

# My Journey in Faith



**Teacher Book**

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# 1 GOD CREATES

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### THEME

In His love and mercy, God created all things. He created human beings to live in relationship with Him, with others, and with His world. Though sin spoiled God's perfect creation, the heavenly Father has redeemed us in Christ and continually re-creates us by the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments.

### OBJECTIVES

By the power of the Spirit working through the Word, students will

- acknowledge that God is the Creator of all that exists;
- affirm that life and human relations are gifts from God to be enjoyed in relationship with Him;
- rejoice that God has redeemed His fallen creation through the sacrifice of Christ;
- live in thankfulness to God by serving Christ and others and by caring for His creation.

### ATTENTION, PLEASE

*(Choose one)*

#### Create a Solar System

*(10 minutes)*

*Materials: Unfilled balloons of various colors and sizes, lightweight string or fishing line, thumbtacks, markers*

The purpose of this exercise is to enable students to picture the immensity of God's work of creation. Stress, **Nothing in creation comes into being unless life is given to it; God alone is Creator and Sustainer of the universe.**

Have students select appropriate balloons for the planets in the solar system (e.g., Earth = blue, Sun = orange). Invite students to work together to determine appropriate sizes for the various planets; inflate the balloons accordingly. (If possible, obtain scientific illustrations of the solar system to inform this activity.) Use markers to draw easily recognizable land masses on the balloon representing Earth, the rings on the balloon for Saturn, and so on. Tie string or fishing line around the knot of each balloon, and hang the balloons from the ceiling over the meeting area so that they orbit around the sun. (Nine balloons will be used, one to represent the following: Sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune.) Say, **In our session today, we'll focus on God's good creation, especially His creative work of making human beings.**

#### Create a Person

*(10 minutes)*

*Materials: Modeling clay (enough for each student to make a human shape)*

Ask students to create a "person" from nothing but "dust from the ground" (clay). Have them shape their person however they like and select a name, personality, career, personal history, and so forth. Have students introduce their creation to the rest of the class. Comment that somewhat similarly, God fashions each individual. He carefully and lovingly creates each person, giving him or her a unique set of characteristics, qualities, aptitudes, and interests. Allow the newly created "people" to dry until the end of the class, and then keep the figures in your room.

Say, **In our session today, we will read about how God made the first two people, Adam and Eve.**

## TOGETHER IN HIS NAME

Read together the First Article and its meaning. Then complete one of the following activities.

### God, I Praise You

(5 minutes)

Materials: None

Have students identify aspects of creation that remind them of God's love or creative power. Have someone begin your prayer time by saying, "God, I praise You for . . ." Encourage students individually to offer the same prayer, identifying specific evidence of the beauty and grandeur of God's creation (e.g., sunrise, babies, mountains). Go around the class two or more times. Then close, saying, **God, we praise You for our creation, salvation, and new life in Jesus. In His name we pray. Amen.**

### Psalm Prayer

(5 minutes)

Materials: Bibles

Have students turn to Psalm 8 in their Bibles. Read this creation psalm responsively verse by verse. Verses can alternate between teacher and students, sides of the room, or boys and girls. Close with a prayer asking God's blessings on your time together in study.

## LESSON BUILDERS

(Choose two or more)

### Who Am I?

(10 minutes)

Materials: Response Books, pencils/pens

Have students find Session 1 in their Response Books. Ask them to write the information requested about them. Once they have completed these items, ask students to share what they have written. Then ask them to tell about their family and aspirations for the future. When everyone has had time to share, read the catechism section. Say, **As we begin our study of God's Word, the Bible, we'll meet many different people. We'll journey through time with God's people to the**

**fulfillment of His promises—the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for our forgiveness and salvation. When we study the Christian faith, our focus will always be on Christ, the Savior of the world.**

### You're in Charge!

(15 minutes)

Materials: Bibles, Response Books, pencils/pens

Gather students together to read the session story, Genesis 2:4–25. (If time is short, focus on 2:15–24, printed in the Response Book margin.) Then have a student read the paragraph on a parent's instructions to Alissa. Allow your class five minutes to write their responses in the Response Book. Then lead the discussion on questions 1–5. (1 and 2) Answers will vary. (3) To work and take care of the garden (2:15). (4) "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (2:17). (5) Answers will vary.

