

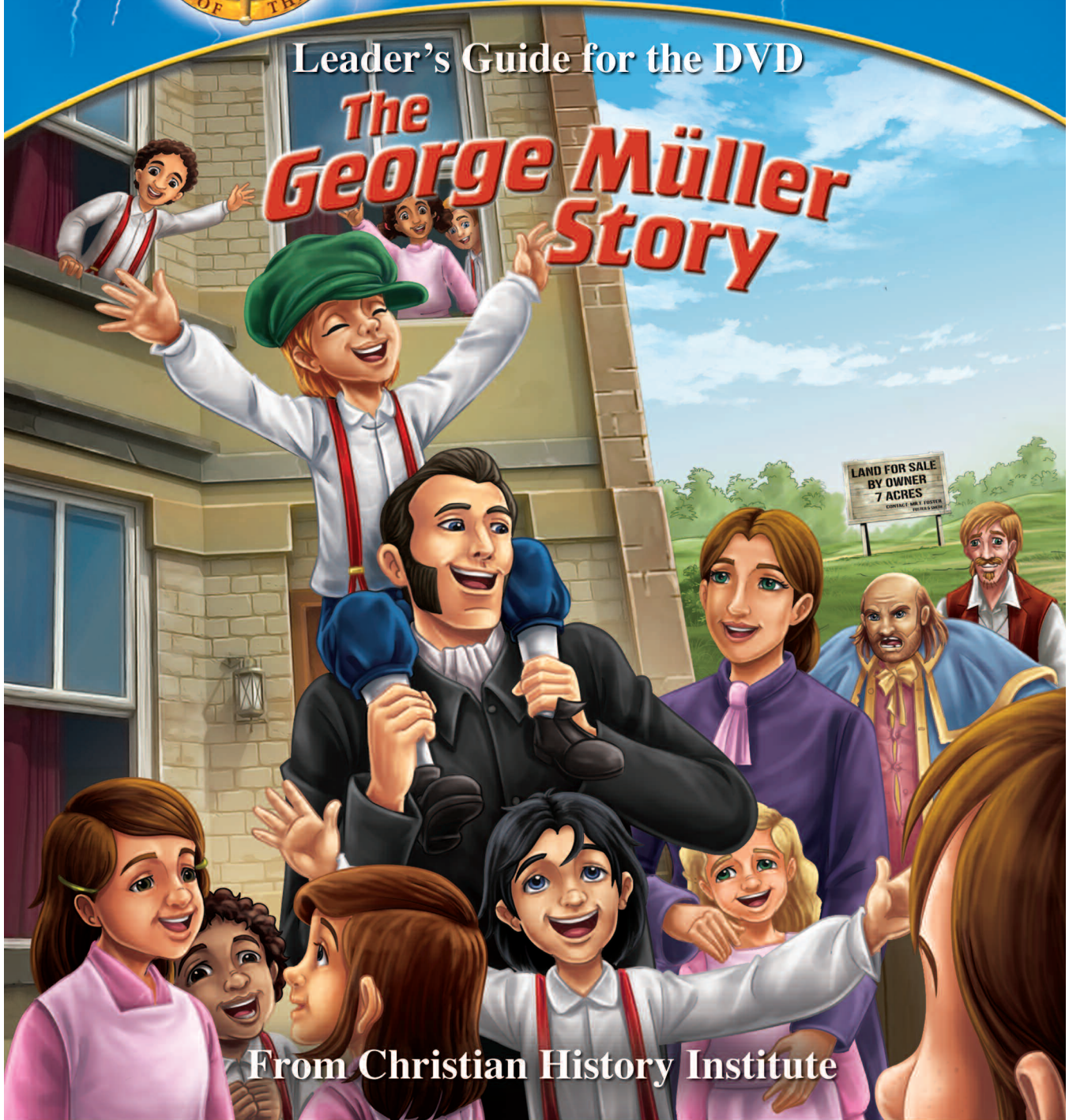


THE TORCHLIGHTERS

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Leader's Guide for the DVD

The George Müller Story



From Christian History Institute

L E A D E R



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Introduction to the *Torchlighters* Series

Torchlighter: *One who commits to serving God
and passing on the light of the Gospel,
even if the going gets tough.*

Kids today have no shortage of heroes. From Hollywood celebrities to musical artists and sports figures, it would seem that there are plenty of heroes to go around. However, the heroes offered by popular culture are teaching children that physical perfection, financial success, and fame are the most important goals in life. The morals and values presented are often in direct opposition to the standards parents want to pass on to their children. So, while there is no shortage of heroes, there is a dreadful shortage of heroes worth emulating.

