



Living the Word: Youth

Dear Youth Leader:

Thank you for your ministry of sharing God's Word with the youth of your congregation! *Living the Word: Teaching Youth God's Story* is designed to support this important ministry with ideas and encouragement for the journey.

Youth ministry takes a variety of different forms. We know that each group has its own unique personality and that your teaching will be different based on the needs of your congregation and your youth. With that in mind, this curriculum is designed to be flexible. Whether you have a bustling roomful of junior high students arriving for an evening gathering or three quiet high schoolers on a Sunday morning, there are ideas here for you!

The key to using this curriculum is to remember that more is being provided here than you will ever be able to use in a single educational period. The most effective experience for you and for your youth will be to use the ideas that you are most excited about and that match the interests of your youth.

Living the Word: Youth (Year 2) has an annual theme as well as multi-week thematic units to help tie the lessons together. Each lesson, is focused on "The Point," the main idea of the lesson. Please note that if your congregation is using *Living the Word* products for other age groups, the themes, The Point, and the daily Bible readings are common among all of our products each week.

Extended Lessons

You may notice that there are two Sunday in the program year that we do not provide a regular lesson for, the Sunday after Christmas (New Year's Eve Day this year) and the Sunday of Easter. We do this because many faith formation groups do not meet those weeks. Since we do not want to miss the Bible readings for those days, and since some groups do meet then, we have created Extended Lessons for the following Sunday. Therefore, the Sunday after New Year's Day (1/7/2024) and the second Sunday of Easter (4/7/2024) have guides that cover the missed stories and that Sunday's story, and they have been extended to have enough teaching material to cover two classes for those who want to use them both weeks.

So, how does it work?

Each lesson contains four "Core Elements." These core elements alone would make a complete lesson that fits within a typical classroom hour. Do you always have to use the core elements? No. But, doing so makes sure that the story is presented and engaged solidly. The core elements of each lesson are: Into the Story, Learning the Story, Living the Story, and Sending the Story.

- ✚ **Into the Story** is designed to help students transition from walking into the room on any given day to being ready to hear the Bible story. It is what is known in educational terms as a "set" or quick introduction that will help students move into the lesson. These activities are meant to take about three to five minutes.
- ✚ **Learning the Story** is the heart of the lesson. If there is one thing not to skip—this is it. Here is where the story is read. We will study God's Word in a variety of ways in these activities, but all of them will get youth into the pages of their Bibles. **Preferably, each youth will have their own Bibles that they bring to class and are able to mark up.** If not, you can provide printouts of the Bible passage from an online Bible (if the

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activity involves them creatively marking the text) or using general “classroom Bibles” (if they won’t be marking in the Bible). The purpose of this curriculum is to help youth hear the story of God’s Word as being for them! There is no better way to do that than to be sure that Scripture is actually in their hands and to empower them to make this physical book their own.

- ✝ **Living the Story** is where youth experience God’s story for their lives. This is where the connection happens between the biblical text and daily life. You’ll find in this section of each lesson an activity that connects the Bible story of the week with a particular spiritual practice, either Prayer, Worship, Fellowship, or Service. It is when we practice our faith in any number of ways that it becomes stronger, shaping our lives.
- ✝ **Sending the Story** is an activity that provides a chance to close the lesson with a review and time to pray.

What follows next in the curriculum is a series of activities titled “Extending the Learning.” These activities are meant to add variety, interest, and customizability to your lesson plan. You’ll be able to count on each week providing different options for activities in these five areas:

- ✝ **Hands On:** We all need to get our hands dirty now and then! These activities will engage youth in experimenting, constructing, tasting, drawing, and other creative expressions.
- ✝ **Mixed Media:** Let’s face it, technology, social media, and mass media play huge roles in our youth’s lives. Why not put it all to work for a good purpose? Whether it’s watching a clip from a popular movie, listening to a contemporary Christian song, doing an Internet search to find out more, or posting their own video—tell your youth to get out their phones and be sure they’re on! Something’s going to happen here that they’ll want to share!
- ✝ **The Competitive Edge:** It’s time to have some fun! These games are a good way of burning off some energy, keeping things fast-paced, and making learning fun!
- ✝ **Simply Serving:** At the heart of a life of faith is serving others. Each lesson includes an idea for looking into the needs of your community and the gifts of your youth to encourage serving as individuals and as a group.
- ✝ **Worship Connection:** A major benefit of using this curriculum if your congregation is using the Narrative Lectionary is that there is a natural connection between class and the worship service. Even if your congregation is not using the Narrative Lectionary, you’ll find ideas here to help your youth make a connection between the story they’ve learned about and what’s happening in worship. Share these ideas for skits, songs, prayers, and more with your pastor and/or worship team and let the leadership abilities of your youth shine!
- ✝ **Youth Discussion Guide:** If you break into small groups (or are a small group), use this discussion guide to help students understand, wrestle, share, and apply the day’s Bible story.

Again, please don’t try to do it all! Not every one of these ideas will fit your group. But, as you can see, a lot of planning has gone into making sure something will!

If you have any questions or comments about this curriculum, please contact me at (262) 358-6574 or G.Rawn@SpiritAndTruthPublishing.com . Your feedback will help make future materials even better!

Blessings,

Gregory Rawn
Publisher