

# Growing in Faith

Quarter 12 | Lesson 1 | Spiritual Formation

1. **Connecting:** Teach others how to do something to learn the importance of instructions.
2. **Teaching:** Learn how believers' lives are transformed by God's grace and love (Romans 5:1–2; 6:23; 8:5–6, 28; 12:12).
3. **Responding:** Think and pray about personal spiritual growth.

## SUPPLIES

- Bibles

*Optional Supplies:*

- Memory Verse Poster
- *The NIV Action Study Bible*
- Pencils
- Student Pages

## Teacher Devotion

*Rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.*

1 Timothy 4:7–8

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we may wonder, "What comes next?" As believers, we can be thankful that we have a training manual, the Bible, to help us know God and how to live in ways that honour Him. But even when we read God's Word regularly, it is not always easy to follow these instructions. We struggle with sin. We find it difficult to love our neighbours as ourselves. We are not sure what to do when facing difficulties or confronting evil. But as we learn to trust and obey God more, He will transform our hearts so we live in ways that reflect His love.

Think about the transformation God has accomplished in your life since you became a Christian. Pause and praise Him for that growth. In what areas of your life is He encouraging you to grow? What steps are you taking to train yourself for His work? Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to transform and encourage you? Pause and invite Him to guide you toward the maturity He has for you. As you continue to spend time with God, reading His Word and learning to trust and obey, you will grow in faith.

## LESSON TIME

### 1. **Connecting:** Teach others how to do something to learn the importance of instructions.

Greet the teens by name as they arrive. Ask them, "What is something you know how to do because someone taught you how?" Allow them to share with you and with others in the class. If time allows, invite 2–3 students to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Many of the things we know how to do we learned from someone else. If someone did not teach us how to do things, such as prepare a meal, tie our shoes, or read, we would not know how to do them. Let's begin class by teaching each other how to do something we know how to do well. For example, I could teach you how to prepare to teach a lesson. Here are the steps:

- Pray and ask God to help you prepare.
- Read the teaching material so you are familiar with it.
- Prepare any supplies needed.
- Teach the lesson.

Now think of something simple you could teach the others in your group. Perhaps you could tell them how to cook your favourite food or sing a praise song. Be sure to divide the task into easy steps.

Divide the students into groups of 3. Have the teens each take few minutes to teach the others in their groups how to do a task or activity. The teens should provide details and helpful tips if possible. Once each student has had an opportunity to teach his group, have the students find seats for a discussion.

- What would happen if you never practiced what you just learned?

Knowing how to do something does not always help or change us. But knowing how to do something and then practicing it does! The same is true with Christian faith. We may know a lot about God. But if we do not put that knowledge into practice we will not grow or change. Today we will learn more about how we can put our faith into practice as God transforms our hearts and our lives.

## 2. Teaching: Learn how believers' lives are transformed by God's grace and love (Romans 5:1–2; 6:23; 8:5–6, 28; 12:12).

There are 21 epistles, or letters, in the New Testament. These letters were written by early church leaders to encourage new Christians and to teach them how to live in godly ways. These letters give instructions to help believers grow in faith and become mature disciples of Jesus.

To understand the teachings in these letters, we need to understand the foundations of what it means to be a Christian. First, God loves us. He is always good and always holy, and His love for us is greater than we can ever imagine!

Next, we need to understand that we all sin. No matter how much we try to do what is right, we sometimes still make mistakes or poor choices that hurt us and others. We will even sometimes choose to do things that go against God's will for our lives. This is sin, and it separates us from God. Listen to what the Bible tells us about sin.

*Optional:* If you are using *The NIV Action Study Bible*, the students can read more about this in the "What About This?" sections near Romans 4 and Romans 7.

For each Bible verse or passage, have a student read it directly from a Bible. If that is not possible, the verse will be printed in this guide. Ask a student to read Romans 6:23 aloud.

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

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**Turn to a partner and share in your own words what you think it means that “the wages of sin is death.”**

Give the teens about a minute to share with their partners.

**Teacher Tip:** Many people learn and remember information best when they hear it and speak it. Give your students opportunities to share and discuss what they are learning with a group or a partner to help them to understand and remember it.

