

God's Holy Day

STEP 1 Life Need (5–10 minutes)

- Draw symbols of holidays in a game format.
 - ☐ Index cards
 - ☐ Pencils or pens
 - ☐ Whiteboard and markers
 - ☒ Clock or watch

STEP 2 Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

- Complete a Bible study about the Lord's Day.
- *Optional:* Students talk about the service.
 - ☐ Bibles
 - ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
 - ☐ Paper, pencils or pens

STEP 3 Bible Application (5–10 minutes)

- Discuss the importance of Christians meeting together.
- *Optional:* *Blueprint* page about silly laws.
 - ☐ Bibles
 - ☐ (Optional) "Blue Laws" from *Blueprint*
 - ☐ (Optional) pencils or pens, posterboard and markers

STEP 4 Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Evaluate Sunday activities in light of God's purpose for the Sabbath.
- *Optional:* Follow up on journaling.
 - ☐ "A Day Apart" from *Blueprint*
 - ☐ Pencils or pens and journals (from last week)
 - ☐ (Optional) "Quiz/Journal" from *Blueprint*

Memory Verse

Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

—Hebrews 10:25

Bible Basis:

A regular day appointed as holy (Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11), a covenant sign for Israel (Exod. 31:13), worship for Christians (Acts 20:7), and giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Bible Truth:

The Lord's Day is especially given for rest, God's service, praise, and the believer's spiritual growth.

Lesson Aim:

That your students discover wise ways to spend the Lord's Day.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

According to Genesis 2:1-3 God performed three divine acts on the seventh day of Creation. First, He rested, not because He was exhausted, but because He was well pleased with His creation. Second, God blessed the seventh day; and third, He made the day holy.

God instituted a balance of work and rest for human-kind. He decreed that the Israelites were to remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy (Exod. 20:8-11). In Hebrew, *Sabbath* means to cease or rest. Just as God rested after His work was completed, so the Israelites were to rest. Spiritually speaking, the Sabbath rest also served as a shadow or type of the Christians' rest in Christ the Savior (Heb. 4:9-11).

In Exodus 31:13, God declared that the Sabbath was a covenant sign between Him and His chosen people. Just as the Sabbath was set apart as holy and special, so the Israelites were set apart as holy and special.

In the period between the Old and New Testaments, oral tradition grew among the Jews until a large body of regulations about the Sabbath developed. Most of these were to define the meaning of "work." By the time of Christ, the joy of a weekly day of rest and worship had turned into a chore of maintaining legal restrictions.

After Jesus' resurrection, believers began to celebrate

Continued on next page

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE —cont'd

Sunday as the new day for worship. In Acts 20:7, Luke recorded that believers in Troas came together on the first day of the week. Paul instructed the Corinthian believers to bring their collections on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The phrase “the Lord’s Day” is often used to describe the first day of the week, because Jesus rose from the dead on that day.

TIPS**CLASSROOM**

Be sensitive to the students whose families may not attend church on a regular basis. Don’t make snap judgments of people who don’t keep the Lord’s Day holy. You might want to send these students a note, telling them how much you appreciate their presence in class. (Perhaps you can invite a few students over for Sunday dinner!)

PRESESSION ACTIVITY

Objective: To brainstorm different ways to rest, worship, and enjoy the Lord’s Day.

- ☐ Poster board and markers
- ☐ Newspaper travel section

As students arrive, pass out poster board and different colors of markers. Ask students to create advertisements for activities that could take place on the Lord’s Day. Brainstorm the many ways to worship and to spend time in rest and recreation.



You may want to use the movie or travel section from the newspaper to generate ideas of how to promote recreation. They may want to work on this activity in groups of two or three. Place their finished posters around the room or in the hallway. Make it a fun, lighthearted activity as a stepping-stone to a deeper discussion of God-centered ways to celebrate His day.

Understanding Your Students

Free time is one of the joys of adolescence. The weekend is a wonderful recess from school, which rules a teenager’s schedule during the week. They love the freedom of hanging out and being able to “go with the flow” of things.

Perhaps that’s one reason why some young people complain about sitting through a worship service. In their eyes, there’s nothing spontaneous or enjoyable about going to church.

Your goal is to help them understand that the Lord’s Day isn’t an extension of the weekend.

They can begin to practice the commandment to keep the Lord’s Day special. Sunday (or whatever day it is you worship) doesn’t have to be a day of “shoulds” and “ought-tos.” Instead, the Lord’s Day is an opportunity to experience something different from the rest of the week’s schedule. God’s day, His way, gives us all a chance to be renewed—emotionally, spiritually, and physically.



STEP 1

Life Need
(5–10 minutes)

Lesson Aim:

That your students discover wise ways to spend the Lord's Day.

