

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE

LEADERS EDITION

(Part 2 of *Know Series*)



Calvary Chapel Teens 2022 - 2023

WHY THE “KNOW SERIES”

Christians, particularly young Christians know little, if anything of the scriptures in an age of information where the resources of the libraries of history are a click away. Surveys show us while Americans tend to revere the Bible, many, if not most are unfamiliar with what it teaches.

In a guest article to The Christian Post Richard Ross Professor of Student Ministry and J.M. Price Chair of Religious Education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary wrote the following:

Youth ministry researcher Chap Clark says, “I’m convinced that the single most important area where we’ve lost ground with kids is in our commitment and ability to ground them in God’s Word.”

As a result, Barry Shafer says, “The church today, including both the adult and teenage generations, is in an era of rampant biblical illiteracy.”

Duffy Robbins takes this one step further when he says: “Our young people have become incapable of theological thinking because they don’t have any theology to think about. ... And, as Paul warns us, this ... leaves us as ‘infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching’ (Ephesians 4:14).”

At the conclusion of the National Study of Youth and Religion, lead researcher Christian Smith reported:

“Even though most teens are very positive about religion and say it’s a good thing, the vast majority are incredibly inarticulate about religion. ... It doesn’t seem to us that many teens are being very well-educated in their faith traditions.”

Duffy Robbins considers possible causes when he says: “The church in general, and youth ministry in particular, has demonstrated more of an appetite for goose bumps than for God’s truth, more interest in how our young people feel than how they think. ... But where are Christian teenagers learning basic tenets of the Christian faith? And if they don’t understand those basic truths or doctrines ... then how does that impact their long-term faith? I’m concerned that too much of our teaching is reduced to what can ... be communicated by a worship band illuminated by stage lighting and well-placed candles.”

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The basic tenants of the Christian faith have been lost among the activities of Children's Bible Clubs, videos, youth group car washes and fundraisers, all night lock-ins, ski trips, youth band practice and contemporary topical teachings, most of which tell us to stay away from bad things:

Morality has replaced theology,

Activity has replaced accountability,

Relevance has replaced relationships.

Don't hear any of that the wrong way!

These are not bad things. The church I am from practices all of these. And more! Yet there remains amazing Biblical illiteracy and a disconnect from real living faith.

Emphasizing morality, practice and behavior over belief, in our opinion, is part of what has contributed to the crisis of faith facing many young people in the church today.

Although we are involved in all of these things you might expect from an active church, including teaching line by through the entire Bible, in our church services, Sunday School and Youth Gatherings, we discovered there was a huge gap in understanding what Christians actually believe historically, and even how one actually becomes a Christian.

Surveys are showing that Christian students entering their first year of college know less about the Christian faith than in previous decades.

Throughout the history of the church many movements have informed their children, youth and converts through classes, requirements and catechisms. Increasingly over the last one hundred years in the church, the responsibility of teaching doctrine and basics of the faith has been relinquished by families and given to the church. The church in turn has been relinquishing her responsibility and in many cases having little or no system to teach the fundamentals of the faith to new believers or families. The result has been disastrous!

Charles Spurgeon had a catechism he wrote to assist families in learning the basics of the Christian faith.

I am persuaded that the use of a good Catechism in all our families will be a great safeguard against the increasing errors of the times, and therefore I have compiled this little manual from the Westminster Assembly's and Baptist



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Catechisms, for the use of my own church and congregation. Those who use it in their families or classes must labor to explain the sense; but the words should be carefully learned by heart, for they will be understood better as years pass. May the Lord bless my dear friends and their families evermore, is the prayer of their loving Pastor. C. H. Spurgeon

The “Know Series” similar to Spurgeon’s observations grew out of this recognized need in a multi-year curriculum following the school calendar. It is perfect for Sunday School classes for 6,7,8 or 9th grade, high school students and even college and young adult classes. Although the curriculum could be used in an adult class, it is designed with teen and high school students in mind. The format is simple to understand and use, modern in its references and applications, and vital to the future of vibrant Christianity in emerging generations.

Many Christian traditions, but few in the Evangelical / Pentecostal traditions, have what is known as ‘Confirmation.’ Confirmation was / is a rite of passage where a child turns into an adult, or young adult, and affirms, or confirms for first time the faith of their upbringing. Often the student goes through a year-long, or longer study of the scriptures and of their particular church tradition. Having learned the scriptures, doctrines, traditions and practices of the church, they are asked if they are affirming their faith to be their own. Unfortunately even this process is no guarantee that one actually embraces the faith, as much of this can become a tradition in and of itself. It does however provide a basis of understanding for future generations.



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THE TWO YEAR “KNOW SERIES”

The “Know Series” is not intended to take the place of regular worship, or to usurp activities integral to a church’s calendar or practice, yet is designed to be a “once in a lifetime” exploration of what Christians believe, whether it is reasonable to believe these things, and how to live them out in a post-modern and post-Christian society.