**The consequence for our sin is eternal separation from God. Because God is good and holy, we are separated from Him by our sin and shame. But Jesus, God’s Son, gave His life to pay the price for our sin and to restore our relationship with God. This is offered as a free gift—something we cannot ever earn or deserve. If we accept this gift and ask for forgiveness, our sins are forgiven and our shame is taken away. We are no longer separated from God. We can live eternally with Him!**

**Teacher Tip:** Some of your students may have questions after hearing this very brief presentation of the gospel. If any students would like to learn more about salvation through faith in Jesus, invite them to speak with you after class. You can use the Salvation Path to help you as you share the gospel with them. Be sure to pray with and for them! You can download the Salvation Path below.

**Once we become believers, our lives are changed. We are forgiven and restored to honour! But the world we live in is not changed. There is still sin and evil and temptation to sin. But followers of Jesus are called to be different. Listen to another part of the letter Paul wrote to the church in Rome.**

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

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*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*  
Romans 12:2

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- **What do you think it means to transformed by the renewing of your mind? Talk with a partner about your ideas.**

Give the students about 2 minutes to share their thoughts with a partner.

- **What do you think it means to approve what God’s will is? Talk with a partner about your ideas.**

Give the students about 2 minutes to share their thoughts with a partner.

**Our minds are renewed when we replace the ways of the world with God’s truth. God promises that when we accept His gift of salvation we will live eternally with Him. As believers, we are called to learn Jesus’ teachings and obey Him. This is how our minds become renewed. We experience God’s love and forgiveness, and we want to share it with others. We begin to see people as God does, and we want to love and help them as He does. We begin to be less tempted to sin as we are transformed to be more like Jesus and live as God has called us to. This is growing in faith.**

**But we cannot do this alone, so God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us. Listen to what Paul taught about the Holy Spirit.**

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*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever... But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

John 14:16, 26

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- **What does this verse teach us about the Holy Spirit?**

Give the students about 2 minutes to share their thoughts with their partners. Then guide them to understand that we need to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide our thoughts and lives so that we can begin to live in ways that are pleasing to God.

**Teacher Tip:** For many teens, especially those who have experienced trauma, the idea of submitting to the guidance of the Holy Spirit may seem difficult. They may seek to be independent as a way to manage the situations that are beyond their control. Help them to understand that the Holy Spirit guides in gentle and loving ways, and His direction is always good.

**We do not have to try to walk through this life alone. We do not have to try and fail over and over to please God. When we are Christians, the Holy Spirit is our advocate who helps us. He will help us remember what God's Word says. He will help us live in ways that honour God.**

**When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we are restored to a right relationship with God. We are no longer separated from God by our sin and shame. We can trust that He is good and that He will do what is best for us. Listen to how he explained this to the Romans.**

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*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.*

Romans 8:28

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- **What do you think it means that God "works for the good of those who love him"?**

Give the students about 2 minutes to share their thoughts with a partner.

**Understanding that God is always good does not make our problems go away. It does not mean that we will never face anything difficult or challenging. But it does mean that we will not be alone when we face the difficult times. We can trust that God is always good, and He is always with those who love and follow Him. He will bring peace, hope, and joy, even when we are afraid, angry, or hurt.**

**When we know and love God, we choose to reflect His love to others. We choose to live in ways that help others to see Him. We ask for the Holy Spirit's help when we are tempted to sin. We choose to trust in God, even when it is difficult. As we do these things, it brings glory to God's name, and it brings us peace, hope, and joy. That is godly living—and it is a blessing from God!**

**As we learned at the beginning of class, it is one thing to know about something and another thing to practice it so we truly know it. So, how can you know how to live in godly ways? Here are some things you can do to grow closer to God and begin to understand His will for your life.**

**Pray. Thank God for the blessings He has given you and ask for His guidance with the challenges you face. Talk to Him about the things you are thinking and worrying about. God always listens, and He always cares. Then pause and listen to what He speaks to you through His Spirit and His Word.**

**Read the Bible.** Knowing and understanding God's Word is one of the best ways to understand God's truth. If possible, read the Bible regularly and spend time thinking and praying about what you have read. Ask the Spirit to help you understand. Ask the Lord what He wants you to see today. His Word is living and active! Understanding the Bible can help you when you face challenges.

**Spend time with other believers.** More mature believers can help you to grow in faith. They can also answer any questions you may have and provide wise advice when you experience difficulties. They can also pray with and for you.

**Growing in grace and faith does not happen immediately.** It is a lifelong process. God is so big that we can never understand Him completely. But we can continue to learn more about Him and grow closer to Him. As we do this, He continues to transform our hearts and minds to make them more like His.

