



for PRETEENS

FORGED

FAITH REFINED

vol 1. truth

leader guide



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FORGE

(V.) /FORJ/

to form, especially by concentrated effort; to form or shape an element or object by heating and hammering to mold it into a new shape

Forged is a term used to describe how an object is formed or shaped through diligent and concentrated effort. This concept can be applied to the growing in the Christian faith.

When we trust in Jesus for salvation, He makes us new and begins to mold or shape us more into the image of Jesus. As we grow in our faith, the truth of God's Word shapes our minds and hearts and changes our actions to look more like Jesus.

You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:6-7

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

LEADER GUIDE

Forged: Faith Refined is a 2-year curriculum consisting of eight 13-week volumes. Each volume will dive into the Bible to help preteens develop a worldview based on God's perspective. Each Bible study is designed to help leaders encourage and teach preteens with the unchanging truth of God's Word as they are grappling with an ever-changing culture around them. Each session is primarily discussion-based and will work in a church setting of any size. This leader guide provides detailed session plan for each week in this volume.

A redeemable code in each leader guide provides access to PDFs of the parent pages for leaders to access and send home with each preteen. These parent pages are also included in each preteen discipleship guide.

PRETEEN DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Each preteen will need a copy of his/her own Preteen Discipleship Guide. These books are designed to be used both during each session and individually during the week. Look for this icon **PDG** to see when preteens will need their guides.

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

To help parents extend each session conversation into the home, parent pages are provided in the preteen discipleship guide, as well as using the free download code in each leader guide. Most parents want to be a part of their child's decision to surrender to Jesus, but some may need a safe place to walk through the gospel with their kids. Why not invite parents to attend this class with their child? When it come to discussing truth, guide kids and parents (or another caring adult) to turn and talk to one another about what they discovered and are learning. No one knows these kids better than the people raising them, so let's invite them in to this special time as a way to parent with parents and discover if and when kids are ready to make their personal commitment to Jesus.

PRINTABLES

Included in this Leader Guide is a download code to print the Parent Guide pages that correspond to each session. To access your free downloadable items, go to my.lifeway.com/redeem and register or log in.

Enter the following code to download your printable items:

MRX3F3TRUF

WHAT HAPPENS AT EACH MEETING?

Each meeting is divided into the following parts:

- **DISCOVER TRUTH (INTRODUCTION)**
As soon as they arrive, preteens will play games or do quick activities to peak their interest in what they will learn during the session.
- **SEE TRUTH (OPENING GOD'S WORD)**
Preteens will open God's Word and see and hear from the Bible the truth of each lesson.
- **EXPERIENCE TRUTH (HANDS-ON LEARNING)**
Preteens will participate in activities that experience the main point through a variety of interactive, multisensory activities.
- **DISCUSS TRUTH (ADULT/PRETEEN INTERACTION)**
During this time, preteens discuss what they are learning. This is a great time to get a glimpse of where each preteen is on his or her spiritual journey. Discussion time is a safe place to ask questions and a great place for preteens to interact with parents or a caring adult. Additional activities may be provided in this section.
- **APPLY TRUTH (CONCLUSION/APPLICATION)**
Class is concluded through an activity, a discussion or a special experience.
- **SHARING THE GOSPEL**
The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (CSB: 005567177) is sold in packs of 10 and provides a witnessing tool that emphasizes God's plan of salvation from Creation to Jesus and how we respond to the good news. Also available in *ESV (005567178)*.

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH PRETEENS

During these 13 weeks we want to be ready to share more with preteens that feel the conviction and want to make a personal decision for Jesus Christ. As you lead, remember these key tips as you share the gospel with preteens.

- The ultimate goal of teaching the Bible is for a person to accept Jesus as his Savior when the Holy Spirit leads him to realize that he has sinned against God and is spiritually lost. The Holy Spirit is the leader in the experience, but believers have the responsibility of following the Spirit's leading.
- Becoming a Christian is an individual matter and discussions about conversion are more effective when conducted individually. The preteen will feel freer to share true thoughts and feelings.
- Remember that each person comes to this decision as the Holy Spirit leads. People respond at different ages and with different backgrounds. Strive to know the preteens you teach as individuals.
- If a preteen indicates a desire to become a Christian, ask her to tell you what she feels. Use questions that require thoughtful answers rather than just yes or no. Use language the preteen understands.

