

YEAR B | QUARTER 4

13

Gift Exchange

Grace in Action
We respond to Jesus' love.

POWER TEXT

"'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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart'" (Jeremiah 29:11-13, NIV).

KEY REFERENCES

- Jeremiah 29:11-14
- *Steps to Christ*, chaps. 7; 8, pp. 57-75
- *Early Writings*, pp. 149-153
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 189-191
- Student lesson on page 142 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 9, The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God and Jesus planned a special gift for us—salvation.
- **Feel** a desire to give themselves to God to be saved and transformed.
- **Respond** by committing themselves to a personal daily walk with Jesus.

POWERPOINT

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God plans the gift of sending His Son to be our Savior very carefully. Many details about His birth are actually symbols of the circumstances surrounding His death. We can give ourselves as a gift to Him, making careful plans to dedicate ourselves to Him every day.

This is a lesson about grace in action.

All the gifts God gives to us are gifts of grace. The most important gift was His Son to be our Savior. When we give ourselves to Him, He also gives us the gift of transforming grace. He gives us the power to be growing, maturing sons and daughters of God.

Teacher Enrichment

"With a holy sadness Jesus comforted and cheered the angels and informed them that hereafter those whom He should redeem would be with Him, and that by His death He should ransom many and destroy him who had the power of death. . . .

"Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven. And the heavenly host sang a song of praise and adoration. They touched their harps and sang a note higher than they had done before, for the great mercy and condescension of God in yielding up His dearly Beloved to die for a race of rebels" (*Early Writings*, p. 151).

"Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.' This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 70).

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 the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Surprise Gifts* *B. Well-Planned Gifts*	empty wrapped gift box, slips of paper, pen, container empty wrapped gift box
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 137. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, gift-wrapped box
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Bibles, woman dressed as Ellen White, reading (p. 149) OR paper, pens/pencils, art supplies Bibles, pens/pencils, paper
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*My Gift*	glass jar with lid, water, cooking oil
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Share the Prayer*	arrow bookmarks (p. 150), scissors, markers, pens, business envelopes, art supplies (optional)
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

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

A

YOU NEED:

- ☐ empty wrapped gift box
- ☐ slips of paper
- ☐ pen
- ☐ container

Surprise Gifts

Have each student write their name on a slip of paper as they arrive. Put all the names in a container. Ask students to sit in a circle. Place the container in the middle of the circle. Begin when most students have arrived. Say: **I am going to draw a name from the container and think of a gift (imaginary) I would like to give the person whose name I draw. I am going to whisper what my gift will be and who it is for to the person next to me and pass this gift package. Each person will pass the gift and whisper what the gift is and who it's for to the person next to them until it gets to the person it is intended for—the person whose name I draw. That person then looks at me and says "I thank you for the _____"** (whatever they heard the gift was supposed to be). **The recipient then whispers to the next person what they are going to give me in return. The whisper and the box continue around until they get back to me.** When the gift has gone around once, being "given," "received," and "given back," the next person draws a name from the container, and the circle begins again.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel to get an unexpected "gift"? How did you feel about thinking of one to give in return? Let's say together our power text, Jeremiah 29:11-13:**

" '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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' " (Jeremiah 29:11-13, NIV).

Our power point reminds us that

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.

Accommodations for students with special needs

This activity may be challenging for students who are hard of hearing. Encourage them to observe and contribute to the discussion.

B

YOU NEED:

- ☐ empty wrapped gift box

Well-Planned Gifts

Have the students sit in a circle with you. Say: **Many of you have given and received gifts this past week. Some of them may have looked similar to this** (hold up the gift-wrapped package). **But some of our very best gifts are gifts that cannot be wrapped. Even though they may not be wrapped, they may have taken a lot of careful planning on the part of the giver. We are going to go around the circle, and I would like you to tell us about one of the most well-planned gifts you have ever given or received in your life. For example, someone went to a lot of trouble to do or make something for you that was just right for your needs at the time, or you did that for someone else. I will go first, then I will pass the gift box to my right, and _____ (name of person on your right) will have a chance to share next. We want to hear as much as you know about the planning that went into the gift.**

Go around the circle. If you can sense that a student feels uncomfortable sharing, let them say "Pass."

