



DISCIPLES & THE EARLY CHURCH

Unit 10 • The Roman Church

UNIT DESCRIPTION

"Looking at the Epistle [Romans] as a whole we cannot but be impressed by the sequence of its parts. Omitting chapters 9-11 for a moment we see that here, as often in Paul's letters (Gal., Eph., Col.), creed and conduct are intimately related, and in this order (1-8; 12-15). The Law says, Do and you shall live; but the Gospel says, Live and you will do.

"The first note in the Pauline theology is not 'work out your salvation,' but 'get salvation, and then work it out,' for no one can 'work out' what is not first 'worked in' (Phil. 2:12, 13).

"It is when doing is put before doctrine that the saying is true, 'Doing is a deadly thing; doing ends in death.' Paul does not begin to build the house of life from the roof, but he first lays a firm foundation on which a substantial house can safely rest. The Apostle never exhorts men to work towards salvation, but always, to work from it.

"Paul and James are not at variance. Paul says, 'faith should lead on to works,' and James says, 'only works can prove that you have faith.'"[1]

This unit is based on the book of Romans, a book rich in theology. The four lessons chosen highlight the big picture presented in the first twelve chapters of the book. This unit is not a complete presentation of the book of Romans. It was designed to show that God wants a relationship with us, and self-effort hinders His ability to bless us. Many great lessons have not been included for the sake of simplicity. The four lessons are:

1. God has revealed Himself (Romans 1:16-20)
2. All are under sin (Romans 3:9-20)
3. The Inseparable Bond (Romans 8)
4. Body Life (Romans 12:1-8)

[1] W. Graham Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*, Volume 3, © by W. Graham Scroggie, 1994 by Kregel Publications, p. 134.



GOD'S REVELATION

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Concept

God has revealed Himself to everyone, externally and internally.

Goal

Students will learn that in the world we can see evidence of God's invisible qualities.

Passage

Romans 1:16-20

Key Verse: "For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature..." Romans 1:20

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Learning Activity #1: [1]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Scavenger Hunt list, 5/class Plastic bag, 1/class <p>Optional Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Feel & Find box or Paper grocery bag with armhole on 2 sides</i> <p>[1] NOTE: Teachers collect before class and bring objects on "Nature Scavenger Hunt" list if not going on scavenger hunt.</p>	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 green leaves of various size (teachers supply) Objects from nature, such as daisy, sunflower, shells, feathers, Queen Ann's Lace, dandelions, etc. (teachers supply) 2 magnifying glasses <i>Printed copy of Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation (pp. 97-104), Petersen</i> <i>My Body Inside and Out, Dr. Anne Townsend</i> 10 crayons without outer wrapper Drawing paper

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

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"For a religion to be universally applicable and effectual it must answer to universal need, and it is here shown that the need to which the Christian religion answers is universal. No other religion answers to world-need, and, therefore, no other religion is universal in its scope.

"Religion is natural and revealed. By the former we have knowledge of God and of our duty from natural sources; and by the latter, from special and specific revelation, as in Judaism and Christianity. When Paul charges the Jews (chapter 2) he takes his stand on the latter ground; but when he addresses the Gentiles he does so on the former ground.

"The material and moral realms are manifestations of Deity. Not only is He revealed in human consciousness, but that consciousness is part of the revelation. "A philosopher has said that there are two wonderful things—the starry world, and the moral law. By the world within we are able to apprehend the world without, and to rise, as Philo said, 'from below upwards, as if by a kind of celestial ladder, guessing at the Creator from His works by probable inference.'"[1]

God reveals Himself to everyone. His existence is clearly evident to each one of us externally and internally. Externally, God's revelation is manifested through the visible creation. The intricacy, complexity and wonder of the world in which we live give us external proof of God's existence as well as clues about His existence and His character. Internally, we all have an innate sense of right and wrong (morality). God has given us a conscience through which we know right from wrong. We instinctively expect certain "right" behaviors from those with whom we interact while we condemn their "wrong" behaviors. When we say, "That's not fair" or "So and so treated me wrong," we are verbalizing this truth. Our need for rules, structure and clear boundaries is evidence that man is a moral creature.

The external and internal revelations are intended by God to direct our attention to Him. How have most people responded to God's revelation of Himself? "When confronted by God, people 'neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him' (Romans 1:21). Humans desperately repress the truth, not thinking 'it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God.' (Romans 1:28.) "The sinful condition of humanity is demonstrated in the fact that individuals do not choose to respond to the truth they do possess, or live by the standards that they hold. Thus divine judgment is just: all DO have some knowledge of God and of morality. Anyone who is lost will be judged because of his or her own personal response to God Himself, and his or her own sins."[2]

[1] W. Graham Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*, Volume 3, © by W. Graham Scroggie, 1994 by Kregel Publications, pp. 135, 136.

