PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

John 17:1-26 • (Read the whole passage.)

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV) • “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

Genesis 1:26 (NIV) • “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’”

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV) • “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NIV) • “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

James 1:22-25 (NIV) • “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) • “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

2 Peter 1:19 (NIV) • “We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

Romans 12:1, 2 (NLT) • “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

2 Corinthians 2:15 (NIV) • “For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.”

(See additional passages in student material.)
B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “REFLECTING GOD’S IMAGE”

Before showing up on the first day of school or meeting a future employer, many people make an effort to look their best. As many say, “first impressions are the most important.” The same applies to how people perceive citizens of God’s kingdom. We are called to reflect the image of the King. However, the reflection of God’s image should be something that emerges from us naturally. The moon doesn’t try to be a night-light—it simply reflects the light of the sun naturally. Furthermore, our reflection should be continuous and not momentary patches of light.

We tend to get preoccupied with whether people think well of us or not. However, one of the greatest joys for a citizen in God’s kingdom is to be about what others think of God. Looking into a mirror, you can see whether or not you look sad, happy, mad, upset, or depressed. Our lifestyle also speaks volumes about us: what kind of language we use, the music we listen to, how we interact with the young, old, and everyone in between. This lesson is focused on how we can reflect God’s image and embrace a lifestyle that reflects God’s character.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “REFLECTING GOD’S IMAGE”

As a result of this lesson, we would like the students to be able to:
1. Recognize the reality that we can reflect God’s image in all aspects of our lives.
2. Identify with Bible characters and others today who reflect the image of God.
3. Develop a determination to overcome the obstacles with which the devil has shrouded God’s reflection in our lives.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) several mirrors of different sizes, oil, dust or flour, markers, mud, toothpaste, paper, pens or pencils; (Activity B) Bibles, one flashlight per student or pair; optional: blindfolds.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Bibles.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN BEFORE

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Ask them which verse they chose to learn from Wednesday’s section of their lesson. Give them opportunity to say their verses from memory.
2. Give the students opportunity to “quote” themselves, using what they wrote in the Monday section of their lesson. Be sure to debrief them about any quotations that might not reflect the Christian life accurately. However, quotations of this nature do not occur in every lesson.
3. Review responses that they and others made to the scenario that was posed on Sunday. Discuss the variety of responses, ending with thoughts from last week’s What’s to Be Said About . . . in the teacher lesson.

If you have a very large group, have adults available to process this section with smaller groups of students.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

>> Song service
>> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
>> Service project reports

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive.
(participate actively and with one another) and to study from the Word. At some point you should distribute or call their attention to their student lesson for this week.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY—MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

Get ready • Gather a variety of sizes of mirrors. Smear one with oil, one with dust or flour, another with markers—draw all kinds of distracting things (smiley faces, tic-tac-toe, etc.). Have some covered with mud or toothpaste so you cannot see clearly. Leave some mostly clear with a little part covered. The idea is to have varying degrees of clarity in the reflections. Save one mirror that is completely clean.

Get set • Have the students divide into the same number of groups as there are mirrors. Give each group paper and pencils. The groups will rotate from mirror to mirror, describing what they can see in the reflection and what is hard to see—the level or quality of the reflection.

Go • Say: As your group looks into the mirror, please describe how well or how poorly you can see your reflection (i.e., colors are noticeable but patterns are not, you can tell when someone is wearing glasses, the shape is totally changed, for some, part of the mirror is clear and the rest is not, etc.). After the students have rotated around all the mirrors bring them together to debrief.

Debriefing • Ask: Which mirrors did you find were easy to see the reflection in? What mirrors were the most difficult? Why? What can this exercise teach us about being a reflection of Christ to others? What are some things we do to muddy up the reflection? What are some things we do to clean up the reflection?

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY—LIGHT UP THE DARK

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to show that the more people who practice the business of reflecting light, the more light exists for us to effectively do what we need to do. You’ll need a Bible, as many flashlights as there are students or a flashlight per pair. (Small inexpensive flashlights can be purchased at a dollar store.)

