

World Religions, Cults and False Religious Practices

Fall Quarter, 2017

Quarterly Objective: Young teens will understand that they should worship only the true and living God and should worship Him as He desires to be worshiped.

<p>World Religions (Unit 1)</p> <p>Young teens will contrast the worship of the true and living God with that of false religious systems.</p>	September	3	The True and Living God.	9
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<p>Cults (Unit 2)</p> <p>Young teens will learn to identify cults and understand the dangers of their teachings.</p>	October	15	Animism, Old Practices in Modern Times	35
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Learning to use the materials . . .

STEP ONE: Acquaint yourself with the Quarterly Theme.

During this quarter, young teens will examine facts about world religions, including biblical Christianity, and they will compare the beliefs of cults and false religious practices with scriptural worship of the true and living God.

STEP TWO: Read and study the Lesson Strategy.

The quarter is divided into three units. Each unit begins with two pages of information about the lessons in the unit and a preview of teaching posters that can be used as bulletin board ideas.

STEP THREE: Develop an understanding of the teacher's guide.

The *Young Teen (Junior High) Teacher* is a guide to help you develop, follow and apply a four-step active learning procedure that should lead your students to focus on the subject, examine the Scriptures relating to the subject, define the subject's meaning and apply the subject to their lives.

STEP FOUR: Plan for student involvement.

The lessons contain questions that are difficult for students to answer with a simple yes or no. They are designed to teach students to think a question through before giving a reply. Each lesson also includes activities that illustrate a particular principle uncovered in the lesson discussion.

STEP FIVE: Check out the student leaflet.

Each student receives a four-page, full-color leaflet for each lesson that contains scriptural applications of each lesson along with facts, illustrations and stories that help apply the lesson to the student's life.

STEP SIX: Examine the visual aids.

To help with your lesson presentations, the *Young Teen (Junior High) Visual Aids* contains a quarterly theme poster, three unit theme posters and a lesson poster for each lesson. The visual aids also contain photomasters which may be used as transparencies or handouts and two pages of instructions explaining how to use the visuals.

TEACHER OR FACILITATOR?



Today in educational circles, individuals who present lessons are called *facilitators*. What is the difference between a teacher and a facilitator? Literally speaking, as far as the position is concerned, the terms mean the same thing—the person who presents the lesson and is in charge of the class. But in the actual performance of the task, the two words have somewhat different meanings. A teacher is one whose job is to impart knowledge or to give instructions. A facilitator is an individual who makes a task easier or who guides and directs others to a goal.

So, is your job that of a teacher or a facilitator? Actually, your role is a combination of both. You are a Bible teacher—you impart spiritual knowledge. But an effective teacher is also one who makes learning easier and is able to direct students to a goal, which is how to apply particular spiritual principles to their everyday lives.

The goal of every Sunday School teacher/facilitator should include a commitment to understand sound biblical truths, to show that those truths are not abstract theories but relevant principles of life and to develop effective active and interactive learning techniques.

Almost anyone can stand in front of a class and talk for forty-five minutes. But that is not effective teaching. Effective teaching is a fine art which involves dedication to produce a creative product. Full-grown effective Sunday School teachers do not just happen. They are products of commitment, determination and surrender to the task God has given them to do.

ADAPT YOUR PRESENTATION TO YOUR STUDENTS' LEARNING HABITS

One of the first steps to becoming an effective teacher is to recognize some basic principles of how students learn. How do students learn? They learn by their experiences—both direct and indirect. However, Christian students have a way of learning that is not available to unsaved students. Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” But in spite of the tremendous amount of knowledge that is available from experience, that experience cannot teach a student all he needs to know.

Generally speaking, people learn through impressions they receive through their five senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. An effective method of imparting knowledge involves combining as many of the students' senses as possible.

Lessons in this quarter's study contain a variety of multisensory methods of presentation. Keep in mind that all students will not respond in the same manner to a particular method of lesson presentation. Therefore, you should not feel constrained to teach the lessons in a “robotic” manner—presenting them precisely as the teacher's guide instructs—instead, you should learn to adapt the activities or discussion questions to your students.



