

YEAR D | QUARTER 4

13

Part of the Plan

Grace in action
God reveals Himself to us.

POWER TEXT

"The rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79).

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 1:57-79
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 10, pp. 97-100
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22
- Student story on page 142 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 9, The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ
- No. 22, Christian Behavior
- No. 18, The Gift of Prophecy

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God has always been concerned about our salvation.
- **Feel** the security that comes today from knowing God's grace.
- **Respond** by letting God guide their "feet into the path of peace" today.

POWERPOINT

God is personally interested in my salvation.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Zechariah's song of praise first of all worships God for the salvation He has provided (Luke 1:68, 69). Then Zechariah points to the Bible to show how salvation was always what God was trying to convey to His people (verses 70-75). He portrays salvation in terms of redemption, covenant, rescue, and forgiveness. Then he explains that Jesus' life illuminates our lives in the present and guides us into everlasting life in the future.

This is a lesson about grace in action.

The birth of John the Baptist was but one more part of God's great plan for the salvation of humankind. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Zechariah recognized the part his son would play and proclaimed God's continual interest in the salvation of His people. Nothing is more important to God than that, and John's mission was to help make that clear.

Teacher Enrichment

"Redeemed his people. These words constitute an implied announcement that the Redeemer Himself would soon appear, 'to give his life a ransom for many' (Matt. 20:28). As is so often the case throughout the prophets of the OT, Zacharias here speaks of a future event as if it were already accomplished. . . . God's promises are so sure that even then Zacharias could rightfully speak of the plan of redemption as an accomplished fact" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 690, 691).

How peaceful do I feel today? What or who guides my steps?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?**

Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Past, Present, and Future* *B. Hair Today, Hair Tomorrow*	paper, markers, art supplies
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 137. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	white/chalkboard, markers/chalk, dictionaries or thesauruses (optional) expressive reader, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Walking in Peace*	long length of rope
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Salvation Affirmation*	
* Closing		Prayer and Closing Comments Reminder to Parents Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ markers
- ☐ art supplies

Past, Present, and Future

Ask students to sit or stand in a line. The first person will say "past," the second person, "present," and the third, "future." Begin again with the fourth person and continue until each student has said either "past," "present," or "future." Ask the students to form groups based on which word they said. Give each group paper and art supplies and instructions to draw five blessings from God. The blessings can be things God has already done for them (past), blessings they currently receive from God (present), or blessings they believe they will receive from God (future). The blessings they choose do not have to correlate with the words they said.

Bring the groups back together and allow the rest of the class to try to guess what the other groups have drawn.

Debriefing

Ask: **Is it easier to identify things God has done in the past, is doing now, or will do in the future? Why? Do you believe God has or will guide you in each stage of your life? Why or why not?**

Say: **Your salvation is the most important thing to God. The reason Jesus came to this earth from heaven was to save us from sin and to give us eternal life. Our power text is Luke 1:78 and 79. Let's say it together:**

"The rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79).

That promise is for each of us. And the power point for today reminds each of us that

God is personally interested in my salvation.

B

Hair Today, Hair Tomorrow

Hold up a hair in your hand and ask one of the students seated far from you to identify what you have in your hand. Ask: **Can you guess how much value a piece of hair has?** Say: **Think for a moment of your morning routine when you are combing your hair. Usually after you comb your hair in the morning there is some hair left on your comb. Does your head hurt every time when you comb or brush your hair? Probably not, right? You throw away the hair that we lose without thinking much about it. Yet God knows you so well, the Bible tells us He even knows how many hairs you have on your head** (Matthew 10:30).

Debriefing

Ask: **How concerned about you is God? How important is your salvation to God?** Say: **In fact, your salvation is the most important thing to God. Your salvation matters more to God than anything else. Let's repeat our power text, Luke 1:78, 79:**

"The rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79).

That promise is for each of us. The power point for today reminds each of us that

God is personally interested in my salvation.

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Oh, Magnify the Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 12)
"I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 15)
"My Peace" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 94)
"He Is Our Peace" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 109)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

God is concerned with the salvation of each person who has ever and will ever live. But many do not even know about Him yet. Our offerings help to get the message of grace to all people.

Prayer

Ask students if anyone knows the mathematical sign for infinity. (A numeral 8 on its side.) Ask students to hold hands and form a figure eight. As you pray, thank God for creating a plan to save us before He even laid the foundations of the world. Thank Him for loving us so much He wants us to live in infinity with Him.

Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

YOU NEED:
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk
- ☐ dictionaries OR thesauruses (optional)

Ask students to think of as many words as they can that mean "salvation" or "to save." You may want to provide dictionaries or thesauruses to help them. As they call out answers, write them on the board.

