

MIDDLE SCHOOL

teacher

# WESLEY

RELEVANT

INSPIRED

PRACTICAL

LIFE-CHANGING

The god who created us

The god who corrects us

The god who calls us



September—November 2012

Teacher's Guide

MIDDLE SCHOOL

# lesson 1

## Bible Basis:

Genesis 1:1-26

## Focus:

Our God is an awesome God!

# You're an Awesome God!

## STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Describing “awesome”: Students will think about what they consider “awesome.”

- nature video, player (optional)
- magazines, scissors
- construction paper, glue (optional)

## STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Reading from Genesis 1: Students will study the awesomeness of God as recorded in Genesis 1.

- Bibles, pencils
- The Rock*

## STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Describing God as awesome: Students will choose from activities that explore the awesomeness of God.

- magazines and newspapers, scissors, glue, colored markers, poster board or butcher paper, paper, pencils, white board
- jump rope
- “The Big Question” poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

## STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Seeing for ourselves: Students will look to nature as an example of God's awesome creation.

- CD of a praise song, CD player (optional)
- Bible or *The Rock*
- “The Big Question” poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids* (optional)

## Memory Verse

But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

—Jeremiah 10:12

## Understanding the Bible

The first chapter of Genesis reveals the central truth of the Creation narrative: everything owes its existence to God.

In Hebrew literature, pairs of opposites suggest totality. The “heavens” in Genesis 1:1 refer apparently to the atmospheric heavens, and the phrase “the heavens and the earth” supports the idea that God created all things.

One view of Genesis 1 holds that verse 1 is a summary of the whole chapter. A second view holds that God created the stuff of the universe as an unfinished mass, then formed it into what we see through our eyes, our microscopes, and our telescopes. A third view of creation is that in verse 1 we have the original creation, but there is a gap before verse 2. In this gap a chaos was caused due to Satan's fall. The rest of chapter 1 corrects this chaotic condition.

Beginning with verse 3, the writer described Creation in terms of the first six days of a week. Note that the first group of three days portrays the creation of the realms, and the second group of three days describes the creation of the rulers of those realms. The sun, moon, and stars (vss. 14-19) rule over day and night (vss. 3-5). Fish and birds (vss. 20-23) rule over the seas and the sky (vss. 6-8). Animals (vss. 24-25) rule over the land and vegetation (vss. 9-13). But humans rule over and take care of all creation (vs. 26). Thus a hierarchy of authority is built into creation.

—continued on next page

indicates items you will need to prepare before class

## Understanding the Bible —cont'd

The assumption behind this is that God rules all creation, including humans, for He made it all.

### Classroom Tips

As you study a lesson, prepare as much before Saturday night as possible. Gather teaching materials and arrange for equipment. Collect concrete examples of God's creation to bring into the classroom: leaves, feathers, pine cones, shells, rocks. Place all materials together so they can arrive at class together.

Encourage discussion, even when students bring up topics you cannot or will not discuss. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I'll try to find out." Find a possible answer before the next class meeting. As you steer discussion to complete the teaching plan, let students know that their opinions and questions are valuable.

## Teacher Devo

*See how the lilies of the field grow. Matthew 6:28b*

*O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. Psalm 104:1b, 10-12 (Read all of Ps. 104)*

Remember that line, "take time to smell the flowers"? It's not a bad idea. When was the last time you spent a block of time observing, appreciating, and rejoicing in the creation God has set around us?

Try to set aside some moments for just that as you prepare to present the Creation story to your students. After all, it's much easier to teach about the wonders and majesty of God's work in nature if you've been a student of it yourself! Let God show Himself to you in fresh and simple ways this week as you meditate on His handiwork, something none of us can duplicate, yet each of us is invited to enjoy.

## When Teaching the Bible to Middle Schoolers . . .

Young adolescents seem to relish creative expression. Their bursts of creativity may be linked to their feelings that they can do anything. That's why youth respond to teaching methods that captivate their imaginations: roleplays, skits, and simulation games, as well as making posters, charts, crafts, setting up displays, working outdoors, doing experiments, and watching videos.

This study of God's creativity should spark students' own creative expression. It may also prompt dozens of questions about the origin

of the universe. However, too many questions will prevent your class from reaching the most beneficial part of the lesson—the application. Don't squelch their questions, but do maintain the focus and complete the lesson. Be willing to discuss the topic after class or during the week with students who desire a deeper investigation.