It is not necessary to do all three years as each stands by alone. In our opinion the most important is “Year One: Know What You Believe” followed by “Year Two: is “Know Why You Believe” which repeats many of the topics in Part One, “Know What You Believe,” but explores the reasons Christians believe these things and the reasonableness of all of the topics taught. Year Three “Know Your Bible” is designed to help the students see the Bible is one continuous story from Genesis to Revelation. The original design for a three year program was to use it for grades 7-9, one section for each year. Having done the first two, the third section can be invaluable, but will not be available unless sections 1 or 2 have been completed.

YEAR ONE: “Know What You Believe” covers all area of core Christian belief, including several sessions on the Bible as the Word of God, the structure of the Bible, Jesus, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, Prayer, Conversion, The Attributes of God, The Resurrection, Discipleship, The Church, and special seasonal lessons on origin of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Mothers Day, including teaching topics on Serving, Giving, and Attitudes.

YEAR TWO: “Know Why You Believe” includes sessions on “Does God Exist?” “What is God Like?” “What the Bible Says About Itself” “The Impact of the Bible on World Cultures” “Does the Bible Contradict Itself?” “Jesus in History” “Prophecies: History in Advance” “Science and the Bible?” “Jesus the Only Way?” “The Problem of Evil” “World Religions and Cults” “Comparative Salvation” “Stewardship” as well as exploring national and religious holidays during the school year calendar.

Every session in each Series contains a resource page with books, articles, videos, links and outside resources for further study and application.



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RESOURCES AND LESSONS PLANS

EACH LEADER SESSION INCLUDES:

- 1) OBJECTIVE for the week
- 2) Classroom Teaching Outline
- 3) Red Sections indicate blank fill-in spaces for Student Handbook

GOALS

A) Knowledge

“Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.” Proverbs 23:12

Seeking knowledge, particularly knowledge about God, His Word, His Commands, His Ways is simply good for us. “The Know Series” is designed to give us knowledge of what Christians believe, have always believed, why we believe and how to apply it to our lives. By the end of our time together students should have a robust knowledge of the scriptures. Any knowledge acquired about the Lord and His Word will pay huge dividends in our lives and future.

B) Experience

“After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.” Judges 2:10

Knowledge is important, and so is an experience with the Lord. We are working with students, many of whom were brought up with faith. They are now entering a time in their lives where their faith needs to be their own, not that of their parents, that of their teachers or their peers. They need their own experience with God! If they are not saved, they need to encounter God for themselves. Often parents believe their children are right with God when they have never in their hearts or minds ever committed to Christ.

C) Discipleship

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20



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A disciple is one that has accepted the Person of Jesus Christ, believes the Word of God, conforms their life to the pattern of scripture and actively spreads the Word of God. A disciple is not just a passive learner, but an active participant.

D) Baptism

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Baptism is one the first things we can do to show God, Ourselves and Others that we have made the decision to trust God for our life and salvation. "The Know Series" offers all students the opportunity to be baptized at the completion of the year. Students choosing baptism will therefore demonstrate a clear understanding of what they are doing having spend time learning the Christian faith.



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THE MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE: YOU!

In the context of leading “The Know Series” you are so much more than a teacher.

You are a Teacher. In that you are imparting information, making difficult things easy to understand and helping bring application of the material to real living.

You are an Example. It is important for you to own the material yourself, and to live out what you know in front of your students.

You are a Leader. That means you have followers, you need to be out in front, doing these things before others. You go first.

You are a Mentor. That means you’ll need to take some time with some of your students one on one to explain things deeper and to attend to their particular needs or questions.

You are a Follower. That means you need to demonstrate teamwork with your co-workers and submission to God.

You are a Steward. God has given you your life, your experience, some students, a curriculum and time. Recognize that it is God that has you in this position at this time.

Right now you’ve got an amazing opportunity and serious call.

You’ll do great. Do it as on to the Lord!

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.... Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.” Colossians 3:17, 23



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SOURCES, DISCLAIMERS AND ATTRIBUTIONS

In a Series like the Know Series the basic assumption is that there is no new information and very little that is original. This is especially true in the first series, “Know What You Believe” and becomes decreasingly so as we move through “Know Why You Believe” and “Live What You Know.” If there are any original thoughts still out there on the topics of doctrine and apologetics (defense of the faith) they certainly are few and far in between. Most of what needs to be said in these areas has been said, yet needs to be communicated in updated language to every generation.

It would be nearly impossible to say anything new about the historic Christian faith. It can be said in new ways, and hopefully we have reworked what has been said and believed for centuries, into an accurate, understandable and meaningful way for students in the 21st century. No footnotes or attributions appear anywhere in the “Know What you Believe” material, although there are extensive resources included at the end of each session and at the end of “Know Series.” It is not believed that there are any direct quotes from any outside source material, although admitting that there is nothing ‘new’ conveyed in the studying of these basic Christian doctrines and truths. If there is any similarity to the writings and quotes of others it is because the truths contained have come by way of years of study and assimilation of these truths. Any resemblance to anybody else’s work is strictly unintentional and the result of things stuck somewhere in the recesses of memory from study.