Say: **In our Bible story today Zechariah has been unable to speak and hear for nine months, ever since he doubted the angel Gabriel, who came to tell him Elizabeth would have a baby. Now the baby has been born, and when the neighbors and relatives gather to name the baby, they try to name him Zechariah, after his father. Zechariah takes a writing tablet and writes: "His name is John." The Bible says, "Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God" (Luke 1:64). Our Bible lesson today is Zechariah's song of praise. It tells some important things about God's plan for our salvation.**

Experiencing the Story

YOU NEED:
- ☐ expressive reader
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Ask an adult or student who can read smoothly and expressively to read Luke 1:68-79 aloud. Ask the students to listen carefully to the Scripture passage and to stand up any time something related to saving or salvation is said. Place the following list of words on the board to help, but tell the students they are not limited to these: redeemed, salvation, rescue, forgiveness, mercy.

Put a mark beside each word on the board as it is said, and add new words or phrases from the passage as students identify them. Or, have the students read the story silently and then work together to mime it.

Debriefing

Ask: **How much of this passage is about salvation, either in the past, the present, or the future?** (If necessary, read the passage again, asking students to listen for the transitions from past to present to future salvation.) **Who or what is the "rising sun" in verse 78? Why did Zechariah choose that metaphor? What happens when the sun hits the shadows** (verse 79)? **What is the "path of peace"? Is it present or future?**

Say: **It is so encouraging to know that**

God is personally interested in my salvation.

YOU NEED:
- Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Divide students into small groups and give each group one of the following Bible references. Give each group three minutes to read its reference and prepare a charade to present to the class. Each will illustrate a time that God showed or will show He is concerned about the salvation of His people. After each, ask the students how this episode illustrates God's concern about the salvation of His people.

Genesis 3, with special emphasis on verse 15 (God's speaking to the serpent in the garden after Adam and Eve first sinned)

Genesis 6:5-7; 7:1-13; 8:15-22 (Noah and the Flood)

Exodus 3:7-10 (God's speaking to Moses at the burning bush)

Exodus 14:29, 30 (Crossing the Red Sea)

Daniel 3 (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace)

Daniel 6:6-23 (Daniel in the lions' den)

Mark 15:25-39 (Jesus' crucifixion)

1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 (Jesus' second coming)

Say: **Let's say together our power text, Luke 1:78, 79:**

"The rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79).

The power point for today reminds each of us that

God is personally interested in my salvation.

YOU NEED:
- long length of rope

Walking in Peace

Arrange the rope so it forms a single pathlike line. Ask your students to take off their shoes. Have them picture that this is symbolically a path of peace. Allow students to take turns naming something for which they need guidance in a path of peace, and then to come and walk the path. (Examples: "I need peace with my mother" or "I need peace from thinking I have to get perfect scores in school" or "I need peace from feeling angry toward a certain person.") If anyone is uncomfortable naming something they need peace with in their own lives, they can name something that is general to kids their age. As they walk the path and feel the rope under their feet, encourage them to pray silently that God will rescue them from whatever is an enemy in their lives, and to thank Him for the salvation He has given.

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you let God guide your feet in paths of peace? What does that have to do with salvation? Has God promised to save us only in the future, or does He save us from our enemies here and now?**

Say: **Each of us needs to remember that**

God is personally interested in my salvation.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

Salvation Affirmation

Invite students to tell the class if they had the opportunity during the past week to share with someone the amazing things God has done for them.

Ask: **What blessings did you share with someone last week? How did you explain that God's answer to your prayers has built your faith and confidence in Him? What did you share about Jesus' relentless love who is passionately interested in our salvation?**

Ask students to form pairs. Partners are to sit or stand facing each other and hold hands (if they are willing). They will repeat the following salvation affirmation after you read it, phrase by phrase.

O, Lord and Redeemer,
We thank You for the record of how You have led Your people,
How You saved them from their enemies,
How You kept the promises You made to them,
How You came to earth to secure our salvation.
We thank You for always loving us,
For never giving up on us,
For planning our salvation before there was sin.
Let us always walk in the light of the morning sun,
In the path of peace You lay before us.
Amen.

Closing

Prayer and Closing Comments:

Read Psalm 89:1, 2 as a benediction.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **As a child Jesus shared God's love. We worship God when His character is reflected in our lives.**

Notes

Student lesson

Part of the Plan

Have you ever looked forward to something with so much eagerness that you thought you'd burst? How did you feel when it finally happened? Was it so great that it made you feel like singing? Imagine how Zechariah and Elizabeth felt.

