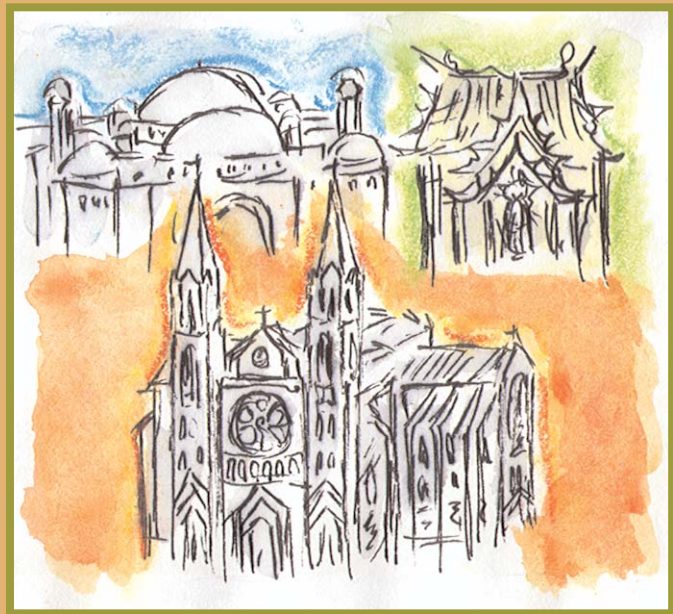


YEAR 3 BOOK 1

# JUNIOR 2

Student Workbook



**THEME:**

Historical Overview of the Christian Church  
and World Religions

# Student Devotional—Be an example!

*“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 ppt 2:9)*

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There is no greater calling, no greater blessing, than to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Serve Him with all your heart. Be an example. Walk in purity!

God knows that there is room enough in our hearts for only one “most precious thing.” If it is not Jesus, then it’s something else.

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

**2 Timothy 4:7**

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## BIBLE READING FOR THIS QUARTER

1. Jn 14-15; Acts 1-2; 2 Tim 1
2. Acts 3-5
3. Mt 10; Acts 6-7; Rom 8
4. Jn 14-15; Act 8-9; 2 Tim 1
5. Ps 32:8,9; Is 30:1-17;  
1 Tim 4:1-5
6. Jer 23:9-40; 2 Pet 2;  
1 Jn 2-3
7. Neh 1; Dan 9; Jn 17;  
1 Tim 3; 2 Tim 2
8. Ps 60; Rom 2-8
9. Deut 28-30; Ps 18:20-36;  
Mal 3-4
10. Deut 7-8, 12:29-13; Hos 4
11. Is 45-46, 57; Ezek 14
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18:1-17,19

## YEAR 3 BOOK 1

### Unit 1: Establishment of the Early Church

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# Historical Overview of the Christian Church and World Religions

## UNIT THEMES:

### unit 1:

#### Establishment of the Early Church

Young people often consider history an irrelevant and boring subject. Why learn about people long dead and events long past? We need to realize that God is the God of history. Abraham was chosen at a specific point in human history. The nation of Israel really did exist in ancient times. Jesus came into the world to become a part of world history forever. Within history humans did what was right before God, or offended God through sinful acts. It is therefore imperative that we should learn from the mistakes of our spiritual forebears. The first section of this

text maps out the path that the first Christians took in establishing the church. We see how they gradually moved away from the will of God, and substituted their own will and ideas. But through prayer, the Holy Spirit will work in every heart that is willing to receive the Lord's guidance in utmost humility. Let us open our hearts and minds to discover the working of God in human history.

### unit 2:

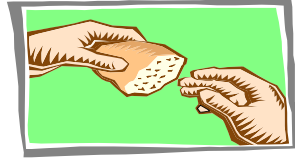
#### Many Names For Christianity

Christianity is a very diverse religion today. Most of us know of Christian churches from different denominations—the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church—to name a few. How did we get so many versions of Christianity? You may find it hard to imagine a time when the Catholic Church was the only church in the world. However, that was the case until the tenth century, when the Orthodox Church broke away from the Catholic Church in the West. All the various Protestant churches did not come into

being until as late as the sixteenth century. This section follows the history of the Christian church as it divided into many branches. We look at the conflicts and controversies that caused major schisms within the churches. As we study this, we should think about our church, and learn from the mistakes of the past. Through prayer and knowledge, we can avoid the pitfalls that beset the secular churches around us.

## MEMORY VERSES FOR SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER

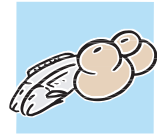
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1. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
2. "For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which you have prepared before the face of all peoples." (Lk 2:30, 31)
3. "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (Jas 1:2-4)
4. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (Gal 1:8, 9)
5. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet 5:8)
6. "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of ram." (1 Sam 15:22)
7. ""These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."" (Mt 15:8, 9)
8. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom 5:1,2)
9. "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God." (1 Cor 2:11)
10. "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." (Rev 22:14)
11. ""You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them."" (Ex 20:3–5a)
12. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." (Col 1:15–16)

★ **Objectives:**

- 1) To learn about the development of the early Church.
- 2) To understand that the Holy Spirit is able to unite God's people when they call upon Him.



## The Book of the Acts of the Apostles

The Book of Acts is crucial to our understanding of events leading to the inception of the earliest church. The church was not established gradually. It came with a very loud sound, in tongues of fire, on one of the busiest days in Jerusalem.

### 1. Read Acts 2:1–4.

(A) Write in point-form a summary of the sequence of events happening here.



(B) Which two elements are portrayed in this passage?

(C) God's presence is often linked to powerful elements and forces of nature. Can you think of stories or incidents in the Bible when God appeared within these powerful forces?

### 2. Read Acts 2:5–13 carefully. Why were people confused about the situation?

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### 3. The New Testament is full of explanations or descriptions about the effect of the Holy Spirit on believers. Read the following verses to discover some of the effects the Holy Spirit could have on us. Think of other verses if you can.

- a) 2 Tim 1:7
- b) Gal 5:22–23
- c) Eph 3:16–19
- d) Jn14:15–18
- e) Jn15:26–27



4. Acts 2:42 describes a vital, growing church. Three things were key in the verse. List them, and explain what they mean in practice:

1)

2)

3)

5. Having read the above verses on the effects of the Holy Spirit on a believer and the church, can you explain why the church described in Acts 2:42–27 was so unified?

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1. Draw a timeline to illustrate the key events recorded in Acts 1 and 2.

2. Explain, in your own words, what we can learn about unity from the early church.

Check For Understanding



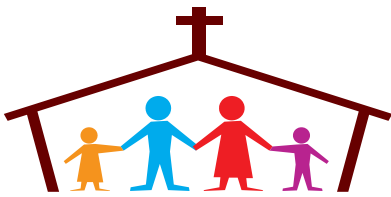


## Fellowship

It is essential for a healthy church to hold true to the teachings of Christ, for all members to take part fully in the community that forms the church, and find strength in prayer. Work together to plan one fellowship for your class, which takes into account these important needs of the community of Christ. You may invite other classes to join your fellowship if this is appropriate. Try to involve everyone in your class in the planning. Decide what activities you would like, and delegate different people to be responsible for each activity. Remember Acts 2:42 as your guideline. Your agenda should focus on:

**-prayer**

**-community and faith-building activities that will help to draw people closer together.**



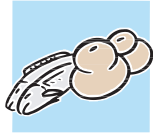
Your fellowship will take place during the week of Lesson 6, after the lesson has been covered, so you have time to plan carefully. As you plan, think of the needs of your group and your church community. Take into account anyone who needs help or support, physically or spiritually. You could plan group games to give everyone an opportunity to get to know each other better. You could ask various counselors, pastors or deacons to help with discussions, and you could plan a question and answer session too. The possibilities are endless. Some considerations are:

- a. Have an aim or a theme for the fellowship.
- b. Decide on how much time you wish to plan for. E.g., a one-hour fellowship could include a discussion of a topic or issue, snacks, games, hymn singing. If it is less than an hour, you will have fewer items on your agenda.
- c. Always have a counselor, deacon or pastor present. People are more likely to ask questions about faith or other issues in a more relaxed atmosphere, and you want to have someone more mature who is able to help out if this happens.
- d. Delegate tasks. Everyone should be involved.
- e. You could invite students from another class if you wish, or even truth seekers, if you plan for this.
- f. Always allow time to pray together during fellowships, and try to make it a relaxing atmosphere so everyone feels comfortable.