If you feel unprepared for this lesson, seek out some books or a video about Creation from a Christian bookstore or your church.

# STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

## Lesson Focus:

Our God is an awesome  
God!

### Before Class Option

Provide pencils, markers, and paper. Have students sketch illustrations of the term "Awesome God." Otherwise, have students complete this sentence: "The most beautiful place I've ever visited is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

### real life

DOWNLOADED

Free! Downloadable Options for Steps 1 and 4.

<http://www.wesleybible.com/reallife>

**Link to Last Week** Talk with your students about how their relationships with Jesus were renewed.

**Students will think about what they consider "awesome." This will lead them to ponder the awesomeness of God's creation.**

#### Materials:

- magazines
- scissors
- construction paper, glue (optional)
- nature video, player (optional)

In this step you will help your students to reflect on and describe people and things that they consider "awesome."

Make available a variety of magazines, especially nature magazines. You may also want to include some sports and youth culture magazines. Instruct students to look through these periodicals and cut out pictures of things they consider to be "awesome." You may want to have them mount their pictures on construction paper. After a few minutes, have students share their pictures with the rest of the class.

Instead of using magazines, you might want to show a few minutes of a nature video. One that spotlights one or more National Parks would be appropriate to show the awesomeness of God's creation.

After students have shared their pictures or watched the video, ask them:

- ▶ **Why did you choose the pictures you chose?** (*Students might say that these things are very impressive, they're one of a kind, they're beautiful, etc.*)
- or
- ▶ **How would you describe what we've just seen?** (*Beautiful, amazing, awesome, inspiring, incredible, etc.*)
- ▶ **What makes something or someone "awesome"?** (*Students' answers will vary and might include it has to be unusual, amazing, really big, especially beautiful or inspiring, etc.*)

Today we've seen some things that we consider awesome and we've talked a little about what "awesome" means. Have you ever considered God to be awesome? What would it take for you to consider Him that way? Let's check out what God did in Genesis 1.

### More to Know

Terminology of life in the Spirit. God does not have a double standard—one for the born again or newly redeemed and one for the sanctified believer. His standard is one—"Be ye holy, for the Lord thy God is Holy" (Lev. 11:44-45; Deut 26:19; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). This quarter, we'll look at some biblical support to living the holy life, or life in the Spirit.

# STEP 2

Studying God's Word

## Bible Basis:

Genesis 1:1-26



Students will study the awesomeness of God as expressed in His creation and recorded in Genesis 1.

### Materials:

- Bibles
- pencils
- The Rock*

Distribute *The Rock* and direct students to Today's Scripture on page 5. Assign individual youth each one day of the Creation account to read aloud for the class, from their Bibles or page 5 of *The Rock*.

▶ **What do you think God wants you to realize from this passage?** (God created everything. He is the creative power behind everything that exists.)

Divide your class into two teams, based on the month their birthdays fall in: January–June birthdays are on Team A; July–December birthdays are on Team B. Alternate asking each team one of the questions from *The Rock*. If a team correctly answers a question within 30 seconds, they score 1000 points. If not, the other team gets a chance to answer the question within 20 seconds to score 1000 points. Answers are given on the following page.

### Alternate Method

Assign parts to students and read Today's Scripture dramatically.

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE**  
 ●  
**SELECTED VERSES FROM GENESIS**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." ...

<sup>8</sup>God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so.

...

<sup>11</sup>Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.

<sup>13</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years." ...

<sup>15</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

<sup>16</sup>And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ...

<sup>18</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

<sup>19</sup>And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.

...

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

4
Lesson 1

**BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR TEAM A**
**A**

1. What was the last thing God made?
2. Why do you think God made this last out of all His creation?
3. In what ways were humans more special than God's other creations?
4. Think of seven words that describe God, write them down, and then read them to the rest of the class.
5. Circle the words describing God that could also describe humans. Explain how these words relate to Genesis 1:26.
6. Each team member: Describe one unique way you are made in the image of God.

**BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR TEAM B**
**B**

1. According to the first four words of Genesis 1:1, what existed "in the beginning"?
2. What did God do during the first day of creation?
3. What did God do during the sixth day of creation?
4. How did God create light? What does this creative act reveal about the Creator?
5. The three people who live closest together should answer this question: What does being created in God's image mean?
6. Each team member: Describe one unique way you are made in the image of God.


