

ENGLISH CURRICULUM PACKET

A Teaching Unit for Homeschool or Private School Secondary English Teachers

This packet accompanies

Even When We Cannot See

A Faith-Based Modern Novel by

Susan E. Lewis



THEMES

#1-We must discern between good and evil, truth and lies.

#2-Our perspective of life and the absolutes we have will determine our choices, attitudes, and responses.

Literary Techniques:

Discussion and Activities for alliteration, symbolism, strong imagery, motif of light vs dark, metaphors and similes

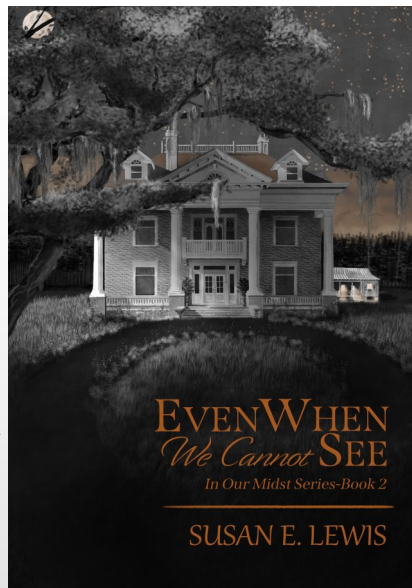
Classroom Teachers and Home-school Parents—Activities include:

- A “What-if” scenario for HS students to learn to discern the truth from lies.
- Challenging comprehension questions involving Why? and How? And reading between the lines
- “Fruit inspection” for reliability of testimony
- Looking at the testimony and following of current sports and music icons who are Christians.

Book 2— *Even When We Cannot See*

Even When We Cannot See is the continuing story of Marc and Maylee from *In the Midst of Us*. With all that is happening across our nation, teens are being challenged with unprecedented circumstances and choices.

Even When We Cannot See tells a story of young people who must discern who they can trust is telling the truth, not unlike the challenges facing our world today. Again Marc and Maylee discover that someone they think is trustworthy, is not. Their attempt to adopt Carly and Elias is challenged by someone's hidden agenda. It is important for teens to learn to discern the motives behind people and the storylines presented today. Teens must decide for themselves what causes are worthy of supporting.



FROM AUTHOR AND FORMER EDUCATOR—SUSAN E. LEWIS

This **Curriculum Packet** is full of interesting and meaningful activities to build **comprehension** skills, examine important **themes**, and teach **literary techniques**.

Also available—

- An accompanying **PowerPoint** with an overview of the curriculum, slides for activities and for display. The PowerPoint can be downloaded for **FREE** on the website www.castinglightpublishing.com
 - The novel *Even When We Cannot See* is available for purchase on [amazon.com/Susan-E.-Lewis/e/B07XWR95HX](https://www.amazon.com/Susan-E.-Lewis/e/B07XWR95HX).
-

Other novels written by the author are also available on Amazon—

- Book 1 of the In Our Midst series titled *In the Midst of Us* 
- Book 1 of the middle grade Brooklyn Sleuths series titled *The Three Sleuths of Brooklyn*
- Book 2 of the middle grade series titled *The Tombstone Riddle* (available in 2022)

Each book has **Curriculum Packets** available on castinglightpublishing.com as well as **PowerPoints**, all available for **FREE**.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR—

I spent over thirty years in education, with the last fifteen teaching English to both junior high and high school students. My goal in teaching has always been to involve young people in the learning process, helping them discover the excitement of gaining knowledge and wisdom. I also believe it's important to encourage young people to discover their purpose in life. The stories I write are fun but always with a message. —*Susan Lewis*



Welcome to the Curriculum Packet

This packet (along with the PowerPoint) will allow you to bring out the

thematic teaching points

that are so relevant in today's world.

Especially for teens
who are facing unprecedented
choices and challenges.

The activities and discussions
will help your students—

Trust God in difficult circumstances,

Learn how to discern between good and evil, truth
and lies, and

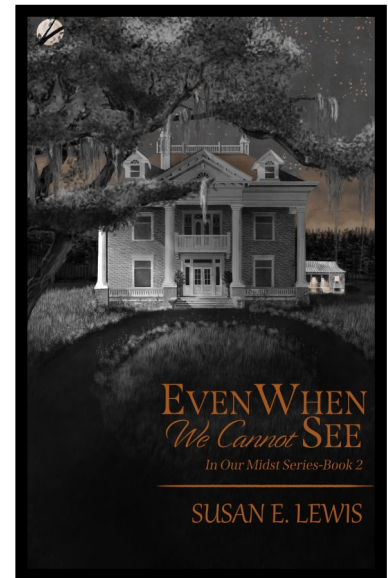
Make wise choices.



Educators are free to choose the activities and discussion points you feel are most relevant to your class of students or homeschool student. Or tweak them to fit your instructional goals.

If you have any questions, you can email me at selewis.writer@gmail.com

(The referenced Bible verses in the curriculum are from the New International Version of the Bible, unless indicated otherwise.)



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EVEN WHEN WE CANNOT SEE

EVEN WHEN WE CANNOT SEE



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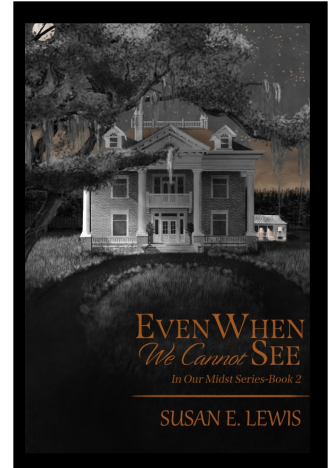
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EVEN WHEN WE CANNOT SEE



Student standards for Reading: Literature – Key Ideas and Details

Objective: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Answers found in Appendix 1

1. List two ways the Army has changed Marc.
2. Why does Maylee not join Marc in Alabama right away? Give two reasons.
3. Describe two scenarios that show Marc has grown to trust God.
4. Several things happen at the last minute in the book (often called at the eleventh hour). It is one aspect of the theme God is worthy of our trust. Describe two of the situations.
5. Describe why Maylee is worried about Marc when he is first in Alabama.
6. In your opinion, is Maylee wrong or right to travel to Alabama before Marc is out of lockdown? Explain.
7. Describe Louise Drake's character with at least three descriptors. Explain how we see these character traits.
8. Who do you feel is the more treacherous character—Sam, Wayne, or Billy Drake? Justify your answer.
9. Marc, his Army friend Trey, and Trey's Uncle Charlie all have had unusual supernatural (spiritual) experiences. Describe the experience you feel is more credible and explain why. If you know of a real account of a similar spiritual experience, describe it instead.
10. In the book, Marc and Maylee have two disagreements. Describe them both and explain how communication is key to the outcome of each.
11. In the story, Maylee has trouble trusting God with the situation with Carly. Maylee's response shows how one's perspective of things can cause problems. Describe Maylee's initial response to the dilemma about Carly's adoption and how it shows a lack of trust.

FOR DEEPER DISCUSSION

Reading Between the Lines

Goals: (1) To infer information that is not stated. Based on context, students will be able to explain additional thoughts the character might be thinking, but has not stated. (2) To build the students' thinking and reasoning skills

Discussion: Present any or all of the following quotes from the book, asking the accompanying questions for students to think about and make a judgment on. Students should find the quotes in the book and read the context. (This can be done orally or as a written assignment where the students fill in the chart found in Appendix 2.)

Chapter	Quote	Question
17	"You know when God makes a dramatic appearance in our lives, I believe he wants us to make use of that experience."	1. Uncle Charlie is inviting Marc to join a group of prayer warriors. What else could God want us to do when he makes an appearance in our lives?
18	Billy Drake's expression as he watched his wife was one that haunted me for several days.	2. Maylee doesn't describe Billy Drake's face. What do you think his expression is? And why?
19	What was it about that house?	3. Maylee is referring to the fourth house behind the Drake's mansion. Based on what you know about those houses and the characters, what do you think could be the story associated with the house?
21	"At least, I am certain that Mossy Oaks is where we are supposed to be for now."	4. What does Marc mean when he says "supposed to be"? And why "for now" only?
25	Abigail merely scooted a few pinecones and sat in the small space she had created.	5. What does this action by Abigail show the reader about her character? Describe another scene that shows the
25	"He is like a father who wants us to grow into better people. And hard things help us grow."	6. What is implied here? How do hard times help us grow?