Ask a volunteer to read the paragraphs on God's creation of human beings.

### Two Trees

(10 minutes)

Materials: Computer and projector, newsprint or board, markers, Bibles

Ask two volunteers to draw the outline of two trees on the newsprint or board. (Use brown for the trunk and green for leaves.) Label the trees "Tree of Life" and "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." Ask your volunteers to write responses in red on the appropriate tree. Review Genesis 2:8–9. Ask, **How does the Bible describe the trees in the garden?** ("Pleasant to the sight and good for food.") **What words would you associate with the tree of life?** (Answers will vary, but may include life, eternal life, happiness, contentment.) **What words would you associate with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?** (Answers may include good/evil, death.)

Say, **One tree signified and gave life, but the other signified and brought knowledge of good and evil—and ultimately death—into the world.** Affirm that God's plan has always included life for His children.

Discuss ways people "eat evil fruit" in our world. Possibilities may include not valuing the world God has made for us by littering or polluting or failing to respect the lives of others through racism, abortion, violent acts, or other forms of persecution. Say, **Even when we eat evil fruit in our life, the forgiveness we have in Jesus' death and resurrection holds the power to restore us.**

### In His Image: Male and Female

(10 minutes)

Materials: Unlined index cards, pencils/pens, newsprint or board, markers

Distribute materials. Ask students to work in pairs to write—on one side of an index card—the value of friendships between persons of the same sex. Then ask students to write—on the opposite side of the card—the value and benefits of friendships between males and females. (As students are writing, print "Friend to Friend" on newsprint or board.)

Collect index cards. Ask a volunteer to print the words or ideas on the newsprint or board. Share with your whole class the responses on the cards. Edit or delete responses as appropriate.

Ask students to discuss the ways that the two types of friendships are similar and different. Then ask, **In what ways do the similarities and differences complement each other?**

Affirm that as God created animals male and female, He created humankind male and female according to His good purpose and will. Say, **In love, God made us male and female to bless His creation. God saw that Adam needed help, so God brought Eve to him. Together they would work in the garden and rule the earth for God. Together they would have children so that the earth might be filled. God made marriage when He brought Adam and Eve together as the first husband and wife, the first family. In marriage, a man and woman leave their fathers and mothers and live together as husband and wife under God's blessing. In life, God blesses us with many friends, both male and female.**

### Name It

Materials: Copies of Activity Sheet, pencils/pens

Distribute materials. Invite students to read the introduction and then to work with a friend to write their responses on the Activity Sheet for Session 1, found at the back of the Teacher Guide.

As time permits, share responses. Point out to your class that "by faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God" (Hebrews 11:3).

### HERE AND NOW

(Choose one)

### The Wonders of Creation

(20 minutes)

Materials: Printed color images from the Internet, National Geographic magazines and other pictorial magazines, newsprint or poster boards, glue sticks, scissors, markers, or poster-creating applications on the computer

Divide your class into groups. Create posters depicting the wonders of God's creation by cutting pictures from magazines. Discuss the many blessings God gives to us that are listed in the First Article and its explanation. Pictures should include scenery, people at work living out their different vocations, and the blessings God gives each day through His creation. Encourage students to write on the bottom of the poster Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof."

Display the posters in your room and at appropriate places where the congregation can view them.

### Fellowship with God

(15 minutes)

Materials: Response Books, pencils/pens, newsprint or board, marker

Ask students to turn to this section in the Response Book. Read the scenarios. Then select volunteers to role-play a conclusion to each scenario. On the newsprint or board, write the following statements:

- Life is a gift from God.
- God's gift of life moves us to respect and uphold life.
- Sex is a gift from God.
- God's love for His creation moves us to respect and honor one another.
- Creation is a gift from God.
- God's gifts to us through His creation move us to respect and take care of His world.

Help students to apply these truths to the scenarios. Read together the paragraphs on God's plan, human sin, and God's re-creating work in Christ.

