

**colaborate**  
LUTHERAN

*Leader Guide*

**Unit 2**

**Lutheran History & Catechism**

*Sampler*

SPARK  
HOUSE

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## Leader guide

The Colaborate Leader Guide gives you everything you need to lead a confirmation class—and then some. Created by experienced youth pastors, this leader guide is meant to equip you to head into each session feeling informed, supported, and ready to walk with your students as they explore their questions about the Bible, Lutheran history, and the Small Catechism.

Each session dives into Lutheran theology and history with deep scholarship, but we also understand of the realities of youth ministry. The leader guide makes it easy for any leader—regardless of theological training, regardless of lead time—to facilitate a class. We provide the Bible verses, the theological background, and lots of creative ideas to guide leaders as they work through each lesson. Leaders truly can pick up the guide, spend a few minutes prepping, and start a class, just like that.

The leader guide features embedded images of the student handbook so you can walk through the lesson with your group in real time. It offers expanded discussion questions, additional activities, and tips for adapting the content to the size and dynamics of your group. Need to use up some time? We can help. Only two kids this week instead of ten? We're on it.

Easy to use, easy to follow, and easy to pass on, the Colaborate Leader Guide helps you turn confirmation class into a time of rich engagement with the Bible, with Lutheran doctrine, and most importantly, with your students.



**LESSON:  
MARTIN LUTHER**

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

If we follow Jesus, why do we call ourselves Lutherans?

**TAKEAWAY**

Luther lived five hundred years ago and was inspired to teach in a way that pointed to Jesus free gift of salvation.

**BIBLE PASSAGES**

Ephesians 2:8-10  
1 Corinthians 1:11-13

**KEY VERSE****Ephesians 2:8**

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”

**SUPPLIES NEEDED**

- Handbooks
- DVD
- Bible
- Pens/pencils
- Paper for writing
- Butcher paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Stapler

**Background Information**

Martin Luther lived in Germany more than five hundred years ago. He was a friar in a monastery and worked as a Bible professor at the University of Wittenberg. Luther’s preaching and teaching led to conflict with the church in his day (the only Western denomination was the Roman Catholic Church), to the point where he was excommunicated.

At many key moments in Luther’s life, he came up against the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, but the central conflict came about when he nailed his “95 Theses” to a church door on October 31, 1517. Luther stated in the theses that there was no biblical basis for believing that the church dispensed grace—that God’s salvation was, instead, a free gift given through Christ and grasped only by faith. His writing against the practice of indulgences spread like wildfire throughout Europe. This movement is called the Reformation (and it’s why we celebrate Reformation Sunday right around Halloween).

Luther’s teaching and preaching always begins with Christ, with what his death and resurrection mean for us:

- We can’t help ourselves and need a savior.
- God comes to us in the flesh in the person of Jesus.
- Christ’s death on the cross alone frees us from sin.
- The resurrection is God’s promise of eternal grace, mercy, and love.

Luther spent the rest of his life teaching, preaching, and working to understand how to lead the churches that were becoming “Lutheran”—committing themselves to his theology of grace.

**What Students Need to Know . . .**

- Luther began by making specific arguments about his particular time in history. He was appalled by the abusive practices that had taken hold of the Roman Catholic Church. His concerns were informed by his personal experiences of guilt, and by the philosophies and theologies he had been taught. Luther brought himself, all that he had learned, his friends and family, and God into his deep exploration of what the gospel truly means. It’s based in a certain time, but speaks to us too.
- For Luther, the words of the Bible can be read in two ways: as Law and as Gospel. The Law serves two purposes: First, it creates civil laws and order (like the commandment against murder). Second, the Law reveals how far short we fall of the glory of God (like the commandment against idolatry—anytime we put our trust in anything but God, we’ve missed the mark). This is where the Gospel breaks in: the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, who gives us what we can’t provide on our own. It’s not about what we do or don’t do, but about what God has done for us in Christ. This is where we get the classic Lutheran phrase taken from Galatians 2: “We are justified by faith in Christ Jesus apart from works of the law.”
- Luther’s theology is centered on paradox. Grace is a gift we don’t deserve—a mystery in itself!—but Luther takes it even further. Our response to that gift is good works done in love for God and for our neighbor. Although Luther rejected the idea that good works are necessary to “earn” our salvation, he did argue that they would flow freely from a believing heart. And yet we are still bound by our sinfulness; we never “get better” at being human. Each day is a new beginning. This is why we are all, as Luther said, *simul justus et peccator*—simultaneously saint and sinner.