DEEPER DISCUSSION—Reading Between the Lines (continued)

Chapter	Quote	Question
29	And while I may have been losing physical weight, the burden of my heart had expanded—had become a millstone around my neck.	7. What is implied by the metaphor “millstone around my neck”?
29	“I don’t see how they could be better either, but I know I’m not God who views everything with perfect clarity.”	8. What can we learn about God from Marc’s statement? And how can that knowledge bring us comfort?
34	“That’s not really the question you want to ask me, is it, Marc?”	9. What other questions might Marc want to ask Sam?
36	“I’m having it cleaned. Expecting a new resident soon.” What did that mean? A dozen thoughts drove through my head—several of them not pleasant.	10. What could some of Marc’s unpleasant thoughts be concerning “a new resident soon”?
42	“Army training has prepared you for times like these, Marc. But be careful, son.”	11. Give some examples of “times like these.” (They do not have to be from the story.)
47	“The presence of interested parties carries a lot more influence than their stories on paper.”	12. Why do you think that is true?
50	When Brenda’s car drove into the driveway, Carly stopped reading and lifted expectant eyes up at me.	13. What do you think Carly is thinking and feeling?
51	“Several articles with him are definitely . . . incriminating.” Again, he looked at Carly. He didn’t go into more detail.”	14. What could some of those incriminating articles be?

THEMES FOUND IN

EVEN WHEN WE CANNOT SEE

Objective: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

THEME #1—We must discern between good and evil, truth and lies.

- A. Deception is all around us.
- B. We can identify truth and lies by a person's fruit.



THEME #2—Our perspective of life and the absolutes we have will determine our choices, attitudes, and responses—even during adversity.



THEME #3—We can trust God because of his character and his abilities.

- A. Even in adversity, we can trust God.
- B. The right perspective about ourselves and life will help us trust God.



THEME DISCUSSION



THEME #1—DISCERNING TRUTH

**We must learn to discern between good and evil, truth and lies
because deception is all around us.**

RELEVANT BIBLE VERSES:

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

Matthew 7:15, 16a, 18 Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit, you will recognize them. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.

2 Peter 2:1-3 But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed (NLT).

See also—1 John 4:2-6

CONNECTING TO THE STORY *Even When We Cannot See*:

Questions—

1. Who is the main deceiver in the story? _____
2. Who else in the story “appear” to be friends, but who may be “wolves in sheep’s clothing”?

Answers: 1. Sam 2. Wayne, Abigail, Louise, Sherry, Rob Verret

Learning from the characters—

Marc and Maylee determine the truth by

- Praying
- Consulting with people they trust
- Thinking about and being open to the evidence around them

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #1—DISCERNING TRUTH



We must learn to discern between good and evil, truth and lies.

Deception is all around us, but we can identify people by their fruit.

ACTIVITY 1: Become an investigator, always analyzing and looking for truth.

Discussion—Who do you trust? And why?

- Create a list on the board with the students' answers to the questions—Who do you trust? And why?
- After above discussion, ask students the following question: **How can we determine if someone is trustworthy enough to follow their actions or beliefs?** Discuss their ideas then present the following list to be copied in their notebooks.

Take Notes—Be an Investigator and Look for Clues

1. Gather information before making a judgment about the person or before making a decision to follow what he/she is asking you to do or believe.
2. Test the person's words. Is there evidence for what is said?
3. Look at the person's fruit—what he/she does, not just what is said.
4. What is your source of information?

> Primary or secondary source? (We'll talk about this. See page 33.)

> Does the person have a reason to lie or be biased?

Note: Witnesses never agree entirely (not always because they're wrong or lying, but sometimes because of different perspectives)*

5. Does the person's life and fruit match your absolutes? (*Not sure what absolutes are or if you even have any? We'll talk about that too. See pages 20 and 22*)

*Wallace, J. Warner and Susie Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity for Kids: Investigate Jesus with a Real Detective*. Publisher: David C Cook, October 1, 2016.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #1—DISCERNING TRUTH



ACTIVITY 1 (continued)

Discussion—Let's talk about FRUIT

- Matthew 7 says there are false people around us (*who don't care if they lead us down the wrong path*).
- But we can identify them by their fruit (*and therefore avoid their damaging guidance*).
- This means look at and analyze their actions, not just their words. Fruit refers to what a person produces in his/her life. Not what he says he produces, but what can actually be seen from his life.

Practicing "Fruit" Inspection—

A manufacturer's "fruit" are the products it makes. Let's pretend we are going rock climbing in Colorado, and we want to be sure the safety equipment we buy will do the job the company "says" it will do and keep us safe, (using fruit to verify their words). Use the worksheet on the next page.

Questions to ask and analyze to determine reliability of a product

1. What do I know about the manufacturer?
2. How much experience does the manufacturer have?
3. What do other people say about the manufacturer and the product?
4. How many people like or praise the item and the manufacturer?
5. Do these people have a reason to lie? (Perhaps they've invested a lot of money in the company)
6. Do any of them have a particular perspective that could cause bias? (Their family may own stock in the company or a relative started the company.)
7. How does the item look? And how well does it work? (Be careful—the way an item looks can be misleading.)

Practicing “Fruit” Inspection—(continued)

Have students look over each of the websites and answer as many of the questions as possible. After analyzing the products, students should check one of the following and be prepared to explain why:

- ☐ REI has the better products
- ☐ PublicLands.com has the better products
- ☐ It is impossible to determine the best product. Further investigation is needed.

	REI rei.com	PUBLICLANDS publiclands.com
What do I know about the manufacturer?		
How much experience does the manufacturer have?		
What do other people say about the manufacturer and the product?		
How many people like or praise the item and the manufacturer?		
Do these people have a reason to lie?		
Do any of them have a particular perspective that could cause bias?		
How does the item look?		
How well does it work?		

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #1—DISCERNING TRUTH



ACTIVITY 2: Investigate/Analyze a Person—Checking the reliability of someone such as a salesman, a guide, or an impressive person like Jesus.

Instead of products, let's look at analyzing people, discerning who is reliable and trustworthy. Students must always be thinking, analyzing, and making wise choices, especially when it comes to discerning if someone is trustworthy enough to follow.

Task A: Have students copy the following questions in their notebooks.

Questions to ask to determine the reliability of a person—

1. What do I know about this person?
2. What do other people say about this person?
3. How many people like or praise this person?
4. Do these people have a reason to lie?
5. Do any of them have a particular perspective that could cause bias?
6. What are some of the fruits produced by this person's life and/or words?

Task B: Determining the Reliability of Jesus (using the first four questions above)

Make copies of the worksheets on the next two pages for the students. Have students fill in the worksheet. Then discuss. The last two questions (above) dealing with perspective, bias, and fruit will be looked at later.

- ♦ One thing students will do in this activity is look at the disciples of Christ and how they spoke and lived the truth of Jesus' resurrection, even when it meant persecution and possible death. The disciples were risking their lives by preaching the resurrection. Hopefully this will help students realize the power of a person's testimony when belief continues to be strong even under the threat of persecution.

Questions to ask and analyze to determine the reliability of Jesus

1. What do I know about Jesus?	Source:	Fact:
		A.
		B.
		C.
		D.
		E.
2. What do other people say about Jesus?	Who?	What was said?
		A.
		B.
		C.

Questions to ask and analyze to determine the reliability of Jesus

2. What do other people say about Jesus?	Who?	What was said?
		D.
		E.
3. How many people like or praise Jesus?	Number (can be an estimate)	Event, place, or group
		A. Disciples and people who saw Jesus after he rose from the dead
		B. Church
		C. Christian concert _____
		D.
		E.
4. Do these people have a reason to lie about who Jesus was?	Group (choose 3 of the above):	Yes or No Why or why not?
	A. Disciples	
	B.	
	C.	

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #1—DISCERNING TRUTH



ACTIVITY 3: Who can we believe?—A What-if Activity

What if students are given a mission where they must cross dangerous territory to take Bibles and supplies to a small community? The students have found out there is a map that was drawn by someone who has crossed this territory many times, and he offers his service as a guide. Three people have arrived who all say they are the guide and map maker—Marty Appleton. But who is telling the truth? Who can be trusted to get the students across safely?

Task A: Show the students a clip from the **old show** “To Tell the Truth,” which is similar to what they will be doing at the end of this project.

Link to the older episode <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=old+show+where+guest+had+to+guess+who+was+telling+the+truth&docid=608008506594886873&mid=BF84EB29BE68193CE057BF84EB29BE68193CE057&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

Task B: Read to the class the description of the territory they must cross, their mission, and the profile of Marty Appleton. This narrative is found in Appendix 4.

