FAITHWEAVER NOW®

Weaving faith into today's families

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADER GUIDE

Group

FAITHWEAVER NOW®

Weaving faith into today's families

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL

LEADER GUIDE

YOUR ACTIVATION CODE IS NOW LOCATED INSIDE THE TEACHER PACK!

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FAITHWEAVER NOW

Group resources really work!

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.

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FaithWeaver NOW® Bible Curriculum, Middle School Bible Studies, Summer
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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Even the Sunday school Bible curriculum you used just a couple of years ago is already out of date.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.

Elisha Helps a Widow and Her Sons 2 Kings 4:1-7

When teenagers learn about or see people in need, they might experience emotions of discomfort, sadness, guilt, powerlessness, or sympathy. But because they often aren't mature enough to process these emotions, they may react in an unhealthy way. For instance, they might ignore the needs they see and focus instead on "easier" issues such as friends, hobbies, family, or self. Or they might make jokes about being in need. Help students see God's compassion for the needy.

STUDY	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Faith Connection	**Step Into My Shoes** *(about 10 min.)* Play a game to determine fictional needs.	"Step Into My Shoes" handout (at the end of this study), scissors, tape	Cut apart the sections of the "Step Into My Shoes" handout. You'll need one slip for each student, and you'll need to make sure each type of need goes on two students.
	Media Connection (Option) *(about 10 min.)* Research local agencies that help people in need, and understand the rate of poverty in their city.	smartphone(s)	
2 Bible Exploration	**I Need a Sign** *(about 15 min.)* Make cardboard signs to depict the needs in the Bible Passage.	Bibles, Bible Trek, pens, cardboard scraps or paper, markers	Remove the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book.

▶Bible Point

God cares for needy people.

Key Verse

"He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10:18).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Students will look for ways to help meet the needs of people around them.

STUDY	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Notice the Needs** *(about 10 min.)* Create a scene depicting the life of a needy person to visually represent God's care in the midst of a desperate situation.	Bibles, marker, piece of cardboard, foam cups, loose change, tissues, bandages, clean ratty clothes (optional), clean old toys (optional)	
	Choose Your Own Adventure *(about 15 min.)* **Adventure 1: Take My Life** Draw a prayer about giving your life to serving God. **Adventure 2: Minuscule Meditation** Use observations in nature to prompt prayers of dedication.	Bible Trek, a few copies of the "Take My Life and Let It Be" handout (at the end of this study), paper, markers Bible Trek	Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations.
	Be the Miracle *(about 10 min.)* Brainstorm action plans for addressing the needs of people in tough situations.	9 foam cups, permanent markers, paper, scissors, pens	Label each foam cup in large letters with one of the following: hungry, sick, homeless, unemployed, orphan, abused, lonely, no money, illegal immigrant.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Trek, coins from the "Be the Miracle" activity, tape	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.	Bible Trek	Remove the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Trek student book.

Elisha Helps a Widow and Her Sons

2 Kings 4:1-7

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Elisha the Prophet

Elisha was a prophet who ministered in Israel during the time of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Elisha's ministry spanned the reigns of four kings: Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash. And he was even consulted by Jehoshaphat, a king of Judah.

In 2 Kings 4:1-7, it is interesting to note that the husband who died had been from "the company of the prophets." During this time in Israel in which few people followed God, groups of people gathered to promote the worship of God, with older prophets acting as spiritual mentors to younger ones. Thus it is quite possible that Elisha was familiar with the widow and her sons.

It Seems Cruel, But...

Apparently the man who died had left significant debt. Though it seems cruel, Mosaic law provided that a creditor could force debtors or the children of debtors into slavery in exchange for unpaid debt. And even though the widow had just lost her husband, a creditor was apparently threatening to take her two sons.

The oil the woman possessed wasn't even enough to cook with. The Hebrew word for *oil* used here indicates that she had only a small flask of oil that was used for anointing, not cooking.

God's Creative Plan

God didn't respond to the widow's need by having Elisha produce a bag of gold coins that would enable her to pay her debt. Instead, knowing that they had only a tiny bit of oil, Elisha asked her and her sons to gather jars from their neighbors to fill with oil. In this way, Elisha made the widow act on her faith in God.

It would have been easy for the widow to refuse Elisha's instructions, fearing that the neighbors would think her crazy for asking for jars when they knew she didn't have anything to fill them with. But she was faithful in following the instructions that came from God through Elisha. And her faithfulness was rewarded!

