



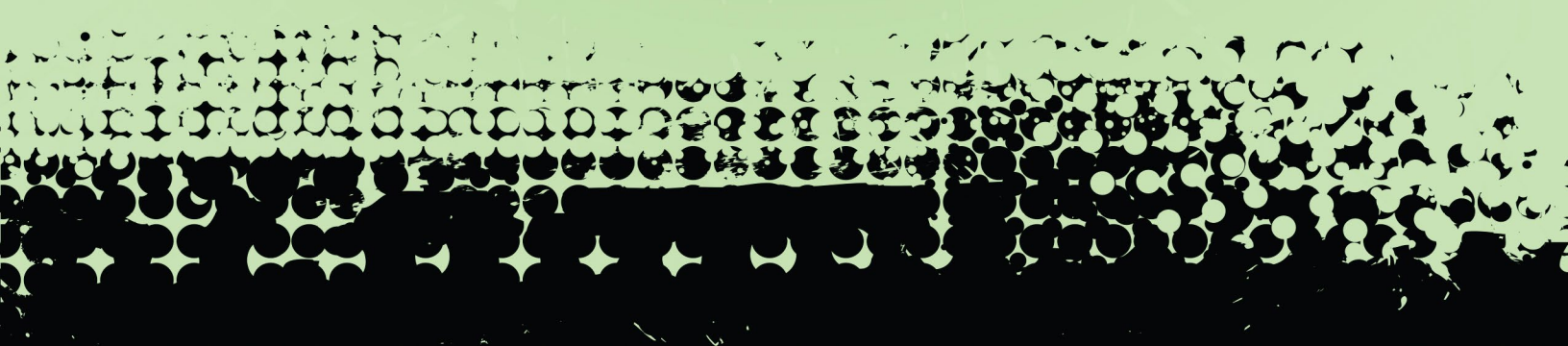
# **APOLOGETICS FOR TWEENS**

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**8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LESSON CURRICULUM**

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**T H O M A S   J .   G R I F F I N**



# **APOLOGETICS FOR TWEENS**

*How to save your children from doubts and  
unanswered questions about Christianity*

## **8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LESSON CURRICULUM**

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THOMAS J. GRIFFIN

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Please read the Leader's Guide first before the curriculum to understand what is included, how to use the curriculum, and importantly the background and purpose for the curriculum as well as real world stories that emphasize the need for apologetics with our youth. To summarize here for you, the curriculum includes a weekly scripture lesson and apologetics lesson for a school year. It also has some recommendations for activities, contests and games as well as top questions and answers about the Bible and Christianity that came up over a twelve year period.

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## **JESUS GIVES HOPE**

Scripture verses	Matthew 14: 22-33
High level key topic	Jesus is our hope for salvation

### **SCRIPTURAL LESSON NARRATIVE**

The dictionary defines hope as the belief that what we want can happen or that whatever happens will turn out for the best. If you accept Christ as your Savior, then that is exactly the way it works. Several places in the Bible it tells us that whatever we ask for in Christ it will be given to us. That doesn't mean selfish and material desires or that your prayer will be answered exactly the way you request it. But it does mean that God listens and will do the best thing for you based on your prayer as long as it fits within His plan for your life.

Hope is an invisible feeling that helps you keep on living when things look troublesome. What a powerful feeling it is to know that whatever happens the most powerful being in the universe is there to help you and will take whatever happens and make it good for your life. As long as we remember that we can have peace and not panic when our world seems difficult and things are not going our way. When your world is crumbling, focus on Jesus, give Him thanks, praise Him, and ask Him whatever you need. He will help you through and make things turn out better for you. You may not see it right away but it will happen.

When things are going badly, we tend to panic and try to fix them. But we cannot control most of our circumstances. Instead of wasting energy and worrying about it, ask God to help us identify the most important thing to do next. Then rely on God to help you get through that day. When you learn to master living one day at a time in reliance on Jesus, you will learn the secret to having peace in your life.

In today's story, Jesus had just finished the feeding of the 5,000. He asked the disciples to cross the sea in their boat and meet Him on the other side while He went up the mountain to pray. When He finished, the boat was a mile out and a storm was upon them. Suddenly they saw Jesus walking across the water toward them and shouted to Him. Peter asked that Jesus command him to walk toward Him on the water. He did and Peter began to walk until He saw the power of the storm and became afraid, then began to sink. He cried out "save me" to Jesus and Jesus took His hand, saying, "Oh ye of little faith. What were you afraid of?" The others in the boat were astonished and said, "Truly this man is the Son of God."

