

Torch

MEMORY VERSE: “You’re here to be light; bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. ...If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand – shine! ... be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God. Matthew 5:14-16 (MSG)

STUDY PLAN: To deepen your understanding of how your faith shapes your actions and decisions as a witness to Christ.

To earn the Torch badge, you will need to do the following:



Step 1: Lost in the Dark **My initials** _____

Have you ever been in complete darkness? It is disorienting and confusing. You might have been afraid to move – not sure if you would trip or fall. You might have been unsure of how close or far objects around you were. Even in your own home, when you move in the dark, you bump into things and have trouble getting your bearings.

A light makes all the difference. A torch symbolizes several things. It symbolizes casting light or truth. It symbolizes a beacon to guide others. It attracts attention. It can be used to lead others.

As teenage Christians, you may be going out into a world that is different from your home community. You will be with people who don’t already know you, your family, and what you stand for. Your values may be challenged and questioned. You may see your own values in a different light.

How can you keep your torch lit and be a witness of Christ?



Share any experiences you have had of being in total darkness or a heavy fog.

Discuss how your parents, teachers and friends have shaped your beliefs and values. How do these beliefs help you keep your light burning? How does your faith help you be a light to others?

It is time for you take the torch and carry it. Do you feel ready?



Do any of the following:

1. Read other translations of Matthew 5:14-16, using the Bible Gateway app. Read the verses before and after to determine the context of Jesus’ words.
2. Select and plan a craft using candles to make at the end of this lesson. Look online for easy ideas such as this lace covered jar.



Lace covered candle holder



Step 2: Deciding who you are - identifying your ethics

My initials _____

To be a witness of Christ, you will be asking yourself questions about what you stand for and why. Your values and ethics provide answers.

Living your ethics means making real life decisions using your values and taking the consequences. Your sense of right and wrong are influenced by many things – your friends, the media, your parents and your faith. Character is shaped over a lifetime as you define your values, prioritize them, and use them to resolve dilemmas. Your ethics is the way that you apply your personal values and standards to everything you do in life.

What are values?

Values are those parts of your life that you believe are good or have worth for you. You make decisions all day by applying your values. Most of the time, your decisions are automatic because your values are habit.

Your biggest decisions will be made according to what you value most. Some people even die by their values. In the American Revolution, colonists gave their lives because they treasured liberty and independence for themselves and for future generations.



The next few pages are an abbreviated version of the tools provided in *Ethics for Young Adults* by Rev. Greg Richards, PhD. The objective is to clarify what is truly important to you and to distill them into a personal mission statement.

Your Values

List 6- 8 of your values here. This is an expedition inside of you – put down the ideas, things, principles and relationships that matter to your most. Order doesn't matter at this point.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Reflect on what it was like to list your values? Did it come easily?

Some commonly accepted Christian values are:

Grace – giving people more than they deserve

Hope – the conviction that God is present in all situations

Love – loving the unlovely

Joy – a personal relationship with God

Justice – supporting the disadvantaged

Compassion – the lack of self-centeredness

God first – applying faith to all situations

Peace – absence of fighting and a positive well-being

Integrity – being strong and morally upright

Prioritize your values

Deciding what matters most is a challenge. We can't always have it all or have it all at the same time. It is a struggle to be all the things we want to be. Setting priorities means to rank your values in order. This order may change during your life.

Look at your list of values on page 2. List them from most important to less important below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____



When I say..." I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I am saved"
I'm whispering "I get lost"
"That is why I chose this way"
When I say..."I am a Christian"
I don't speak of this with pride
I'm confessing that I stumble
and need someone to be my guide
When I say..."I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong
I'm professing that I'm weak
and pray for strength to carry on
When I say..."I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success
I'm admitting I have failed
and cannot ever pay the debt
When I say..."I am a Christian"
I'm not claiming to be perfect,
my flaws are all too visible
but God believes I'm worth it
When I say..."I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain
I have my share of heartaches
which is why I seek His name
When I say..."I am a Christian"
I do not wish to judge
I have no authority
I only know I'm loved.

By Carole Wimmer, 1988

Use your values to solve dilemmas

A dilemma is a complicated problem. It takes conscious thought and, sometimes, help from others whose ethics and maturity we trust. When two values clash, when two duties conflict, or when an ethical dilemma makes us think hard, following these steps may help you:

1. Write out the problem clearly
2. List the values that are in conflict
3. List the actions or choices you could make
4. Describe the outcomes for the possibilities in number 3
5. Now consult your *prioritized* list of values
6. Talk it out with a parent, teacher or mentor
7. Make your decision and take responsibility for the consequences



A Dilemma Story

Regina has a dilemma because of competing events this Saturday. She feels obligated to attend a family reunion 100 miles away to celebrate her grandfather's 75th birthday. Her other obligation is to her middle school basketball team and a playoff game about the same time as the reunion and birthday party.