Get set • Find a part of your church that is dark enough that when the lights are off, you need a flashlight to see. Hide the flashlights. Then have the students wander in the dark finding the flashlights. Each pair or individual needs to have one by the end.

Go • Say: I’ve hidden some flashlights, and it’s your job to find them. There are enough flashlights for everyone (or pair) to find one. When you find a flashlight, turn it on and then help someone else find one. Continue to help others find flashlights until each person has one. The game is complete when everyone has found a flashlight. Upon completion, gather the group into a large circle and have the students point their lighted flashlights into the middle.

If flashlights or a dark space is not available, simply blindfold students and separate them over a large area. They are not allowed to take off their own blindfold. They should help someone else take off theirs. Then they are to freeze where they are. They are allowed to help only one person. Continue until all the blindfolds are removed.

Debriefing • Read Matthew 5:14, 16 aloud and then ask:

1. Why did Jesus call us the light of the world?
2. What is significant about the phrase “a city on a hill can’t be hidden”? How does that apply to the idea of reflection?
3. How can we share our light to show others the way to Jesus?—Adapted from The Gigantic Book of Games for Youth Ministry, (Loveland, Colo.: Group Publishing, 1999), vol. 1.

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story or stories:
**Story One.** Dustin recently moved into a new house that has a small pond with a waterfall in the yard. He was showing some friends around when they noticed the pond was full of green stuff. Because of the slimy mess, there was no way to tell how deep or shallow the pond really was. Dustin said, “The pond needs to be cleaned, and when the water can flow freely through the system, then the waterfall will work. After that, it is much easier to keep clean.”

Disease, gunk, and other bad things tend to flourish in stagnant water, but when there is a free flow of water coming and going, the water is cleaner.

**Ask:** How is that similar to our lives? What causes the green stuff to grow in your life? What tends to work as a good cleaning exercise for you? (Without proper daily time with Jesus, our lives can become full of green stuff so that people can’t even see Jesus in us. Other things such as music, movies, TV, friends, and even school and work can muddy things up.)

**Say:** Every day we need to clean out the unnecessary green stuff so people can see the reflection of Jesus in our eyes, actions, words, and expressions.

**Story Two.** Cameron came home from school one day with a great project for himself and his father. Cameron said excitedly, “We need to find a white flower and pick it, and then put it in a vase with water. And then we put drops of blue food coloring in the water and see what happens.”

His father asked, “Why?”

It was a science project Cameron had heard about from someone else, and he was eager to see what would happen. Sure enough, not immediately, but after a while the white flower began to turn a bluish cast. Imagine that!

**Ask:** How does what we put into our lives affect what shines out of our lives? Can people hide and fake it? For how long?

**Debriefing • Say/Ask:** It is possible to have so many things compete for your heart and mind that you reflect many different loyalty. In the pond story, we discussed how it is possible that many material things can muddy up our relationship with God, causing our reflection of Him to become poor. How can we learn to recognize when we are “muddied up”? After we have recognized we need a good spiritual bath, how do we help others who want to hose themselves off without offending them or coming across as holier-than-thou?

Find and read the following references together. Discuss how they relate to what you have just been discussing: Matthew 7:3-5; Matthew 23:25, 26; John 15:3, 4.

### CONNECTING

**A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM**

Present the following ideas in your own words:

As citizens in God’s kingdom it is only reasonable to reflect the ways of the King and the kingdom. If you have ever been near a fair-skinned person who spent too much time in the sun, you not only can see the color of the sun on their face, you can feel the heat of the sun reflect off of them. (This applies to all pigmentations but is probably most notable with fair-skinned people.) They are not trying to be red. They do not exert energy trying to emit warmth—they are red and they are warm, thanks to the sun. It is so important to understand that the source is not in us but comes from the King. We are merely reflectors. We are meant to say and do and feel and think and live and give and work for the same things Christ did. When Jesus taught the disciples to pray He charged them to pray, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In a sense, God is asking us to be reflectors of the lifestyle of heaven.

**Ask:** What do you think are the main attributes of the lifestyle of heaven? What are the rules?
B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Ask: What do we know about how mirrors function? How the moon functions? What parallels can we draw between these things and our own lives? Refer to Beginning Activity A if you did not do that activity. Discuss the principles involved.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

Suppose a friend invites you to his house to watch a movie you know your parents would not approve of, and frankly makes you a little uncomfortable.

