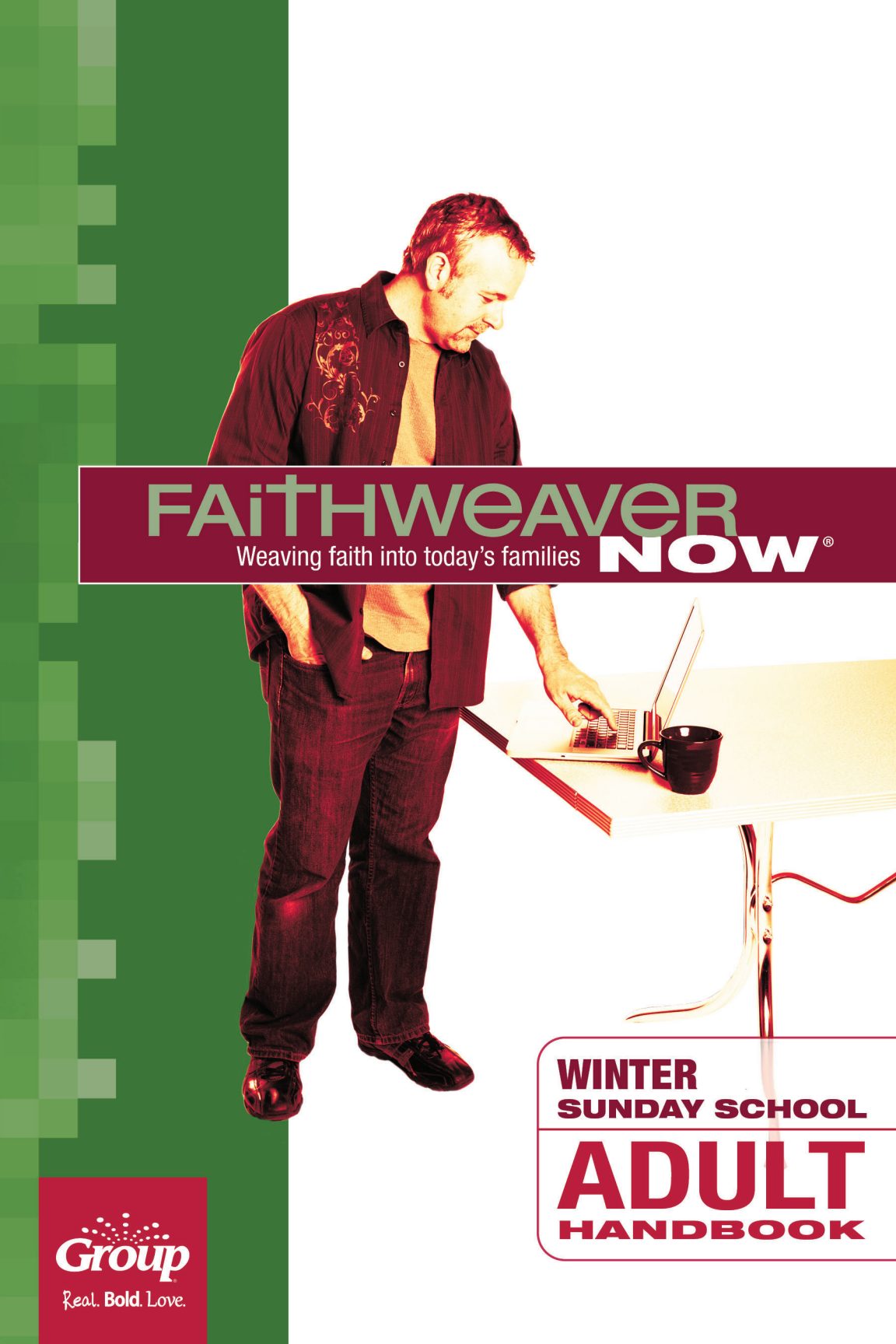


FAITHWEAVER NOW®

Weaving faith into today's families

WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL

ADULT HANDBOOK

Group

Real. Bold. Love.

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This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



Relational
Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential
What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable
The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based
Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

Group

group.com/sunday-school

FaithWeaver NOW® Bible Curriculum, Adult Handbook, Winter
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The future of Sunday school + family ministry is NOW.

No doubt about it, the world is changing. Families used to go to church every week. Kids used to have longer attention spans. Teachers used to have more time to prepare. And didn't our budgets used to be bigger?

Even the Sunday school Bible curriculum you used just a couple of years ago is already out of date. But there's one thing that's never changed: the need to grow families closer to Jesus.

That's why we created FaithWeaver NOW®, and it's different from anything you've ever seen before!

It combines Sunday school with family ministry.

