Also Available for Bible Grades 6–8
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Introduction to the Course

It is very likely that you, as well as many of your students, have seen the 1946 Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life*. There is an often-overlooked scene from that movie that provides the backdrop for our study of the life of Joseph.

If you recall, George Bailey was having financial difficulties as he struggled to maintain the Bailey Bros. Building and Loan. His financial difficulties were not the result of his poor management of the bank. Rather, the struggles he faced resulted from his desire to help those in need—even when they could not make their loan payments on time. In the business world of today, George would not be viewed as a shrewd businessman. He was too kind, too generous, and too willing to “forgive” what was owed to him.

When his competitor, Henry F. Potter, offered him a job, George was sure his troubles were over. George was willing to overlook the fact that Mr. Potter was mean and unscrupulous. His lucrative offer to George would allow George to live in the nicest neighborhood in town, buy the things that he and his wife had always wanted, and enable their family to travel the world.

However, Mr. Potter’s offer came with one stipulation. If George took the job, the Bailey Bros. Building and Loan would have to be closed. The institution that had faithfully served the Bedford Falls community for many decades would no longer exist. George knew that would be difficult medicine for the people of Bedford Falls to swallow because no one liked, or trusted, Mr. Henry F. Potter.

But George was certainly tempted. As a matter of fact, he even asked for 24 hours to think about the offer. But as he prepared to leave Mr. Potter’s office, he finally came to his senses. “Wait a minute here,” he said, “I don’t need 24 hours. I don’t need to talk to anybody! I know right now. The answer is no, no, no!”

Once George realized that his personal desires had clouded his thinking, his ethical framework took over. Drawing upon years of convictions that had guided him since childhood, George knew what he needed to do. He could not allow the people of Bedford Falls to be at the mercy of Henry F. Potter. He had to do everything in his power to keep Bailey Bros. Building and Loan in business. It was his value system that would not allow him to take the easy way out.

It is this sort of ethical framework—more specifically, a biblical ethical framework—that is missing in today’s society. We no longer describe a choice in terms of “right or wrong” or “black and white.” Ethical and moral choices are often made according to one’s feelings, what others may think, or personal gain. As a result, we are becoming a nation that is morally adrift.

Although Joseph lived out his story centuries ago, the principles that guided his choices are as relevant as the top story that leads today’s news. Joseph was far from perfect, but he had an ethical framework that was grounded in the very nature
of God. Although he was cast into an ungodly environment at an early age, he continued to make godly choices throughout his life. It is Joseph’s story, and the ethical principles that guided his life, that today’s students need to hear and learn.

As our Lord demonstrated during His earthly ministry, storytelling is one of the most effective ways to reach the hearts and minds of students. It is for that reason that the lessons of Joseph: A Character Study unfold in a story format. As your students are drawn to the incredible life of Joseph, they will also begin to embrace the principles that guided his choices. As these principles are discussed in the context of today’s events, your students will begin to see connections between what Joseph faced and the challenges they face daily.

Each of the six units is designed to be taught in about a three-week period. At the beginning of each unit, the pertinent aspect of Joseph’s story will be summarized in sufficient detail to provide you with the context for the lessons contained in that unit. Of course, as the teacher, you always have the opportunity to “dig a little deeper” into areas that you believe will benefit your students. Suggested areas for further study will be noted.

As you begin the individual lessons, a specific portion of the unit summary will be briefly reviewed. This will “set the stage” for the specific principles taught in each lesson. As the units and lessons unfold over the course of the semester, students will see how Joseph’s ethical framework shaped the choices Joseph made, which in turn, set the direction for his future.

May the Lord bless you and your class in the coming weeks.

Ollie E. Gibbs, EdD
Headmaster
Lexington Christian Academy
How to Use the Teacher Guide

Introduction
It is important to understand that a teacher guide functions as the name implies—it is a guide. This Teacher Guide takes into consideration a number of assumptions:

• The typical semester has approximately 85 instructional days.
• While teachers appreciate organization and structure, they also want instructional flexibility.
• Although teachers are creative by nature, they are always looking for new ideas or strategies.
• Because preparation time is often difficult to set aside, teachers need planned teaching strategies, activities, and assessment instruments.
• While it is important for students to learn Bible content, it is equally important that they learn the practical life lessons that God’s Word has for them.

Instructional Plan
*Joseph: A Character Study* is divided into six units. Each unit consists of three weeks. Each week is intended to take four days to teach, but there is flexibility to extend or shorten the number of days to teach the lesson. This flexibility is important since school calendars vary, a weekly chapel program sometimes replaces a day of Bible instruction, or time needs to be allowed for student assessment.

Typically, the first four days build on each other. However, the days of instruction are not linked to specific days of the week. The course materials are designed to facilitate and enhance your teaching, not to impose a specific structure. As the teacher, you are free to add to, delete, or modify any teaching strategies to make the course more appropriate for your particular classes from year to year.

For each week in this Bible study a fifth-day option will be provided. In some cases, the option will be a test. However, in most cases the fifth-day option will focus on expanding the students’ understanding of the objectives for the week. The content covered in Day 5 is not foundational to the week’s objectives, so it is not essential that you cover it in class. However, the content for Day 5 will strengthen the students’ understanding of one of the objectives for that week’s study.

*Joseph’s Unfolding Story*
As noted in Introduction to the Course, at the beginning of each unit the time period of Joseph’s life discussed in that unit will be carefully summarized. This summary will be provided under the heading Joseph’s Unfolding Story. However, in addition to the unit summary, a subset of that summary will be provided for each of the weekly lessons. Thus, at any time in the course, you can quickly see the relationship between the lesson you are teaching, the unit, and the scope of the entire course.