The *Torchlighters* video series offers children real heroes that they can depend on. These heroes have lived truly great lives marked by moral depth, strength of character, and an unwavering commitment to Christ. By sharing in their struggles and small steps of obedience, we are all challenged to live lives of faith. It is our sincere desire that as children get to know these “torchlighters,” they will be challenged to follow in the footsteps of the greatest torchlighter of them all, Jesus Christ. Learn more about the mission behind this series and find more free resources at

www.torchlighters.org



Synopsis of *The Torchlighters: The George Müller Story*

George Müller lives on radical prayer, depending on God to supply all his needs without asking for a cent from anyone—not even the congregation he pastors! His ministry efforts bring him into contact with some of the poorest of the poor: the neglected street children of the city of Bristol (England). When he discov-



George Müller, Mary Müller, and Henry Craik
ask God to provide for the orphans.

ers that the workhouses prey upon them and force them into unpaid labor, George realizes he must do what he has done in countless other situations: pray and trust God to accomplish the impossible.

George and his wife, Mary, open the first orphanages of Bristol supported entirely by prayer, and God miraculously provides for their every need. But as the children fill more and more homes, profit for the workhouses dwindles. Enemies of George's work devise a plan to shut him down for good. Will George's trust in God's provision remain strong in the face of cunning opponents and desperate circumstances?



Teaching Plan for *The George Müller Story*

Enter the world you might know best through Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* or Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*—Victorian England! When Queen Victoria reigned in the 19th century, the United Kingdom saw growth in industry and prosperity among many people. This prosperity, however, often came at the expense of society's most vulnerable individuals: the poor and disabled. With the advent of the Poor Law of 1834, workhouses were reformed to serve more as correctional centers based around hard labor than as refuges for poverty-stricken people. Eager opportunists collected destitute, orphaned children from the streets and brought them to the workhouse for cheap or free labor.

It was into this world that George Müller, a transplant from Prussia (modern-day Germany), came to Bristol as a minister of the Gospel. A convert to the faith after a rough-and-tumble youth of squandered wealth and drunkenness, George purposed to rely only on God's provision for his every need. And when he saw the plight of Bristol's street children, he chose to trust God to provide for them, too. Müller's goal was twofold: to provide for the destitute orphans and to show doubters the power of God. In this episode of *The Torchlighters*, young viewers will be amazed at the miraculous abundance of God's provision when faithful people pray.

1. PREVIEW *The George Müller Story* before showing it to your students. This will help you to recognize the major themes and teachable moments that occur throughout the video while equipping you to answer student questions. Our theme for this series is ***God Provides***. Four subthemes will be explored:

- **Lesson 1: Food in the Wilderness** — God provides for his people's physical needs.
- **Lesson 2: Deliverance in the Exile** — God provides a rescuer in his people's darkest moments.
- **Lesson 3: Salvation at Golgotha** — God provides the ultimate sacrifice and redemption for his people everywhere.
- **Lesson 4: A Home with Him** — God provides a place with him in his family forever.

2. REVIEW the Supplementary Information. Become more informed about this true story by reading through *Key People* on p. 18, *England and the Industrial Revolution* on p. 19, and the *Timeline* on p. 20. The DVD also features *Robber of the Cruel Streets*, an informative documentary giving background information on George Müller's life.

3. SELECT and PREPARE Teaching Material. Our four-lesson plan is designed to lead children on a faith journey with George Müller. Our provision focus is intended to show children how God provides for physical needs and our greatest need of all—salvation from our sins. Feel free to mix and match to best suit your group and the time available. All material is reproducible and designed to help children apply the teaching themes.



NOTE: Special supplies are needed for activities in each session. To supplement the *Torchlighter* video's focus on orphan care, we encourage you to invite a guest actively involved in foster care and/or adoption ministries to speak to your group in session 3.