## SIDE BY SIDE

(Choose one)

### Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

(10–15 minutes)

*Materials: Undecorated cupcakes or sugar cookies (prepared or purchased before class), frosting (any flavor), knives, candy sprinkles, Response Books, pencils/pens*

Invite students to put the finishing touches on an individual snack. If possible, have them design their snack to represent their personalities (e.g., smiley, serious, flashy, creative). As they do, remind them that God is continually involved with His creation. He has created us individually and has redeemed us personally in Christ. Each of us is unique. As time permits, read aloud Psalm 139 as students decorate their snacks. Then comment, **God made you uniquely you. Yet many influences shape you. Your parents teach and train you, and so do teachers, coaches, friends, and spiritual enemies. What you read and the activities in which you participate also train you. Many things make you uniquely you. I pray that God's Word and His love for you will be the major influence that shapes you.**

Afterward, ask students to write a prayer in their Response Books. For this and every journal entry in the Response Book, have students sign and date their work.

### Creating a Garden

(20–30 minutes)

*Materials: Various types of bedding plants or bulbs, potting soil, hand shovels*

*Note:* Receive permission ahead of time to adopt a flower bed at church.

Take students to the flower bed and ask them to create a garden that reflects the uniqueness of each of God's creations. Mix the plants so that different varieties are planted next to one another. Comment that variety reminds us that every person is unique, that each of us is special in God's eyes, and that all of us together make up His creation.

## CLOSING RESPONSE

(Choose one)

### In Praise of Our Maker

(5 minutes)

*Materials: None*

Gather students together in a circle. Ask everyone to thank God by calling out one blessing in our world corresponding to the successive letters of the alphabet. Respond in threes. Introduce the prayer each time with **"Thank You, Lord, for . . ."** Have students call out three blessings: "art, boats, clothes"; "dogs, energy, friends"; and so on. Close each petition with "How great You are!"

### Clean Again

(10 minutes)

*Materials: Baptismal font, towel, Bible*

Gather the class around the church baptismal font. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Point out that God's re-creating power has made each of us a new creation through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Have the students dip their hands in the water and make the sign of the cross on their forehead or heart to remind them of their Baptism into Christ.

Close with the blessing: **The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us. Amen.**



# THE FALL INTO SIN

## Genesis 3

### The Seventh Petition

## THEME

At Satan's instigation, our first parents gave in to temptation and plunged humanity into sin. Evil and sin changed God's creation from wholeness and community into brokenness and separation. Even in the midst of human failure, God gave the hope of forgiveness and reconciliation through the promised Savior. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have victory over sin, death, and the devil, and we have the power of God to resist temptation and to live as His renewed people.

## OBJECTIVES

By the power of the Spirit working through the Word, students will

- acknowledge that sin separates us from God and His holiness;
- affirm that God's solution to our sin is found only in the promised Savior, Jesus Christ;
- praise God for His strength to live as His children, resisting temptation and remaining faithful while facing the forces of evil through the power of God's Word.

## ATTENTION, PLEASE

(Choose one)

### The Restorer

(10 minutes)

*Materials: Hat or bowl, small piece of paper for each student*

Have your class sit in a circle. In a hat or container, have a small piece of paper for each

student. On one of the pieces write "Destroyer." On another, write "Restorer." Leave the rest of the papers blank. Have each student draw a piece of paper from the container; the Destroyer and the Restorer should not reveal themselves. The goal for the Destroyer is to find out who the Restorer is during the game.

Say, **One of you is the Destroyer. When the Destroyer looks at you and winks with his or her right eye, wait five seconds and then cross your arms. One of you is also the Restorer. The Restorer looks at people who have been destroyed and brings them new life by winking with his or her left eye. If you are the Restorer, your goal is to restore people without letting the Destroyer know who you are. When the Restorer winks at you, wait five seconds and then uncross your arms.**

With all the students sitting in a circle, the Destroyer starts by winking at another student. The student who has been "destroyed" waits five seconds and then crosses his or her arms. The Restorer then attempts to wink at the destroyed person without being caught by the Destroyer. After a five-second waiting period, the restored person then uncrosses his or her arms. If the Destroyer identifies the Restorer, the game ends. You may put a time limit on each round to keep it moving. Rotate the Destroyers and Restorers.