Ask: How would this challenge, and your response, allow you to reflect God’s image? If you were to examine your life as if you were looking into a mirror, what parts of the mirror would be fuzzy or completely covered? What parts are clear and reflect the image well?

Distribute or call attention to the student lesson. In the Friday section there is a graphic representing a mirror. Have students individually make a few notes about things that are clear in their lives and things that can make the reflection fuzzy. If appropriate for your group, have the students choose someone to pair up with and share their mirrors and encourage each other to clean away what is getting in the way and to affirm each other of their clear reflection.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Say/Ask: When you look at the life of Christ you can remember dozens of stories that paint a picture of what God is like. Jesus, in fact, made the claim, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” If you could relive any story in the Gospels and be there to be a personal witness to the event, which story or event would you choose? Why?

Read John 17 out loud in class. Ask the students to imagine this prayer being prayed by Jesus Himself.

Ask: As you listen to the prayer, what part of the prayer do you identify with? In this prayer, what is Jesus really asking God to do in us?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What does reflecting God’s image look like every day?
2. Do you have to make no mistakes in order to reflect the likeness of God to others? Explain?
3. How did the disciples do at reflecting the image of God to others? (Refer to Acts 4:13, 14.)
4. Who in your life reflects the image of God to others? Why did you choose them?
5. In what area of your life do you want to more fully reflect what God is like?
6. Do you think it would be easier to reflect God’s image if you had been there with Christ (as the disciples were) rather than never having seen Him in person? What does Peter say about that in 1 Peter 1:8, 9?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

In most cases, such as the moon or a mirror, the work of reflection isn’t work at all. The moon is just a satellite hanging out around a planet—in the right spot at the right time. Some say, “The moon is beautiful tonight!” The moon is beautiful every night, but it is the light of the sun that makes the moon even noticeable. Is that the way it is with you?

Or maybe reflecting God’s goodness is a lot
like being a mirror. While some of us may be dusty or dirty, we have the potential to reflect Christ to others. What will that reflection be like? Our world has clouded up and obscured a clear picture of what God is like. God is ultimately calling on you and me to be the reflection of Him other people can see.
MIRRORS AND THE MOON

In many carnivals there is often what is called the “Hall of Mirrors.” If you’ve never been inside one, it is a long, windy hall full of mirrors that make you look fat, tall, skinny, and short, and distort your features so that you can hardly tell that it’s you! Mirrors have varying degrees of depth that, even though it may not seem like it, alter your image just a tiny bit. So a reflection of yourself will never be completely perfect, even if you look right into a mirror. In a similar way, even though the reflection may not be precise, others can still see what God is like by looking at you.

The story is told of a boy named Miguel who was walking home from school one Friday afternoon. He noticed another boy struggling to carry a large stack of books that were teetering back and forth. When the books hit the ground, Miguel ran to help. Miguel found out the boy’s name was Eddie, and Miguel helped him carry all his books home. He then invited Eddie over to play video games. It didn’t take long for Miguel and Eddie to become great friends.

During school and after school, all the way through high school they were inseparable. When the day came for high school graduation, Eddie, as the valedictorian, was required to give a speech to the rest of the graduates and guests. He said:

“I had given up. I was so alone, and I felt that my life didn’t matter to anyone. So I cleaned out my locker for the last time and made my decision to commit suicide. As I carried a stackful of books from my locker I spilled them everywhere. I wanted to die right there on the spot. But then Miguel came along and helped me. Not only did he help me, but he became my friend. What began as a little gesture of kindness became the beginning of a friendship, which in turn, has made all the difference in my life.”

As Miguel heard the speech he wondered if God hadn’t placed him in the right place at the right time with the right frame of mind. Reflecting God’s image to others may not be as hard as it seems. Just watch how the moon reflects the sun!