This exercise gives you a chance to think about the success of the early church and how we can apply their strategies ourselves today. It also provides everyone with an opportunity to become involved in a collaborative project that is fun and beneficial in fostering closer ties within the household of God.

## ★ Objectives:

1. To understand that God prepared the groundwork for the spreading of His gospel.
2. To let the students to know that God guides His apostles and followers as they strive to do His will.



## God Paves the Way

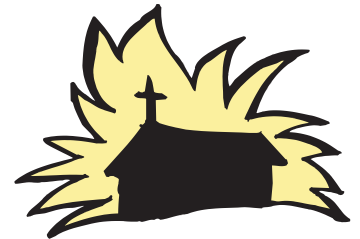
Proverbs 8:15 says: "By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice." Long before the birth of Jesus Christ, the way was being prepared for the apostles' work through various events in history:

### 1. God allowed Greece to become a world power under Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.), resulting in Greek being established as a common language.

Alexander was not satisfied with conquering countries. He wanted to teach them to appreciate Greek culture. He wanted to teach all the people in his empire Greek ways and beliefs. Hence, under Alexander, the process of Hellenization—being put under Greek influence—began. Hellenization had far-reaching consequences. Many Jews who did not return to the holy land became Greek-speaking Jews, called Hellenistic Jews. Feelings between them and the Aramaic-speaking Jews of Palestine were not always cordial, leading to the first major conflict amongst the early believers.

#### Read Acts 6:1–7.

- a) What was the conflict here?
- b) What action resulted as a consequence of these accusations?
- c) What qualities should the chosen seven possess?
- d) What were the names of the seven who were chosen?

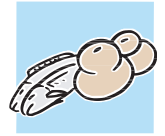


### 2. Amidst the power struggles between Greeks and Romans, the Jews gained special religious privileges and freedom of worship of which Christians initially took advantage.

Around the time of Jesus' birth, Augustus became the first Emperor of Rome. Some Jews had been cooperative when the Romans were attempting to take over from the Greeks, so when Augustus came into his own, he rewarded his allies. Jews were given the freedom to practice their own faith. They had to acknowledge that the Roman Emperor was their king, but they did not have to worship his image, or practice the religious beliefs of those around them.

Christians initially enjoyed this religious freedom together with the Jews because they were not seen to be different in the beginning. Jesus was Jewish after all, and so were His closest companions. Immediately after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, His disciples preached mainly to the Jewish community. Problems only developed when persecutions began in Jerusalem. Christians fled to other cities and the Word of God spread to the non-Jewish population. Non-Jewish believers did not have the same religious freedoms as the Jews. This became a most challenging issue for the believers at the time.





3.

The Pax Romana provided an atmosphere that was conducive to preaching the gospel.

From the time of the Emperor Augustus, for about three hundred years, there was peace and prosperity within the Roman Empire known as the Pax Romana, the “Roman peace.”

Under these circumstances, Christians traveled widely and preached wherever they could. In Acts of the Apostles, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Peter, Philip, and others were able to travel wherever the Spirit moved them to spread the gospel, with only a few exceptional circumstances.

4.

Pagan society was in a state of flux at the time, creating an atmosphere that prepared people to listen to and believe in the Christian gospel.

Pagans of the time were experiencing much insecurity. Political alliances were changing, in part due to the Romans, and traditional practices were altering, resulting in uncertainty. Moral and religious bankruptcy permeated society, and sensitive people were finding ways to escape their dissatisfaction and disillusionment in life. The following verses give us an idea of the type of people you would find in pagan society during Paul’s time and the lifestyles they led. Read the verses and write down the various sins mentioned.

- a) Rom 1:24–31
- b) Eph 4:17–19
- c) Eph 5:3–7, 18
- d) Col 3:5–9
- d) 1 Thess 4:3–8
- e) 2 Tim 3:2–5

5.

Although the apostles were there devoting their time solely to preaching the Word of God, many early Christians worked to spread the gospel independently too. Just from Paul’s letters alone, we can find mentions of many fervent brothers and sisters who worked diligently for God, in their own way. Refer to the following verses and make a list of the members mentioned and what they did to help spread the gospel.

a) Rom 16:1–2

b) Rom 16:3–5

c) Rom 16:12

d) Phil 2:25

- 1) What were the key factors that helped Christianity to spread in the first few centuries?
- 2) From the key factors, find evidence of God preparing the way for the gospel to spread.
- 3) Can you find parallels between the society in the apostles’ time and our society today?
- 4) What can we learn from the early Christians about serving God?



Imagine yourself a part of the Palestinian population in the first century AD. Divide into different groups. Each group takes on one role. Depending on time, select the roles you wish, or you may use all the roles. Some roles are interrelated and can be presented together (e.g. roles one and two). Allow ten minutes to come up with a short skit or presentation. This does not need to be a long activity. Some of you may only need to think of a couple of things to say in your role. Try to re-enact the bustling atmosphere, the confusion, and eye-witness accounts of the time. Have fun!



#### Roles:

##### 1. Reporters

Imagine you are a team working for a top Palestinian News Network during the first century AD. You are in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost covering the Jewish festival, when suddenly a commotion takes place. The team races to the scene of action, and discovers total confusion over a group of men and women who seem to be in a trance. They are uttering something, and you suddenly realize that you understand what they are saying. Then you also realize that the people around you, who speak different languages, also understand them at the same time. This is a newsworthy event indeed! Prepare an interview with the people involved, as well as some of the crowd.

##### 2. Festival Goers

You are all going about your business preparing for the festival, when suddenly a group of men and women nearby start shouting. You join the crowd going to see what's happening. You see people shaking and shouting. They seem to be in some sort of trance, but then you realize that you understand what they are saying! How strange! A group of reporters comes over and starts asking you questions.

##### 3. Talk show host

You are interviewing several guests regarding a remarkable new religious movement that is taking Jerusalem by storm. Prepare questions you might wish to ask a Pharisee, a new Christian convert, and a pagan.

##### 4. Talk show guests

A Pharisee, a Christian and a pagan give their point of view about this new religious movement.

★ **Objective:**

To understand the social background that led to the persecution of Christians.



Memory Verse:

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”  
(Jas 1:2–4)

## Persecutions

Despite the growing divergence between traditional Jews and Christian converts, Christian communities worshiped and operated within the Jewish synagogues for more than a generation. As long as the church was regarded as another Jewish sect, the Roman authorities tolerated it under the agreement between the Emperor and the Jews. In the following examples we see how Paul and his fellow Christians were accepted in the synagogues and regarded as part of the Jewish community. Read the passages and summarize the events briefly in point form. State the place, the persons involved, what happened and evidence that the Christian missionaries were accepted by the Jewish community:

**a) Acts 13:13–15**

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**b) Acts 14:1**

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**c) Acts 17:1–4**

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**d) Acts 18:1–4**

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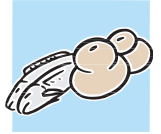
As more and more gentiles became Christians, however, problems arose that alienated Christians from the Jewish communities. For example, two of these major problems were:

- 1)** The Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) decided that non-Jewish Christians did not need to be circumcised. These uncircumcised Christian believers were gradually rejected by staunch Jews.
- 2)** Gentile Christians were not protected by the special agreement between the Romans and the Jews with regards to religious practices. They were therefore considered unpatriotic by pagans when they refused to take part in the cult of emperor-worship. Christianity became less and less acceptable. In this situation, it was perhaps inevitable that persecution would descend.

**Persecutions** were not uncommon, but they occurred in pockets. The most vicious persecutions were started by the Emperor Nero. Nero wanted to expand his palace grounds. Unfortunately, there was no room for expansion, as the area around the palace was occupied by a bustling city. Around 64 AD, a mysterious fire began which destroyed most of the area around the palace, therefore rendering it uninhabitable. Nero took over the area. A rumor began which pointed the finger at the Emperor for the tragedy. Tacitus, a historian who lived at the time, wrote in his “Annals 15.4”:

To kill the rumors, Nero charged and tortured some people hated for their evil practices—the group popularly known as **“Christians.”** The founder of this sect, Christ, had been put to death by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, when Tiberius was Emperor. Their deadly superstition had been suppressed temporarily, but was beginning to spring up again—not now just in Judea but even in Rome itself where all kinds of sordid and shameful activities are attracted and catch on.