## Where Students Might Struggle . . .

- Youth are wonderers. As they take possession of their own faith and life, it's common for youth to wonder what the "right church" is. Teens place a high value on authenticity—their BS meters are strong, and their independent streaks are too. It can help to show that Luther's intent was always to call the church back to its most faithful roots, so that Christ is delivered to the people. This also gives the students a measuring rod to hold up against the various confessions of faith: "Which of these offers Christ's gifts most freely?"
- Martin Luther struggled with bouts of depression and doubt his whole life, and at the end of his ministry, he turned violently on the Jewish people of Germany. It's important to remember (and to remind students) that Luther, like everyone else in our faith family, wasn't perfect. He was bound by his time and place, as well as by his own personal circumstances and flaws. Yet the core of his theology still bears a faithful witness to Christ. This is a place to invite students to sift through the mess of life (the manure, if you will?) and recognize where grace and growth can happen.
- Adolescents can easily identify what it feels like to be judged. It only takes a few moments in a middle school hallway during passing time to see it play out. Young people in this developmental stage, who are becoming acutely aware of the social order around them, know the pressures of having to measure up in terms of popularity, athletic ability, grades, hotness, sexual experience, and parental expectations. And they know what it feels like to not measure up.
- There's no such thing as a free cafeteria lunch. Students at this age may have jobs, or at least competing demands on their time and energy. They are becoming aware of what things cost. To speak of Christ's gift as free is counterintuitive; we're speaking against the assumption, "If everything costs something, then that's how God must work too. Don't we have to keep the commandments and be good to go to heaven?" Luther's proclamation of the gospel contrasts with the vivid experience in our lives, for Jesus has already done everything needed for our salvation. It's a divine accounting that messes with our sense of how the world works.

## About the Video . . .

For many Lutherans, Martin Luther is something like a mythical, larger-than-life figure. Some of your students will know that Luther had some issues with the Roman Catholic church and risked his life when he made those beliefs known to others. But they might be surprised to discover that Luther never set out to leave the Roman Catholic church and start a new denomination. So how would Luther feel about our being called Lutherans?

## Lesson Notes . . .

## Icebreaker

### A BUNCH OF -IANS

1. Invite students to draw or write (preferably draw) something about what makes them unique.
2. As they are drawing, write all their last names on the board in alphabetical order, adding -ian or -an suffixes to the ends. For example: Anderson become Andersonian, etc.
3. Collect papers and redistribute, giving one to each student (they *can't* have their own paper back).
4. Invite each student to read/present whatever paper they have received. For example: "This has someone in the water? So they're swimming?"
5. The presenter then guesses which of the last names on the board goes with their paper. Other students may provide input, but the original drawer/writer may not say the correct answer. For example: "Well, Maria's a swimmer, so I guess . . . Brownian?"
6. Tape the paper next to the last name chosen (it may not be correct, and that's okay!).
7. Proceed around the room until all symbols have been assigned to their -ian'ed last names.
8. Check with each student. Whose symbol was assigned correctly to their last name? Where were there mix-ups? What needed clarification?
9. Ask them to consider: What if everyone like you—everyone who was a swimmer, or a tuba player, or had three sisters, etc.—was named after you?

## Into the Story

Find the Key Verse in your Bibles: Ephesians 2:8. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Ask your students:

- We can use the words *faith* and *belief* interchangeably. In worship, when we read the creeds, we say, "I believe . . ." or "We believe . . ." Is that kind of belief the same as this faith that Paul is talking about, or is it different? What does the word *faith* really mean, anyway?
- When have you received a gift? What about a gift you really didn't feel you deserved?
- Have you ever given someone something wonderful that they—maybe even you!—didn't feel they deserved? How did they react? How did you feel?

Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:8-10.

- According to Paul, is our salvation the result of doing good works, or is it something else?
- What is the purpose of good works, then?

Turn to 1 Corinthians 1:11-13. Ask a volunteer to read aloud.

- What is the difference between baptizing and proclaiming the gospel? How are they related?
- It's easy to name the separations in the body of Christ—different congregations, different denominations, and so on. Where do we see Christians coming together?

## Questions to Get the Conversation Going . . .

- Was Martin Luther perfect? Okay, was he *close*?
- Did he want to break up the church?
- What was he trying to accomplish?

There are 2.2 billion Christians in the world, and about 70 million of them are Lutheran . . . but what does it mean to be “Lutheran”? Are Lutherans followers of Jesus, or of Martin Luther, or both? Who was Martin Luther, and what was he trying to accomplish?