DISCOVERING HOW TO GET YOUR LESSONS TO TAKE ROOT



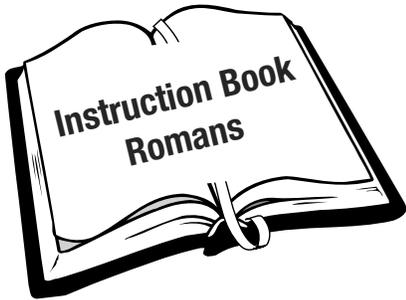
How does a pilot learn to fly a plane? He may spend hours pouring over books and listening to lectures. He may amass the required number of hours at the controls of a flight simulator. But a pilot really learns to fly by controlling a real airplane.

Students learn valuable life lessons the same way. You may encourage them to read the Scriptures, to listen to pastors and teachers, but, if you really want their appreciation of biblical truths to take root in their lives, show them how to apply these truths to real-life situations.

Lessons for young teens should hold their attention, but they also should be fun. You communicate the wrong message when you say, “Okay, we have had our fun, now it’s time to talk about God.” Joy and excitement should not be separated from a study of God’s Word.

Young teens should be involved in the lesson. If you employ only passive learning techniques, it is difficult to determine how much of the lesson a student understands. You do not know when a student is actually “getting it” if your lesson presentation is in the form of a lecture. If you involve all the students in discussion, games or activities, you can soon spot the student who is learning the least.

SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO GET TO HEAVEN

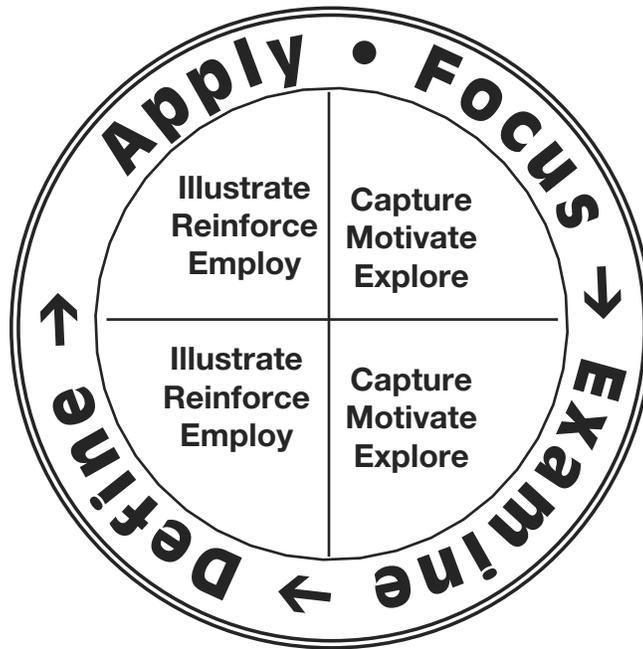


Your class period offers you your best opportunity to witness to a group of young teens. There are few things more satisfying than to lead a young person to Christ. The techniques may vary, but the message is the same.

To get to Heaven you need to know:

1. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).
2. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).
3. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).
4. “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).
5. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).
6. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9).

FOUR-STEP LESSON STRATEGY



FOCUS

Capture the students' attention by using an appropriate motivational activity or an exercise that encourages them to think.

EXAMINE

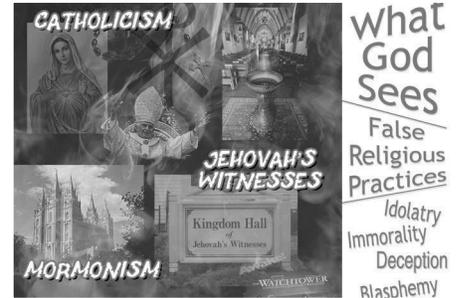
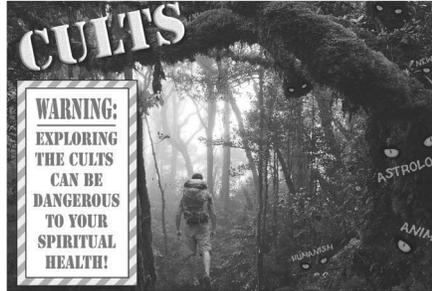
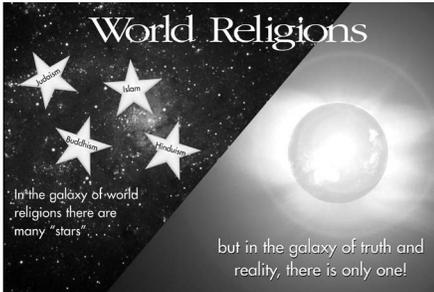
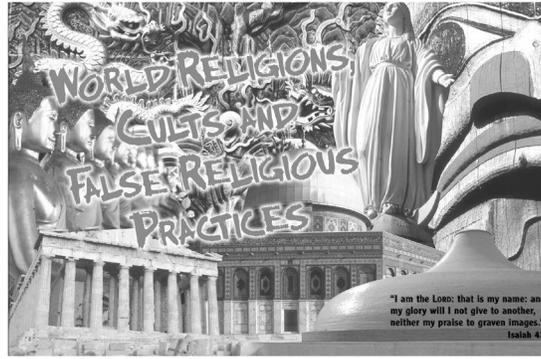
Introduce the Bible Text and encourage the students to discover what the Scripture teaches by analyzing it, investigating it and then comparing it to other passages.

