GOD’S DNA
What makes God, God?
by Jeremy Walden
Leader’s Guide

Thank you so much. You will help teens explore the foundations of our faith. God’s DNA asks a big question, “What makes God—God?” Each lesson will focus on a different characteristic of God. We all remember saying this prayer when we were children, “God is great. God is good. Let us thank Him for our food. Amen.” The first twelve weeks explain the greatness of God. The last 12 weeks explain the goodness of God.

Exploring “God’s DNA”
Each discussion guide is divided into four sections:
1. The “Getting Started” segment opens each session with one or two questions to introduce the topic.
2. The “Getting Your Feet Wet” section introduces a few simple Scriptures that talk about the topic.
3. The “Getting Deeper” segment explores a Biblical story that illustrates or an expanded section of Scripture that explains the topic in more detail.
4. The “Getting Real” section includes questions that will get your teens talking about how the topic affects their lives and the youth group.

Energize The Lessons
Here are three quick things you can do that will enhance each lesson:
1. **Ask follow-up questions.** Go with the flow. Don’t stay glued to this guide. Ask your own questions based on the group’s discussion. Help students expand their answers by asking them to be more specific.
2. **Personalize.** Tell your stories. Share examples of how you learned these principles—some times the hard way.
3. **Use culture.** Show movie clips, play popular and Christian music, play TV shows, and use quotes that all discuss the theme of God.

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digital resources for the next generation
GOD is the CREATOR

Getting Started
Try to guess the right answers to the following questions:

1. What percentage of people say the universe was originally created by God?
   A. 38%
   B. 56%
   C. 73%
   D. 87% (Barna Research, 2000)

2. What are the chances of evolving a man by chance processes alone?
   A. 1 in 10^{20}
   B. 1 in 10^{200,000}
   C. 1 in 10^{2,000,000}
   D. 1 in 10^{2,000,000,000} (What is the probability of evolution occurring solely by natural means? Part 2 by Dr. John Ankerberg, Dr. John Weldon)

3. What percentage of people say evolution should be taught in science class in our nation's public schools?
   A. 80%
   B. 65% (iWon.com survey)
   C. 50%
   D. 35%

4. What percentage of people say creationism should be taught in science class in our nation's public schools?
   A. 56% (iWon.com survey)
   B. 43%
   C. 35%
   D. 22%

What does your school teach about “the beginning of earth?” Is there ever any debate when this subject is taught? Do you know anyone who believes in evolution?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Gen 1:1
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Ps 8:3-5
When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.
GOD is the CREATOR

Isa 45:12
It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.

Getting Deeper
Show your class a picture of someone famous. Then ask them to write down what they see in the picture or what they know about this person. Then show them the picture of a homeless person. Again, ask them to write down what they see about this person from the picture. Ask, “Do these two people have anything in common?”
• What does Genesis 1:26-27 say they have in common?
• What does it mean to be created “in God’s image?” How are we like God?

Read Acts 17:24-27.
• Why were we created?

Look at these lyrics from the band, Live, from their Birds of Pray CD (2003):
“I don’t need no one to tell me about heaven I look at my daughter, and I believe. I don’t need no proof when it comes to God and truth I can see the sunset and I perceive.”
• How does Romans 1:20 say the same thing? What do you notice about God when you look at creation?

Getting Real
1. Where is your favorite place to go see God’s creation?
2. Do you think God created in the past but doesn’t any longer or that God still creates? Explain.
3. If a person believes God created the universe but is being taught evolution during Science, how should he/she react in class?
4. Does the creation story effect the way you treat the environment, earth, trees, animals, etc.? Explain.
5. How does it make you feel to know that you are created in God’s image?
6. Does that fact that others are created in God’s image influence how you treat people? Explain.
GOD is All-Powerful

Getting Started
1. What is the most powerful thing you have ever held in your hands? How did you treat it?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Matt 19:26
Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Ps 66:3
Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you."

1 Cor 6:14
By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

Getting Deeper
• What powerful thing did God do for the Israelites?
• Why did God do this miracle?
• What does it mean to "fear" God?

