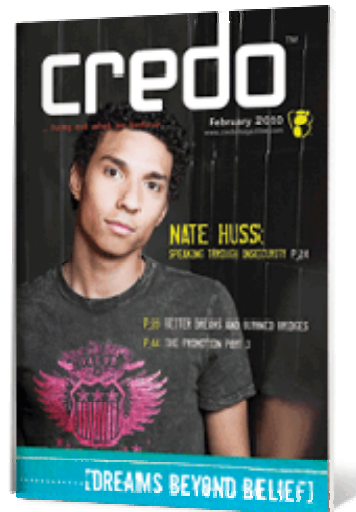


credo™

Leader's Guide

February 2010



This month:

- **Showcase of Your Dreams**
- **Saints or Sinners?**
- **The Rights of Sons and Daughters**
- **Unanswered Prayers**





Leader's Guide

How to Use the *Credo™ Leader's Guide*

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.

The *Credo™ Leader's Guide* is available for download as a .pdf file at www.credomagazine.com, www.barefootministries.com, and www.wordaction.com.

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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.

Week 1: SHOWCASE OF YOUR DREAMS

Summary: Little kids dream of becoming things such as doctors or firefighters. As those kids grow into teenagers they continue to dream, but their dreams take on a more definite nature: Where will I go to school to become a doctor? How will I make becoming a firefighter a reality? As high school progresses, students can begin to feel the pressure of how to make their future dreams a reality—living up to their parents' expectations while choosing a career path that they themselves will enjoy. And where is God in the mix? How does he lead and guide young people in these kinds of choices? God opens miraculous doors in our lives, but he invites us to partner with him in finding and then pursuing those opportunities. When Joseph was a young man he had some dreams that seemed impossible to ever become reality. But through circumstances that no one could have foreseen and that took him to some tough places, Joseph's dreams were fulfilled in God's way and time, blessing Joseph, his family, and millions of others.

Leadership Focus: While any of the students in your group would benefit from attending a Christian college, your student leaders in particular may benefit from (and be more open to) doing so. Take advantage of opportunities to have college reps visit your group or for your group to visit local or denominational Christian colleges.

Movie: Show the scene from *Slumdog Millionaire* where Jamal answers the final question on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? and wins the grand prize.

Clip Location: Start at approximately 01:42:26, where the host says, "Welcome back to Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" Stop at approximately 01:50:11, where Jamal is holding the check. (There is some shooting near the end of the scene that is not graphic, but you can avoid it by stopping right after Jamal's correct answer is confirmed.)

Synopsis: Jamal Malik, an uneducated young man who grew up as an orphan, finds himself one question away from winning a huge cash prize on a popular game show.

Gospel Filter: Sometimes our dreams are supernatural and sometimes they are "ordinary." God can use our dreams and the circumstances of our lives to work for our good.

- **Examine**

Watch with your students the above-referenced clip from *Slumdog Millionaire*. (The movie in its entirety presents many powerful discussion points, but other scenes do contain vulgarity and graphic content.) Discuss the following questions:

- **How did Jamal attempt to find an answer to the question?** Students should quickly recall that he phoned a friend, but point out that he first sought to remember any time in his life when he might have read *The Three Musketeers*. Throughout the movie, it was remembering life experiences that allowed Jamal to correctly answer the game show questions.
- **Why were the people so excited to see Jamal answer the question?** He was about to win the grand prize, a huge sum of money. The context of the film shows that Jamal had had a very rough childhood. The odds were greatly against him winning this game, so the suspense was heightened even further.
- **What is the best thing you have ever won? What is the greatest thing you have ever tried for but lost?** Describe the situation. Invite the students to respond.