DEFINE

Explain the meaning of difficult words and phrases and clarify them through the use of hands-on projects and exercises.

APPLY

Illustrate and reinforce the lesson with concrete examples and lead them to use a lesson's biblical principle in everyday situations.



QUARTERLY PREVIEW

“World Religions, Cults and False Religious Practices” is the theme for this quarter. The lessons will show that false religious ideas are as old as the human race. In Satan’s enticing words to Eve in the Garden of Eden, he introduced the suggestion that she and Adam could become gods. By appealing to the vanity of a man’s human nature, it was no doubt Satan who convinced Cain that he could satisfy God’s demands by offering the works of his hands rather than the required sacrifice of faith. From that beginning in the Garden of Eden, sinful man has methodically developed his own religious systems that are in opposition to the worship of the true and living God.

UNIT DIVISIONS

The thirteen lessons in this quarter are divided into the three following units: Unit 1—World Religions; Unit 2—Cults; Unit 3—False Religious Practices.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The lessons in Unit 1 examine the beliefs of prominent religions of the world, including the worship of the true and living God. The lessons in Unit 2 discuss what the cults that are prominent in today’s society believe. Students’ attention is called to the dangers of cultic practices. The lessons in Unit 3 examine three pseudo-Christian organizations, showing why those groups, even though they use Christian expressions, cannot be considered teaching true New Testament doctrines.

Unit Theme:

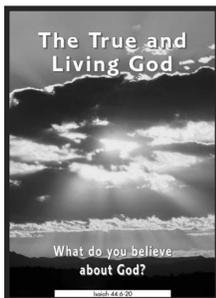
World Religions

PREVIEWING THE UNIT—

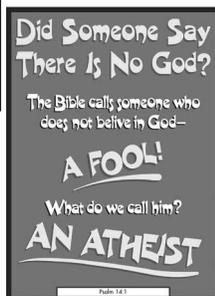
Why are there so many different kinds of religions in the world? In Romans 1:21 the apostle Paul gave us some background information about how these forms of worship came to exist. The apostle said there was a time when the people who now reject God knew Him, but “they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” In verse 23 Paul informed us that these wicked individuals “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” These verses describe the steps of an individual in his journey into sin. First, he rejects God. Then when an individual rejects God, he rejects the moral and spiritual laws of God which allows wickedness to spread rampant through his life. Next, he invents a god, or gods, that he fashions in his image instead of the reverse. The psalmist called this person a fool (Psalm 14:1).

This quarter, students will examine major world religions and contrast them with the worship of the true and living God. Students will understand that false religions of the world, unlike worship of the true and living God, are products of man’s attempt to create gods after his own image.

Lesson Posters for Unit 1



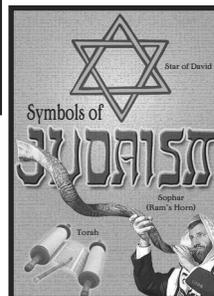
Lesson 1



Lesson 2



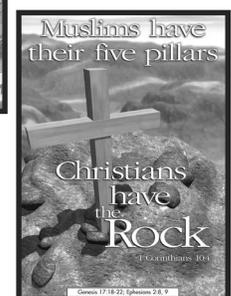
Lesson 3



Lesson 4



Lesson 5



Lesson 6

The Challenge—

Some boast that they learned the lessons of life through experience. But is it the best way to learn? Learning by experience is risky business for several reasons. Some will miss the point of a particular experience. Experience is a risky teacher because an important learning experience may go over the heads of some. Others may interpret the experience incorrectly and will not apply the lesson to their lives.

