Cycle Overview

Quarter & Subject	Course Description	Bible Passages
Fall 2014 **Guided by God**	Elijah and Elisha, prophets in the Divided Kingdom, teach us how to follow and serve God.	1, 2 Samuel; 1, 2, Kings
Winter 2014–15 **Essential Bible Truths**	This course is a survey of basic Bible doctrines, including Bible, God, man, sin, Satan, angels, salvation, the church, and end times.	Selected passages throughout Scripture
Spring 2015 **Old Testament Deliverers**	Studying the judges of Israel and Ruth helps students know that God blesses obedience and those who trust Him.	Judges; Ruth
Summer 2015 **Growing Spiritually**	Basic steps, next steps, and growing steps provide the framework for studying fundamental areas of spiritual growth, such as Bible study, church attendance, understanding God's will, and overcoming temptation.	Selected passages throughout Scripture
Fall 2015 **Spiritual Conflict**	This course develops the theme of the conflict between God and Satan and how this conflict plays out in the lives of believers as they must decide between various courses of action.	Selected passages throughout Scripture
Winter 2015–16 **Character Studies**	Bible characters like Rahab, Caleb, Daniel, Lydia, and Silas help teens today know how to develop Christlikeness.	Selected passages throughout Scripture
Spring 2016 **Mark's Gospel**	Students will learn valuable lessons from the life of Christ as they study the Gospel of Mark.	Mark
Summer 2016 **Making Wise Choices**	Joseph and David demonstrate how believers should choose to live for God even in difficult circumstances.	Genesis; 1, 2 Samuel
Fall 2016 **The Church**	Family members, family protocol, family history, and family growth are the themes in this practical study of the church, the family of God.	Selected passages throughout Scripture
Winter 2016–17 **Self-Concept**	As young teens struggle with issues of self-concept, they will learn what the Bible teaches about unconditional love, accepting change, handling rejection, dealing with failure, and other practical subjects.	Selected passages throughout Scripture
Spring 2017 **The Ten Commandments**	The Ten Commandments (all of which are directly or indirectly referred to in the New Testament) are God's timeless moral standards to teach us how to properly relate to God and others.	Exodus and selected passages throughout Scripture
Summer 2017 **Handling Problems**	Problems "In My Life" (such as bad habits and worry) and problems "In My World" (such as pain, prejudice, and pollution) are the focus of this course.	Selected passages throughout Scripture

HOW DOES GOD SEE ME?

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THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF OUR CURRICULUM

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

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Building Lives by the Book

How to Teach *My Faith* Lessons

Thank you for choosing *My Faith* as your Sunday School curriculum for junior high youth. This material has been designed to help you, a junior high teacher, clearly present God's Word to your students. It will guide you in using active learning methods that allow your students to interact with God's Word for themselves. It offers application ideas that will encourage your students to be doers of God's Word, not merely hearers (James 1:22).

Take a few moments to become familiar with the layout of this teacher book and with *Living My Faith,* the weekly take-home devotions for students that help them learn and integrate the lesson material on a daily basis.

Notice these icons in the teacher book.

Refer to the **daily devotions** or the **back cover** of the **student book**.

Quote (or read) the **memory verse** in class, or use the verse in some other way.

Use the **reproducible worksheet** from the teacher book as part of a learning activity.

We have built this course and the individual lessons around a central theme. As you emphasize the theme (and even decorate your room with the theme in mind), we believe your students will have an effective learning experience.

In preparation for teaching . . .

- read the lesson texts several times. Look up words or concepts that you cannot clearly explain. Use Bible study tools as necessary to help you understand the passage(s).
- do the daily devotions in the student booklet. You need to know what your students are studying each day.
- memorize the memory verse throughout the week.
- look at the materials list early in the week.
- prepare the activity that focuses students' attention on the Bible lesson. Remember, this part of the lesson should take only five to ten minutes.
- work through the Bible study section. Notice the active learning methods. Decide how you will involve your students in the Bible passage. The Bible study is the heart of the lesson. Plan it carefully. Make notes in the margins of your book. Strive for maximum participation.
- decide how to apply the Bible truths and bring the lesson to a close. If more than one application idea is suggested, use the one best suited for your class. Don't assume your students will "just get it." Plan these final minutes of class time carefully.
- pray for yourself, your students, and your lesson. The Holy Spirit is your divine Helper. Without Him, you cannot do anything of eternal value (John 14:16, 17; 15:5; 16:13).

