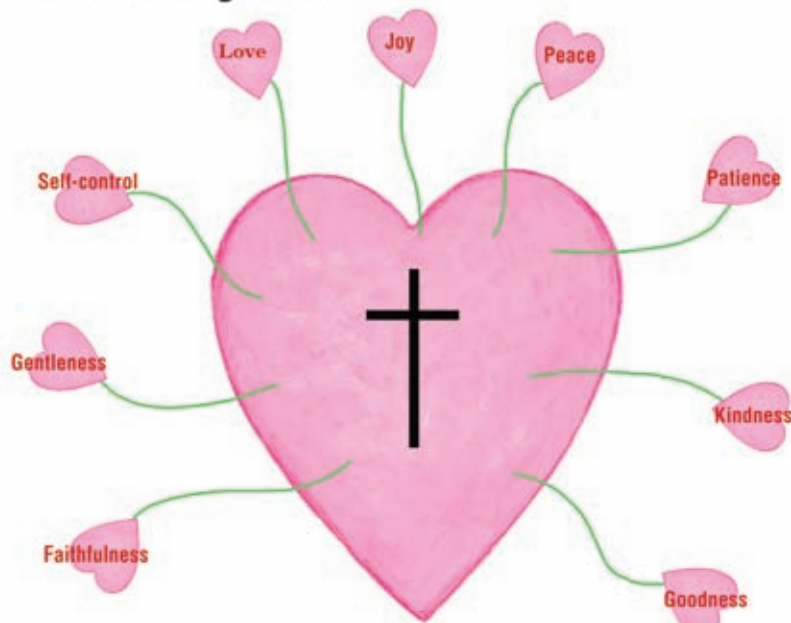
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ation. The accompanying interpretation of each section is in the diagram in the Student Books; have volunteers read these portions aloud. **What is the happy ending to the story Jesus told?** (God comes to our hearts through His Word. As we continue in the Word, the Holy Spirit continues to grow faith, which takes root and eventually bears fruit: results.) **Now let's review as well as learn something new about the fruit of the Spirit that He grows in us.**

### Word Study Review

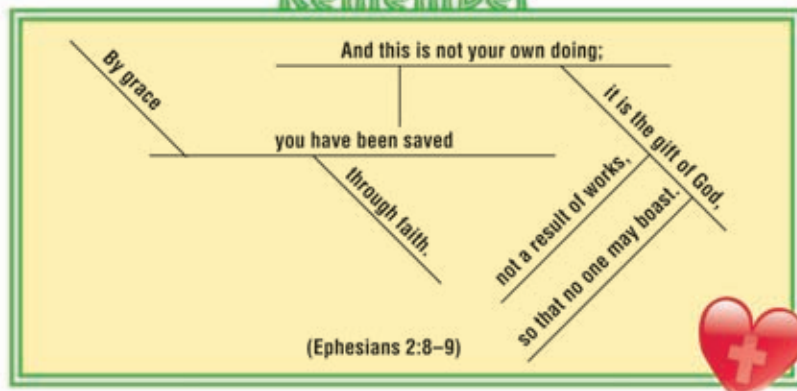
This is an opportunity to review the definitions of the word *fruit*, concentrating on the third definition, which will be further explored in the remainder of the lesson.

## What's Growing in Your Heart and Life?



Galatians 5:22–23

## Remember



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a resolution. Consider: Does the resolution point to Jesus, our Savior, in our lives? If not, perhaps some editing is needed.

**PREPARE:** Work together to plan for any needed props, costumes, or background elements. Consider if you want a musical background. Do you want a banner or poster that gives the title of your story? Rehearse together and make adjustments as necessary.

**PERFORMANCE:** Sharing the message with others is significant. Set up a performance date when all nine skits can be shared. Extend the learning even further by recording each presentation. Experiment with sound production. Make a dry run and decide what changes in equipment may be needed to make an excellent product. Using a video camera can be part of this interesting process, but still photos can also be used in a digital-story format with an audio component. Check the One in Christ Web site for more information

**PRESENTATION:** Share your productions beyond your classroom by placing them on a school or classroom Web site. Consider sharing them with other Lutheran schools on our One in Christ Web site from CPH. See what other fifth graders have done; enjoy meeting other Christians and sharing Christ's message with them and hopefully even with people who are just beginning to learn about Jesus!

## Words to Remember

Today's Bible verse is presented as a mind-map.

Explore the many directions these phrases

go and how it all connects; have students look up and rewrite the verse. Alternatively, suggest that students figure out the verse, write what they think it says, and then make any necessary changes after checking it with the actual verse in the Bible.

