

Tracing the *Essentials of Faith* in the Bible Stories

Scripture reveals to us who God is, what He requires of us, and how He shows His love to us in mighty saving acts of grace. Our finite human capacities can never begin to know all there is to know of God, but our gracious God is able to make known to us what we need to know of Him in order to have life, health, and peace.

Through the Word of God written, the Holy Spirit teaches us all we need to know of God. We learn what He desires to make known to us.

The Bible, though, does not teach us in neat theological categories. Rather, God makes Himself known through accounts of His work in the lives of real people, through prophecies and prayers, doctrinal teaching, and wise sayings.

When we follow all these threads of truth, we see a pattern emerging—a royal robe woven from the gathered truths of Scripture adorns our King and displays His love.

To see God more clearly, we express what we learn from Scripture in a coherent way known as the essentials of faith. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are two ancient ways the essentials (known then as “the rule of truth”) were spoken.

The great Reformation confessions of faith further laid out the teaching of Scripture in a systematic way. They wove together the Golden Threads of Scripture, bringing forth the royal robe that glorifies Jesus our King. By studying them, we grow in our understanding of God. Such knowledge leads us to put on the robe of Christ by faith. This means that we take our place in union with Him, growing in love and obedience by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The list of essentials of faith is not all Scripture has to say about God, but represents the Golden Threads around which the whole royal robe is woven. Under the heading of Teacher Devotionals, every Bible lesson in this curriculum is keyed to the Golden Threads it expresses. The Stray Threads section picks up additional ideas or notes the ways in which the Golden Threads may get distorted.

Believers in the Reformed tradition are a people who celebrate that God can be known because He graciously has made Himself known. A crucial part of our faithfulness is learning and studying the essentials that have been revealed. So, we offer these in hopes of enriching every Bible lesson, enabling you as a teacher to trace the threads of Christ's Royal Robe in the teachings of Scripture.

- 1 The one true God is the triune God of grace—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—whom alone we must worship and serve.
- 2 The eternal Son of God came to us as a human being in Jesus Christ.
- 3 Holy Scripture is the Word of God written, through which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we truly meet the triune God.
- 4 The triune God is sovereign over all.
- 5 Humanity has fallen into sin.
- 6 We are made right with God by grace alone through faith alone.
- 7 Election: God chose us to be His children and servants.
- 8 The Holy Spirit makes us more and more like Jesus.
- 9 A life of obedience.

For a more in-depth look at these threads, visit www.cookministries.com

From These Roots



Beginner Edition

September, October, November 2008

developing *a Spiritual Life*

by Tom Tyndall

To develop a spiritual life raises many images. Some think fleetingly of a life removed from everyone and dismiss such wanderings as impractical. Others seek trinkets, quick schemes in the manner of spiritual diet plans to trim themselves, and fear a cultish and mindless faith. I prefer to think of developing a spiritual life as permission and encouragement to ask questions. How am I invited to know the love and will of God? What do I discern to be the will of God? How will I follow God's will?

Our world is caught up in and pushed to identify our wants, so that often we forget true, suppressed, or ignored needs. In this nation, our needs dissolve quickly to wants over the next new electronic gadget, or upgrading our current possessions. Advertisers lure us with fear of rejection by others if we do not acquire the next fad or honor the current media icon

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In This Issue:

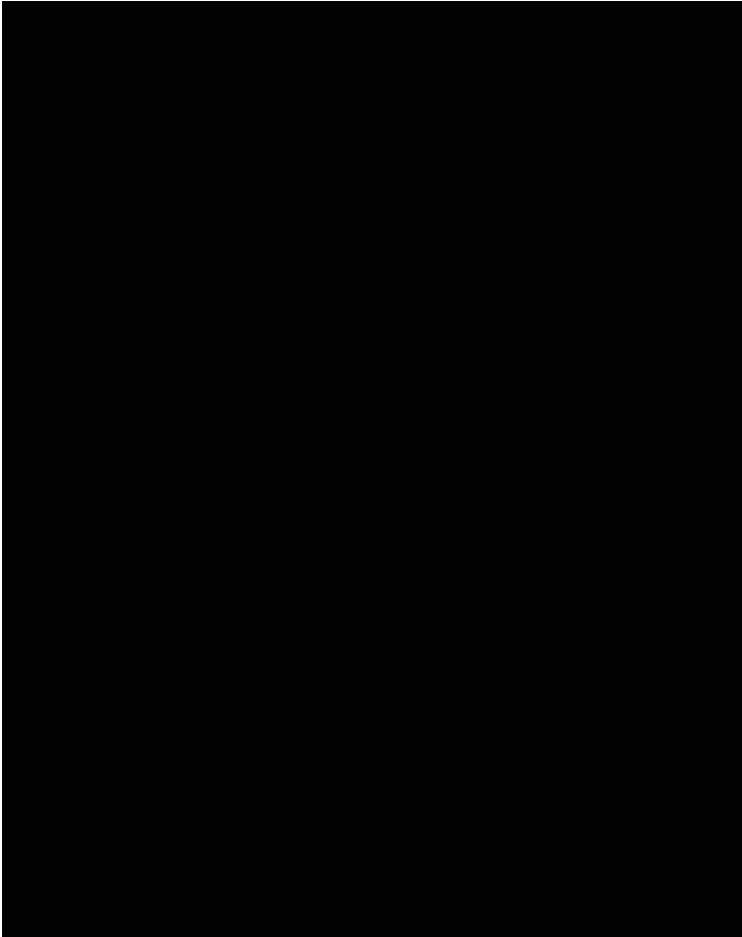
Developing a Spiritual Life	1	Let's Celebrate	11-13
Tech Topics	5	Reaching Out	14
The Bulletin Board (for teachers)	6	Mission Highlight	15
Beginner Pages	7-10	Threads in the Royal Robe	16

Important Dates

September 24	See You at the Pole Day
September 21	International Peace Day
October 5	World Communion Sunday
October 26	Reformation Sunday
November 23	Christ the King Sunday (last Sunday in Liturgical Year)
November 27	Thanksgiving Day
November 30	First Sunday of Advent

that we wish to meet. Yet most of the world has no access to such whimsical indulgences.

Our society is desperately longing to see whatever effects longterm transformation of lives, and yes, of culture. Men and women want help and hope, but



they want an honest evidence, true stories, not sham, not quick one-liners to maturity, and they are suspicious or increasingly weary of those who advertise quick schemes. We long to finish well, to find that which is durable and carries us through the day or through our lives.

The way to develop a spiritual life to find a durable center for our lives is at once attractive and difficult. It means first that I seek to sense my truest needs and try to separate them from my

wants, whims, and the fads thrust upon me. To know what makes my heart sing, what energizes my dreams, what affirms my abilities, and what makes me know I am one who resides in the kingdom of God is to find a deeper, more durable direction that carries me through to the end of a day or the end of my life.

The ancients kept the spiritual life simple. Reading Scripture, praying for their own struggles and the needs around them, practicing some form of community, and finding some opportunity to serve others were the tools they sharpened to discern God's way.

Consider the inner refreshment of your own preoccupied life out of these common practices.

To read Scripture means not only zeroing in on a text and swallowing it, but also taking time to digest the text, to sense those inner attention grabbings of God. At times this means comparing two or three translations. It means giving myself permission to ask questions such as What does the text actually say? What did it say to its original audience? What does the text mean for me today? What do I learn of God and of myself from this text?

To pray for some means keeping a list of persons or requests. This is a wonderful encouragement, and yet throughout a day, in moments of brief awareness or reflection, we detect soul soundings for those who come to mind as we encounter them, or as pictures, voice messages, e-mails, or other communication bring them across our paths. To pray is to remain open to praying throughout our day even as we mark out specific times to lay our day before God. Beginning that time with affection expressed, even wonder, toward our Lord sets us in a relationship of service, welcome, and a holy dependence on the One who desires

intimacy, release, and healing for us. Such praying may also find us laying out honest emotions of greed, anger, lust, wandering attention, or disappointment as well. God is big enough to take it all. To pray, even briefly, with full attention may mean finding a particular place near a window, a special room, or a particular scene we go to in which quiet reflection and an invitation to approach God speak to our deepest longings.

