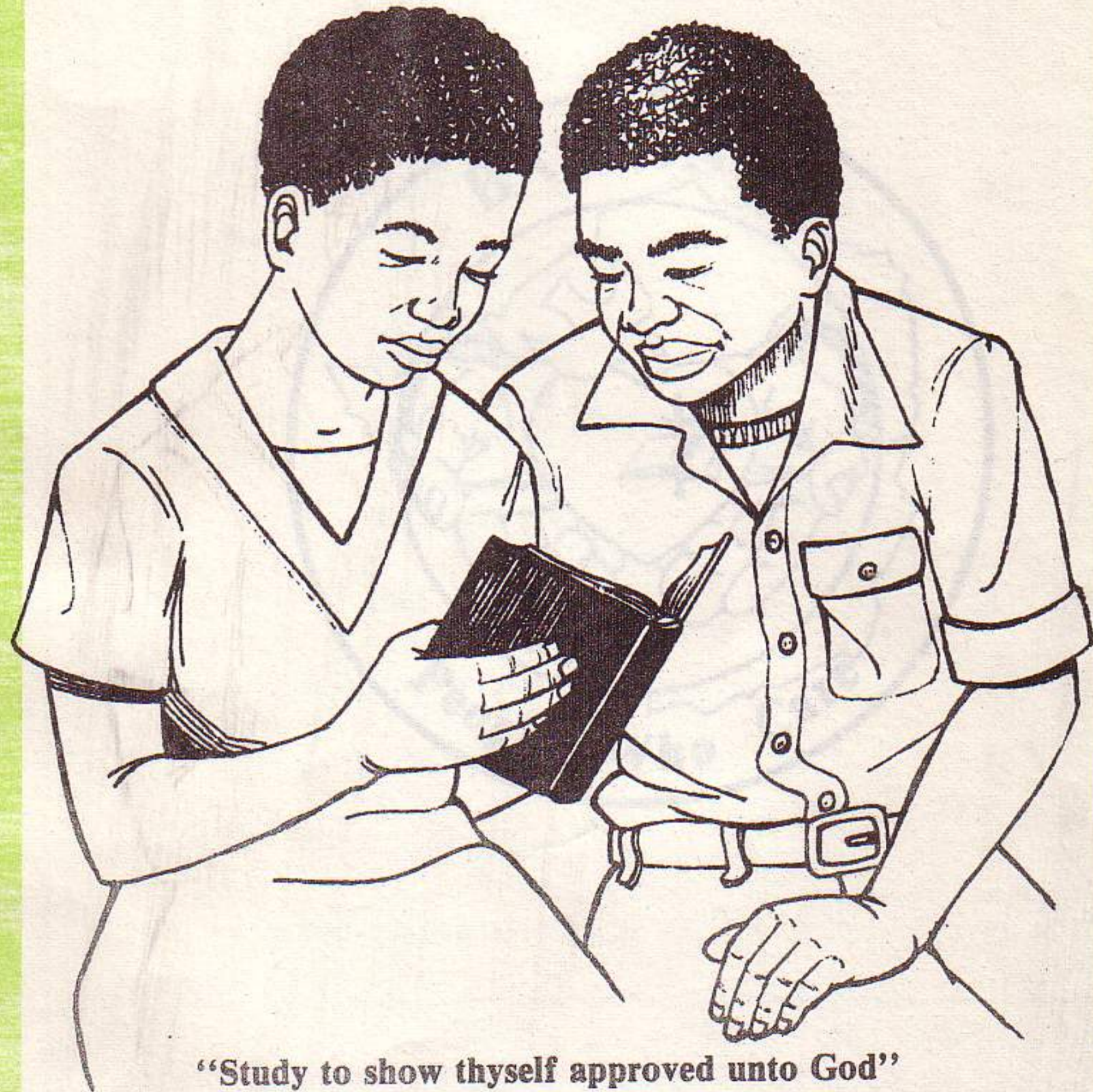


What it means to be a Christian.