Transition by saying, **Let's read a Bible story where a rough life turned out good—and where someone who seemed as if he would lose it all ended up winning big time.**

- **Explore**

Read with your students Genesis 37:1–11 and Genesis 45:1–7. If necessary, summarize the events that transpired in between the two passages (Joseph being sold into slavery, Joseph rising to leadership in Egypt, Joseph's family coming Egypt in search of food, and so forth). Be sure to bring out the following points from the passages:

- The story tells us that Joseph had "tattled" on his brothers. Joseph was the "baby" brother and was their father's favorite, even wearing a special robe from Jacob that would have served as a constant reminder to his brothers that their father loved Joseph best. No wonder they were upset at his dreams!
- In Joseph's first dream, the brothers' sheaves of grain all bowed down to Joseph's. In the second dream, even the sun, moon, and stars bowed to him! Explain that in Hebrew culture, the occurrence of a similar dream more than once would have been interpreted as a sign that it was sure to come true.
- We would probably be selective about whom we told such a dream to! In this case, no interpretation was necessary; Joseph's brothers got what he meant, and they weren't very happy about it.

- We are not told why Joseph shared his dreams. Perhaps he was completely oblivious to what they might mean, or perhaps he was just innocently sharing with his brothers his excitement over the dreams. The “rest” of the story clearly illustrates Joseph’s great wisdom. It would seem that at this point in his young life, he did not exercise a lot of that wisdom!
 - Joseph’s father was also a bit skeptical about the dreams Joseph shared. However, the story tells us that he “kept the matter in mind” (37:10). Jacob remained open to the fact that there may have been something significant to Joseph’s dreams. Many years later, his suspicion would prove correct.
 - Joseph’s brothers had not seen him since selling him into slavery all those years ago. They assumed he was dead. Furthermore, they had lied to their father about what had happened to Joseph. They fully expected Joseph to be angry about what they had done to him—and Joseph was now a powerful man, capable of taking painful revenge! If they survived the wrath of Joseph, they also had their father to deal with.
 - It would seem natural for Joseph to be angry at his brothers for what they had done to him. He had had a long time to mull it over! But instead of being angry, Joseph was grateful to see his family again, and he saw that God had been working from the very beginning of it all for the good of his family and others.
 - Joseph had gone from a child slave to being second in command in one of the most powerful nations of the time. In response to his position of leadership, others—including his family—would have bowed to him in respect. God knew what Joseph was destined for; God worked through some tough circumstances to bless Joseph and his family and to fulfill a higher calling in Joseph’s life.
- Transition by saying, **As a boy, Joseph may not have fully understood his dreams—but God had a purpose in them and a path through which they would be fulfilled.**

- **Live**

Read together “God’s Dreams” on pages 12–13 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo* and discuss the following questions:

- **Are all dreams from God? Do all dreams have meaning?** Some (maybe most!) of our dreams are simply a result of the things we have experienced during the day, the things that are on our mind, or the spicy foods we ate late at night! But God does give us dreams—desires in our hearts for what we might do or become in the future.
- **Are you a “risk taker”? Do you go for the big prize every time, or do you settle for what you have without always hoping for something better?** Invite the students to respond.
- **How could something good prevent you from having something better?** We might think that something is the best, but find out soon after that we could have had something better if we had only waited. The point is not that we should keep holding out until we are all millionaires; it’s that we should passionately seek to find and then pursue God’s dreams for our lives. Those dreams may be bigger and better than anything we could ever imagine on our own.

Close the session in prayer. Ask God to fill your students’ hearts and minds with *his* dreams—and to open doors for the fulfillment of those dreams.

Week 2: SAINTS OR SINNERS?

Summary: “Holy” is a church word that is used quite frequently in worship settings. Most people would quickly assent to the fact that God is holy, and when applying that word to God, they would have in mind that God is big, awesome, and all-powerful. We tend to relate “churchy” things to God, and so we say that the church sanctuary, the pulpit, and the huge, ornate Bible that sit on the Communion table are all “holy.” These articles are, in fact, set apart and dedicated to God’s use, and this is coming a bit closer to the deeper meaning of the word “holy.” God calls us, his people, to be holy, but what exactly does that mean? Christians should not feel holy only when they are at church. Peter described an attitude and way of living that allows us to live as holy people, just as God commanded. This holiness is not based on a set of right and wrong actions but on being filled with the same all-consuming love for others that God demonstrated for us through Christ. This holiness is made possible by God, but it does require our active participation as well.