The Jesus Connection

Jesus showed even more care and compassion for needy people than Elisha did. And as followers of Jesus, we can model the same care.

Having needs can lead us to greater dependence on God. How has God helped you with needs already? What needs do you need to commit to him now? Ask God for help to depend on him with your needs. You can write your prayer here.

Step Into My Shoes
Supplies

"Step Into My Shoes" handout (at the end of this study)
scissors
tape

Step Into My Shoes
Easy Prep

Cut apart the sections of the "Step Into My Shoes" handout. You'll need one slip for each student. You'll need to make sure each type of need goes on two students.

Media Connection
Supplies

smartphone(s)

1 FAITH
CONNECTION

Step Into My Shoes

What You'll Do

Have students form a line and turn their backs to you. Use tape to attach a slip of paper from the "Step Into My Shoes" handout to each student's back. Make sure each type of need goes on two different students' backs, because students will later form pairs by finding someone with the same need. It's okay if you don't use all the needs. Then explain to the group that they all have a statement about a kind of need affixed to their backs.

Say: **I'm giving you just a few minutes to mingle with each other, asking yes-or-no questions as you try to guess what need or problem your back says you have. A hint: You want to ask questions such as "Is my need money-related?" or "Is my need a physical need?" Now, begin!**

After a few minutes, have students remove their slips and read them to see how close their guesses were. Then have students find their partners—another person labeled with the same need.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to determine your needs?**
- **When have you encountered someone with a need like the one you had on your back?**
- **How was determining your need in our game like or unlike the way you determine other people's needs?**

Say: **The needs we discussed put people in really tough situations. In times of need, it can be tempting to wonder if God really loves you or if God even exists. Well, God *does* love people in need, just as he loves all of us. Today we're going to talk about how ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. We'll see an example of that in the Bible.**

Media Connection (Option)

What You'll Do

Instead of doing the "Step Into My Shoes" activity, have students form as many groups as there are smartphones among them. Then have students use the Internet to search for agencies in your area that are doing things to help the needy. Also have kids visit city-data.com and look up the poverty rate in your city or town.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What discoveries did you make about the needs in our city and how they're being met?**
- **What are some other needs you've seen in our area?**
- **Tell about a time you encountered someone with a really obvious need. What did you do?**

Say: **People in our community—in every community—are in really tough situations. In times of need, it can be tempting to wonder if God really loves you or if God even exists. Well, God *does* love people in need, just as he loves all of us. Today we're going to talk about how ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. We'll see an example of that in the Bible.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

I Need a Sign

What You'll Do

Hand out cardboard scraps or paper and markers. Also make sure everyone has a Bible. Say: **Sometimes when homeless or poor people need food, they'll hold up cardboard signs that say things like "Will work for food." We're going to make our own signs to depict the needs displayed in our Bible passage. If you don't find any needs, make a sign of thanks instead. For a background, understand that this was a very desperate situation. Since the woman's husband died, she was in big trouble economically. Women couldn't go out and get jobs in that day; each woman was entirely dependent on her husband's income to survive. To make matters worse, this woman's husband had accrued debt, and we're not just talking about a small credit card bill.**

Have students form groups of four and read the passage in the following sections, making a sign to depict the need in the verses they read.

- **2 Kings 4:1**
- **2 Kings 4:2**
- **2 Kings 4:3-4**
- **2 Kings 4:5-6**
- **2 Kings 4:7**

Have groups show their signs to everyone else.

I Need a Sign
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Trek
pens
cardboard scraps or paper
markers

I Need a Sign
Easy Prep

Remove the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

- **On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the worst, how bad was this woman's situation? Explain your answer.**
- **What are some situations in modern times that are similar to this woman's situation?**
- **What solutions might the woman have if this were happening now?**
- **How did you see her emotional and spiritual needs met at the same time as her more obvious practical needs?**

Say: **Let's personalize this passage by thinking about our own needs.** Have students take a couple of minutes writing answers to the questions on the "Think It Over" section of their Bible Trek pages. Then have a few students share what they wrote.

Say: **There are three critical points in this event. First, the woman was in a very desperate situation. Situations just like hers (and even worse) still exist in the world today.**

Second, God's miracle was a private provision of love and grace, not a public sensation or spectacle. By having her close the doors and experience the miracle in the privacy of her home, God protected her dignity and showed his love in a very personal way.