Some of your teens will draw symbols of holidays while others guess the day. Then, they'll discuss the significance of holidays.

Materials:

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers
- ☒ Clock or watch with second hand

Have your teens write one of their favorite holidays on separate index cards. Collect the cards and divide your class into two teams. Have both teams take turns selecting a card and drawing symbols of that holiday on a whiteboard. Have other team members try to guess the holiday. Give each team 30 seconds. After all holidays are identified, ask:

- ▶ **What makes a holiday special?** *(It honors or remembers a person or event; it is a day different from others; it includes fun traditions; it's a time for families and friends to get together.)*
- ▶ **What is your favorite holiday? Why?** *(Answers will vary. Allow various teens to share.)*
- ▶ **What is your least favorite holiday? Why?** *(Answers will vary. Allow various teens to share.)*
- ▶ **Why do we anticipate some holidays more than others?** *(Because of the celebration attached; personal reasons; family traditions; presents received, etc.)*
- ▶ **What about holidays that honor our country? How do you think those days should be spent?** *(Some teens may see those days as just another day off, others may say that they put a flag in the front yard or that their school or church takes time out to honor war veterans, etc. There is no right or wrong answer here, but it would be good to demonstrate to your teens that not all holidays have the same importance. For instance, Groundhog Day is obviously not as significant as Memorial Day.)*
- ▶ **Is Sunday a holiday? Why or why not?** *(Allow various teens to share. Answers will vary.)*

In today's Bible study, we will study how God prepared a special day for believers to remember and celebrate Him. We'll see that this day was intended to be different from all the other days of the week.

STEP 2

Bible Learning

(15–20 minutes)

Bible Basis:

A regular day appointed as holy (Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11), a covenant sign for Israel (Exod. 31:13), worship for Christians (Acts 20:7), and giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2).



Objective: That your students discover what Scripture has to say about the Lord's Day.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

There are four sections that your students will be completing as they investigate what the Bible says about the Lord's Day. We've completed the sections for you, suggesting some answers.

Have students turn to the Bible study, "His Day, His Way," on page 11. Call on someone to read the introduction.

■ FROM *Blueprint*—His Day, His Way

The commandment to "remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" doesn't sound as serious or as significant as "You shall not murder" or "You shall not steal." Why does God want people to keep one day in His way? Fill in as much information as you can discover or assume from Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:13; Acts 20:7; and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 about the Lord's Day.

Complete the sections with your students in the way that seems best for the group. Perhaps you want to give your students a few minutes to fill in the first section, and then talk about what they found. Proceed section by section until your students have studied all the passages being considered today.

Here are possible answers for each section:

The First "Lord's Day"

(Gen. 2:1-3)

(It followed Creation. It was on the seventh day. God was the participant. God rested from work on this day. God blessed the day and set it aside. God was pleased with this day.)

The Israelites' "Lord's Day"

(Exod. 20:8-11; 31:13)

(God commanded they keep this day special—holy. God expected His people to work six days, but not on the seventh day. He wanted His people to follow the pattern He set at Creation. If they were to keep it holy, that meant the day was a special day for their God. This day belonged to God—people were to approach it with this attitude. The day was a sign between God's people and Himself that they were special. It was one generation's responsibility to teach the next about the Lord's Day.)

The New Testament "Lord's Day"

(Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2)

(The disciples came together on the first day of the week to remember Christ the Lord. Valuable sermons were part of the early Lord's Day. Those who loved Jesus gathered together to hear about Him. Communion [fellowship meal or breaking bread together] was part of the Lord's Day. Collections for people who had needs were taken by churches. People were asked to give according to the amount of money they had. It was to be something they did on a regular basis.)

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:1-3

¹Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. ²By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Exodus 31:13

Say to the Israelites, "You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy."

Acts 20:7

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

¹Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ²On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

▶ **What should your "Lord's Day" include?** (*Students' conclusions will vary, but they may include statements like these: God expects His people today to go to church and keep His day. We should give tithes to the church and share with people who are in need. We should have Communion as part of our church service. Church is a way we remember the truths about God. God has informed us about how to spend His day. It is our parents' responsibility to teach us what the Lord's Day means—and it is our responsibility to learn our lesson well so we can teach the next generation.*)

As you talk about what students have written, ask some questions to help them draw out deeper meanings. For example:

▶ **How did you draw that conclusion from the text?**

▶ **Why do you think the Lord wanted His people to understand that fact?**

The object here is to help your students discover the truth of Scripture for themselves. Instead of telling them the answers, simply point them in the right direction. Your students should finish today's study with a new feeling for the importance of the Lord's Day.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Students need the opportunity to talk about church, and how they feel about going. We've given you a few questions that can help draw them out, but you may not need them. Most high schoolers have strong, often some negative, sentiments about church and Sunday. Listen carefully to what they say. Show respect for their opinions. Here are some questions you may want to use in your discussion.