# INTO our lives

## What's Growing in Your Heart and Life?

Have students label the nine smaller hearts with the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22–23. This is actually just the introduction to an in-depth activity that may take several days to produce. Divide your class into nine groups and assign one of the fruit of the Spirit to each group. The task for each group will be to develop a story line that demonstrates an example of that trait being lived out in the Christian life. Provide copies of Reproducible 18, on which students can take notes as they develop the story line. Here are explanations of the tasks listed on the Reproducible.

Discuss these parameters at each step of the process.

**PLAN:** Take time to plan the modern-day situation and develop it into a script that can be used to act out the story. Encourage students to develop descriptions of characters and to consider an interesting plot line that involves a problem or conflict that ultimately leads to

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PLAN:</b>	<b>PREPARE:</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE:</b>	<b>PRESENTATION:</b>

Reproducible 18  
Unit 2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Lesson Support



## Cultural Connections

Invite a farmer or someone with experience as a gardener or landscaper to talk about the difficulties of planting in different types of soil. Some plants grow better in particular soils and climates than others, but high-quality soil is always valued. Also have your guest discuss and answer questions about different types of pests, weather problems, and diseases that can cause plant problems. Let students share experiences too. Discuss: Why is it so important to nurture plants carefully? Why is it so important to nurture our faith carefully?



## Critical Thinking

Today's lesson examines what the Holy Spirit grows in the lives of Christians according to Galatians 5:22–23. Compare that list with the lists found in two other references to the Christian life. Which traits are similar? Which are unique to one list and not another? (James 3:17–18 speaks of these traits: pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, sincere, righteousness, making peace; Colossians 3:12 speaks of compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience.)



## Curriculum Connection

Several topics in the Science volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide series could be an excellent connection for this lesson. Just as we need the Holy Spirit's work to stay alive in faith, so also plants need sunlight, water, nutrients, and air in order to grow and thrive. Section 5.2.2.7, Photosynthesis, focuses on the role of sunlight in plant growth. You could design a comparison experiment with students in order to see how crucial light is to the development of a fast-growing plant, such as grass or beans. Similar experiments could be designed using differing amounts of water or fertilizer. Section 5.2.2.5, Organisms and the Environment, takes a look at the same issues in a larger context: that of our environment as a whole.



## Just for Fun

Play "Fruit Basket Upset" (Galatians version). Give each person the name of one of the nine fruits of the Spirit. (At least two people must be assigned to each word.) All sit in a circle except for one person in the center, who is the leader and calls off the names of the fruits. Those given that word must switch chairs while the leader tries to get to one of the open chairs first. Whoever is left standing is the new leader. The leader may call off more than one word. If the leader says "fruit of the Spirit," everyone must switch places. While this is fun to play, it may also help students remember the words. (Here's another memory clue: the first three are one-syllable words, the next three are two-syllable words, and the last three are three-syllable words—at least in this English translation!)



## Check it Out

As you explore the fruit of the Spirit, consider that fruit must be connected to the tree or vine in order to grow. Jesus speaks of this very thing in John 15:5. This does, however, bring up the concept of what happens when the fruit or branch is broken off and no longer connected to the source. The warning is given in John 15:6. If there are no fruits (results), there is no value to the branch, and it is tossed out (Luke 3:9). This is a stern reminder about the importance of staying connected with our Lord through the Means of Grace. But then, in John 15:7–12, Jesus goes on to speak of the forgiveness, joy, and comfort we have in Him.



## Searching Further

A main theme of this lesson is "continue growing." There are a number of Bible verses that use the word *continue*. Ask students, **How could you find Bible verses that talk about continuing?** Hopefully they will mention a concordance! Challenge students to look in the Student Book concordance (in the Appendix) and list things that must or will continue. Point out that there are many other concordances that are even more inclusive. If available, show students the concordance at the back of *The Lutheran Study Bible* (available from CPH). You may also want to introduce students to Biblegateway.com, which is a quick and accurate online concordance. A concordance will lead students to these answers: *continue* steadfastly in prayer; *continue* in faith; *continue* in the grace of God; *continue* to speak [God's] Word with all boldness; let brotherly love *continue*.

# How does Jesus serve as my substitute?

## Background

Why did Jesus become our substitute? Genesis 3 begins the story of the promise of a Savior and His ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross. In that chapter, we see that Adam and Eve disobeyed God in favor of trying to gain more knowledge in order to be more like God. The resulting “blame game” from Eve to the serpent and from Adam to Eve shows how quickly mankind had fallen and how easy it was to continue sinning. A holy God could not coexist with sin; sin had to be punished. Genesis 3:14–15 brings to light the plan God the Father had

already set in motion for that punishment—His Son Jesus taking our place on the cross as our substitute. Prophets such as Isaiah provide more information from the Lord, prophesying the family line and path the Messiah would take in order to fulfill our heavenly Father’s plan. This leads us to our main scriptural focus in Luke 2:1–20. This is the account of the birth of our Savior, as our Lord Jesus became one of us, taking on human form and completing what had begun in Genesis 3. This is summed up so completely in John 3:16–17.