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YOUNG PEOPLE TEACHER'S BOOK



"Study to show thyself approved unto God"
2 Timothy 2:15

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

Africa Coordinated Curriculum for Bible Study

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

TEACHER'S BOOK

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 1983

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON	TITLE
1	Who is A Christian?
2	How Does One Become a Christian?
3	Which is The True Religion?
4	How Can I Serve God?
5	What About Sin?
6	Who Can Be a Church Member?
7	Who Can Be a Deacon?
8	Who Can Be a Pastor?
9	How Does One Start a Church?
10	Why Should I Tithe?
11	Who Can I Share My Faith?
12	Who Can Be Great?
13	My Testimony

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is very important because becoming a Christian is the beginning of our walk by faith with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the very foundation of the Christian faith.

Teachers, you must be sure that you are able to teach these lessons from your own personal experience, otherwise, your teaching will mean nothing to the students.

You need to read through all of the lessons before you begin to teach even the first lesson, so that you will have an overall view of the quarter. Make notes as to when you need to make assignments ahead of time. Make all the preparations for your charts or assignments as outlined in this booklet. DO NOT WAIT until the morning you are to teach the lesson before you begin to make preparations.

SPECIAL NOTE: Many of the illustrations used in these lessons have been written by Teacher Semwayo at the Sanyati Primary School.

Lesson 1

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: John 3:1-21.

MEMORY VERSE:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Begin the lesson by asking the students to give their definitions for a Christian. Write these on a chalkboard. Discuss these and see how many meanings include what a person does or does not do.

A Christian is a believer, a follower of Christ. Make a list of the outward appearances of a person that is a Christian.

Be sure to point out that a Christian is not perfect, but that there has been a change on the inside.

"Communism can put a new coat on that poor man;
Christianity can put a new man in that ragged coat."

What is on the inside always manifests itself in outward expressions.

If there is an unsaved young person in the class, ask him or her to give their idea of the meaning of "Christian".

In closing the lesson, ask each student if he feels that he meets the requirements of the definitions given. Close in prayer asking God to draw each student closer to him and help him to understand there is to be a difference between him, **BECAUSE HE IS A CHRISTIAN, AND THE UNSAVED PERSON.**

Lesson 2

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Romans 10;
(Read also John 3:16-18;
10:27-29; 14:6.)

MEMORY VERSE:

"Because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

Revise again the definition of "Christian" as determined in last Sunday's lesson.

Ask the students to reflect back over their own personal acceptance of Christ. Discuss the steps that they followed in becoming a Christian.

Discuss such things as:

What changes came into their lives as a result of this action?

Was theirs an emotional experience or a very quiet one?

How did they know that they were saved?

Why did they come to Jesus to be saved?

Use this illustration:

"As a young man, Allen Stewart was greatly disturbed because he wasn't sure where he would spend eternity. A Christian friend, noting that he was under deep conviction of sin, counseled with him about his soul and told him he only had to believe on the Lord Jesus. But Stewart thought this was far too easy, so he decided to follow his own ideas. He joined a church, sang in the choir, and became a busy worker, hoping that through these efforts he would gain salvation. Yet nothing he did brought him inner satisfaction and joy. One day as he was reading Jesus' parable of the sower, he was troubled by the verse, "Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word of their hearts, LEST THEY should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12). As he thought about the last phrase, the truth suddenly came to him. 'Will you look at that!' he exclaimed. 'Even the devil knows that a man finds forgiveness if he just believes!' Thus awakened, he turned from his own works and accepted Christ. By trusting Jesus, Stewart at last found peace that he had so desperately sought."

There is no set pattern for becoming a Christian. There are no set outward emotional expressions that must come with this decision, but one must come to the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son. This is the only way (Acts 4:12).

God's Word is used by the Holy Spirit to convict a person of his sin and his need for salvation through Christ. Sometimes, even a sermon dealing with subjects other than salvation can be used to bring a person to Christ.

An example of this is a certain young man living in Bulawayo. He had a very responsible job and received a good salary. He was a heavy drinker and smoker and was very reckless with his money. One Sunday he attended a church service. The pastor's sermon that Sunday was on tithing. The pastor pointed out that God can take away all the riches of a person if that person is not doing God's will. The young man was deeply touched and knew that he was among those that were not doing God's will. He repented. Today, he is a changed man and serves the Lord in his church.