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel to get a gift that had been carefully planned for you? How did it feel to give a gift that had been carefully planned? What gift that we Christians have been given is the most well-planned gift of all?** (Encourage responses, such as Jesus, salvation, grace.) **Who really deserves to receive the most well-planned gift from us?** (God, Jesus) **We can plan to give a gift to God. What might that be?** (Accept all answers.) Say: **Let's say together our power text, Jeremiah 29:11-13:**

" '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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' " (Jeremiah 29:11-13, NIV).

Our power point reminds us that

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.

Prayer & 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. Close with a prayer that God will show everyone in your Sabbath School, adults and students alike, a way that He would have them "stand still" in their lives and allow Him to win victories for them.

Suggested Songs

YOU NEED:

- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

"Into My Heart" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 152)
"Jesus Loves Me" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 63, third verse)
"Father, I Adore You" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 32)

Mission

YOU NEED:

- ☐ gift-wrapped box

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

Use the offering device that you have been using this month. Discuss with the students the concept of their having a plan about their giving. Discuss what sources of income they have and what they might plan ahead to do each week in the upcoming year.

Prayer

Ask students how they would like to pray today. Allow them to lead out. 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

Ask: **Which of your friends or family members have been in some kind of trouble? Who helped them make a plan to get out of it?** (Encourage students to explore possible situations.) **How did they respond after they were helped to get out of their trouble?**

Say: **When God sent His Son to be born, live, and die for us, He was making it possible for us humans to get out of the trap of sin into which our ancestors Adam and Eve fell when they listened to Satan's temptations.**

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ woman dressed as Ellen White
- ☐ copies of reading (p. 149)
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ art supplies

Experiencing the Story

Say: **Let's turn to Genesis 3 to remember what happened here on earth some time after Lucifer left heaven.** Have students tell you what is happening in this incident as they look over the chapter. Point out verse 15 and tell them that although this verse is in prophetic language and may not be easy to understand at first, it is considered a prediction of Jesus' coming to save us from Satan's power. The verse is a promise that God would have a plan to provide a way for the descendants of Eve (all of us) to get away from Satan and eventually be back with God as it was before Adam and Eve sinned. (According to *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 1, p. 233, the woman's seed is Jesus, who got struck when He gave His life for us, and Satan is the serpent whose head was crushed when Jesus paid the penalty for sin.)

Say: **Today we have a "guest" who was able to observe what it was like in heaven when Jesus and God the Father were discussing their plan to save us. Last quarter we learned about the gift of prophecy that was given to Ellen White. "She" is going to share what she saw in one of her visions.** Have an adult woman read or recite the excerpts from *Early Writings* on page 149.

OR Divide the students into groups, each with an adult facilitator. Give each group the page 149 excerpts and ask them to read them and then choose to do one of the following as a group:

1. Write a dialogue between Jesus and the angels.
2. Draw a mural of the scene.
3. Discuss the following questions:

A. Why did God and Jesus want to save us? B. How did the angels help Jesus while He was here—can they remember any specific instances and support them with Bible verses? (at His birth, during His temptation, in Gethsemane, at His resurrection, etc.)

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think about the plans Jesus made with the Father?** (Encourage responses.) **How do you think the angels felt?** (Sad at first; they may have thought that the price Jesus was willing to pay was too high.) **How would you have felt if you had been an angel?** (Encourage responses.) **How do you feel knowing someone went to such trouble to plan the perfect, most important gift for you?** (Encourage responses.) **How would you like to respond to that kind of gift?** (we couldn't; thank Him; give something back) **Let's say Jeremiah 29:11-13 together. What do these verses suggest is an appropriate response to God's plans?** (pray, seek Jesus with all our hearts, plan to give myself since He gave Himself) **Our power point reminds us that**

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

Exploring the Bible

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Say: **There were lots and lots of details to the plan God and Jesus made for our salvation. Some of them we will find out about only when we are living back with God and our heavenly family. For now let's look at some of the circumstances that were similar around the time Jesus was born and the time He died. All of these things were part of God's plan.**

Have students form small groups. Have each group take one of the sets of texts listed. Say: **Each group is to read both texts in their set and then decide what was similar between circumstances around Jesus' birth and Jesus' death.** Students will very likely need a clue to help them think in the right direction. Give them one based on the answer provided for you. When all groups have finished reading their texts and guessing the connection, ask each group what they decided the connection was. Share the one listed if the students did not think of that one.