Leadership Focus: Involvement in the corporate activities of the church is a part of God’s plan for his people. It is how we grow in holiness and build one another up. Whenever possible, involve your student leaders in leadership in areas of “big church”—as ushers greeters, worship leaders, and so forth.

- **Examine**

Read together “Everyday Saint” on pages 22–23 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo* and discuss the following questions:

- **How would you personally describe God’s love?** Be open to various answers. Be sure that *deep, eternal, sacrificial, powerful, and similar* concepts are touched on.
- **What “rules” does our church have for dress or conduct—both inside and outside of church services?** Invite the students to respond. If your church or youth group has any official (printed) guidelines, be sure to discuss them here. Why do your students think that these codes of conduct exist? Even if you don’t have any printed rules, there will be some common ideas that people follow. For example, it is probably not appropriate to wear a bathing suit to church, and it is not appropriate to talk on a cell phone during worship. Some of these rules relate to conducting ourselves in ways that are pleasing to God, and others are more common courtesy or common sense.
- **When is it better to be “bound” to someone or something than to be “free”?** Invite the students to respond. If you were adrift in the ocean, it would be good to be bound to your raft or to a strong swimmer. If a man and woman are passionately in love, they “bind” themselves to one another in the marriage relationship for strength and security.

Transition by saying, **Let’s read some of Peter’s advice about something we should be “bound” or committed to.**

- **Explore**

Read with your students 1 Peter 1:13–25. Be sure to bring out the following points from the passage:

- To “prepare your (mind) for action” means that you are thinking about what’s ahead, making a game plan, plotting out mentally what actions you will take in the future. Point out that as much as God does for us (and that’s a lot!), he calls us to participate in the plan, to partner in what he is doing in the world and in and through our own lives.
- “Living in ignorance” means you just don’t know any better. Some ignorance is beyond our control. A two-year-old is ignorant about the fact that playing in the street can lead to getting hit by a car. Other ignorance comes from plain laziness or lack of effort. Many adults are ignorant about politics in our country simply because they don’t take the time to inform themselves and get involved.
- We all bear God’s image, and Christians bear the name of God’s Son. When we live as God, then we show others the nature of God. When we carry God’s name but do not live as God lives or desire, we basically ruin God’s reputation. God knows the best way to live, and he wants to show us that way.
- God judges—and will judge—everyone who has lived, is living now, or will live. This is an impartial judgment, meaning that there are no favorites. The standard is the same for all. Therefore, we should have “reverent fear” for God—not a fear of being “slapped down” by God but a respect for the power and holiness of God.
- The price for any guilt we might have before God has been paid with the most precious gift—the perfect blood of Christ. It is through Christ that we have faith and hope in the forgiveness of God. We can have the respect without the fear of punishment.
- We purify ourselves by obeying the truth that God has given us and by having sincere, “from-the-heart” love for our brothers (and sisters!). When we love others as deeply and unconditionally as the holy God has loved us, then we are living as the holy God lives.

• The word of the Lord stands forever. This means that the truths of God and of the Bible never change; they are valid for all time. It is through this truth that we receive God's eternal life. When it continues to live and grow within us, then we are eternal too.

Transition by saying, **The truth of God's word and of his command to love as he loved is a truth that we should bind ourselves tightly to forever.**

- ***Live***

Share with your students an experience of "grass and flowers." You can do this in one of the following ways:

- Go outside and walk through a field or garden with attractive grass and/or flowers.
- Bring to your meeting some beautiful potted flowers or fresh-cut bouquets.
- Share with your students some color pictures of vibrant flowers or spectacular landscapes.

After your experience, discuss the following questions:

- **Do you consider yourself much of an "outdoors" or "nature-type" person? Why or why not?** Invite the students to respond. Share with them your own like or dislike of mowing and gardening.
- **What can we learn about God from the beauty of the grass and flowers?** God's creation is magnificent and awesome. We can work with and manipulate what God has created, but we can never match it. The beauty of God's creation is far superior to the beauty of anything that we ourselves could ever make.
- **What can we learn about life from the limits of the grass and flowers?** Even the most beautiful creations in this world don't last forever. Grass and flowers tend to die (or go dormant) in the fall and come back to life in the spring. Life is full of similar cycles of birth, living, and then death. But God can break that cycle of death in us, through Christ.