4. VISIT www.torchlighters.org. Our website is full of other free resources, such as unique ministry ideas, informative blog posts, publicity posters, an interactive Kids Zone, and the “Carry the Torch” theme song, craft, and relay! Use these resources to plan an introductory session focused on the question, “What is a Torchlighter?”

Are you planning a *Torchlighters* showing or event? Publicity is easy when you download free posters at www.torchlighters.org.



Session 1: God Provides Food in the Wilderness

FOCUS: God provides for his people's physical needs.

THEME VERSE: "And my God will meet all your needs, according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

- **PREPARE:** Use the information on p. 19 of this guide to teach about 19th-century England, the Industrial Revolution, and workhouses. (For more information on the life and ministry of George Müller, please see our *Christian History* magazine #128: George Müller, available at **ChristianHistoryMagazine.org**.) During teaching time consider "picking oakum" for a powerful object lesson. You will need hemp rope (old/used would be best, but you can find new at a hardware store or online).

Be sure to have all the equipment necessary to show the preview for *Torchlighters: The George Müller Story*.

For **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME**, bring a large cardboard box decorated to look like a house and heavy-duty tape. Print the theme verse on poster board. (If you desire, be prepared to sing and teach the song, "Jehovah Jireh," which is available on YouTube.)

For **HOME SWEET HOME INVITATION**, bring card stock, art supplies, and scissors for your group.

- **GAME—UP JENKINS:**

ASK: How do you think kids your age spent their time 200 years ago? (Let them offer many answers).

SAY: Why don't we play a game that children may have played in the 19th century?

Divide your group into two teams and ask them to elect captains for each. Sit the teams opposite each other at the table. Explain the rules of **Up Jenkins**: One team receives the coin, and the entire group must keep their hands under the table and out of sight. One member of the team will secretly hide the coin in one of their hands. When everyone is ready, the captain of the opposing team shouts, "Up Jenkins!" The hiding team then slaps their hands palm down on the table at the same time to mask the sound of the coin. The opponents have to guess who is hiding the coin and under which hand; if they're correct they win a point, but if they're wrong, the hiding team takes the point. Play for several rounds, and mix up teams if it suits your group.

- **TEACH—LIFE IN THE WORKHOUSE:**

*SAY: Children in the 19th century were like you in many ways. They did things like going to school, playing outside, and spending time with family. But for some kids, life looked a lot different. Instead of having time to play games like **Up Jenkins**, they had to work hard, long hours. One common job for*



working kids was picking oakum. Kids would have to sit with a frayed end of rope, like this, and pick it apart strand by strand! (If you bring a rope, let students try it themselves first.) Let's look at p. 3 of your Student Pages to learn more.

SAY: Imagine if you had to do this all day long, seven days a week. How do you think you would feel? (Sad, sore, angry, etc.) This job was usually kept for prisoners and slaves. In 19th-century England, poor, orphaned, and homeless children were often treated like slaves and forced to do work like this in places called "workhouses."

• **PREVIEW THE GEORGE MÜLLER STORY:**

SAY: Next time we gather, we will learn about someone who gave these children a home other than the workhouse, even though he had no money or means to do it himself. His name was George Müller. As we watch this short clip, see if you can find out how George planned to care for them.

Play the short preview clip at the beginning of the DVD.

SAY: How do you think George plans to help these children? (By giving them a home and asking God to provide all his needs.) When we watch the whole episode next week, we'll see that George depends on God for EVERY need. Do you think God can take care of ALL of them? Let's go to the Bible to find out.

• **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME:** Invite your students into your Bible center for Bible time. Teach the song, "Jehovah Jireh" or show the YouTube clip to your group.

ASK: What do you think "Jehovah Jireh" means? Maybe the song gave you a clue! We get "Jehovah" from the Hebrew word, Yahweh—what does Yahweh mean? ("I am"—the name God gives himself.) "Jireh" is also from the Hebrew, which we translate as "provides." Let's put it together: (God provides.) The song was inspired by today's verse. Let's read it together!

Direct one student to hold up the verse for everyone to see and read it aloud together.

ASK: How do we know this promise in Philippians is really true? Examples from kids' lives, because Scripture is true and 'God-breathed' (2 Tim. 3:16), etc.

SAY: We also know this verse is true because God shows us in the Bible how he has ALWAYS provided for his people. Let's take a look at one story right now.

