Responding to God's Grace
The Combined Teacher’s Guide
FALL QUARTER 2019
SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER

Christian Education Department
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Faith Liberating Studies Teacher’s Guide  
Fall Quarter  
September 2019 – November 2019  
Prepared by Rev. Dr. D. Melynda Clarke  
Quarter’s Name: Responding to God’s Grace

Lesson 1  
September 1, 2019  
Faith and Doubt

Devotional Reading: Luke 17:22, 26-37
Lesson Scripture: Genesis 18:16–19:29  
Focus Scripture: Genesis 19:1, 15-26, 29

Key Verse: So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, which he overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled. Genesis 19:29

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Be cognizant and discerning of the world’s wickedness and be drawn from its temptations.
2. Have an increasing regard and compassion for the vulnerable lives that are at risk in evil settings.
3. Promote a sense of advocacy for others through faithful prayer and intercession.

Key Terms
• **Blinding light** – An extraordinary flash that temporarily dazed the wicked men and revealed to Lot the true nature of his guests.
• **Overthrew** – This term, lit., “turned upside down,” is used consistently to describe the destruction of the cities of the Plain.
• **Zoar** – A small place, the Hebrew word *misar*, lit., “a little thing,” has the same root consonants as the name of the town Zoar in v. 22.

Teaching Strategies
This quarter will lead participants into a deeper understanding of
the meaning of God’s faithfulness and the possible responses by God’s chosen disciples.

For Lesson 1, consider the following:

- Remember your participants may have viewpoints from different backgrounds, cultures, and generational perspectives. Therefore, some may have perceptions of this text as a judgment God placed upon alternative lifestyles and sexuality. The emphasis is not to judge or identify a person or specific sinful behavior as a reason for tragedy and/or destruction. Instead, attempt to maintain that God’s mercy is necessary for all, and even Lot and his family were vulnerable to God’s wrath. Focus on the need for prayer, intercession, and compassion when others are suffering.

- Use this story to illustrate God’s sovereignty. Provide an alternative perspective by presenting God’s love for humanity in sacrificing his son, Jesus, whose punishment was completely undeserved.

- Bring the discussion to a place where intercessory prayer can occur for others who have not accepted Jesus Christ, or who are living in environments where they are drawn into sinful habits. Use this time to pray for the local church as a whole, to become passionate about souls being saved from destruction.

- Have a large jar and strips of paper or small post-it notes available. Have the members write on individual notes, the specific sins and crimes against God that are prevalent in our world today. Fold them, place them in the jar, and seal the top. Label the jar, “The Prayer for Deliverance,” and take time to reference the jar in your closing prayer and future Sunday prayers.
Questions

- Ask the members of the group to consider a time in their life when someone interceded for them in prayer. Inquire whether there were significant changes that led to their deliverance or the deliverance and salvation of others.
- What are the consequences of failing to respond to God’s instruction to repent from sin? Why haven’t more people accepted Jesus Christ?

Closing Devotions

Closing Song of Praise:
“I Need You to Survive,” Hezekiah Walker or “Lead Me, Guide Me,” AME Hymnal #378

Closing Prayer:
Help me, God…

To realize it is in being crippled that I learn to cling, and in limping that I learn to lean.

That victory comes not in how courageously I struggle, but in how completely I surrender, and that this is how I am to grow, by being defeated, decisively, by constantly greater things.

Help me to understand that your power is perfected in weakness, so that when I am rendered weak, you are given the opportunity to be shown strong.

Help me to understand, too, that “more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of, for so the whole round earth is every way bound in chains about the feet of God.”

Ken Gire, Windows of the Soul
The Secret Chamber – A Daily Devotional; April – June 2018

Resources: The Holy Bible – New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and Bible Commentary, AME hymnals, laptop with projector or large screen; access to Internet and YouTube, strips of paper or Post-It notes; empty jar.
Lesson 2    September 8, 2019

God Answers Prayer

Devotional Reading: Psalm 99
Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10
Focus Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:9-20
Key Verse: Then Eli answered, “Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you made to him.” 1 Samuel 1:17

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Reveal how God is faithful in responding to those who seek God.
2. Encourage believers to release matters of great importance into God’s hands.
3. Develop unrelenting faith that an unanswered prayer is still part of God’s master plan.

Key Terms
• Humble, Humility – Having or showing a modest or low estimate of one’s own importance.