[2] Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary*, Wheaton, Illinois, 1984, pp. 810-811.

Set Up

Instructions: Collect before class the nature items for the “Leaf Rubbing” and “Discovery” Activity Stations as footnoted on page 2.

Instructions: If it is not conducive to go on a nature walk at your location, collect before class the suggested items on the “Nature Scavenger Hunt” list for the Object Lesson.

Activity Stations:

- **Leaf Rubbing Station**

- **Instructions:** Lay the leaf flat, vein-side up, and cover with the drawing paper. Holding a crayon flat on its side, with outer paper wrapper removed, rub until outline of leaf shows up.
- While students are working, point out the designs that appear. Discuss the concept that God must be creative and ordered because He creates things to be organized in design.

- **Discovery Station**

- **Instructions:** Use the magnifying glasses and a variety of small intricate objects from nature such as a daisy, sunflower head, shells, feathers.
- These objects indicate that God's design is intricate & complex, yet easy to enjoy. It's hard to imagine that such things happened "by chance." Romans 1:20 says that there are things about God that people can't see, such as His eternal power and all that makes Him God. But since the beginning of the world, those things have been easy to see when we view His creation. When we see the incredible complexity of God's design, we get glimpses into His creativity and hugeness.

- **Life Station**

- **Instructions:** Look through the book My Body Inside and Out and the printed pages from Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation.
- Look at the descriptions of how animals and humans are created. God took great care to design each creature and person to function in a special way in this world. Even though we know a lot about animals and humans, there is so much we don't know. Only God knows everything! Considering the uniqueness and intricacy of God's design, how can we deny God's existence?

The Bible says that there are things about God that people cannot see. But since the beginning of the world all things have been seen through His creation. In the activity stations we looked for clues that God has given us about Himself. We studied objects taken from nature. What were some of the discoveries you made?

God has given us lots of ways to know that He exists. We learned at the leaf rubbing station that God is creative. He designs things to be organized. At the station with the magnifying glasses we learned that God's design is intricate and complex, yet easy to enjoy.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Introduction Continued

And at the life station we learned that God created man and animals with uniqueness and intricacy of design in order to function in this world. When we see the detail and purpose to His design, we know it couldn't have all happened by chance.

Even though we don't see God with our eyes, we do see in nature the signs He's given us so we know He is real. Now let's think about more clues. Our key verse for today says, "For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature..." (Romans 1:20). We all know that invisible means that it can't be seen, but what are "qualities"? When the Bible speaks of God's invisible qualities it is talking about who He is, what He is like. Eternal means "has always been and will always be". And divine means "perfect in every way". So this verse tells us that the things we see in creation are clues pointing us toward the truth that God has always existed, He made everything and He is perfect in every way. As we look at the things He made we see evidence of His invisible characteristics, His power and perfection.

Transition

Let's go outside to find out what we can learn about God.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Nature Scavenger Hunt

Instructions: Have the students pair up and together collect the items on the "Nature Scavenger Hunt" sheet. If you have an uneven number of students, you can either have a teacher pair with a student or put 3 students in a group. Take the students to the predetermined location and have them search for the items for 10 minutes. Blow the whistle as a signal to gather and continue with the lesson. Stay outside for the first part of the LESSON if the weather is conducive. Note: Use the provided bag to keep a set of the items found for use in the **Optional Activity**.

Instructions: If you don't go on the walk, have the students consider what they see outside that would give them clues about God using the suggested questions.

Everyone grab a "Nature Scavenger Hunt" sheet and let's go outside. Find a partner with whom to collect the items for the scavenger hunt. You will have 10 minutes to find the items on your sheet. We will gather at << specified place >> to begin the lesson.

Transition

Let's find out more about how God reveals himself to us. Everyone find a place to sit.

**Lesson
Part 1
Lg. Group**

Listen as I read **Romans 1:16-20**. Our key verse is, "For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature..." (Romans 1:20). The Bible says that from the very beginning of time people have known about God and His amazing power and perfection because they see the earth and sky and all the creation God made.

Everyone lie down on your back and look up at the sky. Have any of you ever thought about how big God must be to have created such a vast world? When you look at the earth and sky, what thoughts about God come to your mind? Did you know that the Bible tells us God created everything in nature with a spoken word? Isn't it amazing that some people can look at all that God created and choose not to believe that He exists? How do you suppose they can do this? Look back at the passage we just read. Why does this anger God? Verses 18 and 19 say that the truth about God is obvious to everyone, but in their wickedness, they refuse to believe the truth and also prevent the truth from being known. God uses very strong language here to let us know that He is the God of the universe and He does get very angry about His truth being kept secret.

