

TEXT John 15:1-9; Ephesians 3:14-21

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that the Spirit of Christ with them and in them can be a living reality in their lives, and will prove to be a source of comfort, guidance, and inspiration.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. — Matthew 28:20

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. — John 15:4

ANSWER

TITLE: **Jesus Is Always With Us**
SEARCH
TITLE: **Jesus’ Presence With Us and In Us**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

God indicated from the very beginning His will and desire for fellowship and communion with man by the fact that He met and walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the Garden. When man broke that relationship, God immediately introduced a plan whereby fellowship could be restored. Knowing man’s need for enlightenment, guid-

ance, and wisdom, He promised through the Prophet Ezekiel to meet that need through His Spirit: “And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27).

YOUR OPENER

Jesus' Presence With Us and In Us

TEXT: John 15:1-9; Ephesians 3:14-21

KEY VERSE: Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. — John 15:4

RESPONSES

1. We must repent, open our heart's door to Him, and invite Him into our lives. We must love Him, keep His commandments, and obey His Word. Have the class consider that the only way this is possible is to be truly saved (born again), which results in a Christian life.

2. Your students should recognize that it means to go into the Word by reading it, and then allowing it to regulate our lives so that we live in conformity with His Word. The students should see that we must unceasingly seek His will in our lives, and bear Christian fruit (John 15:16). Many Biblical examples can be brought out showing God's presence and blessings to the believers who continued to follow and obey Him (Enoch, Abraham, Job, Daniel, etc.); likewise, the removal of His presence from those who did not (Saul, Asa, etc.).

3. John 14:27 — Peace

John 15:11 — Joy

Acts 1:8 — Spiritual power

1 John 5:14-15 — Answers to prayer

Bring out that peace and joy are things that the people of the world seek with all their hearts, but they are found only in Christ and in having His presence continually.

4. The word *fellowship* denotes a "mutual affection and an enjoyment of another's presence." A Christian has a beautiful fellowship with Jesus, and with God the Father. Christians are also instructed to be of one mind, in complete unity, and to enjoy fellowship with one another (1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 John 1:3,7). If Christ's Blood cleanses us from all sin, we have Christ's presence in our lives and it will be natural to love one another as He loves us.

5. "We walk by faith, not by sight." The students should know that by faith Christ lives in our hearts, and it is confirmed by His love in which we are grounded. God said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You may want to ask your class how, in the light of the above Scriptures, it is possible for a Christian to backslide and lose his fellowship with God. Following your discussion the class should conclude that one backslides by disobeying God's Word. God never turns His back on us, but many people have turned away from Him.

Some of Jesus' last words to His disciples were, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Though we cannot see Him today with our physical eyes, we can know we have Him in our lives by the presence of His Spirit in us. We have the daily assurance that He can dwell within each heart. The focus of Paul's writing from which we draw part of our lesson today is the value and the necessity for the believer to have the presence of Christ and His indwelling Spirit as a moment-by-moment reality. The essence of the Christian life for Paul was union with Christ, the basis for our hope of Heaven. Paul expressed it this way: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

1. What is it necessary for us to do in order to have the definite knowledge of Jesus' presence in our lives? See John 14:23, Acts 3:19, and Revelation 3:20.

2. Once Christ's presence is in our lives, we must ensure that He will continue to abide with us. John 8:31 indicates that we must continue in His Word. What do you think the word *continue* means in this context?

3. Name some of the promised blessings Jesus' presence brings to those who continue to love, obey, and follow Him.

John 14:27

John 15:11

Acts 1:8

1 John 5:14-15

3

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Paul and John describe our relationship with Jesus in 1 Corinthians 1:9 and 1 John 1:3 as being one of fellowship. How would you describe Christian fellowship?

5. At times when we cannot actually feel the presence of the Lord, what confidence can we receive from God's Word that He is, indeed, still with us? See 2 Corinthians 5:7 and Hebrews 13:5.

6. There is a definite contrast between the circumstances shown in Matthew 18:20 and 2 Timothy 4:14-17, and yet Christ was present in both instances. Describe what is taking place in each case, and what we can learn about Christ's presence from these Scriptures.

7. God has promised to be with us in every situation. Look up the following Scriptures and explain how each verse shows us God will be there: Psalm 46:1; Isaiah 43:2; Mark 13:11; Hebrews 4:15,16.

8. What effect did the presence of the Spirit of the Lord have on those of the Early Church in the Book of Acts (Acts 13:33; 5:12)? What effect did the Spirit have on the lives of the listeners?

