

Suggestions for Working in the

Journal of Faith

As you begin work in the Student Journals, keep in mind that they follow the sequence of II Peter 1:5–9. This Scripture explains that faith is the foundation for virtue, which is the basis for knowledge, and so on. The Journals will be most effective when completed in conjunction with study in the Wisdom Booklets.

The Wisdom Booklets are the core of the Advanced Training Institute (ATI) curriculum and are designed to be explored as a family. Students who work in the Journals as an integral part of their Wisdom Booklet studies have found the benefits to be long-range and life-changing.

The Journal of Faith can be started at thirteen or fourteen years of age. Developing the contents of the Journal should be the student's own work. Typing the contents for the Journal is acceptable.

A student will need the following skills in order to complete the Journal of Faith: the ability to form well-written paragraphs with correct spelling and punctuation; to synthesize material and write it in his own words; to identify main topics in reading material; to conduct accurate and thorough research on a given question; to write a well-formed essay; and to have a working understanding of the seven basic principles in order to identify adherence to or violation of them.

How I Was Saved by Grace Through Faith

The Biblical Definition of Grace:

Look up the given references, and then write the Biblical definition of grace in your own words.

Q: What if I cannot remember any of the details surrounding my salvation experience?

A: Your parents can share with you what they recall of the “how,” “when,” and “where” of your experience. Those details can then be included in the description.

The Hearing of Faith:

Describe how, when, and where the Good News of salvation from sin was heard.

The Response of Faith:

Describe the prayer that you prayed to become a Christian.

The Confirmation of Faith:

State when and where you were baptized since you put your faith in Christ.

Read Through the Bible

On page 5, write the date you completed reading each book of the Bible. As you read through the Bible, stop periodically in your reading and ask yourself what you have read and what applications can be made. Jotting notes in a notebook as you read will facilitate completing the “Insights and Applications of Faith” part of this project. Reread a book until you are able to make some application to your life.

On pages 6–38, write the major topics of the books. For example: “Controlling the Tongue,” “How to Deal With Persecution,” “Characteristics of the Wicked,” etc.

Under “Insights and Applications of Faith,” include personal applications of faith that you have gleaned from the accounts of people's lives, events, and the doctrinal truths presented in that book of the Bible. Because of space limitations, it may be necessary to record only the insights and applications of faith which were the most meaningful to you.

Visualizing the events reported in the Scriptures may help you arrive at insights and applications. For example, visualize what it must have been like for Daniel to go to his house and kneel before his window to pray, knowing of the king's decree. Can you picture Abraham standing before the altar upon which his only son lay, knowing he would have to give him as a burnt offering to the Lord? What must have gone through his mind as he raised his hand to slay his son? Ponder what Abraham was asked to do, and why he was able to be obedient until God gave new instructions. What faith did Abraham have, and how did he exhibit it? When might you be called upon to demonstrate the same type of faith as Abraham? What actions or attitudes might need to be focused upon in your life to reveal that you are applying the lessons of faith you have learned?

Q: If I have already read through the Bible, must I do it again, or can I just skim the books for applications of faith?

A: It is important as you do the projects in this Journal that you remind yourself of your goal: to build your faith. Instead of focusing on completion, take this opportunity to build your faith by rereading principles of faith that you can apply to your life.

Q: Can we read through the Bible together as a family?

A: Yes, you can read the books of the Bible with your family. However, the insights and applications you record should be your own personal work. They can grow out of the family's discussion, but what is written should reflect your own interaction with the truths of the book.

Q: What exactly is meant by “insights and applications”?

A: What lessons about faith did you learn from that particular book of the Bible which can be applied to your life? What lessons about the lack of faith did you learn from that book? As you read about the judgments that came to God's people, especially in the Old Testament, you will want to analyze why those judgments came upon them. You will find that judgment was usually sent in response to various expressions of faithlessness.