Close in prayer. Ask God to fill your students with the same all-consuming love for others that God has demonstrated for us through Christ. If time and resources allow, you might lead your students in the planting of some flowers or send flowers home with them as a reminder of today's discussion.

Week 3: THE RIGHTS OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Summary: In our day and time, we have lost much of the concept of what it means to be an heir. In the days of the Old and New Testaments, the procedures for passing along property and wealth from one generation to another were very detailed—and very important. One’s standing in a family and one’s possessions largely determined one’s standing in society. Today we might have many millionaires in the world—many of them “self-made”—and wealth is still a primary factor in determining how society views us. The biblical idea of inheritance paints a powerful “before-and-after” picture of our standing with God. The original readers of Galatians knew that to be without a legitimate inheritance was to be truly destitute and forsaken—the worst of all circumstances. Since God had chosen a people—the Jews—anyone who was *not* chosen stood little chance of benefiting from God’s inheritance. But a new day had dawned—and it dawns for us as well. Adopted as sons and daughters of God, we are privileged to experience freedom, justification, and an eternal inheritance.

Leadership Focus: The church today spends a lot of time studying the New Testament—sometimes to the neglect of the Old Testament. Your teaching should include a good balance of New *and* Old. This is particularly true as you teach your student leaders. Help them to better understand through the Old Testament the tenets of God’s law—and the freedom of Christ.

Movie: Show the scene from *Annie* where Mr. Warbucks’ assistant comes to the orphanage to see about finding a child to bring home for a week.

Clip Location: Start at approximately 00:25:19, where Miss Ferrell says, “Mr. Warbucks would like to invite an orphan to spend the week with him in his home.” Stop at approximately 00:28:29, where Miss Ferrell and Annie walk out. (These times and exact words reference the 1981 version of the film; however, the same scene in other versions will also work.)

Synopsis: Famous billionaire “Daddy” Warbucks brings an orphan, “Annie,” to stay with him for a week. Despite the trickery of the mistress at the orphanage, Annie wins over Mr. Warbucks’ heart and is eventually adopted by him.

Gospel Filter: Life as an orphan is not a good life. Before coming to Christ, we were spiritual orphans. But in Christ we have been adopted and can enjoy the full benefits of the sons and daughters of God.

- **Examine**

Watch with your students the above-referenced clip from *Annie*. (The entire movie presents many powerful discussion points, but there are a few swear words elsewhere in the film.) Discuss the following questions:

- **Why was Annie so desperate to get out of the orphanage?** Life in this orphanage was particularly miserable for the children, who were mistreated by the greedy, irresponsible mistress, Miss Hannigan. Annie and all of the children held onto the hope that one day they would be adopted by someone and have a family again.
- **Why was Miss Hannigan so desperate to keep Annie in the orphanage?** Annie resisted Miss Hannigan’s harsh treatment and refused to let Miss Hannigan get her down, which made Miss Hannigan mistreat Annie even more.
- **How have orphanages and the process of adoption changed since the era that the movie *Annie* portrays?** Orphanages still exist in many parts of the world but are rare in North America. Here, orphans tend to be cared for by relatives or live in foster homes until someone adopts them.

Transition by saying, **Let’s read what the Apostle Paul had to say about orphans—and about being “adopted” by God.**

- **Explore**

Read with your students Galatians 3:19—4:7. Be sure to bring out the following points from the passage:

- The Old Testament law was given because of our transgressions (sins). It was a part of God’s plan all along; however, it was unable to bring life or righteousness. In other words, it dealt with the symptoms but not the problem. It was not able to make anyone right before God. Its purpose was to bring us to Christ.
- We sin of our own choice, but it is our natural inclination to *choose* to sin. Sin is alluring and captivating; it draws us in and becomes a habit that is impossible to break on our own. The consequences of sin—heartache, pain, and death—certainly hold many people captive, even affecting those who did not commit the sin themselves.
- To be justified is to be made right, or to have our actions proved to be right or above blame. The presence of sin in our lives is a problem if we want to be with a sinless, holy God! We need something to take care of the sin, to make it right by God’s standards. It is faith in Christ that does that.

