November 2009

This month:

Grace-Full Leadership
The Power of Confession
The Leap of Faith
Lead with Your Life
Each week’s small-group Bible study provides a leader’s lesson summary, suggested opening activities, and a student study sheet. The study sheets are designed to get students into God’s Word through the reading of the Scripture as well as discussion. Student sheets are laid out in half sheet pages so that they can be printed out, cut in half, three-hole punched, and stored in a journal.

Each student study sheet has the following sections included:

- **Examine:** Students explore their personal thoughts on the issue before reading the Word.
- **Explore:** Students dig into the Word by reading the Scripture and answering and discussing questions or statements.
- **Live:** Students make life applications from what they’ve discussed, read, and learned.

The *Credo™ Leader’s Guide* is a FREE resource created by Barefoot Ministries® for use in conjunction with *Credo™*. Each issue of *Credo™* delivers a month’s worth of devotions, features, and articles around a central theme. The *Credo™ Leader’s Guide* gives youth leaders the ability to build on the monthly theme through small-group Bible study. The *Leader’s Guide* uses the articles and devotions from the magazine as illustrations and lead-ins for digging deeper into God’s Word. As each Bible study is dependent on the students having used the magazine for their daily devotions and spiritual growth, the *Credo™ Leader’s Guide* helps youth workers keep their students accountable in their spiritual walk.


For inquiries, order changes, or customer support, call toll-free 1-866-355-9933, or e-mail cmolinaqury@barefootministries.com.

For more great youth ministry curriculums, Bible studies, training, tools, and other resources, please visit www.barefootministries.com, the most complete and affordable online youth ministry solution.

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Week 1: Grace-Full Leadership

**Summary:** Grace is one of the key concepts in the entire Christian faith. Instead of giving us what we deserve—judgment and death—God instead gives us what we need: love and forgiveness. Too many times, Christian young people say they have experienced God's grace, then live their lives hoping their enemies or rivals will get what's coming to them. It's also easy to see within the youth group, when students who are weaker, less intelligent, or socially challenged are treated with contempt and ridicule by the rest of the group. Such an attitude is not Christian, and shows the group neither understands nor lives-out the grace of God.

**Leadership Focus:** Christian leaders are leaders who live-out God's grace, giving people what they need instead of what they deserve.

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**Movie:** *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings, Extended Edition.*

**Clip Location:** Disk 2, Chapter 7, 2:53-4:40

**Synopsis:** Frodo and Gandalf have a discussion about Gollum, who is a wretched creature with a disastrous story and uncertain intentions. Gandalf admonishes Frodo for wishing Gollum was dead and challenges him to be compassionate and gracious, even if someone deserves death.

**Gospel Filter:** This clip contains a serious lesson on the nature of grace. Gandalf challenges Frodo to be less hasty to deal out death and judgement. “Many that live deserve death,” says Gandalf. So it is with us.

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**Examine**

Watch the clip from Chapter 7 of *The Fellowship of the Ring* where Gandalf and Frodo discuss Gollum. Then discuss the following questions:

- In the course of the story, Gollum caused a lot of trouble. Why would Frodo wish Gollum had been killed earlier by Bilbo?
- Have you ever wanted someone to get what they deserve? What did that feel like?
- Why is it difficult to forgive people who wrong us?

**Explore**

Have your students look up and read aloud Luke 10:25-37. Invite them to discuss their thoughts and record their observations on the study sheets. During the discussion, ensure that the points below are considered.

- Luke 10:25-28: (Notice it's an expert in the law asking the questions here. Jesus answers his question with a question about the law. His answer, loving God and loving neighbors, is the heart of the Christian life throughout the Bible.)
- Luke 10:29-32: (Notice the priest and the Levite-- the holy, “Godly” people-- are the ones who walked by on the other side, leaving the man for dead.)
- Luke 10:33-35: (Spend some time discussing the Samaritans: they were considered no-good, sinful half-breeds. Good religious people weren't supposed to even talk with a Samaritan. Jesus uses the Samaritan as the “good guy” in the parable on-purpose. The Samaritan goes far out of his way to help the man whom the Levite and priest left for dead.)
- Luke 10:36-37: (Loving our neighbor means loving people the rest of the world has left for dead-- people no one else will touch.)