And third, God used other people as part of his miracle in helping this needy woman. In the same way, God wants to use loving people today to show how ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Notice the Needs

Notice the Needs Supplies

Bibles
marker
piece of cardboard
foam cups
loose change
tissues
bandages
clean ratty clothes (optional)
clean old toys (optional)

What You'll Do

Say: **It can be easy to go through life ignoring the needs of others, without even intending to do so. Often when we see people in need, we look away and go on with our lives. Today we're going to set up a reminder of the real needs and challenges many people in the world face.**

Let students use the supplies to create a scene representing the lives of needy people. Encourage them to portray lots of different types of needs in their scene, and make sure students work together to create the scene.

Invite a student to read the Key Verse, Deuteronomy 10:18, aloud: "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and

clothing." Then direct the students to write the verse on a piece of cardboard and set it in the scene as a reminder of God's presence and care in needy people's lives.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What needs are you representing with these objects? Why?**
- **What is the visual and symbolic impact of putting this cardboard message in the scene?**
- **How will this experience—and the impact of the Key Verse—change the way you respond to those in need? Be specific.**
- **How does the message of this verse change your view of God?**

Say: **In the midst of a need—whether it's physical, spiritual, or emotional—it can be hard to see God. But in our Bible passage, it was the woman's need that enabled her to ultimately see God at work in her life. When you experience needs or see other people in need, remember our Key Verse and that ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. He can use our needs to point us to him.**

Choose Your Own Adventure

Choose Your Own Adventure Supplies

Bible Trek
Adventure 1
a few copies of the "Take My Life and Let It Be" handout (at the end of this study)
paper
markers
Adventure 2
no additional supplies

Choose Your Own Adventure Easy Prep

Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations.

What You'll Do

Say: **In our adventures today, we have two activities you can choose from. Adventure 1 uses music and art, and Adventure 2 uses nature. The directions are on your Bible Trek papers. Look them over and decide which activity you want to do. You can work with the others who choose the same activity.** Allow time for students to decide which adventure they want to do. Summaries of the adventures follow.

ADVENTURE 1—MUSICAL ART: TAKE MY LIFE

In this adventure, students will draw a prayer about giving their lives to serving God by using the lyrics of the hymn "Take My Life and Let It Be."

ADVENTURE 2—NATURE WALK: MINUSCULE MEDITATION

In this adventure, students' prayers of dedication will be prompted by what they observe in nature.

Say: **After you finish your adventure, you'll present some of what you experienced, so keep that in mind. When everyone has finished, we'll talk about what we've learned. You have 10 minutes to complete your adventures.** Move between the stations, and offer assistance as needed. Let groups know when they have about five minutes left so they can wrap up their work.

After 10 minutes, have all groups take turns presenting what they experienced.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What did you discover about how you can serve God by caring for the needy?**
- **What discoveries did you make about the way God sees the needy?**
- **How does God's view of needy people compare to the way most people treat them?**

Say: **▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE, and he can use you to make a difference in their lives! As you give him your life, he can use you like he used the widow's neighbors to bless someone in need.**

Be the Miracle

Be the Miracle Supplies

9 foam cups
permanent markers
paper
scissors
pens

Be the Miracle Easy Prep

Label each foam cup in large letters with one of the following: hungry, sick, homeless, unemployed, orphan, abused, lonely, no money, illegal immigrant.

What You'll Do

Say: **How is God calling you to be a part of his care for needy people? Let's look at some ways we can be like the neighbors in the Bible and take action to help people in need.**

Set out the cups so students can see the labels.

Give paper, scissors, and pens to students, and tell them they have five minutes to brainstorm specific ways middle school students could help care for people with the needs on the cups. Encourage students to think about practical needs (such as clothing, food, and healthcare); emotional needs (such as encouragement, friendship, and guidance); and spiritual needs (such as prayer, Scripture, and developing a personal relationship with Jesus). For each idea, have students cut out a small coin shape from a piece of paper, write the helpful idea on the coin, and put it in the appropriate cup.

After five minutes, pull out one or two of the coins from each cup and read the ideas aloud.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How are these ideas helpful for the needy people represented by each cup?**
- **What holds you back from reaching out to needy people?**
- **What surprised you about ways students your age can make a difference and show God's love to the needy?**

Say: **When we see or hear about people in need, we often feel bad, guilty, or depressed. We can feel powerless—as if we can't do anything to help. And so often, we don't help. But we just discovered there are all kinds of ways we can reach out and show how ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. The widow's neighbors had no obligation to help her, but when they did, God literally multiplied their efforts. He can use us in bigger ways than we imagine, too.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Set out the coins from the "Be the Miracle" activity, and have each student select one to take home. Students will pick a coin they can commit to following through on this week. This will be their Daily Challenge. Direct students to tape the coin onto the Daily Challenges section of their Bible Trek pages.