Close the lesson with prayer for unsaved friends. Be sure to call them by name.

Lesson 3

WHICH IS THE TRUE RELIGION?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: John 14:1-31.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the father, but by me'" (John 14:6).

As you study this lesson, keep pointing out, over and over again that Christianity is Christ, ONLY CHRIST. Not Christ plus something else, but only Christ. Taking another religion, and adding Christ to it does not make it Christianity. We cannot come to God except through Christ, and ONLY CHRIST.

Here are some guidelines to follow when witnessing to those of other religions:

1. Avoid criticism and belittling of the other person's religion.
2. Avoid defending Christianity.
3. Show Christ in his miraculous role as God-Man. This presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God, his teachings and sin-free life. His sacrificial death and significant and unique resurrection were also in God's plan for the salvation of mankind.
4. Stress individual commitment and personal reliance on Christ. Many people believe in an impersonal God and that all religions are of almost equal merit.
5. Stress that God has revealed himself most clearly in Jesus of Nazareth.
6. Stress the Heavenly Father as a loving God (see John 1:1-18.)
7. Speak in simple language, using modern translations if they are available, or in the language of the person to whom you

are witnessing.

Witnessing is an expression of Godly love which reaps many benefits for the witness. Exposure to new ideas, and different beliefs should result in deepened commitment to the Saviour as well as a more intelligent appreciation for the Christian faith.

No matter what other religion a person has, he must come to understand that only through Christ can he have salvation and everlasting life.

Close the class by praying for unsaved "religious" friends. Be sure to call them by name as you pray, and ask God for an opportunity to witness to them this coming week.

Make a chart on the chalkboard listing the ways we can serve God.

Include such things as:

- Learning about him in his word
- Finding his will through prayer
- Witnessing to others through baptism, church attendance, tithing, personal testimony
- Worshipping God

A survey has revealed how an average person uses his lifetime:

- 6 years spent in eating
- 11 years in working
- 5 1/2 years in washing and dressing
- 3 years in education
- 8 years in amusement
- 6 years in walking
- 3 years in reading
- 3 years in conversation
- 24 years in sleeping
- 6 MONTHS in worshipping God

We cannot serve the Lord unless we worship him.

In closing the lesson, encourage the students to worship the Lord more this coming week.

Lesson 5

WHAT ABOUT SIN?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Genesis 3:1-13; Romans 6:23.

MEMORY VERSE:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

On the chalkboard or on a piece of paper, write the word SIN in large letters.

Discuss the difference in sin and sins. Point out to your students that we sin because we have a sinful nature which we inherited from Adam and Eve because of their decision in the garden of Eden.

When the Bible speaks of the heart, it is referring to "the moral citadel (centre) of man's being". It is his true self, the deep, inner nature which produces first the seed of thought and then the fruit of action. The importance of guarding and inspecting what issues from the heart is of supreme significance. This subject is brought to our attention no less than 70 times in the book of Proverbs alone. The Bible teaches that environment and evil companions are involved in the formation of man's thoughts (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33). It places primary emphasis on our depraved and fallen nature as their source (Psalm 58:3; Romans 3:1-18,23). It reveals that every human heart is "...deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt..." (Jeremiah 17:9).

An analogy from nature brings home this truth in a most striking way. No doubt you have occasionally seen an apple with a wormhole in it. But did you ever wonder whether the worm began to bore from the inside or from the outside? Well, scientists tell us IT BEGAN ON THE INSIDE! They say that the egg is laid in the blossom, and that after the wiggly, undesirable little creature hatches in the core, it eats its way to the skin. The worm of sin

operates the same way, from the inside out!

Although Christ has fully paid the penalty for our wrong doing and we have been born again, we will not be completely free from the sinful tendencies of the flesh until we stand perfect in his presence. We must strive diligently to live in holy obedience to our Lord. Remember, there is a 'worm' in the 'apple' of our hearts!

Close the lesson with a prayer of thanksgiving that Jesus came and died to forgive our sins.

Lesson 6

WHO CAN BE A CHURCH MEMBER?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Ephesians 6:10-17.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might" (Ephesians 6:10).