Task C: Based on what they have learned about the territory and the mission, students brainstorm on what would be the necessary qualifications for a guide they can trust for this mission. Students copy the list in their notebooks. These notes will be used later.

Task D: Students must interview the three people who each say he is Marty Appleton, the mapmaker and guide who knows the territory well. It is important to choose the right person for such an important decision. Who do they believe is telling the truth? (Homeschool parents can make adjustments as needed.)

Step #1—Make copies of Appendix 4 which describes the mission, Marty Appleton, and provides some links to help your three volunteers (see Step #2 below).

Step #2—Choose three students or fellow faculty to play the part of the three guide candidates. Give them copies of the profile. Decide who will be the real mapmaker. He must tell the truth. The other two should memorize enough to sound like the real character though they will be lying. The best people to play the roles are those who can act and think on their feet. Give your volunteers a few days to prepare for the interviews. Suggestions for props and costumes are also given in Appendix 4.

ACTIVITY 3 (continued): Who is Telling the Truth?—A What-if Activity



Step #3—Have students write down all the questions they would like to ask the three people. You may want to show the “To Tell the Truth” episode again.

Step #4—Set aside one class period for the interviews. Students should come prepared with all of the notes they have taken throughout the project tasks. You will reread the mission and the profile of the character. Students will then take turns asking questions of the three candidates to determine who is telling the truth. The time needed for the interviews will vary, depending on the number of questions asked by the class. Have fun with this activity!

Step #5—After the questioning is complete, have each student write on a slip of paper which guide he/she believes is the real Marty Appleton and why. Call on students to tell their guess.

Step #6—Reveal the true character.

Step #7—Close out the project with a summary of the importance of discernment, especially as they meet new people through jobs and college experiences.

EXTRA—Another thought about discernment—**Study and learn well what is true and real, and the teachings that are false will be evident.**

A Story: When bank tellers are trained to recognize counterfeit bills, they are taught the differences by studying real bills, not fake ones. They study the real bills over and over until they are very familiar with what true bills look like. Then when a counterfeit comes along, it will stand out because it doesn't match the real ones.



This is true with discerning the truth in our world. Study what is real and true—**God's Word.** Study the truths of God over and over until you are very familiar with what truth looks like. Then when false statements or fake news comes along, it will be easier to recognize and discern as false.

Looking at the Differences—See Appendix 5

The fruit of goodness and truth looks far different than the fruit of the ungodly world, according to Galatians 5:19-25

Appendix 5 is a chart that delineates these differences. You can use the chart as a visual during your discussions.

THEME ACTIVITIES

THEME #2—Perspectives and Absolutes



Our perspective of life and the absolutes we have will determine our choices, attitudes, and responses—even during adversity.

RELEVANT BIBLE VERSES: (Activity 4, page 26 will challenge students to identify the perspective of some of these verses.)

Proverbs 14:16 The wise fear the Lord and shun evil, but a fool is hotheaded and yet feels secure.

Proverbs 19:8 The one who gets wisdom loves life; the one who cherishes understanding will soon prosper.

Proverbs 19:20 Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 2:1-5 If you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understand—indeed if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Joshua 24:15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourself this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served . . . Or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Deuteronomy 30:19 This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life so that you and your children may live.

1 Corinthians 7:17 Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them . . .

1 Corinthians 8:13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now you believe in him, and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #2—Perspectives and Absolutes



CONNECTING TO THE STORY: *Even When We Cannot See*

Questions—

1. At first Marc and Maylee have different perspectives of the situation with adopting Carly. How do their perspectives affect their prayers?
2. Marc and Sam's perspectives of Sam's effort to "help" Carly are so different. Explain.
3. How does Marc's perspective of God change between Book 1 and Book 2? This can be answered even if students have not read Book 1—*In the Midst of Us* because Marc talks about the change in himself in the book *Even When We Cannot See*. (See Chapter 29)

ACTIVITY 1: Perspectives and True/False Statements

- **Copy the Definitions:** Have students copy the following definitions in their notebooks.
 - (a) **perspective**—a point of view; how someone views something; a subjective way of looking at something;
 - (b) **subjective**—based on and influenced by a person's experiences, feelings, emotions, prejudices, and understanding
 - (c) **bias**—a preference or inclination (liking) that prevents impartial (neutral or fair) judgment
 - (d) an **absolute** is a perfect and complete truth; something that is pure, total, not to be doubted or questioned
 - (e) a **standard** is something that has a measure or level of excellence
- **Discussion of Perspectives:** Based on the definitions above, how does one's perspective of something or someone influence the attitude that person has—how he/she thinks about and responds to an event or circumstance? Later in the curriculum, Activity 3 will help students see how influential perspectives can be.
- **Discussion: True or False?** The discussion that is generated from the following statements can be done orally, or you can give the students a copy of the statements first for them to think about and write down their own thoughts before discussing. (See discussion points on next page.) After the students answer True or False, they should prepare to explain their answers.
 1. A person's perspective of something will determine how that person responds to it.
 2. A person cannot change his/her perspective of something.
 3. We can choose how we respond in spite of our innate perspectives.
 4. Some perspectives are wrong.
 5. All perspectives are valid.
 6. Moral absolutes are impossible in this day and time.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #2—Perspectives and Absolutes



Discussion Points for the True or False statements on the previous page.

1. A person's perspective of something will determine how that person responds to it. **TRUE, usually**
 - > We are a product of personality, our upbringing, our experiences, and our environment. All of these combine to develop a certain perspective which naturally will govern how we respond to a situation. Especially young people.
2. A person cannot change his/her perspective of something. **FALSE**
 - > It is possible to transcend or move above a certain perspective with training and enlightenment. This shows the importance of who we listen to and who we train under.
3. We can choose how we respond in spite of our innate perspective. **TRUE**
 - > Life is all about making choices. This is really an important point to make with teens. They will be confronted by many choices as they leave home. A discussion of absolutes is critical for this point. These Bible references can help guide your discussion Phil. 4:8-9, Galatians 6:7-9, Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Joshua 24:15, Proverbs 3:3-6
4. Some perspectives are wrong. **TRUE**
5. All perspectives are valid. **FALSE**
 - > History tells us this. Hitler's view, for one, is an example of a perspective of mankind that was horrific and detrimental to society. Hitler's perspective was definitely wrong. Because the discussion of perspectives and absolutes is a deep and varied topic, looking at the injustices throughout history is a good way to start the discussion. The current events in our nation would create a relevant discussion of perspectives as well.
6. Moral absolutes are impossible in this day and time. **FALSE**
 - > Unfortunately, this is being taught in many higher institutes of learning. Point out that a society without moral absolutes can deteriorate into chaos. People without moral absolutes to frame their viewpoints and actions will be easily tricked and persuaded toward wrong thinking—something our enemy Satan tries to do regularly through many errant people in our society. Our Christian children and students need to be trained to discern truth from lies.

NOTE: Also refer to the **Curriculum Packet for Book 1 – *In the Midst of Us***. Activities in that packet are geared toward training our students to stand up for what is right and say no to peer pressure.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #2—Perspectives and Absolutes



ACTIVITY 2: Evaluating and Classifying Absolutes

- **Look again at the definition of absolutes**—An **absolute** is a perfect and complete truth; something that is pure, total, not to be doubted or questioned. A **standard** is similar. It is something that has a measure or level of excellence.

Some absolutes are undeniable and indisputable. Others are opinion.

- **Discussion**—What are some absolutes (perfect truths)? Draw three columns on the board: Label them **Absolutely True**, **Absolutely False**, and **Opinion**.
- **Classifying Absolutes**—On the next page are some statements. Copy the page and cut out the statements, putting the slips of paper in a bag. Have a student draw out a slip of paper and read the statement to the class. Lead a class discussion to determine True, False, or Opinion. Part of the discussion should include how do we know or how can we prove it. After a decision is made, write the statement in one of the columns. If the entire class does not agree, take a vote and write the number who agree and the number who disagree.
- **Discussion**—Bring out the point that some physical absolutes are undeniable, like touch a hot stove and you will get burned. But others, such as moral absolutes—are choices, decisions that every person has to make for themselves. **Teens need to be ready to examine what other people say to recognize and discern good from bad standards and determine for themselves what moral truths will become the foundation for their lives.**

- **Discuss the following**— **Two general perspectives: Absolutism and Relativism**

Absolutism is a view of moral values that believes standards are always necessary. The opposite of absolutism is relativism. **Relativism** is a view of morals that believes values are dependent upon the situation. Relativists believe standards, and therefore judgments, are dependent upon cultures, people, and perspectives. Therefore, morals can change. However, a person who believes in absolutes frames his decisions by truths that do not change and are set by a morally upright deity who also does not change and has the best interest for humankind in mind at all times.