## Devotions

The Eagles were one point behind in the final minutes of a basketball game when their star player, Logan, fell and broke his wrist. The guys on the bench knew the coach would call one of them into the game as a substitute. Philip said, “Mark, I’m sure the coach will pick you because you are our best rebounder.” “Thanks,” said Mark, “but we need points; you would make the best substitute.” Logan sat out for the rest of the game, his hand on ice as he watched Philip do what Logan was unable to do. When Philip’s final shot won the game, Logan joyfully congratulated him, saying, “You are the best basketball substitute ever!” You and I are in a similar situation. We fell, but not on a basketball court—we fell into sin. Like Logan, we need repair and relief—our sinful hearts need

to be repaired, and we need relief from the punishment of sin. Some people think they will be saved by being good or by being in church—but there is only one substitute who can truly take our place, and that is Jesus. He lived a perfect life for us, in our place. He died on the cross as our substitute, taking our punishment. Jesus didn’t come off a bench to join a game; He came from heaven at Christmas to become one of us! Jesus is the best substitute ever—and there is no substitute for Jesus!

Say together the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed (not the explanation). These words tell what Jesus did as our substitute.

Sing: “Amazing Grace” (*LSB* 744; recorded as *Hymn of the Month for grade 5, December*). This hymn tells us of the amazing love of Jesus, shown in all He did for us.

## Central Truth

In order for Jesus—true God—to be our substitute, He became one of us—a person, a true man.

## Objectives

- Recognize that our sins must be punished, so Jesus took the punishment in our place.
- Explain that when Jesus took the punishment for our sins, He gave us His righteousness so that we are now holy before God.
- Proclaim this Good News to everyone.

## Materials

- The Basics
- Hymnals and music CDs
- Web Resource 40a and 40b
- Reproducible 40

## Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references before class time.

- 2 Corinthians 8:9
- Philippians 2:5–7
- 2 Corinthians 15:21
- Romans 6:3–8
- Hebrews 10
- Luke 2:1–20

## INTO the lesson

### Your Substitute

Today, add the word *Substitute* to your classroom bulletin board focusing on names for Jesus. Discuss the first section of the Student Book activity. Though this seems obvious, it is also profound! **The significance of Christmas is that God was born as one of us so that He could become our substitute—it was necessary for Jesus to be both true God (almighty) and true man (to take our place). God’s plan at Christmas makes so much sense for that very reason. It is often hard to understand God—but we can relate to Jesus because He became a person like us, except for sin.** Expand on these concepts by discussing the Bible study in the Student Book. Also explore Web Resource 40a. Follow Jesus’ life through His state of humiliation and state of exaltation as these steps are described in the words of the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed. Note the phrase that is the turning point—Jesus went into hell, but He went there to show the devil that God has won the victory. The steps (down in humiliation and up in exaltation) take on a V shape, which can stand for victory—the victory of Christ’s triumph and the victory He gives to us! (See 1 Corinthians 15:57.)

### Word Study Review

By God’s grace and God’s design, in Old Testament times a substitute was provided through the means of sacrificing a lamb to pay the penalty for the sins of the people. This was a prefiguring or a preview of God’s plan for everyone through Christ Jesus. **He is the ultimate and complete Lamb of God who was offered on the cross for the forgiveness of all sins. No other sacrifice or substitute is needed. This gift is given to us; we receive it by faith in Christ Jesus.**

## INTO the Word

### Why as a Baby?

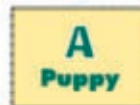
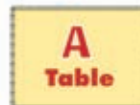
Say, **I understand the importance of Jesus coming as a person to be our substitute, but why was He born as a helpless little baby? Don’t you think people would have been more impressed if Jesus had come to earth in all His might and glory? Maybe they would have been scared into believing what He said. Or maybe Jesus should have come to earth as a conquering king or mighty soldier—people**

### LESSON 40

## How does Jesus serve as my substitute?

### Your Substitute

Put an X on the one that could take your place.



What do these Bible verses tell about our substitute?

