

Teacher Notecards Level 5, Quarter C— Christian Champions

Use these Teacher Notecards as a reference when teaching
Explore Scripture.*

Print on paper or cardstock. Fold in half, then fold again
along the gray line. This will create a two-sided, notecard-
sized piece for you to hold in your hand.

*The narrative form has been edited to fit on these cards. Please see the full
Explore Scripture sections of each lesson for more interactivity, application, and
content.

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Big Idea: **Dedicated Christians eagerly follow Jesus Christ through twenty centuries.**

Revelation 19:5-9

Era #1—Age of the Church

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era provides an overview. We will explore the lives of dedicated Christians who eagerly followed Jesus Christ through the past twenty centuries (picture 5C.1).

This era can be summarized into four major sections:

- **Great Commission** (AD 30) *Jesus commands His followers to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28).* Key People—Jesus Christ, apostles; Key Places—Mount of Olives, Jerusalem
- **Pentecost** (AD 30) *The Holy Spirit descends on believers, empowering them to witness about Christ (Acts 2).* People—Holy Spirit, 120 disciples; Places—Upper Room, Jerusalem

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- **Church Growth** (AD 30–2000+) *The Church expands from Jerusalem to reach all people groups (Revelation 5:9-14).* People—all true Christians; Places—all nations of the earth
- **Wedding Supper** (AD ???) *Christ and His bride, the Church, celebrate their marriage (Revelation 19:5-9).* People—Christ, all believers; Place—Heaven

Did you know that Jesus Christ will someday get married? That's right! On an appointed day in the future, Jesus will be the Groom—and guess who will be His bride? Encourage kids to respond, but don't tell them the answer unless a child responds correctly. Let's read about it! Open your Bibles to Revelation 19:5-9. Read the passage slowly and expressively.

Introduce kids to the heavenly wedding between Jesus Christ and His Bride, the Church. Emphasize that all true believers throughout Bible history and Christian history will be present at this huge celebration. Talk about how many people might be present, etc.

If time allows, you may also want to discuss how Jesus' parables in Matthew 25:1-10 and Luke 14:15-24 relate to this wedding feast.

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Champions: Christian Missionaries

God raised up heroic men and women during each generation who served Him faithfully throughout the ages. They proudly carried the Good News about Christ wherever they traveled. They remained true to Jesus and devoted their lives to His Word. God used these champions to strengthen the Church and to preserve the Bible for us today.

Era Event: Sign of the Fish

Who can guess how long Christians have identified themselves using the “fish” symbol? Encourage responses. The “sign of the fish” has a long history—nearly twenty centuries! In the days when it was illegal to worship Christ, the “sign of the fish” helped early Christians identify each other and directed believers to secret meeting places (picture 5C.2).

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The New Testament word translated “fish” is pronounced ICK-thoos (ΙΧΘΥΣ). Each letter from the Greek word for “fish” is the first letter of an important name for Jesus. The word forms an acronym:

- I = Ιησους (Jesus)
- X = Χριστος (Christ)
- Θ = Θεος (God)
- Υ = Υιος (Son)
- Σ = Σωτηρ (Savior)

When Christians drew the “fish” symbol, they were saying, “Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son, our Savior.”

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Big Idea: **Fearless Christians endure persecution and death for their faith in Christ.**

1 Peter 4:7-19

Era #2: Age of Persecution (AD 30-300)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about fearless Christians who endured persecution and death for their faith in Christ. During this time, apologist Tertullian wrote, "The blood of the martyr has become the seed of the Church." (picture 5C.3)

This era can be summarized into four major sections:

- **Christianity Outlawed** (AD 64–313) *Emperor Nero accuses Christians of burning Rome; tortures thousands.* Key People—Cruel Emperors: Nero, Domitian, Decius, and Diocletian; Martyrs: Polycarp, Perpetua, Justin Martyr, Cyprian of Carthage, Ignatius of Antioch; Key Places—the Roman Empire
- **Jerusalem Destroyed** (AD 70) *When the Jews revolt, General Titus demolishes the city and Temple.* People—Titus; Places—Jerusalem

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- **Heresies Refuted** (AD 85–150) *The apologists write to defend the true faith against false teaching.* People—Origin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement; Places—Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage
- **Church Growth** (AD 30–300) *Persecuted Christians inspire others with their heroic examples.* Missionaries—Gregory of Armenia, countless others; Places—Armenia, North Africa, France, Portugal

Study 1 Peter 4:7-19 together, paying special attention to the activities that Peter tells believers to do while face suffering. Ask kids to identify the two different kinds of suffering mentioned. Ask if they know anyone who has endured suffering for the sake of Christ.

Champion: Polycarp

Polycarp was born in AD 70. He became leader of the Church in Smyrna (point to the west coast of Turkey on the globe), one of the seven churches for whom the Apostle John received a message from God (Revelation 2:8-11). Polycarp knew John personally and had heard him teach about Jesus. Polycarp was a shining example of gentleness and humility as he led the Church in Smyrna. Those who worshiped false gods hated Polycarp because he preached Jesus as the only true

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Lord. When persecution broke out in AD 156, Polycarp became a target. He was imprisoned and charged with being a Christian.

Polycarp's Roman captors threatened him with death, but that is not really what they wanted. They were hoping to force him to deny his faith in Jesus. The Romans thought this would be a devastating blow to Christianity, causing other believers to lose faith. They ordered him to curse Christ. Polycarp replied, "I have served Him for eighty-six years, and He has never done me any wrong. How can I deny my King who saved me?"

The angry crowd demanded that Polycarp be burned at the stake. As the flames went up all around him, he prayed aloud, thanking God for the privilege of dying for his Lord, and that he was about to receive the crown of life.