Study Guide
Each student will need a Study Guide book. This student publication consists of a selection of activities (numbered study guides) that can be done in class or assigned as homework. Pages are perforated so that assignments that you want to be handed
in as homework can be easily removed. Study Guide answer keys can be found after each weekly section in this Teacher Guide.

**Visual Aids**
This course includes a CD of blackline masters (BLMs) and PowerPoint presentations (PPTs) to assist you in the instructional process. BLMs may be duplicated for distribution to your students or projected for the class as part of your instructional strategies. Answer keys for the BLMs can be found at the end of this teacher guide. PPTs provide concise presentations of Joseph's Unfolding Story segments.

**Student Assessment**
More so than any other school subject, Bible instruction is deeply concerned about students' lives coming into conformity with God's Word. This course is intentional about having students apply the lessons to life, but life application is difficult to evaluate. However, since Bible is a school subject, the student's achievement in Bible must be assessed. In order to address different learning styles, a variety of assessment strategies may be used. The following assessment tools are included as a part of this course. Once again, you need to choose which strategies best fit your classroom environment and teaching style.

- **Unit Pretest:** This is a quick, easy-to-administer test that reveals the students' basic understanding of the material to be taught in that unit. While you will correct the pretest, the score should not be included as part of the students' overall grades. This assessment is to guide your instruction, allowing you to focus on areas that need additional instructional time.
- **Homework and Homeward Bound Assignments:** On almost a daily basis, homework assignments will be suggested. However, the intent of these assignments is to help students maintain a daily focus on the weekly lessons. In most cases, the homework assignments will require minimal time. Whether or not you use the homework assignment—or even grade it—is totally up to you. However, Homeward Bound assignments are more in-depth and are designed to be graded assessments. There will be at least one Homeward Bound assignment for each three-week unit.
- **Memory Verses:** Bible memory assignments have been aligned with the individual units and weeks. Since schools handle Bible memory in various ways, you may adapt the suggested passages to your school's or church's present Bible memory program, expand the passage to include more verses, or use the verses in the manner suggested. However, it is important that memory work not be isolated from instruction. At every opportunity, incorporate memory verses into your instruction. While assessment of memory verses should occur weekly, students should also be responsible for the accumulation of verses over time. Memory verses can also be included as a part of each unit test.
- **Unit Test:** At the conclusion of each unit (approximately three weeks), the student should take a unit test. Six unit tests, as well as a comprehensive semester test, are included with the BLMs. Certainly, you can adapt these tests to reflect your classroom discussion. You will need to determine if memory verses will be a part of the unit tests.
Principles Notebook
As the title of this course suggests, students will be learning principles from Joseph’s life that will help them make godly choices. The Principles Notebook will not only enable students to keep a record of each principle but also encourage personal application and reflection. As you periodically check the students’ notebooks, you will gain a fuller understanding of how this Bible course is influencing students’ lives. In addition, the completed notebook provides another opportunity for a final assessment of each student’s level of achievement. Explain and discuss the notebook assignment during the first week of school. The following is a step-by-step explanation that you can share with your students.

Step 1. Remind your students that as they study the life of Joseph, they will also learn specific principles from his life. These principles guided him to make godly choices in a very difficult and ungodly environment. Because these principles are so important for the choices your students will make, each student will develop a notebook that will include all of these principles.

Step 2. For the sake of consistency, have each student purchase a three-ring binder. You might want to have a sample to show them. It is important that this notebook be used exclusively for these principles from Joseph’s life. This will make it easier for your students to organize each section, easier for you to do a periodic notebook check, and easier for you to grade at the end of the semester.

Step 3. In order to promote creativity, encourage each student to create his or her own title and design for the notebook cover. This should be the first page in the notebook. As you begin each unit, give each student a copy of the appropriate BLM as a unit divider.

Step 4. The real “meat” of the notebook relates to the individual principles. While there are three weeks for each unit, the number of principles in each lesson will vary. As you teach each principle, you will be provided with ideas that you can suggest to your students to expand their understanding and application of the principle.

While this teacher guide will provide structure for the notebook, students should be encouraged to be creative. Each principle provides new opportunities for creativity and personalization. Help your students “think outside the box” as they develop their notebooks.

Step 5. The objective is to produce a notebook that summarizes the principles for making personal, godly choices as revealed through Joseph’s life. Bible knowledge is an important part of the notebook. However, life application is the ultimate objective.

Concluding Observations
Joseph: A Character Study combines a number of important factors that set the stage for an exciting Bible study. First, the study is biographical. This is the story of Joseph, from his youth to his death. Students in this age group enjoy stories of real people.
Second, this Bible study focuses on times of extreme adversity and extreme privilege. For example, Joseph was sold into slavery, yet ended his life “second only to Pharaoh.” When Joseph correctly interpreted the dreams of the baker and cupbearer, he was sure that he would soon be released from prison. However, he was forgotten and remained imprisoned for at least two more years. Throughout Joseph’s life, he experienced both devastation and success. Your students will be amazed at all that befell Joseph throughout his life.

Finally, your students will study two of the most influential nations in the history of mankind. The story of Joseph is pivotal to the development of the nation of Israel. God worked through Joseph to establish a home in Egypt, the second of the two great nations. As the story of Joseph unfolds, so does the history of these two great nations. While nearly four millennia have passed, and certainly the two nations have changed significantly, your students will benefit from studying the histories of two countries still prominent in today’s news.

