

My Church: How It Works, Where I Fit

Tell me about your family . . .

We're all born into families, but there's another family we get to choose to be a part of—God's family, the church. This quarter you'll study what the Bible has to say about how the church got started, how it should work, and how you can be sure you're a part of it.

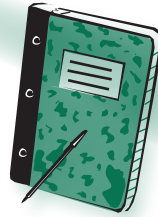


The Living My Faith

Devotional Bible Study is

designed to help you dig into God's Word. Each lesson offers devotions for

Monday through Saturday, along with worksheet to be completed during your group study and articles that will help you better understand and apply God's Word.



Journal: Purchase a journal or notebook to record your personal thoughts and prayers. Bring your journal and student book to class

each week so that you can take notes during the lesson or write any special insights you gain from a particular activity. You may also use the journal for sermon notes or for prayer requests.



Bible study tools: In order for you to dig into God's Word, consider using a Bible dictionary and a concordance. If you are not familiar with these helpful guides, ask your pastor or youth leader for a recommendation. Or visit an online Bible tools Web site, such as www.blueletterbible.org. This site offers commentaries, maps, and many other tools to help you in your Bible study.

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Living My Faith Student Book • Fall Quarter 2016 • Vol. 18, No. 1 • Published quarterly by Regular Baptist Press • 3715 North Ventura Drive • Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004-7678 • Alex Bauman, editor Copyright 2010 by Regular Baptist Press • Printed in U.S.A. • All rights reserved.

My Adoption

Monday

1. What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word "adoption"?
2. Look up the word "adoption" in a dictionary and summarize the definition.
3. Read Galatians 4:4 and 5. When you are saved, what do you receive?

Did you know that if you've trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you're adopted? This quarter you will be studying the church, God's family. Everyone who is a part of God's family is adopted into it. Thank God today for your adoption.

Tuesday

Every adopted child has a birth family they were born into. The same is true of children adopted into God's family.

1. What was God's command to the first parents, Adam and Eve, as recorded in Genesis 2:16 and 17?
2. According to Genesis 3:1–8, how did Adam and Eve respond to God's command?

Adam and Eve's sin had serious consequences for the whole human race. This is the "birth family" every human is born into.

3. Read Romans 5:12. What's so bad about being part of this family?

Just as adoptive parents take a child out of a bad situation and provide him or her with a better life, God adopts His children out of the horrible situation of eternal death and separation from Him.

Wednesday

God clearly shows us His adoption process, named salvation. Summarize the following verses, substituting your name for words like "all," "thou," and "us."

1. Romans 3:23
2. Romans 6:23
3. Romans 5:8

Isn't it great that, even though we were born into the worst "birth family," God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die so that we might be adopted into His family? All we have to do is believe the gospel (Acts 16:31)! Have you been adopted by God?

Thursday

When we trust in Jesus alone for our salvation, we are adopted into a whole new family. Being a member of God's family has many benefits. Read the following verses and fill in the blanks to complete the descriptions of some of these benefits.

1. Romans 8:1: We don't have to fear God's _____ to eternal punishment.
2. Romans 8:14–17: God's _____ lives in us and bears witness that we are truly God's _____. We become _____ with Christ.
3. Jude 24: We will be presented before God as _____.
4. These are just a few benefits. Can you list any more?

Remember to thank your Heavenly Father today for the benefits of being in His family.

Friday

The greatest benefit of adoption is a new relationship with God.

1. Read Romans 5:10. What kind of relationship did we have with God before we were saved?
2. What is our relationship with God like after we're saved? (See Romans 5:1.)
3. When we're saved, we call God by a new name. What is that name (Romans 8:15)?

This name is one that a loving child would call his or her father. When you pray today, thank God for the Father-child relationship you share with Him.

Saturday

Read your memory verse for this week, 1 John 3:1.

1. What did John, the author, want us to “behold”?
2. Read John 3:16. What was the result of God’s love?
3. Read Ephesians 2:4 and 5. What was the result of God’s love?
4. According to Romans 5:8, were we easy people to love? How do you know?

We should respond like the apostle John and say, “Look! What a great love my Heavenly Father has shown me! He calls me His child!”

WEEK 1

Memory Verse

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (1 John 3:1).

Live Faith in Action!

by Anne O'Boyle

Tasha gave an exaggerated sigh as she closed her book. "I wish I lived back then!" she exclaimed, staring out the bus window. She and her youth group were on their way home from the monthly area-wide youth activity.

Her seatmate, Molly, gave her a funny look. "What in the world are you reading?" she asked.

"It's this story set in Bible times." Tasha turned toward Molly, excitedly talking with her hands. "All the Christians seemed so close to each other. They were always going to the temple or eating together or standing up for their faith."

Molly interrupted. "I'm always going to church, and it's not that exciting."

"That's what I'm saying!" Tasha replied. "Tonight's activity was just the same old thing—games, food, and a speaker. But it was different back then."