Champion: Perpetua

In the year AD 202, the emperor declared Christianity an illegal religion. In the city of Carthage (in present-day Tunisia, North Africa) lived a twenty-two-year-old Christian woman named Perpetua and her infant son. Before long, Perpetua was imprisoned, along with four Christian friends and her baby. While in jail,

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her wealthy father tried to persuade her to turn from her faith, but she refused. Perpetua entrusted the care of her baby to her mother and brother. Soon, Perpetua and her friends received the death sentence. They spent their last hours in prison praying and worshiping together.

On the day of execution, the brave Christians were led into a large arena. As the crowd cheered, the men faced a bear, a wild boar, and a leopard. Next, the women were forced to endure the torture of a fierce cow. Finally, the suffering saints were sent to the executioner to be beheaded. On the way, Perpetua saw some grieving Christian friends. "Stand firm in the faith!" she called out. "Love one another, and don't let our suffering weaken you!" As the sword was brought down upon her neck, it was done carelessly and did not finish the job. In great pain, Perpetua took the executioner's trembling hand and guided his sword to her throat. Thus a young, brave woman entered the presence of her Savior.

Era Event: Catacombs

For centuries, persecuted believers worshiped together and buried their dead in underground catacombs (picture 5C.4).

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Big Idea: **Clear-thinking Christians attain respect throughout the Roman empire—and beyond.**

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Era #3: Age of Influence (AD 300-600)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about clear-thinking believers who attain respect within and even beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire (picture 5C.5).

This era can be summarized into four major sections:

- **Christianity Sanctioned** (AD 313) *Emperor Constantine officially ends persecution of believers in the west.* Key People—Constantine, Theodosius I; Key Places—Constantinople, Rome
- **Church Councils Meet** (AD 325–451) *Leaders debate doctrinal issues and write creeds to summarize beliefs.* People—Athanasius, Augustine, Cyril, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Gregory I; Places—Nicaea, Constantinople, Carthage, Ephesus, Chalcedon
- **New Testament Books Collected** (AD 367–404) *Scholars confirm 27 divinely inspired NT Books; Jerome translates the Bible into Latin.* People—Athanasius,

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Eusebius, Jerome; Places—Carthage, Bethlehem

- **Church Growth** (AD 300–600) *Influential Christians introduce the Gospel message to many people.* Missionaries—Martin, Patrick, Columba, Benedict; Places—British Isles, Afghanistan, Central Asia

When the Apostle Paul became a believer in Christ, everything changed! Instead of being an enemy of the Church, he became a staunch supporter. Paul is a great example of a Christian who served as an “ambassador of Christ” wherever he went. He wrote a letter to the Christians in Corinth, encouraging them to serve God as ambassadors whose lives would influence others.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and ask students to describe how Christians have gone from “old” to “new.” God has called every believer to stand out from the world. We are emissaries and representatives of Jesus Christ to a world that desperately needs Him!

Champion: Athanasius

The New Testament warned that heresies (false teachings) about Jesus would arise. During the fourth century, many Christians began following the teachings of a man named Arius, a church leader in Alexandria, Egypt. Locate Alexandria on a

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map. Arius claimed that Jesus was not really God, but only a created being. This false teaching came to be called Arianism, and those who believed it were known as Arians. To combat Arianism, God raised up a champion named Athanasius.

Born of Christian parents at Alexandria in AD 296, Athanasius grew to know and love the Lord during his childhood. At the age of twenty-three, Athanasius became a deacon in the Alexandrian church—about the same time that Arius began to teach his false views about Jesus. From this point forward, Athanasius spent years disputing Arianism and other false teachings. When he became the bishop of the Alexandrian Church, he always directed the Church in the simple truth of the Scriptures. Before Athanasius died, he listed twenty-seven books that he considered divine Scripture. These are the same twenty-seven books in our New Testament today.

Champion: Augustine

Augustine of Hippo was one of the leading Christian thinkers of all time. He wrote hundreds, perhaps thousands, of books, letters, and sermons that have influenced the lives of Christian leaders for 1,600 years. Yet there was a time when those who knew Augustine would not have believed that God could have any use for him.

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Augustine was born in AD 354 in Carthage, North Africa. Locate Tunisia on the globe, on the northern coast of Africa. Although Augustine's mother raised him to follow Christ, Augustine rebelled against all she taught him. He spent the first thirty-one years of his life seeking the pleasures of the world. Augustine's heart remained far from God.

One day as Augustine was thinking about his empty life, he heard what sounded like a child's voice say, “Take up and read! Take up and read!” The voice urged him again and again. Believing that God might be speaking to him, Augustine picked up a copy of the book of Romans and began to read these words (read Romans 13:12-14 aloud). Augustine sensed that God was talking directly to him. Bursting into tears, he repented of his sins and received Jesus' forgiveness. From that moment on, Augustine was a champion for Christ. He spent the remaining forty-four years as a pastor, a writer, and a defender of the Christian faith.

Era Event: The Latin Vulgate

Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, the common language of many people (picture 5C.6).

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Big Idea: **Resourceful Christians gain political power but neglect humility and holiness.**

1 Peter 5:1-11

Era #4: Age of Authority (AD 600-900)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about resourceful Christians who gain political power, but who neglect humility and holiness (picture 5C.7).