Have your group examine the plain clay pot. Then ask them to list words that describe this pot.
Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 from The Message.
If you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That's to prevent anyone from confusing God's incomparable power with us. As it is, there's not much chance of that. You know for yourselves that we're not much to look at. We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we're not demoralized; we're not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we've been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken. What they did to Jesus, they do to us—trial and torture, mockery and murder; what Jesus did among them, he does in us—he lives! Our lives are at constant risk for Jesus' sake, which makes Jesus' life all the more evident in us. While we're going through the worst, you're getting in on the best!
• What do the "clay pots" represent?
• Does the list describing the plain clay pot also describe messengers of God? If so, how does this reflect God's power?
• How does Paul's troubles demonstrate the power of God?
GOD is All-Powerful

Getting Real
1. What do you think is the greatest, most powerful thing God does?

2. Have you ever seen God help someone through an “impossible” situation?

3. What kinds of things does God do with His power?

4. Do you think people who expect God to do something powerful actually experience His power more than others?

5. Why do you think God chooses to do powerful things sometimes and to not do anything powerful at other times?

6. Because God is so powerful, name two things you would like to see God do in your life.
GOD is Present Everywhere

Getting Started
1. What tools could a person use to determine where they are?

2. How many different answers to this question can you think of — “Where are you?”

Getting Your Feet Wet
Jer 23:23-24
"Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

1 John 4:15
If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him ...

2 Chron 30:27
God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.

Getting Deeper
Read Psalm 139:7-16.
- Do you think David ever tried to escape, hide, or run away from God? Explain.
- How does God’s presence with you before you were born make you think about God’s presence with you now?

Getting Real
1. Have you ever felt far away from God? When?

2. What does it mean when the Bible says we should draw near to God?

3. If God is everywhere, why is it difficult for people to find Him?

4. Are there any places that God is not? (Is the opposite of 1 John 4:15 true?)

5. React to this statement: “Nearly two-thirds of regular attenders say they have never experienced God’s presence at a church service.” - George Barna (1997)

6. How does realizing that God is everywhere help you?
GOD is Wise

Getting Started
1. If you could ask God for anything, what would you ask for?
   (Solomon asked for wisdom.)

2. Who is the wisest person you know? Why do you think they are wise?

3. What’s the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Can a person be smart but not wise?
   (Wisdom—the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting; insight.)

Getting Your Feet Wet
Isa 55:8-9
"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Ps 92:5
How great are your works, O LORD, how profound your thoughts!

Job 12:13
To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.

Getting Deeper
Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-28. The following is from The Message:

The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. This is the way God works, and most powerfully as it turns out. It’s written, "I’ll turn conventional wisdom on its head, I’ll expose so-called experts as crackpots."

So where can you find someone truly wise, truly educated, truly intelligent in this day and age? Hasn’t God exposed it all as pretentious nonsense? Since the world in all its fancy wisdom never had a clue when it came to knowing God, God in his wisdom took delight in using what the world considered dumb—preaching, of all things!—to bring those who trust him into the way of salvation.

While Jews clamor for miraculous demonstrations and Greeks go in for philosophical wisdom, we go right on proclaiming Christ, the Crucified. Jews treat this like an anti-miracle—and Greeks pass it off as absurd. But to us who are personally called by God himself—both Jews and Greeks—Christ is God’s ultimate miracle and wisdom all wrapped up in one. Human wisdom is so tinny, so impotent, next to the seeming absurdity of God. Human strength can’t begin to compete with God’s "weakness."

Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I
GOD is Wise

don't see many of "the brightest and the best" among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these "nobodies" to expose the hollow pretensions of the "somebodies"?

• How does God's wisdom compare to the world's wisdom?
• How does God choose to show His wisdom to people?
• Why do you think the “nobodies” get it but the “somebodies” don’t?

Getting Real
1. Does God’s wisdom ever conflict with your wisdom?

2. James 1 says we should ask God for wisdom. Have you ever done that?

3. In what area of your life do you need the most wisdom?

4. How can you gain wisdom?
GOD knows Everything

Getting Started
1. How do you react to people who think they “know-it-all?”

2. Who do you think knows more—you or your parents? Do you or your parents know more about being a teenager? Explain.

Getting Your Feet Wet
Ps 139:1-6
O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. 
You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 
You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 
Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. 
You hem me in--behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. 
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Ps 147:5
Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Luke 16:15
He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

Getting Deeper
Read Isaiah 40:12-14.
- List the things that verse 12 says God knows.
- Verses 13 and 14 ask a serious of rhetorical questions which basically say that God never needed to go to school or have a teacher. What does that tell you about God’s knowledge?

Getting Real
1. If God knows everything, why does He want us to pray?