Teaching God’s Word is exciting, relevant, and life-changing. May the Lord bless you and your students through this course.
Unit 1

The Story Behind the Story

Week 1—The Choices We Make (Exodus 19–20)

Week 2—The Patriarchal Period (Various Genesis passages)

Week 3—Joseph and His Brothers (Genesis 37)
Unit 1

The Story Behind the Story

Joseph's Unfolding Story

For the teacher: Read the following article as part of your Week 1 lesson preparation. There is too much text to read aloud; however, you can use this content as raw material for a lecture or for some other presentation method. You will need to select what you will present and what you will leave out. Underline key sections, make notes in the margins, organize and outline the material—anything you need to do to sharpen your presentation. For your convenience and help, the teaching resources CD contains a PowerPoint presentation (PPT 1) based on this material.

The Cosmic Context

The events in the life of Joseph—like every other account in the Bible—must be seen in light of God's cosmic salvation story.

The story begins with God's creation of the universe. God declared that His handiwork was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). There was no sin. Then the first humans—who were created in God's image—gave in to the serpent's temptation and rebelled against God. Sin entered the world, and to this day every generation passes that sin nature to the following generation. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, and God proclaimed curses on both the humans and the serpent. But in the midst of the curse on the serpent, God promised that one day a descendant of the woman would mortally wound the serpent (Genesis 3:15) and, by implication, do away with the curse.
The human sin nature shows itself in the next chapters of Genesis: Cain’s murder of Abel, the widespread sin that prompted the Flood, and the rebellion at Babel. The remaining chapters of Genesis (12–50) deal with the patriarchs. The rest of biblical history presents greater and greater detail about God’s plan of salvation throughout the subsequent eras—the captivity in Egypt; the Exodus and wilderness wanderings; the conquest of the land under Joshua; the disappointing record of the judges; the united kingdom (also called the united monarchy) under Saul, David, and Solomon; the divided kingdom; the exile; and the return. The whole Old Testament was aimed toward the fulfillment of God’s promise to send the Messiah—His anointed one, Jesus—who would redeem His people. The Gospels describe the short era of Jesus’ years on earth. Acts, the epistles, and the book of Revelation cover the era in which we presently live: the era of the Church. As we read in Revelation, the end of the story—the end of this era—will be marked by the return of Jesus in glory to rule over a redeemed creation.

We can see a development in God’s revelation of His cosmic plan of salvation in the biblical record. Over the millennia, God revealed more and more of His plan. The apostles of Jesus knew more than Adam, Abraham, Moses, or David. Yet throughout biblical history, we see that people who believed in God had certain attitudes and actions in common. Throughout the Old Testament, true believers revered God, listened to Him, obeyed Him (even without understanding the reasons for God’s commands), recognized that they were recipients of His grace and love, depended on Him for the power to live for Him, and demonstrated the authenticity of their relationship with God in their relationships with others. We can find all these elements in the patriarchal era, the law of Moses, the psalms of David, the books of wisdom, and the preaching of the prophets—and throughout the New Testament.

We live in the “last days”—the Church age. We have the full revelation of Scripture, and the Holy Spirit indwells us. Nevertheless, we can gain insights for life today by studying the life of someone who lived in the early days of God’s salvation history: Joseph.

This first week of this unit presents a broad introduction to the main objective of the course: preparing teens to make ethical decisions, both during their teen years and into adulthood. Making God-honoring decisions has been a burning issue from the beginning of human history. The remaining weeks of this unit—and the remainder of the course—will explore the life of Joseph. Though Joseph’s life has many interesting elements, your students will study this man’s life as a means to an end—developing habits of mind and heart that will guide the decisions they make as disciples of Jesus.
Week 1

The Choices We Make

Exodus 19–20

As you introduce your students to this study of Joseph, be sure they understand that the primary focus of the study will be on the choices Joseph made. Daily, all of us make a number of choices. Many of the choices we make reflect our preferences—our likes and dislikes. Sometimes we make choices that affect our lives in important ways. For example, high school students often make choices about what classes to select, who their friends should be, or whether to participate on a mission team or some type of community outreach. And then there are ethical choices.

Joseph made a number of life-changing choices. The consequences of his choices extended far beyond his personal life. As a result of the choices he made, the family of Israel (Jacob) was able to grow to a nation of millions. We must remember that our choices also have life-changing consequences.

The lessons in Unit 1, Week 1, have the following objectives:
• The student will understand that the choices we make reflect who we are and what we believe.
• The student will realize the importance of developing a personal, biblical, ethical framework to guide choices.
• The student will analyze the Ten Commandments as components of an ethical framework.
• The student will learn that every choice they make—whether right or wrong—has consequences.
• The student will receive instruction related to developing a personal Principles Notebook throughout the semester.
Day 1

Transition
Whether this is the first or last hour of the day, students need a time of transition from their previous activities to this time of Bible study. This is particularly true at the beginning of a new semester.

As students arrive, put the BLM 1.2 transparency (Choose the Correct Answer) on the overhead or project it on a screen to stimulate your students’ thinking about the life of Joseph. As you begin class, call on different students to answer each of the questions. Explain to your students that these questions serve as an introduction to this semester’s study.

Instructional Strategies
Introduce students to the course by showing PPT 1 (The Choices We Make). This PowerPoint presentation sets the stage for the rest of the course. Your students will be studying the life of Joseph, but not as an end in itself. Instead, they will analyze the choices Joseph made and will glean principles to help them make ethical decisions themselves.

After showing PPT 1, provide students with the overall structure of the course.
• There are six units. Each unit covers a major part of Joseph’s life.
• Each unit contains three weeks of lessons. Important principles that guided Joseph’s choices are included in these lessons.
• On the basis of the principles from these lessons, every student will compile a Principles Notebook. (See Principles Notebook section. You may explain the requirements for the notebook now, later in the class period, or later in the week. It is strongly suggested that the explanation for the notebook be given by the end of the first week of the semester.)
• The students’ grades will be based on unit tests, Homeward Bound assignments, tests of memory verses, and the Principles Notebook. Of course, you may choose to grade any of the homework assignments. A semester exam is also provided.