This era can be summarized into four major sections:

- **Islam Founded** (AD 610) *Muhammad declares himself "Prophet of Allah"; writes the Quran (Koran).* Key People—Muhammad; Key Places—Mecca, Jerusalem, Medina
- **Roman Empire Revived** (AD 768–814) *Pope crowns Charlemagne emperor; unifies European culture and learning.* People—Charlemagne, Alcuin, Leo III; Places—France, Germany, Italy
- **"Iconoclasm Controversy"** (AD 787) *The Nicean Council approves use of sacred images to enhance worship.* People—Leo, Gregory III, John of Damascus;

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Places—Nicea, Rome, Constantinople

- **Church Growth** (AD 600–900) *Resourceful Christians take the Gospel message into new regions.* Missionaries—Boniface, Anskar, Alopen; Places—Germany, Denmark, China

Point out that you teach because you want to pass along the faith that you have received. This is a very important principle of spiritual growth. Unfortunately, Christians have not always applied the principle. Study 1 Peter 5:1-11 together, discussing both the responsibilities of mature leaders in the Church and the role of young believers.

Champion: Gregory I

Gregory was born into a wealthy Roman family with close connections to the Church. As young Gregory grew up in the great city of Rome, little did he know that one day he would become one of its most respected and powerful leaders!

As a young man, Gregory served as a prefect of Rome, providing for the city's defense, food supply, and finances. After his father died, Gregory became a monk. He eventually became one of seven cardinal deacons of the Church. When the leader of the Roman Church died, Gregory reluctantly agreed to become Bishop of Rome.

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During the years that Gregory led the Church of Rome, his people faced famine, plague, and hostile armies. At times, Gregory believed that the end of the world was near. God strengthened Gregory to meet all those challenges and more: he promoted plainsong in the Church (now called the "Gregorian chant") and he encouraged artists to paint beautiful illustrations of Christ's life (because many people could not read). Gregory became one of the most important medieval leaders. His energy and wisdom greatly strengthened the western Church.

Champion: Charlemagne

Charlemagne was the most famous ruler during the Middle Ages. A tall, mighty warrior, he conquered European lands until, by AD 800, Charlemagne ruled the region that includes modern-day France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and most of Italy. Locate these countries on a map. On Christmas Day, the pope crowned Charlemagne "Emperor of the Romans." This began a powerful and complex union between the government and the Church that lasted 800 years.

Charlemagne possessed many good leadership qualities. He set up policies that helped feed and clothe poor farming families of Europe. With the help of his friend, Alcuin, Charlemagne improved education by starting schools and staffing them

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with excellent teachers. Many church leaders received their training there. During Charlemagne's reign, many outward aspects of the Church grew stronger.

However, during this era the internal, spiritual condition of many Christian leaders became weak. Lands were conquered, officials were appointed, and laws were enacted that were motivated more by ego and greed than spiritual conviction. These selfish examples stood in sharp contrast to their suffering predecessors who gave up everything to follow Jesus.

Era Event: Rise of Islam

During this time of spiritual neglect and complacency, another major religion emerged—Islam. For centuries to come, Christianity and Islam would compete for the souls of the world.

Followers of the religion of Islam are called Muslims. Islam spread rapidly and invaded lands that once were firmly Christian. Muslims aggressively pushed their beliefs on people, even using military force to "convert" people. Sadly, most Christians had become lazy and indifferent. The average believer forgot or ignored Jesus' command to make disciples. While Muslims were militant and zealous, Christians were passive (picture 5C.8).

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Big Idea: **Political Christians compete for power, splitting the Church between East and West.**

1 Corinthians 3:1-15

Era #5: Age of Division (AD 900-1100)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about political Christians who compete for power, splitting the Church between the East and West (picture 5C.9).

This era can be summarized into four major sections:

- **Monasteries Established** (AD 600–1500) *Regional centers of service and learning flourish throughout Europe.* Key People—William of Aquitaine, Raymond de Puy, Robert of Molesme; Key Places—throughout Europe
- **Islam Expanded** (AD 650–1250) *Muslim armies invade Persia and threaten Eastern churches.* People—al-Shafi'i, al-Ghazzali; Places—Northern Africa, Central Asia
- **“The Great Schism”** (AD 1054) *Church leaders in the West and East compete for power, sever official ties.* People—Leo IX, Cardinal Humbart, Cerularius; Places—Rome, Constantinople

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- **Church Growth** (AD 900–1100) *Devout Christians travel to northern and eastern lands with the Gospel message.* Missionaries—Cyril & Methodius, Lief Ericson; Places—Russia, Ukraine, Bohemia, Greenland

Jesus prayed that His followers would remain “one.” Read John 17:20-23. “Oneness” has sometimes been difficult to maintain among Christians. Many issues that divide churches are not Scriptural reasons; instead they are trivial and nitpicky, based on personal preferences. Other issues are based on important doctrinal matters that must be resolved carefully and wisely.

During his second missionary journey, Paul preached in the city of Corinth for eighteen months, establishing a church there. But after he left, Paul heard disturbing news that divisions had formed among the Corinthian Christians. Paul responded by writing this letter to correct their immature behavior. Study 1 Corinthians 3:1-15 together.

Champion: Vladimir of Russia

Use a map to identify Ukraine and the bordering region of Russia. For most of the twentieth century, atheists ruled this part of the world. A thousand years ago, however, a Russian prince made sure that the entire country knew about the true God.

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When he came to power, Prince Vladimir was a wild, cruel, and selfish man. He fought and defeated his two brothers for the right to rule. Once in power, he set up idols and built temples where horrible acts of pagan worship were committed. He earned the reputation of being a ruthless man.

In the eighth year of his reign, Vladimir realized that if his country had religion, it would unify the people. He assigned men to go explore various religions and return recommending one of them. These investigators observed Judaism, and Islam, but were most impressed with what they saw at a worship service in Constantinople. The prince followed their recommendation, choosing Eastern Orthodox Christianity as the religion of Russia.