▶ **What part of our worship service has the most meaning for you? The least? Why?**

▶ **What things do you wish could happen at our church?**

▶ **When you think about the Lord's Day, do you consider the whole day or just the morning?**

▶ **What changes do you think you need to make in your celebration of the Lord's Day?**

STEP 3

Bible Application

(5–10 minutes)

Objective: That your students share some of their feelings and opinions about the Lord's Day.

Materials:

□ Bibles

The memory verse for today reminds us of the importance of Christians gathering together on a regular basis. Let's read it together. Have students look up today's memory verse, Hebrews 10:25, in their Bibles.

Point out to your students that the author of the Book of Hebrews was writing to Jewish Christians who were about to face intense persecution. Some of these Christians were tempted to abandon their faith and go back to Judaism. The writer, however, states just the opposite. Instead of giving up and deserting, Christians should come together and encourage each other.

Constantine the Great was the first Roman emperor to establish civil laws saying people must rest and worship on Sunday. Throughout history, similar rulings have been made. The Puritans set up laws for Sunday forbidding public entertainment, sports, buying and selling, traveling, and unnecessary work. Today many states still have laws restricting public activities. Some of these laws are enforced; others are ignored.

In 1651, a woman at Plymouth, Massachusetts, was fined 20 shillings for wringing and hanging out her clothes on Sunday. In New Haven, Connecticut, Sabbath travel was prohibited as late as 1814. Today, however, stores are open for business as usual, and we have a lot more Monday holidays to encourage weekend trips. If you want to keep God's day in a reverent way, you might feel somewhat out of place.

Have students look up the following Bible passages. Have volunteers explain the passages, and then summarize them as a class—Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8-10; Exodus 31:14; Isaiah 58:13-14; Mark 2:27; Hebrews 4:4.

Let's make a list of some of the things these passages suggest we do to keep that second commandment.

- Devote one day each week to the enjoyment of God's presence with us, His people.
- Obey His commandments about the day of rest and worship as they apply to us today.
- Do not concentrate upon the negatives—what we may not do on the Lord's Day—but on the positive blessings of a day when we are free to worship Him.
- Recognize that, just as our tithes and offerings are a set-aside amount of our money, a definite number of our weekly hours similarly belong to God.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

- "Blue Laws" from *Blueprint*
 □ Pencils or pens
 □ Poster board and markers



Check out "Blue Laws," on page 16 of *Blueprint*. Discuss how these laws sound like the Jewish Pharisees' laws about the Sabbath. Have students list on the posterboard ways people keep the Lord's Day special today. Have them also list ways people keep Sunday similar to other days of the week and ways to bridge the gap to make it special and restful instead. Close with a prayer thanking God for His day and asking His help in keeping it His way.



STEP 4

Life Response

(5–10 minutes)

Bible Truth:

The Lord's Day is especially given for rest, God's service, praise, and the believer's spiritual growth.

Your teens will discuss the importance of keeping the Lord's Day holy and plan creative ways to do that.

Materials:

- ☐ "A Day Apart" from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Journals (from last week)

Discuss:

- ▶ **What do you enjoy most about Sundays and why?** (*Answers will vary. If it's true, explain that one of your favorite parts of Sundays is spending time with them.*)
- ▶ **Is Sunday less special because it happens each week? Why or why not?** (*Answers will vary.*)
- ▶ **How can keeping the Lord's Day benefit you?** (*It can remind you of God; it creates a change of activity; it's refreshing and gives energy to meet the challenges of a brand-new week; meeting with other Christians is important.*)



Next direct your youth to "A Day Apart" on pages 14 and 15 of *Blueprint*. Encourage students to read it on their own or in small groups. Ask:

- ▶ **What did you learn from the article "A Day Apart," and what do you plan to implement into your life?** (*Answers will vary.*)

Remind your teens to continue journaling their answers to the Daily Faith devotionals found on page 12 this week and bring the journals back next week to discuss.

Be sure to follow up with your teens next Sunday to see what they did to honor the Lord's Day.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

- ☐ "Quiz/Journal" from *Blueprint*



Turn to the "Quiz/Journal" on page 13 of *Blueprint*. Fill out the quiz first and answer the two questions provided. Next write down your own ideas of how you'd like to spend the Lord's Day (in the journal section) and think of ways to implement this plan. Next have your teens complete the bottom "Journal" conclusion on their own.

If time permits have students share what they learned with a friend.