Since we are looking for the personal applications of faith you discover, it is best to avoid commentaries until after you have personally wrestled with the Scripture. Rather than reporting on others' views, make your Journal of Faith a record of what stood out to you personally.

There may be whole sections of a book where you may not have any applications. For example, if you are reading the book of Genesis, and all the lessons of faith which stood out to you were from the lives of Jacob and Joseph, that is what you would record. You do not need to make a comment about every character or event in the book.

Q: Must we write in complete sentences and paragraphs for this section or merely in “note form”?

A: There is not enough space to use paragraph form. Write in “bullet” style by listing your main points and putting a bullet in front of each one.

Q: Approximately how long will it take to read through the entire Bible?

A: If you read at least three chapters a day, you can go through the whole Bible in a little more than a year.

Reading at least six chapters a day will allow you to finish the project in approximately half a year. Remember, the goal is not how fast it can be done; the emphasis is rather on how God is developing faith in my life as I read.

Q: Do we have to confine our insights and applications of faith to the designated space, or can we write on additional sheets of paper?

A: The goal is to summarize your thoughts in the space provided. You can keep track of your entire thought process in an essay or a notebook, but enter just the highlights in your Journal. The goal is to record the essence of the lesson learned, rather than the thought process you went through to arrive at your conclusions.

Q: Must the books of the Bible be read in order?

A: The books of the Bible do not need to be read in order, but it may be helpful to start with the Pentateuch and the historical books.

Understand Basic Principles

Attend a Basic Seminar, and record the location and date on page 39. If you have already been to a Basic Seminar, record the location and date of the most recent one you have attended.

Record the location and date of your participation in the Basic Seminar Follow-Up Course. As each booklet is completed, the leader or your parent(s) should write the completion date on the line to the left of the matching principle and initial it. The Follow-Up Course should be studied as a family or with another group rather than individually.

Study God's Heroes of Faith

Read the Scripture given for each hero, and then choose ten heroes to examine, completing the forms on pages 40–50. Look for principles which they either followed or violated, and identify the resulting benefits or consequences.

Design:

The principle of design is the purpose and the functions of each thing God has created.

Authority:

The principle of authority is God's working through human authorities in order to give His protection, direction, and provision.

Responsibility:

The principle of responsibility is becoming accountable to God for every one of my thoughts, words, actions, attitudes, and motives.

Ownership:

The principle of ownership is recognizing that everything I have belongs to God and is entrusted to me for the advancement of His kingdom.

Suffering:

The principle of suffering is the process by which God transfers our affections from temporal things to eternal riches and matures us for leadership in this life and throughout eternity.

Freedom:

The principle of freedom is the power to fulfill our basic needs in harmony with the ways of God and to enjoy the blessing which results.

Success:

The principle of success is fulfilling the purposes for which God created us.

In reporting on principles where no specific information is given about a hero, take the key phrases Scripture does give about the person, and evaluate what kind of person he must have been for God to describe him in that way.

For example, Scripture indicates that “. . . Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24). Evaluate what it means to “walk with God” in terms of design. What kind of man was Enoch with regard to responsibility and authority if we know that he “walked with God”? How would a man who “walked with God” view suffering in his own life? What would have constituted success to a man who at that early time in history “walked with God”?

Reading over the Scope and Sequence Resource Chart may also prompt ideas as to how the Bible character applied each basic principle.

Q: Do we need to write in paragraph form for this project?

A: No, use the bullet form with sentences and phrases.

“Walk” With Great Christians

Choose three of the great Christians pictured on page 51 for your study. Select two more great Christians to study either from the list or of your own choosing. Complete the pages “Insights From Walking With Great Christians.”

Q: Does the biography need to be a certain page length?

A: No page length is specified for these books; however, pamphlets and short articles (such as a chapter from a book) would not be sufficient.

Q: Where can we obtain biographies?

