

YEAR B | QUARTER 4

12

Beginning With a Gift

Grace
God gave Himself to us.

POWER TEXT

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3, NIV).

KEY REFERENCES

- John 1:1-18
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 1, pp. 19-26
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 73-77; vol. 9, pp. 105-109
- Student lesson on page 132 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 1, The Holy Scriptures
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 11, Growing in Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God gave Himself to us before the foundation of the earth.
- **Feel** deep and abiding appreciation for the inestimable value of God's gift of His Son.
- **Respond** by demonstrating gratitude for God's grace to them.

POWERPOINT

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

John traces the existence of Jesus to the beginning of the world. He maintains that Jesus has always existed and that He was together with God at the creation of the world. Jesus makes a decision to take on the human form forever in order to save us. Jesus came to help us know God and to help us understand how much God loves us.

This is a lesson about grace.

We want to understand the price God had to pay in order to give the gift of His Son. Therefore we will seek to express our gratitude to God for sending Jesus to us, His ultimate gift of grace.

Teacher Enrichment

In the chapter John says three things about the Word:

1. The Word was there at the beginning of the world. The Word is part of eternity and was there with God before time and the world began. He was referring to the preexistence of Christ. Significance: If God's Word is part of the eternal scheme of things, it means that God was always like Jesus. Sometimes we tend to think of God as stern and avenging, and we tend to think that something Jesus did changed God's anger into love and altered His attitude to humans. The New Testament shows us that God has always been like Jesus. What Jesus did was to open a window in time that we might see the eternal and unchanging love of God.

2. The Word was with God. This refers to the close and most intimate connection between Jesus and God. God has no secrets from Him; therefore, Jesus is the one person in all the universe who can reveal to us what God is like and how God feels toward us.

3. The Word was God. The Word was of the same character, quality, essence, and being as God. When John said the Word was God, he was not saying that Jesus was identical with God; he was saying that Jesus was so perfectly the same as God in mind, in heart, in being that in Him we perfectly see what God is like (adapted from Roger L. Fredrikson, *John*, The Communicator's Commentary [Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985], pp. 32-34).

What are ways I have experienced God's grace in my life? How has my life changed since I've gotten to know Jesus better?

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. Shopping Spree*	paper, pencils
		B. God's Gifts	paper, pencils, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
		C. Memory Test	variety of objects, table, cloth, paper, pencils
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 127. 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	Bibles
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*A Gift for You*	Bibles, colored and white paper, colored markers
* 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:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Shopping Spree

Ask: **If money was not a problem, what Christmas gifts would you give to your family and friends this year? Be creative and thoughtful in your selection.**

Debriefing

Ask: **Who would like to share what they would give? How did you go about choosing your gifts? Why do you think the people you are giving to will be happy to receive what you chose? How do you feel giving these gifts? Today we'll be talking about the greatest gift we've ever been given—Jesus. Let's say together our power text, John 1:1-3:**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3, NIV).

Our power point reminds us that

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

God's Gifts

Say: **Write the letters of the word "gifts" on the left side of the paper, with generous space between the letters. Next, write "flowers," "birds," "trees," "people," and "fruits" across the top of the paper.** Write the following on the board so the students know what their papers should look like:

	Flowers	Birds	Trees	Animals	Fruits
G					
I					
F					
T					
S					

Say: **The object is for you to fill in the spaces with the appropriate names of things in the categories and that begin with the letters that spell "gifts."** For example, in the space where "flowers" and "G" intersect, the student would write the name of a flower that begins with G, such as gladiola. Give the students an allotted amount of time, or allow them to finish.

Debriefing

Ask: **How difficult was it to think of gifts Jesus created for you? How do you feel about the gifts of creation? Today we'll be talking about the greatest gift we've ever been given—Jesus. Let's say together our power text, John 1:1-3:**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3, NIV).

