

**BIBLE  
STUDIES  
FOR LIFE.®**

## Advanced Bible Study

TEACHER GUIDE | SPRING 2021 | CSB

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**STUDY 1:**

*Essentials of  
Christianity*

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**STUDY 2:**

*How to Share Christ*

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## LEADING SOMEONE TO THE GREATEST DECISION OF ALL

One of the great joys of leading a group in Bible study is seeing group members deepen their walk with Christ. Everyone's walk with Christ begins with an initial decision to follow Him in repentance and faith. There may be people in your group who have not made that decision yet. Take advantage of your time with them to talk about becoming a Christian.

As you tell your own story about coming to Christ, share these key truths:

1. We are all sinners, and each of us needs to acknowledge before God that we are sinners. That acknowledgement involves repentance, which is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Refer to Romans 3:23; 6:23; and Acts 3:19.
2. The only way a person can receive the gift of forgiveness is by faith in Jesus as God's Son. Use verses like Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; and John 14:6 when talking about faith in Christ.
3. Confessing your faith in Jesus Christ means confessing Him as Savior and Lord. Share Romans 10:9-10,13.

Invite the person to pray a prayer similar to this:

**“Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I'm sorry for all the wrong I've done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen.”**

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### EXTRA!

Every week, you'll find additional discussion questions and creative teaching ideas to help you tailor each session to the needs of your group. You'll also find links to magazine articles and the *Family Connection* page for parents.

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### FAMILY CONNECTION

*Family Connection* helps parents connect with their students and kids by talking about what they're learning in their different Bible study groups. *Family Connection* makes it easy for parents to engage their children in spiritual conversation. *Family Connection* is available at **BibleStudiesforLife.com/FamilyConnection**.

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## HOW TO USE

### WHAT'S INSIDE

**Teaching Plan**—Each session has a two-page teaching plan. Use it in accordance with Advanced Bible Study, utilizing the teaching outline to guide your class through the passage and its key emphases as detailed in the Advanced Bible Study commentary. Engage class members by leading a discussion of key points, asking questions, and inviting their insights.

**Optional Idea**—We learn in a variety of ways. This additional teaching idea will encourage your class members to use different senses, enhancing their learning and deepening their understanding.

**Dig Deeper**—This is an illustration or fact not readily drawn from the passage that can add depth and meaning as you teach.

### PRAY

Because the Holy Spirit is the guide for your study, invite Him to show you how to “rightly divide the word of truth” as you teach your class. Read the Bible passage several times, asking the Holy Spirit to show you its meaning and application.

### PREPARE YOUR CLASS MEMBERS

Encourage your class members to read Advanced Bible Study prior to class time. In addition, you may consult one of the following Personal Study Guides or commentaries:

- ▶ Herschel Hobbs Commentary
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Young Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Senior Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: KJV Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Daily Discipleship Guide

Some class members may prefer to read their book after class as a way to follow up and reflect on what they have learned and discussed.

# Introduction

## ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

When we compare world religions, we quickly see that we are far apart in our beliefs and worldviews. Some people attempt to find a common ground by declaring, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, so long as you sincerely believe it.” But what we believe does matter! Our beliefs make a difference both now and for eternity. This study looks at the core truths central to the Christian faith. Without these truths, life loses all meaning and hope. But within these core truths, we discover the character of God, the nature and work of Christ, who we are, and where we are going—truths that point us to a right relationship with God.

### How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan:

**Exercise Faith.** Within the pages of Scripture, God has revealed truth, the core things that define Christianity. Knowing these truths is more than an academic exercise; as we trust what God has revealed to us, our faith impacts how we live both now and for eternity.

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**SESSION 1****The Nature of God****THE POINT**

God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE**

Today's automobile is complicated, yet we simply jump in the driver's seat and go. We can enjoy the journey even if we don't understand every aspect of an internal combustion engine. Christians have struggled to understand the doctrine of the Trinity for thousands of years. But, just as we drive cars without fully comprehending how they work, we can embrace and trust the truth that God is one in essence, but exists in three distinct Persons.

**JOHN 14:8-11,16-20,23-26**

<sup>8</sup> "Lord," said Philip, "show us the Father, and that's enough for us."<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time and you do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"<sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who lives in me does his works.<sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves. [ ... ]<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.<sup>17</sup> He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you.<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you."<sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too.<sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. [ ... ]<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.<sup>24</sup> The one who doesn't love me will not keep my words. The word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me."<sup>25</sup> "I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you."<sup>26</sup> But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

# Teaching Plan

## GET INTO THE STUDY

**OPENING QUESTION:** *What is something you use—and appreciate—even when you don't thoroughly understand how it works?*

- ▶ We successfully use apps, dishwashers, GPS systems, computers, automobiles, and more. However, we don't always know and completely understand what makes these things work.
- ▶ God has revealed Himself to us as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Theologians call this the Trinity.
- ▶ Display **Pack Item 1: Essentials of Christianity** poster, to introduce the theme of this study, along with the focus of each session.