- **Final Discussion Points**—Like all of us, teens will have to choose. As Deuteronomy 30:19 says: This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. **Now CHOOSE LIFE** so that you and your children may live.

It is only possible to choose LIFE when moral absolutes are in place. Without absolutes, society—life in general—becomes chaotic because everyone does what he or she thinks and feels is okay. And since we are all different, our thoughts and feelings will eventually collide with someone else's.

ACTIVITY 2: Evaluating and Classifying Absolutes

If you touch a hot stove, you will burn your skin.	If your heart stops beating, you will die.
If you go to a party, you will have fun.	If you practice a skill, you will get good at it.
The leader of an organization is always right.	Everyone dies someday.
The Bible is the word of God.	God is a good and trustworthy father.
God has given us evidence of his existence.	If we don't have absolutes, we will be tricked and easily swayed.
A firm foundation is vital when building a structure.	A standard or absolute is a firm foundation for a doctrine or truth.

Within the two general viewpoints (absolutism and relativism), there are more specific perspectives. The following is a chart of some different points of view. There is room to add other perspectives as the class discusses the chart. Ask the students to consider each point of view in relation to the lockdown that occurred during the 2020 COVID Pandemic or any event that is relevant..

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THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #2—Perspectives and Absolutes



ACTIVITY 3 (continued): What is your perspective of life?

Writing Assignment—

Step #1—Make a copy of the chart of different perspectives on previous page 24, one for each student.

Step #2—Students are to put a check beside each perspective that they can relate to. Most likely they will mark more than one.

Step #3—Each student will write a personal essay explaining how he/she dealt with the lockdown that occurred during the 2019-2020 school year.

This essay should be at least five paragraphs long with an opening and closing paragraph. The personal essay should also tie in what the students have learned about perspectives and how their own perspective (as revealed through the chart) affected their choices and attitudes.

The body paragraphs could include the following information:

- A. What did you think and feel about the virus, the cancellation of activities, conflicts that arose, the number of people affected, etc?
- B. What did you learn about yourself and your family?
- C. What helped you cope? (Examples—strategies, activities, people, thoughts, pets, your perspective)

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #2—Perspectives and Absolutes

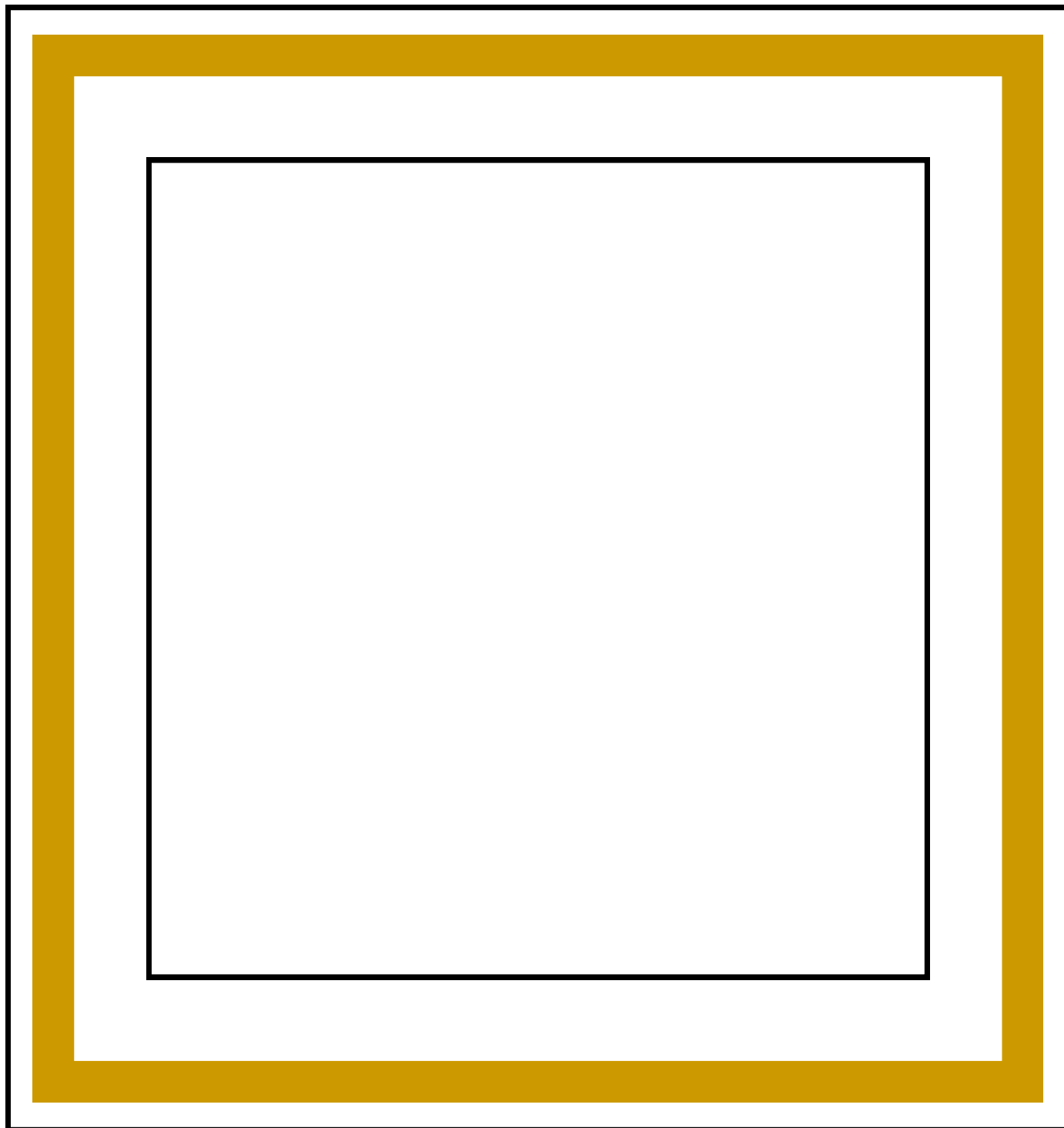
ACTIVITY 4: How does God say we should look at life?

Directions—What is the perspective or viewpoint being presented in the following Bible verses? Check the box or boxes that define the perspective. More than one answer could be possible. Students should be ready to discuss and justify their answers.

Each verse is teaching us to look at life from the viewpoint of

	BIBLE VERSES	LOVE	FAITH	PUTTING OTHERS FIRST	BEING WISE	YIELD- ING TO GOD'S
Proverbs 14:16	The wise fear the Lord and shun evil, but a fool is hotheaded and yet feels secure.					
Galatians 2:20	I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for					
Proverbs 19:20	Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.					
Proverbs 3:5-6	Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.					
1 Corinthians 7:17	Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them					
1 Corinthians 8:13	Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.					
1 Corinthians 10:23-24	"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.					
1 Peter 1:8	Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now you believe in him, and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.					

ACTIVITY 5: Using God's absolutes to frame our beliefs. If we want a good life, we need standards to live by. God's absolutes should frame our beliefs and viewpoints so we will not be tricked and easily swayed. **Directions:** In the frame itself, students are to write out God's most important standards. Inside the frame, have students draw a depiction of what they want their life to look like over the next ten years, staying within God's absolutes.



THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #2—Perspectives and Absolutes



ACTIVITY 6: Is it possible to have a utopian society, and what would it look like?

Task A: Discuss what a utopian society is—Have three students look up the definition in three different sources. After the three sources are read, have students collaborate and create a class definition for utopian society. Write on the board. Students copy into notebooks. Discuss whether or not it is possible to have a utopian society.

Task B: Have the class create a list of the aspects of a society. Write the list on the board for students to copy. Be sure the following are included—health care, education, property ownership, freedom of travel, boundaries, religion, laws, leadership/government, money, recreation, careers, housing, privacy, food, water supply, utilities, etc.

Task C: Create a utopian society.

—Students are to create a utopian society.

—Students can choose to either draw their society or write a narrative. At least ten of the aspects from the collaborative list must be included.

—Students will read their narratives aloud (You can give points for participation. No need to grade for content or grammar.)

—Students who choose to draw their community will present their drawing and be prepared to explain in detail every aspect of their society.

—Each student must also be prepared to explain which absolutes and moral perspectives control or manage their societies.