3. When do you doubt that God knows everything?

4. Have you ever thought you knew better than God?

5. Does the fact that God knows everything (right from wrong, the future, etc.) help you follow and obey Him?
GOD is Holy

Needed Supplies: watch or clock

Getting Started
Play the “silent” game. See how many people can keep silent for 3 minutes. (Time them).
1. Is it hard for you to be silent?
2. Can you ever think of a time you were silent out of respect for a person or a situation?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Lev 20:26
You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

1 Sam 2:2
There is no one holy like the LORD ...

Hab 2:20
But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.

Getting Deeper
• The angels call God “holy” three times. What does “holy” mean?
• How would you react if you saw what Isaiah saw in verses 1-4? How did Isaiah react? (v. 5)
• How did the Holy God react to Isaiah’s sin? (v. 6-7) How does our Holy God react to our sin?
• God’s forgiveness motivated Isaiah to go and be God’s spokesman. What does God’s forgiveness motivate you to do?

Read Revelation 4:2-11.
• What do you think about a God who’s throne sends lightening, rumblings, and thunder?
• How did the inhabitants of heaven react to God’s holiness? (v. 9-11)
• What “crown” do you need to lay before God?

Getting Real
1. Would you worship, follow, believe, and obey a god that was not holy?

2. Many times when people realize the holiness of God, they see how sinful they are. How easy is it for you to recognize your sin?

3. God says “Be holy, because I am holy.” Does God expect us to be holy (perfect and sinless)? Explain.
GOD is a Judge

Getting Started
1. How many of you have ever been to court? What was the courtroom like? Were people nervous or calm? Explain.

Getting Your Feet Wet
Heb 10:30-31
For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

James 4:12
There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy.

2 Tim 4:8
Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Getting Deeper
Quickly overview Jesus’ different stories concerning the judgment of God found in Matthew 24:42-25:46.
- What criteria does God use to judge people in each of the stories?

Getting Real
1. Have you heard many lessons at church about God’s judgment and Judgment Day? Why do you think that is the case?

2. How do you feel about being judged by God?

3. As a Christian, should we “fear” judgment? (See 1 Cor. 1:7)

4. Repeatedly, the New Testament says we shouldn’t judge because God will judge everyone. Why are people so judgmental? What kind of judging does God not want us to do?

5. How does knowing that God is a Judge affect how you live everyday?

6. How does mercy and grace affect God’s judgments?
GOD is King

Needed Supplies: paper and pens

Getting Started
1. What are the differences between being President and being King of a country?

Getting Your Feet Wet
1 Tim 6:15-16
God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

1 Sam 12:12-13
You said to me, 'No, we want a king to rule over us'-even though the LORD your God was your king.

Ps 29:10-11
The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Getting Deeper
Read Psalm 99.
• How does this songwriter suggest people react to God being King?
• What does God the King do? (v.7-8)

Getting Real
1. What does it mean when someone says that God is the Lord (King) of their life?

2. Do we have a choice if God is King? Explain.


4. Pass out paper and pens to everyone. Ask students to list 5 things underneath these headings: my activities, my relationships, and my entertainment. Then ask them if God is King over these aspects of their lives.
GOD is an Author

Getting Started
1. Show note in a bottle. Have any of you ever gotten a message in a bottle? If you wrote a note and put it in a bottle, what would you write?

2. You communicate in many ways. Have you ever communicated something important by writing it down? When?

Getting Your Feet Wet
2 Tim 3:16
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

Gal 1:11-12
I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Rev 1:1-3
The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Getting Deeper
Read 2 Peter 1:16-21.
• How much do our courts value eyewitness testimony? Does eyewitness testimony help you believe the Bible is from God?
• What is prophesy? Where does prophesy come from?

Read Jeremiah 45:1-2.
• Describe the process involved here from the message getting from God to us.

Getting Real
1. Honestly, is it easy or hard for you to believe the Bible was authored by God?

2. In your opinion, what is the main message God wants to communicate to us through the Bible?

3. What ways have you found helpful for reading and/or studying the Bible?
Getting Started
1. What do you think your life will be like in 10 years?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Eph 1:11
In Christ we were chosen to be God's people, because from the very beginning God had decided this in keeping with his plan. And he is the One who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants.

Ps 33:10-11
The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Prov 19:21
Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Getting Deeper
Read Jeremiah 29:11-14.
• What is God's specific plan for these people in captivity and exile?
• Do you think God has a similar plan for you? Explain.
• How is a relationship with God at the center of His plan?