**Bible Study**
**Team A**

1. People.
2. Sometimes last place is the place of most honor. People are the crowning act of God's creation. He saved the best for last.
3. Humans are the only beings made in God's image. They were given the task of ruling over the rest of creation.
4. Some possibilities are awesome, creative, loving, wise, caring, powerful, eternal, perfect, wonderful, gracious, etc.
5. Students might choose creative, loving, wise, caring, powerful, wonderful, gracious, ruling, leading. These are attributes of God that people can share because we are made in His image. God is the ultimate example of these characteristics that people can only possess in a limited sense.
6. Accept all reasonable answers, such as "I can show love to others" or "I can express myself creatively."

**Team B**

1. God.
2. God created the heavens and the earth, light and darkness, day and night.
3. God created all kinds of animals, and people.
4. God said "Let there be light." God's

words are extremely powerful.

5. Being created in God's image means that we are like God in some ways. We can think, feel, have a relationship with Him, etc.

6. Accept all reasonable answers. They should be different from the answers given by Team A.



Read this week's memory verse, Jeremiah 10:12, from your Bible or page 8 of *The Rock*:

**But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. Jeremiah 10:12**

**How do God's power, wisdom, and understanding make you think of Him? (Accept all answers.)**

In today's lesson we've seen that God is the power, the Creator, the reason for everything that exists. What an awesome God! Now let's do some activities that explore what that means to us.



# STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

Students will choose from activities that explore the awesomeness of God.

Allow your students to choose from the following activities on the awesomeness of God. They may work individually or in groups. If your class is small, you may want to prepare just one or two activities. In “Word Collage” students will make a collage of words that describe our awesome God; in “Jumping for Joy” students will use jump ropes and call out descriptions of God; and in “The Big Question” students will use a creative teaching aid and respond in writing.

**tip** To reduce your explanation time, you may photocopy the Step 3 page in each lesson. Simply cut out the activity instructions and place them with appropriate supplies at your activity centers.

## Word Collage

- magazines and newspapers
- scissors
- glue
- colored markers
- poster board or butcher paper
- “The Big Question” poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

In this activity you will make a collage of words that describe our awesome God. Look at the poster “The Big Question” and use it as inspiration. Then write and/or cut out and mount on your poster words to describe God. Start with the word “awesome.”



## The Big Question

- paper
- pencils
- “The Big Question” poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

In this activity you will express in writing your feelings about God’s awesomeness. Look at “The Big Question” poster and use it for inspiration to write a poem, letter, or song about God and His awesome creation. This might be a thank-you to God, or your answer to the “big question.”

## Jumping for Joy

- jump rope
- white board
- colored markers

Spread out. The first person will jump rope and call out words describing God (one word per jump). The jumper is out when he or she misses the rope or runs out of words. Jump until everyone has had a turn. Write each word down and share them with the large group.

# STEP 4

Applying God's Word

## Lesson Focus:

Our God is an awesome God!

**Students will learn to look to nature as an example of God's awesome creation.**

### Materials:

- CD of a praise song
- CD player
- Bible or *The Rock*
- "The Big Question" poster from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

In this step you will encourage your students to appreciate God's awesome creation and respond in praise and thanksgiving to Him.

Weather permitting, take your class for a short nature walk outdoors. Ask each student to find one thing in nature for which he or she is especially thankful. If they can do so without damaging any part of nature, have them bring one object back inside with them, such as a pinecone, a leaf from the ground, or a stone.

If weather or other circumstances do not permit you to go outside, display the poster "The Big Question" from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*. Note the things on the poster or other elements of nature that students suggest for which we can be thankful to God. Write your students' ideas on the board.

Indoors, ask your students to brainstorm ways they can respond to our awesome God and His creative work throughout the coming week. They might mention things like taking better care of nature, appreciating it, thanking God for creation, etc. Encourage your students to choose one response to make their own in the coming week.



## Seal It!

Have a volunteer read aloud this week's memory verse from the Bible or page 8 of *The Rock*.

***But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. Jeremiah 10:12***

Close class in prayer, thanking God for things that He has made and you and your class have enjoyed. You may want to play a praise song in closing, and have students sing along if they know the words.

Encourage your students to keep their piece of nature somewhere (locker, dresser, bookshelf) where it will remind them this week that our God is an awesome God.

Remind your class to read the "Everyday Devotions" on page 8 of *The Rock* throughout the coming week.

**Next Week** You will need washable ink stamp pad(s) in Step 4 and small, unframed mirrors (available at most art and craft stores) and sturdy mat board (optional) in Step 3.