Step D: Finish the activity with a discussion of the only possible perfect society (Heaven) described in the Bible. Discuss why it is the only possible utopia.

Some descriptions of the physical Heaven can be found in the following verses: Revelation 21:1-4, Revelation 7:15-17, Revelation 22:4-5, John 14:2-3,

And this brings us to the third theme and the most important truth. It is the foundation for all other truths, absolutes, and perspectives—

WE CAN TRUST GOD.

THEME ACTIVITIES

THEME #3—We Can Trust God



**God is worthy of our trust because of his character and his abilities.
Even when we cannot see what he's doing; even when times are hard.**

We can trust God—This truth is also **the greatest perspective of life** we can have. If we can learn to look at ourselves and at life **through God's eyes**—his perspective, his viewpoint—we will be changed. And we will gain the peace, strength, and wisdom to journey through the storms of life.

RELEVANT BIBLE VERSES (ESV):

Looking at <u>ourselves</u> through God's eyes	Looking at <u>life</u> through God's eyes	Looking at <u>trials</u> through God's eyes
Zephaniah 3:17 The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.	Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.	Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.
Jeremiah 31:3 The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again"	Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Joseph's view of his life that was full of trouble)	Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.
Psalms 9:10 Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.	John 8:12 (Jesus said) I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.	Isaiah 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

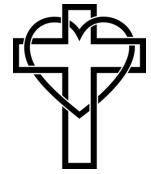
THEME ACTIVITIES

THEME #3—We Can Trust God



Looking at <u>ourselves</u> through God's eyes	Looking at <u>life</u> through God's eyes	Looking at <u>trials</u> through God's eyes
Galatians 3:26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.	Psalm 28:7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.	2 Timothy 1:7 For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.	John 15:5 (Jesus said) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.	Romans 8:35, 37 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.	Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.	James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
Colossians 3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved—compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.	Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.	John 16:33 (Jesus said) I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.
Psalm 139:13-14 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.	John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.	Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED



THEME #3—We Can Trust God

CONNECTING TO THE STORY *Even When We Cannot See*:

Question—

Both Marc and Maylee face challenging situations where they need to trust that God is in control and that he will work out everything for the best. Lists four of those situations.

Possible Answers: Getting into flight school, finding a place to live in Alabama, trusting that Marc is able to handle the challenge of Warrant Officer training school, being protected at Mossy Oaks, believing in God's help with Carly's adoption

OVERALL GOAL: Proving three truths about God that should be the foundations we stand on, during good times and adversity—If students can truly believe in the character traits of God below, they will have three powerful truths to help them when adversity enters their lives.



God loves us and wants the best for us.	God is sovereign and is in control of everything. (sovereign means has supreme, permanent power and authority)	God keeps his promises.
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(Optional) Object Lesson—Ecclesiastes 4:12 “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands (or three truths) is not quickly broken.”

Materials needed—three cords (6 ft. in length), a basket with a handle, rocks or bricks

1. Read the above verse and then show the students the three cords.
2. Have two students hold the end of one and hang the basket with the rocks/bricks inside. Note that the cord is burdened by the load.
3. Have the same two students take two cords and entwine them together. With the basket hanging on the paired cord, ask the students if the weight is easier to bear.
4. Braid the three cords together. Have the students hold the ends with the basket in the middle. Is it easier to hold?
5. Finish the lesson with a comment on the three character traits of God that we will be exploring. They are like that strand of three cords—**strong and reliable**.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED



THEME #3—We Can Trust God



God loves us and wants the best for us.

God is sovereign and is in control of everything.

God keeps his promises.

More Connections to the Story—In Chapter 28, Marc challenges Maylee when they first learn that adopting Carly is not going to be easy. “Are we going to trust God with this?” The question is discussed again in Chapter 29. This theme is presented throughout the rest of the book.

HOW DO WE KNOW THESE STATEMENTS ARE SOLID TRUTHS WE CAN STAND ON?

The answer comes through **TWO SOURCES**—

A. The testimony of others (Revelation 12:11)

B. The Word of God

First—Establish two **absolutes** (perfect truths) that hopefully, all your students will agree with.

- **Absolute #1**—The Bible is the very word of God, spoken through men of God
- **John 1:1-3** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.
- **Hebrews 4:12-13** For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
- **Absolute #2**—Jesus is the physical representative of our spiritual God.
- **1 Corinthians 8:6** Yet for us there is but one God the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.
- **John 10:29-30** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #3—We Can Trust God

HOW DO WE KNOW GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY?

The answer comes through **TWO SOURCES**—

- A. The Testimony of others, pointing us to
- B. The Word of God



ACTIVITY 1: Interviewing Followers of Jesus Christ (looking at primary and secondary sources, historical and current)

TASK A: Review— Review Activity 2 for Theme #1 concerning the discernment of truth (pages 14-16). In that activity, students looked at the disciples of Christ who would have been safer had they not kept up the story that Jesus had risen from the dead. Why would anyone lie about the resurrection when it meant persecution and possible death? The disciples were risking their lives by preaching Jesus and his resurrection. Students will now dig even deeper into the perspective of others and how viewpoints of Jesus (and therefore God) can weigh heavily upon our beliefs and actions—both for the good and the bad. That is why it is so crucial who we listen to. We need to discern who is a reliable witness as to the trustworthiness of God.

TASK B: Teach—The difference between PRIMARY and SECONDARY SOURCES

- A source means where and how we get our information to write a report or to analyze the reliability of something or someone.
- A **Primary Source** is an artifact or original document, usually written at the time of the event
- Examples of primary sources include: letters, diaries, autobiographies, artifacts, eyewitness accounts, interviews, speeches.
- A **Secondary Source** is something created by someone who was not present at an event.
- Examples of secondary sources include: biographies, textbooks, newspaper articles, encyclopedia articles, essays, testimonies.
- Discuss the pros and cons of each type of source.

TASK C: Teach or review—How to cite sources, whether primary or secondary. Students will be researching followers of Christ and should be required to cite their sources when they turn in the answers to the questions on the following page.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #3—We Can Trust God



TASK D: Research—Whose testimonies can give us insight into the trustworthiness of God? We will look at three groups of people and their testimonies—

1. JESUS' DISCIPLES: John, Peter, Paul

2. CHRISTIAN MARTYRS (imprisoned, tortured, or killed for their faith): Stephen (in Acts), Joan of Arc, Thomas Beckett, William Tyndale, Richard Wurmbrand, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jim Elliot, (also see www.opendoorsusa.org and www.persecution.com—home of Voice of the Martyrs)

3. CURRENT FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST WHO HAVE A LARGE PLATFORM: Singers: Lauren Daigle, Toby Mac, Chris Tomlin, Jeremy Camp, Natalie Grant, Kari Jobe, Matthew West, Mandisa; **Athletes:** Tim Tebow, Tony Dungy, Drew Brees, A.C. Green, Kurt Warner, Coach Dabo Swinney (Other names can be added by the teacher or the student.)

- **Directions:** (a) Assign each student one of the above people to research in order to answer the questions provided below. Or allow students to choose. In order to do this fairly in my classroom, I pulled students names from a bucket to determine the order of choice. If there are fewer topics than students, 2-3 students can pick the same person. (b) Students are to find 2-3 sources to answer the questions listed below. They need to identify if their sources are primary or secondary as well as write a proper bibliographic citation. (c) At this point, students simply take notes and write their citations. One main thing the students are searching for is which of the three foundational truths about God (mentioned on page 31) are taught by the person, through words or actions. (d) Conduct a class discussion based on the students' research findings. (e) Fun Activity: See further instructions on the following page—

• **Questions to Research and Answer:**

1. What are the basic **facts** of this person's life—birth, death (if applicable), country of birth, country of service, family, etc.
2. How would you describe this person's **personality**? Likes and dislikes?
3. What is/was the person's **testimony** about God and Jesus?
4. **How** does/did this person present his/her testimony?
5. What are/were they willing to **sacrifice**?
6. What does/did this person **suffer** for the testimony of faith?
7. **Why** is/was this person willing to suffer persecution?
8. How large is/was their **audience**?
9. What is/was the **effect** of this person's life and testimony?
10. What are some fun and **interesting** facts about this person?
11. Which of the foundational **truths** about God (page 31) are proven through the person's life and testimony?

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED



THEME #3—We Can Trust God

TASK D: Research (continued)—Whose testimonies can give us insight into the trustworthiness of God?