Principles Notebook
Before you explain the notebook assignment to your students, take time to review the Principles Notebook section of How to Use the Teacher Guide. The five steps presented in that section provide a clear overview of the assignment. When you are ready, give each student a copy of BLM 1.1, the cover page for Unit 1.
**Class Instruction**

This opening discussion will help your students understand that there are reasons for the choices they make.

1. Ask your students if they have ever used a compass. Encourage those students who have used a compass—especially in a hiking or camping situation—to share their experiences with the entire class. A compass provides a “true” direction. It always points north. Knowing this important fact, you can always be sure of the direction you’re going.

2. We have a moral compass. The Bible points us to what is pleasing to God, thus enabling us to make the right choices. The more we know God’s Word, the more prepared we will be to make the right choices in life. Study Guide 1.2 (The Bible—Our Moral Compass) enables the students to see how God’s Word provides direction for their lives. You may have students complete all or part of this assignment in class or assign it as homework.

3. Ask the question, “Does everyone's moral compass point in the same direction?” Have students vote yes or no by raising their hands. Depending on how your students answered the question, ask one or more of these follow-up questions:
   - What would our society be like if everyone had the same moral compass?
   - Can you think of an example in which it is obvious that individuals in our society do not have the same moral compass?
   - What is a typical moral choice that you or your friends face?
   - What or who influences the moral choices you or your friends make?
   - Why is it important to make good moral choices?

4. In preparation for tomorrow’s class, you may wish to assign Study Guide 1.1 (Choice Categories).

**Bible Memory**

For these first three weeks, students will focus on selected verses from Psalm 119. Even though you have read this psalm in the past, take time to reread it with the following thoughts in mind.

Psalm 119 eloquently shows the importance of God’s Word as it relates to making choices. Beginning with an acknowledgement that the person who walks “according to the law of the Lord” is blessed, this psalm reiterates the important relationship between God’s Word and godly behavior.

Did you know that at least 161 of the 176 verses in this psalm specifically talk about God’s Word? Using words such as law, decrees, commands, precepts, and statutes, the psalmist proclaims the centrality of God’s Word in the lives of His people. As we study the life of Joseph, we will show the correlation between Joseph’s wise choices and principles from Scripture.

If you wish (and if time permits) you may want to share these thoughts about Psalm 119 with your students. However, an opportunity will be provided during the week to share an overview of this psalm in conjunction with your Bible memory assignment.
Week 1—The Choices We Make

Day 2

Transition

If your students were assigned Study Guide 1.1 and/or 1.2 as homework, you may wish to share some of the students’ responses with the class. Student responses should be kept anonymous.

There are two important facts that should be reviewed with your students. First, there are at least two categories of choices. There are those that have short-term consequences and those that have long-term consequences. Second, God’s Word is the moral compass that enables us to make godly choices. This is clearly illustrated in Psalm 119:9–11. This is also the memory passage for this week (see Day 5).

Students need to move beyond simply making choices to a broader understanding of developing an ethical framework. That is the focus of today’s class.

Instructional Strategies

Definition of Terms

Before students are able to understand what is meant by an “ethical framework,” they need to be able to distinguish between ethics, morality, and values. Students may have heard these terms used interchangeably; however, they are significantly different from each other.

Ask students to refer to Study Guide 1.3. You may also choose to use BLM 1.3. Using the diagram, lead a discussion of the terms ethics, values, and morality. Ask students to suggest examples of values and to describe how values shape our choices. The following discussion points may be helpful.

Begin by pointing to the word morality. Every day we make choices—right or wrong, good or bad. The distinction between right and wrong and good and bad refers to our “morality.” For example, a person who consistently makes bad decisions may be referred to as morally corrupt, wicked, or evil.

Now draw your students’ attention to the word values. Each choice we ultimately make (whether good or bad) is based on a principle. These principles represent our values. For example, if you believe that lying is acceptable, then you may see lying as an option in certain circumstances. However, if your personal belief (value) is that lying is not acceptable, then you will know that in order to lie you must go against that principle.

Point to the circle and the word ethics. Finally, we look at ethics. The academic study of these principles (values) and the choices we make (morality) is called ethics.
Framework

We now need to understand the concept of an ethical framework. The best way to illustrate this is to use a simple puzzle, one that has a small number of pieces. Ask your students, “What needs to be done first when putting a puzzle together?” Their answer will probably be to find the pieces with the straight edges and put them together first.

Whether you choose to assemble the border pieces in front of the entire class or have the border preassembled, the lesson is clear. Once the framework for the puzzle is complete, you know that all of the other pieces will fit within the framework.

Everyone has an ethical framework. That is, everyone makes moral choices (good or bad) based upon a specific set of beliefs (values) that define our lives. However, there are many possible ethical frameworks. One of the main purposes of this course is to help students develop a set of principles that enable them to make choices that honor God.

Taking That Extra Step

Every day we see and hear stories of individuals who make good and bad choices. Select a current news story—it may concern a world leader, an athlete, an entertainer, or other celebrity—that illustrates a choice that has affected others. After discussing the story with your students, ask them to identify the values that guided the choice that person made. Remind your students that choices have consequences.

As an additional step, suggest to your students that they may want to add a current story illustration to the Unit 1, Week 1, section of their Principles Notebook. They may cut an appropriate story out of a newspaper or print one from an online source. In addition to including the story, the students should explain the choice made, the value or values upon which the choice was made, and how the choice affected others.

Remind your students that the pieces that form the border of your puzzle are the only pieces that will form the border. They alone form the framework for the rest of the puzzle.