READ (as time allows): *Exodus 16:1-21*

DISCUSS: Why were the people of Israel grumbling? How did God take care of their needs? Do they trust God completely? Do you remember an example of when God took care of the needs of the people of Israel before they were in the wilderness? How has God provided for your needs?

SAY: Exodus 2:23-24 tells us that the people of Israel cried out to God during the days of their slav-



ery, and God heard them. He provided for them first by rescuing them from the land of Egypt, but he did not forget about their needs as they traveled through the wilderness. The accounts in Exodus and Numbers show all the ways God provided—he gave them water, the miraculous manna and quail, safety from enemies, and healing from sickness. We'll see more examples of God providing for his people in coming weeks, but there are so many that we can't get to them all! Even so, the nation of Israel was often not grateful for God's provision. This is because they had a deeper need that God would provide for in Jesus who is the living water (John 4:1-26) and the true bread of heaven (John 6:22-58). They needed for eternal life in him. That is our sure foundation. We'll talk more about that in the coming lessons as we "build up" this house during our Bible time.

Ask a volunteer to help you tape the theme verse to the side of your cardboard box house.

SAY: Next week, we'll see how God provides for George Müller and the children in his care—starting with a home! Just as George invited children to come to his home, let's invite friends to come to ours!

- **PROJECT—HOME SWEET HOME PAPER HOUSES INVITATION:** Print the invitations (on next page) on card stock and see instructions on p. 4 of the Student Pages. Encourage students to decorate and personalize at least one invitation to hand out to a friend.
- **CLOSING PRAYER:** *Heavenly Father, our Great Provider, thank you for taking care of your people and giving us all the things we need. Help us to come to you for our needs, big and small, and trust in your goodness to provide. Amen.*
- **PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:** Review session 2; prepare beforehand by reading the book of Esther and gathering your supplies accordingly.
- **LOOKING AHEAD:** Start thinking now about your guest speaker for the **ADOPTED THROUGH CHRIST INTERVIEW**. Speak to someone in your church or consider the Christian adoption/orphan care advocates in your area—from crisis pregnancy centers to adoption agencies to various nonprofit organizations devoted to orphan care worldwide.

NOTE: Refer to the answer key on p. 23 for answers to selected Student Pages.

Join us to view

The George Müller Story

Date: _____

Time: _____



Join us to view

The George Müller Story

Date: _____

Time: _____





Session 2: Who, Me, Lord?

FOCUS: View *The George Müller Story* and consider how God provides for our deepest needs.

THEME VERSE: “And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.” Matthew 21:22

- **PREPARE:** Be sure to have all the equipment necessary to show *The George Müller Story*.

For **COCK-A-ROOSTY**, bring cones as markers and treats for your group.

For **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME**, print this lesson's theme verse on a colorful poster board and bring cardboard house from Lesson 1 and heavy tape.

- **GAME: COCK-A-ROOSTY:** Welcome your guests and invite your group to your gym/play area and explain this variation of another silly game popular in the 19th century:

Set up cones in two parallel lines a reasonable distance apart for your group (if you don't have access to a gym or open area, modify the distance to fit inside your room). Choose one player as “it” and have this player stand in the middle. Direct everyone else to line up on one side of the cones in their “den.” Tell everyone (including the person who is “it”) to stand on one leg. When you call out “Cock-a-roosty!”, the group must try to get past the “it” person to reach the other side, or “home,” hopping on one leg the entire time! Last person standing wins! Add to the chaos by having everyone crow like roosters. Play several rounds to give everyone a chance to be “it” and give out treats.

- **REVIEW:** Ask your group what they remember from the previous lesson and refresh their memories with facts learned from p. 19 of the Leaders Guide.
- **INTRODUCE THE VIDEO:** SAY: *Today we will watch The George Müller Story and find out how he depends on God for his needs. As you watch, keep a tally of every prayer God answers and listen carefully to find out how many houses God provides for the children.*
- **SHOW** the 30-minute program *The Torchlighters: The George Müller Story*.
- **STUDENT QUESTIONS:** Allow the group time to process the video, share their tallies of answered prayers, and ask questions. Follow up on how many houses God provided.
- **FURTHER DISCUSSION:** Lead discussion using appropriate questions from the *Dig into the Story* on p. 5 in the Student Pages. For further questions, direct your students to p. 6 for *Dig Deeper*.
- **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME:** Invite your group to your Bible area. Find a volunteer to hold the theme verse poster so that your whole group can see and read aloud together.