Vladimir took his commitment to Christianity seriously. He tore down idols and pagan temples and replaced them with churches and schools where the Gospel would be taught. He turned from his own sinful and excessive lifestyle. Vladimir's life ended at the hands of rebels during a pagan uprising. On his deathbed, this once selfish, cruel man gave everything he owned to the poor.

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Champion: Anselm

Another division that took place during this period involved the struggle for power that existed between church leaders and government leaders. At the center of this dispute was a theologian named Anselm. Born in northern Italy one thousand years after Jesus' death and resurrection, Anselm left home after an argument with his father. For a number of years he wandered around Europe, until he finally settled down and joined a monastery. He was a brilliant thinker and became known for his logical argument for the existence of God. He also used logic to explain why God became a man. While some might say, “I'll believe after I understand,” Anselm said, “I believe so that I can understand.”

In 1093, Anselm was named Archbishop of Canterbury in south England. This began an ongoing struggle with two successive English kings who wanted to exercise control over Church matters. Anselm stood so firmly against this that both kings ended up exiling him from England. The dispute over who had the greatest authority, Church or state, continued long after Anselm's death in 1109.

Era Event: Monasteries

Throughout Europe, North Africa, and the New World, Christians established monasteries, centers of learning and service (picture 5C.10).

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Big Idea: **Aroused Christians rally to fight for the Church against Islamic invasions.**

Ezekiel 36:18-38

Era #6: Age of Crusades (AD 1100-1300)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about aroused Christians who rally to fight for the Church against Islamic invasions (picture 5C.11).

This era can be summarized into five major sections:

- **Cathedrals Built** (AD 900–1500) *Regional centers of church authority spawn leading universities.* Key People—regional Bishops; Key Places—Europe
- **Crusades Organized** (AD 1096–1291) *Zealous Crusaders battle Muslims who control the Holy Land.* People—Innocent III, Louis VII, Bernard of Clairvaux, Saladin; Places—Jerusalem, Egypt, Damascus
- **Scholarship Renewed** (AD 1100–1300) *Church scholars voice their views through writing and reason.* People—Peter Abelard, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas; Places—Oxford, Paris, Bologna, Cambridge

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- **Rome Challenged** (AD 1215–1600) *Spiritual decay permeates Rome; renewal movements reject church authority.* People—Peter Waldo; Places—France, Bohemia
- **Church Growth** (AD 1100–1300) *Clear-thinking Christians focus on reaching out to others.* Missionaries—Francis of Assisi, Dominic Guzman; Places—Italy, Scandinavia

Ezekiel's message provides insight into the era of the Crusades as well as today. Ezekiel was a prophet and priest who lived in Jerusalem. But in 597 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar deported him to Babylon, along with other Jewish captives. Ezekiel explains that the Jews had not conducted themselves like God's people. Instead of trusting God during the years before their captivity, they had relied on human insights and political solutions. But to honor His holy Name, God would soon act to redeem His people: cleansing them, giving them a new heart and spirit, and gathering them back to the land. Study Ezekiel 36:18-38 together. Emphasize that God cares about the Jewish people and He will fulfill His Word regarding Israel.

Champion: Bernard of Clairvaux

Bernard's father was a noble Frenchman who fought in the First Crusade. Early in Bernard's life it became clear that he loved to learn. After coming to know Jesus in a personal way, his studies focused on the Scriptures, early Church writers, and

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God's beautiful creation. His appreciation of nature motivated him to establish a serene monastery at Clairvaux, which many monks joined. Bernard taught about a personal experience with Christ, and he believed that the way a person lives should reflect his deep love for Jesus. He earned great respect from both government and church leaders.

Before the Second Crusade, Bernard preached with such passion that entire villages joined the movement. They were willing to lay down their lives in battle. However, disease, starvation, and distrust between rulers doomed this crusade to failure. This caused Bernard great grief.

In addition to his work in education and Christian service, Bernard wrote many hymns, some of which are still sung today. His songs express a deep love for Jesus.

Champion: Peter Waldo

Shortly after Bernard's death, a movement began in France that contradicted the thinking of church leaders, but gained popularity among common people. A wealthy merchant named Peter Waldo heard a man singing a song that told of a young man who left home and returned later as a beggar, though none of his

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family recognized him until his death. Peter was so moved by this song that he set aside just enough money to care for his family, and he distributed the rest of his wealth to the poor. From that time on, Peter devoted his life to sharing the Gospel with the poor. Others joined him. In groups of two they went out, wearing the simplest of clothing and preaching the greatest news ever.

These Christians, who came to be known as Waldensians, were a blessing to common people but a threat to church leaders who ordered them to stop preaching. To this Peter replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29) The Waldensians continued to preach boldly—even though it cost them great suffering. For hundreds of years, these humble people were severely persecuted. Many lost their lives because they chose to obey Jesus' words.

Era Event: Chivalry

Chivalry refers to the concept of knighthood—the customs, practices, social system, and personal ideals associated with knights and their way of life (picture 5C.12).

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Big Idea: **Distressed Christians plead for change in the worldly Church.**

Romans 12

Era #7: Age of Unrest (AD 1300-1500)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about distressed Christians who plead for change in the worldly Church (picture 5C.13).

This era can be summarized into four major sections:

- **Opposition Suppressed** (AD 1184–1500) *Church leaders silence those who challenge their authority.* Key People—Wycliffe, Huss, Savanarola, Joan of Arc; Key Places—England, Bohemia, Italy
- **“Papal Schism”** (AD 1309–1417) *Several popes claim authority over the church; they reign simultaneously.* People—Urban VI, Clement VII; Places—Rome, Avignon (France)
- **Printing Press Invented** (AD 1440) *Gutenberg prints the Vulgate Bible; books become accessible to many.* People—Johannes Gutenberg; Place—Germany
- **Church Growth** (AD 1300–1500) *Valiant Christians take the Gospel message to the*

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common people. Missionaries—Raymond Lull; Places—North Africa, West Africa

The Apostle Paul wrote an inspired letter to the church in Rome, teaching them how to imitate Jesus Christ instead of the world. 1400 years later, the corrupt Roman church was in desperate need for Paul's antidote to its problems. The unhealthy state of the Church in Paul's day, in the Middle Ages, and today is directly related to the same problem: worldliness increases when God's Word is neglected or ignored. As long as human words carry equal or even greater weight than Scripture, Christians cannot be transformed into Jesus' image. Study Romans 12 together, identifying steps that lead to spiritual transformation.