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**Live**

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Jesus makes it clear in this parable the key to the kingdom is not just loving God. It's loving our neighbors, too. In the *Lord of the Rings* clip, Frodo thinks Gollum should be killed because he deserves it. In the parable, the no-good Samaritan is the one who actually loves his neighbor. As we live our lives, we must practice *grace*: giving people what they need, not what they deserve. That's only possible as God changes our hearts and minds, teaching us how to love people as He loves.

- What are some ways God has shown you grace, giving you what you needed and not what you deserved?
- What are some ways you can show grace in your life?
- Who are some people in your life right now to whom you can show grace? How will you do that?
**Week 2: The Power of Confession**

**Summary:** Confession is tough sometimes for teenagers. Some of them spend most of their time trying not to get caught doing something or blaming someone else for their bad decisions. Owning up to one's shortcomings, sins, and mistakes takes a significant amount of maturity. Nevertheless, God's call to be a follower of Jesus is a call to a life of confession. We confess our sins, our frailty and weakness as humans, and our continual need for God's grace to empower us to live Godly lives. Teenagers must be encouraged to develop the spiritual discipline of confession— it will pay off for the rest of their lives.

**Leadership Focus:** Christian leaders live lives of honesty before God and others. This includes various kinds of confession.

- **Examine**
  Begin the session by reading “Sacred Life: Confession” by Brooklyn Lindsey on pages 22-23. Then discuss the following questions:
  
  - What is confession? What does it mean to confess something?
  - Is it hard for you to confess when you're caught doing something wrong? Why or why not?
  - Is it harder to confess when you haven’t been caught? Why or why not?

- **Explore**
  Have your students look up and read aloud 1 John 1:5-10. Invite them to discuss their thoughts and record their observations on the study sheets. During the discussion, ensure that the points below are considered.

  - 1 John 1:5-7: (Notice John does not leave any room for hypocrisy here. God is light, and if someone walks in darkness, they are not in the light, no matter how much they may claim to be. One's lifestyle is the evidence of their relationship with God or lack thereof.)
  - 1 John 8-10: (For someone to claim they have never sinned is a lie. The only way to forgiveness and wholeness in Christ is to confess our sins. We must admit it, not holding back to try and make ourselves look better. We must come clean and be honest about our sin. The road to cleansing goes through confession every time.)

- **Live**
  This short passage from John points out the need for confession, but simply telling our teens they need to confess their sins is not enough. They need some handles on how to actually engage in the spiritual discipline of confession. The chapter on Confession in *Credo* can help give us some concrete ways to practice confession.

  - Why is it necessary for Christians to practice confession?
  - Which of the areas in the article-- Journaling, Accountability Friendships, Altar Prayer, Mentor, or Communion-- appeal to you the most? Why?
  - How can you engage one of those methods of confession, beginning this week?
**Summary:** The Christian life is a life of faith, which is believing in something or someone we cannot see. Moments come in life where we are called to make a leap— a rather large step— of faith. God calls us out of our comfort zone and asks us to trust Him, even if we don't see why or how. It's important for teenagers to begin to develop a “yes, Lord” attitude toward those moments. Saying “yes” as a teenager leads to a life of “yesses.”

**Leadership Focus:** The life of a Christian leader involves moments where one must step out in faith, even when it is risky.

**Movie:** *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, Special Edition.*

**Clip Location:** Chapter 31 (Entire Chapter)

**Synopsis:** Luke trains to become a Jedi with Master Yoda, and his space ship sinks into the swamp. Yoda challenges him to use the “Force” to raise it. Luke fails because he does not believe it is possible.