9. In order for the Gospel to be spread, the disciples had to move into other parts of the world. What initiated these moves?

10. When we have the reality of Christ's presence with us now, what is our hope for the future? See John 14:3, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, and 1 John 3:2.

6. Comparing and contrasting the two situations should bring out that God is with us when we are in the company of other believers, and He is also with us when we feel we are standing alone or experiencing resistance from those around us. Jesus' presence is in the heart of the believer, and is not confined within the walls of a place of worship. Ask your class to relate examples of times when Christ's presence was manifested in a special way when they were going through hard trials.

7. Psalm 46:1 — Our refuge in trouble
Isaiah 43:2 — Protection in affliction and danger
Mark 13:11 — Wisdom from Above
Hebrews 4:15-16 — Grace in time of need
As the students discuss each verse emphasize how the Lord had promised to be a "very present" help to us, whatever the need may be. His Spirit will give wisdom and guidance when we look wholly to Him. Bring out that God has promised that none of these trials of life can overcome us if we trust in Him.

8. The disciples felt oneness, encouragement, and inspiration in the fellowship they were experiencing. The grace of the Lord was upon them. They rejoiced in the victories the Lord gave. Some of those who listened marveled, taking note that the disciples had been with Jesus. Although some opposed the disciples, they could not deny what had been done. Discuss with your students that we are living in the time of the Latter Rain and that the Spirit of God is available to those who seek for His enduement. He will work in our lives today even as He did in the lives of the disciples.

9. Your students should see that the spread of the Gospel into other parts of the world began when the Early Church at Jerusalem encountered great persecution. There was much opposition as the disciples scattered everywhere, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Should we expect any less today? God will allow whatever is necessary for His aims to be fulfilled. It is our part to follow His ways, and to remember that He will never leave us, nor forsake us.

10. We shall be like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is, and will be in His presence forever. Bring out the glorious hope this is for the Christian; that regardless of what we may have to go through here, it will be worth it all when we see Jesus face to face.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How does a person receive the Spirit of Christ into his life?

Is Jesus' presence with every Christian?

Does a Christian have to guard against losing the Spirit of Christ?

Do some Christians have more of the Spirit of Christ in their lives than other Christians? Explain your answer.

What are the benefits of having the Spirit of Christ in one's life?

What means did Jodi use to change her friend's opinion?

How does the ANSWER story reflect the benefit of having Christ with us and His Spirit to lead and guide us?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a puppet to class and leave it on your desk or table in plain view of the students, until ready to use. During this period it will remain "lifeless." Do a brief demonstration with the puppet and compare its dependency on the hand within to the Christian's dependency on Christ within. Both are necessary to instill "life" with a purpose.

Bring a foreign language book to class and show it to your students. Explain that Scripture can be like a foreign language if we do not have Christ's Spirit to open up our understanding.

Have your class prepare a list of qualities that they would like in a close friend. Compare this list to the list of qualities of Christ. Does Jesus match up to their list? Would He make a good friend? Write the list on a blackboard where all can see and more easily compare.

Prepare a word association game for your class. Choose approximately five words that tell how you might feel if God is not with you and five words that tell how you might feel if He is with you. Write each word on large flash cards. As you show each word, have the students

tell you what the word brings to their mind. The negative words may evoke a negative association and the positive words may draw a positive response. This activity should encourage discussion regarding our feelings and responses with or without God in our lives. Sample words:

POSITIVE:

Guided
Faith
Peaceful
Comforted
Loved
Wise
Obedient
Secure

NEGATIVE:

Fearful
Hate
Critical
Deceitful
Jealous
Suspicious
Resentful
Angry

Answers for ANSWER

Is He With You?

Knowing that Jesus is with you all the time is a real comfort. Your key verse is a promise that He is with those who love Him. Write the key verse on the lines provided below. Then try to find it in the maze. The letters of the first three words have been circled for you. Just follow the verse through and mark it the same way, circling the letters of each word.

L	B	C	G	J	K	N	U	N	B	D	C
O	P	Q	S	X	V	E	S	T	G	L	R
I	A	M	B	C	E	P	C	Q	J	K	O
S	B	W	G	A	Y	J	H	T	F	E	W
C	T	J	W	G	K	E	B	C	H	G	
G	H	K	P	L	P	S	E	N	J	T	K
K	Y	O	U	A	B	C	G	D	O	E	P

LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN
UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.