Sure, you've seen Sunday school aimed at families. But FaithWeaver NOW actually hits the target by having everyone in the family learning about the same Scripture each week.

It's simpler and easier.

Sometimes change is a wonderful thing. Gone are the days when you needed to spend hours preparing your lessons and hunting for supplies. FaithWeaver NOW will have you and your team ready to go in a snap.

It's made for NOW.

Life is complicated and full of distractions. FaithWeaver NOW keeps faith on track through even the most frenzied lifestyles.

What makes FaithWeaver NOW the perfect curriculum for TODAY's church?

- Families learn the same Bible passage in age-appropriate ways.
- Kids don't just hear the Word. They experience it.
- Simple and easy lessons fit even the busiest lives.
- Kids see God in their everyday world.
- The Scope & Sequence goes through the Bible every three years.
- You can customize it however you like, with both print and digital versions.



Create a vibrant family ministry that's new…that's wow…that's NOW. FaithWeaver NOW gives you a fresh strategy for being more successful than ever in bringing families closer to Jesus.

Thom and Joani Schultz
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer
Group Publishing, Inc.

Welcome to the

FaithWeaver NOW Adult Handbook!

The fact that you're reading this shows how much you care about your faith. You take your relationship with Jesus seriously. You want to live like him. But it can be hard sometimes, especially amidst the busyness of life, and with **FaithWeaver NOW** we're going to help you grow in your faith.

You'll learn together with—and from—other adults who wrestle with the same issues you do. Together, you'll work through those issues and give each other brand-new insights into how to weave faith into your life. You'll have fun learning together. You'll discover things you never knew about yourself, about each other, and about God. You'll laugh together. You'll probably cry together, too. But most importantly, you'll discover how to weave faith into your life and walk with God for a lifetime.

Here's what you'll find in your FaithWeaver NOW Adult Handbook—including how to use each piece to get the most out of each week:

BIBLE BACKGROUND

This is a more in-depth look at the week's Bible passage. Use it to gain a deeper understanding of God's Word.

THE JESUS CONNECTION

This brief devotion will help you think through how this week's lesson applies to your life and how to pray about this week's point.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These are the questions you'll go through as a group and the specific passages you'll look at. Use this page to follow along during the lesson.

DAILY CHALLENGES

Here you'll have some options for how to apply each study to your life. Mark the one you choose as a reminder to live out your faith.

TALK TOPICS

Several thought-provoking questions to bring up with your friends, family, or co-workers during the week.

THROUGH THE WEEK

Study a passage on this week's point every day! There's even some great questions for you to journal about as you consider what the Bible has to say to you.

So again, welcome to the world of **FaithWeaver NOW!** May God bless your journey together—as adults and as faithweavers!

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus Mark 1:1-8



▶Bible Point
We prepare our hearts for Jesus

Key Verse
"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

Jesus Brings Good News

Mark saw Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection as the beginning of the gospel. The word *gospel*, derived from the Old English *godspel*, means "good news."

Prophets Foretold About Jesus

As Mark began his Gospel, he launched into a quotation from the Old Testament. By connecting what he was saying about Jesus with the words of the prophets, Mark built validity for his own message in the minds of his Jewish readers.

Some question why Mark said the quotation is from Isaiah when in reality the first part is from Malachi 3:1. Mark is mentioning together two quotations on the same topic, and crediting both to Isaiah would have been acceptable for Mark's audience.

By using the quotation from Isaiah in Mark 1:3, Mark emphasized the kingly nature of Jesus. In those days, a servant often traveled ahead of a king to alert people that the king was coming.

John the Baptist Comes Before Jesus

The last half of this passage shows that John the Baptist did what was prophesied in the Old Testament: He came to prepare the way—more specifically, the people—for Jesus' coming. As people repented in response to John's preaching and confessed their sins, their hearts were prepared to accept their coming King.

BIBLE BACKGROUND



John the Baptist's choice of clothing was not accidental: He likely was identifying himself with the prophet Elijah, who dressed the same way (2 Kings 1:8). His was the clothing of the poor, and his food was also that of the very poor. John was humbling himself, knowing how great the coming Jesus would be. In those days, it was the job of the lowest servant to untie a visitor's sandals and wash his feet. John let people know that as eloquent and persuasive as his preaching might be, he was the lowest of the low in comparison with the glory of the coming Savior, Jesus.

THE JESUS CONNECTION

At Christmas, we anticipate the birth of Jesus. His birth, death, and resurrection make our lives in heaven possible. There is always much to do before Christmas. But Jesus cares more about our hearts than about gifts and decorations. We can prepare our hearts by turning from actions and attitudes that distract us from Jesus. What do you need to turn from?