Certainly, some of life's most profound lessons are learned through experience, but usually lives are changed because a teacher accepted the challenge to show individuals how to apply the lessons experience taught him.

Recognizing the Obstacles—



You are probably not working with young teens for fame or prestige, and it is certainly not for money. So, why are you doing what you do week after week? Your basic reason for being a youth worker should be to introduce young teens to a vital relationship with God—a relationship that will make a difference in their lives at home, at school and at church. You want to help them “connect” to a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

If you are a parent, you know the sickening feeling you get, when in a crowd, you realize that your child is not with you. While you begin frantically searching for him, your emotions run from hope to

worry to sheer terror. When you find him and realize he is safe, your emotions take another roller coaster ride. You ask why he left your side and what enticed him to wander off.

This experience is similar to how a teacher should feel about reaching young teens. Your child was lost, in danger and did not know it. Any number of interesting and exciting things could have coaxed him to walk away from the security you provided. Is that not how it is with this generation of young teens? Many are tempted to walk away from a relationship with God who loves them like a mother and father. There is no age-group in churches that is more open, more needy or more obviously headed down a path that could lead to serious consequences than young teens. These young people need more than mere warnings. They need guidance and help in applying biblical principles to their lives that will enable them to avoid the pitfalls Satan has placed in their paths.

Creating Opportunities—

Reaching young teens before they reach high school is essential. To do that, you should make a bold attempt to create opportunities for reaching them.

1. Set dramatic goals (evangelism and numerical growth).
2. Create a friendly classroom environment (take pictures of your students and post them around the room; make every student feel important).
3. Enhance your facility (decorate your room in a different theme each week or each quarter; hang banners, signs or posters in the room; rearrange the chairs into a different formation each week).

Vocabulary Builder—

At the beginning of each lesson, there will be a box containing difficult words that can be used in presenting the lesson. The box will also contain simple definitions to help convey the meaning of the words to students.

The True and Living God

- ◆ **Quarterly Theme:** World Religions, Cults and False Religious Practices
- ◆ **Unit Theme:** World Religions
- ◆ **Unit Objective:** Young teens will contrast the worship of the true and living God with that of false religious systems.
- ◆ **Lesson Theme:** A Look at the True and Living God
- ◆ **Lesson Objective:** Young teens will understand that it is impossible to know the true and living Almighty God unless He reveals Himself to man.
- ◆ **Bible Principle:** There is only one God.
- ◆ **Bible Text:** Isaiah 44:6-20.

□ **Life Application:** I know God has spoken to me through His Word, and any religious thought that is in conflict with the Bible is not of God.

Vocabulary Builder—

- **Omnipresent:** God is everywhere at the same time
- **Omnipotent:** God is all-powerful
- **Omniscient:** God is all-knowing

LESSON EXPOSITION

Many philosophers and humanists have made attempts to study God and to offer their findings to mankind as systems to help in reaching Him. These systems are called religions. Beginning with himself as the model, man seeks to define what God is like. However, a view of God from the eyes of an unregenerated man can only result in a distorted concept. A distorted view of God can only produce a fruitless search for true inner peace. If man is going to enjoy eternity as a saved human and possess true inner peace while he lives on earth, he must know the only true and living God and receive His Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior.

This quarterly study provides information (although limited) on many of the world's religions, on many of the cults and on some of man's false religious practices. These religious systems are the result of men's attempting to explain God from the human perspective. They are the best that man can do. As these lessons unfold, one will see just how human and ineffective these systems are when

trying to meet the most important need of man—the salvation of his eternal spirit. Man's inadequacy to produce a system that will satisfy God is seen in his corrupted concept of God. This first lesson is presented so that the student can have a clear view of God as revealed in the Bible. With this information in hand, one will have a better arsenal with which to combat the forces that propagate false gods and preach "another gospel."