On Sunday morning . . .

- make sure you arrive in your classroom before the first student.
- look at your room. Is it attractive and inviting to students?
- commit yourself and your class to the Lord.
- teach with the confidence that God will work in your students' lives.

God has promised that His Word will not return to Him void; it will accomplish its intended purposes (Isa. 55:11). You can teach with confidence!

Notes for This Quarter

People today are encouraged to think of themselves as inherently worthy beings, finding fulfillment in their strengths and seeking their own best interests. The goal of life is self-satisfaction.

A Biblical view of man certainly differs from this popular view. This course is designed to help junior high students realistically acknowledge and accept who they are as sinful yet redeemed persons who are loved and gifted by God.

The lessons are based on Biblical characters and events with which most of your students will already be familiar. Encourage your students to dig deep into the Bible texts and to view these people as real people with emotions and struggles similar to their own.

The *Living My Faith* student books are designed to provide your students with the knowledge base they need to discuss and interact with the material during class time. Urge your students to be diligent in completing their devotions each week; then incorporate the devotions in the Sunday School lessons. In so doing, you will enrich your lesson time, and you will help your students develop the crucial habit of spending time in the Word daily.

Included in this teacher book are journal pages that correspond with the desired student response for each lesson. See page 124 for more information.

As you prepare each lesson this quarter, pray for each student by name. Ask God for the wisdom and the words to teach His children these important truths about Him and about themselves.

JUNIOR HIGH MATERIALS LIST

- Teacher's personal Bible
- Students' personal Bibles and extra Bibles for students who do not bring Bibles to class
- Whiteboard and colored markers or chalkboard and chalk
- Pens (assorted kinds) and pencils (well sharpened; with erasers)
- Felt-tip markers (various widths and assorted colors)
- Pads of self-stick notes (various colors; ruled and unruled)
- 3 x 5 cards
- Sheets of poster board (white and colors)
- Masking tape (or other adhesive for mounting items on the wall)
- Glue sticks
- Scissors for teacher's and students' use
- Poster-sized paper or butcher paper
- Construction paper

Leading a Student to Christ

The highest privilege you have as a teacher is the opportunity to lead your students to Christ and help them grow in their relationship with Him. Be prepared to talk to students about salvation or about other problems or decisions in their lives.

There is no set pattern for talking to someone about the Lord. In each situation, be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your own heart and mind and to the needs of the individual teen. Deal with him separately rather than in a group. Allow the teen to tell you in his own words what his need is. Don't put words in his mouth; this is his decision, not yours!

Salvation Decision

Stress the need for personal salvation, particularly if the student has grown up in the church. She may confuse her knowledge of Bible stories, her church-centered activities, or her parentally enforced Christian code of conduct with individual faith.

Thoughtfully rephrase the Christian clichés that your students may have heard so often, or that may seem like a foreign language to some young people; e.g., ask Jesus into your heart, ask Jesus to be your Savior, have faith, trust in Jesus. Help the teen understand that "trust" is having confidence that someone or something is always right; "Jesus died for me" means that I was condemned to die, but Jesus voluntarily took my place on the cross; "believe" means accepting/deciding that something is true and then acting on it. Don't let the personal nature of salvation become misunderstood through the use of trite phrases or pat answers.

Plan of Salvation

Keep a few basic points in mind when dealing with someone about salvation.

• Each individual is a sinner. No one can live up to God's standard (Rom. 3:23).

• Sin's penalty is death (Rom. 6:23).

• God loves him and sent His Son to pay the penalty for his sin. Christ died as his substitute, in his place (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

• When he places his confidence in Jesus and what He did as sufficient payment for sins, Jesus becomes his Savior. His sins are forgiven, and he receives God's gift of everlasting life (John 1:12; 5:24).