SAY: *Our theme verse makes a BIG promise. It's a promise that George Müller took very seriously, but what does it mean? In this verse, Jesus challenges his disciples not to doubt God but instead believe in God's ability to do anything. What do you think it means to ask in faith? Does that mean if I ask God for a million dollars, or a mansion, or a fancy car, I'll get them?* (Allow students to pon-



der the question, directing them to understand God provides for our needs, but not necessarily our wants.) *God has promised to give us everything we need—George believed it and lived by asking for every need from God. And God provided! Let's read another story of how God provides—this time, by delivering his people from a great danger.*

READ: Open your Bible to the book of Esther. Summarize Haman's plot to eradicate the Jews in chapter 3 and Mordecai's plea to Esther to go to the king; focus specifically on Mordecai's understanding of God's promises for the people of Israel in Esther 4:13-14. Discuss how God uses Esther to intercede for her people in Chapters 5-8 (if your group is familiar with the story of Esther, ask them to share what they know about the story).

DISCUSS: *What promise did Mordecai believe in, even though Haman planned to have all the Jews murdered? (God would deliver his people, as he had promised and had already done in the past.) What did Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews of Susa do? (Fasted and prayed to God for Esther to have courage before the king and to deliver them from death.) How did God provide for his people in this story?*

SAY: *During this time in Israel's history, God's people lived in exile, meaning they were taken from their country and forced to live somewhere else. Esther had to ask God for what seemed like an impossible thing—rescue from the hands of Haman, the world's most powerful man next to King Xerxes. Yet God put Esther in a time and place where he could use her to deliver his people. God provides for his people by giving them a deliverer. God provides Esther in this story—but we can look back in books like Judges and see God's repeated faithfulness to his people by providing leaders who saved the people. But there is a promised Deliverer who is greater than Esther and all the judges of the Bible. In John 3:16, Jesus says that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Through Jesus, the true Rescuer, we have deliverance in this life and the next.*

As we finish today, think about the promises in God's Word that we discussed. How has God delivered you from danger? What prayers has God answered in your life? (Be sure to share your own personal stories of God's physical and/or spiritual deliverance and provision.)

ASK a student to tape today's theme verse to your SURE FOUNDATION house.

- **ACTIVITY—PRAYED AND PROVIDED:** Direct your group to p. 7 of the Student Pages to complete this worksheet.
- **PARENT LETTER:** Distribute this letter to help parents understand the lessons you are sharing in class (p. 17 in Leader's Guide).
- **CLOSING PRAYER:** *Heavenly Father, thank you for providing daily protection from things that can hurt us. We thank you most of all for protecting us from the consequences of our sin—eternal separation from you—through Jesus our only Deliverer. Please remember our need and forgive us of our sins. Amen.*
- **PLANNING AHEAD:** Be prepared to host your guest for the **ADOPTED THROUGH CHRIST INTERVIEW**. Bring jumbo-sized cardboard blocks for **BUILDING BLOCK RELAY**.

NOTE: Refer to the answer key on p. 23 for answers to selected Student Pages.



Session 3: God Provides Salvation at Golgotha

FOCUS: God provides for our greatest need: redemption from sins through Jesus.

THEME VERSE: “In love he destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will.” Ephesians 1:4b-5

- **PREPARE:** Bring jumbo-sized cardboard blocks for **BUILDING BLOCK RELAY**.

Invite your guest to come speak for the **ADOPTED THROUGH CHRIST INTERVIEW**.

Prepare the theme verse on a poster board for **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME**.