- To “clothe (ourselves) with Christ” is a powerful word picture! It means we are wrapped in him, covered by him so that Christ is what others see when they see us. Now we do not live in sin; we live in Christ.
- When we come to Christ, we do not lose our unique character traits and abilities, but they are no longer the focus. In Christ, one person is not better than another. One person is not more important than another. And one person is not loved more than another. In fact, for *all* of us, our status improves considerably: in Christ we are all “heirs” of God.
- An heir is a person who rightfully inherits something from someone else. Children are often the heirs to the money and possessions of their parents when they pass away, but you can make anyone (even someone who is not your descendant) your heir by legally designating what that person will receive from you. Even though we didn’t used to live as children of God, through Christ we are “adopted” by God and have the right to enjoy the full benefits of God’s children.
- Genesis 12:1–3 tells of God’s promise to Abraham regarding his “seed.” The concept of “seed” and becoming a “great nation” both refer to having many descendants. God promised to give Abraham numerous descendants, to bless them, and to bless the world through them. Through Christ we are “adopted” into Abraham’s line and designated by God to enjoy his blessing and to bless others.

Transition by saying, **After being adopted by God, there is no distinction anymore. We are his full children and can share in the full inheritance of his children.**

- ***Live***

Read together “Nate Huss: Speaking through Insecurity” on pages 24–25 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo* and discuss the following questions:

- **Has adoption touched your life in any way? If so, how?** Invite the students to respond, and be sensitive to any situations where this topic might stir up strong emotions.
- **What would adoption have to do with insecurity?** Those who have been given up for adoption might feel that they were not worthy of being loved by their original parents. They might also feel that they have to prove themselves “worthy” to their potential new parents. Thank God, he loved us and counted us worthy to be adopted by him forever!
- **What injuries have you had—physical or emotional—that have healed but still hurt a bit? What good can this sort of lingering pain bring?** A little lingering pain can give us perspective, reminding us where we have come from and making us appreciate where we are now. As with Nate, our past hurts can give us the opportunity to minister to the present hurts of others who are going through similar things.

Close the session in prayer, thanking God for his loving adoption and for the blessings that come from being his children.

Week 4: UNANSWERED PRAYERS

Summary: If you've ever seen the movie *Napoleon Dynamite*, you'll remember Uncle Rico and his constant longing to go back to his high school days and succeed as a football player. For many adults, the grass always seems to be greener in the past, when great opportunities were missed. Teenagers are often looking *ahead* to greener grass, when the pressures and restrictions of school are behind them (never mind the greater pressures and responsibilities that come with adulthood!). God has prepared a great eternal home for his children, but he has also prepared miraculous and mind-blowing things for us in *this* life—things we might never wrap our minds around if we knew them now! Paul knew that the coming of Christ had been destined since the beginning of time, and that followers of Christ can receive the mind of Christ so that they think like Christ. This is an incredible concept, one that should fill your students with excitement and wonder. God has great things in store for them—things that are beyond anything they have ever dreamed.

Leadership Focus: One important leadership opportunity for your students is for them to “speak a message of wisdom among the mature” by teaching the Word of God. This can happen in the youth group setting and also in an adult Bible study or “big church.” Provide the tools and guidance your student leaders need as they prepare to teach.