- a. 2 Corinthians 8:9 **Jesus switched places with us; He was born in poverty on earth so someday we can have the riches of life in heaven.**
- b. Philippians 2:5-7 **Jesus was true God but became “nothing,” emptying Himself to become one of us to save us.**
- c. 2 Corinthians 5:21 **Jesus not only switched places with us, becoming sin for us, but He also suffered the punishment of that sin for us.**
- d. Romans 6:3-8 **Jesus died as our substitute, taking the punishment of our sin; we not only share in His death but also in His resurrection, which promises us eternal life!**

### Review

**Sacrifice.** In the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament, the lamb was the substitute for the people. When the lamb was sacrificed, its death carried the people’s punishment for their sins. This ceremony prefigured the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Jesus was the ultimate substitute—true God and true man, holy and human. We live in New Testament times. Because of Jesus, there are no more blood sacrifices. Those ended with Jesus, the complete and perfect substitute. (See Hebrews 10:10, 14, 18.)

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would probably have listened then. In fact, Jesus could have forced them to believe in Him! Listen to the responses of the students to those incorrect ideas. Emphasize that God does not force us to believe; He has great power but He doesn’t use it to frighten us or to subject us to His authority. **Jesus wants us to know that God is loving and full of grace and mercy; Jesus came to earth in humility—He was not too proud to become a little baby. He**

set aside His power and might to set aside our fear and fright. He wants us to know that He came for all people—rich or poor, lowly or great, learning or learned, weak or strong. He became all this for us so that we may have the riches of eternal life through the righteousness that He gives us. Read the story of this great gift from God in Luke 2:1–20. Focus on key phrases by working on Reproducible 40 and also using Web Resource 40b.

### Why as a Baby?

- Our Lord did not "lord it over all." What does that mean?  
Jesus set aside His power and glory to serve humbly, rather than proudly demanding the birth of an earthly king.
- What message did Jesus' humility give?  
He came for all people. He models humility for His followers.
- Identify another time when Jesus showed humility.  
Possibilities include riding a donkey into Jerusalem and washing the disciples' feet.
- Explain in your own words what the symbol above tells you.  
Possibilities include that the purpose of Jesus' birth was to die on the cross to take our punishment—He was our substitute in both situations.



### Why Go to So Much Trouble?

Why did God go to so much trouble, having His Son be born as one of us, only to later suffer and die on a cross? Why didn't He just snap His fingers and say, "Sin, be gone"? God wouldn't do that, because He is a just God. If there was no punishment for sin, the message would be "sin as much as you want because it doesn't matter anyway." This would not be justice from a just God. The penalty had to be paid. So God Himself took the punishment for us. He calls us to repentance and a new life in Christ.



### Remember

**F**or our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)



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because, either way, the judge would look unjust and unfair. The judge looked at his sorrowful daughter, who had tears flowing down her face; he looked at her two little children standing beside her; and he looked at the police report that said her careless mistake of running through a red light had caused an accident that led to considerable damage and warranted a penalty of ten thousand dollars. The judge felt torn, but he knew what he had to do. He pounded his gavel and declared a fine for the full amount to be paid immediately; otherwise, she would have to spend a month in jail. There were murmuring whispers in the court that grew louder as the judge stepped down from his bench, took off his judge's robes, and walked over to the table of the officer of the court. The judge stated, "Justice has been served; the penalty must be paid. However, I am now stepping down from my role as judge. I am now acting only as a father." He took out his personal checkbook and signed a check for the full amount. He paid the penalty. His daughter was now free! The judge was just and fair; he was also kind and merciful. Discuss with your students how this relates to what God did for us. (God said that the consequence for our sin is death. He was *just* in demanding punishment. Then He took the punishment on Himself, knowing we could never save ourselves. He showed grace and mercy, setting us free through Jesus. He calls on us now to turn from our sins and live a life of repentance.) Say, **The Christmas story is a sweet story—but it is so much more. It is the powerful message of God's love and grace, offering us salvation and eternal life in Christ Jesus.**