In the same way that a puzzle has a clear border, God has given us the Ten Commandments to serve as the ethical framework for our moral choices. Display BLM 1.4 (The Ten Commandments). Remind students that Moses had just led the nation of Israel out of Egypt. As members of a new nation, the people needed to know how they were to conduct their lives (make moral choices). Thus, God gave them an ethical framework—the Ten Commandments—to guide their choices.

Ask various students to read the verse associated with each of the commandments. The meaning of these commandments will be the focus of our next two classes.
Day 3

Transition
As students arrive, call their attention to the puzzle border and ask, “What was the point of this puzzle?” The point of the puzzle was to demonstrate that there are clear boundaries—represented by the border—to completing the puzzle’s picture. In other words, the border is the framework for the puzzle.

Ask, “What is the relationship between the puzzle’s border and the Ten Commandments?” The Ten Commandments provide the ethical framework for our moral choices.

Looking Back to Look Ahead
It is always a good idea to help students contextualize what they are learning. This is a good time to briefly review the past two days’ classes as they relate to this week’s lesson and the remaining two weeks in this unit. This will enable your students to make the connection between what they are learning and the overall objectives of the course.

Looking back: Since our Bible study is about the life of Joseph and the godly choices he made, we began the course by studying the types of choices we make and the consequences of those choices. We learned that ethics is the academic study of the principles that guide our moral choices. We also learned that everyone has an ethical framework.

Looking ahead: Beginning with today’s class, we are going to study the Christian’s ethical framework as represented by the Ten Commandments. In future weeks we will study the patriarchs—Joseph's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather—and some of the choices they made. We will then meet Joseph and discuss some of the early choices that affected his life.

Instructional Strategies
1. Display BLM 1.5, which shows the distance the Israelites traveled from Egypt to Mount Sinai. Remind your students that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments more than 400 years after the death of Joseph. However, before we study Joseph’s life we need to understand the ethical framework that God had established for His people and for us.

2. Ask students to open their Bibles to Exodus 19 and to locate Study Guide 1.4 (Preparing to Meet God) in their Student Book.
Typically, when we hear someone talk about “preparing to meet God,” it is in reference to someone who is about to die. However, that was certainly not the case prior to God’s provision of the Ten Commandments. As we learn in Exodus 19, God gave the people of Israel—through Moses—clear instructions as to how they should prepare themselves for their meeting with Him.

3. With the class, read Exodus 19:1–15 and complete the appropriate sections of Study Guide 1.4. Upon completion of the study of this passage, ask students to answer the final question: “What is one important lesson that you’ve learned from this passage about personally preparing to meet God?” After students have had time to write their own responses, you may choose to have students share what they’ve written or you may provide an important lesson that you have learned.

4. Study Guide 1.5 (The Commandments as an Ethical Framework) and Study Guide 1.6 (Personal Study of the Ten Commandments) provide the structure for the remaining portion of today’s class and tomorrow’s class. As each commandment is discussed, the student is to write that commandment on one of the puzzle pieces (Study Guide 1.5). The student is also to complete the Key Ideas on Study Guide 1.6. The Personal Application section of Study Guide 1.6 for each commandment can either be completed in class or as homework. The first four commandments will be addressed in this lesson, and the remaining six commandments will be covered in Day 4.

Commandment 1. “I am the Lord your God.... you shall have no other gods before me.”

Key Ideas:

- This commandment makes it very clear that we must take our relationship with God seriously.
- Without establishing the authority of God in this first commandment, there would be no basis for the remainder of the commandments.
- This commandment distinguishes the God of Israel from the pagan gods that surrounded them, especially the ones they had been familiar with in Egypt. The God of Israel was not to be viewed as one other god among many. He was to be the only God that had Israel’s allegiance.

Commandment 2. “You shall not make for yourself an idol.”

Key Ideas:

- When it comes to the question of God, there are only two possibilities; we either accept the God described in the Bible or we make God in our own image.
- What is the difference between God and the pagan gods? Our God
  - fulfilled a covenant (promise) He made with His people.
  - expected His people to live moral and just lives.
  - was not controlled by magic or “religious” leaders.
  - was not associated with elements of nature or animals.
Commandment 3. “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.”

Key Ideas:

- It is interesting that two of the Ten Commandments have to do with a good “name.” In addition to the third commandment, there is the ninth commandment: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” In other words, 20 percent of the message God gave on Mount Sinai concerned how we speak of God and speak about others.
- This command warns against giving God a “bad name.” To speak disrespectfully about God would cause others not to believe or respect Him.
- We diminish God’s reputation when we use His name in a disrespectful, irreverent, or frivolous way.
- Another form of misusing God’s name is when individuals invoke His name to further their own agendas or to garner prestige. It is interesting to note how nonreligious individuals will invoke God’s name, whether in prayer or to appear religious, when it serves their personal purpose.

Commandment 4. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”

Key Ideas:

- This commandment referred to God’s resting on the seventh day of creation. Certainly God did not need to rest because He was tired! The first six days were devoted to the physical creation. The seventh day was set aside for spiritual purposes.
- The Sabbath is to remind us that our lives are more than the accumulation of material things. We are reminded of God, His presence, and His importance in our lives.
- The time we set aside for certain activities is a declaration of what we deem important. Think about the time that people set aside to view sporting events. Now think about the amount of time individuals set aside to study God’s Word and to pray.
- The focus of the Sabbath day is not to have time off from work—or school! The focus of this day is to be on spiritual growth. What would be your ideal “spiritual day”? 
Week 1—The Choices We Make

Day 4

Transition
As students arrive, ask them to keep their books closed. Once all students have arrived and you are ready to begin class, remind your students that we have six remaining commandments to study. Display BLM 1.6. This BLM gives the first four commandments in order. However, the remaining six commandments are out of order. Ask your students to identify commandments 6–10 in order.