First of all, those who confessed to being Christians were arrested. Then, on information obtained from them, hundreds were convicted, more for their anti-social beliefs than for fire-raising. In their deaths they were made a mockery. They were covered in the skins of wild animals, torn to death by dogs, crucified or set on fire—so that when darkness fell they burned like torches in the night. Nero opened up his own gardens for this spectacle and gave a show in the arena, where he mixed with the crowd, or stood dressed as a charioteer on a chariot. As a result, although they were guilty of being Christians and deserved death, people began to feel sorry for them. For they realized that they were being massacred not for the public good but to satisfy one man’s mania.



**There were several key reasons given for executing Christians, although the legal grounds always remained obscure:**

1. Christians were cannibals—based on a misunderstanding of the Holy Communion.
2. Christians were atheists—like the Jews they had no images in their shrines to worship the gods.
3. Christians were incestuous—their “love” for one another was well known.
4. Christians refused to worship the Emperor—in itself a crime of treason.

Many Christians answered these charges in their writings. You could say that these Christians were the first theologians. They were called the Christian Apologists, but it does not mean that they were apologizing for their faith. They were called Christian Apologists because in their essays and letters, they

- 1) defended their faith and
- 2) replied to charges made against Christians



However, they were largely ignored by authorities bent on persecution. By the third century, in many areas, simply bearing the name **“Christian”** became a **crime** in itself.

1. Why did Nero wish to persecute Christians?

2. Why were Christians hated and persecuted generally?

Church leaders tried hard to rally the believers throughout these difficult times. In their letters and during their missionary journeys, the apostles were constantly trying to encourage the believers to hold fast to their faith, no matter what happened. Read the following verses and think about how believers at the time might be encouraged by them:

- a) Phil 1:27–30
- b) 1 Thess 3:1–5
- c) 2 Tim 1:8–12
- d) 1 Peter 1:6–9



**Persecutions in schools today**

In North America, nobody arrests us or executes us for our beliefs anymore. However, there are other forms of persecutions. In schools the most common form is bullying. Bullying is a form of persecution because it targets weaker victims and demoralizes them, sometimes so severely that victims commit suicide. What would you do in the following situation?

Mary is a very quiet girl in your class. She seldom smiles and she gets very nervous when the teacher calls on her to answer questions. She usually gets the answer wrong anyway. She doesn't seem to have any friends. To be honest, she is usually so sullen and unfriendly that no one really bothers trying to make friends with her.

After some time, you begin to notice certain things. A group of two boys and a girl two grades up go to Mary during recesses. They usually walk her to a corner and talk to her. You don't know what they're saying because they usually surround her. Sometimes, you see them walk off with the snack that Mary had brought with her. Mary also loses many things. She would have pencils, coloring markers, bookmarks, and erasers in the morning, but she would lose them in the afternoon. When the teacher becomes exasperated with her, Mary cowers in her seat. On a few occasions, Mary even lost her field trip money. When this happens, Mary doesn't go on the trips because she says her parents can not afford to give her the money again.

You become very suspicious of these senior friends of Mary. The thought comes to your mind that Mary is the victim of bullying. You become convinced that these two boys and the girl are taking things from Mary—her snacks, all the items that she loses, including her money. You don't wish to get into trouble with the bullies. You are afraid they might target you if you tried to interfere. However, you are aware that Mary is becoming increasingly depressed. What would you do?

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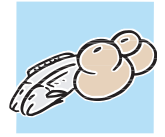
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★ **Objectives:**

1. To trace the beginnings of disunity within Christianity.
2. To understand the importance of keeping to the original and true teachings of Christ.

Memory Verse:

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”  
(Gal 1:8, 9)

## A. False Teachers

Unity within the church did not last long. False teachers arose quickly. In 2 Corinthians 11:13–14, Paul wrote of ‘false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.’ In Galatians 1:6–9, he raged against those who would pervert the gospel of Christ, stating categorically that whoever preaches a gospel other than the original truth will be accursed. In his letter to the Philippian church, Paul identified threats to church unity. Doctrinal dissent was evident even at this early stage. Philippians 3:2 warned believers to beware! There were those who argued strictly for the legality of the law—the old debate of circumcision. Paul kept reminding believers that they should now worship in the spirit, rather than adhere to practices of the flesh.

- Read 2 Peter 2:12–19. How does Peter characterize false teachers in this passage?
- 1 Jn 2:18–23 depicts the situation towards the end of the first century. Briefly describe in your own words what the believers are experiencing.
- 2 John mentions one important doctrinal heresy. Can you find it?
- The book of Jude gives a graphic description of what false teachers were. Read v.12–13 and write down the four nature images he used for this purpose.

## B. Heresies and Heretics

“Heresy,” Greek *hairesis*, can be defined as a belief or practice contrary to the orthodox doctrine, or an opinion contrary to what is normally accepted or maintained (*Oxford English Reference Dictionary*). The word usually refers to a group within a parent body that has sectarian views. There were many heretical groups within the early church, some of which survived for a long time. Three of these are described briefly below.

### 1. Gnosticism:

Gnosticism is a term that refers to a variety of religious movements in the early Christian centuries. These movements stressed salvation through a secret knowledge, or *gnosis* (Greek). Many Christian theologians in the second century wrote against these movements, calling them heresies. It is difficult to confirm the origins of Gnosticism. Some scholars think various groups affiliated to the movements were around before the beginning of Christianity.

#### Beliefs:

Although there were many different branches of Gnosticism, all believe in a sharp dualism. They believe in a transcendent God and an ignorant lesser god referred to as the demiurge. The demiurge was supposedly the god who created the cosmos, the god of the Old Testament. Some Gnostics taught that the creation itself was the result of a fall from Sophia (Greek for “wisdom”). Hence, all creation was evil, because all physical, material things were evil. However, some of the transcendent light (sparks of divinity) was trapped within the bodies of a few individuals. These individuals are destined for salvation, but they are unaware of this. When God sent down Christ as redeemer, salvation in the form of a secret knowledge (*gnosis*) was brought to Earth. The special individuals made aware of their special status. Upon physical death, the awakened “spirituals” were then able to ascend safely through the planetary regions controlled by hostile demons to be reunited with the transcendent God.



## B. Heresies and Heretics

### 2. Docetism:

Docetism was another heresy connected to Gnosticism. It began in Hellenistic and oriental areas. The main idea was that matter—whatever is physical—is essentially evil, and the divine is incapable of suffering. This led to the belief that Jesus Christ was not really a man and that He only appeared to be so. This undermined the Christian beliefs of incarnation, atonement and resurrection.

**Incarnation:** If Christ was not really a physical human being, then Mary did not really give birth to a physical being, only one who appeared to be so.

**Atonement:** Christians believe that our sins are atoned by the suffering and death of Christ. However, if Christ only appeared to be physically present, then He could not really have suffered or died. He only appeared to have suffered and died. Hence Christian belief in the atonement is threatened.

**Resurrection:** Obviously, if Christ was not really physically present, He could not have resurrected. What the disciples saw must have been a form of projection of Christ, a kind of spiritual manifestation, not really a physical being. This causes major doctrinal problems as Christians base their doctrine of salvation upon the belief that the risen Christ—the physically risen Christ—has conquered death by reversing the process of death itself through resurrection.

### 3. Montanism:

Around the mid-second century AD, a new Christian convert named Montanus who lived in a village at the border of Mysia and Phrygia began to go into trances and utter strange sounds. Some believers warned against false prophets, possibly remembering Matthew 7:15, while others thought that he did have prophetic gifts. Two women who called themselves prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla, soon shared this ability to “prophecy in tongues.” Montanus soon proclaimed himself to be the chosen prophet of God.

#### The main beliefs of this group were:

1. The Holy Spirit is poured upon individuals, a signal that the New Jerusalem was arriving.
2. A strong leaning towards the apocalyptic and eschatological focus in the Bible. Hence, Montanists believed in the imminent coming of the New Jerusalem.
3. The believers of this sect were the “elite” who would prepare for the coming of New Jerusalem by leading ascetic lives (that is, practice severe self-discipline and abstain from all forms of pleasure) to the extent of withdrawing from the world.
4. Take part in special fasts to prepare themselves for the coming of the New Jerusalem.
5. Expect and even encourage persecutions so that the church would be a purified Bride for Christ.

By around 230 AD, the group was virtually excommunicated. The Synod of Iconium refused to recognize the validity of the Montanist baptism. The movement continued underground, mostly in protest of the growing formalism and worldliness of the official church.

### 4. Research and discuss:

The two letters of Paul to the Thessalonian church are very much concerned with eschatological (end time) events. [Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12.](#)

- a) summarize what Paul wrote in this passage,
- b) think about how the believers at Thessalonica might have misunderstood Paul’s message on the second coming,
- c) discuss how these misunderstandings might have influenced the spread of Montanism later on.

