

# Word Aflame Jr. High

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**Jr. High Teacher's Manual**

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# Editorial




by Evan Zenobia  
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I write this editorial in the hope that by the time you read it, our nation has returned to normal. But it is not lost on me that our world may never be the same. We have been working tirelessly to evolve at Pentecostal Publishing House and present new methods of education and resource allocation to equip our teachers and churches alike. Our faith remains in God, and we believe that He will help us, but we are also intent on making the best of the worst of situations. We are working for you and your students, and we want to do everything that we can to make sure that even in time of uncertainty, we are not lax on spiritual education and discipleship. It remains our goal to continue offering the highest quality content and making it accessible to all those affected by events of previous months.


Just as we must evolve in the way we share resources, we understand that you too must evolve in the way you teach and educate. Now more than ever, we as teachers are being forced to adopt social media and video services to make sure we are still doing everything we can to teach and

connect with our youth. Now more than ever, students need teachers—people willing to go above and beyond classroom responsibility to ensure students are being fed and disciplined through countless platforms and methods. Now more than ever, we must lean into everything we have at our disposal to share truth with our students. Record that devotional you've been praying about. Host your Sunday school lesson on a live Monday night video call. Post inspirational messages and Bible verses on your Instagram story. Tag your students in posts about prayer and Bible reading. But whatever you do, don't stop reaching them.

This quarter will focus on the basics of truth that life in Christ offers us. This point will be emphasized throughout each unit as we look at the foundational Scripture passages and stories of the Word of God including the story of Moses and God's mission to rescue His children. Finally, we look at the need to be mission minded and invest into not only making disciples, but becoming a disciple of God.

**The Gear Icon** : This icon denotes a suggested time for discussion or student/teacher input.

**The Pencil Icon** : This icon denotes a specific answer to a question within the student handbook or other student writing prompt.

**The PowerPoint Icon** : This icon denotes the use of the designated item within the PowerPoint slides provided with the lesson such as fill-in-the-blank answers or Bible verses.

**Bold Font:** This font indicates a major point that is also in the PowerPoint and student handbook.

*Italicized Font:* This font indicates a note for the teacher or a word that is being defined.

## ACCESSING THE DIGITAL CURRICULUM

With your purchase, digital resources for both the teacher's manual and the teacher's resource packet (TRP) are available through access codes.

To access the PDF and DOCs of the teacher's manual digitally:

1. Visit [pentecostalpublishing.com/downloads](http://pentecostalpublishing.com/downloads) and follow the instructions to access digital resources.
2. Use the download code: .

The coupon code will be valid for one year from the date of the first lesson.

# Theme Development

## Unit 1: Back to Basics

- This unit explores important questions of truth, belief, and faith and takes us to the basics of understanding who God is and what He wants for us.
- The theme of this unit is all about asking questions. There are a couple of ways to approach decorating for this. First, you could focus on the ideas of larger than life questions and present decorations of the cosmic variety with cosmic imagery.
- Another option that would play very well is decorating around a trivia or gameshow theme to drive home the point of finding the answers to tough questions. Consider dressing like a gameshow host and carrying a microphone.
- Consider the use of the Teachers Resource Packet (**TRP**) if props and settings are not possible.

## Unit 2: Out of Egypt

- This unit explores the life and times of Moses and his transformation from Egyptian prince to Israelite prophet.
- Decorations are pretty straightforward for this series, focusing on Egyptian themes and imagery. Consider the use of real life depictions of Egyptian scenery: pyramids, desert, hieroglyphs, and so forth.
- Consider the use of the Teachers Resource Packet (**TRP**) if props and settings are not possible.

## Unit 3: Mission Mandate

- This unit explores what efforts we can take to connect with our mission field, even if that field is right in our backyard.
- Consider using a collection of various items and imagery representative of cultures across the world. You could decorate each week with a new style from Asian, to European, to South American, and so on.
- Alternatively, consider collecting everything that you and the church have from various places around the world and setting up missionary stations, featuring the photos of missionaries in those countries or continents. This could be used later on for reference and focused prayer on behalf of those great men and women serving God across the world.

**Embark:** This opening section is meant to elicit discussion and promote activity to encourage the learning process of students while creating a fun and engaging atmosphere.

**Explore:** This section is the basis for the lesson with various biblical references, key points, as well as personal examples to effectively convey the big idea in a logical and practical manner.


**Expand:** This section is intended to provide a consolidated yet effective means of closure perpetuated by closing discussions, activities, or prayers.

# LESSON 1


# WHAT IS TRUTH?

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

## BIBLICAL PASSAGE

John 18:33–38 

## BIBLE POINT

Absolute truth exists and is available to anyone willing to search the Scriptures. 

## SUPPLIES

Pens, pack of Starburst candies, bag of Hershey's Kisses; *optional*: paper (1 sheet per student)

### Legend:



PowerPoint Slide



Student Handbook



Activity

**Unit Aim:** Our society questions the necessity and possibility of moral absolutes. As Apostolics we believe in the existence of truth—that God and His Word are real and without fail—and we must act on that truth to work out our own salvation.