Instructional Strategies
1. Once again, have your students turn to Study Guide 1.5. Review with them the important role that the Ten Commandments play in setting a framework for our ethical system of beliefs.
2. Resume your discussion of the Ten Commandments by noting the Key Ideas for each of the remaining six commandments. It is important for students to note these Key Ideas in Study Guide 1.6. The Personal Application portion of Study Guide 1.6 can be completed during class time or assigned as homework.

Commandment 5. “Honor your father and your mother.”
Key Ideas:
• Just as God provides a moral framework for the world, parents provide a moral framework for their children. In many ways, the relationship between parents and their children is like the relationship between God and His creation. Parents provide a very important connection to the child’s understanding of God.
• Honoring one’s parents does not come with stipulations. In other words, it is wrong to believe that we should honor our parents only if …
  – they deserve our honor.
  – we’re complimented for doing so.
  – it feels like the right thing to do.
  – our friends do it too.
• Sometimes parents do not treat their child as they should. It is during these times that it takes great strength and courage for the child to honor his or her mother and father. But remember, the command to “honor” is not an option.

Commandment 6. “You shall not murder.”
Key Ideas:
• What was the reason for the first murder? It could be argued that it was sibling rivalry (Genesis 4:2–5).
• Murder carries with it great consequences. First, it is a violation of God’s gift, the creation of man in His image. Second, the murder of a single
person has significant implications for the future. No one knows the contributions a single individual may make in the course of a lifetime. No one knows how the children of someone slain may have influenced the world. And, of course, no one knows how the children of the children of someone slain might have had an impact on our world.

Commandment 7. “You shall not commit adultery.”

Key Ideas:

• How you define or characterize adultery to your class must reflect your school's guidelines regarding the discussion of sexual matters as well as your sense of your students' maturity. As a part of your discussion of adultery, you may want to draw the following distinctions:
  – In today's society, adultery refers to the voluntary sexual relationship between a married individual with someone other than his or her spouse.
  – During the time of the Old Testament, men often had more than one wife (e.g., Jacob married Leah and Rachel). This was true of most societies during Old Testament times. Adultery in these societies referred to sexual relations between a man (married or unmarried) and a woman who was married to someone else.

• If you identify the Bible's teaching regarding sex, you will quickly learn that there are two distinct categories: holy and unholy sex. Sexual relations that are designated as holy occur between a husband and a wife. All other sexual behaviors would be classified as unholy.

• There are a number of implications that result from the act of adultery. First, we could say that adultery is a type of theft. This is when one person trespasses the marital bonds of another couple and steals the affection of one of the spouses. Second, the stability of the family unit is undermined by the act of adultery. The “cheated” spouse loses respect and trust for his or her marriage partner. And if the children are aware of the adultery, it undermines their trust in that parent.

Commandment 8. “You shall not steal.”

Key Ideas:

• Notice how people try to justify stealing. Surely, you have heard people make statements such as the following:
  – If I plan to give it back, is it really stealing?
  – Since I’m not taking something from another person (but from the government or the company I work for), is that stealing?

• God expects us to respect not only human life (You shall not murder) but also possessions (You shall not steal). Ownership is so important to God that it is included as one of the Ten Commandments.

• Stealing is one of the commandments that people most often break. For many individuals, stealing occurs so frequently that it becomes a “normal” part of their lives. If you have stolen, you have probably experienced guilt. The first step to removing the guilt and getting victory over such a habit is repentance.

• Certainly the students have already been taught that it is wrong to plagiarize. Plagiarism is stealing someone else’s ideas and claiming them as your
own. This commandment does not just refer to material possessions; it also refers to the ideas and words of others.

Commandment 9. “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

Key Ideas:
• The latest research indicates that over 90 percent of adults admit to some form of lying every day. Remember, lying can take many forms other than an outright falsehood. Exaggeration and misrepresentation are two of the most common forms of lying.
• Unlike stealing, which includes all types of possessions and even ideas, lying is only about words. Why is this so important to God (Proverbs 6:16–17)? To lie is to distort reality (the way things really are). As a result, others will make wrong decisions or assumptions on the basis of the lie. Thus, the lie is affecting many more people, often in a very serious manner.
• The psalmist reminds us, “The word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does” (Psalm 33:4). The reason we should strive to be truthful is that it is a divine quality.

Commandment 10. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house… or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Key Ideas:
• Note how most of the previous commandments have to do with specific, concrete actions: honoring parents, keeping the Sabbath day, not committing murder or adultery, and so forth. However, the tenth commandment concerns our minds. It is in this commandment where God focuses on our thoughts and desires.
• Does this commandment mean that we should not desire or want other things? No. The focus of this commandment is wanting something at the expense of someone else. It is not wrong to want something, as long as it doesn’t violate either of the first two commandments.
• There are two very important principles to keep in mind as it relates to “coveting” or “wanting”:
  1. Coveting often leads to sinful actions. The story of David and Bathsheba is a perfect example (2 Samuel 11).
  2. Coveting often causes us to be slaves to material possessions. Credit card companies and the advertising industry are predicated on the belief that people will desire things that they don’t need or can’t afford. As a result, many people are “drowning” in debt.
Week 1—The Choices We Make

Day 5

Transition

Write the following four numbers on the board or overhead: 400 BC, 1400 BC, 2400 BC, and 3400 BC. Ask students to identify the approximate number of years before the birth of Christ that God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses (1,400). Now ask your students these questions:

- Did Jesus reject the Ten Commandments during His earthly ministry?
- Almost 2,000 years have passed since the time of Christ. That means that the Ten Commandments are over 3,400 years old. Are the Ten Commandments still applicable to us today?