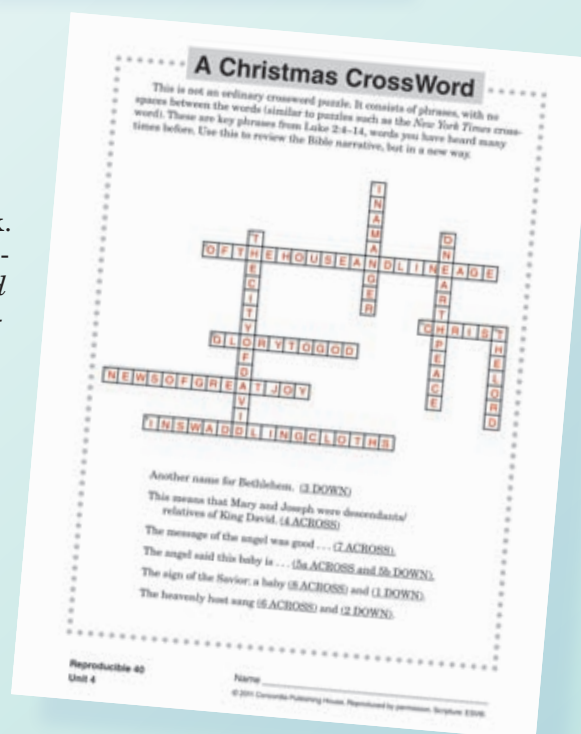
### Words to Remember

Say, This Bible verse is also known as the "Great Exchange." Jesus substituted for us, taking on our sins and the punishment for those sins. In exchange, we receive all the benefits as He gives us His righteousness, making us holy and blameless before God so that we may receive the gifts of faith, forgiveness, life, and salvation! A fair exchange and a fair substitution will have some equality. Not so with Jesus—He took the pain so that we have the promise; He took the negative so that we have the positive; He took death so that we have life!

## INTO our lives

### Why Go to So Much Trouble?

Discuss the paragraph in the Student Book. Then tell this parable that relates to the illustration in the Student Book: *A judge was seated at his bench in the courthouse, hearing indictments and dealing out punishments as needed. Suddenly, there was a gasp in the courtroom as the judge's own daughter was escorted in by two policemen. Reporters followed them quickly into the room, eager to see what would happen. If the judge did not charge her with a steep fine, everyone would say he was being partial and easy on his own child. However, if the judge did charge a heavy penalty, everyone would say he was merciless to his own daughter. Either way, the reporters would have a good story. The judge's enemies were also pleased*





## Learning Together

Have students work in small groups or pairs to create an echo story based on Luke 2:1–20. Encourage them to include actions that younger students could easily mimic. Have groups practice with one another and then visit other classes in the school to share the story of Jesus' birth. Or have students write a "Family Line Rap" about Jesus' lineage. Begin with Jesse and end with Jesus. Refer back to Reproducible 7 for a list of the family line(age). Encourage students to be creative with including as many of the generations as they can. This activity can help reinforce rhyming, rhythm, and writing skills.



## Making Comparisons

Point out to your students that we have a rather sanitized and hygienic image of the manger that was Jesus' baby bed. Explain that a manger was a trough from which animals would eat or drink. Pass around a well-used dog dish and discuss with students how they would feel about eating or drinking from it, much less use it for a baby. Ask, **What is the significance of the manger? What message does it give to the world?** (Jesus gave up the power and wealth of heaven to be one of the lowliest people on earth; He came for all people—the lowliest shepherd as well as the mightiest leader.) Explore the words of *Hymn of the Season for grade 5, Christmas*, which is "Once in Royal David's City" (*LSB* 376 and on the *HOS* recording). This stately hymn emphasizes all that Christ became for us so that we can someday live with Him in heaven. Read each stanza as a poem and then have students summarize the message of each.



## Sharing the Faith

Have the students create an acrostic using the letters of the word *SUBSTITUTE* to tell about Jesus. Display the posters in the school hallway for others to see.



## Curriculum Connection

A discussion during your math class can add further nuances to an understanding of the concept of *substitution*. Section 5.2.3, Simple Algebraic Expressions, in the Math volume of the *Concordia Curriculum Guide* series, could be an excellent connection to this lesson. In algebraic equations, the letter  $x$  (or others) substitutes for an undetermined number. It allows students to work with a problem even if all of the information is not yet available. As our substitute, Jesus is how God "solves" the human problem of sin!

# From what and for what did Jesus redeem us?

## Background

“And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on His right and one on His left” (Luke 23:33). Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas? Yes, it is a merry and blessed Christmas, because on that cross we see the reason for the celebration of Christmas. At this time of year, we often hear the phrase “Jesus is the reason for the season.” Jesus *is* the reason for Christmas, but He is the reason for much more than that. By His birth, life, death, and resurrection, Jesus set us free from slavery to sin, death, and the devil. We owed our holy God perfect obedience, and we

responded instead with rebellion and disobedience. We were lost and captive under the weight of a debt we could not pay. Out of His great love and mercy, God promised to send a Savior, Christ the Lord. The Savior came to redeem us, to buy us out of our slavery to sin with His own blood. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Our Redeemer paid the price, and we receive the gift! Merry Christmas! (This is a big lesson. You may want to split it over several days. This background article could be used as an extra classroom devotion.)