- You might want to use these questions: Why do you want to become a Christian? What do you think a person has to do to become a Christian? Why do you need Jesus? Can you do anything to save yourself? Explain the good news of Jesus in your own words.
- Use your Bible as you share the gospel. After reading a Bible verse, be ready to explain the verse in your own words. Invite preteens to also turn in their Bibles to see this truth for themselves. Help the preteen understand unfamiliar terms such as repent. Refer to *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* (pg. 112) to help you know Bible verses to share and ways to explain how to become a Christian.
- Help the preteen know how he can respond. Use directions such as: Tell God you know you have sinned and are sorry. Ask God to forgive you for your sin, for wanting your way instead of God's way. Ask Jesus to become your Savior (the One who keeps you from being separated from God) and Lord (the One in charge). Again, refer to *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* for good ways to help kids know what they can do.
- Be sure preteens know the difference between becoming a Christian, being baptized, and joining the church. Explain that baptism is a symbol for a commitment that has already been made.
- Include parents or caregivers when possible. Tell them what led you to discuss salvation with their child. Explain where you think the preteen is in his spiritual journey e.g. becoming aware of a need for God, is thoughtfully considering how to respond, made a decision to accept Christ, or wants to be baptized.)
- Prepare yourself ahead of time so you are ready to answer kids' questions as they arise. Be ready with Bible verses ready to use.
- Pray. Ask God's leadership as you help boys and girls grow in their understanding of salvation.

Some of the preteens you teach may have Christian parents while others may not. How can you reach out to them?

- Cultivate friendship. During the study, make home visits to families you don't already know. Let them know of your interest in their child. Share stories or pictures from the class with parents.
- Pray for the parents.
- Invite the parents to special events at church.
- Share parents' names with leaders in adult Sunday School classes.
- Minister to parents as you discover needs. This could be anything from a hot meal after a hospital stay or helping locate child care for a working mom.
- Present the gospel as you see opportunity. Use the plan listed above for preteens.
- Share your own testimony. A one or two minute presentation is good. Keep it simple.

WHO DEFINES TRUTH?

Jesus is truth and determines
what is true about His creation.

 KEY PASSAGE

John 1:1-18

 KEY VERSE

John 14:6

SPARK THE CONVERSATION

Preteens will be reading from John 1:1-18 as they learn about the source of all truth and the way by which we determine what is true. Through these verses, preteens will see how Jesus is truth and that only through a relationship with Him can we discern all that is true. They will also discover that as Creator, Jesus holds all authority for truth and the words spoken by Him declare what is true. The eternal nature of Jesus will show that truth never changes despite culture's claims on truth and the belief that truth is relative. Preteens will answer questions about how the Bible defines truth, how culture defines truth, and how to judge between the truth of God's Word and cultural worldviews. Preteens will learn that truth is important for their everyday lives and is of eternal importance.

IGNITE

YOU WILL NEED

- Printed pictures of road signs (e.g. stop sign, pedestrian walking sign; yield sign; no U-turn; no left turn)
- Index cards with the definitions of the signs

PREPARE

- Search online for road sign images and print out four images.
- Tape all four road signs on a wall or dry erase board. Incorrectly tape a definition index card under each sign. (Example: Yield sign might say "No U Turns")

Ask: Are these road signs matched with their true meanings? If not, what are the true meanings of these road signs? (*Allow preteens to work together to match the correct definitions with the correct sign.*)

Ask: How did you know the road signs were incorrectly labeled? How did you know the true definition for each sign? (*Answers may vary but should relate to the fact that these signs can only have one intended meaning. A stop sign cannot be a pedestrian walking sign.*)

Continue: Introduce today's Sharpen & Strengthen by explaining that all truth comes from God, and He alone determines what is true. Explain that **Jesus is truth and determines what is true about His creation.** Draw the connection between the only true meaning of each road sign and the absolute truth of God.

SHARPEN & STRENGTHEN PDG

YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles (1 per preteen)
- Preteen Discipleship Guides (1 per preteen)

TEACHING TIP There may be some terms that need defining. If so, pause and define words, such as *worldview*, *truth*, or *culture*. Provide directions for locating the Book of John if needed.

INTRO

Direct preteens to Session 1: Sharpen and Strengthen in their Discipleship Guides. Explain that preteens will follow along in their guides as you lead.

Open: In today's world, we hear many views that claim to be true, but how do we know what really is true? How can we decide what to believe and what not to believe? As we read Scripture, we come to understand that God is truth, and His Son, Jesus, has come to shine truth into a dark and sinful world. People and cultures who don't follow Jesus will try to persuade us to believe that truth can change from one person to the next—that what's true for you might not be true for your best friend. However, this belief is false. Truth never changes, as we'll see in our everyday experience of the world and as we engage with the truths revealed in Scripture. Knowing that truth never changes helps us to decide between right and wrong, and it also allows us to know the Author of truth Himself— God.