Instructional Strategies

1. Divide your class into groups of three or four. Students should refer to Study Guide 1.7 (The Ten Commandments in the New Testament). Students may wish to reference Study Guide 1.6 for a complete listing of the Ten Commandments. Have the students complete Study Guide 1.7 as a group. Since students at this age enjoy competition, you may want to have a contest to see which group can complete this exercise first.

2. Psalm 119:9–11 is the memory passage for this week. God’s Word acts as a compass for our lives, enabling us to make good decisions. Using Study Guide 1.8 (God’s Compass: Psalm 119:9–11), ask students to summarize the following observations about each of these three verses:

   How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word (119:9).

   What does it mean to live a “pure” life? It means to live a life that honors God. Just as a compass guides us down the right path to achieve our destination, God’s Word directs our decisions so that we may live a life that pleases Him.

   I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands (119:10).

   In order to achieve our destination (pure lives), there are two important facts we need to remember about the use of our compass (God’s Word). First, the psalmist reminds us that we must seek with all our heart. A compass (God’s Word) is of no use if we leave it sitting on a shelf. We must make an active decision to use our compass. Second, as we travel any pathway in life we will encounter obstacles. These obstacles may be material possessions, pleasures of life, or honors and possessions. While these obstacles may not necessarily be bad for us, they may cause us to stray from leading pure and holy lives.
I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you (119:11).

It is unlikely that we always carry a compass with us. In the same way, it is also unlikely that we are always carrying a Bible with us. The best way to ensure that we always have God’s Word available to guide us is to memorize (hide in our hearts) His Word. It is for that reason that we begin with this passage of Scripture for our memory work this year. Psalm 119:9–11 provides us with the rationale for memorizing God’s Word.
Choice Categories

We make choices every day of our lives. Most of our choices are short-term; that is, they are choices of preference. However, we also make choices that are long-term; that is, they have an impact on our future. From the following list, circle $S$ if it is a choice that is short-term or $L$ if the choice has long-term implications.

- $S$ $L$ You choose what to wear to school.
- $S$ $L$ You choose a book to read.
- $S$ $L$ You choose which classes to take in high school.
- $S$ $L$ You choose what time to set your alarm.
- $S$ $L$ You choose which church services and activities to attend.
- $S$ $L$ You choose your friends.
- $S$ $L$ You choose which college to attend.
- $S$ $L$ You choose what to do on a Saturday.

Identify the easiest short-term choice that you make and explain why.

What do you believe is the next long-term choice that you will have to make?
The Bible—Our Moral Compass

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, containing 176 verses. The focus of Psalm 119 is the Word of God and how it influences our lives.

Choose three verses from Psalm 119 that best describe how God’s Word can influence your life. For each verse, write the reference (the verse you’ve chosen) in the space provided. Then write the entire verse in the next area provided. Finally, explain how this verse can influence the choices you make.

Example:
Psalm 119:59

This verse says, “I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes.”

How can this verse influence your choices?
I know that I don't always make wise choices. If I focus on God’s Word, I know that my choices will honor Him.

Psalm 119:_______

This verse says,

How can this verse influence your choices?
Psalm 119:________
    This verse says,

How can this verse influence your choices?

Psalm 119:________
    This verse says,

How can this verse influence your choices?
Understanding Ethics, Values, and Morality

Ethics: The study of principles of right and wrong

Values: The principles upon which our choices are made

Morality: The distinction between right and wrong choices
**Preparing to Meet God (Exodus 19:1–15)**

1. Why did God tell Moses to remind the people of what He did in Egypt (19:4)?

2. How did the people respond to what God had told Moses (19:8)?
3. As a result of their response, the people would have two days to prepare themselves before God met them on the third day. How were the people to prepare themselves?

4. What is one important lesson that you've learned from this passage about personally preparing to meet God?
The Commandments as an Ethical Framework

As you discuss each of the Ten Commandments in class, write that commandment in the designated portion of the puzzle. Note that the Ten Commandments form the framework—or border—for our personal ethical beliefs.
Personal Study of the Ten Commandments

Commandment 1. “I am the Lord your God…. you shall have no other gods before me.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 2. “You shall not make for yourself an idol.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 3. “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 4. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 5. “Honor your father and your mother.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:
Commandment 6. “You shall not murder.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 7. “You shall not commit adultery.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 8. “You shall not steal.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 9. “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:

Commandment 10. “You shall not covet.”
Key Ideas:

Personal Application:
The Ten Commandments in the New Testament

Noted below are the Ten Commandments and twenty New Testament references. For each commandment, write the two New Testament references that address that commandment. You will note that some references are listed multiple times. That is because the reference is appropriate for more than one commandment.

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<td>Matthew 19:18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commandment 3</td>
<td>Acts 17:29</td>
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**Commandment 1**
“I am the Lord your God …. you shall have no other gods before me.”

**Commandment 2**
“You shall not make for yourself an idol.”

**Commandment 3**
“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.”

**Commandment 4**
“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”

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**Commandment 9**
“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

**Commandment 10**
“You shall not covet.”
God’s Compass (Psalm 119:9–11)

Summarize the key points from each verse.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. Psalm 119:9
Your summary:

I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. Psalm 119:10
Your summary:

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:11
Your summary:
Week 1—Study Guide Answers

Study Guide 1.1  Choice Categories
We make choices every day of our lives. Most of our choices are short-term; that is, they are choices of preference. However, we also make choices that are long-term; that is, they have an impact on our future. From the following list, circle S if it is a choice that is short-term or L if the choice has long-term implications.