To be in a community takes us off that uniquely American preoccupation with ourselves and our fulfillment. A small group, whether meeting to study, to support in crisis or because of a particular interest such as caring for those with particular handicaps, calls us to remember that God not only wishes us to be transformed, but to intercede and to work for the transformation of those around us. Where is your community? For men this seems particularly difficult to open our thoughts, our emotions, even our faults and dreams to the support and scrutiny of others. Yet it is tremendously liberating and healing to know the active, gracious care of others who are with us in community.

To find a place of service calls me to deeper awareness of God's world. We are called to be the person for and in Jesus but also to do His works. To serve as a teacher, mentor, encourager, spokesperson, organizer, caregiver, helper, builder, or activist is to be among some avenue of people that God's Spirit beckons us to. Where do you currently serve? Where have you served? Where are you now drawn to serve and make a difference? Our Lord calls us to times of reflection, but not to the isolated life. As we serve, we often hear the cries of our society. We see we are called to listen, to strategize, to speak or to encourage those who do not possess the resources we do. And we

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find in service a humility and teachability from others that bears the mark of One who washed feet, who spoke to those of his tribe and those to whom no one would speak or approach.

I may find an atmosphere to serve . . . *out of a perceived need*. I may work near an inner city church. I might begin to wonder what activities that church has for neighborhood youth.

Perhaps I recognize that our church or group meeting is near a college or university campus, and yet we have no active ministry to those students. I might organize parents to adopt a student for a semester. Or I might start a Sunday morning class on "Questions from Everyday Life" or host a Bible study at 9 PM one night a week at a campus facility to encourage students to wrestle with questions and investigate Christian responses to such questions.

I may serve as I have struggled to have financial peace due to wild spending habits or a gambling addiction of one parent. That may convince me to work with others in helping in financial planning. Or to give some personal word of witness on how moving toward tithing has made a difference in my life.

As a couple of good friends observe

continued

me, each tells me separately that they see in me a special ability to organize people for tasks, that could lead me to investigate organizing my church's next short-term mission trip. Or if I love to teach people some particular value such as trust, it might mean that I work with a small class of young guys to build trust in them.

I may be someone who has not grown up in the church. Out of my recent commitment to Christ, I join a church. From that commitment a passion arises in me to reach people who are pre-churched. Incidentally, I like the term *pre-churched* better than *un-churched*. *Unchurched* sounds derogatory, like *unhinged* or *undone*, a negative term. *Pre-churched* says people are candidates for the fellowship of Jesus Christ. *Pre-churched* says they might even be interested if someone illustrates the compassion of Jesus to them.

I may just want to go for it and risk. I decide to volunteer for a short-term mission trip across the Tex-Mex border, knowing no Spanish, not really knowing exactly what I will do, but I am excited to do something that is different or places me in a different culture. When I arrive, I find an older woman in our team has brought plans to draw and then paint a picture of the world on the side of a building. I remember latent artistic skills I have not used in years. Together the two of us design and then enlist others to paint a map of the world the week we are at this school. Being tall and loving detail, I do the outlines of the continents and most of the northern hemisphere. Over a dozen people, many of them from the Hispanic neighborhood, show up to help us along and to enjoy painting with us. In the meantime I actually learn a bit of Spanish and the older woman who speaks fluent Spanish gets to share her faith with several students and a teacher who shows up two after-

noons to help us paint.

I am occasionally put in places that are different from my own familiar surroundings. I have to ask, how does Jesus Christ affect this culture? How does He affect me in the short time I am in this culture? What new questions will this raise for me about my own familiar society?

From the disciplines of soaking in Scripture, engaging in reflective prayer, affixing myself to some community, and finding a place to serve, I find I am developing a spiritual life or rather God is developing that life in me. I find God's usefulness. Ministry does not depend primarily on degrees or certification. A spiritual life is not some other-worldly, isolated existence though it does mean drawing away for periods of renewal and reflection.

Out of a directed inner life that moves me into my culture, I see God give a light to someone or a direction to someone's future beyond my own life. I also connect with others who have similar interests and I find a common affirmation of both God's grace and the encouragement of others. I find myself traveling as a person in the kingdom of God, but also finding real hope and offering that to others in a real world.

To know that life and to continue to seek it amidst all the other distractions and callings that bombard me and you is to find ourselves strangely on the adventure of life guided by the presence and power of Jesus Christ Himself.