The Church:

1. The church of the living God is a body of baptized BELIEVERS voluntarily banded together for the purpose of preaching the gospel to all the world.
2. The church is a very important institution. In the eyes of God it is the most important organization on earth (Psalm 87:2).
3. As is said of baptism, it must also be said of the church regardless of its importance and value to God, church membership will not save anyone.
4. No one is saved because he joins the church. Neither can a person be as good a Christian outside the church as he can in the church.
5. Something is wrong with a person who claims Christ as Saviour who refuses to join the church.
6. Remember church membership is a God given privilege but is not essential to salvation. Some say that membership in the church is essential to salvation but the Bible does not say this.

Why Joining the Church is Important:

1. Because it is taught in the Bible and was practiced by New Testament converts (Acts 2:47).
2. Because Jesus added converts to the Apostolic church (Acts 2:47).
3. Because Jesus established the church and wants it built up by every believer (1 Peter 2:5).
4. Because in the church we become labourers together with God (1 Corinthians 3:9).
5. Because in the church we can have fellowship with God's people (Acts 2:42).

6. Because no believer can honour the Lord outside the church.
7. Because the greatest source of strength and joy and teaching comes from the church and the opportunity to get on God's side in the world is provided in church membership.

How a Saved Person Should Feel Toward the Church:

1. Cherish the church as the greatest organization on earth and a high privilege to be a part of it. Acts 2:41-47 shows that the Apostles felt this way.
2. Love the church like Christ does' (Ephesians 5:25).
3. Put the Church first above all clubs and organizations (Matthew 6:33).
4. Remember, you need the church far more than the church needs you. The church will go on without any one person, but no person can go on without the church.
5. Matthew 5:6.

Close the lesson with prayer thanking God for the church.

Lesson 7

WHO CAN BE A DEACON?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Acts 6:1-6; Acts 8:26-40;
1 Timothy 3:8-13.

MEMORY VERSE:

"For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 3:13).

How much more should the church expect of the deacon in personal commitment than it expects of other members?

An isolated admonition of the apostle Paul may be the best answer to this inquiry. In 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul writes to Timothy: "...set the believers an example". This principle applies to all Christians, but it can be of special reinforcement to one who serves as deacon. Men and women and boys and girls are always looking for examples, and in the Baptist fellowship the deacon is often expected to fill this role.

The deacon who sets a worthy example for others to follow is achieving one of the major purposes of a Christian. He is fulfilling the expectations of those who felt he was worthy to "walk circumspectly" before the people.

In this admonition to Timothy, Paul listed the areas in which the example is to be set; "...in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity; all areas which are a part of the personal life of a man".

The deacon must set the example in family life. The neglect of the home is no joking matter. 1 Timothy 3, makes clear that one qualification of both deacons and preachers is exemplary family life.

"Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own house well" (1 Timothy 3:12). He assumes responsibility for a programme of family worship in his home. He leads his family to worship and serve in the church. His home is a testimony to the transforming power of Christ in family life.

The deacon must set the example in accepting responsibility. What should a church expect of its deacons? The New Testament does not answer all our questions about the first deacons, but it does

make three things clear: (1) they were chosen by the highest Christian standards; (2) theirs was a humble service; (3) they performed a spiritual ministry.

The deacon must set the example in business life. This is a high calling. It deserves the best that is within us, especially in the world of our everyday business relations. Not only does such commitment bring genuine, personal rewards, it has spiritual compensations as well: "Those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:13).

The deacon must set the example in visitation.

The deacon must set the example in personal evangelism. Refer to Acts 8:30,35. No deacon should be satisfied with anything less than his best as a soul-winner for Christ's sake.

The deacon must set the example in support of the total church programme.

After discussing all of these, close the class session by praying for each of the deacons in your church. Be sure to call them by name as you pray for them.

Lesson 8

WHO CAN BE A PASTOR?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

MEMORY VERSE:

"And he sat down and called the twelve, and he said to them, 'If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all' " (Mark 9:35).

As you discuss the qualifications of a preacher or pastor, list these on a chart or chalkboard. Point out any differences in the qualifications of a pastor and those of the deacon.