Many Lutherans see Martin Luther as an example of faithfulness. However, he was a man of deep faith and deep doubt—both of which fueled his passion for the God and the church.

What is each student’s symbol? This is an opportunity for them to articulate what’s important in their life. Make sure they understand it doesn’t have to be religiously significant. It can be anything.

### Martin Luther

*The man behind the movement*

There are 2.2 billion Christians in the world, and about 70 million of them are Lutheran . . . but what does it mean to be “Lutheran”? Are Lutherans followers of Jesus or of Martin Luther or both? Who was Martin Luther, and what was he trying to accomplish?

**Epheians 2:8**  
“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”

## COLOR ME LUTHERAN!

John Frederick of Saxony had this seal designed for Martin Luther in 1530. It soon became known as the Luther Rose and has been a symbol for Lutherans around the world. Go ahead, color it in!

**BLACK** Crucifixion and Salvation.  
**RED** The heart’s natural color, not ruined by the cross.  
**WHITE** Faith gives joy, comfort, and peace.

**BLUE** Joy in spirit and faith is a beginning of heavenly future joy.  
**GOLD** The joy of heaven is valuable and has no end.

**Religious Affiliation**  
Check all that apply:  
 Christian  
 Protestant  
 Lutheran  
 Disciple  
 Jesus Follower  
 Believer

**Martin Luther**  
(1483–1546) was a German monk, priest, and leader in the Protestant Reformation of the church.

**Martin or Martin?**  
People sometimes confuse Martin Luther, the church reformer, with Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights leader. How do you know the difference? For each item below, draw a line to the Martin you think it describes.

**Luther**  
Preached about nonviolence  
Called the pope the Antichrist  
Won the Nobel Peace Prize  
Catholic  
Gave the “I Have a Dream” speech  
Translated the Bible into German  
Became a pastor in his twenties

**MLK**  
Martin Luther might be the founder of the Lutheran Church, but that doesn’t mean he always felt confident about his faith. He had plenty of struggles, doubts, and questions. Why are we named for such a complicated guy?

**colaborate** Martin Luther © 2015 sparkhouse. All rights reserved.

Have your students color in the Luther Rose, either alone or together. Make sure you note the meanings of the different colors.

Let your students do this exercise on their own—don’t tip your hand and give them the answers! Of course, all options apply!

Many students—adults?—don’t know there’s a difference between Martin Luther and Martin Luther King Jr. Have them take the test and see if they can figure out who’s who!

Have a student read the pivot statement located at the bottom of the page and gauge the group’s thoughts on where the lesson might go. Remember: You want tension! Allow your students to live with the questions posed on the first page until after the video has played and you begin exploring the infographic.



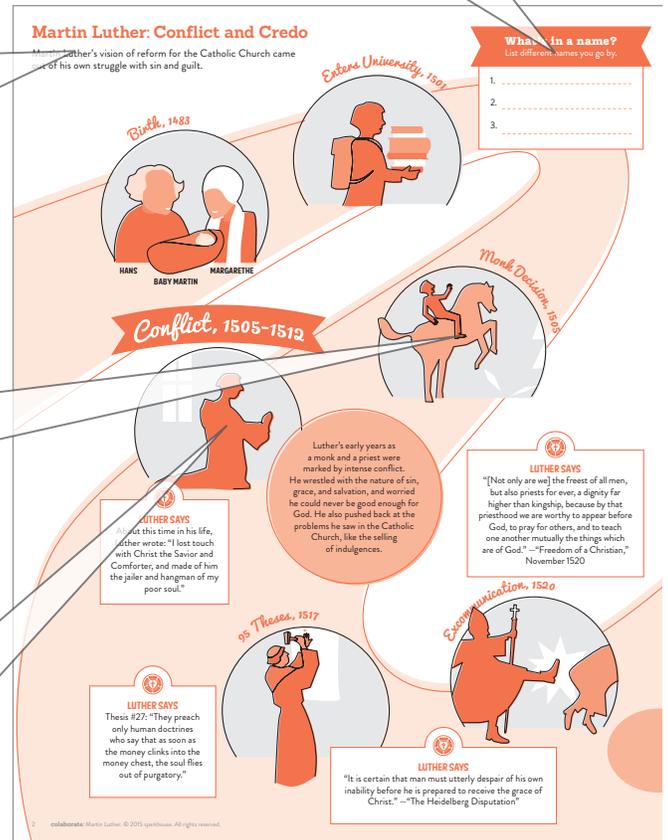
The infographic begins at the top left side of the page, with the birth of Martin Luther. Follow the sweep of the infographic up and down as we highlight the big moments of Luther's life, from conflict to credo—and beyond. You'll notice his path wasn't a direct line, and this infographic will elucidate that fact for your students. We've included some questions (circled numbers) that might be helpful stopping/discussion points. However, the infographic is flexible, so we put it to work!