Wherever God places you, that is God's joy for you!



A graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary (MDiv) and Fuller Theological Seminary (DMin), Tom Tyndall has served in churches from seven members to 7500 members in Charlotte, North Carolina; Oxford, Mississippi; Dallas; Lakeland, Florida; and Nashville. He and his wife, Betty, have three grown daughters and one granddaughter.

Great ideas for your church computer lab . . .

How to Stick CDs to the Wall (so they won't fall down!)

There is a type of product called a "CD Hub" that adheres to surfaces. Originally designed to mount CDs in notebooks and presentation kits, these hubs can be purchased in bulk and used to hang your CDs in any design on a wall. You can find them in clear plastic or less expensive white foam hubs. www.uline.com supply has the best price I've seen on "foam hubs"—\$49 for 1000. One nice thing about using CD Hubs is you can CHANGE YOUR DESIGN. Many churches mix and match their CD sides/colors to spell out words, such as "Jesus," using CDs. Double-sided foam tape or removable tape/gels have proven less durable or desirable.

Another option: CDs can also be overlapped, then glued together and hung in a line as a wall unit or from the ceiling. Popular shapes include fish, and spelling out words.

Used CDs Make Great Lesson Reminders—Here's How . . .

Students or teachers write on CDs to send home as lesson or verse reminders. Lay a bunch of dead CDs (think: AOL) shiny side down on a dropcloth. Spray with gold, white, or colorful paint. Or buy a set of blank CD LABELS at an office supply store. Spray painted CDs require permanent markers to write on them. CD labels may be preferable if you don't have or want kids to use permanents.

Technical Note: Put a quarter inch scratch near the CD's hold across the program area so

younger ones don't put the CD in their home computer and accidentally install it! To quickly and safely make this "scratch," place the flat edge of a screwdriver perpendicular to the CD's hole and hit with a hammer.

How to Make Inexpensive but Indispensable Dividers That Go Between Computers

Glue a colorful piece of cloth around a 3' x 4' section of rigid foam insulation, or drywall. Make sure you fold the cloth all the way around the edges and glue those edges so they don't come apart. Rigid foam insulation is an interesting choice you may not be familiar with. At about 3 inches thick, it's very lightweight but surprisingly strong. It can be purchased at most building supply stores in sheets.

In my lab, we place the dividers between the tables (each table has one computer). Most lessons I will pull them out a foot or two so that the kids sitting at one computer can't see the other computer next to them. As the teacher, I sit at the divider working with both computers. Dividers are great at corralling SOUND. They deflect a nearby computer's sound just enough that students aren't distracted by the sound and sight of computers around them.

Drywall is a second choice. Score the paper with a knife and "snap" the drywall to break it into the dimensions you prefer. You may want to glue two pieces together to keep the drywall from bending. Store the dividers completely vertical or they will take on a bend.

bulletin board

Tips for teachers
who want to use
*From These
Roots* in the
Sunday school
classroom

*Fascinating website:
Hollywood Jesus*

hollywoodjesus.com

Reviews of current feature films from a moderate Christian perspective. Provocative quotes from the movie. Discussion ideas. Plot summaries. Pictures. Author David Bruce has an eye toward each movie's spiritual and

theological message, and discussion potential.

If you do children's sermons, hollywoodjesus.com is a source of contemporary movie references and discussion ideas for your sermons.

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Cook Communications can provide you with a resource catalogue of all their publications.

Go to www.cookministries.com to request a copy.

You can read George Barna Research's latest study on children and spiritual formation, including statistics and research that bolster the vital importance of children's ministry. Go to <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=278> Make sure you read Barna's *Challenges Faced by Young People*.

*Check out these
Christian humor
web sites!*

- www.fairding.com/list_bible.shtml
Collection of funny Bible verses
- www.skywriting.net More funny verses and resources.

Prayers for Beginners

JOY Prayer

- J** Pray to Jesus wiggle thumbs, say something to praise Jesus
- O** Pray for others wiggle 3 fingers, pray for Others
- Y** Pray for yourself . . . wiggle pinkie, pray for Yourself

The Five Fingers of Prayer

1. Your thumb is nearest to you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a “sweet duty.”

2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.