Read Romans 8:28-29.
• Explore the definitions of these words — called, purpose, foreknew, predestined — to help understand these verses.
  Called — invited or summoned
  Purpose — proposal or intention
  Foreknew — knew beforehand
  Predestined — determined beforehand
• What is God's plan for us according to these verses?

Getting Real
1. Do you think God has a specific (detailed) or generic (overall) plan for you?

2. Do you think God ever changes His plans? Explain.

3. Does God make people follow His plans? Explain.

4. How can you know what God's plans are for your life?
GOD is Eternal

Getting Started
1. When is the earliest memory you have? How far back do you think God can remember?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Job 36:26
How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.

Isa 26:4
Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

Rev 1:8
"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Getting Deeper
God is eternal and He wants to share that eternity with us. Read 1 John 5:11-13.
• How would you define eternal life?
• Who has eternal life? Who doesn’t?
• Can you know if you have eternal life?

Getting Real
1. Does it hurt your brain to think that God never had a beginning and He will continue to live forever?

2. Does thinking about eternity make you value your time on earth? Explain.

3. What do you think it means when the Bible says that God “has set eternity in the hearts of men?”

4. How does knowing that you will live forever affect how you live now?
GOD is Unchanging

Getting Started
1. Name one thing you would like to change.

2. Name one thing you hope always stays the same.

Getting Your Feet Wet
1 Sam 15:29
He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.

Mal 3:6
I the LORD do not change.

James 1:17
… the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Getting Deeper
• When the Bible was written, there were no paragraph breaks. Do you think verse 8 should go with verse 7 or verse 9?
• If it should go with verse 7, then what does God’s unchanging nature have to do with leaders?
• If it goes with verse 9, then what does God’s unchanging nature have to do with different teachings?

Getting Real
1. Why do you think this is an important characteristic of God?

2. Usually we talk about how much God wants us to change. Is there anything God doesn’t want us to change?

3. Would you rather things change a lot over the next year or have them stay the same?
GOD is a Shepherd

Getting Started
1. What tools do shepherds use in herding sheep? (staff and rod are the most common) What is each tool used for?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Ezek 34:15-16
I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak ...

1 Peter 2:25
For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 5:4
... when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Getting Deeper
Read Psalm 23.
- List the things that God does for David.
- What is the significance of David saying “The Lord is my shepherd?”
- Has there been a time in your life when God “restored your soul?” What “green pastures” and “quiet waters” has God used to help you?
- Show them the olive oil. This is another tool that shepherds use. Why would a shepherd anoint a sheep with oil? [Some people believe anointing with oil served two purposes: (1) as an insect repellent and (2) as a medicine to heal wounds.] What would it mean to you if God did those things?

Getting Real
1. What modern day person or role would be similar to a shepherd?

2. To you, what’s the best thing about God being a Shepherd?

3. Have you ever left God’s flock? Did God, the Shepherd, search for you? Explain.

4. Even though God is our shepherd, He often asks us to shepherd each other. Who shepherds you? Who could you shepherd?
GOD Redeems

Getting Started
1. Show the class different coupons. Ask them to read the fine print. It will probably say something like this:

ValuPage Savings are issued from a printer at checkout. You can use them to pay for groceries on your next shopping trip.

Featured Savings are limited to one per visit. Additional In-store Savings are unlimited. Some items may not be carried in all stores. Unlawful to alter. No cash value. ValuPage Savings are redeemable on your NEXT visit. Coupon redemption cannot result in cash back and is subject to individual retailers coupon policies. Customer must pay any sales tax. Good on all products except as prohibited by law.

What does it mean to “redeem” a coupon?

Getting Your Feet Wet
1 Chron 17:21
And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?

Mic 4:10
There the LORD will redeem you out of the hand of your enemies.

Titus 2:13-14
… our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Getting Deeper
Biblical “redemption” meant freeing a slave by paying a price for that slave.
Read Colossians 1:10-14.
• Are you a slave? If so, who holds you captive?
• What price did God pay to redeem you?
• Because of your redemption, God “qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints.” What do you think that inheritance is?

Getting Real
1. Imagine yourself as a slave on an auction block. If you sell for the right price, you are free. If you don’t sale, you remain a slave. What would you say to persuade someone to buy you and to let you go free?
GOD Redeems

2. Why does God pay for us to go free?

3. What does God’s redemption tell you about how much you are worth? About other people’s worth?

4. You cannot be redeemed by God until you realize that you are a slave who needs to be freed. Have you realized this? If so, when did you?