1. Summarize the beliefs of the Gnostics.
2. Docetism teaches that the divine can never suffer physically. How did this teaching impact on the Christian belief in incarnation, atonement and resurrection?



## Life Application Different Views

Most of us are very blessed in our lives. We live in countries where there are no religious persecutions. In North America, the social trend is towards religious tolerance (which means people try to accept that others may have different beliefs). Christian communities bend over backwards to preach tolerance towards other world faiths as well as philosophies. On the surface, such tolerance seems like a good thing. However, it means that anyone who insists on one correct way to salvation is then seen as intolerant or even fundamentalist. The word “fundamentalism” tends now to be linked to terrorist groups, a tag we certainly do not wish to have.

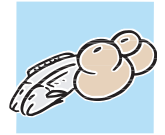


## Discuss

Imagine you are speaking to a person who has very tolerant views. How would you respond to his/her views?

1. Your religious beliefs may be true for you but not for me. There is no absolute right or wrong when it comes to religion. Who is to say which religion is right?
2. All religions are pretty much the same.
3. As long as I do the right thing, it doesn't matter what I believe in. God will accept me if I am a good person.





★ **Objectives:**

1. To understand some of the events that led to believers falling away from the truth.
2. To understand that Satan works in subtle ways, and we must always be watchful.

Memory Verse:

“Be sober,  
be vigilant;  
because your  
adversary  
the devil  
walks about  
like a roar-  
ing lion,  
seeking  
whom he  
may devour.”  
(1 Pet 5:8)

## A. The Apologists and the Veneration of Martyrs

The apologists were admired and respected because they debated doctrines with the pagans and Jews who constantly attacked Christianity. Poorer, less educated believers allowed themselves to be led by these intellectual converts without questioning whether their teachings were according to the teachings of Christ and the apostles. One reason for this was that the apologists, these Apostolic Fathers, were very willing to die for their beliefs rather than deny Christ.

There were always Christians willing to die for their faith. These people are called “martyrs.” Stephen was only the first of countless thousands of Christian martyrs. The martyrdoms of Peter and Paul were given special significance by the churches. There were other important martyrs. The following is a description of the martyrdom of Polycarp, taken from *History of the Church (IV 15)* by Eusebius, one of the church historians who lived at the time:

### Polycarp

He stepped forward, and was asked by the proconsul if he really was Polycarp. When he said yes, the proconsul urged him to deny the charge.

“Respect your years!” he exclaimed, adding similar appeals regularly made on such occasions: “Swear by Caesar’s fortune; change your attitude; say: Away with the godless!”

But Polycarp, with his face set, looked at all the crowd in the stadium and waved his hand towards them, sighed, looked up to heaven, and cried:

“Away with the godless!” The governor pressed him further: “Swear, and I will set you free: execrate Christ.”

“For eighty-six years,” replied Polycarp, “I have been his servant, and he has never done me wrong: how can I blaspheme my king who saved me?”

“I have wild beasts,” said the proconsul. “I shall throw you to them, if you don’t change your attitude.”

“Call them.” Replied the old man. “We cannot change our attitude if it means change from better to worse. But it is a splendid thing to change from cruelty to justice.”

“If you make light of the beasts,” retorted the governor, “I’ll have you destroyed by fire, unless you change your attitude.”

Polycarp answered: “The fire you threaten burns for a time and is soon extinguished: there is a fire you know nothing about—the fire of the judgment to come and of eternal punishment, the fire reserved for the ungodly. But why do you hesitate? Do what you want.”

...The proconsul was amazed, and sent the crier to stand in the middle of the arena and announce three times:

“Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian.” ...Then a shout went up from every throat that Polycarp must be burnt alive...

The rest followed in less time than it takes to describe: the crowds rushed to collect logs and faggots from workshops and public baths...When the pyre was ready...Polycarp prayed:

“O Father of thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have come to know thee, the God of angels and powers and all creation, and of the whole family of the righteous who live in thy presence; I bless thee for counting me worthy of this day and hour, that in the number of the martyrs I may partake of Christ’s cup, to the resurrection of eternal life of both soul and body in the imperishability that is the gift of the Holy Spirit...”

When he had offered up the Amen and completed his prayer, the men in charge lit the fire, and a great flame shot up.

Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna (Izmir in modern Turkey), became a martyr at the age of around eighty-six, around 156–160 AD. His eagerness to meet death for his faith was a common attitude amongst many Christians. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, saw his journey to Rome for execution as imitating the Lord’s last journey to Jerusalem and the cross. Martyrdom came to be seen as the ultimate sign of discipleship, and many Christians did not flee when persecutions came to their city.

### Thoughts for discussion:

1) Review the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. Which of the commandments have been broken with the belief in the veneration of martyrs?

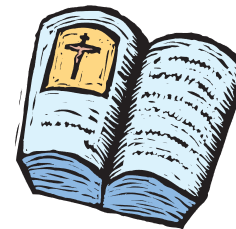
2) Refer to the memory verse for this lesson. How do you think the “roaring lion” has devoured believers through their beliefs and practices described above?

**B. Theologians of the Early Church**

The teachings of the church kept evolving after the death of the apostles. Theologians of the church grappled with what the central beliefs of Christianity should be in turbulent times. What, for example, should be done about believers who denied their faith under threat of torture and death? What of those who gave in and sacrificed to idols to save themselves or loved ones from horrific deaths? These were the “lapsed,” people who did not take the noble path of martyrdom. Church leaders had to come up with a solution to the many who repented after a series of persecutions had passed. During these times, many church writers contributed to the evolution of Christian doctrines that gradually led further and further away from the original teachings of Christ and the apostles.

One such writer was Tertullian, the first major Christian author to write in Latin. He lived around the mid-second to third century. He was a key person in developing the doctrine of the Trinity. He developed this doctrine as he wrote against the heretic Praxeas. Tertullian also attempted to defend the use of the Old Testament by Christians, and explain the oneness of God the Creator and Savior.

Another writer was Irenaeus. Like the writers of the letters in the New Testament, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, tried to counteract the influence of the heretics by writing against their teachings and warning the believers of the errors of these heretics. The passage below was written by Dr. Everett Ferguson, a Professor of Church History in Texas. Read the arguments Irenaeus made against some heretics.



**Irenaeus**

Irenaeus was born in Asia Minor and studied under Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. He then went to Gaul where he became Bishop of Lyons in AD 177. His books aimed to counteract the Gnostic ideas common in this region.

Two major writings by Irenaeus survive: *Against Heresies* (*Five Books Exposing and Overthrowing the So-Called “Knowledge”*) and *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, an instructional book, demonstrating that the basic Christian faith fulfills the Old Testament.

Irenaeus stressed the fundamental Christian doctrines that were being challenged by Gnosticism: that the world was created by one God; that Jesus Christ, son of the Creator, died to save men; that there will be a resurrection of the body. He appealed to the historical roots of the Christian faith, and argued that Scripture contained a succession of covenants through which “one and the same God” progressively revealed his will to men, as they were ready to receive it.

Irenaeus developed the idea that Christ, fully man as well as fully God, retraced the steps of Adam, with a different result. Because Christ passed through every age of life, all humanity shares in his sanctifying work.

The Gnostics claimed to possess secret traditions passed down from the apostles. To counter this, Irenaeus developed an argument involving another kind of apostolic succession. He claimed that the churches preserved public, standard beliefs handed down from apostolic times by the teachers in the churches.

Irenaeus thus developed Christian theology in several ways; for example, the “canon (or rule) of truth” preserved in the church as the key to inter-

preting Scripture; his view that the Eucharist (the Holy Communion) contains “an earthly and a divine reality;” and the place of the virgin Mary (the new Eve) in his theology. At the same time he tried to base his teachings and arguments on Scripture.

**Thoughts for discussion:**

How do you think the “roaring lion” used the Christians’ defense against heretics and other attackers to undermine the truth?

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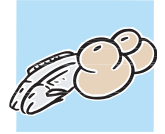


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## C. Conversion of Constantine



The single most significant event for Christianity in the early centuries was the conversion of a future Emperor of the Roman Empire—**Constantine**. Constantine was sympathetic towards Christians because his mother was a convert. He had defeated a rival named Maxentius at the famous battle fought at Milvian Bridge in 312 AD. It was just before this battle that the conversion experience took place.