Champion: John Wycliffe

John Wycliffe (WICK-liff) is remembered as the “Morning Star of the Reformation” because his views influenced later champions who ignited a much-needed Reformation in the Church. Wycliffe recognized that the only way to turn the tide of corruption in the Church was to make God's Word available to more people.

A great thinker who taught at Oxford University, Wycliffe once enjoyed the political backing of the English government. But as he challenged many church beliefs and practices, his English supporters forsook him. Some of Wycliffe's beliefs may not seem radical now, but they caused quite a stir in his day; only the

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Scriptures are infallible, not rules made by the Church; ministers are supposed to serve people, not rule over them; Jesus is Head of the Church, not the pope. Views like these made Wycliffe an enemy of the church in Rome. His teachings were condemned, and he was labeled a “heretic.”

Wycliffe believed that because Scripture is the standard by which all Christians should live, then it is absolutely necessary for common people to have access to the Bible. So Wycliffe undertook the first English Bible translation. John Wycliffe died of natural causes, but forty-four years later, his enemies dug up his bones and burned them.

Champion: John Huss

John Huss grew up in a poor family in Bohemia, known today as the Czech Republic. Locate this area of Europe on a map. Through diligent study, John eventually became the president of the University of Prague, preaching twice each day in that city's Bethlehem Chapel.

As Huss observed the abusive practices of many church leaders, he could not remain silent. He preached boldly, showing from Scripture how wrong those

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things were. Though many people were glad to hear the truths he taught from the Bible, the powerful religious leaders were not. Huss was criticized and ridiculed. The archbishop of Prague even collected his books and set them afire in the courtyard.

Eventually, the church in Rome ordered Huss to stop preaching altogether, but he refused. As a result, he was excommunicated from the Church. Shortly after this, Huss was ordered to stand trial. The trial was filled with lies and false accusations. It was clear that Huss' enemies were not really interested in the truth. They had already made up their minds to silence him once and for all. Huss was charged as a heretic and burned at the stake.

John Huss experienced mistreatment just as Jesus did. Like Christ, people who could not bear to hear the truth hated him. Both Huss and Jesus were falsely accused in an unfair trial. And like Christ, Huss died bravely, telling his heavenly Father, “Into Your hands I commend my spirit.”

Era Event: The Printing Press

Gutenberg's printing press made the Bible and other books accessible to more people (picture 5C.14).

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Big Idea: **Resolute Christians sever the authority of the controlling Church.**

Romans 5:1-11

Era #8: Age of Reform (AD 1500-1600)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about resolute Christians who sever the authority of the controlling Church in Rome (picture 5C.15).

This era can be summarized into five major sections:

- **Renaissance Introduced** (AD 1450–1600) *Humanists rekindle interest in arts, literature, and Greco-Roman heritage.* Key People—Erasmus, Colet, D’Etaples; Key Places—Italy, France
- **Reformation Sparked** (AD 1517–21) *Luther posts 95 Theses; stands for his convictions at the Diet of Worms.* People—Luther, Melancthon; Places—Germany
- **Protestantism Birthed** (AD 1520–) *Reformers lead opposition to Roman Catholic doctrine and practice; many follow.* People—Zwingli, Tyndale, Calvin, Knox; Places—Switzerland, England

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- **Counter-Reformation Organized** (AD 1545–63) *Roman Catholics seek to correct issues at the Council of Trent.* People—Pius V, Borromeo, Contarini, Loyola; Places—Italy
- **Church Growth** (AD 1500–1600) *Resolute Christians take the Gospel message into new continents.* Missionaries—Francis Xavier, Bartolome de Las Casas; Places—Mexico, Central America, Japan, Southeast Asia

The 16th century Church had grown very worldly. Biblical ignorance made it possible for self-serving men to come up with rules that benefited them. They presented their ideas as God’s ideas, manipulating the people into submission.

Study Romans 5:1-11 together, emphasizing that people are made right with God not by works, but by faith in the finished work of Christ on their behalf.

Champion: Martin Luther

Martin Luther was born nine years before Christopher Columbus sailed to America. One day while he was studying law, he found a copy of the Bible. He had never even seen one before (most people of his day hadn’t), much less read it. Once he started reading, Luther could hardly put it down. The Scriptures gripped his hungry heart. Luther became a monk.

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As a monk, Luther did all the things the church leaders taught to find peace for his soul, but he grew more miserable. Luther felt no closer to God—and more sinful than ever! At last, while reading the book of Romans, he understood that he had been trying to please God through human effort, but the Bible clearly taught that only faith could make him right with God. At that moment, Martin Luther believed that Jesus had died to forgive his sins.

Once he knew the truth, Luther challenged the false teachings of the Church. He wrote down 95 teachings of the Church that disagreed with the Bible and nailed the list to a church door at Wittenberg, where he was a professor (picture 5C.16). Luther was summoned to a special council at Worms, Germany to explain his actions. He was ordered to retract his beliefs, but Luther firmly refused, insisting that Scripture was on his side. The Roman church excommunicated him.

Luther’s courage and teachings inspired others who also saw need for reform. This movement came to be known as the Reformation.