• Everlasting life begins immediately and is not temporary. (Point this out in any verse where the word "eternal" or "everlasting" is used, such as in John 3:16.) Nothing we can ever do will take us out of God's hand of security (John 10:27–29).

• The Christian should tell others of his decision (Rom. 10:9, 10).

• The experience of the new birth (being born into God's family) is not based on a feeling, but on confidence in God's Word (1 John 5:11, 12).

Encourage the student to pray, no matter how hesitantly. He needs to talk to God about his need and his decision.

Ask him to explain to you what he has done and what has happened in his life.

Discipleship

Encourage a new believer to read the Bible, and explain the importance of prayer. Help him understand how to pray. Point out 1 John 1:9 as God's instruction for dealing with sin in the Christian's life.

Make it a priority to follow up the new Christian. Visit in his home; encourage him to attend Sunday School and church regularly; help him with Bible study and prayer; guide him in his new life as a Christian.

LESSON 1

HANDMADE BY GOD

LESSON TEXTS

Genesis 1; Psalm 8; 139

MEMORY VERSE

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27).

TOPIC

Creation of man

THEME

God created man in His image.

DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE

The student will realize his or her value by recording ways he or she reflects God's image.

OUTLINE

I. Mankind Is Created in God's Image
II. Mankind Is Created for God's Glory
III. Mankind Is a Valuable Creation

MATERIALS

(in addition to supplies listed on page 3)

GENERAL

- *Living My Faith* student books, lesson 1 devotions (pp. 1–4)

START UP

- **Container**

BIBLE STUDY

- Copies of page 12
- Aluminum foil
- Full-length mirror

WRAP UP

- Copies of page 13, three-hole punched
- Three-ring binder for each student

BEFORE CLASS

Across the top of the board, write "Who Am I?" in large letters. Then, under the question, divide the board into two columns. In the first column, draw a circle. In the second column, write "Mankind Is . . ." Refer to the board as directed during the lesson.

Write Genesis 1:27 on a full-length mirror with a dry-erase marker for use during the Reflect and Remember activity.

START UP (5–10 MINUTES)

WHO AM I? (PART 1)

Direct students' attention to the question at the top of the board. Give each student a 3 x 5 card. Instruct students to write three answers on their cards without recording their names. Encourage the students to be creative in their answers; e.g., I am a basketball player; I am a pet lover; I am the only blond in my family. Have the students place their cards in a container.

If a student gets his or her own card, he or she may draw again.

Have each student draw a card and read the three statements to the class. Have the class guess whom the statements describe. Instruct the student who wrote the statements to claim his or her card. After all the cards have been read, discuss the following questions:

- Was it easy or difficult to come up with three statements about your identity? Why?
- Do you ever struggle to define who you are?
- When is it easy to become discouraged about yourself?
- When are you most encouraged about yourself?

Take note of students' answers to the last two questions. You will discuss these questions again during the Wrap Up time.

BIBLE STUDY (25–35 MINUTES)

I. Mankind Is Created in God's Image

UNIQUE CREATIONS

Give each student or pair of students a dry-erase marker and have them turn to Genesis 1. Instruct students to record in the first column on the board as many of God's creations aside from human beings listed in Genesis 1 as they can in sixty seconds. Students should write their answers in the space outside the circle.

Give the signal to begin and allow the students sixty seconds to write. When time is up, send students back to their seats. Refer to Genesis 1 as you go over the items. Ask a student to read God's assessment of His creation from Genesis 1:25; then draw a stick figure in the middle of the circle. Use the following commentary to explain that mankind is a very special creation of God, different from all His other creations.

During the first six days of creation, God made everything from the sun to the beasts that crawled on the ground (Gen. 1:1–23). He described His creation as "good" (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31), meaning "beneficial, valuable, and pleasant." On the sixth day He also created mankind (v. 26). As a potter forms and molds his clay, God shaped Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. Adam became a "living soul" (2:7). God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, and He continued His work of goodness by creating a companion for Adam. God formed woman from one of Adam's ribs and brought her to Adam to be his helper and mate (v. 22). God blessed Adam and Eve and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (1:28).

Ask volunteers to read Genesis 1:26–31. Have students review Monday's and Tuesday's *Living My Faith* devotions.