(e) A Fun Activity: Award Ceremony—Students will now create a mock award ceremony for the person they researched—based on the person’s likes, dislikes, personality, era lived in, and accomplishments. This is an opportunity for the student to get creative.

1. Mandatory requirement is a nomination speech written and given by the student. Within the speech, the student needs to share which of the foundational truths about God are/were evident in the person’s life and testimony. A reminder of those truths—

- A. God loves us and wants the best for us.
- B. God is sovereign and in control of everything.
- C. God keeps his promises.

2. Other options, for fun—design a plaque or trophy, etc., write a description of a place for the ceremony that the honored would appreciate (based on his/her life), make a list of prominent guests who have been affected by the life of this person, create an invitation for the ceremony, describe or create decorations and/or food liked by the honored person, make a slide show of the person’s life, etc.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #3—We Can Trust God



ACTIVITY 2: Thirsting for God's Word (the Bible)

Discuss and Read: The Word of God is a well of spring water that takes away our thirst when we are parched or panicked, seeking for comfort and direction as we walk through this life. We are living in unprecedented times where the world presents many reasons to doubt, be afraid, or be concerned about the future. Teens need to learn to rely upon the Word of God, the Bible, to give them truths that bring comfort, wisdom, and direction as they walk through life. God sent the Bible to us as a map to help us through this life on earth because he knew it was going to be difficult at times. He longs for us to pick up and study that map because he knows how much his words and ways will help us.

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk (of the word), so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

John 6:33, 35 For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Revelation 7:16-17 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 21:6 He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life."

Thinking about Symbols: The introduction and the verses above present several images or symbols for the Bible.

- Give the students a half sheet of paper (colorful ones if possible). On their paper, have them draw the image they most relate to concerning the Bible and its use in our lives. (bread, a map, milk, a sword, a spring of water, the shepherd, a well, etc.)
- Bring a (clean) trash can with a lid to represent a well. Fill the can with bottles of water for each student. (Don't let them know what is inside.) Write THE BIBLE on the outside.
- Hand out "dry" crackers (such as Saltines) for the students to eat while each describes their representation and tapes it to the "well of spring water."
- Reread the above Bible verses. Then hand out the water bottles to the students to relieve their physical thirst as you stress how our mental thirst should lead us to God and his word..

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED



THEME #3—We Can Trust God

God Keeps His Promises—

Quotes from the story—

- Johnny laughed. “Not literally, but everything the sergeants throw at them is to make the recruits stronger and teach them to obey orders. They themselves probably don’t know it, but those sergeants are a part of **God’s toolbox. One of God’s goals is to teach us to rely on him when things get tough.**”
- “His faithful promises are our armor and protection.” I finished the verse knowing **God’s promises were what we needed to stand on.** “This fight is not over, Maylee. **But we’ll fight with God’s tools—his promises.**”



Activity 3: Finding God’s Promises—This activity can be done individually (or in pairs or small groups).

Task A: Students look through the Bible and find ten promises from God that they feel are important, especially for teens.

Task B: Students must then narrow the promises down to five—the most important. This will encourage the students to scrutinize God’s word and analyze in depth his promises. To help students narrow down their choices, have them consider a scenario where they would have to present five and only five of God’s promises to someone who is unsaved. What would be most important?

Task C: Time to get creative—Students will create a toolbox. Can be a real toolbox, a shoe box, etc. They are to label it God’s Promises, and they can decorate it how they want.

Task D: Review symbolism with the students. Their next task is to come up with “a tool” or representation for 3-5 of the promises they have chosen. These will be stored in their toolbox and then presented to the class.

Example—James 1:17 “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” **Possible symbolic tool**—a small wrapped box with twinkle lights wrapped around it and a silhouette or “shadow” glued to the box so it does not shift.

Task E: Students are to present their tool boxes and tool representations to the class, explaining why they chose the verses they did and the associated symbols.

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #3—We Can Trust God

ACTIVITY 4: How do we know God truly loves us and wants the best for our lives?

Continue to look at dedicated followers of God whose testimonies give us insight into what it means to persevere, stay true to, and trust God even when it's difficult or not popular.

Search the Word of God and look for his promises.

Study the following charts, and then—take Action—spend time with God, getting to know him. God WANTS you to know how much he loves you!

God says "I Am . . ."	Bible Verses (ESV)	Character Traits of a good Heavenly Father (actions=good fruit)
A Good Father 	1 Thess. 2:11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. Psalm 68:5 Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Psalm 103:13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction . . .	1. Gives good gifts 2. Loves 3. Protects 4. Does not change 5. Shows compassion 6. Comforts 7. Teaches 8. Provides 9. Listens 10. Helps 11. Plans for our good 12. Equips us Other excellent verses— John 3:16, John 14:9-10, Proverbs 3:11-12, Isaiah 9:6, Romans 8:15, Ephesians 6:4, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Matthew 6:26, 1 John 3:1, Ephesians 4:6

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

THEME #3—We Can Trust God

ACTIVITY 4: How do we know God truly loves us and wants the best for our lives?

GOD SAYS “I AM . . . ”	Bible Verses (ESV)	Character Traits of a good Shepherd (actions=good fruit)
A Good Shepherd 	John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Psalms 23:1-3 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 1 Peter 2:25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. Isaiah 40:11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” John 10:14-15 I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.	1. Saves us 2. Protects 3. Leads 4. Provides what we need 5. Brings us back into the fold 6. Comforts 7. Cares for us 8. Lays down his life 9. Feeds us 10. Knows us 11. Shows compassion 12. Watches over us More verses— Psalm 100:3, John 10:27, Matthew 9:36, Isaiah 53:6, Hebrews 13:20-21, Psalms 79:13

THEME ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

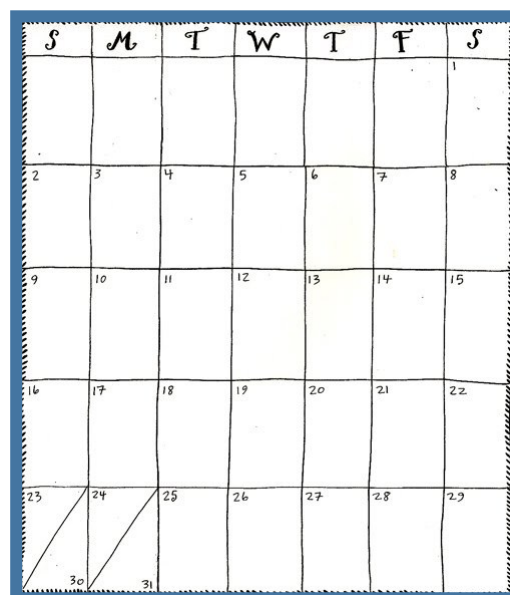
THEME #3—We Can Trust God

ACTIVITY 4 (continued): How do we know God truly loves us and wants the best for our lives?

Take Action—Create a calendar For one month, challenge your class or homeschool student to take daily actions involving all that you have studied in this unit. Write an action to take or a Bible verse to memorize on each day of the week. By challenging students to take daily actions, they will get out of their comfort zones and taste what it's like to live by the standards God put in place in his word. **Read Psalm 34:8-15** “Taste and see that the Lord is good . . . those who seek the Lord lack no good thing

Some examples of actions to encourage—

- ◆ Persevere.
- ◆ Stand up for something godly.
- ◆ Ask someone older and wiser about life.
- ◆ Look carefully at the fruit of someone in your life.
- ◆ Help a parent, sibling, or neighbor.
- ◆ Eliminate all negative words or thoughts.
- ◆ Memorize one of God's promises (at least one a week).
- ◆ Teach a younger sibling something wise.
- ◆ Look for good even in a negative situation.
- ◆ Listen to Christian music and analyze the lyrics of a Christian song.
- ◆ Write an encouraging note to someone.



LITERARY TECHNIQUES

Alliteration, Motifs, Metaphors, Similes, and Imagery

Objective: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings; and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

A. ALLITERATION—

1. Definition: The repetition of initial sounds in a phrase
2. Purpose of alliteration: to create a mood or effect; to focus the readers' attention to an important message being conveyed
3. Examples from the book:
 - * clattered and clinked (Chapter 13)
 - * storm of struggle (Ch. 29)
 - * treachery in his touch (Ch. 35)
 - * rhythm of the rain (Ch. 37)
 - * hurting my heart (Ch. 44)

B. MOTIF—

1. Definition: A reoccurring element in a literary work; a dominant theme or central idea that is presented repeatedly throughout the story.
2. Purpose: Motifs help present the central idea or theme of a literary piece in an interesting way. Motifs give a fictional story depth and significance.
3. The main motif in *Even When We Cannot See* is **Light vs. dark**
4. The purpose of this motif: To emphasize the presence of evil even in the midst of good. Because the theme of good vs evil is symbolically revealed through a motif of light vs. dark, the reader is presented with the need to discern between the two. The plot of *Even When We Cannot See* reveals that if discernment is not made between good and evil, then loved ones can be hurt.
5. Examples from the book

DARKNESS

- There were no streetlights. The Drakes' house was unlit. The darkness was vast around us.
- Rain was not in the forecast, but no starlight or moonlight reached through the cloudy darkness.