So far we have looked at ways God shows Himself to us in Nature. We can see what God is like by looking at the world we live in. This is called external revelation. External means outside. Revelation means to reveal or teach. So, external revelation means that God reveals or teaches us about Himself by what He created that we can see, touch and hear.

Transition

Let's go back to our classroom to learn about the internal clues God gave us about Himself. Take all your items from the scavenger hunt and put them in the "What's Inside It" box when you get in the room.

**Learning
Activity# 2
Lg. Group**

"Mock" Mother May I

Instructions: The teacher will come up with his/her own "password," e.g., "Oh, wise one," "Oh, mighty and wonderful servant," etc. The teacher will decide three different measures of steps (e.g., baby steps, umbrella twirls, frog hops) which the students will be allowed to take when they figure out the correct phrase. The teacher will say, "<<name,>> take 3 umbrella steps." That student will take one turn to guess the teacher's phrase that will permit him to move toward the teacher. Continue down the line of students until a student guesses the correct phrase. After one series of turns, if none of the students guess the correct phrase, the teacher should give a clue. To complicate or frustrate things more, change the rules periodically as you go down the line of students (e.g., you guessed wrong, go back 3 steps; you guessed wrong, but what the heck, you can go ahead one step, etc.).

**Lesson
Part 2
Lg. Group**

It's not surprising that you were frustrated. We want to know what's right and what's wrong. We want rules to be consistent and fair because God made us that way. God created us with a conscience. God, being a perfect and moral creator, created us with a conscience, the awareness of right and wrong. This is called internal revelation. And this is what God uses to show us that we are sinners and need His forgiveness. External revelation gives us clues about God's character and existence. Internal revelation shows us our sinfulness and need for God.

Let's look again at Romans 1:16. Paul says he is not ashamed of the Good News about Christ. What is the Good News about Christ? (Jesus came to earth as a man to live a perfect life so He could die on the cross to pay for our sin.) Verse 16 also says the Good News tells us about how to be right with God. What does he mean? Why aren't we right with God? The problem is that God is perfect and we are sinners. Because perfection can't live with imperfection, we need help. God provides the help we need in Jesus. Verse 17 tells us how to be right with God. "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." We have faith when we believe that Jesus took the punishment we deserve and ask that His punishment pay for our sin. We become righteous or right with God and are given eternal life with Him when we have faith and act on that faith by admitting we need His forgiveness.

As those who have been forgiven, we can be honest about our sin because we know that Jesus' death paid for every sin we have and ever will commit. We know we can't be perfect or ever do enough good to be acceptable to God. We can rejoice because Jesus did everything necessary to make us acceptable. We are then free to offer the same gift of forgiveness to others who are guilty and need God's forgiveness.

Let's get into small groups.

- What invisible qualities are clear to you as you look at all God made?
- Was it really annoying to play a game when the rules kept changing and you had to guess what you needed to say in order to advance?
- Have you ever had any experiences when you were supposed to follow the rules but you were unclear about what they were?
- Do you think God and His "rules" are confusing? How does God use external revelation to teach us about Him? What external revelation causes you to wonder about God?
- How has God used internal revelation to teach you how much you need Him? Have you ever felt guilty or ashamed about something you thought, did or said? What can you do when you feel guilty or ashamed? (Be honest w/God, others; accept God's forgiveness, thank Jesus for dying to pay for our sin, etc.)

Transition

**Learning
Activity#3
Sm. Groups**

Learning Activity#3 Continued

Optional Activity

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray now that people who don't know God will see all the external and internal clues He has given about Himself.

Game – "What's Inside It?"

Goal: God gives us the ability to identify these objects without looking. We can't "see" the things in the box, but we can identify each item by using our sense of touch. Even though we don't see God with our eyes, we do see the signs He gave us in nature and we know He is real and FUN.

Instructions: The Feel & Find box/Paper grocery bag has an armhole in each side for students to insert their hands and feel objects from the Nature Scavenger Hunt. Put the objects in the box/bag (seal bag and lay it on its back or front) Place a student at each of the four/3 openings in the box/bag. Have a student name an item from the "Nature Scavenger Hunt" list. At the signal, each student will try to find the corresponding object by reaching into the box, pulling out their choice and showing it to the teacher.

Nature Scavenger Hunt Items:

- Berries
- Acorn
- Seed pods
- Thistles
- Grasses
- Ferns
- A circle from nature
- A square from nature
- Something beautiful God made
- Moss
- Seed
- Pine cones or Pine needles