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Champion: William Tyndale

William Tyndale was another brave man who wanted people to be able to read the Bible for themselves. Tyndale was a scholar who understood the Hebrew and Greek languages. He wanted to provide an English Bible translated directly from Hebrew and Greek—the original languages of the Bible. But the Church of England forbade Tyndale to work on this project.

Instead of giving up, Tyndale sailed to Germany to do the work that God had called him to do. Within two years, thousands of copies of his English New Testament were printed. The English authorities, however, were determined to stop Tyndale. They made a raid on his printer, and he had to find a safer place to produce his books. He fled to Antwerp, Belgium, where he hid his illegal New Testaments in barrels of grain and shipped them to England.

Tyndale’s faith and strong desire to see his countrymen read their very own Bibles helped him endure much hardship. English spies trailed him wherever he went. Eventually a “friend” betrayed him in Antwerp. Before Tyndale was strangled and his body burned, his last words were a prayer, “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.” Amazingly, within two years, England’s King Henry VIII welcomed the English translation, giving orders for it to be used in every church in the land!

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Big Idea: **Devout Christians establish churches and societies based on the Bible.**

Titus 2:11-15

Era #9: Age of Piety (AD 1600-1700)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about devout Christians who establish churches and societies based on the Bible (picture 5C.17).

This era can be summarized into five major sections:

- **Anabaptists Opposed** (AD 1525–1800) *Protestants who receive “believer’s baptism” (ana = again) are persecuted.* Key People—Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Menno Simons; Key Places—Switzerland, Holland, England
- **Puritans Established** (AD 1580–1800) *English separatists hope to purify the Church from all Roman Catholic ideas.* People—Henry Jacobs, Thomas Cartwright, Oliver Cromwell; Places—England, Holland
- **Deism Fostered** (AD 1630–1800) *Deists believe that God set the universe in motion—but He no longer interferes.* People—Rene’ Descartes, John Locke,

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Thomas Woolston; Places—France, England

- **Pietism Promoted** (AD 1660–1800) *Protestants learn to study the Bible and pursue personal holiness.* People—Philip Spener, George Fox, Johann Arndt, August Francke; Places—Germany, England
- **Church Growth** (AD 1600–1700) *Devout Christians promote religious freedom for all.* Missionaries—Matteo Ricci, John Eliot, Roberto de Nobili; Places—China, India, New England

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote a personal letter to his good friend, Titus. Paul wrote from a prison cell in Rome. What do you think Paul wanted to tell his friend? Encourage kids to respond. Paul had many things to say, but the most important thing that Paul wanted to tell Titus was to stay close to the Lord. Paul wanted to make sure that Titus did not forget to keep God “number one” in his life. At the end of his letter, Paul reminded Titus that one day Jesus would come back and reward him for all the things he had done for the Lord. Study Titus 2:11-15 together.

Champion: George Fox

Young George Fox was hungry for something that the 17th century Church of England didn't offer. At the age of eleven, he had felt God's presence, and through-

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out his early years he worked hard to be close to God. As a nineteen-year-old, Fox left home on a spiritual quest. He soon realized that only Jesus Christ could satisfy his spiritual hunger.

For years, Fox preached in England about enjoying a personal relationship with Christ and living a holy life. His teachings sounded very strange to most people of his day, and he suffered because of it. George Fox was imprisoned, pounded with sticks, and even beaten with a heavy, brass-bound Bible. But this didn't slow him down. Believing that Jesus wanted His followers to live in peace as friends (John 15:14), he started the “Society of Friends,” a group of believers who came to be known as “Quakers.”

Outsiders ridiculed the Quakers for their beliefs. In time, a prominent Quaker named William Penn established a colony in America where Quakers were able to worship freely. This colony was called Pennsylvania (“Penn's woods”). Meanwhile, George Fox kept living and teaching the principles for which he had so often been persecuted. When he died in 1691, Fox left behind a journal of his experiences and insights—which was published and read by many people.

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Champion: Philipp Spener

While the Quakers' emphasis on holy living was felt in England and in the American colonies, another voice arose in Germany. Philipp Spener intensely wanted to see fresh vitality come into the dry, empty churches of his day. Spener became a minister who was known for his piety. He encouraged other pastors and common people to meet for prayer and Bible study together.

Spener preached that being a church member was not enough. A person must be a friend of Jesus Christ. People know God through a personal relationship with Him, not through religious rules. Spener also taught that true faith should result in a lifestyle of doing good deeds—and he lived by this standard. His social works included helping poor, uneducated children and establishing homes for people with special needs. Though some opposed his efforts, many people in Germany listened to Philipp Spener's teachings and followed his personal example.

Era Event: The Puritans

Puritans were English separatists who hoped to purify the Church from all Roman Catholic ideas. These devout Christians loved Jesus and tried to make God's Word central to everything they did (picture 5C.16).

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Big Idea: **Fervent Christians revive the faith of individuals and nations.**

Colossians 1:1-14

Era #10: Age of Awakening (AD 1700-1800)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about fervent Christians who revive the faith of individuals and nations (picture 5C.19).

This era can be summarized into five major sections:

- **“Reason” Exalted** (AD 1650–1800) *Philosophers promote scientific reasoning above practical experience.* Key People—John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant; Key Places—Germany
- **Believers Awakened** (AD 1730–60) *The Church renews its responsibility to fear God and to preach evangelism.* People—John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards; Places—England, United States
- **Revivals Ignited** (AD 1750–1900) *Preachers take the Good News to the unchurched, leading many to salvation.* People—Campbell, Finney, Moody, Monod, M'Cheyne; Places—Wales, Scotland, United States

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- **Revolutions Fought** (AD 1770–1800) *People reject exploitation, overthrow tyranny, and establish new governments.* People—John Adams, George Washington, Napoleon; Places—United States, France
- **Church Growth** (AD 1700–1800) *Fervent Christians ignite fires of faith in individuals and nations.* Missionaries—Carey, von Zinzendorf (Moravians), Schmidt, Brainerd; Places—India, Virgin Islands, South Africa

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the believers in Colosse whom he had never met. Paul had heard about the faith and love of these Christians and he wanted to encourage them—because they were facing some difficult challenges.