# the rock

# THE \* BIG QUESTION \* \*

Where did it **ALL** come from?



# THE \*BIG QUESTION

Where did it **ALL** come from?

## **T**HE BIG ANSWERS

1. Some people think the universe has always been around. They say that it is always creating itself. It always has and always will. But this theory doesn't explain where matter itself came from.
2. Others think that the universe just happened by chance. Certain elements came together in the right place, at the right time. But if the whole universe was a big accident, why do we see form and order? And even if the universe did happen by chance, where did the material to start it all come from? The second "big answer" ignores the question of where it all came from too.
3. Some people say that the universe was designed by an intelligent cause or agent (Intelligent Design).
4. Still others use the Bible to answer the "big question." Their answer is simple: "In the beginning God created. . . ." They believe God created the universe with a specific plan in mind.

Believers in the first two answers are quick to cry out against the other answers, "That God stuff isn't logical! It's not scientific! It just doesn't make sense!" But does it?

These answers actually make a lot of sense. They address the question "Where did it all come from?" In the first two answers, either the universe itself or the molecules mentioned would have to have come from nothing, with no action from any outside force. And that doesn't make sense!

The idea that God created it all seems to be the best answer. It's the only answer that answers "the big question" at its bottom line.



## **S** SCIENTIFIC SENSE?

Some evolutionists claim that believing God created the universe doesn't make scientific sense. The theory of evolution, in its most basic form, says that all living things developed (evolved) from simpler living things. Some even say that life, like the universe, began by chance (the right molecules in the right place at the right time again).

It takes a lot of faith to believe all of that. First, you have to believe in the chance meeting of the right molecules to begin the universe. Then, if that managed to happen, you have to believe in another chance meeting of the right molecules to start life on earth.

## **C**OULD AUNT EDNA HAVE BEEN AN AMOEB?

You also have to believe that the early forms of life were able to develop into more complex forms. No one has recorded an amoeba becoming a more complex life form.

If simple life forms evolved into more complex life forms, layers of rock in the earth would show it. Simple fossils would appear in the lower layers and more complex fossils in the higher levels. Many mountain ranges, though, show complex fossils in the bottom layers, with simpler fossils on top!

And you've heard of the famous missing links. Scientists have searched for years to find fossil evidence to link one species to

another. Genetic changes do occur within each species. But there is no evidence that a simple species evolved into a more complex one.

The Bible clearly states that the living God created life. He spoke matter into being, then made many different creatures—"each according to its kind." We see variety in living beings because God made them that way.

## **S**UPPORT FROM SCIENCE

At least two scientific principles support belief in creation:

Principle #1—*Conservation of Energy*. Energy can't be created or destroyed—just transferred. And it takes a huge amount of energy to create a small amount of matter. Where did the energy needed to get things rolling come from? The Bible says the source was God.

Principle #2—*Second Law of Thermodynamics*. When left alone, things tend to decay and become less organized. (Think about your room after a few weeks without cleaning it up!) Just the opposite would have to have happened for the universe to have come into being by chance.

## **T**HE BIG DECISION

The two options: it all happened by chance, or by God's choice. "In the beginning God created . . ." is not simply a Christian answer to the "big question." It just might be the only reasonable answer.



# GOD *made it* ALL

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

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<sup>9</sup>And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ...

<sup>11</sup>Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.

## TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

### ● SELECTED VERSES FROM GENESIS

<sup>13</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years." ...

<sup>19</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ...

<sup>23</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. ...

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."



BIBLE  
QUESTIONS  
FOR  
TEAM

A

Bible  
Study

1. What was the last thing God made?
2. Why do you think God made this last out of all His creation?
3. In what ways were humans more special than God's other creations?
4. Think of seven words that describe God, write them down, and then read them to the rest of the class.
5. Circle the words describing God that could also describe humans. Explain how these words relate to Genesis 1:26.
6. Each team member: Describe one unique way you are made in the image of God.

BIBLE  
QUESTIONS  
FOR  
TEAM

B

1. According to the first four words of Genesis 1:1, what existed "in the beginning"?
2. What did God do during the first day of creation?
3. What did God do during the sixth day of creation?
4. How did God create light? What does this creative act reveal about the Creator?
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# Conversation Overheard

I never assume anything is true. I prove it by the scientific method.

What about love? You can't prove it with science, but it's still there.



Love is different from the questions science can answer.

Then you admit there are questions science can't answer?