Constantine related his experience to the church historian Eusebius towards the end of his life. It seemed that Constantine was alarmed by reports of Maxentius' possession of mysterious magical arts. He prayed to the "Supreme God" for help. On the eve of the battle, as Constantine was walking about at noon, he saw a vision. It was the sign of a cross in the noonday sky "above the sun," and with the sign were the words, "Conquer by this" in Latin. That night Constantine had another vision, a vision of Christ appearing to him in a dream commanding him to use the sign as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies. He obeyed, and was victorious.

This made Constantine the sole master of the West (the area surrounding Rome). He then went on to meet his rival Licinius, who had control of the East of the Roman Empire (the area around Palestine) and was also victorious. Thus, in 323 AD, he became the sole emperor of the whole Roman Empire. He established his seat of power at Byzantium, later known as Constantinople, now Istanbul.

Although Constantine embraced Christianity and treated it as a favored religion in his empire, he did not let go of his previous pagan beliefs. His own favorite god, the Unconquered Sun, seemed to have been integrated in his beliefs with the worship of the Son of God in Christianity. In 321 AD, he established a day of rest on the first day of the week, and called it "the venerable day of the Sun," that is, Sunday. Christian leaders of the time did not wish to alienate their latest, most powerful ally, and eventually changed the Sabbath

day to Sunday in order to align their day of worship with the rest of the pagan world. They conveniently used the key event of the resurrection of Christ on Sunday as the reason for the change, stating that the resurrection was so important that it was right to change the day of rest in order to remember it.

Christian artwork of the time also made it easy to blend paganism with Christianity. Christ, for instance, was often portrayed with the sun shining around his head like a halo. He was even portrayed as the sun god in a chariot. From sun worship came the celebration of Christmas on December 25, the birthday of the sun. The celebration of Saturnalia, the Roman winter festival of 17–21 December, provided the basis for later Christian practices of exchanging gifts and lighting candles.

The importance of Mary in Christian worship probably grew because there were parallels in paganism. Some believe that the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis (Diana) transferred itself to the veneration of Mary. Another pagan goddess was the Egyptian goddess Isis, who was known as the "universal mother," the "Great Virgin," and the "Mother of the God." It seemed natural that such pagan parallels would transfer itself to Christianity so that the worship of the Virgin Mary took a significant place in Christian worship in the Catholic Church.

### Thoughts for discussion:

Use the information given in this section to list the ways in which the "roaring lion" subverted the truth even in an atmosphere of religious freedom.

## Life Application

### Discuss

As a group, discuss the following question:  
**"How does the 'roaring lion' devour, undermine and subvert believers and the truth within our present-day society of religious freedom?"**

★ **Objective:**

To understand that we will lose the way to salvation if we disobey God's teachings



Memory Verse:

“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.” (1 Sam 15:22)

## **A. The Problem of Circumcision**

The first major disagreement within the early church is actually recorded in Acts of the Apostles. Read Acts 15.

- a) What was the main point of dissension in this chapter?
- b) What was Peter's argument in vs. 7–11?
- c) How did Barnabas and Paul witness to God's work?
- d) What decision did the council make regarding circumcision?
- e) How did the leaders of the council come to their decision?

## **B. The Question of the Divinity or Humanity of Christ**

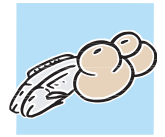
Believers tried to understand who Jesus Christ really was and how He related to God. This led to the heresies described by the apostles in the New Testament letters. After Constantine became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire, this question continued to plague the church. The conflict came to a head with the preaching of Arius, senior presbyter of one of the churches in Alexandria. In 318 AD, he clashed with Bishop Alexander on this issue.

Arius believed that Jesus Christ was different from the Father. Jesus Christ was only the Son and did not possess the divine qualities of the Father, such as immortality, sovereignty, perfect wisdom, goodness and purity. The Son was begotten by the Father and did not exist before that. The Father produced the Son as a creature, but the Son was the creator of the rest of creation. The Son did exist outside of time, before all things. Yet he did not know the Father perfectly and did not share the same being as the Father. He did, however, receive enough grace and wisdom from the Father so that he was able to reveal the Father to humankind.

This began a vigorous debate regarding the nature of Christ that lasted over the next few centuries and shaped the doctrine of the Trinity in the Catholic Church. Arius was quickly branded a heretic together

with all his followers. However, he did have support from some of the Bishops. Over the next few decades, as the various factions within the church fought over this issue, supporters of Arius rose in favor but were banished again. The controversy was fuelled by political rivalries between the eastern and western churches. Two main rival groups emerged, one based in Alexandria in the west, and one in Antioch in the east. The Alexandrian and Antiochene theologians never agreed in their doctrines of the divinity or humanity of Christ.

Into this mix came the Emperors. Once Constantine became the first Christian Emperor, he was anxious for any divisions within the church be settled. He sent his religious advisor, the Spanish bishop Ossius, to try and reconcile the different factions, but Ossius did not succeed. Hence, Constantine summoned a meeting of bishops from east and west to settle the issue. The meeting was initially planned for Ancyra (modern Ankara). Then the venue moved to Nicaea, near Nicomedia (today's city of Iznik).



**This was the Council of Nicaea. This council was significant because several things happened that influenced the future of the church:**

**1•** The meeting resulted in the writing of the Creed of Nicaea. This creed stated the official beliefs of the church. It was formulated to combat the position of Arius and stated that the Son and the Father shared the same substance. They rejected Arius' claim that there was a time when the Son did not exist, or that the Son was inferior to the Father in any way.

**2•** From Nicaea also came important regulations (called "canons") about church organization. The Bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Caesarea and Jerusalem were given special status. They had superiority over other churches and bishops. Soon after, the Bishop of Constantinople was also included, since the Roman Emperor ruled from there, and it was considered the new Rome. There were also canons that outlined the importance of certain church practices such as the performing of the Holy Communion (called the Eucharist) for those about to die but had not been baptized, or stopping the clergy (a name referring to ordained ministers in the Catholic Church, that includes priests and bishops) from transferring from one city to another. There were twenty canons that were drawn up from the meeting, dealing with these issues of organization.

**3•** Constantine himself called the meeting, presided over the meeting, and influenced the decisions. He gave the decisions reached by the council the status of imperial law. This was the beginning of a change in relations between church and state. Other emperors later on would also involve themselves in church debates, supporting one side over the other and making doctrinal decisions a law to be obeyed.

The Council of Nicaea did not have the widespread support that the emperor hoped for. Very few bishops from the west attended it. When the decisions were imparted to all the churches, there were many who opposed the decisions. The debates over these decisions continued to rage over the next few centuries and ensured the permanent rift between eastern and western churches.

Check For Understanding

As we have seen, there were conflicts within the church even from the times of the apostles. However, the way they approached the solutions were different. Consider the accounts from both sections above, and make a list of similarities and differences in approaches and results.

**Similarities**

**Differences**

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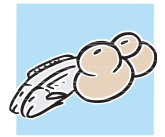
## Life Application

### Fellowship Time

Fellowship time. Remember to begin with a prayer, and perhaps hymn singing if there is time. Make sure everyone is involved. Fellowship is a special time to bond with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Make an effort to speak to someone you do not normally speak to. Learn at least one new thing from those you know well. Such times help us to form a special, spiritual relationship with one another. Once we have this bond, we will always have someone to turn to in times of difficulties and trouble. In this way, we are able to help each other to keep to the true path of salvation.

★ **Objective:**

To realize the importance of good leadership within the church.



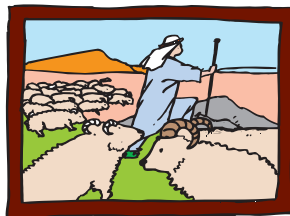
## Memory Verse:

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Mt 15:8,9)

**A. Leadership**

a. Read Ezekiel 8. What were the abominations that Ezekiel saw in his vision?

b. What we have just read in Ezekiel shows us the importance of leadership. A good leader guides his people towards the right path. The religious leaders portrayed in the passage in Ezekiel did not do that. In fact, they themselves committed terrible sins against God. Contrast this with Josiah, who led Israel back to God again. Read 2 Kings 22, and take note of some religious reforms undertaken by King Josiah.