You can write your prayer here.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 GETTING STARTED

- Why do you do all this preparation for a guest?
- What does your preparation communicate to your guest of honor?
- Tell about preparations you've made for other experiences you've looked forward to, such as buying a house or starting a new job.

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Read: Mark 1:1-8

- What thoughts did you have about the way John prepared for Jesus and how that connects to your life today?
- What does it tell you about God that he sent a messenger to prepare the way for Jesus? Couldn't Jesus have announced himself?
- Since John prompted people to confess their sins and be baptized by him, why would the people still need to meet Jesus?
- Based on this passage, what do you think it means that we prepare our hearts for Jesus?

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Clean Heart

Read: Psalm 51:10

- What's the difference between people trying to prepare for Jesus by being good enough and people trying to prepare for Jesus the way John described?
- What evidence can show you that God has purified your heart?
- Tell about a time you felt like God was renewing your heart and spirit.

Prepare Prayer

- What barriers did God reveal to you that are making you less receptive to his work in your life?

- What areas did God reveal to you where you've veered off his path?
- How did this prayer experience help you prepare your heart for God?
- What can you do this week to have a more open heart to receive Jesus' love?

DIGGING DEEPER

Daily Challenges

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week.

- Refer to the chart you made as you read Mark 1:1-8. Choose one of the things you wrote in the second column as a Daily Challenge.
- If you uncovered any barriers you've placed in your heart that make it closed off to Jesus, continue to pray about those barriers this week and ask God to help your attitude be open to Jesus.
- As you make preparations for Christmas, pray regularly that God will prepare your heart for the season.

Talk Topics

- What are some things you've done to prepare for a relationship with Jesus?
- What are some things you've done to prepare to be more open to Jesus?
- What would you change about your habits or lifestyle this week if you knew Jesus was coming to stay at your house as a guest?
- How can your life reflect that Jesus is a permanent resident in your heart?

Through the Week

Use the following passages and questions to explore additional biblical insights about a relationship with Jesus.

Monday—Luke 15:3-10

- **How does this passage help you see yourself through God's eyes? What has God done to prepare for a relationship with you?**

Tuesday—2 Corinthians 7:10

- **What's the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? How can you be sure your sense of guilt is godly sorrow? What have you been holding onto with worldly sorrow?**

Wednesday—Jeremiah 15:19

- **How can repentance bring about restoration? What would restoration look like in your life right now?**

Thursday—2 Peter 3:9

- **In what ways does God's patience encourage you? What part can you play in preparing other people's hearts for Jesus?**

Friday—Romans 2:5-8

- **What do you think of the statement that God will repay us for what we've done? How can your actions reveal a heart for God?**

Saturday—Acts 26:20

- **What signs are there in your life that you've repented? In what ways do you need God to keep working on your life?**

FAITHWEAVER NOW®
Weaving faith into today's families

WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL ADULT HANDBOOK

The FaithWeaver NOW Adult Handbook weaves transformative experiences into every lesson and includes activities that make the Bible unforgettable.

This quarter you'll explore these Bible passages:

	BIBLE CONTENT/SCRIPTURE	KEY VERSE	BIBLE POINT
WEEK 1	John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus (Mark 1:1-8)	"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).	We prepare our hearts for Jesus.
WEEK 2	God Dwells With Us (John 1:1-14)	"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).	Jesus is God.
WEEK 3	Jesus Is Born (Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20)	"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).	Jesus was born for us.
WEEK 4	Faithful People Thank God for Jesus (Luke 2:22-40)	"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name" (Psalm 100:4).	We thank God for Jesus.
WEEK 5	Wise Men Find Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12)	"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5).	Jesus deserves our worship.
WEEK 6	John Baptizes Jesus (Mark 1:4-11)	"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).	God sent Jesus.
WEEK 7	Jesus Surprises Nathanael (John 1:43-51)	"O Lord, you have searched me and you know me" (Psalm 139:1).	Jesus knows all about us.
WEEK 8	Disciples Follow Jesus (Mark 1:14-20)	" 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men' " (Mark 1:17).	Follow Jesus.
WEEK 9	Jesus Demonstrates His Authority (Mark 1:21-28)	"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).	Jesus is all-powerful.
WEEK 10	Jesus Heals, Prays, and Preaches (Mark 1:29-39)	"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).	Jesus cares for us.
WEEK 11	Jesus Calms a Storm (Mark 4:35-41)	"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).	We turn to Jesus when we're afraid.
WEEK 12	Four Friends Help a Paralyzed Man (Mark 2:1-12)	"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).	Jesus forgives us.
WEEK 13	Jesus Heals the Blind Man (Mark 10:46-52)	"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy" (Titus 3:5).	We have faith in Jesus.

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