What do our different names tell us about one another?

What stories (from the Bible or otherwise!) have changed the way you look at yourself, at life, or at the world?

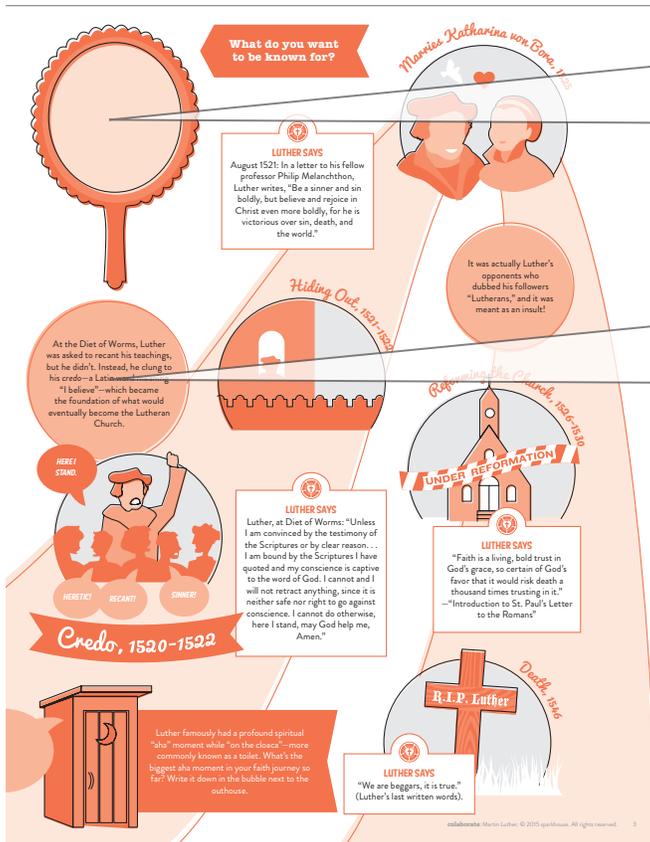
Luther had a "eureka!" moment while riding on a horse and it changed his whole approach to his life and faith. Have students talk about a moment when they changed their minds or ideas about something important in their lives.

God is always speaking, always pushing us to engage in the world in just and compassionate ways. How is God speaking to your students?



Want More?

- Luther compared God to a fortress—protecting and defending us. Have students create a building or other structure that symbolizes the nature of God. Use supplies you have around the church, like a shoebox, paper, tape, and scissors.
- Send your kids out on a scavenger hunt for every instance of the word Luther or Lutheran they can find in the church. After they return, award points as follows: 1 pt. for each item, 4 pts. for an original find, 5 pts. for finishing first, 3 pts. for looking in obscure places. Have fun with this and remember: the points don't really matter!
- If you have time for a movie night, *Luther* (2003) is a recent interpretation of the life of Martin Luther.



Your students will understand legacy, even if they don't know what the word means. Have them name it here.

When have you taken a stand that was unpopular or that put you at risk? What convicted you? How did you feel? What was the result?

- Luther was a colorful character. Confirmation students may be interested in wild things Luther said. Many may not be appropriate for your community! However, for what it's worth: "But what do you say? 'Come here, Satan! And if you had more worlds than this, I would accept them all, and not only worship you, but also lick your behind.'" —Martin Luther
- The hymn Luther is best known for is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." If you have access to sound equipment, play a recording (there are plenty on YouTube.), or if you have the ability to accompany a song, grab a set of hymnals and get your kids singing. No matter what, walk through the lyrics and ask the kids: What phrases jump out at you? What's puzzling? What matches what we already know about Luther and his theology?

**LEADER TIP**

**The Cycle of Faith.**

Faith gets assembled from a lot of places. Students might offer ideas that were never taught in Sunday school. We are exposed to all sorts of statements about faith, in all walks of life. If something takes you by surprise, go with it—ask questions about why that’s so meaningful to them.