Worldview: How we view the world—our basic beliefs about God, humanity, ethics, and the world around us

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WHO DEFINES TRUTH?

Ask preteens to open their Bibles to John 1. Read John 1:1-18 or invite one or more preteens to read aloud.

Explain: The Book of John begins with creation. When God created the world, He spoke everything into existence. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light (Gen. 1:3). He called the light “day” and the darkness He called “night” (Gen. 1:5). Everything God created was spoken into being by Him.

God’s words are powerful. His words spoke light into existence and they speak truth into our lives today. Only God has the authority to declare what is true because He is truth. We know that light is day because God both created it and declared it to be. Whatever God says or does is true. Also, as John 1:3 tells us, creation was spoken into existence by the Word—Jesus. It was the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, whose words created the sun, moon, stars, seas, mountains, and everything else that came into being. Jesus is the Creator, and all truth begins in Him.

Truth: Who God is and what He says

Read John 14:6 or invite a preteen to read this verse aloud.

Ask: How does Jesus describe Himself? Does Jesus merely say He speaks truth? Encourage preteens to memorize this key verse.

Continue: In John 1, we read that Jesus came to dwell among us and that He is full of grace and truth. Jesus came to make the truth knowable to us. Then in John 14:6, Jesus Himself testifies that He alone is the way, the truth, and the life. **Jesus is truth and determines what is true about His creation.** Truth is not just something to acquire through wisdom. The source of truth is found in the Person of Jesus. To know Jesus and believe His words are to know truth. Therefore, we can define truth as “who God is and what He says.”

WHAT DOES CULTURE SAY ABOUT WHO DEFINES TRUTH?

Culture: the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a group of people

Explain: Can $2+2=5$? No, of course not! $2+2$ always equals 4. Can the sun also be the moon? That would be absurd! Is a circle also a square?

Of course not! Though many would agree that these examples are ridiculous, in our culture we find that many people do not agree on what is true. We call this relative truth. Or in other words, a culture's worldview is always changing and can be different for every person. Every time we watch a movie, scroll through social media, or interact with our friends at school, we are introduced to different ideas, messages, and beliefs that often contradict each other. For example, the movie *Frozen* depicts love as a willingness to put another above yourself, even if it costs you your own life. On the other hand, *Beauty and the Beast* communicates the message that love can be earned by simply cleaning yourself up and changing your behavior from unkind to caring. These two definitions of love are different. One displays sacrifice that is freely given. The other portrays love as something to be earned. They cannot both represent a true definition of love at the same time. We also see that our culture often disguises lies as truth. Ideas or messages are communicated to us daily, and even though they may be popular or make us feel good, when examined more closely, we find they are indeed false.

Ask: What are some beliefs or ideas our culture claims to be true but are really false? (Answers will vary but may include: Joy is found in materialism or wealth; salvation can be earned; just follow your heart; look within to find yourself; enjoying yourself and be happy; your worth is determined by how many likes you get on social media, and so forth.)

Continue: Have you ever thought about what existed before the world was formed? The Bible tells us that God is eternal. This means that God has no beginning and no end. The eternality of God (truth that God has always existed and will always exist) is important because this also means that truth is eternal. And since Jesus is truth (John 14:6), absolute truth has always existed. Absolute truth is truth that does not change. Not only that, but Jesus never changes. The Jesus who existed before the creation of the world is the same Jesus we know today. He will be the same person 10 years from now, or even 1,000 years from now.

Hebrews 13:8 reads, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Since Jesus is truth, truth never changes. What God declared to be true before the foundation of the world is still true today. Truth is not relative. It does not change based on our new knowledge, discoveries, or people's opinions. New knowledge or discoveries help us, in our limited knowledge, understand what God knew to be true all along. Truth is eternally founded in the Person of Jesus Christ, and it will remain

unchanged just as Jesus remains unchanged. Psalm 119:160 says, “The entirety of your word is truth, each of your righteous judgments endures forever.” God’s Word is everlasting and always true.

HOW DOES THIS CHANGE HOW I EVALUATE WHAT IS TRUE IN MY OWN LIFE?