**B. Reasons for the decline of the church**

There were many reasons for the decline of the medieval church. Amongst the most important were:

1. The rise of nationalism
2. The rigid enforcement of doctrine and practice
3. Maintenance of the church hierarchy: To maintain the various levels of clergy, as well as the numerous churches that had flourished over the past centuries, the medieval church had to use different means of getting money. Often, these means involved oppressing ordinary Christians. There were other ways of deception, such as the sale of relics, which alienated many devout Christians.
4. Lack of moral standards amongst churchmen
5. Onset of the Renaissance
6. The Crusades
7. The Babylonian Captivity

**Question:** Based on the information above, can you find some parallels with our own society today?

1. What were the reasons for the decline of the medieval church?

2. Refer to Neh 1, Dan 9, and Jn 17:6–26. What do these passages tell us about strong leadership? Are there any similarities in these passages? [eg. all these leaders prayed for the believers, for the Church, etc.]

**Life Application****Qualities of a Good Shepherd**  
Journal Entry

If I became a leader in the church, how would I lead my younger brothers and sisters?

## ★ Objectives:

1. Remind students to be diligent in keeping to the original teachings of Christ.
2. Show students that God has prepared a way for the true church to emerge at the right time.



## Memory Verse:

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom 5:1,2)

## The Protestant Reformation

### A. Sin

Read the following verses and discuss what each says about sin and being saved from sin:

1. Rom 3:21–26
2. Rom 5:18–19
3. Rom 6:7–14
4. What is the main message in the above verses?

The medieval church did not preach this same message. Instead, they invented tickets called indulgences to salvation. The Catholic Church taught that when Christians died, they went to purgatory to purge all the sins they committed in life. If you were very good, the time you spent there would be shorter. After "doing time" in purgatory, you then proceeded to heaven. Obviously, everyone would wish a very short time in purgatory. The church knew that, and that was how indulgences became popular. By buying indulgences, you could buy forgiveness for all your sins. This was possible because the indulgences were officially given by the pope, or the head of the church.

## Martin Luther

Martin Luther was the son of a miner, born in 1483. He had an excellent education, and even received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Erfurt, Germany. He was so bright that his father urged him to enter law school, which he did. However, in July of 1505, he experienced a profound conversion experience that changed the course of his life. He ended up in a monastery belonging to the Augustinian order of monks. At the monastery, he came under the influence of a mentor, a leader of his order named Johann Von Staupitz. Von Staupitz encouraged Martin to think upon the love of God for the sinner, evidenced in Christ's death. Martin studied the Bible very diligently. During 1513–1528, he lectured on Psalms, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, and Titus. Around this period, he came to understand the doctrine of "justification by faith."

It was the issue of indulgences that bothered Martin greatly because it promised full remission of sin and punishment in purgatory for living persons as well as dead. He observed the negative effect the sale of indulgences had on moral and ethical standards of believers. On October 31, 1517 he posted his Ninety-five Theses (topics for debate) on the door of Castle Church at Wittenberg, to protest against the sale of indulgences.

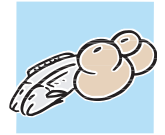
Luther was summoned to Rome to answer for his theses. It was here that he realized the extent of moral decline within the church. In fact, he was excommunicated eventually, and might even have burned at the stakes if he had not been protected by the ruler of the area he came from.

### The Lutheran Church contained several distinctive features:

- Justification by faith alone
- Salvation by grace alone
- The Bible alone as the authority for doctrine and practice
- The priesthood of the believer
- Promotion of congregational singing

1. What were indulgences?
2. Why was Luther so concerned about them?
3. Why do you think people were prepared to follow Luther and not the Catholic Church?





★ Objectives:

1. Remind students to be diligent in keeping to the original teachings of Christ.
2. Show students that God has prepared a way for the true church to emerge at the right time.

Memory Verse:

“For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” (1 Cor 2:11)

## A. Reforms of the Old Testament

Read the following passages, and using point form notes, fill in the boxes for each passage.

Reform is not a new idea that came about with Martin Luther. There have been many reformers in the Old Testament. Below, we look closely at two of them. However, the Bible readings for this week will also lead us to other royal reformers.

### 2 Kings 12:1–16 (Jehoash's reform)

What type of reform was made (i.e., things that were done to correct the situation)?	Was there anything missing in the reformation (i.e., things that should have been done that were not)?

### 2 Chronicles 19:4–11, 20:31–37 (Jehoshaphat's reform)

What type of reform was made (i.e., things that were done to correct the situation)?	Was there anything missing in the reformation (i.e., things that should have been done that were not)?

## B. Three Main Branches of the Protestant Reformation

Lutherans separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church by declaring:

### 1. Lutheranism

- a) The pope has no divine right to spiritual matters. The Roman Catholic Church believed that the pope had the final say in spiritual matters, including matters regarding doctrines.
- b) The pope was not infallible. That is, the pope is also human and can make mistakes. The Roman Catholic Church believed that since the pope was a spiritual descendent of St. Peter, God would inspire him so that his decisions were all correct.
- c) The Scripture, not a priest or the church, had final authority over conscience. So in matters of morality, in right or wrong, believers need to turn to scripture for final decisions, although they may go to the priest or the church for guidance.

Lutherans believe that our sins are forgiven through the grace of the Holy Spirit, not by any good works we do, or by going through any church rite. This was a key idea of the Reformation.

There are two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). Lutherans believe that in the Holy Communion, Christ is really present in the bread and wine (they do use wine) in some miraculous way. They ordain their priests, and their Sunday service consists of prayer, meditation, and readings from scripture. Unlike Roman Catholic priests, Lutheran priests are allowed to marry.





## 2. Prebyterianism

Presbyterians are also known as Calvinists. The word “Presbyterian” comes from the Greek word “*presbuteros*,” meaning “elder.” This refers to the people who direct the operations of the church.

Presbyterians are Protestants who trace their beginnings to John Calvin and France. Calvin wrote “*The Institutes of the Christian Religion*,” in which he outlined the belief system of the Protestant churches. He then moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where he preached his beliefs. The Calvinist faith spread rapidly across Europe. One of his converts was a Scot by the name of John Knox, who spread Calvinism in

Scotland. Presbyterianism then spread to North America and the rest of the world.

Calvin emphasized the sovereignty of God in his teachings. Humans are completely dominated by and dependent on God. Our lives are unconditionally predestined. Presbyterians try to live a morally strict and clean life to show a good example. Calvin’s reform ideas included education, liberation of the oppressed and the establishment of democratic forms of government in church and state.

They have two main sacraments: baptism for infants and adults, and the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion). The Communion is open to all baptized

Christians and not just Presbyterians. The consecrated bread and wine in the Holy Communion are symbols representing Christ’s body and blood.

Presbyterians believe in the Trinity. The Bible is the foundation of their faith. They believe that they are saved “by faith alone, by God’s grace only, through scripture only.”

Elders who are elected by their congregations govern the churches. The congregation also elects and ordains pastors. All elders and pastors gather to form presbyteries for mutual support and cooperative governance. They do not believe in a hierarchical structure of church governance. It is a policy for Presbyterians to seek community with all Christian churches.

## 3. Anglicanism

The Church of England is the mother church of the Anglican Communion. The church was created in the sixteenth century by King Henry VIII, who wished to get an annulment from his first wife, the elderly Catherine of Aragon, so he could marry Anne Boleyn. The pope refused to grant the annulment, so King Henry took over the English church and made himself head of the church. He broke with Rome and thus formed the Anglican Church. He then had the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, pronounce his first marriage null and void before proceeding to marry Anne.

The Church of England spread through-

out the British Empire. Its influence spread into India and North America, where it evolved into the Episcopal Church, an independent church that came about after the American Revolution.

Anglicans retain many elements of traditional Catholic worship. However, they also accept basic insights from the Protestant reform. The Anglican Church has few firm rules and allows great flexibility in the interpretation of doctrines. It considers the Bible to be divinely inspired and sees the Lord’s Supper as the central act of Christian worship. Anglicans respect the freedom of individuals, permitting a great deal of variety, independent thinking and religious liberty. They recognize both the

Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds. They also have a ‘*Book of Common Prayer*’ that is used in worship.

For **Check for Understanding** and **Life Application**, please refer them to the Teacher’s Guide.

★ **Objectives:**

1. To understand that the belief in Jesus Christ as our Savior is absolutely essential to our salvation.
2. To understand the importance of obeying every part of the Bible because it is the inspired word of God.
3. To learn that being devout and earnest in one's faith does not necessarily lead one to salvation.



## Memory Verse:

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." (Rev 22:14)

**A. Islam**—Brief Outline of Islam

In Arabic, Islam means "purity, by submission to Allah's will" and "obedience to Allah's laws." Allah is the God of perfection and beauty; Islam is the religion based on the revelations and teachings of Allah to his prophet Muhammad.