## Devotions

In advance, display a number of balls of play dough. All should be round except one; it should have at least four large protrusions and perhaps be a different color than the rest. Say, **When Jesus came to this earth, He was not what people expected. The world’s idea of a savior is someone who is a mighty warrior or a powerful king. Jesus was different. Have you ever considered what Jesus expects of His followers? He wants us to be different too from the rest of the world. But being different is very hard! The easy way is to be like everyone else. Hold up the ball that is different, and after each of the following statements, push in one of the protrusions. It is much easier to do something because “everybody does it.” It is easy to say bad language when everybody else says it too. It is much easier if you can**

**have the same things everybody else has. It is easy to make choices if you can wear what everybody else wears.** Roll the ball in your hands to make it smooth. **This is called “conforming,” being like the rest of the world even when it is wrong. However, this is not what Jesus wants for us. Listen to Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God.”** Mold the ball into a cross shape. Say, **Jesus has redeemed us, paying the price to set us free from sin. He changes us into a new creation, transformed to live for Him and in Him. Dear Jesus, our Redeemer, You have bought us back from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Help us to live transformed lives for You. Amen.**

## Central Truth

Because of our human nature, we are born into the slavery of sin; but Jesus came to redeem us—to buy us back.

## Objectives

- Admit that on our own, we are prisoners and slaves to sin, death, and the devil.
- Gratefully thank Jesus for redeeming us with His own body and blood on the cross to pay the price for our redemption.
- Trust that our Redeemer has completed all things for our salvation.

## Materials

- The Basics
- Balls of play dough
- Hymnals and music CDs
- Reproducible 43
- Web Resource 43a

## Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references before class time.

- Luke 2:11–12
- John 1:45–46
- Matthew 13:54–55
- Luke 19:7, 10
- 1 Corinthians 1:23–25
- Luke 24:1–11
- Luke 23:32–47

Sing “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” (LSB 341; recorded as *Hymn of the Season for Grade 5, Advent*). Reread stanza 5 as a prayer to our Redeemer.

Say together the explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed.

# INTO the lesson

## The Unexpected Gift

Say, When you look under the Christmas tree, you often find the presents you hoped to receive. Sometimes, though, you might be a little disappointed. Imagine that you really wanted new video games or sports equipment and instead found socks and school supplies. You might need those things, but they are not what you wanted!

Many people in Israel wanted a certain kind of Messiah. They hoped the coming king would destroy their enemies and make Israel a great nation. But Psalm 130:7–8 gives a different picture. Read the verses to the class and ask, What does it say the LORD would do for Israel? (Redeem Israel from sin) What does it mean to redeem something? (Check the word study review and do a concordance search for Bible verses using the word *redeem* or *redemption*.) To redeem means to buy back or to pay a debt owed by someone else. Jesus, the Messiah, came to redeem Israel and all people from slavery to sin and death. He paid the debt we owe, not with money but with His own blood. Jesus was not the kind of Messiah that everyone expected, but He is exactly the kind of Messiah that we need. (Guide students through the activities on the first page of the Student Book lesson.)

### LESSON 43

## From what and for what did Jesus redeem us?



### The Unexpected Gift

We often talk about Jesus as the “best Christmas gift.” But He was not the gift people expected. They were looking for a mighty warrior and king. Read the Bible verses in the gift box to the right and list some of the unexpected things about Jesus.

*Isaiah 55:8–9: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

1. Luke 2:11–12 **He was born in a lowly manger in tiny Bethlehem.**
2. John 1:45–46 **No one expected good things from Nazareth.**
3. Matthew 13:54–55 **They didn't expect such wisdom from a carpenter's son.**
4. Luke 19:7, 10 **They were surprised He associated with sinners.**
5. 1 Corinthians 1:23–25 **He died a criminal's death on a cross.**
6. Luke 24:1–11 **Even though He had told them, they didn't expect Him to arise on the third day.**

### The Redeemer

Instead of comparing Jesus our Redeemer to a gift box, perhaps it would help to compare Him to a gift certificate. (As our Redeemer, Jesus paid the price, purchasing us to buy us back.)

	PURCHASED FROM	PURCHASED WITH	PURCHASED FOR
Gift Certificate	fast-food place	money	lunch
My Redemption	sin, death, devil	Jesus' body and blood on the cross	forgiveness, life, salvation

### Review

**Redeem:** to buy back or to pay a debt owed by someone else. Jesus came to redeem Israel and all people from slavery to sin and death. We owe God perfect obedience, but we are sinners and cannot give Him what we owe. The penalty for our sin is death and separation from God. Jesus, our Redeemer, came to suffer that punishment in our place. He paid the price to set us free, not with money but with His own blood.