## EMBARK

### A. Option 1 — Discussion

1. *Instruct teens to use their student handbooks for this exercise.*
2. What is a *foundation* (such as a foundation on a building)?
3. Why are foundations important?
4. What are some things that are foundational to our Christian faith?
5. Is how we define *truth* foundational? Why or why not?

### B. Option 2 — Two Truths and a Lie

1. *Lead the group in a game of Two Truths and a Lie.*
  - a. A volunteer shares three facts about him- or herself, but gives only two that are true.
  - b. The remaining students take turns guessing which one of the three facts is a lie.
  - c. The first student to identify the lie correctly is next to share three facts.
2. *The purpose of this activity is to clearly demonstrate the following:*
  - a. There is a clear distinction between the truth and a lie.
  - b. Everyone knows the meaning of these two terms.
3. *Follow the game with a discussion about what constitutes the truth and what constitutes a lie.*

## EXPLORE



### A. Our Twenty-First Century Attitude about Truth

1. Our culture today is reshaping the definition of truth. In the twenty-first century, it seems truth has become an endangered species.
2. We begrudgingly accept the fact that many political candidates lie while on the campaign trail, and we are not surprised when they continue the process after the election.
3. When it comes to religious matters, some Christians are compromising doctrine, adopting an “agree to disagree” mentality. They say principles don't matter so much, preferring rather to accept and tolerate people who seem sincere.

4. **Many people question whether truth even exists.**  

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## B. Pilate: A Brief History




1. While the number of people who question whether truth exists is alarming, it is not entirely new. Allow me to introduce you to a historical figure who had the same attitude toward truth thousands of years ago.
2. Likely he would have been forgotten by nearly everyone had he not been involved in the most significant trial in all of human history.
3. This man, whom we refer to as Pilate, held the title *prefect* in the Jewish province of Judea from AD 26–36. He was equal in authority to a Roman governor. **Pilate's primary function would have been to serve as a military leader, having three thousand troops at his disposal.**  
4. He also would have been responsible for the joyous task of collecting taxes. He served in an important role in the court system, which is what he is remembered for today.
5. We have archaeological proof that Pilate existed. In 1961, archaeologists discovered the Pilate stone—a pillar of limestone found at a Roman theater in the capital of Judea. This pillar bears an inscription dedicated to the Roman emperor from Pilate.
6. We know Pilate best for his role in Jesus' trial. Everyone involved knew Jesus had done nothing worthy of a death sentence. Pilate was not a Jewish sympathizer, and He was not a secret follower of Jesus. He was not even a man concerned with justice.

## C. The Illegal Trial


1. Pilate was in a situation where the easiest thing was to sentence Jesus to die to avoid another clash with what he may have called the “superstitious Jews.” Yet he did not immediately take that course of action; he even tried several times to avoid the decision he ultimately made.
2. When Pilate first became involved in the trial of Jesus, the law had already been violated. This case could have been immediately dismissed. The interaction between Pilate and Jesus' Jewish accusers was marked with crazy arguments that demonstrate no real courtroom process was followed (John 18).
3. Once this circus trial ended and Jesus was sentenced to death by the Sanhedrin, the next step was turning Him over to the Roman authorities—it was a violation of Roman law for the Jews to carry out a death sentence. The Roman government was the only authority allowed to execute criminals (John 18:31). Ironically, the law was not followed until Jesus was turned over to the Roman government.
4. Pilate was the appropriate person to hear the charges against Jesus. Initially Pilate properly denied the case because of the vague charges (John 18:29–31). It was common practice for him to receive counsel from a neighboring governor, and Pilate was correct to personally question Jesus to determine his opinion about the charges leveled against Jesus.

## D. The Ultimate Question

1. Read John 18:33–37. 

2. What an interesting conversation. Pilate asked Jesus who He was and what He had done. When Jesus responded, He was not trying to avoid the question. He did not deny being the King of kings; rather, He acknowledged that what Pilate had said was true.
3. In John 18:37, Pilate was confronted with the most important truth he would ever hear in his life. Jesus stood before him and plainly explained who He was.
4. Read John 18:38. 
5. Pilate was not asking this question out of a desire to have an answer. He was not asking Jesus to explain truth to him; rather, he was somewhat flippantly saying, “Truth, ha! What is truth anyway?” He was not expressing a desire to know truth; he was questioning if truth really can exist.
6. This interaction is why Pilate felt it was acceptable to sentence Jesus to die, while at the same time admitting Jesus was innocent. **The man who questioned the existence of truth did what so many people do when faced with a tough situation: he made up his own truth.**   
 He placed himself not only in the role as judge of Jesus, but as the judge of himself. He felt justified sending an innocent man to die.

### Activity – Starbursts or Kisses?

1. Bring a pack of Starburst candies and a bag of Hershey’s Kisses to class. Make sure you count the Kisses ahead of time.
2. Ask the class: Which is the best Starburst flavor? Toss the named Starburst candies to those answering the question.
3. Ask the class: How many Hershey’s Kisses are in the bag? Once all students have had a chance to guess, award the bag of candy to the student who guessed the closest.
4. Ask the class: What was the difference between these two exercises?
5. *The Point:* The best Starburst flavor is subjective; it is a matter of opinion. The Hershey’s Kisses count, though, is fact. No matter how passionately you believe there are twenty pieces, if there are twenty-five pieces in the bag, you are still wrong.
6. Briefly explain the difference between truth and opinion. 