Teaching Strategies
This lesson is designed to encourage people who have long awaited a positive response to their prayers. Many Christians face hardships and disappointments such as chronic illnesses, financial losses, and family troubles. Hannah’s story gives examples of how even the most faithful and obedient of God’s servants may still face continued disappointments while others appear to continuously be blessed. After God answers Hannah’s prayer, there is the commitment made to dedicate the first-born son, a tradition found in the Law of Moses (Exodus 13:2, 12-13, 15; Numbers 18:15-16). A pledge to God is intended to show one’s obedience and love to God. In modern days, the sacrificial tithe and offerings are just the beginning. Challenge members to identify blessings that God has faithfully bestowed into their lives that could be given back as part of ministry and building God’s kingdom.

Questions
1. What are examples of God’s answers to your prayers? What are the challenges that you faced when waiting? Consider Hannah’s pain as described in verse 10.

2. Compare how other women in scripture were blessed with an anointed child, who also returned the child to do God’s work. Examples include Sarah (Isaac), Elizabeth (John the Baptist), and Mary (Jesus).

**Closing Devotions**

**Closing Song of Praise:** “Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul”

**Closing Prayer:** Elohim, you created me. You promised in your Word that you would be with me and watch over wherever I go. You are the God who keeps his promises, always and forevermore. Today, Lord, I pray for patience. I pray for a superior and unrelenting willingness to trust you, oh God, even when I am feeling forgotten, confused, abandoned, and immersed in doubt rather than faith. Yet, you are still God, Elohim, the one who answers the unanswered prayers. I stand in faith in the morning light, knowing my faith will carry me through until my blessing comes. Help me to remember your goodness and dedicate that blessing back to you. In the matchless name of your Son, Jesus, the Christ I joyfully say AMEN!

By Reverend Dr. D. Melynda Clarke inspired by Genesis 28:15

**Resources:** The Holy Bible – New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and Bible Commentary, laptop with projector or large screen; access to Internet and YouTube; African American Heritage Hymnal; African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Hymnal.
Lesson 1   September 1, 2019

In the Beginning, God

Focus Scripture: Genesis 1:1-5, 27-29; 2:1-4
Key Verse: This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. Genesis 2:4 (CEB)

Bible Background

• Many scholars claim that Genesis 1:1 to 2:4 was written by someone from the priestly tradition. This priestly writer described creation with harmony and beauty, intending to inspire the people of Israel to praise and worship their Creator.

• The opening chapters of Genesis are not intended to be read as science or as history. Rather, these chapters are a poem of praise to God and are intended to express awe and wonder toward God.

• The repetitive phrasing and formal structure are key parts of the Creation story. Each act of creation follows the same pattern: God speaks a command; the command is accomplished; God sees that it is good.

• The Creation story found in Genesis 1:1 to 2:4 is written in such a way that it contests the widely head and ancient belief that the world was ruled by many gods who had domain over different aspects of the world. In the Creation story, all of the power is found in the one true God.

Take-Away
God, the one God of all creation, created the world and all that is in it.

Lesson 2   September 8, 2019

God Creates Humankind

Focus Scripture: Genesis 2:4, 7, 15-18, 21-25
Key Verse: Then the Lord God said, “It’s not good that the human is
alone.” Genesis 2:18 (CEB)

Bible Background

- The second chapter of Genesis is a retelling of the same Creation story told in chapter 1—but with a different intention.
- In the same way that scholars believe Genesis 1 was written by the P source, many scholars claim that Genesis 2 was written by the J source, which was based on the oral tradition of Israel.
- Unlike the formal, repetitive structure found throughout chapter 1, the second chapter reads as a dramatic narrative and feels more natural, the way one would actually tell a story.
- Genesis 2-3 utilizes a number of puns and plays on words, a key characteristic of Hebrew literature. The name of the first human, Adam, is a play on the Hebrew word for humankind, adam, and also alludes to the substance from which he is formed, adamuh, the claylike soil of the region.
- This creation account describes God in terms that would be appropriate for a human person. God is depicted as physically present on earth rather than being a transcendent entity.

Listening

If you feel it would be helpful, let the students take notes during class, and tell them to use them freely for this exercise.

Take-Away

God created humans for community, to be in relationship with God and with one another.
Responding to God’s Grace

Lesson 1

Faith and Doubt

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 18:16–19:29
Focus Scripture: Genesis 19:1,15-26, 29

Key Verse: So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, which he overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled. Genesis 19:29

Lesson Goals: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:
1. Understand the reasons why Lot and his family were spared during the destruction of Sodom.
2. Reflect on a time when they felt fearful over an impending disaster.
3. Celebrate God’s deliverance from difficult circumstances.