When we lose our focus on Christ, we begin to sink into life's problems and become afraid. Keep your eyes on Jesus and He will provide you the hope you seek to make it through your circumstances.

### **ARE MORMONS AND JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CHRISTIANS, AND OTHER MODERN CULTS?**

The dictionary defines cult as a system of religious beliefs and rites. But the general meaning of the word cult in religious terms is a deviation from the normal. And that is what Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists and Scientologists, and others such as Wicca and New Age are. They do not represent traditional Christianity. They are an abnormal variation from Christianity that is defined by the fact they do not believe in the Trinity and that Jesus is the Son of God.

Take a look at the attached chart and let's review them.

**Mormons** – also called LDS, or the Church of Latter Day Saints.

They consider Joseph Smith to be a modern prophet who established a new version of Biblical teaching. They have several books/scriptures of authority. They believe God the Father was a man elevated to rule the world and he himself had a father and mother and wife. He is the creator of all the spirits that will be born on earth. They believe in many gods. They believe that the fall of Adam and Eve was not a serious sin because it opened the way to perfection. They believe that we can overcome sin and please the Father. They believe Christ was conceived from a physical union between the Father and Mary. They believe he was married and had children and became a God when resurrected. They believe that Christ did not purchase our salvation. They believe our good works earn us most of the way to salvation, and then God's grace takes us the rest of the way. They believe in hell but it is not clear if anyone but Satan and his demons will spend eternity in hell. Some of them also believe if you reject Mormon teaching you will be in hell. They believe in three realms and only Mormons will be in the highest realm.

**Jehovah's Witnesses** – also called Watchtower Society.

They have a variation of the Bible they created and believe you cannot understand the Bible without their help. They do not believe in the Trinity and think it is satanic. They don't believe the body and soul are separate and think that at death we go to sleep until the resurrection. They believe Jesus was the archangel Michael before becoming a man. They don't believe he was a God but only a perfect man, then made immortal in the resurrection. They don't believe Christ's death bought our salvation but that we are saved by following their teachings. They believe those who do not repent of their

sins die in the lake of fire, but are not there eternally. They believe there are two other saved groups. One lives in heaven with God and the other on earth forever.

#### Christian Science – church of Christian Science.

The Bible has authority but only as interpreted by their founder, Mary Baker Eddy. The trinity is a group of attributes not persons. God is an infinite mind. Humans are also just mind. Matter, sin, death and disease are not real. Christ is the spiritual element of God and came to show us how to be spiritual. They believe all are saved but that we should seek a level of enlightenment. They don't believe in heaven or hell but that we progress to greater levels of enlightenment. Mind and spirit are all that exist.

#### Scientology – Tom Cruise, John Travolta

Spiritual authority comes from the writings of L. Ron Hubbard. His source was eastern and Native American traditions. Believe God is what he is for each person. So he is different for each person. Hubbard's beliefs were a combination of Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism. Believe man is partly god, and composed of the physical and spiritual, basically good. Each person has a Thetan spirit that is 80 trillion years old, that it survives death then implants into another person. Jesus has no role in this cult. We all go through reincarnation. When we develop enough spiritually we can understand our Thetan nature and cease the cycle of reincarnation and join the intergalactic Thetan collective.

You will observe that most of these teach some abnormal variation of the Bible and Christianity. That's the problem. The Bible itself tells us that antichrists will appear in the world with false teachings and that anything different than what the Bible says is not true. We must be on our guard against false teachings and false prophets who try to take us away from the real truth of Christ, God and the Bible. You will find difficult passages in the Bible to understand and difficult parts of Christianity. These mysteries will only be revealed when we are in heaven with God. Don't let yourself be deceived by false teachings. And for those teaching the false doctrine, either avoid them, or try to help them understand the truth but do not let yourself get swayed from what you know to be the truth in Christ and God's Word.

## THE GIFT IS BORN

Scripture verses	Luke 2:1-20
High level key topic	Jesus is our hope for salvation

### SCRIPTURAL LESSON NARRATIVE

We continue our studies about God's gift (Jesus) as He is born in this week's lesson. Try to keep in mind that Jesus was both God and man. His human form and attributes were added to His Godly attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, eternality, all holiness and all lovingness. When God stepped into our world in human form, it was because of how much he loved us and because he is a just and holy God and cannot tolerate sin. There was no other way to save us from our sins except through the sacrifice of someone to pay the penalty for us. Understand that Jesus took all our sins on His shoulders to endure the punishment that should have been for us because of our sin. But when He did that, the sins of all people past, present and future were wiped clean for all those who accept Him in their hearts as Lord and Savior and who ask forgiveness and turn away from their sins.