Okay, I admit it. But evolution is different. There's evidence for it.



Evidence that man came from the ape?

Right.

And that the ape came from the fish?

Simplified, but true.

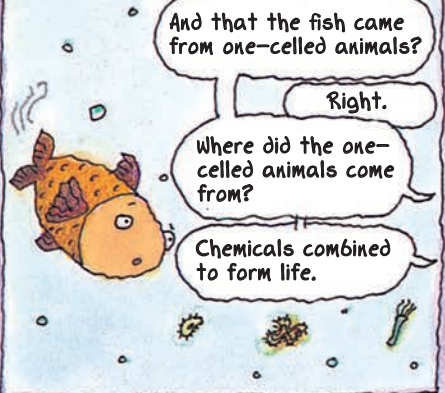


And that the fish came from one-celled animals?

Right.

Where did the one-celled animals come from?

Chemicals combined to form life.



Where did the chemicals come from?

The earth. And it probably came from an explosion of a larger planet.

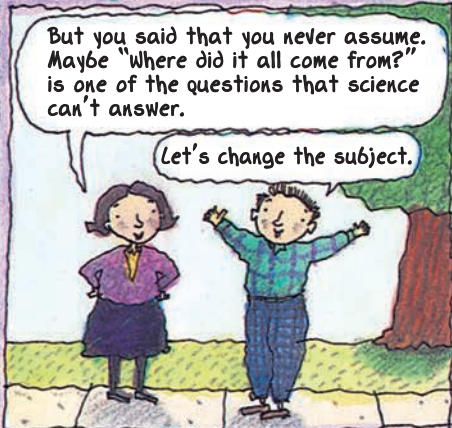
Where did that planet come from?

It was just there. We have to assume...



But you said that you never assume. Maybe "where did it all come from?" is one of the questions that science can't answer.

Let's change the subject.

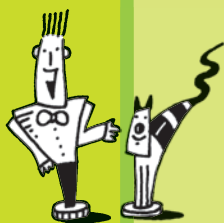


# the book

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**General Publisher:** Donald D. Cady; **Editorial Director:** Craig A. Bubeck

Volume 21, Number 1

# every day devos

# Awesome GOD

**But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. Jeremiah 10:12**

**If you think God's creation is awesome, just think how much more awesome God Himself is!**

**MONDAY** Read Psalm 19:1, preferably sitting outside in your yard or in a park. Take some time today to notice God's creation around you. Write a poem to praise God for His creativity and power.

**TUESDAY** Come up with as many adjectives (descriptive words) as you can to describe God's power. Use these words in a prayer to give God glory.

**WEDNESDAY** Look at Jeremiah 10:12. When you read the action words—made, founded, stretched—what images come to your mind? Draw a picture or write a song using these images.

**THURSDAY** Read Jeremiah 10:12 again. How does knowing that God created the heavens and earth make you feel about Him?

**FRIDAY** Read Genesis 1:2a. What pictures come to mind when you read the words "formless and empty"? Now picture the light, sky, seas, and so on, appearing as God speaks them into existence. Thank Him for creating the earth.

**SATURDAY** If you can, get up early and take a walk outside. Take time to notice little things that you might normally pass by. Sing a praise hymn that talks about God's creation.

**Wesley**

**MS**

Middle School  
The Rock  
No. 3062

ISBN 978-0-781446-61-7



9 780781 446617

# MIDDLE SCHOOL

Wesley presents middle schoolers with a Sunday school experience that supports them through this important time of change—physical, emotional, and spiritual. The lessons target the needs of preteens with in-depth Bible studies, daily devotionals, tie-ins to current events and preteen topics, and aim to provide an outlet for preteens to encounter God’s love for them.



## Teacher's Guide

Each lesson contains step-by-step instructions to help you prepare and teach, with Bible background, tips for teaching middle schoolers, and a variety of activities to help your students learn and apply the Bible lesson.

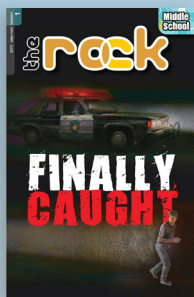
*One per teacher recommended.*



## Creative Teaching Aids

Bring the world and time of Scripture to life with this visual aids packet containing a variety of posters, timelines, Bible maps, and more.

*One per class recommended.*



## The Rock

This student book contains eight pages for each lesson, including Bible studies, stories, articles, and a six-day devotional schedule for your students.

*One per student recommended.*