- **Examine**

Read together “Better Dreams & Burned Bridges” on pages 33–34 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo* and discuss the following questions:

- **What are your biggest dreams? What has happened in your life that you would have never dreamed would happen?** Invite the students to respond. You can help to encourage discussion by sharing some of your own dreams, from now and from when you were a teenager. Encourage your students in their pursuit of their dreams.
- **Would you leave everything behind of God asked you to? How would you know if he was asking you to do that?** This is an open question. It might be easy to *say* we would follow God in this way, but much more difficult to actually follow through with it! God calls people in many ways—directly, through a feeling or sense, through the words of others, through his Word, through circumstances, and through combinations of all of these.
- **Honestly, what would happen if God gave you everything you had ever asked for? What if he gave you a million dollars?** Life would be much different if we got everything we wanted or asked for—and not always in good ways! Again, it might be easy to say we would be generous with a million dollars—and we might really intend to be generous. But when we had the money, it might corrupt our priorities, complicate our relationships, and destroy our walk with God. Money and power are two things that tend to “go to the head” of even the most sincere people.

Transition by saying, **Let's read about what it's like to hope for the awesome things that God has prepared for us.**

- **Explore**

Read with your students 1 Corinthians 2:1–16. Be sure to bring out the following points from the passage:

- Paul did not teach or preach with fancy words or complicated concepts. He kept it simple and kept it real, remaining humble and even fearful as he taught. This approach assured that it was God speaking through him and not human effort that was getting through to people.
- When we grow up in or around church (or even in a culture where churches are common), we can take for granted that God exists. Think about it: we get up early on Sundays, sing songs and hear lessons about someone we can't see, and give our money away to him as well! This could seem foolish to some people, although to the people of God it is perfectly clear why they do it.
- Worshiping God *before* Christ would have involved repeated trips to a central location where animals would have been slaughtered in elaborate ceremonies. No youth groups or children's church. In fact, women and children would not have even been allowed into many of the main worship services.
- Heaven is obviously *one* big awesome, incredible things God has prepared for us. However, there are great things in store in this life as well! Churches are full of testimonies of lives that have been radically changed by the love and power of God. Encourage your students in their dreams, but also encourage them to be open to dreams that God might give them. With God's leading, they could end up in places they would never imagine now.
- Knowledge about “human” things is certainly of great value. The knowledge of how to build a car, construct a house, fly a plane, or assemble a computer is worth a lot in life! But these things do not last. Knowledge of God is better than anything because it has the power to give eternal life.

- Paul used a simple explanation to illustrate how we can actually know the thoughts of God: the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God, since Christ is God he has the Spirit of God, and this Spirit has been freely given to us. This does not make us God, but it means that it is actually possible to know what God wants of us and to do that.
- To “discern” something is to be able to tell the truth about it. Someone who is strong on discernment might meet a new person and be able to sense from a brief conversation whether that person is authentic or fake. It is even possible to “discern” a situation and know whether or not it’s something to be avoided. When we have the Spirit of God, we can discern spiritual things—living in a way that pleases God and knowing when situations are pleasing or displeasing to God.

Transition by saying, **God has great things for your future—and even now, he wants to give you *his* mind and *his* Spirit.**

- **Live**

Play for your students the Garth Brooks song “Unanswered Prayers” (originally from his 1990 album *No Fences*, but also available on subsequent compilations). If possible, provide copies of the lyrics. Discuss the following questions:

- **What do you think it means that “hindsight is 20-20”?** When we look back on things, we often have a perspective we didn’t have when we were in the middle of them; we can see more clearly all the pieces and what was really going on. Point out that God always has this perspective on our lives since he is not bound by time the way we are.
- **What is something you used to really, really want, but now you realize it’s probably better that you didn’t get it?** Invite the students to respond, and share a story or two of your own. Like the song, you may have been in a relationship that, if it had lasted, would have given you a much different life than you have now!
- **Is an unanswered prayer really unanswered? What else could it be?** We could consider a lack of an answer from God to be a “no,” or a “not yet,” or a “yes, but in a different way than you expect.” Remember, the things God has planned for us are way beyond—and way better than—anything we could imagine!

Close the session in prayer, thanking God for the awesome future he has for you and your students.

Examine:

Watch with your group the clip from *Slumdog Millionaire*.

- How did Jamal attempt to find an answer to the question?
- Why were the people so excited to see Jamal answer the question?
- What is the best thing you have ever won? What is the greatest thing you have ever tried for but lost? Describe the situation.