3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God’s guidance.

4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is



our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will confirm. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.

5. And lastly comes our little finger, the smallest finger of all, which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, “The least shall be the greatest among you.” Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively. Should you find it hard to get to sleep tonight, remember the homeless who have no bed in which to lie.

Songs for Beginners

God So Loved the World

Sung to: "I'm a Little Teapot"

God so loved the world He gave His son.
These are the words in the Gospel of John.
God so loved the world He gave His Son.
Read verse three, sixteen in John.

If You're Thankful and You Know It

Sung to: "If You're Happy and You Know It"

If you're thankful and you know it clap your hands.
If you're thankful and you know it clap your hands.
If you're thankful and you know
then your face will surely show it.
If you're thankful and you know it clap your hands.

*Follow this asking what each child is thankful for.
You can substitute the hand clapping with other body move-
ments (jumping, hopping, shouting) as well.*

Another option is to sing:

If you're thankful and you know it shout your praise.
If you're thankful and you know it shout your praise.
If you're thankful and you know it
then your voice will surely show it.
If you're thankful and you know it shout your praise.

Follow with "shouting" out what you're thankful for!

You Can Talk to God

Sung to: "Jesus Loves Me"

You can talk to God each day
When you bow your head and pray.
God will always answer you.
He hears your prayers
and loves you too.

Please Pray to God,
please Pray to God.
Please Pray to God
And tell God, "I LOVE YOU."

Thanksgiving Song

Sung to: "Jesus Loves Me"

Lord, we thank Thee for this food,
Bless it to our bodies, God.
Help us live Your name to praise,
Serving You through all our days.

Yes, Lord, we thank You.
Yes, Lord, we thank You.
Yes, Lord, we thank You.
In Jesus name, Amen.

“We Are Thankful for All These Things”

Create a “big book” for your class. The children in your class are the illustrators! Use two large sheets of poster board. Fold each in half and create a big book by tying them together with yarn or punch on the fold and secure with brass brads. On the cover write, “We Are Thankful for All These Things.” Your class can illustrate one page each week.

1st page

God Gave Me My Family

Children draw pictures of their families and glue to the page. You may overlap them, then sponge print hearts around.

2nd page

God Gave Me My Senses

Children glue features on faces with wiggly eyes, cotton balls, yarn, macaroni, etc., and glue to the page.

3rd page

God Gives Me Trees and Flowers

Children glue a tree trunk out of construction paper to page and glue tissue paper for the leaves, draw flower stem and glue on tissue paper petals or pom poms for flowers.

4th page

God Gives Me My Food

Children cut their favorite foods out of magazines and glue to the page.

5th page

God Gives Us Friends

Children cut out a traced paper chain of two children holding hands and glue to page. Make it simple, just head hands and legs.

6th page

God Gave Us Jesus

Children draw a cross and a Bible, or you draw and they color.

Not only does this book help children develop an attitude of gratitude, it reinforces basic motor skills and cooperation. Children will be excited to be called illustrators after this activity!

You can read the book to your class each week during the fall season leading up to Thanksgiving. Or you can have each child create his own small version of this book to take home.



Autumn Tree

You can create a beautiful autumn tree by tracing your arm!

Materials Needed:

- Large Piece of Paper
- Crayons
- Recycled Supplies

Instructions:

This is an easy craft idea! On the large piece of paper, trace your hand and forearm all the way up to your elbow. Make sure your fingers are spread apart. The tracing of your forearm will be the tree trunk and your fingers will be the branches! Color it in with brown crayons (or you could use paint or markers).

Using the recycled supplies, cut out small triangles or leaf shapes, and glue them all over your tree branches to be the leaves! Make sure you use lots of reds, oranges, yellows, and browns to make colorful autumn leaves!



To make your leaves try some of these suggestions:

- Construction Paper
- Tissue Paper
- Cardboard
- Crepe Paper
- Wallpaper Samples
- Scrap Material
- Buttons
- Felt
- Pieces of Real Autumn Leaves
- Anything else you can find that has Autumn colors!

You can also use paint to make the leaves easily! Pour a little paint on a paper plate, dip your finger in it, and then make fingerprints on the tree branches! Do this with red, orange, yellow, and brown, and you have a tree full of autumn leaves!