LITERARY TECHNIQUES CONTINUED

Alliteration, Motifs, Metaphors, Similes, and Imagery

B. MOTIF—(continued)

LIGHT

- I stayed crouched in the mud, my eyes fixed on that wall of light that stood protecting us for probably five minutes or more.
- And yet these little fireflies were doing one of the things they were made to do—deliver light. How could I do any less for Maylee?
- I could see the stars against the open night sky sparkle and glitter, steady against the darkness.
- A warmth swelled up in my chest as our headlights illuminated that beloved house, its golden lamp light glowing behind the screen door and open windows.

SHADOWS

- The building Billy Drake had pointed out was in the shadows. Suddenly it looked more like a run-down shack instead of a cute cottage.
- “Nothing seems to grow in the dirt around these houses. I guess ‘cause they’re always in the shadows.”
- Most of the buildings were in shadows, except where lights shone above the door of each unit. Everything was quiet; the airfield seemed normal.
- I entered the room. Half of the study was light and vivid brightness, the curtains fully open and sunshine pouring through. The other half was dark wood and shadows, images of books and statues hidden in the gloom. The line where the light from the windows stopped crossed the center of Billy Drake’s desk. His face too was half in the shadows.

C. METAPHORS AND SIMILES—

1. Definition: Phrases in literary pieces that show a comparison between unlike things. Metaphors present these comparisons without using the words *like* or *as*. Similes use the words *like* or *as* within the phrase.
2. Purpose: To help the reader understand difficult concepts such as love or pain. This technique develops an image for the reader that strengthens the importance of the concept in the sentence.
3. Examples from the book:
 - “They (fabrics) are like exotic paints that I can wrap around my fingers.” (Ch. 4)
 - Her tone was a brick wall. (Ch. 29)

LITERARY TECHNIQUES CONTINUED

Alliteration, Motifs, Metaphors, Similes, and Imagery

IMAGERY—Specific word choices that carry strong pictures or mental images that appeal to the five senses of sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch.

Numerous examples are scattered throughout the story. Here are a few to start the discussion. Students should be able to answer the following questions: (A) How is the imagery presented? (B) What specific word choices are strong? (C) What senses are used? and (D) How effective is the mental picture?

Students may find other examples in the story to add to the discussion.

1. I heard laughter all around me as I tasted muddy tire tracks filled with the smell of earthworms and rotted grass. (Ch. 1)
2. A motor accelerating with the changing of gears pulled my attention away from the park. The lumbering bus slowly rounded the corner and pulled over to the curb beside me. (Ch. 3)
3. The dejected form didn't even wait for the cloud of dirt to settle back on the road before crossing into its midst. (Ch. 16)
4. A long-legged bird skittered across the beach, stopping to look for bugs every few inches. Sea gulls called and flew overhead. A breeze picked up. The beach umbrella creaked and swayed. A soft gray and white feather blew onto my drawing paper. (Ch. 21)

WRITING ACTIVITY: (Tying several of the lessons together) Have students write a short poem or descriptive paragraph about a particular place. The students will write the narrative twice—first using strong **imagery** from the **perspective** of a **dark** and negative viewpoint. Then they will write a second description of the same place from a **light** and joyful, positive **viewpoint**. Extra points can be given when students include **alliteration**, **metaphors**, and/or **similes**.

A Final Thought for Teens

1 Timothy 4:12 and 16

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Watch your life and doctrine closely (*your perspective and absolutes*). Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (*You will find and live God’s plan and purpose for your life.*) - (*Paraphrase and amplification by the author.*)

Be encouraged—

Find your purpose,
Stand for what is right, and
Use your gifts and talents
to make this world a better place.



Appendix

Appendix 1

Answers to the Questions on page 6 and Reading between the Lines, pages 7-8

1. List two ways the Army has changed Marc.
 - A. He is more confident
 - B. He has grown stronger in his faith and trust in God
2. Why does Maylee not join Marc in Alabama right away? Give two reasons.
 - A. Marc will be in lockdown and can't be with her.
 - B. Marc will not have time to find a place for them to live.
3. Describe two scenarios that show Marc has grown to trust God.
 - A. When he listens and obeys God's voice during the bullying incident at Basic Training.
 - B. When he shows faith that God will do what is best for all in the adoption situation.
4. Eleventh hour situations—getting into flight school at the last minute and rescuing Carly at the last minute.
5. Describe why Maylee is worried about Marc when he is first in Alabama.
He sounds tired and she's worried he might not be passing officer training
6. Opinion
7. Louise Drake
 - A. Eccentric—the way she dresses and acts
 - B. Needy/obsessive—her need to be around May, her behavior in the baby's room
 - C. Possibly an alcoholic—Abigail's comment
8. Opinion
9. Opinion
10. The first argument occurs when Marc is late coming home and doesn't let Maylee know. They are honest with each other about their feelings and what is going on. They realize that had they communicated, everything would have worked out better. The second argument is about how to pray for Carly's situation. Maylee has decided to try to control the situation instead of trusting God. Marc solves things by confronting Maylee.
11. Maylee is scared that they will lose Carly and does not show trust in God. She starts to throw up her food in an attempt to show God how much she wants to adopt Carly. Her perspective of prayer is one of trying to control God to do what she wants. She is not trusting that God will do what is best for Carly.

DEEPER DISCUSSION—READING BETWEEN THE LINES

1. Possible answers—pray for someone, call to get together with someone, share God with someone, write an encouraging note, share what God has done in your life, etc.
2. Either Billy Drake is angry and exasperated at the continued lack of Louise moving past their loss of a child. Or he is sad and sympathetic.

Appendix 1 (continued)

DEEPER DISCUSSION—READING BETWEEN THE LINES

3. The houses used to be slave quarters on the original plantation. The mystery about that house makes one wonder if it is still used for hiding people (possibly for sex trafficking—a topic in Book One of the series) or will be used to hide Carly once she is kidnapped.
4. Marc is showing his absolute trust in God by saying they are where they are supposed to be for the moment, implying that the situation may not be perfect but that God may have lessons for them to learn while they are temporarily there.
5. Moving the pine cones only slightly shows that Abigail has a small or low opinion about herself. Another situation where we see this is when Wayne yells at her from his truck and she walks across the road through the unsettled dust. It shows she doesn't think much of herself.
6. God allows difficult things in our lives to help us mature and grow spiritually and emotionally. We learn to rely on God more.
7. A millstone around one's neck is used in the Bible to represent a situation that will drown a person who is hurting a little one. Reference is from Matthew 18:6. Maylee's attempt to change God's mind is hurting herself as well as causing her to neglect May. And as Marc points out will put Maylee in a position where she can't take care of any of the children.
8. This statement shows that Marc believes God is trustworthy even when he cannot see what God is doing. He believes that God can see everything and everyone at the same time and is working out the best as only he can with the myriad of scenarios going on. I (personally) look at God's good and sovereign control of the millions of situations on earth as a multi-level 3D chess board that only he can handle.
9. This is a "supernatural moment" as the sudden presence of darkness in the room suggests. Sam is implying the very questions that were going through Marc's mind before Sam knocked on the door—the kidnapping situations that occurred in Arkansas with Carly and May.
10. Marc's mind is on the Carly situation and wonders if the cabin is being prepared to hide Carly there.
11. Times like these—Any difficult time where we must rely upon God to help us.
12. People present instead of a story written on paper allows for the ability to show sincerity and to bring more emotion to the situation. Also words on paper are easy to ignore. Harder to ignore are the people involved looking right at you.
13. Carly is scared and worried.
14. Possible articles in the car—rope, duct tape, a gun, a gag, a syringe to dose Carly with drugs

Appendix 2

Making Inferences—Reading Between the Lines

Chapter	Quote	Response to Questions
17	“You know when God makes a dramatic appearance in our lives, I believe He wants us to make use of that experience.”	
18	Billy Drake’s expression as he watched his wife was one that haunted me for several days.	
19	What was it about that house?	
21	“At least, I am certain that Mossy Oaks is where we are supposed to be for now.”	
25	Abigail merely scooted a few pinecones and sat in the small space she had created.	
25	“He is like a father who wants us to grow into better people. And hard things help us grow.”	
29	And while I may have been losing physical weight, the burden of my heart had expanded—had become a millstone around my neck.	
29	“I don’t see how they could be better either, but I know I’m not God who views everything with perfect clarity.”	