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Prayer & Praise

C

Memory Test

YOU NEED:
- ☐ variety of objects
- ☐ table
- ☐ cloth
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Arrange on a table a variety of objects, such as a flower, feather, rock, Bible, leaf, picture of the moon, cup of water, etc. Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil. Say: **I'm going to test your memory today. I have under this cloth some gifts from God. I'll uncover them and give you 30 seconds to see them before I cover them back up. Then I want you to write down what you saw.**

Debriefing

Ask: **Who thinks they remembered all the objects?** Find out who remembered the most. **The most important gift from God, one that we don't ever want to forget, is Jesus. Let's say together our power text, John 1:1-3:**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3, NIV).

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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

"Behold, What Manner of Love" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 42)
"Thou Art Worthy" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 49)
"Jesus, Name Above All Names" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 54)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Say: **While we may not be able to go to another land to share God's love, through our offerings and prayers we can support those who do go.** 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

YOU NEED:
- ☐ gift-wrapped box

With the same box as used for prayer, collect the offering, reminding the students that the Christmas season is a celebration of God's gift of His own Son to be our Savior. One of the presents we can give in return is to help others to know of this wonderful gift of grace.

Prayer

Have students write out or dictate to you their prayer requests and their praises and thanksgiving. Place them all in the box. With the gift-wrapped box in hand, present its contents to God. Thank Him for the wonderful gift of His Son. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Point out that one of the traditions about the Santa Claus myth is that children must be good to "deserve" the gifts they receive at Christmas. Then contrast God's gift of grace, which is extended to us all without our deserving it.

Ask: **How does it make you feel knowing God had a plan to save you before you were even created? Let's say together our power text, John 1:1-3:**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3).

What is the point we are learning today?

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles

Experiencing the Story

Ask the class to take turns reading aloud John 1:1-18. Then divide the students into teams of no more than four. Say: **You need to think of a message you want to pass on and then become that message. For example, if you decide your message is "We're for world peace," you might sing a song about the world while hugging each other.**

Give teams time to figure out their messages. Then give each team one minute to send their message while the other teams try to guess what it is.

Debriefing

Ask: **How difficult was it to become the message? What's the difference between saying a message and actually being a message? What did we read in John 1 that Jesus is?** (the Word) **The Greek word for "word" is "logos." Logos can also be translated as "message." How is Jesus God's message? What is the message God sent in Jesus? Why was it important that Jesus be the message?**

You may also want to share information from the Teacher Enrichment section. Repeat the power point with the students:

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

(Adapted from *The Youth Worker's Encyclopedia of Bible-Teaching Ideas: New Testament* [Loveland, Colo.: Group Publishing, 1994], p. 127. Used by permission.)

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Exploring the Bible

Where all can see, write the following breakdowns for today's Scripture passage:

1. John 1:1-5
2. John 1:6-13
3. John 1:14-18

In small groups or as a class, reread each of the following portions of John 1:1-18, one portion at a time. After each portion, ask the students to summarize it in one sentence and then find another place in Scripture that supports the same idea. (Use a Bible with marginal references, if possible.) Some suggestions for other Scriptures that correlate with these passages are given below, but are by no means exhaustive.

1. Verses 1-5 Psalm 18:28; Isaiah 55:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 7:16; Revelation 1:8
2. Verses 6-13 Isaiah 49:6; 53:3; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 2:8; 5:1; 1 Peter 1:23
3. Verses 14-18 Romans 3:24; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:7, 8; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 2:14

After the groups have had time to prepare their one-sentence summaries and find a parallel scriptural reference, call on a volunteer from each group to share their work. Write the one-sentence summaries where all can see, and then discuss how they relate to one another.

Ask: **Was it hard or easy to find other references?**

Say: **Jesus wasn't just going to tell us about a gift; He was the gift. Let's say together our power text, John 1:1-3:**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3, NIV).