Autumn is a wonderful time to talk with our beginners about the promises of God and how we know that they are true.

As we see the leaves falling off the trees,
we know we can trust that next spring new leaves will appear.
As the sun sets every night,
we can be certain that it will come up again in the morning.
As a tooth falls out,
we can be sure that a new shiny one will appear in its place.
As we hear about how Jesus died on the cross,
we know that God brought Him back to life!



Have you hugged your pastor today?

Pastors and their families live under incredible pressures. Their lives are played out in a fishbowl, with the entire congregation and community watching their every move. They are expected to have ideal families, to be perfect people, to always be available, to never be down, and to have all the answers we need to keep our own lives stable and moving forward. Those are unrealistic expectations to place on anyone, yet most of us are disappointed when a pastor becomes overwhelmed, seems depressed, lets us down, or completely burns out.

That's why God has instructed us to recognize His servants.

"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."

1 Timothy 5:17

The good news is that we can make a difference! Pastor Appreciation Month is one way we can counter the negative erosion in the lives of our spiritual leaders with the positive affirmation they need.

All Pastors need encouragement. Ask your class to write letters to their pastor with a word of encouragement, praise, or appreciation. Present the letters during your church announcements, and have the kids encourage members of the church to do something special for the pastor that week.

October Is Pastor Appreciation Month!

Here are some ideas:

- Shower your pastor with notes or cards.
- Ask class members to sign up for a day to pray for your pastor so he's being prayed for throughout the year.
- Provide a testimony time during class when you and your friends share what you appreciate most about your pastor.
- Order pizza and sodas and deliver them to your pastor's house. You might want to call first!
- Plan a special banquet or picnic to honor your pastor and his family.
- Have everyone pitch in a dollar or two to buy a gift and card. Don't know what to get? Try a magazine subscription, gift certificate, a shirt, hat, CD—or a weekend getaway!
- Plant a tree in honor of your pastor.
- Set up a "leafless" tree that's decorated with small gifts (cookies, hobby items, gift certificates, money).
- Plan a church picnic, volleyball tournament, softball game, etc., to celebrate.
- Make and hang banners of appreciation all over the church.
- Schedule a special time to pray specifically for your pastor and his/her family.
- Help your pastor feel special all month! Have everyone sign up for a day during October when they will give the pastor an expression of appreciation such as meals, homemade bread, cards, notes, or balloons.

continued on page 15

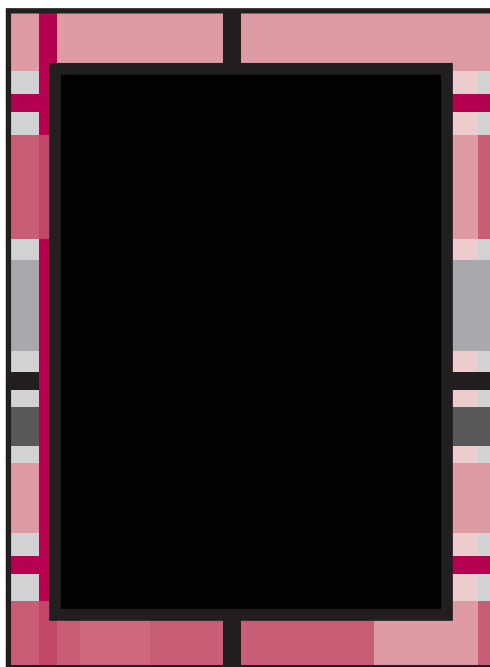
KIRKIN' OF THE TARTAN

The late Dr. Peter Marshall was born in Scotland and served as Chaplain of the Senate and pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC. While serving in the church, Dr. Marshall instituted a celebration of our Scots heritage in 1941 known as the Kirkin' of the Tartan (Churching of the Family). The service is an American invention, but incorporates many elements of our Scots heritage.

After Dr. Marshall's death in the early 1950s, the service moved from place to place and in 1954 was held at the Washington National Cathedral. The service continues to be a part of this church's tradition and is sponsored by the St. Andrew's Society.

The custom has spread to many Presbyterian churches and the service can be adapted for use in Sunday school.