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# INTO the Word

## Is This the Christ?

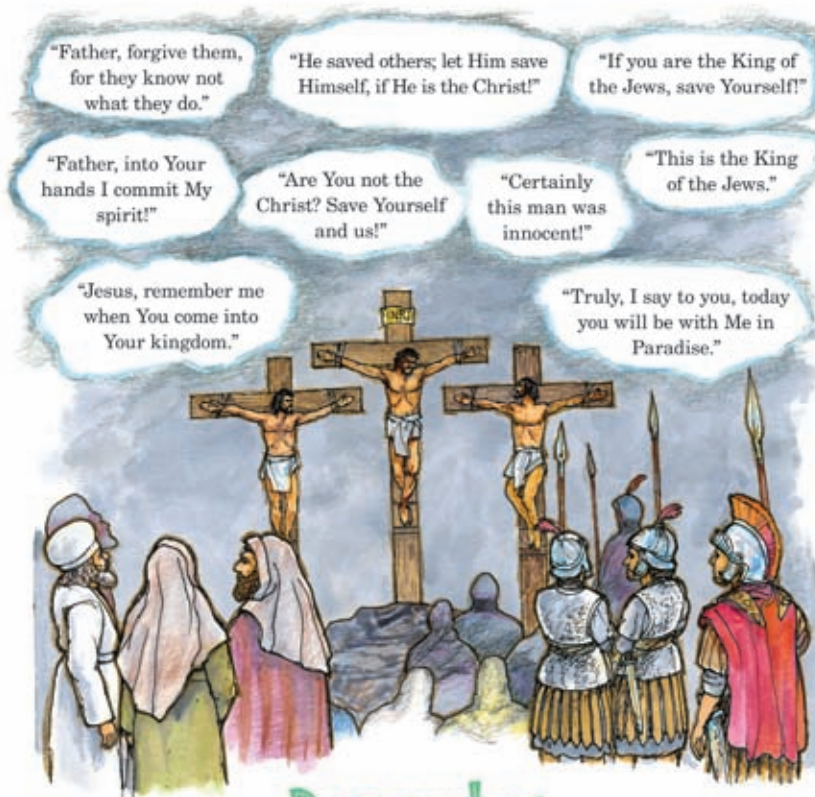
On the first Christmas night, an angel told the shepherds how to recognize the Savior. The Messiah was a newborn baby, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. In today's Bible lesson, the Messiah, the Son of God, is not so easy to recognize. The promised King of Israel is hanging on a cross between two criminals. He doesn't look like a king. Have students read Luke 23:32–46 out loud.

The people who saw Jesus on the cross wondered, “Is this the Christ?” In the Student Book are comments from people at Jesus'

crucifixion. Have students draw lines connecting the comments to who or what said each. Many people watching the crucifixion did not think Jesus was the right kind of king. He was not the Messiah they expected. He did not look like a powerful king. He was not on a throne. He was nailed to a cross. Others said that if Jesus really was the Christ, the Messiah, He should be able to save Himself. But Jesus did not come to save Himself. He came to save us! He came to redeem us, to buy us back from sin, death, and the devil. What did Jesus say before He died? (“It is finished. Father, into Your hands

## Is This the Christ?

Our Savior and Redeemer suffered and died on a cross for us. His enemies derided Him, and His followers felt hopeless; neither expected this could happen to the Promised One. But God's plan was perfect! Jesus did all things necessary to save us. Read Luke 23:32–47. Draw lines to connect the words to whoever said them.



Remember

"I have **blotted out** your transgressions like a cloud and your **sins** like mist; return to Me, for I have **redeemed** you." (Isaiah 44:22)



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I commit My spirit.") His work of saving us was finished. He did what His Father sent Him to do. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the second criminal recognized Jesus. He knew Jesus really was a king, his king, and he wanted to be a part of Jesus' kingdom. The shepherds recognized the baby in the manger. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we also recognize our King on the cross. He redeemed us with His own blood and brought us into His kingdom.