HERE’S WHAT I THINK

You finish the scenes:

Scene 1: Liz was a girl in school whom everyone liked. Always nice to everyone, Liz would walk through the hallways every day with a smile on her face, saying hello to everyone. Liz also had a wonderful singing voice, which she used to
sing in church and in the school choir. One day she was practicing in the music room for special music when one of the younger students came noisily into the room. Liz stopped what she was doing. What did she do to reflect Christ?

Scene 2: Vaughn was a student whom other students looked up to. He could often be found playing ball with people who weren’t even very good. During some free time Vaughn and some students were playing ball. Some friends invited Vaughn to play with them in a basketball game. They were exclusively asking Vaughn and not the other players. What did Vaughn do to reflect Christ?

Log on to www.guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your response. Be up-front and honest. Say what you think.

Monday
WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?

Read the quotations listed below and think about how they connect to the topic of the lesson. Then write your own statement that reflects your position with regard to the topic of the lesson.

“”We are not to reflect on the wickedness of men but to look to the image of God in them, an image which, covering and obliterating their faults, an image which, by its beauty and dignity, should allure us to love and embrace them.”—John Calvin, 16th-century French theologian and Protestant preacher.

“The image of God infused in us never sees the light of day in the service of self, but it becomes the light of day in the service of others.”
—Craig D. Lounsbrough, American author, speaker, and Christian minister.

“In order to perfect Christian character, we must dwell upon the perfection of Christ, and as we behold his matchless charms, we shall desire to be like him, and become changed, reflecting more and more of his spirit of love.”
—Ellen G. White, 19th-century inspired writer and cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“”It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His, that one looking at him sees Christ’s own character shining out as from a mirror.”—Ellen G. White, 19th-century inspired writer and cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Write your own quotation.
WHAT I SAY IS . . .

_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________

Tuesday
SO WHAT?

Paul calls us to “contemplate the Lord’s glory” (2 Cor. 3:18, NIV). A mirror reflects that which is right in front of it. The moon has a line of sight to the sun, which casts a glow on the moon. We are not much different. If we have our eyes, heart, hands, and mind fully focused on Christ, His reflection will appear in our lives. The result, according to Paul, is that we become more and more like Jesus.

Often comedians will imitate others to poke fun at them or exaggerate their behavior. But for Christians, if there is any imitating we do, it is because we are trying to learn what it means to follow Christ. So we practice kindness when we don’t feel like it. But then it grows on us, and in us. Try forgiving someone you don’t like! It grows on you, and in you. Try giving the spotlight to someone else when it is rightfully yours! It changes you. While you may not notice it, you reflect Jesus to others.

Be sure of this, however, that unless the Son is your focus, you will not shine. There is no moon without the sun. There is no reflection without someone standing there. You know the song “This little light of mine, I’m going to let it
shine”? Notice it doesn’t say “I’m going to make my light shine,” or “I’m going to really try to shine.” Your “little light” is a “reflector light.”

Wednesday
GOD SAYS . . .

>>2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)
“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

>>2 Peter 1:5-9 (NIV)
“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.”

>>1 Peter 1:14-16 (NIV)
“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”

>>Acts 4:13 (NIV)
“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”

>>2 Corinthians 4:6 (NIV)
“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”

>>Ephesians 5:8-10 (NIV)
“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.”

>>Hebrews 1:3 (NIV)
“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Thursday
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

When God told us to “be perfect,” He meant to go and spend time with the outcasts, the less-popular people at school, the sad and the broken. He calls us to go to others and extend grace to them in the same way He extended grace to us. Do you remember the first time it occurred to you what Christ had done for you? When did you first understand what unconditional love is? That is the “perfection” God is looking for. Everyone of us is endowed with the capacity to love unconditionally—but only by surrendering our selfish nature and focusing on this perfect part of God’s character will we be able to do it. The more we practice love like this, the more we experience it ourselves. As we receive it from God we can reflect that experience to others.

Friday
HOW DOES IT WORK?

We won’t be able to reflect Jesus overnight. Allowing our “little [reflector] lights to shine” takes time and effort. Try taking a few minutes each morning to ask God for help in showing His love to others. Write in the mirror (on page 58) three to five ways you want to reflect God’s love to others this week. As you follow through, journal your thoughts around the mirror throughout the week.