In the second column on the board, write "Created in God's Image" under "Mankind Is . . ." Ask: What does "made in His image" mean? (Mankind was created to reflect God's likeness. Humans are spiritual as well as physical beings. They have intellect, emotion, and will.)

Record the words "intellect," "emotion," and "will" around the stick figure on the board. Use the following commentary as necessary to aid discussion.

These two human beings were distinct from any other part of God's creation. God did not make them in the likeness of any other created thing. Instead, He fashioned them after His own likeness. By breathing into Adam the breath of life, God made him a spiritual being who reflected God's nature. By combining both the spiritual and physical aspects in Adam, God made mankind His highest creation.

Unlike the creatures of the earth, mankind alone reflects God's personality. Mankind mirrors, in a limited fashion, God's intellect, will, and emotions.

In Old Testament times it was an act of authority to impose names on another and an act of subjection to receive that name (cf. Dan. 1:7). Adam showed his authority over creation by naming the animals that God brought to him (Gen. 2:18–20).

Adam and Eve had the ability to conform their wills to the will of God. Without resistance, they lived in God's presence as His obedient creatures. Although they had limited knowledge, Adam and Eve both shared in God's truth, wisdom, love, and justice. Their Creator had given them a position that was "a little lower than the angels" (Ps. 8:5). This was a position of great honor and glory, for God gave humans—and only humans—the ability to serve Him and fellowship with Him on a personal, intimate level. God gave them authority over all the works of His hands (vv. 6–8).

RESPONSIVE READING

Distribute copies of page 12. Divide your class into two groups and instruct the groups to stand on opposite sides of the room, facing each other. Have the groups read Psalm 8 as indicated on the worksheet. Use the following questions and Thursday's devotions to discuss this passage.

- What responsibility did God give to humans? (To exercise authority over the rest of God's creation.)
- How does this make humans a unique and separate part of God's creation? (They are the only creation charged with responsibilities.)
- What position did God give to humans? (He crowned them with glory and honor and made them a little lower than the angels.)

II. Mankind Is Created for God's Glory

Write "Created for God's Glory" in the second column on the board. Use the following commentary to introduce the idea that humans reflect God's attributes.

God created the world to display His glory and His attributes (Ps. 19:1–4; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:16). Through His creation God revealed Himself as the source of all that is good. As one great theologian has stated, creation is the theater of God's glory.

Mankind's purpose on earth is to reflect God's nature. Fashioned after God's image, humans should reflect God's character through their actions. Adam and Eve did this until they sinned. After the Fall, humans could reflect God's nature only in a limited way and only when related rightly to God through salvation (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:21). God gives believers the ability to demonstrate His holiness (Ps. 99:3–5), love and patience (1 Cor. 13:4), forgiveness (Heb. 10:17), and faithfulness (Ps. 89:1, 2, 5, 8). As dependent and responsible image-bearers, believers are to represent their Creator in all they do.

MIRROR, MIRROR . . .

Refer students to page 8 in their *Living My Faith* student books. Divide your class into four groups and assign each group one of the Scripture passages listed on the chart. Instruct students to study their passages and fill in their part of the chart.

Give each group a large piece of aluminum foil and a marker. Tell them to fashion a hand mirror out of the foil. On one side they should record a key phrase from their Scripture passage. On the other side they should write how believers can reflect that characteristic.

When the groups are finished, have them read their assigned Scripture aloud and present their mirrors and their findings. The rest of the class should use the information presented to complete their charts.

III. Man Is a Valuable Creation

Write "A Valuable Creation" in the second column on the board. Read Psalm 139:1–16 together. Have students take turns reading aloud. Then review students' answers to Friday's devotions. Use the following commentary to discuss the value God has placed on mankind.

In Psalm 139 David recognized that God created a masterpiece in making humans. David realized that humans are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (v. 14). God designed the human body and its intricate parts with His excellence and infinite knowledge. He oversaw every detail of its formation in the womb and predetermined its life span. Because of God's active involvement in the formation and development of life, humans must cherish their bodies as treasures of great value to God.