**Gospel Filter:** In this scene, Luke learns about believing first, even though he cannot see evidence. The last line of the clip is the most important: Luke: “I don't believe it!” Yoda: “That is why you fail.” As Christians we must believe first.

- **Examine**
  Watch the clip from Chapter 31 of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* where Yoda teaches Luke about believing. Then discuss the following questions:
  - Why did Luke fail to raise his starfighter out of the swamp?
  - What does it mean to believe?
  - What do belief and faith have in common?
  - These days, why do people believe in God? Why don't they?

- **Explore**
  Have your students look up and read aloud *Matthew 14:22-33.* Invite them to discuss their thoughts and record their observations on the study sheets. During the discussion, ensure that the points below are considered.

  - Matthew 14:22-24: (Notice Jesus gets by himself to pray after he feeds the 5,000. The true source of His power is his relationship with the Father in prayer. While He is praying, the disciples are in the boat in the midst of a terrible storm.)
  - Matthew 14:25-27: (Jesus walks on the water. Notice the disciples do not recognize Him. When they see Him, they cry out in fear, making a scary situation even worse.)
  - Matthew 14:28-29: (Notice Peter is the one who speaks up, as Peter is known to do. Peter's faith helps him get out of the boat in the first place.)
  - Matthew 14:30-33 (The faith that prompts Peter to get out of the boat wavers when he notices the wind and the waves, much like our own faith sometimes can waiver in the midst of a crisis. Notice, however, Peter's first response when he starts sinking is to cry out to Jesus. So should it be with us. Notice how quickly Jesus acts to save Peter. Notice the end result of this whole episode: everyone in the boat ends up confessing Jesus as the Son of God. Even though he failed, Peter's initial step of faith to get out of the boat results in the confession of everyone else in the boat.)

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Live
Sometimes faith is risky. Sometimes the amazing things God wants to do in the world through His people can only happen with a leap of risk-taking faith. It was risky for Peter to get out of the boat that night. He had to believe before he stepped out on the water. Many times we fail, just like Luke in the video clip, because we do not believe God is powerful enough to accomplish what He says He will do.

- Have you ever had an experience where you took a leap of faith? How did that moment feel?
- What would you do if God asked you to take a serious risk for Him?
- What might happen in your family, church, or school if Christian teenagers truly lived-out their faith, even when it's risky?
Week 4: Lead with Your Life

Summary: The Christian life is the life of leading others. While different people have different leadership gifts and abilities, we are all called to lead in a certain way, even if it is leading others to Jesus through the way we live. Many times teenagers think they're too young to lead, or aren't given the opportunity to lead. If a youth group can intentionally engage in developing young leaders, they are doing a huge service not only to the church of tomorrow, but to the church of today as well.

Leadership Focus: Christian leaders must come to the place where they step-up and lead, even if they are young. Sometimes young leaders can have an effectiveness all their own.

- **Examine**
  Start the session by reading “Follow the Leader” by Meggan Nugent on pages 42-43. Discuss the following questions:
  - What does it mean to be a leader?
  - What are the challenges of leading?
  - Why sometimes don't students lead in their schools, families, and churches?

- **Explore**
  Have your students look up and read aloud 1 Timothy 4:11-16. Invite them to discuss their thoughts and record their observations on the study sheets. During the discussion, ensure that the points below are considered.

  1. 1 Timothy 4:11-13: (It might not be a bad idea to look at verses 1-10. These are the things Paul instructs Timothy to teach. Notice Timothy's age is not the issue here, he is to set an example for believers of all ages, regardless of his young age.)
  2. 1 Timothy 4:14-15: (Notice Paul encourages Timothy to put these teachings into practice. Timothy has to get to work leading. At some point a leader has to lead. If Timothy does nothing, he is in danger of neglecting the gift he has been given by God and the church.
  3. 1 Timothy 4:16: (Notice the content of Timothy's teaching is important. He is accountable for what he teaches and says as a leader. The same is true with leaders in today's church. It is not a theological free-for-all. We must teach and practice sound doctrine.