When you have finished, ask, **How did it feel to get a wink from the Destroyer? How is getting a wink from the Destroyer like giving in to temptation?**

Say, **Today we will look at an event that took place in the Garden of Eden. The Destroyer, Satan, tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God. By disobeying God, Adam and Eve's perfect lives were destroyed. But God had a plan to restore this broken relationship. Let's take a closer look.**

## The Whole Truth?

(10 minutes)

Materials: Index cards, pencils/pens

Ask students to work in pairs. Have the two persons interview each other to find out four unknown facts about the partner. When the interviews are completed, have each student make up one additional “fact” about his or her partner. Invite students to share the five facts that they have with the class. Direct your class to identify which of the five statements is false.

When the students have finished sharing and guessing, say, **Today we are going to take a look at some deceiving words. In the garden, Satan used deceiving words to tempt Adam and Eve to disobey God. Let’s see how Adam and Eve responded and how God revealed His love for them with a special promise of a Savior.**

## TOGETHER IN HIS NAME

(Choose one)

### Taste and See!

(5 minutes)

Materials: Pictures of delicious foods (from the Internet or cut from magazines), picture or drawing of a cross

Before class, mount pictures on pieces of poster board. As you show the pictures, one at a time, ask, **Which of these foods is tempting to you? If you were really hungry, what would you give for it?**

Then show the last picture, the cross. (If possible, print out Psalm 34:8 on the bottom.) Say, **In Christ are our strength for temptation and our hope for forgiveness. Lead your class in prayer: Lord Jesus, of all the good things in life, You are our treasure. Help us today and always to resist all temptations that try to pull us away from You. We take refuge in You, for You are good! In Your name we pray. Amen.**

## Precious Bible Promises

(10 minutes)

Materials: Bibles, index cards, markers

Before class, write the following Bible references on index cards (one per card): Psalm 46:1; Psalm 32:8; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:37; and Isaiah 43:25. Distribute the cards. Ask the students to look up the passage on their card and write a one-word summary—in large letters—on the back side of the card.

Gather in a circle with the summary words on the floor (facing up). As you pray, use the words on the cards. Invite students to offer brief petitions. Close with prayer: **Hear us, heavenly Father, as we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

## LESSON BUILDERS

(Choose two or more)

### Brandon’s Temptation

(10 minutes)

Materials: Response Books, pencils/pens

Invite students to open to Session 2 in the Response Book. Ask a volunteer to read “Brandon’s Temptation.” Then allow five minutes to discuss the questions.

Brandon faces a number of important decisions: whether to take the answers; whether to talk to Collin about what is right and wrong; if he should tell his teacher that the class has the answers to the test; and other issues.

Help students to discuss the issues and to agree that Brandon should not take the answers, that he should talk to Collin, and that together they should talk to their teacher. Invite your class to share the kinds of evil and temptations that teens face at school and at home.

### Don’t Give In

(10 minutes)

Materials: M&M’s

Give each student three M&M’s. Instruct students that they should put the M&M’s in their mouth, but they must not bite or chew the candies. Say, **Let the M&M’s dissolve in your**

**mouth.** After two minutes, ask, **How many of you found it difficult to let the M&M’s dissolve in your mouth without chewing them?**

Ask, **What kind of temptations are hard for you? Are temptations ever “easy”?** Allow students time to respond. Then say, **God calls us to obey Him, just as He commanded Adam and Eve. Because of sin and its evil consequences in our lives, we struggle to do what is right, and often we fail. God knows our condition, and that is why He gave His Son, Jesus. Through Jesus, we have forgiveness of our sins. He gives us the strength to stand up to temptation and follow Him.**

## Temptation First

(10 minutes)

Materials: Bibles, Response Books, pencils/pens, catechisms (optional)

Have students sit in a circle. Say, **We’re going to play “Honey, If You Love Me, Please Smile.”** Choose one person to be the tempter. The tempter’s job is to get someone to smile. He or she goes from person to person around the circle to try to get a smile out of someone. (No touching!) When the tempter feels someone is ready to smile, he or she says, “Honey, if you love me, please smile.” The person tempted must respond—without smiling—“Honey, I love you, but I just can’t smile.”