The question comes, can we know God? Yes. However, since all men suffer from the same sin problem and, therefore, are incapable of giving a valid description of true deity, it is necessary for God to reveal Himself to mankind. In His self-revelation God takes away the possibility of false identification. The next question is, in what way did He reveal Himself? God revealed Himself in man's conscience (Rom. 1:19; 2:15). Man is born with the innate desire to worship something. In every culture known to man there is evidence that humans have at least some knowledge about a higher being. That desire causes man to begin his lifelong spiritual journey in an attempt to identify his creator. Furthermore, God revealed

Himself in the creation (Gen. 1:1; Rom. 1:20). In this creative act, God shows some of His powers. Only in the sinless imagination of God and by the use of His unrestricted power could such a complex universe come into being. The belief by some that this incredible creation came into existence by accident or mere chance only emphasizes the need for correct information about Almighty God. In addition, God revealed Himself in Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:23; John 14:9-11). In God's mind it was necessary that man actually see Him. That was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit visited a young Jewish virgin, after which, she miraculously conceived a child, Jesus the Son of God. In His becoming a man and coming to earth, God displayed His relationship with His creation (Phil. 2:5-11). Then in an act that only God could perform, He offered His only begotten Son as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of all mankind. Then finally, He revealed Himself in His written Word (Luke 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:21).

Where did God come from? God did not come from any place. He is self-existent. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14). "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isa. 44:8). Other references to this self-existent God can be found in many places in the Bible. Some of these include Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:25; Colossians 1:16, 17.

God has revealed much to us about Himself. God informs us that He is a Spirit (John 4:24). By this we know that God is not a human; neither is He an idol made by man. He has no physical form, but He has a voice (Deut. 4:12; Matt. 3:13-17; Col. 1:15). God informs us that He is alive and that He will ultimately destroy all the false gods (Jer. 10:6-11). To accomplish that, He must

possess attributes not enjoyed by the gods of the religions of the world. Therefore, He reveals to us that He and He alone is all-powerful (Gen. 17:1; Isa. 40:18-31)—that He and He alone is all-knowing (Psalm 139:1-4; 1 Chron. 28:9; Psalm 147:4, 5; Rom. 11:33-36)—that He and He alone is present everywhere at the same time (Psalm 139:5-18). In other words, there is absolutely no other god like the true and living God. The possession of such attributes elevate Him to be the realm of sovereign God—nothing is above Him (1 Chron. 29:11-13; Isa. 45:5-7; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 4:11).

The immutability of God is another of His self-revealed attributes, "For I am the LORD, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). Receiving encouragement and strength from the divine truth that God does not change and that He cannot lie, the writer of the book of Hebrews said, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast" (Heb. 6:19). The greatness of the truth of an unchanging God is seen in the security of His works, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: . . . that men should fear before him" (Eccl. 3:14). (See 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30.)

A characteristic of God that separates Him from the gods made by men is His transcendency. It is vital to see that Almighty God is not a part of His creation. Remember that He did not come into being—He is everlasting; He is eternal (Deut. 4:14-19; Isa. 40:12-17). God declares Himself holy (Lev. 19:2; Isa. 57:15). God's created angels call Him holy (Isa. 6:3). God declares Himself to be love (1 John 4:7, 8). This attribute is shown in the greatest act of love ever put on display (Rom. 3:23-26; 5:8-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21).

□ Devotional: No Other Gods, Exodus 20:3.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). Man's greatest need is to be saved from the penalty of sin. The only hope for that lies in the acceptance of the plan of redemption offered by our Creator.

Lesson Strategy

FOCUS

☞ Display Quarterly Theme Poster, Unit 1 Poster and Lesson 1 Poster on a wall in the classroom.

☞ Christians should know as much as possible about God to refute the claims of world religions, cults and false religious practices. The more we know about God, the better we are able to explain why we believe He is the true and living God.

☞ Hand out index cards. Have students write on the cards three things they do not understand about God.

- Have a few volunteers read their cards.
- Ask students if they are bothered by the fact that there are some things about God they do not understand. If so, why?

Ask the students if they could ask God any question about Himself, what would that question be? (Have students write their question on their index card.)