A: To obtain biographies of these great men and women, you might check with your church library or your pastor for titles. Christian Book Distributors (www.christianbook.com) provides a selection of biographies at a reasonable price. Moody Press (www.moodypublishers.com) has many paperback volumes available as well. Other possibilities are Trinity Book Service (www.trinitybookservice.org) and Bob Jones University Press (www.bjupress.com).

Q: Does ATI have a list of recommended biographies?

A: We regret that we have not been able to compile a list of recommended biographies through ATI.

Q: Should we record our insights for this section in paragraph form?

A: Yes, it would be best in this portion of the Journal for you to write in paragraph form.

Q: Must I read the Resource in the Wisdom Booklet on the three great Christians I choose to study before considering this section complete? What if my family is only on Wisdom Booklet 7, and the Resources for the great Christians are in later Booklets?

A: It is not necessary for you to study the Resource in the Wisdom Booklet which pertains to the great Christian you are researching. However, if you do have the Wisdom Booklet that has a Resource on the person you are studying, you will want to take advantage of that information and perspective.

Q: What if I am unable to locate a larger piece of written work on the person I want to study?

A: Find several shorter works that would provide viewpoints from different perspectives. One possible source may be the Christian History and Biography magazine.

Q: In which Wisdom Booklets can I find each of the great Christians?

A: Jonathan Edwards	WB 4
Adam Clarke	WB 6
Fanny Crosby	WB 7
George Mueller	WB 8

“. . . And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.”

(2 Peter 1:5-9)

Walter Lewis Wilson	WB 9
John Wesley	WB 10
John Bunyan	WB 11
J. Hudson Taylor	WB 13
Jean Henri Dunant	WB 17
John Wycliffe	WB 19
David Brainerd	WB 22
Adoniram Judson	WB 29

You may have difficulty finding biographies for Jonathan Edwards, Adam Clarke, Walter Lewis Wilson, Jean Henri Dunant, and John Wycliffe, as many of the works on their lives are out of print or are actually doctoral dissertations.

Identify Seeds of Disintegration

Read the information on seeds of disintegration, and follow the instructions in the first paragraph of page 62. Record your findings on pages 64–65.

This project may be completed on a great Christian about whom you have previously read a biography. Additional study on a biography already read may enhance the detailed discernment needed for this project. You are not confined to one of the five people you studied for “Walking With Great Christians,” but you may choose any great Christian to whom you can apply the questions.

Q: In a nutshell, what exactly are seeds of disintegration?

A: Seeds of disintegration are wrong ideas which are promoted by savorless Christians. The more an organization moves away from its original purpose, the easier it is for that ministry to become ineffective due to the seeds of disintegration. It is not always the case that the founder of the ministry did anything wrong, but the further the ministry moves away from the founder, the more it tends to move away from the principles the founder originally established and his basic motivation as he followed the Lord’s direction.

Initiate Ministry Opportunities

After your study in Wisdom Booklet 9, complete the information for each question on page 66 of the Journal of Faith.

Q: If I have not had an opportunity to witness to someone while working on the Journal of Faith, do I need to wait for this to occur before completing my Journal?

A: Begin to record the things you are doing to make it happen. Are you passing out tracts, going on church visitation, or fasting and praying for opportunities? Let your pastor know that you would be available to share if someone who needs to hear the Gospel comes forward in a church service.

Q: What is meant by “discipleship activities”?

A: “Discipleship activities” refers to things which help someone grow in his or her Christian life (i.e., getting him involved in a church, beginning a Bible study with him, helping him come to the decision to be baptized).

Get a Word From the Lord

Read the information about how to get a word from the Lord, and then identify needs for direction which you have at this time. Go to God’s Word about the matter and ask God for a rhema. In the space provided on page 67, record the rhema God gave in response to your need.

Send a Photocopy of Your Work in the Journal of Faith to:

ATI Family Information Center
Student Journal Processing
Box One
Oak Brook, IL 60522