**LEADER TIP**

**Conflict/Credo Möbius Scarf.**

Being part of the body of Christ is about being in community with other people claimed by God, whether in the same congregation, the same geographic area, the same denomination, or the same religion. When our conflicts and credos stretch or change or even pull us apart, the community helps us stay linked.

We all struggle, and we all have beliefs. This is an opportunity for students to share these things. If they’re comfortable, invite students to pair off and share at least one of their answers. Have each student present their partner’s conflict and credo to the group. Where are there similar struggles and beliefs? Where are there differences?

**Faith That’s Always Reforming**  
 Every day our faith is reformed when we acknowledge the sin that lives within us and “a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever” (Luther’s Small Catechism).

**Option 1: The Cycle of Faith**  
 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran pastor: “You do not have your faith once and for all. The faith that you will confess today with all your hearts needs to be regained tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, indeed, every day anew.” —The Collected Sermons  
 Fill in the lines below with your own conflict and credo.

**Option 2: Conflict/Credo Möbius Scarf**  
 Supplies: butcher paper, markers, tape, stapler

1. Cut a long, thin strip of butcher paper, at least 48 inches x 6 inches.
2. Write “Conflict” and “Credo” on opposite sides of the strip.
3. Twist paper and tape ends together. Draw a line running the length of the loop to show that the strip is infinite. Bonus: Now you have a sweet scarf!

**CONFLICT** “SOMETIMES I STRUGGLE WITH...”

**CREDO** “BUT I BELIEVE THAT...”

1. Think
2. Share
3. Discuss

What’s one reason a person might call themselves a Lutheran today?

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Belief and doubt are two sides of the same coin. Martin Luther’s life wasn’t very different from our own. We have moments of certainty and uncertainty, but we trust that God’s Holy Spirit is with us even in the midst of our own conflict and credo. This project helps students see and understand this sometimes-challenging idea.

What’s one reason a person might call themselves a Lutheran today?

**Into the World**

If you were going to have millions of people bearing your name, what would you want it to mean?

## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

### UNIT 1 - BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT

### UNIT 2 - LUTHERAN HISTORY & CATECHISM

<b>Canon</b>	I don't know why the Bible is so special, why certain parts made the cut, and who had the right to decide.	2 Timothy 3:14-17	<b>Martin Luther</b>	If we follow Jesus, why do we call ourselves Lutherans?	Ephesians 2:8-10
<b>The Hebrew Bible</b>	I don't know why the Hebrew Bible is part of the Christian Bible.	Deuteronomy 6:4-9	<b>The Reformation</b>	Since the church is so divided, I don't understand how the Reformation could be a good thing.	Galatians 3:26-28
<b>Genesis</b>	I don't know why Genesis matters when science has already disproven the stories.	Genesis 1:26–2:4	<b>The Reformers</b>	I don't know how just one person like Martin Luther could totally change the church.	1 Corinthians 3:1-11
<b>Exodus</b>	I don't understand why (or how) God plays favorites with Moses and the Israelites.	Exodus 33:17-23	<b>Lutheran Confessions</b>	I don't know why stuff outside the Bible is important to my faith.	John 11:22-28
<b>Law</b>	I don't understand why we observe some parts of the law but not others.	Deuteronomy 5:1-21	<b>Adiaphora (The Essentials)</b>	I don't know what we're reforming from/to/for. I thought the Reformation was done. How will I know when we're done reforming?	1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1
<b>Judges</b>	I don't know what judges are at all.	Judges 6:11-27	<b>Luther's Small Catechism</b>	I don't know why the Small Catechism matters.	1 Corinthians 15:1-4
<b>Ruth</b>	I don't know why Ruth would willingly become an outsider in a foreign land.	Ruth 1:6-18	<b>The Ten Commandments</b>	I don't know why I should keep the 10 Commandments.	Exodus 20:1-21
<b>Kings</b>	I don't know where kings fit into the story of Israel.	1 Samuel 8:1-9	<b>Apostles' Creed, Article 1</b>	I don't know if I believe in God.	Psalm 8
<b>Babylonian Captivity</b>	I don't get why God would free the people only to let them be captured again.	Jeremiah 25:1-14	<b>Apostles' Creed, Article 2</b>	I don't see how Jesus has anything to do with me.	Luke 23:39-46
<b>Prophets</b>	I don't understand what qualifies someone to be a prophet.	Deuteronomy 18:15-22	<b>Apostles' Creed, Article 3</b>	The Holy Spirit seems really ambiguous, undefined, and impersonal. (P.S. Creepy, too.)	Acts 2:1-13
<b>Psalms</b>	I don't know what purpose the psalms serve.	Psalm 1	<b>The Lord's Prayer</b>	The Lord's Prayer is just empty words to me.	Matthew 6:5-13
<b>Wisdom</b>	I don't know what makes wisdom books more wise than the rest of the Bible.	Proverbs 2:1-15	<b>Holy Baptism</b>	I don't know why people should get baptized.	Romans 6:1-11
<b>Job</b>	I don't know why bad things happen to good people.	Job 1:13-22	<b>Holy Communion</b>	I don't know what communion is for.	Luke 22:14-20
<b>Esther</b>	I don't know why Esther's story matters when it doesn't mention God.	Esther 4:13-17	<b>Confession &amp; Forgiveness</b>	I don't understand why we need to confess if we're already forgiven.	1 John 1:5-10
<b>The Rise of Rome</b>	What happened in the world between the Old Testament and New Testament?	Ezra 1:1-5	<b>Daily Prayers</b>	I don't see the point in praying prayers that other people wrote; it seems forced, insincere, and awkward.	1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## UNIT 3 - BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT

## UNIT 4 - LUTHERAN LIVING

<b>Maps</b>	I don't know where all this Bible stuff happened.	Acts 14:24-28	<b>Justification by Faith</b>	I don't see why I can't take care of justification on my own.	Romans 3:21-28
<b>The New Testament</b>	If the whole Bible is so important, I don't understand why it is split into two parts.	John 12:44-50	<b>The Cross</b>	I don't understand why a symbol of execution is a central image of Christianity.	1 Corinthians 1:18-25
<b>Jesus</b>	I don't understand how Jesus could be fully human and fully divine.	Philippians 2:5-8	<b>Law &amp; Gospel</b>	I don't know why the law still matters when we have the gospel.	Matthew 22:34-40
<b>Matthew</b>	I don't know why Matthew refers to the Old Testament all the time.	Matthew 1:18-25	<b>Saint &amp; Sinner</b>	I never feel like I'm a "good enough" Christian, and I don't know what to do about it.	Romans 7:15-25
<b>Mark</b>	I don't get why Mark skips stuff and ends before the story does.	Mark 1:14-20	<b>The Church</b>	I don't know why I have to go to church to be a Christian.	Acts 2:41-47
<b>Luke</b>	I'm not sure why Luke is so fixated on the Roman Empire and people on the fringes of society.	Luke 2:41-52	<b>Freedom of a Christian</b>	I thought freedom meant I was free of expectations and requirements.	Galatians 5:1, 13
<b>John</b>	I don't get why John is SO different from the other Gospels and changes the order of events.	John 14:6-14	<b>The Neighbor</b>	I don't need any neighbors, because I already have enough friends and family.	Luke 10:25-37
<b>Acts</b>	I don't know if church today is supposed to look like the church in Acts.	Acts 1:6-11	<b>Grace</b>	I don't trust that grace is really a free gift.	John 1:14-17
<b>Paul and the Early Church</b>	I don't know why we hold Paul in such high esteem, given his poor track record with Christians.	Acts 9:10-18	<b>The Word</b>	I'm not sure if the words in the Bible are the same thing as The Word.	John 1:1-5
<b>Paul's Theology</b>	I'm not sure why Paul's ideas are so important to Christians.	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	<b>Bondage of the Will</b>	I'm not sure what or who is behind the choices I make.	Luke 22:39-42
<b>Romans</b>	I don't know why Paul felt the need to cram so many diverse issues and topics into one letter.	Romans 1:1-17	<b>Two Kingdoms</b>	I thought Jesus only talked about one kingdom.	Matthew 3:1-6
<b>1st and 2nd Corinthians</b>	I don't know why the church in Corinth seemed so messed up and confused.	2 Corinthians 5:17-21	<b>Vocation</b>	I don't know what God is calling me to do with my life.	1 Corinthians 12:4-11
<b>Galatians</b>	I don't know what to do when Christians disagree.	Galatians 1:1-10	<b>Worship</b>	I don't know how I'm supposed to feel during or after worship.	Psalms 95:1-7
<b>Letters</b>	I don't know why so many letters are considered Holy Scripture.	1 Timothy 1:1-11	<b>Devil</b>	I don't know what or where the devil is.	Hebrews 2:14-15
<b>Revelation</b>	I don't know how to read this book without being scared or confused about the end of the world.	Revelation 21:1-8	<b>Doubt</b>	Sometimes I have doubts and I don't know if that's okay.	John 20:29-31