- Ask for volunteers to read their questions.
- Ask if there is a specific reason for wanting answers to the particular questions they would like to ask.
- Would it make them resent God if He did not answer their questions?
- Ask if knowing everything about God would really be a good thing.
- Point out that we should be thankful that we cannot understand everything about God. If it were possible to know all about God, it would mean we serve a God who is no greater than our own understanding. The reality that God is the only true and living God is strengthened by our inability to understand everything about Him.

EXAMINE

☞ **Student leaflet, page 1.**

- Who or what do men say God is?
- According to *U.S. News & World Report*, what are some people's ideas about God?
- What does Isaiah 44:6 reveal about Him? (*He is the first and the last, and there is no God besides Him.*)
- Ask students what they believe about God.
- Is it possible for us to know God? Read Psalm 46:10.

We can know God, but because of our sin nature, He must reveal Himself to us.

- Is there anyone like God? Read 2 Samuel 7:22. God is unique in the universe. This means there is only one God, and there is none like Him (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:14). God informs us that He will ultimately destroy all the false gods (Jer. 10:10, 11).

Supplies Checklist:

- ✓ Quarterly Theme Poster
- ✓ Unit 1 Poster
- ✓ Lesson 1 Poster
- ✓ index cards
- ✓ pencils
- ✓ student leaflets
- ✓ Photomasters 1-1 and 1-2

Focus—(10 Minutes)

Before class, put up the Quarterly Theme Poster and the Unit 1 Poster.

Begin class by explaining the Quarterly Theme.

The introductory activity is designed to help focus students' attention on what they believe about God.

Hand out index cards.

- Follow the activity instructions.
- Ask volunteers to read their cards.
- Discuss why our inability to understand everything about God is a blessing.

Examine—(15 Minutes)

Hand out student leaflets.

Briefly discuss the findings of *U.S. News & World Report*.

What does Isaiah 44:6 reveal about God?

Answer the questions and discuss the statements relating to the character of God.

Complete the exercises in both columns on page 2.

- ☞ **Student leaflet, page 2.** Read the verses of Scripture and list the three ways God reveals Himself to mankind.
*(God reveals Himself in man’s conscience;
 God reveals Himself in creation;
 God reveals Himself through Jesus Christ.)*
 Read Philippians 3:10. *(This passage indicates a desire of man to know God.)*
 Read “Some Think . . .” in column two, then have students find and read the passages concerning “But the Bible Teaches That . . .”

- ☞ Hand out copies of Photomaster 1-1 and complete the exercise. Who is God? Photomaster 1-1 lists several names given to God in the New Testament. These names describe certain aspects of His character.
 Allow students time to reach conclusions concerning what characteristic of God each passage at the bottom of the page describes. If necessary, offer them assistance.
(1. Self-existence; 2. God does not change; 3. God is infinite in time; 4. God is everywhere; 5. God is holy.)

- ☞ **Student leaflet, page 3.** Some people have a limited idea of God’s might and power. Read the two passages of Scripture and see that the Bible teaches that God is the Almighty God.
 Have students write the titles given to God found in Isaiah 9:6.
(They are Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.)

Complete the exercises on page 3 of the student leaflet.

DEFINE

- ☞ Help students understand the meaning of Vocabulary Builder words. Write each word on the marker board and discuss each definition.

Define—(10 Minutes)

APPLY

Vocabulary Builder—

Omnipresent: God is everywhere at the same time
Omnipotent: God is all-powerful
Omniscient: God is all-knowing

- ☞ **Student leaflet, page 4.** Have students underline the words that best describe God.
- ☞ Read the article “A Friend Needs Your Help!” Follow the instructions and complete the activity. Ask for several volunteers to share how they would help a friend get to know God better.

Apply—(10 Minutes)

Discuss the exercise “A Friend Needs Your Help!”

Close by showing that God’s unique characteristics prove Him to be the true and living God.

- ☞ Hand out copies of Photomaster 1-2. Give a brief description:
 - first, what archaeologists might find in the ruins of your home.
 - second, what these items would tell them about God.
 Each of the four passages of Scripture in the second column describe a unique characteristic of God. List them. *(The answers are holy, love, all-powerful, true and righteous.)*
 These are only a few of the characteristics of God. But these few are sufficient to show that God is transcendent above His creation and that He is the only true and living God.