5. How does someone become redeemed by God?
GOD Delivers

Getting Started
1. A deliverer is a person who rescues you from harm or danger. Who is your favorite Superhero?

2. Ask a firefighter (lifeguard, etc.) to share a quick story of how he/she was involved in a successful rescue mission.

Getting Your Feet Wet
Ps 140:7
O Sovereign LORD, my strong deliverer, who shields my head in the day of battle ...

Ps 70:5
Yet I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.

Ps 18:2-3
The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

Getting Deeper
• In verses 5-6, David describes his trouble. When was a time when you felt “overwhelmed” and “confronted” and like things were “swirling” around you?
• In verse 7, what did David do?
• What does God do in response to David request? (v. 8-18)
• According to verses 20-21, why did God rescue David?

Getting Real
1. Have you ever been rescued by another person?

2. Who would you turn to if you were in danger? Why?

3. What kinds of things could God rescue a teenager from?

4. Have you ever asked God to rescue you? Do you believe that God can rescue you from any and every situation you may find yourself in?

5. God sometimes uses people to help deliver other people from trouble. Do you think God is using you to help rescue a friend? Explain.
GOD is a Counselor

Needed Supplies: none

Getting Started
1. Write a job description of a counselor at your school.

Getting Your Feet Wet
Isa 9:6
And he [Jesus] will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isa 28:29
All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.

Job 12:13
To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.

Getting Deeper
Read Proverbs 12:15; 19:20; & 12:5.
• What is the benefit of listening to advice?
• What caution does Prov. 12:5 say about listening to advice?
• How do you tell the difference between good advice and bad advice?

Getting Real
1. Who do you go to for advice? Why that person?

2. Would you rather get advice or give advice?

3. How does God try to give you advice?

4. Can you remember a time when you went against God’s advice only to discover He was right?

5. In what area of your life do you need God’s advice right now?
GOD Heals

Needed Supplies: none

Getting Started
1. When is the last time you went to the doctor? Did it help?

2. What makes someone a good doctor?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Gen 20:17
Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again …

Ps 147:3
He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Mark 2:16-17
When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?”
On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Getting Deeper
Read James 5:14-16.
- If you are sick, what should you do?
- Is there a connection between sin and sickness? Explain.
- Have you ever been prayed over? Have you ever prayed over someone else?
  If so, what was that like?

Getting Real
1. Do you know anyone who has been healed by God? What’s his/her story?

2. God heals physical sickness. What other sicknesses does God heal?

3. The Bible makes it clear that not everyone who asks to be healed gets healed. Why does God choose to heal some people and not choose to heal others? (see 2 Cor 12:8-10 for one reason)

4. Who do you know that needs God’s healing right now?
GOD is Forgiving

Needed Supplies: glass bowl, water, food coloring, laundry detergent

Getting Started
1. Show this demonstration. Add water to glass bowl. Then add food coloring. Then add laundry detergent and mix until the water becomes clear again.

2. How does this demonstration illustrate what God wants to do in your life? (see Isa 1:18)

Getting Your Feet Wet
Exodus 34:6-7
Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”

Psalm 103:10-12
He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities … as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Ephesians 1:7
In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace …

Getting Deeper
Read 1 John 1:7-9.
• Jesus’ blood continually cleanses those who “walk in the light.” What does it mean to “walk in the light?” Does it imply God only forgives those who live right?
• God also forgives those who “confess” their sins. Does this mean that we must confess every sin before God forgives us? Or does it mean that forgiveness only comes to those who realize they sin? Explain.

Getting Real
1. Do you think Christians take sin seriously? Explain. Why should we take sin seriously? (see Rom 6:23)


3. Do you have a hard time forgiving other people? If so, why do you think it is so hard?

4. What do you need to confess to God today?
**GOD is a Teacher**

**Getting Started**
1. Who is the best teacher you’ve ever had? Why?

**Getting Your Feet Wet**

Isaiah 48:17
This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
“I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.”

Psalm 32:8
I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

Psalm 25:4-5
Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

**Getting Deeper**

Read Psalm 119:64.
- What’s the difference between “knowledge” and “good judgment?”
- What part does faith play in your ability to be taught by God?