1. Luke 2:3, 7; John 12:12 (Similarity: There were a lot of extra people in town both times—in Bethlehem for the taxation, in Jerusalem for the Passover.)

2. Luke 2:7; Matthew 26:18 (Similarity: Jesus' first meal and His last meal were in borrowed rooms.)

3. Luke 2:4, 5; Luke 23:50-53 (Similarity: There were men named Joseph to help take care of Him at His birth and at His death.)

4. Luke 2:10; Matthew 28:5 (Similarity: Angels told people not to be afraid. Those people later told many other people the good news.)

Say: **Let's say together our power text, Jeremiah 29:11-13:**

" '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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' " (Jeremiah 29:11-13, NIV).

As our power point reminds us:

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ glass jar with lid
- ☐ water
- ☐ cooking oil

My Gift

Hold up a glass jar with lid, half-filled with water.

Say: **The water in this jar represents our life.** Very slowly add a few drops of oil to the water. The oil should go right into the water, then slowly float to the top of the water.

Ask: **What happens to the oil and water?** (The oil enters deep into the heart of the water, then floats to the surface.)

Place a lid on the jar and shake it.

Ask: **What happens now that I've shaken it?** (They mix.)

Say: **Notice how the oil spreads throughout the water when the jar is being shaken. As the mix of the water and oil illustrate, when the good news about Jesus' death and resurrection for us enter into our hearts, we cannot keep the news to ourselves. Our joy will rise to the surface and will be seen on our faces, in our words, and in our actions. Jesus wants us to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts and to be active for Him.**

Ask: **Has Jesus come alive in your life? Have you experienced the joy of His resurrection? When that happens to us, we will be enthusiastically sharing the good news of His death and resurrection.**

Let's repeat our power point together:

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ arrow bookmarks (p. 150)
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ markers
- ☐ pens
- ☐ business envelopes
- ☐ art supplies (optional)

Share the Prayer

Invite students to share their experiences if they had the opportunity during the past week to tell someone about God's goodness. Ask: **Did you think of what plan God has for your life? How can we discover what is God's plan for our lives? How can you explain to others that God has plans for them?**

Distribute arrows from page 150, business envelopes, and other supplies. Ask the students to decide on someone with whom they would like to share the daily prayer that was included in their Bible study guides: **Dear Lord, today take me as totally Yours. I give You all my plans. Use me to serve others. Stay with me and show me how to do everything in Your power. Amen.**

Ask them to write the prayer on the arrow bookmark, decorate it, and put it in the envelope you provide and write on the envelope: A GIFT FROM YOU TO GOD.

Debriefing

Ask: **Whom do you have in mind to share the prayer with? What can you share with the person about why they would want to use the prayer?**

Repeat the power point once again:

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Have the students join you in praying the prayer they have written down during the Sharing the Lesson activity.

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: **John baptizes people. God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.**

Notes

Student lesson

Gift Exchange

Mr. James perched on the corner of his desk. "Can anyone guess what we are going to talk about today besides what you got for Christmas?" he asked.

"Well, I think we have finished the Christmas story," Trevor offered.

"Yes and no." Mr. James grinned and picked up his lesson plan book.

"I know that you have heard about the birth of Jesus quite a few times this month," he continued, "but I want to talk to you today about how Jesus' birth was linked to His death on the cross.

"Here's one example of what I'm talking about," he went on. "When Jesus was born, Bethlehem was overflowing with people. They had come to Bethlehem to be taxed. Thirty-three years later, when Jesus died, Jerusalem was overflowing with people. They had come to celebrate the Passover."

Mr. James looked around the room. "Jesus was born and had His first meal in a borrowed room, a stable. And 33 years later, just before He died, He and His disciples were in a borrowed room, the upper room, having His last supper.

"Jesus was placed in a manger when He was born. What is a manger?" Mr. James asked.

"A place where animals eat," Marci answered.

"That's right," Mr. James said. "Jesus was placed in a feed trough in Bethlehem. Did you know that the name 'Bethlehem' means 'House of Bread'? And 33 years later Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life. At His last supper He broke bread and passed it around to His disciples and said, 'Take, eat, this is My body given for you.' "

"I know one!" Trevor exclaimed. "Joseph was there and helped to wrap Jesus up when He was born. Another Joseph helped to wrap Jesus up in the grave clothes when He died!"