VOCABULARY

- Gateway – The entrance into the city.
- Consumed – Destroyed.
- Lingered – Hesitated.
- Merciful – To be compassionate towards someone.
- Flee – To escape, run swiftly.
- Overthrow – To defeat, put an end to.
- Pillar – Something tall.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Have the class search “Sodom” and “Gomorrah” on their electronic
devices to reveal more information on the cities.

2. Unleavened bread is eaten today during Passover celebration in remembrance of the Israelites escaping slavery in Egypt. They did not add yeast because they fled Egypt so quickly.

**HELPFUL FACTS**

1. This area where Sodom and Gomorrah is located is southeast of the Dead Sea and is an arid desert region with extensive sulfur and other mineral deposits. The Common English Bible indicates that sulfur is better translated as asphalt (19:24), and asphalt deposits are found on the southern shore of the Dead Sea.

2. Discuss the sins that caused God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Be careful not to take up most of the class time discussing sexual sins.

3. In 19:3, unleavened bread is bread baked without yeast. By serving unleavened bread, Lot demonstrated he was a righteous man unlike the men of Sodom (2 Peter 2:7).

4. Some theologians believe Lot was not a man of faith because of his actions. Divide the class into two groups. One group will argue: “What actions prove Lot was not a man of faith?” The second group will argue: “What actions prove Lot was a man of faith?”

5. Discuss Lot’s wife actions that caused her to die. Ask: “How can we become more obedient to God?” “What are the consequences of disobedience?”

6. Be sensitive towards those students who are questioning their sexuality.

**Resources:** Electronic device

**Lesson 2**

**God Answers Prayer**

**Lesson Scripture:** 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10

**Focus Scripture:** 1 Samuel 1:9-20
Key Verse: Then Eli answered, “Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him.” 1 Samuel 1:17

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Hear about Hannah’s desperate pleas with God for a child, and God’s response.
2. Reflect on a time students pled with God to answer their prayers and God responded.
3. Pray at all times, knowing God hears and will respond according to God’s will for our lives.

VOCABULARY
• Distressed – To feel troubled.
• Vow – A promise.
• Vexation – To feel irritation, sorrow.
• Petition – A request.
• Favor – To extend grace and kindness.
• Countenance – The appearance of the face.
• Conceive – To become pregnant.

TEACHING STRATEGIES
1. Ask for three volunteers to play the roles of Hannah, Elkanah, and the narrator.
2. Using a Bible dictionary or electronic device, let the class research women who were barren and God miraculously enabled them to conceive.
3. Print copies of *The Lord’s Prayer* for the class, if no Bibles are available. After the students read the prayer, allow them time to discuss it. Using a Bible Commentary, research the Lord’s Prayer to have more in-depth understanding of each verse. Challenge each student to memorize the Lord’s Prayer.
4. Be sensitive towards students who may be enduring bullying.
5. Be sensitive towards students who may feel bitterness towards God
because of prayers that were not answered.
6. Let students share testimonies of answered prayers to encourage one another.

**Answers:** 1. Sarah mother of Isaac; 2. Mother of Samson; 3. Elizabeth mother of John the Baptist.

**HELPFUL FACTS**
1. Each year Elkanah and his family had to travel from their home in Ramah to Shiloh where they worshipped and offered sacrifices at God’s tabernacle.
2. If a wife could not bear children, she was obliged to give her husband one of her servant girls to do so.
3. Under civil law, Elkanah could have divorced Hannah, but he chose to stay with her. He was devoted to his wife in spite of the social stigma.
4. Hannah made a Nazirite vow, which parents could take for their unborn children. The Nazirite vow meant the child was set apart for special service to God. Nazarite vows did not permit cutting hair or drinking wine. The vow Hannah made to God was for life, not temporary like some others.
5. Hannah’s name means “grace” or “favor.”

**Resources:** Copies of *The Lord’s Prayer*
The Teacher’s Guide  
Junior Lessons  
Spring Quarter: September - November 2019  
Prepared by  
Rev. Tashara S. Void  
Responding to God’s Grace  
Lesson 1  
September 1, 2019  
God’s Got My Back!  