Say: Knowing what is true is important for our everyday lives. Truth established by God is the reality by which we should live. By knowing truth, we are able to avoid the lies we are often told and are free to walk in right relationship with God. So where do we go to find truth? As discussed above, we can know what is true by knowing Jesus. We know Jesus and what is true by reading and trusting God’s Word.

John 17:17 says, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” God’s Word helps us to evaluate what is true and what is false. When we develop a biblical worldview by knowing the truth of God’s Word, we have a lens by which we view the world correctly. As culture provides different ideas, we can examine them against the truths of the Bible. If cultural beliefs contradict the Word of God, then we must recognize them as false. The culture may tell you to find your worth in how many likes you receive on social media, but God says that you are valuable and important because you are made in His image and He loves you. Moreover, knowing biblical truth is important for living righteously in our everyday lives, and it is also of eternal importance. Believing in the only true way to salvation determines how we live here on earth and how we will spend eternity. Many religions claim that salvation is earned through good works or through following a strict set of rules. However, Jesus said in John 14:6 that only He is the way to salvation. Knowing and believing the words of truth frees us to live for Jesus and share about Him with others.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Explain: We can trust what God says is true because He is the truth, and He never changes. God has given us His Son, Jesus, so that we may know truth. He has also given us the Bible so we can continue to grow in truth. Knowing God’s Word helps us evaluate what is true and what is false so that we may live righteously. To know Jesus is to know truth, and knowing truth is essential for living a life that brings glory to Him.

KEY VERSE

Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' **John 14:6**

YOU WILL NEED

- Bible (1 per preteen)
- Dry erase board & dry erase markers
- Ball or other soft object

Instruct preteens to sit in a circle. As you throw a ball to each preteen, ask him to recite one word of the verse. Play one round with the verse displayed where they can see. Then play again, erasing a few words each round. Encourage preteens to memorize the key verse this week using their verse card at the back of their Discipleship Guides.

FIRE IT UP!

FIND THE TRUTH

YOU WILL NEED

- Object (ball, block, figurine, etc.)
- Paper and writing utensil
- 2 or 3 blindfolds (or pieces of fabric)

PREPARE

- Write the word *truth* on the piece of paper.
- Tape the paper to the object and hide it somewhere in the room.

TEACHING TIP Ensure there are no dangerous obstacles preteens could trip over.

- Ask for two or three volunteers to be blindfolded. Blindfold preteens and instruct them to find the hidden object in the room. You may identify what the hidden object is (ball, block, etc.).
- Explain to the group that the object represents truth. Select a few preteens who are not blindfolded to give truthful instructions for the blindfolded players to find the object. Instruct remaining preteens to shout out random directions that are not truthful to find the object.

- Allow several minutes for blindfolded players to search for the object. Untie blindfolds and reveal where the object was hidden. See if the blindfolded players could identify the truth tellers from those giving false instructions.
- Ask preteens what made finding the object difficult? (blindfold, random shouting, etc.) Discuss how being blindfolded and the confusion of the random shouting is a lot like trying to seek out truth in our culture. Remind preteens that Jesus is truth. If our eyes are not opened by the truth of God's Word and a relationship with Jesus, we will have trouble knowing what is true and what is false. Invite preteens to play again with different volunteers.

CHART THE WAY TO TRUTH PDG

YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles (1 per preteen)
- Preteen Discipleship Guides (1 per preteen)

-
- Ask preteens to open up their Discipleship Guides to *Activity 2 in Session 1, "Chart The Way To Truth."* Instruct preteens to look up each of the following Bible verses: *Psalm 86:11; Matthew 22:16; 1 John 5:20; Psalm 26:3.*
 - Ask preteens to fill in the missing words for each Bible verse in their Discipleship Guides. Discuss how these verses remind us that only Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.
 - Guide preteens to the daily discipleship pages found in their guides. Preview this week's daily pages and encourage preteens to complete each day's Bible reading and journaling on their own throughout the week. Review and discuss the following questions to help preteens engage with the Bible on their own.
 1. What does the text say? Write down exact truths from the Bible.
 2. Let Scripture interpret Scripture. What do these verses mean? Be careful to not insert your own meaning into the text.
 3. How can you apply the truths of God's Word to your life? How should these truths change the way you think and live?

BREAK IT DOWN

Finish: Truth is founded in the person of Jesus Christ. By knowing Jesus and His Word, we can rightly discern what is true so that we may live a life that glorifies Him. As you go throughout your week, use the true words of God to see the world. Ask God to help you evaluate the source of truth in your life and reveal any lies you may be believing from culture or personal influences. God delights for us to walk in truth, and He will help us!