Talk With Students

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, place, or other ideas.**

Say: **We saw the way God cared for the needy widow in the Bible. Let's remember that ▶ GOD CARES FOR THE NEEDY as we follow through with our Daily Challenges. We can show his heart as we serve those in need.**

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Trek
coins from the "Be the Miracle" activity
tape

Weaving Faith at Home

Hand out the letter to parents from the Bible Trek student books, one to each student. Also encourage students to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about prayer. Students can also do the activities on the "Bringing It Home" section of their Bible Trek pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families! Available at group.com/digital.

End the study with a prayer where students each pray one word or phrase to describe a need of someone they know. Ask God to help with the needs students named, and to use the middle schoolers in your group to help meet those needs.

Weaving Faith at Home
Supplies

Bible Trek

Weaving Faith at Home
Easy Prep

Remove the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Trek student book.

Step Into My Shoes

I'm hungry	I'm hungry
I'm really sick	I'm really sick
I'm homeless	I'm homeless
I can't find a job	I can't find a job
I'm an orphan	I'm an orphan
I'm abused	I'm abused
I'm lonely	I'm lonely
I don't have enough money to pay my bills	I don't have enough money to pay my bills
I'm elderly and am unable to leave my house	I'm elderly and am unable to leave my house

OK TO COPY

Take My Life and Let It Be

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold:
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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FAITHWEAVER NOW
Weaving faith into today's families

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
LEADER GUIDE

FaithWeaver NOW is for today's Sunday school teachers. It's developed by real Sunday school teachers, examined by real ministry leaders, and tested and approved by thousands of churches so you get great lessons that work with today's families.

This quarter you'll explore these Bible passages:

	BIBLE CONTENT/SCRIPTURE	KEY VERSE	BIBLE POINT
WEEK 1	Elisha Helps a Widow and Her Sons (2 Kings 4:1-7)	"He defends the cause of the fatherlesss and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10:18).	God cares for needy people.
WEEK 2	God Heals Naaman's Leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-16)	"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).	God wants us to be humble.
WEEK 3	Jonah Learns a Lesson (Jonah 1–3)	"The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them" (Hosea 14:9).	Following God is always the right choice.
WEEK 4	Jonah Complains About God's Compassion (Jonah 3:10–4:11)	"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).	God wants us to love everyone.
WEEK 5	God Calls Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-8)	"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Psalm 95:6).	God is holy.
WEEK 6	Josiah Promises to Follow the Lord (2 Chronicles 34)	"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).	God's Word changes our lives.
WEEK 7	Daniel's Friends Are Safe in the Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3)	"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13).	Stand strong for God.
WEEK 8	God Protects Daniel in the Lions' Den (Daniel 6:1-23)	"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).	God protects us.
WEEK 9	God Promises to Restore Israel After the Exile (Jeremiah 29:4-14)	"'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11).	We seek God no matter what happens.
WEEK 10	Nehemiah Seeks God's Forgiveness for Israel (Nehemiah 1:1–2:9)	"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).	We seek God's forgiveness.
WEEK 11	Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall (Nehemiah 2:11–6:19)	"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).	God helps us face challenges.
WEEK 12	Esther Saves Her People (Esther 2–9)	"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).	Everyone can serve God.
WEEK 13	Job Remains Faithful in Suffering (Job 1:1–2:10; 42:1-6, 10-17)	"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).	God brings us hope when we're hurting.

PLUS...

Access all these FREE FaithWeaver NOW digital resources at group.com/digital:

- **FREE digital copies of Leader Guides** in Word and PDF format so you can easily customize any lesson to your ministry. Sharing lessons with busy volunteers couldn't be easier! *See inside for activation code.*
- **A FREE downloadable Director Manual** to help you structure your program for maximum effectiveness.
- **FREE weekly FamilyConnect pages** you can print out or email to parents to help families grow together in faith throughout the week.

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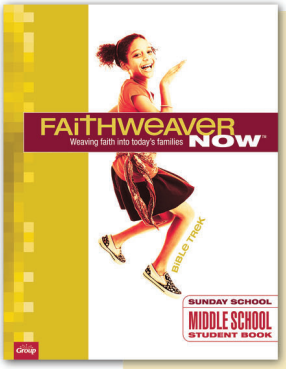

***Get a colorful, age-appropriate student book for every student! Each week, you'll get...**

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