Traditionally, the service begins with a procession of bagpipes and drummer, Christian and St. Andrew's flags, the "britches" Bible (from which some Scripture will be read) and families who bring their tartan forward to be blessed. The



for Reformation Sunday

Kirk—church



Tartan—clan plaid



Clan—family and identity



Britches Bible—Scots translation which refers to Adam as being clothed in "britches"

prayers of the people should include reference to families.

To adapt for a Sunday school class, use a tape or CD of bagpipes, including *Amazing Grace* as one of the tunes. Include a reading from the "britches" Bible (your local St. Andrew's Society can lend you one or send you a copy of the Scriptures you wish to use), talk about St. Andrew and his choice to be crucified upside down, and invite members of your congregation of Scots descent to visit your class.

Most of your children will not have a clan plaid or tartan. Instead of a tartan, have children bring a picture of their family forward for the blessing of the family prayer.

St. Colomba is credited with bringing the Christian faith to Scotland in 563.

However, it was John Knox who brought the Christian Reformation to Scotland in 1547 and, in his evangelical zeal, exclaimed,

"GIVE ME SCOTLAND, OR I DIE!"

St. Andrew (for use with Reformation)

Churches around the world are filled with symbols representing persons or ideology of our faith. Each symbol describes something about the person or idea, giving instant identity.

The apostle Andrew is known as the patron saint of Scotland (Russian and Greek). His symbol is an "X" shaped cross. According to tradition, Andrew did not feel worthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus. Like his brother Peter, he asked for an "X" shaped cross.

Andrew was in Greece when he was crucified. His enemies wanted him to suffer a long time, so they bound him to the cross, rather than nailing him to it.

The flag of Scotland is a white St. Andrew's cross on a blue background. Legend has it that the bones of Andrew were taken to Scotland by a missionary monk. The story continues that when King Hungres of Scotland was in battle with the English, Andrew appeared to Hungres

in a dream, assuring him of a Scots victory. The next day, a shining "X" cross appeared in the sky, frightening the English army, and St. Andrew was declared the patron saint of Scotland.

Make a St. Andrew Shield

Cut a shield from blue construction paper. Cut two strips of white construction paper and glue the strips to the shield in an "X" pattern.