Here is how Regina processes the dilemma:

1. She writes out the conflicting obligations, simply stating "grandpa's birthday vs play-off-game".
2. Two of her core values are in conflict, so she writes "family" and "my team sports".
3. Her choices are simple: "attend the family event or play in the game."
4. For outcomes and consequences, she describes that attending the family party will please her grandfather and those closest to her but let down her coach. On the other hand, if she plays in the game, her team will likely do better and she will fulfill her commitment as a team member. But then again, she will miss a significant event for her family and time with her cousins, whom she rarely sees and miss a precious moment with her grandfather, who is aging quickly and not very well.
5. When Regina studies her list of prioritized values, she immediately sees that she listed family first and team sports third (friends being second).
6. The difficult decision now seems more obvious to her, but not easier. She isn't ready to decide and consults her mom about the dilemma. Her mom listens and understands; she tells Regina that the hard decision remains hers to make.
7. Regina decides to follow the priorities that she established for herself and attend her grandfather's birthday party. Her mom agrees to go along when Regina tells her coach.

Sounds easy enough, but it's not. Working through the important issues, making a decision and taking the consequences helps us grow and develop a strong character.

*(Regina's Story is taken from **Ethics for Young Adults**, a student workbook by the Rev. Greg Richards, Ph.D. Copyrighted material used by permission. See Leader's List for website)*

Write out your personal code of ethics

Some people write down their personal code of ethics and look at it from time to time to see how well they are living according to their values. Draft a statement of your code.

Here is an outline to help you get started:

I want to be known as a person who is known for and truthfully lives a life of: _____

I hope to accomplish and contribute: _____

I will guide my life according to values that include: _____

*(The written material above in Step 2 is from **Ethics for Young Adults**, a student workbook by the Rev. Greg Richards, Ph.D. Copyrighted material used by permission See Leader's List for website)*

Take a look at the GFS promise to the right. Has it contributed to your personal code of ethics?

As a GFS member, I promise

To share God's love for all people

To worship and serve faithfully

To make my words true and my actions right

To grow in mind, body and spirit

To make the world a better place to live.



Step 3: Witnesses for Christ in our times

My initials _____

Being a Christian witness is more than simply 'being nice'. To be a witness is to reveal to the world that we act as we do because of who Jesus is and what God has done for us in Christ. Often it is easy to share God's love with those around us. But sometimes it is difficult. And in rare cases some may pay a terrible price for being faithful to Christ: loss of friends, loss of job, and even loss of life. Those who remain faithful to Christ through hardship and pressure to give up their faith are called martyrs. The word *martyr* simply means *a witness*, but over time, the Church has honored those who bore witness to Christ in suffering and death by specifically referring to them as **martyrs**.

In Hebrews, Paul writes that we are **surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses**, referring to saints of the Old Testament, who ran the race and finished it. Paul encourages you to be active witnesses to Christ and reminds you that you are not alone. Others have been through challenges just as you will be challenged and they have finished the race and you can finish, too.



Share ways you witness for Christ in your own life now.

Talk about people you know who witness for Christ in a way you think is important. Describe how that witness is reflected in their lives.

Remember
WHO you are,
WHERE
you're from,
& WHAT YOU
represent



Do any of the following:

1. Look up a contemporary example of a witness for Christ. Write up a summary and share it with your group.

Some ideas:

- Graham Staines – martyred in India 1999
- Annalena Tonelli – martyred in Somalia in 2002
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer – martyred in Germany in 1945
- Gayle Williams – martyred in Afghanistan in 2008
- Jonathan Daniels – martyred in Alabama in 1965

Use an extra sheet of paper to write your summary.

2. Read *Learning to Speak God from Scratch* by Jonathan Merritt and discuss. This would be a long-term project.
3. Watch a movie about a Christian martyr



Step 4: Raise your voice in your community **My initials** _____

When we commit ourselves to Christ at our baptism, we promise, among other things, to “persevere in resisting evil”, to “seek and serve Christ in all persons”, and to “strive for justice and peace among all people”. When your actions reflect these promises, you will be a better member of your community.



Together, read the Baptismal Covenant in the Book of Common Prayer (pgs 304-305). Discuss ways you can respond to your Christian responsibility in your community as outlined in this promise.

Discuss the challenges of forming opinions on community and political issues which reflect your baptismal promises.



Do any of the following:

1. Find the listing and contact information of the political representatives for your:
 - a. City
 - b. State
 - c. Country
2. Visit a regular session of government (city, county, state or national) and observe the government process.
3. Identify a national or local issue that you can relate to your understanding of Christian responsibility and write/email one of your representative about this issue.



LEADER'S LIST

www.EthicsInTheMiddle.org provides workbooks and lessons for developing and discussing ethics with older teenagers and young adults. The material is prepared by Reverend Greg Richards, an Episcopal priest based in the Diocese of Los Angeles

Think Like A Warrior by Darrin Donnelly is a sports-based book explaining five inner beliefs which can help empower a person. The underlying themes are based on Christian values.

Learning to Speak God from Scratch by Jonathan Merritt delves into the history and meaning of our sacred words and how they can be revived.