**Getting Real**

1. What are some different ways God can teach us?
2. Would you rather teach or be taught?
3. What is one thing you would like to know more about?
4. What is one area of your life that you could use “better” judgment?
5. What do you think God is trying to teach you right now?
GOD Protects

Needed Supplies: baseball chest protector, shin guards, safety glasses, shield, (any other protection devices)

Getting Started
1. Display the items (baseball chest protector, glasses, shield, etc.).

2. What do these items have in common?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Psalm 12:5
"Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them."

Psalm 32:7
You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 59:1
Deliver me from my enemies, O God; protect me from those who rise up against me.

Getting Deeper
Read Psalm 91.
• God’s ability to protect you is symbolized by two metaphors—a fortress (v. 2) and a mother hen (v. 4). How do those metaphors describe God to you?
• According to verses 11-12, what is one thing God uses to protect you?
• Can you share a time when God has protected you in the past?

Getting Real
1. What are you afraid of?

2. Do you have a hiding place? Explain.

3. Do you picture God as someone who fights for you? Explain.

4. Do we have an obligation to help protect those who can’t protect themselves? Explain.

5. What do you want God to protect you from?
GOD is Faithful

Getting Started
1. If wrote your own wedding vows, what would they say?

Getting Your Feet Wet
2 Timothy 2:13
If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Deuteronomy 7:9
Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his
covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his
commands.

Joshua 1:5,9
“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you …
Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD
your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Getting Deeper
The Book of Hosea is one of the most dramatic illustrations of someone understanding
God’s faithfulness. The story begins when Hosea marries Gomer. They have three
children together. Then Gomer seeks other lovers and leaves Hosea. Eventually,
Gomer ends up a slave up for sale at a slave market. Hosea, in spite of what Gomer
has done, redeems her and again loves her as his wife. Understanding betrayal, God
asks Hosea to speak to the Israelites about their betrayal and adultery against God.

In spite of Israel’s adultery, read God’s response in Hosea 14:4.
• What does it mean when God says He “will love them freely?”

Getting Real
1. Have you ever had someone “cheat” on you before? How did you react?

2. How do we “cheat” on God? Is it hard for people to think of sinning as “cheating”
on God? Explain.


4. Silently pray and thank God for His faithfulness in spite of your unfaithfulness.
Getting Started
1. What is the best gift you have ever received? Why?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Ecclesiastes 5:19
Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work-this is a gift of God.

James 1:5
If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

1 John 5:11
And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Getting Deeper
• How does God’s giving compare to the neighbor’s and the father’s?
• How can a person be bold in prayer?
• Are God’s gifts conditional? Explain.

Getting Real
1. What things do you need physically, emotionally, and spiritually?

2. What difference would it make to view those things as gifts from God?

3. Jesus said, “It is better to give than to receive.” How does God exemplify that statement?

4. What is the best gift you’ve received from God?

5. Have you ever been thankful for an unanswered prayer?

6. Name one thing you would like God to give you.
Getting Started
1. How did your parents discipline you growing up?

Getting Your Feet Wet
Revelation 3:19
Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

1 Corinthians 11:32
When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

Luke 12:47-48
“That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

Getting Deeper
Read Hebrews 12:5-11.
• Why does God discipline us?
• How should we respond to God’s discipline?
• Compare your parents’ discipline and God’s discipline.

Getting Real
1. Do you appreciate the discipline you received from your parents? Explain.

2. How does God discipline people?

3. Do you think you have ever been disciplined by God? When?

4. What is something God has taught you through discipline?

5. What would we be like if God didn’t discipline us?
GOD is Love

Needed Supplies: greeting cards

Getting Started
1. What comes to your mind when you hear these words? Read a few “love” messages found in greeting cards.

Getting Your Feet Wet
Psalm 136:23-26
To the One who remembered us in our low estate
His love endures forever.
and freed us from our enemies,
His love endures forever.
and who gives food to every creature.
His love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His love endures forever.

Zephaniah 3:17
“The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”

Getting Deeper
Read 1 John 4:7-21.
• How do we know God loves us?
• How can you know if you love God?
• Do you agree that you love because you were loved? Explain.

Getting Real
1. Do you have a hard time believing that God “rejoices over you” and “delights” in you? Explain.

2. What human relationship best illustrates God love for us?

3. Ephesians 5:1-2 says “Be imitators of God … and live a life of love.” Do you find God’s love nearly impossible to imitate?

4. Pick one word that describes God’s love. (Have everyone use a different word.)