After this discussion, think and talk of ways that you may help your pastor and be an encouragement to him. Perhaps there are some in your class who are thinking of answering the call of God to be a preacher or a pastor.

Not long ago a well-meaning group of laymen came from a neighbouring church to see a certain church leader. They wanted advice on some painless method of getting rid of their pastor.

Here are his suggestions:

Look him straight in the eye while he's preaching and say "Amen" once in a while, and he will preach much better in a few weeks.

Start paying him a living wage.

Re-dedicate your own life to Christ and ask the preacher to give you a job to do, preferably the name of some lost person to whom you could witness.

Get the church to unite in prayer for the preacher.

One minister lists three common problems most preachers face today: the temptation to be lazy, complaining, or proud. We must not demand perfection in God's servants. They have a big enough assignment to follow all the important pointers for pastors that we have studied today. Pray that they will possess these essential scriptural qualities and be spared the pitfalls of laziness, self-pity, and pride.

Close the class session with prayer for each of the pastors in our country, and especially for your pastor. Sometime during the day or the coming week, speak that word of encouragement to him that he needs to hear from you.

Lesson 9

HOW DOES ONE START A CHURCH?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Acts 2:1-4; Matthew 7:24-27;
Acts 7:47-50.

MEMORY VERSE:

"And on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

It is most important that you help your students to understand that when we think of building a church, we are not talking about a building or a church house, but of the body of Christ, the group of believers.

At the beginning of the class time, give each of the members a piece of paper and pencil and ask them to write down one thing that they would do if they were going to start a church in a community where there was not a church.

After you have read all of the scriptures in the lesson for today, then read, discuss and compose a list of these suggestions in the order in which they should be done.

Here is a good example: Not far from Gutu Baptist Church there is an area called Goko. When the first Baptist church was built in this area, all the surrounding places such as Goko, Machingambi, Chinyika still had no one to help them. In 1964, the Gutu Baptist Church was well established. A certain man from Goko attended Sunday services at Gutu. When he had attended for a time, he was then baptized and became a church member. He asked his pastor if he could start a group of worshipers at Goko instead of always going to attend services at Gutu Baptist Church. He worked hard to have the group and all the pastor had to do was to come once in awhile. The Goko group of Christians increased in number and instead of having one man to take charge of the service every Sunday, they had several and had to rotate. After an enquiry class by the Gutu church, these people were baptized. Then the man who had started this preaching point asked the pastor if they could become a church. There was no objection from the pastor and the mother church.

Now, what were the things that this new preaching point had to do in order to begin? What did the new Christian from Goko have to do to get it all organized? These and other questions will help you make up your list.

Do you know of a community that does not have any worship services? What will you as a group do about it?

How do you feel about your own church? Think about this article with your students as you read it to them:

WHY I LOVE THE CHURCH

"It is the altar of my faith where I offer sacrifice to God. It is the sanctuary of my worship in whose holy place I seek the presence of God.

It is a retreat amid the cares of the world where I renew my strength at the fountain of life.

It is a refuge amid the temptations and fears of life.

It is the birthplace of faith and hope and love, and the cradle of peace and good will and brotherhood.

It is in the church that I find Christ, hear his word, read and learn the way of life more perfectly.

It is in the body of the church that I feel the fellowship of a more blessed life, and find the pure friendships that spring from its faith.

It is the church that calls me to better living, and shows me the way of service through its unselfish ministries.

'Christ loved the church and gave himself for it,' and surely it is worthy of my best love and loyalty.

Because I love my church and him who gave himself for it, I will give my time, my talents, my money to its world programme."

Close this session with prayer for your church. Mention the needs of your church as you pray.

Lesson 10

WHY SHOULD I TITHE?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Malachi 3:8-12; Mark 12:41-44.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing" (Malachi 3:10).

Begin the lesson by asking for personal testimonies concerning tithing and how the Lord has blessed those who do tithe.

First, as a teacher, you cannot really, sincerely teach this lesson unless you yourself are a tither. If you have never tithed, as you study the scriptures for this lesson, let God speak to you about what he wants you to do and how he wants to bless you.