These revelations were said to have occurred around 610 AD. The angel Gabriel (Jibril) appeared to Muhammad and told him to "recite." He refused three times, until the angel said, "Recite in the name of the Lord who created." The revelations received during the encounter became the opening lines of the Qu'ran, or "recitation." The Qu'ran is the sacred text of the Muslims.

**The Qu'ran**

The Qu'ran was written in Arabic and consid-

ered authoritative only in that language. It consists of twelve chapters, or "suras." It contains three kinds of teachings:

- 1) **direct doctrinal messages**
- 2) **historical accounts that also have metaphorical meanings**
- 3) **mystical expressions of sublime beauty that inform and support a divine message.**

The key messages in the book deal with:

- **the importance of faith in Allah and the consequences of unbelief**
- **moral duties to one another**
- **Allah's unity**
- **the need to acknowledge the believer's dependence upon Allah**
- **the believer's ultimate unity with Allah**
- **human life being a test: we are rewarded or punished according to our actions in this short life**
- **reward and punishment being given immediately after the funeral, but there will also be a Day of Judgment and a resurrection**

**The Five Pillars**

**The Five Pillars are considered the anchor in a Muslim's life. They are:**

- 1) **Recitation of the Shahadah:** This is a profession of faith stating that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.
- 2) **Salat:** Daily prayers. A Muslim must pray five times a day facing Mecca—before sunrise, just after noon, later in the afternoon, immediately before sunset, and after dark.
- 3) **The Zakat:** Almsgiving. A purification tax on property is paid by all Muslims for the benefit of the poor. The amount is fixed, usually about two and a half percent of one's wealth, although it could be more.
- 4) **Saum:** Fasting. A Muslim must fast during the month of Ramadan (the ninth Muslim month). Fasting begins at sunrise and ends at sunset.
- 5) **Hajj:** Hajj means "pilgrimage." A Muslim must make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime, as long as they are physically able and can afford it financially.

## B. Judaism

### Brief Outline of Judaism

As we know about the origins of Judaism, which is also the origin and history of the people of Israel (of which we are the spiritual descendants), this section will deal mainly with the beliefs of modern Judaism. There are various branches of Judaism today, but regardless of denomination or sect, practicing Jews believe:

- ⇒ That there is one and only one God with whom each individual has direct personal experience, and to whom prayers are addressed.
- ⇒ God is the ultimate authority and has final dominion over the universe.

There are three main Jewish sects today: Orthodox, Reform and Conservative.

- ⇒ Life is holy.
- ⇒ The Torah is the guide to good moral living and reveals the words of God.
- ⇒ Group worship and prayer are a must in righteous living.
- ⇒ Jews all over the world share a broad common destiny and a sense of collective purpose and responsibility to one another.



## The Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible is divided into three sections:

- 1) The five books of the Torah, also known as the Pentateuch, comprise the most important section and are placed right at the front of the Hebrew Bible. These are the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).
- 2) The second section is the Nevi'im, or Books of the Prophets. The Nevi'im is divided into two sections, the former prophets (Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings) and the latter prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).
- 3) The third section of the Bible contains what is called "The Writings." This is a collection of poetry and proverbs. The books contained in this section are: Psalm, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 & 2 Chronicles.

The books listed above are in the order that they appear within the Hebrew Bible.

### Profession of Faith: The Sh'ma

Originally, it was a requirement to study the Torah night and day. This was later recognized as a very difficult thing to do, so a confession of faith called the Sh'ma (Shema) was created using three scriptural passages from Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Sh'ma became the minimum requirement of study, and Jews will memorize the Sh'ma as their confession of faith. Some say that pious Jews hope to die with the Sh'ma on their lips.

## The Sh'ma

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Never forget these commands. . . . Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away. . . . Tie them on your arm and wear them on your forehead as a reminder. Write them on the doorposts of your house (Deut 6:4–9).

### C. Devotion without Obedience is Empty



Read the following passages. What do they tell us?

Luke 10:16

Mt 10:40

Jn 12:44–45

Rev 22:12–16

Based on what you learned in the left passages as well as what you have learned in this lesson, can you say what is the most significant mistake that Islam and Judaism have made?

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1. What does Islam mean?
2. What kinds of teachings are found in the Qu'ran?
3. What are the key messages in the Qu'ran?
4. What are the Five Pillars? List them.
5. What are some common beliefs of all Jews?
6. What are the three main Jewish sects today?
7. Name the three sections of the Hebrew Bible.
8. What is the Sh'ma?

Check For Understanding

**Objective:**

Understand that God will utterly destroy those who worship other gods and disobey His commandments.



## Memory Verse:

“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.” (Ex 20:3–5a)

## A. Hinduism

Hinduism is based on the *Sanatana Dharma*, the Eternal Truths or Laws. These have been developed and taught over ten thousand years by great seers called *rishis*. Hence, Hinduism claims to be the oldest religion in the world.

The British began using the word “Hinduism” around the beginning of the nineteenth century. Some Hindus prefer to be called by the ancient name Vedic. The Vedic teachings are contained within texts called the Vedas. These texts provide the only source for understanding the religious life of ancient India.

Each of the texts is called a Veda, which means “sacred knowledge” or “learning” in Sanskrit, the oldest written language in India.

The Vedas consist of over 1,000 hymns describing the human relationship with God. Over the years, rites surrounding the use of the Vedas have become so complicated that only highly trained priests can read the texts and explain them. The theologies found within the texts have also evolved through a collection of philosophical writings known as the Upanishads. The Upanishads were

compiled between 500 BC and 200 AD.

Other texts are the sutras and sastras, which are collections of proverbs. The sutras contain instructions for priests and guides for human conduct. The sastras are concerned with personal conduct and code of ethics. Around 500 AD, Buddhism influenced Hinduism in a way that encouraged Hindus to depend less on priests and develop a more personal relationship with God.

### Hindu gods

Hindus do not worship any single god, but rather a number of gods. However, they believe in a supreme being known as Brahma, who has unlimited forms, and who is omnipotent, omniscient, and beyond any confines of time and space. The search for this Supreme Being is done through the various gods. Hindus believe that gods often enter the world in human forms called *avatars*. Hindus would not argue about the true God because they believe that God can be represented through any form, all forms, or no form.

Hindus believe that three main gods represent three major aspects of the universe:

1. Creation, connected to the god Brahma,
2. Preserver of the Universe, called Vishnu,
3. Destroyer, called Shiva or Siva.

The Hindu belief in this cycle is closely linked to their belief in reincarnation.

### Reincarnation

Hindus believe that one keeps being reborn from one form to another. The idea of reincarnation in Hinduism is tied to the principle of karma. Karma is the cause and effect under which a past life may affect one’s present (that is, what one is reborn as). What we become in our rebirth is dependent on the actions in our previous life. People are born over and over again until they achieve unity with the Supreme Being. Then the soul becomes one with the Supreme Being. This is the ultimate goal of every soul, because once that has been achieved, there will be no need for any more reincarnation for that soul.

### One God, Many Gods

Hindus claim to believe in one Absolute Being—that is, one God. However, they also believe that this Being is able to become incarnate in many different forms through many different times. Hence, they worship gods in many forms but think that all these different forms are just expressions of the same unchanging Absolute Being.

### Warnings from the Bible:

Read the following verses and briefly explain why God was angry with His people in these passages.

a) Judges 2:11–15

b) Judges 3:5–11

c) Judges 10:6–9

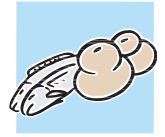
d) Is 19: 1–4

e) Jer 2:7–9

The word Sikh means learner in Sanskrit. The Sikh's faith began with the birth of their first Guru, Guru Nanak, in 1469. According to Sikh legend, Nanak, at the age of 30, went to bathe in a nearby stream. Suddenly, he disappeared in the fast flowing water. A search bore no results and he was presumed drowned. However, three days

later, he miraculously appeared again, recovered from his drowning. Nanak told people that God had spoken to him. He was taken to God's court, given nectar to drink, and instructed to rejoice in God's name and teach others to do so as well. This event is described in detail in Nanak's writing, "Birth Stories," or "Janam Sakhis." Before he died, Guru

Nanak appointed a disciple, Angad, to carry on his mission. Angad's successor was his disciple, Amar Das, who then appointed his son-in-law, Ram Das Sodhi. From this point on, all the Gurus came from the Sodhi family.