The time is near, Elizabeth thought. *I know it can't be too much longer until this baby is born. In another week it will have been nine months since Zechariah served at the temple and the angel told him I would have a son. Nine months since Zechariah doubted the angel and questioned God's messenger. Nine months since Zechariah has spoken anything.*

Elizabeth sighed. Their made-up sign language and pitiful attempts at lip reading were getting old. Most of the time she couldn't figure out what Zechariah was trying to tell her. Writing messages was a better way of communicating, but it was so slow. *It will be over soon,* Elizabeth thought. *The angel said he wouldn't speak until the baby was born. And I'm sure that will be any day now.*

And so it was. Just as the angel said, Elizabeth gave birth to a son. The child was strong and healthy; the neighbors heard and came to offer congratulations and share her joy. And still Zechariah was silent.

One, two, three days went by. Zechariah still didn't speak. Six, seven, eight. The day of the baby's circumcision, according to Jewish law. The day the child would be named.

And again the friends and neighbors gathered. It was a happy, joyous occasion. The neighbors gathered and chatted, mostly about the baby and his father.

"What are they going to name him?" someone asked.

"I would assume they're going to name him Zechariah, after his father," answered another.

"Maybe they're going to name him after his grandfather," someone else chimed in. "The baby is always named after someone in the family. Elizabeth, what are you naming the baby? Zechariah?"

"No," Elizabeth spoke firmly. There was no question. She and Zechariah had learned their lesson about doubting what angels had to say. And the angel had told them what to name the baby. "He is to be called John," she said resolutely.

Silence followed her declaration. Every face held the same question.

Finally someone spoke. "John? Why John? There's no one in your family named John."

"Are you sure, Elizabeth? Are you sure you don't want to name him Zechariah, after his father?"

"It's such a nice name, Zechariah. Elizabeth doesn't know what she's talking about. Someone, ask Zechariah what he wants to name the baby."

Zechariah was sitting quietly, unaware of the commotion around him. Someone tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention. Sign language followed. Zechariah's eyes brightened with understanding. His writing tablet. Where was it?

The neighbors gathered around and watched as the tablet was placed in his hands. He picked up the writing instrument and began to form the words. "His . . . name . . . is . . . John."

And suddenly Zechariah could speak! After nine months of silence, the words came tumbling out of his mouth in a torrent of excitement.

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel," Zechariah exclaimed, "because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David . . . : to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days" (Luke 1:68-75).

Zechariah's eyes were shining. His face was aglow with the presence of the Holy Spirit. He took John in his arms and looked tenderly at the child. He obviously had more to say.

"And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace" (verses 76-79).

Zechariah kissed the baby's tiny forehead. It was over. The long months of silence, the long hours of quiet thought and reflection. But now there was one thing Zechariah knew for sure. God's first concern had always been the salvation of His people. He had a grand, loving plan to make sure it happened. The birth of this child was part of that grand plan, and with the eyes of faith he could see its fulfillment.

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 1:57-79
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 10, pp. 97-100
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22
- Our Beliefs nos. 9, 22, 18

POWER TEXT

"The rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79).

POWER POINT

God is personally interested in my salvation.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 102.

Sunday

READ Read Luke 1:5-17 and this week's story, "Part of the Plan."

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask for an understanding of the plan of salvation.

Monday

READ Read Zechariah's song in Luke 1:18-25.

WRITE Think of Zechariah's encounter with the angel. What were his feelings, reactions, and experiences? Write your answers in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for His interest in your salvation.

Tuesday

READ Read all of Zechariah and Elizabeth's story in Luke 1:5-25 and 57-66.

THINK How did the miracle that took place with Zechariah at John's birth confirm God's plan for his life?

SHARE Share with someone the amazing things that God has done for your family and how these built your faith and confidence in Him.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for showering you with His blessings.

Wednesday

READ Read Luke 1:68-79.

THINK Choose the three verbs from the passage that tell about God's plan of salvation. Think about them.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write about what salvation means to you. You could refer to a story that illustrates what it means to be saved.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to reveal to you His plan for your life and for your salvation.

Thursday

READ Read Psalm 89:1, 2.

THINK What do those verses tell you about how long God has been concerned with our salvation?

SHARE Tell someone about the relentless love of Jesus, who is passionately interested in our salvation.

REPEAT Say your power text to someone else.

PRAY Ask God to guide your feet in paths of peace.

Friday

READ Read Genesis 3:15 and tell the story "Part of the Plan" to your family at worship tonight.

SHARE Ask each person in your family to tell you what they think their first words would be if they hadn't spoken for nine months.

DISCUSS With your family, discuss what a "path of peace" means.

REPEAT Practice saying the power text by sharing it with your family.

PRAY Thank God for being so concerned about our salvation that He developed a plan before the world was formed.