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 18:16-19:29  
Focus Scripture: Genesis 18:22b (begin with “Abraham remained standing”) 33; 19:29  
Key Verse: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” Genesis 18:25

Lesson Goals: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:  
1. Learn about Abraham’s intervention with God.  
2. Recall how the children felt when someone stood up for them.  
3. Plan and carry out ways to help others.

Word Power!!!  
• Slay – To destroy.  
• Fare – To live.  
• Overthrow – Put an end to something.

Teaching Strategies  
Open the lesson with the *Got My Back?!* Activity.  

*Got My Back?!* Read the following statements. If you stand up for the person in the story, check thumbs up (👍). If you do not, check thumbs down (👎).  

1. The new student is sitting alone. You go over and start a conversation.
( ) or ( )

2. The new person comes into church. You go over and greet them during the fellowship moment in service. 👍 or 👎

3. Some older students take the video controllers away from a younger child. You get another controller and play with the younger child. (👍) or (👎)

4. Your cousin is about to get in trouble for something someone else did. You tell the adult. (👍) or (👎)

5. Your friends are joking about one of your classmate’s shoes. You don’t join in the teasing, but you laugh at their jokes. (👍) or (👎)

After reading Into God’s Word!!!, go into the What Would You Do? activity.

Scenarios: (Lead the class in discussion)

1. Your classmate has been waiting all day for lunch to come because s(he) is starving. When it’s time to go to lunch, s(he) realizes that it is not there. What would you do?

2. There is a person in your school who is always mean to others. S(he) always bumps people when they walk by and calls them names. S(he) knocks stuff out of their hands and makes them feel bad. What would you do?

3. On your way to school, you notice one of your schoolmates has pink bubblegum all over the back of her/his pants. All the kids are pointing and laughing, but your classmate does not know why. What would you do?

4. You are taking a test and the person beside you asks for your help. S(he) wants to know what you put for question number two. What would you do?

(Feel free to add any others that you may think of.) Make sure to have the students discuss why they would respond the way they said.
Have the students complete the Remix!!! and Praise God!!! sections, allowing all who are willing to share their answers.

Closing Prayer: God, thank you for having our back! Give us the courage to have someone else’s back by standing up for them when they are in need. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Resources: None.

Lesson 2 September 8, 2019
God Is With Us When We Pray
Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10
Focus Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:9-20
Key Verse: Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said I have asked him of the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:20

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Hear about Hannah’s plea to God for a child and God’s answer to her prayer.
2. Remember ways God has answered the children’s prayers.
3. Pray with confidence that God is listening to them.

Word Power!!!
- Distressed – Extreme pain or hurt.
- Quarters – Rented house.
- Misery – Feeling of distress.
- Nazirite – An Israelite who took a special kind of promise to serve God by doing certain things.
- Vexation – Annoyance, anger, or worry.
- Petition – A written (or verbal) request asking authority to look into a cause further.
- Bitterly – Something done in an angry or very painful way.
• **Countenance** – A person’s face or facial expression.
• **Intoxicant** – A substance causing someone to misbehave or behave strangely.

**Teaching Strategies**
Before class begins, select two students (a female and a male) to play “Hannah” and “Eli.” Begin the class with **Getting Ready!!!**, asking the students what is something they need really badly. (You probably should make certain the learners understand the difference between a “want” and a “need.” You may also need to be aware that some of the learners may be uncomfortable sharing aloud what they really need. Please respect that.) Once everyone who wishes to do so has shared, read the biblical passage and have “Hannah” and “Eli” act out the scene.

Ask the students to describe what they see, how they believe Hannah felt while she was praying, when Eli accused her of being drunk, and when she learned she was going to get what she was praying for.


Ask the students:
Who/What do you want to pray for?
Where can you pray for it/them?
When can you pray for it/them?
Why do you want to pray for it/them?
How do you pray?

After the discussion, read the statement, *Hannah did not care how her prayer made her look. Her only concern was getting God to hear her, so she would stop getting teased. Sometimes, prayer will not be easy, but if you take your concerns to God, he will hear you.*

Prayer Chain Links – The students will write their prayers on the strips of paper, and then staple them together to create a chain link. Allow students to decorate the links however they choose. Hang the
prayer chain in the classroom as a reminder that God will hear their prayers. End with the prayer.

**Closing Prayer:** God, thank you for hearing my prayer. The same way you provided a child for Hannah, please provide me with what I need and desire. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Resources:** Strips of construction paper, stapler, crayons/colored pencils