One pastor suggests ten good reasons why we should tithe:

1. The Bible teaches it.
2. Tithing acknowledges God's ownership of all things.
3. Tithing proves where your heart is.
4. Tithing helps to overcome selfishness. It replaces pagan covetousness.
5. Tithing allows a man to worship God not only with what he is, but with what he has. It is an act of worship.
6. Tithing provides a way to show one's appreciation to God for what he has done.
7. It is a practice every Christian can follow.
8. It is an investment that guarantees dividends.
9. You will grow as a Christian.

10. God will bless you for it.

Do more than think about it...pray about it.

Close the class session by thanking God for your jobs and the privilege to tithe back to him.

Lesson 11

HOW CAN I SHARE MY FAITH?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: John 1:41-46; Isaiah 55:10,11;
Matthew 28:19,20.

MEMORY VERSE:

"So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it"
(Isaiah 55:11).

Early in the week, enlist members of your class and form two groups. One group will demonstrate the incorrect way to witness and the other group will demonstrate the correct way to witness. During the week, the two groups can work out their actions and conversation and be prepared to do this before the class on Sunday.

Then, discuss the rights and wrongs of witnessing. After this, discuss the different WAYS in which we witness.

Here is a good example of sharing our faith:

At one time there was a trio in the Kwekwe Baptist Church. This group sang so well that many people admired it. They visited other churches in the area and shared their music with all of the congregations. Many people came to hear this group sing; many that would not come and listen to a preacher. In the church, the attendance increased and many were baptized. Some church members asked if they might join the trio, so a choir was formed. It was led by the pastor, and then later by another member. The trio continued to sing along with the choir and often offerings were given to the entire choir, which was used to buy uniforms. They were blessed because they shared Jesus with others.

Encourage the students to mark their Bibles, underlining the verses that will help them witness to their friends about Christ. Everyone is important and must be witnessed to for Jesus.

Urge your class members to make a list of their lost friends and to pray for them by name daily. Begin now.

Lesson 12

WHO CAN BE GREAT?

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Jonah 4:11; Matthew 20:20-28;
1 Corinthians 12:4-21.

MEMORY VERSE:

"And then the king shall answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' " (Matthew 25:40).

When we speak of being great, we must ask ourselves the question, "Great in the eyes of whom, God or men?"

Although God may choose prominent and well-known individuals as his servants, the people most mightily used are those who are considered least in the eyes of the world. This was true of Amos, a humble herdsman, who spoke the significant words, "I am no prophet...but I am an herdsman...and the Lord took me" (Amos 7:14,15). Through this obscure farm lad God gave amazing prophecies about Israel's dispersion and regathering. His background, natural gifts, and accomplishments hardly qualified Amos to be listed as an important man of his day, but because of his consecrated life, the Lord accomplished great things through him.

Davis was just a boy tending sheep when God commanded Samuel to anoint him king. Peter and Andrew were fishermen of Galilee when Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men". Abram belonged to an idolatrous family Ur of the Chaldeans when he heard the Divine call; yet by submitting to the power of the Almighty, he became the father of a nation.

If we think God can accomplish great things only through highly talented individuals, we deny the marvel of his sovereign grace. Sometimes we say about a certain gifted person, "If he were only a Christian, how God could use his tremendous talents!" But the heavenly Father does not save and call people because of their merits or superb abilities.

Friend, rejoice in the grace of our Lord, and realize that nothing in you, absolutely nothing, deserves his salvation. Then yield every talent you possess to him. The God who used Amos can use you!

God often uses small matches to light great torches!

Close the session with prayer that each one may have a desire to be great ONLY in the eyes of God.

Lesson 13

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Acts 22:1-22; 26:1-29.

The most important testimony that one can give is to tell exactly how he came to know the Lord Jesus as his own personal Saviour.

"Most of us will never influence thousands. Our lives may touch only a small circle of people. But this should not discourage us, for God uses the witness of ordinary believers where they are. A simple testimony can be a powerful force in bringing others to Christ.

The most effective sermons are often delivered when one man is the preacher and one man is the congregation."

Ask the students to give their testimonies that they have prepared. Try to get them to write it out according to the outline as given in their booklets.