Similarly in the second section “Know Why You Believe” there are few if any footnotes or attributions, that is because as far as we can tell nobody has been directly quoted, except for a few long dead that have no copyrights on them. Since the second section being a discipline known as apologetics is a constant work of research and writing, the assimilated material in this section is most definitely from sources outside of ourselves. Again, most of that material is also a progression of passing down information from one researcher to the next making the ideas and concepts presented almost indistinguishable from those who have originated the ideas. Every effort in these cases has been made to give proper attribution. This section does have extensive resources given at the end of each session and at the end of the course. Every effort has been made to attribute ideas to their proper sources and it is hoped that students and instructors alike will become familiar with these sources, purchase their materials, assimilate the ideas and concepts themselves and pass them on to others as they have become part of your thinking and reasoning.

It should be noted that much of this material has been taught for years at Calvary Chapel in Eastern Connecticut and has been corrected, reformed, added to by many teachers and leaders through the years. This material has been worked and reworked over the years,



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therefore any similarity to the original contributors found in the material is acknowledged.

Because it seemed impossible to footnote every reference, similarity, re-worked idea in the material a complete bibliography rather than footnotes is found at the end of the material and throughout the recommended readings and resources for each section.



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FIRST DAY OF CLASS LEADERS

PREPARATION AND INTRODUCTION

(Sections not in Student Manual are Printed in Red)

(I) BREAK THE ICE

Introduce yourself and have various students introduce themselves. Simple, but informative introductions are best. You might want to tell a bit about yourself and give briefly your Christian testimony. Hopefully you will see many of the students week after the week for the next year. Much of what happens in that time will be relational as well as instructional

Have the students tell where they come from, what school they are in and something about themselves others might not know. (Interests, hobbies, something about their family, etc.)

(II) INTRODUCING YOUR STUDENTS TO THE CLASS OVERVIEW

These lessons are designed so that Jr. High, Middle School students 7-8th graders attending these Sunday School sessions over the next two years will: “Know What They Believe” and Know Why They Believe.”



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YEAR ONE:

"Know What You Believe"

We don't think we can make students believe anything, but we do want them to know what Christianity is and what Christians believe. The choice is up to them. After having learned these truths they will at the end of the year be asked whether they want to be baptized and follow after Jesus Christ.

In our Children's Sunday School Program Grades 1 – 6 the kids went through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The first year of the "Know Series" sums up Christian teaching and doctrine. Again while they may not *believe* these things when they leave your class they will at least *know* what Christianity is and what it teaches.

YEAR TWO:

"Know Why You Believe"

In these sessions we will answer questions for the students like, "Is Jesus the Only Way? Why?" "Is the Bible Really God's Word?" "What about Other Religions." In the first year we will teach them what Christianity is and what Christians believe, in the second Jr High year we will help them understand why Christians believe these things.

(III) ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN OTHER FELLOWSHIP AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO THEM

There are other groups, classes, fellowships and evangelistic events designed for students their age going on regularly. Stay informed and encourage them to participate as much as they can in other fellowship, growth and evangelistic meetings.

(IV) PASS OUT THE ENCLOSED DIRECTORY GETTING THE NAMES, ADDRESSES AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES OF ALL YOUR STUDENTS. USE THIS TO PRAY REGULARLY FOR THEM THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

(VI) USE THE TABLE OF CONTENTS TO REVIEW THE MATERIAL YOU WILL BE COVERING THOURHGOUT THE YEAR

Each student should have a copy of the "Table of Contents." Review with them what they will be learning, covering whatever you think is important as you explain it.

Notice the weeks that they will not be in class and point that out as well.

BE SURE TO GIVE PLENTY OF TIME AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ANY QUESTIONS THEY MIGHT HAVE.



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Make a photo-copy of the directory and turn it in to the church office. This will be used to communicate events and relevant information to the students. Whenever you get a new student, gather the same information passing it on to the church office, so we can continue to serve the Christian and non-Christian students the Lord brings our way.

(V) PRAY FOR ALL THE STUDENTS, THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR SCHOOLS, THEIR WITNESS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

Pray for each by name the first day out loud before dismissing them, using the directory if you need to. Get to know their names. Pray for them and send them out into the world as witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Be creative in your prayer times. Try having each student pray for the person to his or her right and have them pray for their school as well. This will get easier (hopefully) as the year goes on. Don't expect too much from them the first couple of weeks, but as you grow together, your prayer times should be able to grow as well.

ALWAYS HAVE PENS AND PENCILS ON HAND SO THE STUDENTS CAN FILL IN THE BLANKS, LEARNING WHILE WRITING WILL AID THE PROCESS. EVERYTHING THAT IS IN RED IN YOUR MANUAL SHOWS UP SIMPLY AS AN BLANK UNDERLINE _____ IN THEIR MANUALS.



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CLASS DIRECTORY (Be sure these are added to church database)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE / TEXT _____

EMAIL / MESSENGER _____

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACTS

SCHOOL / GRADE _____



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