S   L   You choose what to wear to school.
S   L   You choose a book to read.
S   L   You choose which classes to take in high school.
S   L   You choose what time to set your alarm.
S   L   You choose which church services and activities to attend.
S   L   You choose your friends.
S   L   You choose which college to attend.
S   L   You choose what to do on a Saturday.

Identify the easiest short-term choice that you make and explain why.
Answers will vary.

What do you believe is the next long-term choice that you will have to make?
Answers will vary.

Study Guide 1.2  The Bible—Our Moral Compass
Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, containing 176 verses. The focus of Psalm 119 is the Word of God and how it influences our lives.

Choose three verses from Psalm 119 that best describe how God’s Word can influence your life. For each verse, write the reference (the number of the verse you’ve chosen) in the space provided. Then write the entire verse in the next area provided. Finally, explain how this verse can influence the choices you make.

Example: Psalm 119:59
This verse says,
“I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes.”
How can this verse influence your choices?
I know that I don’t always make wise choices. If I focus on God’s Word, I know that my choices will honor Him.

Psalm 119: \textit{Answers will vary.}
This verse says, \textit{Answers will vary.}
How can this verse influence your choices? \textit{Answers will vary.}

Psalm 119: \textit{Answers will vary.}
This verse says, \textit{Answers will vary.}
How can this verse influence your choices? \textit{Answers will vary.}

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This verse says, \textit{Answers will vary.}
How can this verse influence your choices? \textit{Answers will vary.}

\textbf{Study Guide 1.3 Understanding Ethics, Values, and Morality}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ethics_diagram.png}
\caption{Ethics: The study of principles of right and wrong. Morality: The distinction between right and wrong choices. Values: The principles upon which our choices are made.}
\end{figure}
Study Guide 1.4  Preparing to Meet God

Exodus 19:1–15

1. Why did God tell Moses to remind the people of what He did in Egypt (19:4)?

God wanted the people to fully understand that He had brought them safely out of Egypt. God knew that He was about to reveal to them His Ten Commandments. He wanted the people to carefully listen and take seriously the words He was about to give to them.

2. How did the people respond to what God had told Moses (19:8)?

“The people all responded together, ‘We will do everything the Lord has said.’” Even though the nation did not yet know the nature of the commandments, they promised God they would obey Him.

3. As a result of their response, the people would have two days to prepare themselves before God met them on the third day. How were the people to prepare themselves?

• A boundary line was set around the mountain that neither man nor livestock could cross (19:12).
• They were to consecrate themselves for two days (19:10). This consecration involved washing themselves physically and using oils and perfumes. Physical cleanliness symbolized inner cleanliness.
• They were to wash their clothes (19:10). This was true for the same reasons noted above.
• They were to abstain from sexual relations (19:15). In every way, God’s people were to focus totally on Him.

4. What is one important lesson that you’ve learned from this passage about personally preparing to meet God?

Answers will vary.
Study Guide 1.5  The Commandments as an Ethical Framework

As you discuss each of the Ten Commandments in class, write that commandment in the designated portion of the puzzle. Note that the Ten Commandments form the framework—or border—for our personal ethical beliefs.
Study Guide 1.6  Personal Study of the Ten Commandments

Commandment 1. “I am the Lord your God. ... you shall have no other gods before me.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 2. “You shall not make for yourself an idol.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 3. “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 4. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 5. “Honor your father and your mother.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 6. “You shall not murder.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 7. “You shall not commit adultery.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 8. “You shall not steal.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 9. “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.

Commandment 10. “You shall not covet.”
Key Ideas: Answers will vary.
Personal Application: Answers will vary.
**Study Guide 1.7  The Ten Commandments in the New Testament**

Noted below are the Ten Commandments and twenty New Testament references. For each commandment, write the two New Testament references that address that commandment. You will note that some references are listed multiple times. That is because the reference is appropriate for more than one commandment.

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<td>1 Timothy 6:1</td>
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<td>Matthew 19:18–19</td>
<td>Ephesians 6:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commandment 10. “You shall not covet.”</td>
<td>Romans 7:7</td>
<td>Romans 13:9</td>
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Study Guide 1.8   God’s Compass
Psalm 119:9–11
Summarize the key points from each verse.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. Psalm 119:9
   Your summary: Answers will vary.
I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. Psalm 119:10
   Your summary: Answers will vary.
I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:11
   Your summary: Answers will vary.
Choose the Correct Answer

Select the letter of the correct response that corresponds to the name/location in the left-hand column.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ______ Goshen</td>
<td>A. He was sold into slavery by his brothers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. ______ Abraham</td>
<td>B. He sold his birthright.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ______ Potiphar</td>
<td>C. This is the place where Jacob wrestled with the angel of Yahweh.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ______ Jacob</td>
<td>D. This is where Jacob lived with his 12 sons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. ______ River of Jabbok</td>
<td>E. He was the ruler of Egypt.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. ______ Pharaoh</td>
<td>F. This is another name for the “Promised Land.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. ______ Joseph</td>
<td>G. God promised to make a great nation of his family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. ______ Hebron</td>
<td>H. He was an officer of Pharaoh’s.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. ______ Esau</td>
<td>I. His name was changed to Israel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. ______ Canaan</td>
<td>J. This is the name of the land in Egypt where Joseph’s family lived.</td>
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Understanding Ethics, Values, and Morality

**Ethics**: The study of principles of right and wrong

- **Right**
- **Wrong**

**Values**: The principles upon which our choices are made

**Morality**: The distinction between right and wrong choices
The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2–17)

1. I am the Lord your God.... You shall have no other gods before me.

2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.

3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

5. Honor your father and your mother.

6. You shall not murder.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

10. You shall not covet.
The Land of Goshen to Mount Sinai
The Remaining Six Commandments

Write the number that corresponds to the commandment in the right column. The first four are already done.

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