## STUDY THE BIBLE

### JOHN 14:8-11

**To know Jesus, the Son of God, is to know the Father.**

*Jesus taught what God is like through His words.*

- ▶ Use the paragraph beginning “In the original Greek ...” (pp. 9-10 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to see how John pulled readers into the experience of Philip learning from God—as if they were in the room when the conversation happened.
- ▶ Jesus had invited Philip to follow Him (John 1:43). After Jesus' resurrection, Philip faithfully served God (Acts 8:4-8,26-40). Guide students to know the respect Philip showed to Jesus (p. 10 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ What factors could have made it difficult for Philip to know Jesus or the Father? What did Jesus suggest Philip do? How would this help?
- ▶ Point out this session can become academic. In advance, make copies of **Pack Item 2: The Trinity** and distribute it to students. In unpacking the Trinity, keep pointing to why this truth is vital.

- ▶ Note that the word *Trinity* is not found in Scripture, but the doctrine is. We learn Jesus and the Father are one in purpose and nature (John 10:30).

**Jesus taught what God is like through His actions.**

- ▶ Use the paragraph beginning “Jesus replied...” (p. 10 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to explore several of Jesus' works.
- ▶ Explore Jesus' works, His teaching, and His miracles. (p. 12 in *Advanced Bible Study*) What does each teach about the purpose and nature of God?
- ▶ As with all passages containing trinitarian references, John 14 is not explicitly about the Trinity. As you pull out trinitarian truths, emphasize the context of Jesus' teaching.

See **OPTIONAL IDEA** on page 10 for a creative way to discuss how God the Spirit brings truth to the surface.

### JOHN 14:16-20

**When Jesus, the Son of God, is in your life, the Holy Spirit is in your life.**

**God the Spirit serves as Counselor and Truth Giver.**

- ▶ Discuss how Jesus clarified how His disciples would experience God going forward. (See the paragraph that begins “As Jesus ate ...” on p. 13 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ Using the paragraphs on pages 13-14 in *Advanced Bible Study*, discuss how Jesus described the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Discuss how effective counsel and truth relate.

**The Spirit won't abandon believers.**

- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “Today, we ...” (p. 14 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to remind students that when they follow God's truth, they embrace life in all its fullness.





## Optional Idea

Bring a cork and cup of water. Ask: “What happens when you press the cork into water?” After several responses, include that it resists being pushed under and steadily rises to the surface.

Choose a volunteer to read John 14:16-17a. Ask: Why does truth keep surfacing no matter how we try to disguise or hide it? When do we want this to happen? When do we not want this to happen? How will we heed truth even when we don’t want to face it?

Highlight that Jesus called the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of Truth” (v. 17a). Ask: Why does living according to the truth take courage? Who can help us live by the truth? Let a volunteer grab the cork and tell why he or she likes truth. Then repeat for all volunteers. Discuss advantages of truth including the freedom it brings, and the love we show to God and people when we live according to the truth.

Pause to thank God for sending Jesus to save us and the Holy Spirit to counsel us with truth we can depend on.

Finally ask: Can any of you modify this cork to make it stay underwater? Try out each theory. When the cork bobs back to the surface invite students to share why they like a God who stays the same in character and truth.

Suggest that every time group members see a cork they recommit to watch for and heed God that very day in a specific way. Again, thank God for consistently showing us truth.



## Dig Deeper

*Trinity* is the theological term used to describe God as an undivided Unity expressed in the threefold nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. While the term *Trinity* does not appear in Scripture, it is a biblical concept that appears throughout the New Testament to affirm God Himself is manifested through Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit.

Four statements summarize and clarify the Trinity.

1. *God is One.* The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. His offer of salvation in the Old Testament receives a fuller revelation in the New Testament in a way that is not different, but more complete.
2. *God has three distinctive ways of being in the redemptive event, yet He remains an undivided unity.* That God the Father imparts Himself

to mankind through Son and Spirit without ceasing to be Himself is at the very heart of the Christian faith.

3. *The primary way of grasping the concept of the Trinity is through the threefold participation in salvation.* The approach of the New Testament is not to discuss the essence of the Godhead, but the aspects of the revelatory event that includes the distinctive presence of the Father in the Person of Jesus Christ through the Spirit.
4. *The doctrine of the Trinity is an absolute mystery.* It is primarily known, not through speculation, but through experiencing the act of grace through personal faith.

Jerry M. Henry, "Trinity," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, gen. eds. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003) Wordsearch ed.