Let's repeat our power point:

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

Scenario

Read the following scenario to the students:

Alonso tells you that he doesn't think Christ's death applies to him yet. He says that he believes that he must repent and live for a while without doing anything wrong, and then God will give him the gift of grace, forgive his past, and save him. The only trouble is that he doesn't think he will be able to get everything right so that he can get the gift before he is a very old man, so he doesn't feel like even trying.

Debriefing

Ask: **What can you share with Alonso about God's gift of grace? When was the gift actually given? What does the gift enable us to become? How could you let Alonso know our power point today, and what it means to his life? Our power point reminds us that**

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ colored and white paper
- ☐ colored markers

A Gift for You

Have students share their experiences if they had the opportunity during the past week to send Christmas cards and to offer encouragement to people in need.

Say: **Choose a verse or two from today's Bible passage, John 1:1-18 (or Ephesians 2:8), that you would like to share with someone. Then make and decorate a gift card for that person. On the front of the card, write: "To [person's name], From God." Inside the card, write the verse or verses you would like to share with them.** Let the students know how much time they have for this activity.

Debriefing

Ask: **To whom are you going to give your gift card? How are you going to encourage them in God's grace and love? What does the gift of Jesus tell you about God's love for you? Let's repeat our power point once again:**

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **Dear God, thank You for the precious gift of Your Son, Jesus. We accept Your gift to us. Please help us to share Jesus with others so that they may know of Your awesome love. Amen.**

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: **We open our hearts to Jesus. Jesus is God's gift to us, and our lives are our gifts to God.**

Notes

Student lesson

Beginning With a Gift

What do you think when you look at your baby pictures or book and see some gifts that people gave you before you were even born? Perhaps your mom has even saved a few of those gifts. Did you know God gave you a gift, a priceless gift, even before you were born? Even before the world was born?

I can't believe it! Christmas is almost here again. You know what, Mom? They put up the Christmas display today in the town square," Heather informed her mother as they did the dishes together. Mother smiled as she passed her daughter another pot to dry.

"Speaking of Christmas," Heather continued thoughtfully, "I've heard all my life that Jesus is God's gift to us. But what does that really mean, Mom?" she asked.

"That's a good question, Heather," Mother responded. "A lot of people know that Jesus is God's gift to us. But not everyone understands what that gift really represents and how much it truly cost. In the Bible, though, the first chapter of John helps us to discover the real meaning of God's gift," Mother said, as she dried her hands, picked up her Bible, and turned to the book of John.

"Did you know that Jesus was there at the Creation of the world," Mother quizzed Heather, "and that He was actively involved in creating our world?"

"Really?" Heather responded with a look of surprise. "I thought that Jesus' mission was to be born as a baby, to live on earth as our example, and to die and be resurrected so we could be saved."

"Yes, that's very true," Mother agreed. "But God's plan to save us didn't start there. God and Jesus were closely knit from the very beginning. Together with the Holy Spirit They created the world and every living being. The Bible says that 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' [John 1:1-3, NIV]."

"Wow, that's something to think about," Heather admitted. "So what else did Jesus do besides help to create the world?" She was curious now.

"Well, from the very beginning, before the creation of the human race, God and Jesus agreed that Jesus would give His life to save them if they should sin. No one else could save them. Only Jesus," Mother added.

"Wow, how do you think God felt sending His Son way down here to the earth? God must have missed His Son while He was away," Heather said thoughtfully.

"I'm sure He did. But what was even harder for God was watching the way people treated His Son. Imagine making that kind of sacrifice, to give such a valuable, priceless gift as His only Son, just to have the people He loved respond to Him with hatred and rejection. We cannot imagine the heartbreaking sorrow God experienced when He saw Jesus die on the cross," Mother said sadly.

"I know how it feels to give someone a gift and have the person not appreciate it," Heather replied. "I guess that's what John is telling us when he writes, 'He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him' [John 1:11, NIV]," Heather said, nodding with new understanding. "God gave the world a gift that hardly anyone appreciated."