- **What is the most meaningful thing you learned today? How will you use that knowledge in your life?**

Give the students about 2 minutes to share their thoughts with a partner.

### **3. Responding: Think and pray about personal spiritual growth.**

Have the teens spread out as much as possible. If you do not have a large space, have them line up at 1 end of your space.

**When we accept God's gift of salvation, our lives are changed forever. The biggest change is eternal—our sins are forgiven and we are no longer separated from God by our sin. Because of this, we will live with Him forever when our lives on earth come to an end. Other changes in our lives take place right away.**

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!*  
2 Corinthians 5:17

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- **What does this verse teach us about the changes that take place in our lives when we choose to follow Jesus?**

Allow 2–3 teens to share their ideas. If necessary, guide them to understand that God transforms our lives, getting rid of the old and sinful desires and creating new desires to be more like Him.

**When we choose to accept God's gift of grace through the sacrifice of Jesus, God makes us into entirely new creations. He does not just wash away the old and sinful things in our lives. He makes us brand-new. Our hearts and minds are changed. Because we are human, we will still struggle with the desire to sin. But we will also begin to think in ways that are pleasing to God, which helps us to behave in ways that reflect His love and goodness.**

**If you have made the choice to accept God's gift of grace, take 1 big step forward. This is the biggest and most important step on your journey.**

Pause for the teens to do this.

**Though the eternal change in our lives takes place immediately when we choose to follow Jesus, learning to live in the ways He wants us to takes a long time. We will be learning to do this for the**

rest of our lives. But, as our faith in God grows, we will begin to show signs on the outside that reflect the changes He is making inside of us. We will begin to show that God's character of love, compassion, and forgiveness has replaced our sinful human desires. This journey usually takes a lifetime, but we experience God's wonderful blessings when we grow closer to Him.

**Think about your spiritual journey. Where are you now in your relationship with God? What do you want your relationship with Him to be like? How would you like Him to change your heart and mind? You do not need to share your answers with anyone. For each thing you feel you are doing well, take 1 small step forward.**

**If you do not feel you are doing anything well, ask God in which areas of your life He would like you to begin to trust Him more. Take 1 small step forward.**

Pause for the students to do this.

**Now think about where you started. Maybe it was a time when you did not even know God existed. If you grew up in a Christian home, you have always known about God and you can remember when you first started to know and love Him. Maybe you are not yet sure you are ready to trust God with your life.**

**Now think about the important things that have happened in your life that have helped you to grow closer to God. Some examples might be the day you accepted Jesus as your Saviour or the day you first told someone else about your faith. For each thing you think of, take 1 small step forward.**

Pause for the students to do this.

**Now think about where you are today on your spiritual journey. How would you like that to change in the next year? What would you like your relationship with God to be like 5 years from now? Or 10?**

**Even if you are not sure you are ready to accept God's gift of salvation by grace through faith, you can still think about how to show some of the good character traits we have been learning about. How can you be more patient? More loving? More self-controlled? While you can show these character traits without God, it is much easier with His help.**

Pause for the teens to think.

#### *Optional:*

If you have paper and pencils, allow the teens to draw their spiritual journeys on paper. They can draw symbols and write words to represent the different events in their lives that have helped them to grow closer to God. They should also include symbols or words to indicate what they would like their relationships with God to be like. They can draw their spiritual journeys in the form of a map or a road if they would like to.

If you are using the Student Pages, the teens can do the activity on their pages.

#### *End of Option*

**Teacher Tip:** Help students to understand that the purpose of this activity is not to set outward goals and imagine the outward circumstances of their lives the future. Instead, they should think about the ways they would like their lives to change as they learn to become more like Jesus.

**You can try to make these changes alone. But true faith only grows when we trust God and ask Him for help to become the people He has called us to be. You can ask Him right now. Thank Him for His gift of salvation by grace through faith. Then ask Him to help you become more like Jesus every day.**

Give the students time to pray. As they pray, go around the group. Stand behind each student and pray for him. If it is appropriate, you may lay your hand on his shoulder to let him know you are praying with him.

Close class with a blessing based on Romans 12:2:

**Blessing: May you be transformed by the renewing of your mind instead of being conformed to the world. May you trust God to help you to discern His perfect will for your life as you grow in faith.**

**Family Connection:** Encourage the students to ask their family members, "What is the most important task or skill someone has ever taught you?" They can then share that the Bible is filled with instructions to help Christians live in godly ways.

Lead the students in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "Mighty God" by Elevation Worship:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAhkYoWYxAY>