

Faithful to God

Snow Quest Faith Trail

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Beginner Teacher's Manual

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Unit 1

Better Things

Unit Aim
Students will explain how God gave us better things through Jesus.

Unit Memory Verse
Hebrews 7:19

Scripture Text
Luke 1:26–38
Hebrews 1

Bible Lesson Verse
Hebrews 1:3

Bible Point
To save us, God had a better plan.

Life Application
I am thankful God came to save me.

THE BETTER PLAN

Jesus' Birth Foretold

CORE SUPPLIES

Excite and Engage

Welcome: Purchase fake snow or use DIY ideas to make it.

Attendance charts (AP) ⬇️, markers, offering container (see page 6 for suggestions), unit 1 MV poster (TRP)

Opening Activity: Purchase two sets of birthday party supplies (one is plain and only includes place settings; the other is bright, fun, colorful, and includes prizes and party favors).

Relate and Receive

Bible Lesson: Long fabric headpiece for Mary, gold headband and fabric sash for Gabriel, Bibles

Apply and Act

Life Application: From the options, print your favorite nature picture ⬇️. For each student, print and cut apart a set of New Birth pictures (TRP) ⬇️.

Bible art: Gabriel Visits Mary (TRP) ⬇️, 1 blank piece of paper, crayons, activity papers (page 1), glue sticks

Prayer and Call to Action: New Birth poster (TRP)

Home Connection: For each student, copy the unit 1 HC calendar (TRP) ⬇️ and the lesson 1 HC devotion ⬇️. Separate the activity paper covers (AP) to send home. Prepare child information forms ⬇️ for parents to fill out as they drop off or pick up their children.

EXPANDED SUPPLIES

Worship and the Word

Worship: Battery-operated candle; *suggested songs:* “Away in a Manger” (traditional Christmas carol), “Here I Am to Worship” by Chris Tomlin

Memory Work: For each student, print the unit 1 MV handout (TRP) ⬇️.

Unit 1 MV poster (TRP), memory charts (AP) ⬇️, MV gear stickers (TRP) ⬇️, large cotton balls, bucket, timer

Reinforce and Review

Activity Paper: Activity papers (page 2), crayons

Option 1: Provide sets of glitter glue pens. For each student, print a Thankful LA paper ⬇️.

Option 2: Print two copies of the Bible art: Gabriel Visits Mary ⬇️. Cut each picture into ten pieces and place each set of puzzle pieces in a separate envelope.

Option 3: Select and print one set of JBQ Verses ⬇️ for students to take home. Research Junior Bible Quizzing at the website, www.najbq.com.

Looking Ahead

Lesson 4 suggests that students perform the song “Mary, Did You Know?” (with motions) as a choir special for the adults. If doing this activity, practice the motions throughout the unit.

Teacher Devotional

Read Hebrews 1. Prayerfully consider what this passage says:

About God

As the creator of the universe, the almighty God could have been exempt from facing the pain and suffering that life can bring. Even so, He chose to manifest in the flesh and then subjected Himself to the human experience. His love and desire for our salvation was His motivation.

To You as a Teacher

We should approach each day with a thankful spirit, knowing that the God of all creation came to save each of us individually. Our actions and words should reflect a constant rejoicing in this knowledge. Daily displays of thanksgiving are in order toward the King of kings.

To Your Students

Beginner students are still in the process of understanding abstract versus concrete ideas. Science experiments easily transfer parallel meanings. During this winter theme of Snow Quest, a demonstration of water properties would enhance their understanding of how God the Spirit became God in human flesh. Water, ice cubes, and steam provide an inexpensive yet memorable visual lesson. A quick internet search of age-appropriate science experiments could cement this lesson in your students' hearts and minds.

Just as water is essential to our physical existence, Jesus Christ became the living water to save us.

CORE (designed for a teaching period around 45 minutes)

EXCITE AND ENGAGE

Welcome

Snow, teamwork, trails, and racing—what better combination is there for a Beginner to enjoy during the winter? If your climate rarely includes snow, the excitement of snow will thrill students. Prepare or purchase fake snow and plan a few minutes of playtime during each lesson.

As your *Faith Team* enters the classroom, encourage them to explore the Snow Quest Faith Lodge while greeting their teammates. Explain what a mountain lodge is and that your team will gather at the lodge to practice, plan, and learn about the Snow Quest Faith Trail—a race where faith is vital and teams become better through their study of God's Word.

Distribute attendance charts (AP) 📄, and have students add their names. Students draw one stick figure in a ski-lift chair.

We all have a plan for our lives. Some people plan on going to college, some people plan on being rich and famous, some people plan on winning the lottery, and so on. Some plans are better than others. Not everyone's plan involves following Jesus. Some people do not think they need God in their lives, but they are wrong. God's plan for us is always better than our own plan.

- **What kind of plan do you think God has for your life?**

Lead students to the unit 1 MV poster (TRP). Slowly read it while students echo, **“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Hebrews 7:19). Learning God's Word builds our faith and guides us along the trail. Our verse will show us how God has better plans for us and our faith helps us believe in those plans.**

Introduce the Life Application: **I am thankful God came to save me.**

SHARE IT!

Upload your photos to our Facebook group: Word Aflame Beginner Curriculum Teachers. Before sharing, ask parents or guardians for permission to photograph and share pictures of students using the child information form 📄. Keep the signed forms on file if you share students' pictures on Facebook or any other public site.

Teacher Tip

If attendance charts are mounted on the wall, use crayons or place a sheet or cardstock behind each one (markers can bleed through paper).

Bible Point

To save us, God had a better plan.

Unit 1 Memory Verse

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Hebrews 7:19).

Bible Lesson Verse

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3).

Teacher Tip

Ways to incorporate the memory verse into the CORE lesson:

- Recite it prior to the Bible lesson.
- Set memory verse timers throughout the morning. When a timer rings, students recite the verse.
- Incorporate the verse throughout the lesson by challenging students to listen or watch for a certain signal. When you give the signal, students stand and recite the verse.

Opening Activity: The Better Party Pack

Form two groups. Give each group a birthday party pack. Instruct groups to unwrap the items and set up for a party. Most likely students will observe and comment about the disparity between the two packs. Build a discussion from their comments.

- **Which birthday party pack is better?**
- **How would you feel if your party used this one?** Point to the lesser one.
- **Why is this one better?** Point to the better one.

Just as the better party pack will give us a better party, so God’s better plan is always better than our plans. We need to be saved, and God has a plan to save us.

Review the Life Application: **I am thankful God came to save me.**

RELATE AND RECEIVE

Access Prior Experience: **Have you ever had a plan to do something important—like buy a bike or go to a special event? How would you feel if someone changed that plan and made it even better?**

Bible Lesson: Jesus’ Birth Foretold (Luke 1:26–38)

Select volunteers to be Mary and Gabriel. Place a long fabric headpiece on Mary and a gold headband and fabric sash on Gabriel.

Help students find Luke 1 in their Bibles. Introduce Mary. Instruct actors to repeat their words after you.

MARY: I am so excited! I am planning my wedding. I will be married to a wonderful man. His name is Joseph. He will be such a good husband.

Mary and Joseph had big plans. They would soon be married, build a home, and have a family. While Mary was planning and preparing for her wedding, she had a visitor.

Enter Gabriel in front of Mary. Instruct Mary to gasp and act concerned. **The visitor was the angel Gabriel. God sent him with a special message.**

GABRIEL: Do not be afraid, Mary. God is pleased with you. You will have a baby boy. You will name Him Jesus.”

The angel’s words confused Mary. This was not her plan. God was changing her plan. Then Mary realized God’s plan was better than hers. She listened as the angel said her son would save people from sin.

- **How do you think Mary felt when she heard about God’s plan?** *Doubt, anxiety, excitement. Discuss the feelings Mary might have had.*

To save us, God had a better plan—a plan that is for everyone. Mary heard about God’s plan before it happened, and she was thankful for God’s plan.

- **What part of God’s plan was better?** *Jesus was coming to save us from sin.*

Review Hebrews 7:19 from the unit 1 MV poster (TRP). **Man’s plan was to follow the Law, but that did not keep man from sinning. There was a better hope—it was God’s plan. God’s plan was that He would come as a baby and be our Savior. That is the best plan because Jesus saves us from sin.**

APPLY AND ACT

Life Application: I am thankful God came to save me.

Help students find and read Hebrews 1:3, **“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

Ask for a volunteer. Give the volunteer a nature picture 🌳, a blank piece of paper, and crayons. **I would like you to make an exact copy of this picture. Can you do that?**

Compliment the volunteer’s attempts. **It was difficult to do what I asked, but you tried. This is how our plans work. We try our plan, but God’s plan is always better. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that, as God, Jesus came to earth. Jesus is powerful and can save us from sin.** Lead students in saying the Life Application: **I am thankful God came to save me.**

Give each student an activity paper, a set of New Birth pictures (TRP) 📄, a glue stick, and crayons. **God’s plan was better. He came to save us.** On the front page, help students glue the pictures showing repentance, baptism, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost. Review the Life Application as students trace the words. **I am thankful God came to save me.** Discuss how Jesus’ birth was part of God’s plan to save us.

Prayer and Call to Action

Gather students in a semi-circle near the New Birth poster (TRP). Ask simple questions and help students understand each picture. Lead in a prayer of repentance with students echoing. If students need infilling, lead in a prayer to receive the Holy Ghost.

Home Connection

- For each student, send home a copy of the unit 1 HC calendar (TRP) 📄 and the lesson 1 HC devotion 📄, or show parents the URL on the back of the activity paper so they can download it themselves.
- Send home the cover of the activity paper. Show parents how the back contains the MV posters for the entire quarter.
- Use the child information form 📄 to get contact information from parents. This will be used to establish a home connection throughout the quarter.

EXPANDED *(designed for a teaching period over 45 minutes)*

WORSHIP AND THE WORD

Worship

Gather in a circle. Select a volunteer to operate the candle. Dim the lights. Sing the traditional Christmas carol “Away in a Manger.”

This candle makes our room feel warm and happy as we worship, but it does not provide enough light for the entire room. Ask a volunteer to turn up the lights. **When electricity came, it was a better plan to light buildings—better than small candles.**

Before Jesus came, people had only a little light in their dark worlds of sin. God had a better plan, and He came to save us. Jesus shines into darkness and brings light into our lives. Because He does, we can be saved from sin. I am thankful God came to save me.

Play the worship song “Here I Am to Worship” by Chris Tomlin.

Editorial Note:

Word Aflame children’s levels are in alignment with the adult curriculum, sharing the same biblical text as a springboard into the lesson. Our aligned study texts are from Hebrews, but a Bible narrative text and story is included in each lesson to demonstrate the Bible Point. The Life Application is used to tie the two texts together.



Looking Ahead

Lesson 4 suggests that students perform the song “Mary, Did You Know?” (with motions) as a choir special for the adults. If doing this activity, practice the motions throughout the unit.

Unit 1 Bible Verse

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Hebrews 7:19).

Students add one MV gear sticker (TRP) to their memory charts (AP).



I am thankful
God came to
save me.



See page 7 for more information on the JBQ option.

Memory Work: Hebrews 7:19

Gather students at the unit 1 MV poster (TRP). Slowly recite Hebrews 7:19, allowing students to echo the words. Help them find and then read the verse from their Bibles. **In God’s plan, God became human to be our Savior. This brought better hope than people had before Jesus came.**

We will practice for our Snow Quest Faith Trail race. In this part of our race, we must move snow. Show the cotton balls. These snowballs are scattered across the trail. Begin scattering the cotton balls, saying one verse word as each cotton ball is tossed. These represent our plans. The memory verse tells us that the first plan was based on hoping we could be perfect. That plan was not the best plan “for the law made nothing perfect.”

Have students play a timed relay. Place a bucket on the table and see how quickly they can place all the cotton balls inside it. Students must follow this rule: **Each student can only pick up one cotton ball at a time and put it in the bucket.**

After the game, comment on how moving that snow took some work. **You had to scurry around and pick up every snowball. You had to take each one to the bucket. It was not a very good plan for our race. I hope we can do better in the actual race.**

- **Can you think of a better plan for this trail race?** Discuss options and try different ways to speed up the process.

Our verse tells us that even though the old plan—the Law—was not perfect, God’s better plan was coming. The verse says, “But the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.” In God’s better plan—with Jesus coming to save us—we are brought closer to God.

REINFORCE AND REVIEW

Activity Paper

On the back of the activity paper, students complete the picture by tracing the lines and then color the picture. **God had a better plan for us. He sent the angel Gabriel to tell Mary how she would be part of God’s better plan.** Review how God’s better plan brought salvation.

Option 1: Trace the Lines

Give each student a Thankful LA paper and access to glitter glue pens. Show them how to trace the letters with the pens.

The black and white letters on this paper were like our plans. They were not colorful. They were less than the best.

The glitter pens are like God’s plan. Adding color to the letters made it better, just like God’s plan of coming to earth to save us was better than man’s plans.

Option 2: Bible Art Puzzle

Form two groups. Give each group a Bible art: Gabriel Visits Mary puzzle to complete.

After puzzles are finished, lead in a prayer of thanksgiving because Jesus came to save us.

Option 3: JBQ Introduction

Introduce the concept of Junior Bible Quizzing. Hand out one set of JBQ Verses. Explain that each week, a fun activity will help students review the material.

Option: If you have some JBQ games for the upcoming quarter prepared, show students some activities they will be playing.