### E. Moral Relativism

1. We live in a society that constantly bombards us with a message of moral relativism. Moral relativism is the idea that there is no definite standard of right and wrong because the definitions of those terms change depending upon each situation and each individual.
2. Others may say it is not wrong to lie if the truth might offend someone.
3. We may face questions and even resistance to absolute truths in the Bible. People may say:
  - a. What is truth?
  - b. Why is everything black and white?
  - c. Can’t you see that people make decisions based on their cultures, their backgrounds, and their personalities?





- d. How can you say that what is truth for you is truth for me?
- e. You don't have the right to judge me because what I decide to do is up to me and what I believe is true.

4. **The drumbeat of our world today is moral relativism.**  

## F. Biblical Truth > Moral Relativism




1. As people who believe the Bible is the Word of God, we reject the idea that there is no moral standard of right and wrong. We refuse to believe that what is truth for me is different from truth for someone else.
2. Pilate, you had it all wrong. Truth does exist, and we all have an obligation to respond to that truth. We cannot make up our own rules.
3. Just because you believe something does not make it true. You can believe with all your heart it is not going to rain, and you can walk out in faith, not taking an umbrella when you leave the house, but if it rains, you will still get wet. Our faith must be grounded in truth—not truth we invent, but the truth found in the Word of God.
4. **It is very important that we, the people of God, understand two things: (1) we must know truth does exist, and (2) we must know and proclaim what that truth is, even if it risks offending others.**  

## G. The Role of the Church in Instilling Truth

1. One of the most important functions of the church is to help instill truth. Allow the church family and its leaders to speak into your life.
2. *Read Ephesians 4:11–12.*  *Briefly, discuss the five-fold ministry.*
3. To reap the full benefits of being associated with the church, we must be willing to accept the variety of personalities and methods of those who minister.
4. Some say when a person is engaged in ministry, it is not what happens within the one-hour time frame of a service or a gathering; rather, ministry is the outflow of that person's life. Who we are will be a factor in how effectively we minister to others.
5. People who receive the five-fold ministry are those who faithfully read their Bibles, have a prayer life, and diligently seek God.
6. One may wonder how long it will take. How long will I need to continue coming to church and receiving ministry?
7. *Read Ephesians 4:13–16.* 
8. I don't know about you, but I don't think we are quite there yet. I still have some room to grow to match up to the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ, so I still need the ministry to speak into my life.
9. We still need to be engaged in worship to our God. We still need to be in an atmosphere where our voices join in the prayers of faith being sent up by God's people. We still need to hear the Word of God expounded upon, and we need to apply it to our lives.
10. One of the pieces of evidence Paul gave of a person who is becoming spiritually mature was "speaking the truth in love."
  - a. **We cannot speak truth if we don't know truth.**  

- b. We cannot speak truth in love if we do not have a love for Jesus that causes us to also have a love for people.

## H. Life—An Open Book Test

1. When was the last time you took an open-book test? What about an open-notes test or an open-phone test? What did you think about that process?
2. Many people feel a test is much easier when they have something they can refer to when faced with a tough question.
3. Life can be like that. Thankfully, life is an open-book test. **Answers to the questions posed in life can be found in the Word of God.**  
4. *Read II Timothy 3:16.*  *Explain the following terms.*
  - a. Doctrine—Teaching
  - b. Reproof—Explaining to someone that what he or she is doing is wrong
  - c. Correction—Explaining what action the person should take instead
  - d. Instruction in righteousness—Teaching principles that if followed will eliminate future mistakes
5. As we continue in this series, our focus will be to get back to the basics and examine in detail the most fundamental questions about life to see what the Bible teaches concerning those issues.

## EXPAND

### A. Option 1 — Prayer

1. *Lead participants in prayer that God will help to increase their understanding of truth.*
2. *Be bold about praying against some of the lies you will directly confront in future lessons as well as what was covered in this lesson.*
3. *After the prayer, explain that you will be sharing the truth in love, but you will not shy away from what the Word of God declares to be true.*

### B. Option 2 — Think/Write/Pair/Share

1. *Explain the instructions for this activity:*
  - a. Students will have one minute to think about a prompt you will give (no talking or writing, only thinking).
  - b. Then students will have one minute to write down as many answers to the prompt as possible (still no talking).
  - c. Students then pair up with another person and discuss their answers, adding to their lists as desired.
  - d. Volunteers share their answers with the group and discuss.
2. Prompts
  - a. Name Scriptures that explain who God is.
  - b. Name Scriptures that explain what is required to go to Heaven.
  - c. Name Scriptures that explain what God expects from us after we have been born again.
3. *Explain that these three subjects will be covered in the next three lessons.*

#### Teacher's Note:

Check out the closing options for next week's lesson. If you'd like to invite a guest to share a testimony, now is the time to make those arrangements.