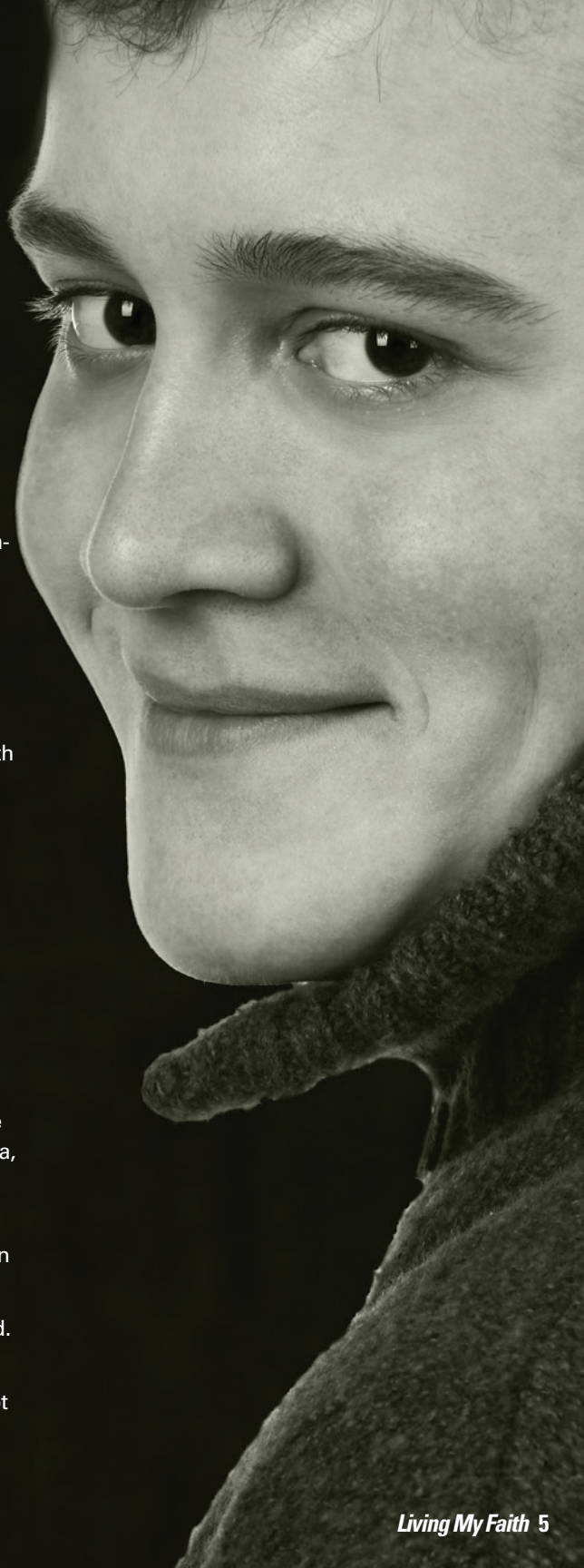
Jesse made his way along the aisle of the bus and sat down behind Molly and Tasha, beside Graham.

"Next month's activity is at our church," he said. "Pastor Rod wants us to help plan it. Any ideas?"

"Lots of basketball," Graham volunteered. "Then food, then go home."

"Come on," Jesse argued. "You know not everyone likes basketball."

Graham just shrugged.





On Wednesday Pastor Rod was late and walked into the middle of a heated discussion. Tasha was on one side of the table, defending her New Testament plan. The other three were trying to talk her out of it.

Pastor Rod listened for a minute, then said, "I think Tasha might have a good idea."

Everyone looked at him as if he'd gone crazy. "I'm not talking about coming in bathrobes!" he exclaimed. "I'm talking about living like the early church did." He flipped through his Bible and laid it on the table where they all could see. "Look in Acts 2:14 and 41-47 for actions and attitudes of the early church. I'll write down what you find."

"I say we should cancel the activity. We need a break," Molly suggested.

Jesse shook his head. "We can't do that," he said. "I've already invited my friend Chad to come."

"How tall is he?" Graham asked.

"Forget basketball," Jesse said. "He can't play. But he needs to be saved. Oh, Pastor Rod said we could have a planning meeting on Wednesday night."

"I'll be there," Molly answered sarcastically. "I always am."

Suddenly Tasha exclaimed, "I know! Let's turn the gym into a Jewish village. We can all dress up as New Testament people. If we can't live in Bible times, at least we can pretend!"

Actions

Peter preached

Christians were baptized

listened to doctrine

fellowshipped

ate together

prayed

witnessed miracles

shared/sold possessions

gave to needy

continued in temple

praised God

Attitudes

courage

gladness

steadfastness

fear (awe)

sharing

unity

singleness of heart

praise

"If we had a youth group like that, do you think the activity would be exciting?" Pastor Rod asked.

They all agreed, and Graham added, "Maybe even as exciting as basketball."

"Let's start with attitudes," Pastor Rod said. "Do you see any that you need to work on?"

Jesse was the first one willing to speak. "I need courage to witness to Chad."

Molly sighed. "I need gladness."

"I need to feel awe about what God's doing today—not just what He did in the past," Tasha admitted. "That way I'll look forward, not backward."

Graham finally said, "I could work on unity."

"Well," Pastor Rod smiled as he stood up, "let's transfer this list of actions into something we can do."

The night of the rally, Molly arrived early, just because she wanted to. "I picked out these encouragement cards," she said to Tasha. "I'm supposed to have all the teens sign them. Do you think they're okay?"

"Yeah, they're great," Tasha replied. The girls looked across the gym to where Graham was working with two huge boxes. On one he had written "FOOD" in marker. The other one said "STUFF." A guy they didn't recognize was helping him.

"Who's that?" Molly asked just as Jesse walked up.

"That's Chad," Jesse said, grinning. "He said he'd help if Graham would teach him to shoot later on." Then a nervous look crossed his face. "Will you pray for me? Pastor Rod asked me to explain why we're bringing in food and other stuff for needy families." Then he stopped. "What's your job, Tasha?"

She smiled. "I'm in charge of the refreshment table. But Pastor Rod told me to sit back and watch the early church in action.

And it looks like it's starting!" she said as the first group of teens came through the door, their arms full of things for Graham's boxes.

Certificate of Spiritual Adoption

*This Decree of Adoption
establishes the relationship of Father and child between God, the Heavenly Father,
and the adoptee,*

_____.

*The adoptee is entitled to inherit all spiritual blessings and eternal life in
accordance with the promises of God's Word. Furthermore, the adoptee has the
same status and rights as a legitimate child of God.*

Date _____

Father God
Adopter _____