Alternative Class Project

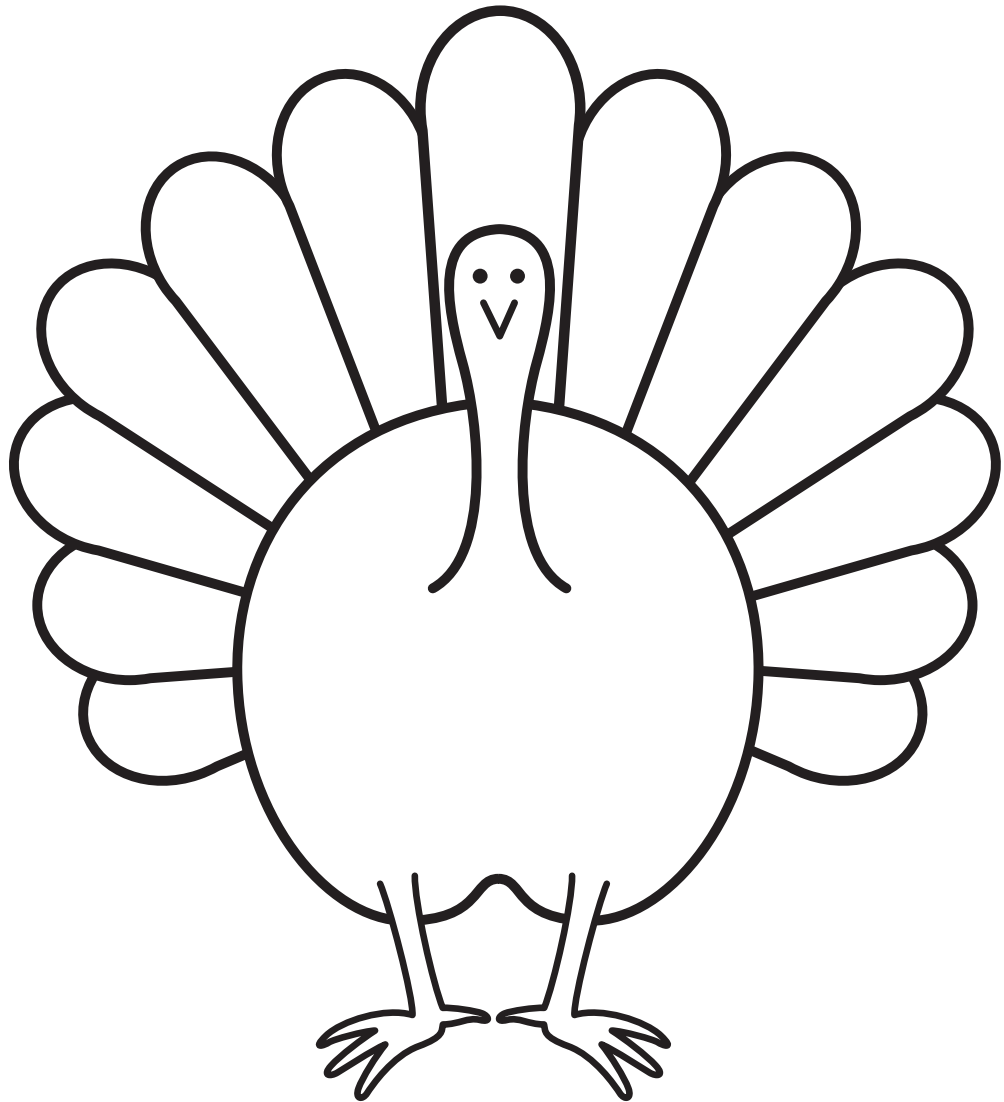
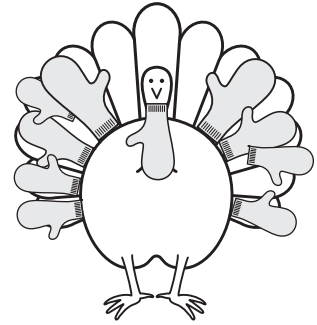
Draw a shield with a cross on poster board or tag board. Using one inch squares of blue and white tissue, crumple the pieces of tissue and glue them in the pattern, using blue as a background and white for the cross.



Mitten Turkey

Instead of having a food drive in your class for Thanksgiving, why not collect mittens or gloves for children and adults that come to soup kitchens, homeless shelters, or inner city ministries.

Draw a large turkey on a piece of posterboard. Have children bring in mittens or gloves and staple to the turkey for tail feathers using a red pair of mittens or gloves as the waddle from the turkey's neck. Display your poster turkey in a prominent place in the church or classroom to serve as a reminder to bring in the mittens and gloves.



Missions Journey

In order to raise mission awareness in your congregation, have each of your local mission recipients supply you with a simple wish list (e.g., paper towels, books, crayons, diapers, toothbrushes).

Ask for donations of old suitcases.

Assign a local mission to each Sunday school class, and provide the class with a suitcase, a wish list, and a profile of their agency. Ask the classes to fill the suitcases with items on the wish list.

Set a time to collect the filled suitcases and then present them to the agency.

(If you wish further details on how to expand this into a full-scale, church-wide mission celebration, contact the Local Missions Committee of First Presbyterian Church, Nashville.)



continued from page 11

- Make a scrapbook with photos and notes reminding your pastor of all that you've shared in the past year.
 - Create the world's largest greeting card (use poster board). Ask everyone in your class to sign the card.
 - Present your pastor with a packet of personal service coupons redeemable for babysitting, lawn mowing, leaf raking, or car washing.
 - Print stickers that say, "We love our pastor!"
 - Treat him to his favorite sporting event. Arrange to have his name announced on the scoreboard. Gather for a sports-themed picnic after the event.
 - Buy a long-distance calling card so your pastor can talk with out-of-state friends and family.
 - Create a pastor's hall of fame where you post your favorite photos of your pastor.
 - Film a video scrapbook and tribute that highlight your pastor's ministry.
 - Buy a journal and pass it to all class members so they can write in it what they've learned since being a part of the church. Present the journal to your pastor.
 - Designate a "Hug Your Pastor Day."
- Come up with your own creative idea!***