"That's right. Those people who really understood the Scriptures did recognize that Jesus was from God and that He was a very special gift sent to save them. They saw how kind and good and loving He was, and they knew that this Man must be from God," Mother added.

"So how much did this gift really cost? And how much do we have to pay for it?" Heather asked.

"That's the best part of all, Heather," Mom responded. "The price of the gift was the life of God's dear Son. But the cost to you and me is nothing. Just accept it, and it's yours—free of charge," Mother said, smiling.

"That's an offer I can't refuse!" Heather replied and folded her dish towel.

"I certainly agree with you." Mother smiled and closed her Bible.

KEY REFERENCES

- John 1:1-18
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 1, pp. 19-26
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 73-77; vol. 9, pp. 105-109
- Our Beliefs, nos. 1, 10, 11

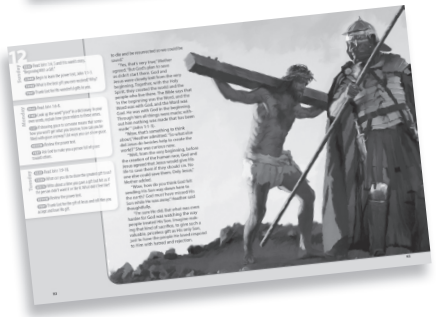
POWER TEXT

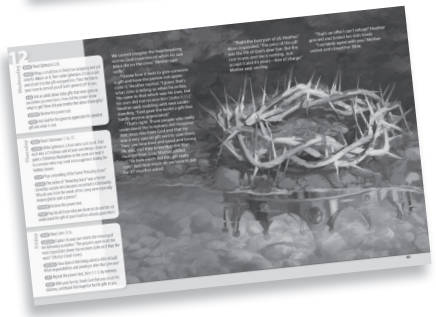
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3, NIV).

POWER POINT

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 89.

Sunday

READ Read John 1:4, 5 and this week's story, "Beginning With a Gift."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, John 1:1-3.

THINK What is the best gift you ever received? Why?

PRAY Thank God for His wonderful gifts to you.

Monday

READ Read John 1:6-8.

FIND Look up the word "grace" in a dictionary. In your own words, explain how grace relates to these verses.

LIST If showing grace to someone means that somehow you won't get what you deserve, how can you be filled with grace anyway? List ways you can show grace.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to make you a person full of grace toward others.

Tuesday

READ Read John 1:9-18.

THINK What can you do to share the greatest gift to us?

WRITE Write about a time you gave a gift but felt as if the person didn't want it or like it. What did it feel like?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for the gift of Jesus and tell Him you accept and love His gift.

Wednesday

READ Read Ephesians 2:8.

WRAP Wrap a small box in Christmas wrapping and put colorful ribbon on it. Then write Ephesians 2:8 on a card and attach it to the gift-wrapped box. Place the box in your room to remind you of God's greatest gift to you.

ASK Ask an adult about baby gifts that were given to you before you were born. How did the people know what to get? How did your mother feel about those gifts?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God for the grace to appreciate His greatest gift and what it cost.

Thursday

READ Read Colossians 1:16, 17.

SHARE Write Ephesians 2:8 on some cardstock. Fold each into a Christmas card of your own design. Draw or paint a Christmas illustration on the cover and mail it to someone who may need encouragement during the holiday season.

PLAY Play a recording of the hymn "Amazing Grace."

THINK The writer of "Amazing Grace" was a former slaveship captain who became converted to Christianity. Why do you think the words of this song were especially meaningful to such a person?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for all those who are slaves to sin and do not understand the gift of grace God has already given them.

Friday

READ Read John 3:16.

EXPLAIN Explain in your own words the meaning of the following quotation: "The gospel is open to all; the most respectable sinner has no more claim on it than the worst" (Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

DISCUSS How does it feel being called a child of God? What responsibilities and privileges does that give you?

SAY Repeat the power text, John 1:1-3, by memory.

PRAY With your family, thank God that you are all His children, and thank Him together for His gifts to you.