In today's story, the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus called for a census in the region. In this case, it required everyone to return to their home towns to register. Joseph was a descendant under the line of the house of David and therefore returned to Bethlehem. Mary was pregnant with child and rode on a donkey on the long ride back there. Because of the census, the town was overwhelmed with people and there was no room for Mary and Joseph to stay in regular lodging. Somehow they found someone who allowed them to stay in the stable where the animals were and when Jesus was born he was placed in a feeding trough.

Meanwhile, nearby shepherds were amazed, shocked, and scared when an angel appeared to them to announce that the Messiah had been born nearby. The shepherds went to see it all while a host of angels praised God. Remember that this baby Jesus grew to be a man, was God in human form, and that He specifically came to endure shame and torture, excruciating pain, and die just to save everyone from their sins. No price was needed to be paid by us as Jesus bore it all. Now we are cleansed of sin in God's eyes. We still sin and can't help ourselves, but in God's eyes, once we accept Jesus, the slate is wiped clean. Because of this act of grace and unselfish love, how will you show God you love Him and thank Him? Keep Him in your heart and mind always. Share His gospel with others. Be obedient and follow His commands.

# BIBLE BOWL CONTEST

100 pts each for first answer; 50 points for second team answer if first team is wrong

1. Is the universe eternal or did it have a beginning?

*It had a beginning*

2. A word we use to call the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together?

*Trinity*

3. Adam and Eve lived over 900 years old. True or False?

*True*

4. After the flood, God changed people's average life span to how many years?

*120 years*

5. He was over 9 feet tall.

*Goliath*

6. He wrote most of the Psalms.

*King David*

7. He wrote most of the Proverbs.

*King Solomon*

8. He led the Israelites out of the wilderness over a period of 40 years.

*Moses*

9. He was in the burning furnace along with Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego.

*Jesus*

10. Spell one of the above correctly.

*see above*

11. Describe apologetics or give a definition defense, defending Christianity

12. What is a prophecy prediction, message from God

13. The famous characters of the Bible are role models for Christians. True or False?

*False*

14. Which famous character of the Bible is a role model for Christians?

*Jesus*

# TOP TOUGH QUESTIONS

The following are typical questions you may encounter and should be prepared to answer. In case some of the curriculum lessons do not cover a few of these or go too deep, I have provided some short answers or suggestions to review. This material can be used to fill in gaps when scriptural or apologetics lessons are not available or to mix up the format with something a little different. Mix a few of these in here and there as regular discussion items.

1. Were there dinosaurs when Adam and Eve lived?

- *No, dinosaurs went extinct 66 million years before humans were created. This occurred in the earlier part of day six in Genesis. (be prepared to address young earth/old earth at some point and explain that the Bible actually supports an old earth or a young earth whichever is found to be true ultimately)*

2. Where did all the people come from if only Cain and Abel were the children?

- *Actually the Bible mentions a third son Seth and says that Adam and Eve had other children. It is a sensitive fact to discuss that until after the flood, God allowed marriage between cousins, nieces, nephews, etc. After about 48 generations God laid down a new law prohibiting such. This corresponds with our science today that shows birth defects can occur after about 48 generations. God already knew that.*

3. How did they get all the animals on the ark?

- *If you read Genesis carefully, it talks about certain 'kinds' that entered the ark. So insects and fish and other related species like of the cat family for example were not necessary to be boarded. The ark in its recorded measurements was large enough to hold about 16,000 to 50,000 animals but perhaps only about 2,000 were needed (equivalent space of 569 railroad cars).*

4. Did people really live to 900 years old?

- *Yes, Methuselah was the oldest and lived to 969 years old. Adam and Eve both lived to about 920 years old. This is best answered by a supernovae explosion called Vela that occurred after the flood and sent destructive cosmic radiation pouring onto earth and eventually limited human life spans. More specifically, Gen. 6:3 explains that after the flood sometime, God limited human life spans to 120 years so we could not do so much evil. Genetic mutations may also play a major role over the millennia.*

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