Chapter	Quote	Response to Questions
34	“That’s not really the question you want to ask me, is it, Marc?”	
36	“I’m having it cleaned. Expecting a new resident soon.” What did that mean? A dozen thoughts drove through my head—several of them not pleasant.	
42	“Army training has prepared you for times like these, Marc. But be careful, son.”	
47	“The presence of interested parties carries a lot more influence than their stories on paper.”	
50	When Brenda’s car drove into the driveway, Carly stopped reading and lifted expectant eyes up at me.	
51	“Several articles with him are definitely . . . incriminating.” Again, he looked at Carly. He didn’t go into more detail.”	

Appendix 3

Connecting the Themes to the Novel

THEME	Event or comment from the book	Chapter
1A. Deception is all around us	Prologue	
	A fellow soldier is actually a bully	Ch. 1
	Meeting an old friend from home	Ch. 12
	A look brings back a memory of a past deception and hurt	Ch. 13
	Stories of people who were dangerously deceptive (Trey's experiences)	Ch. 15
	Trey questions Sam's character—Is Sam all he appears to be?	Ch. 15
	The man in the truck—Is he a friend to Abigail or not?	Ch. 16
	Who is Louise Drake? Is she quirky or questionable?	Ch. 18
	What really happened with May and Abigail?	Ch. 22
	Thanksgiving dinner conversation—who is Billy Drake and what influence does he really have?	Ch. 24
	Maylee hides from Marc what she has been doing	Ch. 29
	Sam partly reveals who he really is	Ch. 30
	Marc realizes Sam is not the friend Marc thought he was.	Ch. 34
	Conversation with Billy Drake	Ch. 36
	Could the airfield manager be a part of Sam's plans?	Ch. 38

Appendix 3 (continued)
Connecting the Themes to the Novel

THEME	Event or comment from the book	Chapter
1A. Deception is all around us	Could Sherry, the receptionist, have been a part of the baby stealing with Denver? (Book One)	Ch. 38
	Someone is hiding in the woods. The presence of the mysterious brown car	Ch. 40
	The two misleading phone calls and the attack on Marc. Everything seemed normal at the airfield.	Ch. 42
	The brown car again. Sam arrives and talks to two unknown people.	Ch. 44
	The aunt and uncle—not everything is upfront with them	Ch. 49
	The lunch meeting between Carly and the aunt and uncle	Ch. 51

Appendix 2

Connecting the Themes to the Novel

THEME	Event or comment from the book	Chapter and page number
2. Our PERSPECTIVE of life and the absolutes we have will determine our choices and re-	A simple conversation with God	Ch. 1
For our characters, that means TRUSTING GOD, viewing life	Prayer at their wedding	Ch. 5
One way they do that is through PRAYER	Introduction to the men's prayer group	Ch. 17
	Uncle Charlie's prayer for protection and miraculous answer	Ch. 17
	Introducing Abigail to prayer	Ch. 19
	Finding out more about the prayer warrior group	Ch. 20
	A quick prayer for help	Ch. 22
	Different perspectives and different prayers—coming to terms with trusting God with the hard things	Ch. 29
	Asking others for help	Ch. 29
	Discussion between Marc and Maylee on what it means to pray and trust God with the results.	Ch. 29
	Praying for direction	Ch. 34
	Prayer and action working together	Ch. 35
	Recognizing God's voice and his promise	Ch. 47
	God answers our prayers, sometimes in the "eleventh hour"	Ch. 51

Appendix 2

Connecting the Themes to the Novel

THEME	Event or comment from the book	Chapter and page number
3. We can trust God	Marc trusts when God tells him to be generous to the bully at Army Boot Camp	Ch 1,
	Marc's letter to Maylee	Ch. 2
3A. Even in adversity, we can trust God	Johnny's comment about God using the sergeants as tools to make us stronger	Ch. 2
	Marc and Maylee's vows at their wedding	Ch. 5
	Johnny's advice to Maylee when she's worried about Marc in the Army	Ch. 9
	Trey's experiences with the supernatural	Ch. 15
	Uncle Charlie's story about his supernatural protection during the war	Ch. 17
	The group of prayer warriors	Ch. 17
	Discussion at the beach	Ch. 21
	Discussion with Abigail	Ch. 25
	Marc's question to Maylee. Are we going to trust God with Carly's adoption?	Ch. 28
	When Marc confronts Maylee	Ch. 29
	Maylee whispers to May	Ch. 33
	Praying to the faithful One	Ch. 34
	Bringing good out of bad	Ch. 47
	God loves her even more	Ch. 48
	Carly's rescue	Ch. 51

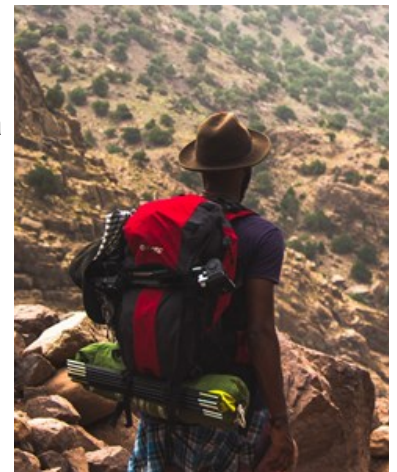
Appendix 4

A WHAT-IF ACTIVITY—

THE MISSION—The students are to carry necessary supplies and Bibles to a small community. They must cross a barren land that is hot and dry during the day and cooler but often rainy at night. It is mostly flat, but there are deep gullies they must cross or find a way around. The trip will take 3-4 days, depending on the reliability of the one old school bus that will be their transportation. Students will be able to carry only one backpack each. There is limited room for food and water in the school bus. But Marty Appleton says he has experience in survival situations. This territory has little vegetation and is the home of several wild animals such as snakes, coyotes, bobcats, owls, and antelope.

THE GUIDE (Marty Appleton)—Before joining the Army, Marty obtained the rank of Eagle Scout. He also had four years experience as a camp counselor at a summer science camp for elementary students. His job in the army was as a mechanic, and now he works as part of a pit crew for a NASCAR team. When he's not on the road with the team, he volunteers at his nephew's school teaching map and compass reading. He loves to swim and hike, and he has a pet snake.

Suggestions for costumes and props—map, backpack, tool kit, water bottle, shovel, first aid kit, compass



Remind the volunteers that they don't have to have all the knowledge, they just need to act like they do. If they can memorize just a few pieces of information, they will do fine.

Below are some links to websites that can give suggestions of information the volunteers can use to answer questions about science camp, Eagle Scouts, Army mechanics job, and NASCAR pit crews.

<https://learning-center.homesciencetools.com/article/plan-a-science-day-camp/>

<https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/eagle/>

<https://work.chron.com/mechanic-jobs-army-18501.html>

Appendix 5—Looking at the Differences

Fruit of the Spirit	Fruit of the World
LOVE	Sexual immorality
JOY	Idolatry
PEACE	Hatred
PATIENCE	Discord
KINDNESS	Jealousy
GOODNESS	Fits of rage
FAITHFULNESS	Selfish ambition
GENTLENESS	Dissentions
SELF-CONTROL	Factions
	Envy
	Drunkenness

As students listen to the narratives on social media and in the news, have them refer to the above chart to identify godly truths and worldly lies masquerading as rights.

The following chart is an excellent reminder of how God's voice sounds and how it won't sound. I offer its excellent wisdom as another helpful avenue for discerning truth. *

GOD'S VOICE	The Enemy's Voice
Stills you	Rushes you
Leads you	Pushes you
Reassures you	Frightens you
Enlightens you	Confuses you
Encourages you	Discourages you
Comforts you	Worries you
Calms you	Obsesses you
Convicts you	Condemns you

* Author unknown



THANK YOU!

Thank you for buying the book *Even When We Cannot See* and using this curriculum with your homeschool student or class.

The themes discussed in this curriculum are themes I hope will encourage spiritual strength as well as direction and purpose for my readers.

Thank you for being a part of those goals.

You can learn about my other books at www.castinglightpublishing.com or contact me at selewis.writer@gmail.com