- **Live**
  Sometimes people in the church, teenagers included, have a sponge mindset. They come to church, soak up God's grace, and go home. This is not how life in Christian community is meant to be. Christians, and even young Christians, are called to serve and lead the church. For that to happen, they must first be given opportunities to lead. Then they must have the courage to step into those leadership roles and go for it!

  - What are some of the gifts God has given you? What are you good at? What do you like to do?
  - To what ministry or service to the church (inside and outside the walls of the church building) might God be calling you?
  - What would it take for you to actually step in and lead in that ministry?
Examine:
Watch the clip from Chapter 7 of *The Fellowship of the Ring* where Gandalf and Frodo discuss Gollum. Then discuss the following questions:

- In the course of the story, Gollum caused a lot of trouble. Why would Frodo wish Gollum had been killed earlier by Bilbo?
- Have you ever wanted someone to get what they deserve? What did that feel like?
- Why is it difficult to forgive people who wrong us?

Explore:
As a group read aloud *Luke 10:25-37* and record your thoughts below:

**Luke 10:25-28:** Who is asking the question here? How does Jesus answer him?

**Luke 10:29-32:** Who are the people who leave the injured man for dead?

**Luke 10:33-35**
Who are the Samaritans? Why is it a big deal that the Samaritan was the one who helped the injured man?

**Luke 10:36-37:** What do we learn about loving our neighbors?

Live:
Jesus makes it clear in this parable the key to the kingdom is not just loving God. It's loving our neighbors, too. In the *Lord of the Rings* clip, Frodo thinks Gollum should be killed because he deserves it. In the parable, the no-good Samaritan is the one who actually loves his neighbor. As we live our lives, we must practice grace: giving people what they need, not what they deserve. That's only possible as God changes our hearts and minds, teaching us how to love people as He loves.

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**Explore:**
As a group read aloud 1 John 1:5-10 and record your thoughts below:

1 John 1:5-7: What does it mean to live “in the light?” What if I say I'm in the light when I actually live in darkness?

**Live:**
This short passage from John points out the need for confession, but simply telling our teens they need to confess their sins is not enough. They need some handles on how to actually engage in the spiritual discipline of confession. The chapter on Confession in Credo can help give us some concrete ways to practice confession.

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- These days, why do people believe in God? Why don't they?

**Explore:**
As a group read aloud Matthew 14:22-33 and record your thoughts below:

Matthew 14:22-24: Where does Jesus go after he feeds the 5,000? Why?

Matthew 14:25-27: What is the disciples' first response when they see Jesus?

Matthew 14:28-29: What do you think caused Peter to get out of the boat in the first place?

Matthew 14:30-33: What happens when Peter takes his eyes off Jesus? What is Jesus' response?

**Live:**
Sometimes faith is risky. Sometimes the amazing things God wants to do in the world through His people can only happen with a leap of risk-taking faith. It was risky for Peter to get out of the boat that night. He had to believe before he stepped out on the water. Many times we fail, just like Luke in the video clip, because we do not believe God is powerful enough to accomplish what He says He will do.

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- What does it mean to be a leader?
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- Why sometimes don't students lead in their schools, families, and churches?

Explore:
As a group read aloud 1 Timothy 4:11-16 and record your thoughts here:

1 Timothy 4:11-13: What is the point here? What is Timothy to do, in spite of his age?

1 Timothy 4:14-15: What must Timothy do? If he does nothing, what is he in danger of neglecting?

1 Timothy 4:16: How important is the content of what Timothy teaches?

Live:
Sometimes people in the church, teenagers included, have a sponge mindset. They come to church, soak up God's grace, and go home. This is not how life in Christian community is meant to be. Christians, and even young Christians, are called to serve and lead the church. For that to happen, they must first be given opportunities to lead. Then they must have the courage to step into those leadership roles and go for it!

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