A person must also understand that he or she is valuable because God chose him or her for a specific task. God picked mankind to reflect His character to the world. When a person feels self-doubt, he or she can look to the Lord for purpose and meaning in life. He or she is valuable because he or she is God's unique and special creation. His or her value does not depend on what others say about him or her or how he or she looks.

See Ephesians 2:10.

REFLECT AND REMEMBER

Reveal the full-length mirror. Have the students read Genesis 1:27 together. Ask one student at a time to erase one word from the mirror and read the verse aloud. That student may choose a classmate to erase the next word and read the verse. Continue until all students have had a turn or until the verse is completely erased. Then recite the verse together.

ASK: How should this verse affect the way we think about ourselves as human beings?

WRAP UP (10–15 MINUTES)

WHO AM I? (PART 2)

Remind the students of the three statements they recorded about themselves at the beginning of the lesson. Refer the students to the bottom section of page 8 in their student books. Ask students if they could answer the question "Who am I?" differently now.

Help the students complete the statements on the worksheet. (I am God's **unique creation.** I am **chosen** by God to reflect His **character** to the world. I am **valued** by God. He sent His **Son** to prove it!)

Use the following questions to guide student to apply the principles from this week's lesson:

- When is it easy to become discouraged about yourself?
- How can the truths of this week's lesson help you during these times?
- When are you most encouraged about yourself?
- Why are the truths of this week's lesson a better source of encouragement than our own successes and strengths?

The journals will be a tool to help students track their spiritual growth this quarter.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH JOURNALS

Give each student a three-ring binder and a copy of page 13. Challenge students to choose one way to reflect God's image each day and to record those opportunities in their journals. Tell students that you will be asking them about their journals next Sunday. Encourage students to bring the journals to class each Sunday this quarter.

Close by using Psalm 8 to guide your prayer.

Encourage students to complete their week 2 *Living My Faith* devotions. During the week, contact the students to thank them for attending Sunday School and to remind them to bring their student books and journals to class next week.

ANSWERS

to *Living My Faith,* week 1

Monday—1. Possible answers: heavens, earth, plants, stars, animals. 2. Good. 3. God didn't speak Adam and Eve into existence. He made them by hand. 4. Very good.

Tuesday—1. See Genesis 1:27. "In the image of God" should be circled. 2. Mankind was created with special attributes that reflect God's attributes. 3. Possible answers: I can think through different solutions to problems; I have a wide range of emotions; I can make informed decisions.

Wednesday—1. Holiness. 2. Love. 3. Forgiveness. 4. Faithfulness.

Thursday—1. God's creation, especially the sky, moon, and stars. 2. Why would God pay attention to insignificant mankind? 3. Humans were made lower than the angels, were crowned with glory and honor, and have dominion over God's creation. 4. He praised God.

Friday—1. God knows everything about a person. 2. God is constantly with His people. 3. God oversees a person's formation in his or her mother's womb. 4. God thinks of His people all the time.

Saturday—1. I am a special work of creation. 2. I am made in the image of God. 3. I am able and responsible to reflect aspects of God's character. 4. Even though I am insignificant in comparison to all creation, God still pays attention to me. 5. God knows me inside and out and is always with me.

Psalm 8

RESPONSIVE READING

TEACHER: O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

GROUP 1: who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

GROUP 2: Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies,

GROUP 1: that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

GROUP 2: When I consider thy heavens,

GROUP 1: the work of thy fingers,

TEACHER: the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

ALL: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

GROUP 2: For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,

GROUP 1: and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

GROUP 2: Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;

GROUP 1: thou hast put all things under his feet:

GROUP 2: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

GROUP 1: The fowl of the air,

GROUP 2: and the fish of the sea,

TEACHER: and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

ALL: O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

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I AM GOD'S CREATION

What an awesome responsibility! God has placed you on this planet to reflect His glory to the world. This week, use this journal page to keep track of how you are doing. Each day, record one way you reflected God's holiness, love, faithfulness, or forgiveness. Refer to last week's *Living My Faith* booklet to review key Scripture passages. Write down your thoughts, reflections, and prayers.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

How did you do? In times of doubt and discouragement, remember who you are! You are God's unique and valuable creation. And, YOU have been given the divine responsibility and privilege to reflect God's image to the world!

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