Paul begins his letter by telling the Colossians that he often prays for them. Paul knows that prayer awakens individuals and churches to their needs. God loves to answer prayers! Study Colossians 1:1-14 together.

Champion: John Wesley

John Wesley and his younger brother, Charles, were brought up to honor God and His Word. When they were young men, John and Charles started a club devoted to holy living. Club members read the Bible together, encouraged each other to obey God's laws, and did acts of charity. Their club grew. They were eventually called “Methodists” because they strictly observed many rules. Though they

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tried to live holy lives, and John became a pastor when he was twenty-three, John and Charles had not yet experienced salvation!

In 1735, during a severe storm at sea, the unwavering faith of Moravian Christians opened the Wesleys' eyes to their own spiritual need. Martin Luther's writings convinced both John and Charles to place their faith in Jesus and receive the gift of eternal life. Soon Charles became an evangelist and songwriter, writing more than 7,000 hymns. John became a tireless open-air preacher of the Gospel. He often said, “The world is my congregation.” Sometimes he would preach four or five times each day. John set up “societies” or Methodist groups that trained new Christians. During his lifetime, John Wesley traveled more than 250,000 miles on horseback.

Champion: Jonathan Edwards

While England was stirred by men like John Wesley, America was beginning to have a spiritual awakening of its own. Jonathan Edwards was one of the leaders. Edwards was extremely intelligent, learning Latin as a six-year-old and mastering Hebrew and Greek by the time he was thirteen. In fact, he graduated from Yale University at the age of seventeen! That same year, Edwards gave his heart to Jesus.

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Edwards became a minister and devoted himself to working among the Mohawk tribe and to leading his Massachusetts congregation. As a preacher, he moved his listeners' hearts and minds. Unsaved people heard his sermons and felt lost and hopeless because of their sins—many turned to Christ. During this time of spiritual revival, some people criticized Edwards for stirring up peoples' emotions, but he was highly respected for his ability to speak to both the heart and the mind.

Edwards became the president of Princeton University in 1758, but became ill and died within a month. He left behind many books he had written that helped to shape spiritual life in America during the next century.

Era Event: Haystack Prayer Meeting

In August 1806, five students from Williams College gathered in a field to discuss the spiritual needs of the people in Asia. A sudden rainstorm forced them to run for cover beneath a haystack. During the shower, they prayed for people around the world who needed forgiveness and new life through Christ. Many view the Haystack Prayer Meeting as the key event for the development of Protestant missions. Within fifty years, the organization formed by these students sent out more than 1,250 missionaries. Most were from small New England towns and farm villages (picture 5C.20).

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Big Idea: **Determined Christians ignite a passion to reach the entire world for Christ.**

Romans 10:11-15

Era #11: Age of Missions (AD 1800-1900)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about determined Christians who ignite a passion to reach the entire world for Christ (picture 5C.21).

This era can be summarized into five major sections:

- **Exploitation Opposed** (AD 1780–1900) *Christians reform social ills: slavery, alcohol, women's rights, child labor.* Key People—Raikes, Mueller, Wilberforce, Willard, Howard; Key Places—England, Africa, United States
- **Missionary Societies Formed** (AD 1800–) *Mission boards commission men and women to evangelize the world.* People—William Carey, Hudson Taylor; Places—England, United States
- **Liberalism Introduced** (AD 1810–) *Theologians discredit "supernatural" events and the Bible's inspiration.* People—Schleiermacher, Ritshul, Wellhausen;

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Place—Germany

- **Armenians Martyred** (AD 1894-96) *Militant Muslims massacre as many as 300,000 Armenian believers.* People—Sultan Hamid; Place—Armenia
- **Church Growth** (AD 1800–1900) *Determined Christians take the Gospel message into uncharted regions.* Missionaries—Judson, Taylor, Slessor, Livingstone; Places—Burma, China, Nigeria, Africa

The Great Commission is God's plan for Jesus' followers to make disciples everywhere they go—in every nation of the world! Telling every person on earth is a huge task that requires great effort from all of Jesus' followers—including each of us!

The Apostle Paul was passionate about the Great Commission. He knew that anyone who calls upon Jesus' name can be saved. Through the centuries, Paul's appeal in Romans 10:14-15 has motivated many, many people to become messengers and missionaries to all parts of the globe. Study Romans 10:11-15 together.

Champion: William Wilberforce

While European and American missionaries were helping people around the world, Western civilization was engaged in the wicked practice of slave trading. To combat this great evil, God raised up a champion named William Wilberforce.

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William was a devout Christian who probably could have served Jesus in many ways. Early in his life he considered becoming a minister. Instead, God placed him in the British Parliament where the Lord opened a door of opportunity through which William could influence the world. A friend named John Newton (author of the hymn, Amazing Grace), who had been a slave trader before his conversion to Christ, convinced William that God called him into politics. As a Member of Parliament, his primary goal was to end slavery.

Throughout his career, William's convictions regarding slavery never softened. Beginning in 1788, William tried to win approval of his anti-slavery act every year. For eighteen consecutive years it was voted down, but his persistence finally paid off. In 1807 the British slave trade was abolished. There was more to be done, however, and William pressed on. He would not rest until slavery was illegal in the entire British Commonwealth. In 1833, just four days before his death, his dream became reality. 800,000 slaves were set free! (Thirty years later, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in America.)