Explore:

Read Genesis 37:1–11 and Genesis 45:1–7.

- What factors “set the stage” for Joseph’s brothers to be so upset with his dream?
- What sorts of dreams did Joseph have?
- If you had dream like this, would you tell anyone? How difficult do you think it was for Joseph’s brothers to “interpret” his dream?
- What do you think was Joseph’s motivation for telling his brothers and father about his dreams?

- How did Joseph’s father respond to the dreams? What was the significance of this?
 - Why would Joseph’s brothers be so terrified to see him after all this time?
 - How would you expect Joseph to feel about seeing his brothers again? How did he feel instead?
 - How was Joseph’s dream from his childhood fulfilled? How was God in it?
- Live:**
Read “God’s Dreams” on pages 12–13 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo*.
- Are all dreams from God? Do all dreams have meaning?
 - Are you a “risk taker”? Do you go for the big prize every time, or do you settle for what you have without always hoping for something better?
 - How could something good prevent you from having something better?

Examine:

Read together “Everyday Saint” on pages 22–23 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo*.

- How would you personally describe God’s love?
- What “rules” does our church have for dress or conduct—both inside and outside of church services?
- When is it better to be “bound” to someone or something than to be “free”?

Explore:

Read 1 Peter 1:13–25.

- What does it mean to “prepare your (mind) for action”?
- What does it mean to “live in ignorance”?
- God is holy—but why would he care whether or not *we* are?

- Why should we be “afraid” of God?
 - What is the solution to a fear God—the reason we don’t need to be afraid?
 - Another word for holy is “pure.” How can we truly purify ourselves so that we can be holy like God?
 - What does the word of God have to do with us being “imperishable” (eternal)?
- Live:**
- Do you consider yourself much of an “outdoors” or “nature-type” person? Why or why not?
 - What can we learn about God from the beauty of the grass and flowers?
 - What can we learn about life from the limits of the grass and flowers?

Examine:

Watch with your group the clip from the movie *Annie*.

- Why was Annie so desperate to get out of the orphanage?
- Why was Miss Hannigan so desperate to keep Annie in the orphanage?
- How have orphanages and the process of adoption changed since the era that the movie *Annie* portrays?

Explore:

Read Galatians 3:19—4:7.

- What was the purpose of the Old Testament law?
- How are people “prisoners” to sin?
- What does it mean to be *justified*?
- What does it mean to “clothe (ourselves) with Christ”?

- What does it mean that nationalities and even gender disappear in Christ? There are still male and female Christians, right?

- What is an heir—and how does this relate to God?

- What were Abraham’s “promise” and “seed”?

Live:

Read “Nate Huss: Speaking through Insecurity” on pages 24–25 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo*.

- Has adoption touched your life in any way? If so, how?
- What would adoption have to do with insecurity?
- What injuries have you had—physical or emotional—that have healed but still hurt a bit? What good can this sort of lingering pain bring?

Examine:

Read “Better Dreams & Burned Bridges” on pages 33–34 of the February 2010 edition of *Credo*.

- What are your biggest dreams? What has happened in your life that you would have never dreamed would happen?
- Would you leave everything behind if God asked you to? How would you know if he was asking you to do that?
- Honestly, what would happen if God gave you everything you had ever asked for? What if he gave you a million dollars?

Explore:

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1–16.

- Based on Paul’s self-description, what kind of preacher or teacher was he?
- Why would anyone in the world think that God’s word was not a “wise” message?
- Technology aside, how would worshiping God *before* Christ have been different?

- What awesome, incredible things has God prepared for you and for those who love him?
 - Was Paul saying that knowledge about “human” things is worthless? Why or why not?
 - How can we actually know the thoughts of God? What are the implications of this?
 - Are you a discerning person? What does it mean to “discern” something?
- Live:**
Listen with your group to the Garth Brooks song “Unanswered Prayers.”
- What do you think it means that “hindsight is 20-20”?
 - What is something you used to really, really want, but now you realize it’s probably better that you didn’t get it?
 - Is an unanswered prayer really unanswered? What else could it be?