After a few rounds, ask, **What does it mean to be tempted?** Then say, **Let’s read Genesis 3:1–19 in your Bibles.** (If time is short, read 3:1–7, 15, printed in the Response Book margin.) Allow students to respond. Ask, **What was the temptation Adam and Eve faced?** (They were tempted to disobey God’s command.) **What was God’s command?** (Do not eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; see Genesis 2:16–17; 3:2–3.) **In what way did Adam and Eve give in to the forces of evil?** (They let the devil gain hold over them and sinned.)

As time permits, review with students the Seventh Petition in their catechisms. Share with your class that this petition is a prayer in which we ask God to deliver us from the forces of evil that would lead us to abandon our faith and instead to trust in God, as Luther explains.

Summarize this section by asking for volunteers to read the paragraphs in the section “A World Now Evil.” Continue with the discussion of the items in the margin. Possible responses are included in the following section.

## A World Now Evil

(10 minutes)

Materials: Response Books, pencils/pens

Introduce the activity by saying, **Before their sin, Adam and Eve enjoyed four perfect relationships: with God, with each other, with themselves, and with God’s world. By disobeying God, however, each relationship was fractured—broken! They had plunged all of creation into the hold of evil.**

Invite a volunteer or two to read the paragraphs. Then ask students to answer the questions in the margin on broken relationships.

- 2a. Adam and Eve and God: Adam and Eve forfeited the image of God with which they had been created; they became separated from God’s righteousness and perfection; they were now guilty of sinning and were condemned to death.
- 2b. Adam and Eve: Each one felt guilt and shame; Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent.
- 2c. Adam and himself; Eve and herself: They were no longer “whole,” no longer perfectly happy and righteous; they no longer perfectly knew and did what was right and pleasing in God’s sight.
- 2d. Adam and Eve and God’s world: All of creation suffered when they sinned; they would live with hardship; they would have to work and suffer with pain, illness, and eventually death.
3. Answers will vary but may include disasters in nature, hostility, violence, disagreements, loneliness, hardship, failure, poverty, sickness, death, attitudes contrary to God’s Word, and so on.

Then direct students to the section “Delivered from Evil.” Help your class to see God’s love in action in the promise of Jesus.

## Delivered from Evil

(10 minutes)

*Materials: Response Books, pencils/pens, photographs from magazines that show evil overcome and relationships restored*

Display photographs. Ask, **What do you see in these pictures?** (Students might answer with the following: troubles and hardships overcome, happy people, love, friendships, forgiveness, etc.)

Then read together about God's restoration in Jesus. Emphasize the gift of forgiveness, which God gives through Jesus Christ; our new life; and the strength to resist evil and temptation, which God the Spirit works through His Word. Invite students to write their answers in their Response Books. Make sure they sign and date their entry.

## HERE AND NOW

(Choose one)

### My Dealings with Evil and Temptations

(10 minutes)

*Materials: Board or newsprint, markers*

Divide the group into pairs. Ask students to suggest real-life encounters with evil and temptations they face when alone, at home, with friends, or in school. Examples of evil might include illness, accidents, and natural disasters. The temptations should include real, everyday, age-appropriate issues—those that students feel comfortable sharing. Then gather students together in a group. Invite one or more to share their examples. Write their responses on the board or on newsprint. Then ask, **What can you do to avoid or overcome these influences? What tool has God, by His Holy Spirit, given to help you face and conquer these forces?**

Give students two or three minutes to suggest responses to evil and temptations in their lives. Write the answers on the board or on newsprint. When confronted with evil and temptation, Christ used quotations from Scripture to resist (Matthew 4:1–11); David recalled God's goodness (Psalm 32:10). Assure your class that, in times of evil and temptation, Christ gives His people strength to

resist sin and evil, and He forgives His repentant children when they sin (John 8:11).