Mr. James smiled. "That's a very good insight, Trevor!" he said.

"I know one too!" Marianne said suddenly. "At His birth the angels appeared to the shepherds and said, 'I bring you good news of great joy!' When Mary and the women were at the tomb, angels told them the good news that He was risen from the dead."

Mr. James smiled his special smile again. He was very pleased with his class today!

"When Jesus was born," Mr. James said, "there was blood and water. There is always blood and water when babies are born. When Jesus died on the cross, a soldier thrust a spear into His side, and blood and water ran out. Something was being born. Do you have any idea what it was?"

The class was quiet.

"Do you remember that when God created Adam, He opened Adam's side and removed a rib and created a wife for him? When Jesus' side was opened on the cross, He was making a way for us to be born again and to become part of His church, which the Bible calls the bride of Christ."

Mr. James was quiet. The only sound to be heard was someone clumping along in the hallway outside the door.

"You know," Mr. James finally said, "the more I understand the Bible stories, the more I appreciate what God has done for us and the more I want to praise the Lord for the great gift of our Savior!"

"I just wish I had something to give Him in return," Marci commented quietly.

"All He wants is you—for you to give Him your whole life," Mr. James responded.

"That sounds simple enough," Trevor said, twirling the pencil on his desk. "But it isn't that easy to figure out how to do it."

"Well, I have an idea for you." Mr. James moved around his desk and reached in a drawer for a pile of index cards. "Anyone who would like to give themselves to Him every day, just as He gave Himself for us, might want to try this." He passed a small pile of cards down each row.

"You could use this prayer to remind you to dedicate yourself to God for each new day."

Trevor read the prayer on the card aloud. "Dear Lord, today take me as totally Yours. I give You all my plans. Use me to serve others. Stay with me and show me how to do everything in Your power. Amen."

"Finally I feel like I'm ready to start the new year," Marianne said quietly.

KEY REFERENCES

- Jeremiah 29:11-14
- *Steps to Christ*, chaps. 7; 8, pp. 57-75
- *Early Writings*, pp. 149-153
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 189-191
- Our Beliefs, nos. 17, 10, 9

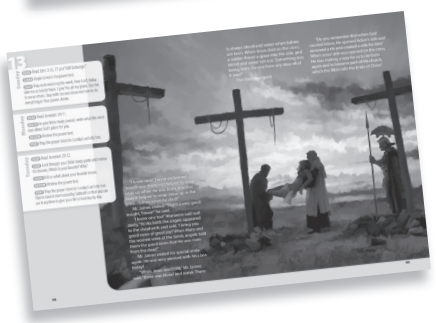
POWER TEXT

"'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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart'" (Jeremiah 29:11-13, NIV).

POWER POINT

We accept God's gift of salvation as we seek to spend time with Jesus daily.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 102.

Sunday

READ Read John 3:16, 17 and this week's story, "Gift Exchange."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text.

PRAY Pray each morning this week: *Dear Lord, today take me as totally Yours. I give You all my plans. Use me to serve others. Stay with me and show me how to do everything in Your power. Amen.*

Monday

READ Read Jeremiah 29:11.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write what this verse says about God's plans for you.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray the prayer listed in Sunday's activity box.

Tuesday

READ Read Jeremiah 29:12.

LOOK Look through your Bible study guide and review the lessons. Which is your favorite? Why?

SHARE Tell an adult about your favorite lesson.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray the prayer listed in Sunday's activity box. Plan to have it memorized by Sabbath so that you can use it anytime to give your life to God day by day.

Wednesday

READ Read Jeremiah 29:13.

DO Draw an illustration or write about what it means to you to seek God with all your heart.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray the prayer listed in Sunday's activity box.

Thursday

READ Read Jeremiah 29:14.

THINK What is God's promise in this verse?

LIST In your Bible study journal, list (1) the things God plans for us, (2) the things we will do, and (3) the promises God makes.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray the prayer listed in Sunday's activity box.

Friday

READ Read Psalm 63:1.

DISCUSS At family worship, talk about what it is like when your soul thirsts for God.

RECITE Say your power text to your family at worship.

ASK Ask an adult to read God's promise in Jeremiah 29:14 aloud.

EXPLAIN Tell your family about the prayer you learned to help you seek the Lord each day.

SING Sing together "Father, I Adore You."

PRAY Pray together the prayer you have learned this week.