Champion: Hudson Taylor

Even as a five-year-old, Hudson Taylor knew he'd become a missionary. By the age

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of seventeen, he pinpointed the region of the world where he would go—China. But unlike other missionaries in China, Hudson was not content to stay along the coast. He wanted to move inland, where people had never heard the Gospel.

Hudson's style of ministry raised many eyebrows and drew much criticism. Missionaries usually brought their western ways with them. Hudson decided to live among the Chinese people and to become much like one of them. He shaved his head, wore a long braid which he dyed black, dressed in Chinese clothes, and ate their food. By becoming like the Chinese people, Hudson gained acceptance and was welcomed.

Hudson Taylor's example and ideas have motivated many other missionaries. His influence on missions has been enormous. After his innovative methods proved to be successful, Hudson started the China Inland Mission (CIM). When he died in 1905, CIM had 205 mission stations and 849 missionaries. Most important of all, more than 100,000 Chinese had become Christians!

Era Event: Slavery Abolished

During the 19th century, slavery was an issue that divided many Christians. In England, it took years of political debate to end slavery. In the United States, slavery was finally resolved through a Civil War that cost many thousands of lives (picture 5C.22).

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Big Idea: **Focused Christians launch ministries to reach people in specific segments of society.**

2 Corinthians 4:1-7

Era #12: Age of Ministries (AD 1900-2000+)

We are building a Christian history timeline and learning about champions who lived during each era. Today's era is about focused Christians who launch ministries to reach people in specific segments of society (picture 5C.23).

This era can be summarized into five major sections:

- **Ministries Started** (AD 1900–2000+) *Christians establish ministries to penetrate specific segments of society.* Key People—William Booth, Cameron Townsend, Teresa of Calcutta; Key Places—primarily in Western Nations
- **Cooperation Encouraged** (AD 1925–) *Evangelical and mainline denominations form supportive associations.* People—“National Association of Evangelicals”/“World Council of Churches”; Places—International
- **Mass Evangelism Introduced** (AD 1950–) *Broadcast technology opens new opportunities to promote the Gospel.* People—Billy Graham, Luis Palau, Bill Bright,

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“Jesus” film; Places—Worldwide

- **Vatican II Council Convened** (AD 1962–65) *Roman Catholics promote healing, renewal, and outreach.* People—Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI; Place—Rome
- **Church Growth** (AD 1900–2000+) *Focused Christians take the Gospel message into Third World countries.* Missionaries—Gladys Aylward, Eric Liddell, Amy Carmichael; Places—China, India, Africa, Asia, Pacific Rim

In the Old Testament, only the priests offered sacrifices, led worship, determined the will of God, and interpreted the Law. Common people did not enjoy direct access to God. But through Jesus Christ, our great Mediator and High Priest, every Christian has direct access to God. Believers have become a “holy priesthood” and can minister to one another and to the world.

Now, all believers are ministers. All of us who know that Jesus died to forgive our sins and rose to give us new lives are priests and ministers. God has a ministry for every Christian. How many of you know what your ministry is? Encourage responses. It is up to each of us to listen to God's Spirit and to take action on whatever He says. It is exciting to know that God calls each of us to depend on His power to selflessly minister to others. Study 2 Corinthians 4:1-7 together.

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Champions: William and Catherine Booth

William and Catherine Booth gave up comfort and privilege to reach London's poor, homeless, and destitute with the Gospel message. They decided these people needed their own church and founded the East London Christian Mission.

In May of 1878, Booth read a proof of the Christian Mission's annual report. At the top it read: “The Christian Mission is a Volunteer Army.” Booth's friend strongly objected to this wording. He was not a volunteer: he was compelled to do God's work. So, in a flash of inspiration, Booth crossed out “Volunteer” and wrote “Salvation.” The Salvation Army was born.

Now, in more than 106 nations around the world, the Salvation Army continues to work where the need is greatest, guided by faith in God and love for all people.

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Champion: Cameron Townsend

When young Cameron Townsend discovered that the Cakchiquels in Guatemala did not have a written form of their own language, he began living among them. He learned their complex language, created an alphabet for it, analyzed the grammar, and translated the New Testament in the remarkably short span of ten years.

Convinced that every man, woman, and child should be able to read God's Word in their own language, Townsend and like-minded colleagues founded “Camp Wycliffe” in 1934 as a linguistics training school. Today, Wycliffe Bible Translators has been involved in more than 700 New Testament or Bible translations, and hundreds more are in progress.

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Champion: Teresa of Calcutta

Teresa knew from the age of twelve she would become a missionary. Upon becoming a teacher at a Catholic high school in Calcutta, India, Teresa was moved by the extreme poverty just outside her door. She began working with those “poorest of the poor,” and formed the “Missionaries of Charity.” For almost fifty years, “Mother Teresa” devoted her life to helping those who could not help themselves. Her example became a definitive model of Christian love and service to the entire world.

Champion: Billy Graham

In part due to the benefits of mass media such as television, Billy Graham may be the most well known evangelist in the world. It is estimated he has delivered Jesus’ message to nearly 215 million people in more than 185 countries. Graham has counseled presidents and world leaders yet has never forgotten his humble position as God’s servant. In his own words, “My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which, I believe, comes through knowing Christ.”

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**Era Event: Dead Sea Scrolls**

The Dead Sea scrolls are ancient manuscripts discovered in caves near the Dead Sea (close to Jerusalem). Some of the 900 scrolls are copies of Old Testament Bible books. They show how God has carefully preserved His Word through thousands of years (picture 5C.24).

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