## My Temptations

(15 minutes)

*Materials: Copies of Activity Sheet, pencils/pens*

Before class, make copies of the Activity Sheet for Session 2 (at the back of this Teacher Guide). Distribute and work through the questions with the class. Responses follow.

1. God develops our character by helping us to persevere. Comment that nowhere does God promise to remove trouble or temptations from the life of a believer.
2. Each individual is responsible for the hold temptation is able to take in his or her life.
3. God is faithful. He will strengthen us so that we will not have to handle more than we can bear. Point out that God strengthens us through His Word and Sacraments to remain steadfast in the face of trials and persecution.

Review student paragraphs. Affirm student comments expressing trust in Jesus and reliance on the Means of Grace as the students face trials and temptations.

## SIDE BY SIDE

(Choose one)

### The Wall

(10 minutes)

*Materials: String, tape*

Place a string across the room at a height of about six feet. This is an invisible wall. One side of the wall is sin, and the other side is eternal life. The students have to get from one side to the other. All the students start—are born—on the sin side. They cannot go under or around the string; they cannot touch the string. Everyone must go over the top! Say, **Together you must figure out a way for the whole class to get across the wall from sin on one side to eternal life on the other. You cannot use chairs or any other equipment. And everyone must get over!**

Watch your class carefully as they discuss and plan their strategy. In truth, it should be impos-

sible to make it over the string. (Even for an acrobatic team it would be impossible for the last person to make it over!) When finished, say, **How did it feel to be on the wrong side of the wall? How did it feel wanting, but not being able, to get people across? What role do evil and temptation play in this activity? Because of the fall, we are born into sin. Getting to eternal life on our own is impossible. We need a Savior to take us to the other side and to keep us from giving in to temptation. Jesus is our Savior, and He lifts us out of our sin and gives us eternal life.**

## Stuck on You

(10 minutes)

*Materials: 3 × 5 cards, markers, tape*

1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

Divide the number of words of this passage by the number of students you have. Write consecutive words on the cards. Tape the cards to the front of the students' shirts. Without talking, have the students arrange themselves in the proper order of the passage.

When they have completed the task, have them remove the 3 × 5 cards and read their cards in order. Say, **God promises to be with us when we face evil and temptation. He loves us in Jesus and will forgive us when we fall and ask for forgiveness.**

## CLOSING RESPONSE

(Choose one)

### The Weight of Sin

(5 minutes)

*Materials: Large, heavy books (2–3 per student), Bible*

Have students stand and raise one arm to the side (palm up). Place a couple of books on each hand. The object is for students to keep their arms raised with the books for the Closing Response.

Read Romans 3:9–20 slowly. Pause at certain times. Say, **Feel the weight of sin.** (The heavy books represent the weight of sin.) Continue reading the Romans passage. Say, **God's Word tells us that we have fallen into temptation and sinned. The weight of sin can lead us into despair and hopelessness. But thanks be to God, Jesus has come to rescue us—to take away our sin.**

Begin removing the books from the hands of the students and say, **Keep in mind that Jesus Christ has died for us and is risen from the dead. He is our saving Lord—the joy of believers through the ages. He gives hearts troubled by sin a tremendous relief as the "weight of sin" is removed.** Close with this prayer: **Lord, thank You that You did not leave us dead in our sin. You have given us new life through Your life, death, and resurrection. You have given us Your victory over sin, death, and the devil. Thank You for Your incredible grace. In Your name we pray. Amen.**

## In God We Trust

(5 minutes)

*Materials: Coins (pennies or nickels, one per student), red marker*

With the red marker, draw a cross on each coin before class. You will later give a coin to each student.

Say, **God promised a Savior who would help us resist temptation, deliver us from sin and evil, and restore our broken relationship with God. St. Paul writes, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). We can trust in God's promises to us.** Give a coin to each student. Say, **On this coin, it says, "In God We Trust." God always does what He promises. He promised a Savior, and He gave us Jesus. He promised us victory over sin, death, and the devil, and He delivered. He promises to strengthen us in the face of temptations, and He will! When you pull this coin out of your pocket, see the cross and remember the phrase "In Christ We Trust."**

Close with a prayer thanking God for His grace and promises.