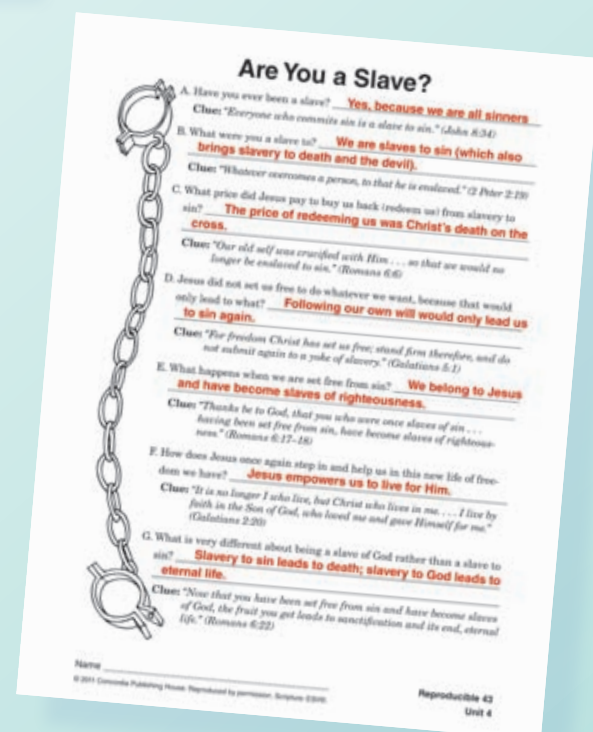
## INTO our lives

### Are You a Slave?

Explore the Bible study on Reproducible 43. Emphasize that Jesus purchased us from slavery to sin, death, and the devil. **He paid the price so that we may be His own, becoming slaves to righteousness! We are redeemed by Him to live for Him.** Refer again to the transforming power Jesus has in our lives. Use Web Resource 43a to discuss what our transformed lives are like. Read to the class Philippians 3:20–21 and ask, **What is the ultimate transformation that will take place?** (When we are in heaven our bodies will be perfect and we will be holy.)

### Words to Remember

How did God redeem us? What did God do to our sins? He erased our sins as if they were nothing more than a cloud or a mist.





## THE WORD FULFILLED



**In the Old Testament, the words of the prophets**

**inspired by the Holy Spirit foretell the life and death of the promised Messiah. With all the prophecies telling what the Savior would be like, why didn't people recognize Him when He came?** (The people had formed their own ideas based on what they wanted.) Explain that the events surrounding the crucifixion were prophesied hundreds of years earlier. The fact that Jesus was crucified with criminals and buried in a rich man's grave is found in Isaiah 53:9. Psalm 22 reflects the crucifixion of Jesus in great detail. Verses 7 and 8 speak of the ridicule directed at Him: "All who see Me mock Me; they make mouths at Me; they wag their heads; 'He trusts in the LORD; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, for He delights in Him!'" Verse 18 of the same psalm describes how the soldiers gambled for the Savior's clothing: "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." We praise God for the promise of resurrection in Hosea 6:2: "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him."



## Critical thinking

The angel announced to the shepherds that the newborn Savior was "Christ the Lord." In Old Testament verses, you will often see the title "LORD" spelled out in all capital letters. God revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:13–15) with the name Yahweh, which means "I AM WHO I AM." Thinking themselves unworthy to write the holy name of God, scribes copying the biblical texts used in place of Yahweh the title *Adonai*, which means "Lord." You will see LORD in capitals in places where the name Yahweh was used. Jesus is LORD. He said in John 8:58, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." Jesus used the holy name "I AM" to refer to Himself. The baby in the manger in Bethlehem and the crucified King on the hill outside of Jerusalem is Yahweh, God Himself in human flesh. Search YouTube to find a good version of the song "Mary, Did You Know?" (The version sung by Kathy Mattea is quite good.) Encourage students to pay special attention to the last portion of the song, which identifies Jesus as the "great I AM." This is very poignant, as it recognizes Jesus as true God and the long-awaited Messiah. He is Immanuel—God with us!



## Searching Further

**Messiah:** At the crucifixion, Jesus was ridiculed as "the Christ of God, His Chosen One." The word Christ is not actually a name but is the Greek form of the Hebrew title Messiah. Messiah means "the anointed one," a person chosen or set apart for a special purpose. In the Old Testament, we read how David was anointed king over Israel (1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 2:4). In Luke 4:16–21, Jesus uses the words of Isaiah 61:1 to refer to His ministry as the anointed one, the Messiah of Israel: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives . . . to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." We, too, have been anointed with the water of Holy Baptism; we have been chosen by God to be His own.



## Reaching Every Individual

The Second Article of the Apostles' Creed describes the facts of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. In his explanation of that article, Martin Luther emphasized the fact that Jesus did those things for you! Luther said that Jesus "is *my* Lord" and that He "redeemed *me*," "purchased and won *me*." Jesus suffered so "that *I* may be His own." This emphasis is a reflection

of the angel's wonderful words on the first Christmas night, "For *unto you* is born . . . a Savior." Jesus died for the sins of the world. Through faith, the gift of forgiveness won at the cross belongs to you and to each of your students. Emphasize that this is not just a general blessing from God; it is personal and for each individual.