## Beliefs and Practices

Guru Nanak taught that God could only be known through the divine name of "Nam." The aim of life was union with God, which can be achieved only by blending your light with the eternal light. This blending can be achieved through meditation, when chanting the various names of God would free one from the physical world.

Sikh Gurus are the mediators of divine grace and the closest embodiments of divinity that can be known on earth. Through them, one can purify oneself and achieve a higher state of consciousness. Sikhs believe that we are all born in ignorance of God's grace, become awakened to this Truth through the grace of the Guru, and then awaken to realize God. The bliss of this realization allows one to approach God.

The sacred book of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth Sahib, is a collection of hymns and poems composed by various Gurus and lay people. It is a unique book compared to other faiths in that it also contains writings by non-Sikhs (Muslims and Hindus, for example). In the Sikh place of worship, called a Gurdwara, the Guru Granth Sahib is treated like a human guru. It is put on a raised platform at the front, and treated as a living Guru. When it is not in use, it resides in a special room.

Sikhs are expected to rise before dawn, bathe, then recite the sacred prayer of Nanak. Many Sikhs will recite verses from their sacred book during their daily activities. They believe in the discipline of purification and overcoming of greed,

anger, false pride, lust and attachment to materialistic things. At the end of life, a person's good and bad conduct is put on a balance, and the result determines the family, race, and character of the person when reborn. There is no direct belief in heaven or hell. The soul develops through the various reincarnations, until it finally becomes united with the infinite one.

Sikhs developed a warrior attitude because of their history. The conquering Moguls were violent, and the Sikhs formed rebellions against them. When the Khalsa was established, the five K's were instituted:

- Kesh (uncut hair)
- Kangha (comb)
- Kirpan (sword)
- Kara (steel bracelet)
- Kachch (short pants for use in battle)

As a result Sikhs wear long uncut hair with a comb in it, and a steel bracelet on the right wrist. The sword and short pants are usually reserved for battle.

1. What is the Vedas? What other sacred texts are there in Hinduism?
2. What is the sacred text of the Sikhs, and what does it contain?
3. What are the five K's in Sikhism?
4. What are the idols we must beware of in our lives?

Check For Understanding

★ **Objective:**  
 To learn about other faiths and understand the differences between their beliefs and ours



Memory Verse:

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." (Col 1:15-16)

**Teachings of Buddha**

When Siddhartha reached enlightenment, or "nirvana," he adopted a balanced form of discipline called the Middle Path. Both extremes of self-denial and self-indulgence are to be avoided. He became known as the Buddha. His first sermon was at the deer park near Benares and it included teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

**The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism are:**

1. Duhkha, the universal fact of suffering;
2. Samudaya, the cause of suffering;
3. Nirodha, the defeat of suffering; and
4. Magga, the way of overcoming

suffering.

The way of overcoming suffering can be found through the Noble Eightfold Path:

1. Right understanding (wisdom): This involves seeing life as it is, in all its impermanence and unsatisfactory nature.
2. Right thought (wisdom): Here one acknowledges the power of one's mind, which should be filled with thoughts of loving-kindness and compassion.
3. Right speech (morality): Such speech ranges from not telling lies to not gossiping.
4. Right action (morality): Such action is not taking life, stealing or indulging in sexual misconduct.
5. Right livelihood (morality): One must be careful to have a job that does not involve one in destroying life or hurting people.
6. Right effort (meditation): This is needed to think about what one says and does.
7. Right awareness (meditation): One must be wholly alert or awake in life.
8. Right concentration (meditation): With this one achieves a deeper level of attentiveness, characterized by peace and calm.

Buddhists believe that the practice of this spiritual path will lead to truth or "dharma," enabling people to achieve nirvana. For Buddhists, not even gods are immortal. They are not the creators, although they are considered higher beings. Only the state of enlightenment and nirvana lasts forever.

While historians see Siddhartha Gautama as the founder of Buddhism, Buddhists see him in a different light. To them, he is merely the one who discovered dharma, the truth about the way life is. Life is unsatisfactory as long as people cling on to their self-absorption. When one is able to lose oneself in love, compassion and sympathetic joy, then eternal peace can be found. Hence, Buddhists believe that the truth, or dharma, is the foundation of Buddhism, not the person named Gautama.

Siddhartha Gautama died after a long life of teaching. After his death, the Buddhist community consisted of two groups: those who continued to lead ordinary lives with

jobs and families, and those who gave up everything to meditate and teach dharma. The latter group consisted of monks and nuns. The word Sangha is used for an assembly of monks and nuns. The householders offer the Sangha food, clothes and somewhere to live. They even thank the monks for this opportunity. This is because the householders hope to be like them in another reincarnation and achieve nirvana

Buddhists believe that the practice of this spiritual path will lead to truth or "dharma," enabling people to achieve nirvana.

**Branches of Buddhism**

Within Buddhism there are two main schools of thought and practice. One is the Theravada-Hinayana, or "small vehicle" also known as the "school of the elders (Theras)." This is the original line of teachings. The larger group is called the Mahayana, or "great vehicle." The Theravada is considered more orthodox, while the Mahayana is a more reformed teaching that developed later.





## B. Scientology

The Church of Scientology was formally established in the United States in 1954. It is considered a religio-scientific movement that has generated controversy and even extreme anger. The core of the movement is based on a system of psychology and the way the mind works. Its aim is for humanity to evolve, individually and collectively as a society, to a higher state of being. According to L. Ron Hubbard, the objectives of Scientology are to create a “civilization without insanity, without criminals, and without war, where the able can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where Man is free to rise to greater heights.” The faith of the religion lies in man, and the teaching is concerned with showing man how to set himself free. The route to freedom lies in knowledge, in knowing how to know. The purpose in life is to know

yourself, and then to find greater meaning in your existence.

The word “engram” is used by Scientologists to mean a memory trace that is supposed to be a permanent change in the brain. It accounts for the existence of a memory that can only be found in the subconscious, but can be brought into consciousness when triggered by new experiences. New experiences are supplied by what is known as an “audit.” The audit is conducted by an auditor in a one-on-one session. The auditor confronts the engram in order to bring it to the surface and clear, or free, the potential convert’s mind to it. The purpose is to free an individual’s mind of engrams and allow the devotees to achieve improved health and outlook.

The movement appoints its own ministers

who perform the same duties as ministers of other religions. A sermon may be given at weekly services that address the idea that a person is a spiritual being. Weddings and christenings are celebrated with formal ceremonies, and death is marked by funeral rites. An escalating fee structure for services rendered is strictly applied.

The Church of Scientology and its officers have had many private lawsuits brought against it. Government prosecutions have been laid for fraud, tax evasion, financial mismanagement, and conspiracy to steal government documents. Former members testified that Hubbard was guilty of using a tax-exempt church status to build a thriving, profitable business.

### Check For Understanding

Read the following passages:

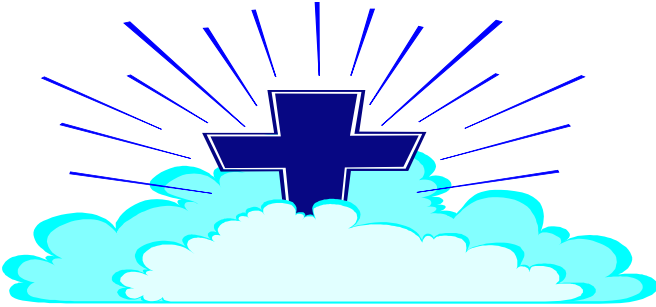
**John 4:13; 6:32–35, 51; 11:25–26; 14:6; 15:1–4.**

1. What is Jesus Christ telling us about how we can attain the truth and reach eternal life?
2. Consider the teachings of Buddhism and Scientology. What are they teaching that is contrary to what Jesus Christ taught us?



How do we try to find **joy** and **satisfaction** in our lives? Are we still looking for **happiness** in worldly pleasure, money, success or fame?

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In order to be completely reliant on the Lord, it takes **3** things on our part:

**belief, giving over, and trust.**

**belief** —we need to believe that God has the power to solve our problems (Heb 11:6)

**giving over our worries** —we need to make our requests known to Him through prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving (Phil 4:6-7)

**trust** —we need to trust that whatever God does (or doesn't do at the moment), it is the best thing for us (Rom 8:28)

*"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other."  
(1as 5:16)*

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking,  
correcting and training in righteousness."

2 Timothy 3:16

**YEAR 3 BOOK 1**

General Assembly of the True Jesus Church

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