

# Expounding the Faith



Collegiate Quarterly

## Teacher's Guide

### Surveying the Source

Rom. 5:1, 2.

### Plotting the Course

**The students will:**

- ▶ Be able to explain the sources of their faith in Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Understand the uniqueness of the plan of salvation among all the other ideas in which human beings choose to

place their faith.

- ▶ Experience a renewal of their appreciation for the significance of God's redemption and of the future He has planned for us.

### Preparing to Lead

While we generally have a positive reaction to the mention of faith, faith is only as good as that in which we place our faith. People have had faith in dictators, cult leaders, and ponzi schemes. We would be justified in regarding such faith as misguided. Perhaps the most misguided of all is faith in faith.

As Christians, we are not asked to have

what many refer to as blind faith. Indeed, we are invited to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8). God shows us that He is worthy of our trust by the way He works in our lives and hearts. With that faith, we can then learn about Him, and claim the grace He has for us now and in the world to come.

### Getting Started

**A.** Have your class do the reproducible activity on page 36. After an appropriate amount of time, have the students share their answers.

Ask them if they have ever considered how much of their lives are based on faith in people and things that are fallible.

Explain that as beings with limited knowledge of the future, it is necessary to take certain things on faith. When we trust other people or human inventions or institutions, the risk always exists that they may fail or betray us. For example, bungee cords usually work. Still, there have been many instances where they have not, leaving the people who trusted

them in a tight spot indeed. But God cannot fail us or betray us, and His plans for us are recorded in His word.

**B.** The following variation on activity A may be more effective if you think that class members might be reluctant to share their thoughts and opinions individually, and if your class is fairly large: Have class members break up into groups of 3–5. Give each group a copy of the activity sheet on page 36. Have each group discuss the survey and suggest answers to fit into the categories. Each group will then appoint one member to report back to the class as a whole with their answers. Discuss as in activity A.

### Materials

none required

## Delving Into the Word

**A. Say:** “George Plimpton was known for writing non-fiction books based on his participating in many different activities. These activities usually had a fairly steep learning curve, and serious and immediate consequences for mistakes or failure. Examples included playing professional football (Plimpton had the perfect build for, well, writing), and performing in a high-wire trapeze act. He didn’t just write his books, he lived them.

“Hebrews 12:2 describes Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith. He conceived the plan of salvation. But He also came and did what was necessary to make it a plan of salvation *for us*. His plan necessitated that He play the most central and dangerous role. This is what we have faith in, and Jesus’ act of ‘sealing the deal’ is *why* we can have faith in it!”

Ask individuals to read the following texts: John 1:14; Philippians 2:5–11; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 13:8. *Ask:* “What do these passages tell us about our faith and the One we have faith in?”

**B. Say:** “What does the word *faith* mean to you? For most people, it is a

word they hear in church, a part of religious language or ‘Christianese’ that they can put out of their mind after they shake the pastor’s hand on the way out. It may be what they call the impulse that makes them do religious things. Or it may be a term for the set of dogmas and beliefs that make up a given religious system such as the ‘Christian faith’ or the ‘Buddhist faith.’

“All of these definitions have their strengths and weaknesses; but they fall short of the biblical idea of faith, which is trust in a God who has shown time and again that He can be trusted, even when He can’t trust us. But as in human relationships, faith must exist not only in one’s head, but in the heart. It must manifest itself in our actions toward God and our fellow humans.”

Have your class look up the following texts about faith: Romans 3:3; Hebrews 11:1; James 2:14–26; Jude 3. *Ask:*

•“How do these texts compliment each other?” •“How do they describe the cycle that starts with belief and then moves through acting upon one’s belief, to sharing the belief with others?”

## Discussing the Ideas

1. Since our faith is based on what is revealed to us in the Bible, how do we know we can trust the Bible?
2. Why is faith necessary to please—and therefore to have peace with—God?
4. How does the life and ministry of Christ give us hope for the world to

come?

5. How is true faith shown by one’s actions in the world at large?

6. What part does the proclamation of our faith to others play in our life of faith?

## Closing the Activity

Faith is how God reaches out to us in our imperfect, sin-scarred world.

Discuss how can we use and apply our faith so it becomes stronger.

*Say:* “Faith is a gift from God. But like other gifts, we can tinker with it enthusiastically for a while, then neglect it, only

to find that when we come back to it, it has become rusty and unusable. Let’s not do that. Instead, let’s keep learning more about God. Let’s keep trusting Him, and teaching others to trust Him. You can’t give away what you don’t have.”

**Alan Hecht, Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A.**

**Directions:** List five things in your daily life that require you to have faith in order to function. For example, when you listen to the weather report, it is of no use to you unless you accept that the meteorologist is at least trying to tell the truth according to the available computer models. Then briefly explain what makes it possible to put your faith in these things (past experience of accuracy, et cetera).

Things that Require Faith	What Makes Your Faith Possible