- **REVIEW:** Use p. 8 in the Student Pages (*Story Mix Up*) to review the story of George Müller. Encourage the class to share the important details of the story, focusing on what they know about his life and legacy. Encourage your guest to ask questions of the students as they review the story.
- **BUILDING BLOCK RELAY:** Set up two lines of cones and divide your group into two or more teams on one line of cones for this variation on a relay race. Place an equal stack of blocks next to each group and explain that each team must “build a house” by running and stacking the blocks at the other set of cones. The first team to build their house wins. (You can make the game longer by having the students deconstruct and rebuild their houses at the starting point.) **ALTERNATE:** If space is limited, you can use Jenga blocks instead.
- **ADOPTED THROUGH CHRIST INTERVIEW:** Invite your guest to share what he or she has prepared for the class. Allow plenty of time for questions and encourage your students to use the interview on p. 9 of the Student Pages for more discussion questions.
- **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME:** Invite the class into your Bible center for Bible time. Sing (or play) “Jehovah Jireh” and review what was discussed in the last two sessions. Ask a new volunteer to hold up the theme verse and read it aloud together. Then **READ** Ephesians 1:4-10 together.

DISCUSS: *What does this passage tell us about God’s plan for us? What does it mean that we are adopted as God’s children through Jesus Christ? How do we have forgiveness of sins? What did it cost God to adopt us as his children? After listening to our special guest, how does this passage help us understand God’s loving care?*

SAY: *The Bible tells that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)—and because of our sin, we cannot be with God in heaven. The greatest need of every person in this world is to be saved from the consequences of sin: that is, eternal separation from God. But God loves us so much, and wants to adopt us as his children. So while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). He himself provides the sacrifice, and when we trust in this free gift, we can be saved from sin. (Romans 3:24-25). Do you know how Jesus has power to save us from sin? Because Jesus didn’t stay dead! God raised him from the dead. Jesus had to suffer and die to save us, but he*



conquered death from rising from the grave! Romans 6:9 says that “since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death has no mastery over him.” On the hill of Golgotha, on the cross, Jesus died to provide for YOUR greatest need: salvation from sin. And by his resurrection, he provides the greatest gift: life forever with God. Jesus already did the work; when you trust in him as your Savior and ask him to forgive you of your sins, God grants you eternal life as HIS child—you will always be in God’s family.

ASK a volunteer to tape today’s theme verse to your SURE FOUNDATION house to end your Bible Time.

- **ORPHAN CARE PROJECT:** Refer students to pp. 10-11 in the Student Pages. Discuss as a group how you can minister to orphaned children locally or worldwide with the ideas provided, or come up with some of your own!
- **ESCAPE THE WORKHOUSE MAZE:** Direct students to p. 12 of the Student Pages for this activity.
- **CLOSING PRAYER:** *Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for loving us and providing for our biggest need—salvation from our sins and life forever with you. You gave us what we needed most, and you continue to bless us with even more every day. Help us to live joyfully and thankfully because of your gifts. Amen.*
- **PLANNING AHEAD:** Come prepared to complete the **ORPHAN CARE PROJECT** that your group selected. Acquire materials and art supplies for the **DWELLING PLACE COLLAGE** as outlined on pp. 13-16 of the Student Pages. Look ahead for other supplies you might need.

NOTE: Refer to the answer key on p. 23 for answers to selected Student Pages.



Session 4: God Provides a Home with Him

FOCUS: God provides an eternal home in his family when we trust in Jesus.

THEME VERSE: “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.” Rev. 21:3

- **PREPARE:** Be ready to complete the **ORPHAN CARE PROJECT** with your group.

See pp. 13-16 of the Student Pages and gather noted supplies for **DWELLING PLACE COLLAGE**.

Have today’s theme verse ready for **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME**.

For **BIGGEST BUILDING**, identify a number of non-breakable items in your room that your group can use to build (books, tins, blocks, binders, etc.). You can also supply other items, like decks of cards or stacks of newspaper, for your group.

- **ORPHAN CARE PROJECT:** Spend time collecting donations, funds, letters, etc. Pray over the items with your group and discuss what they learned (use pp. 10-11 of the Student Pages to help guide discussion).
- **BIGGEST BUILDING:** Divide your students into three or four groups. Give each group an equal amount of materials to start. Instruct them to build the biggest house they can using those items plus any others they might find in the room (with your permission.) Limit their time to 10 to 15 minutes. The team that finishes with the biggest building wins.
- **SURE FOUNDATION BIBLE TIME:** Ask a volunteer to display this lesson’s verse and READ Revelation 21:3.

DISCUSS: One of the themes we’ve discussed over these past four lessons is the idea of home. What is home? What do you like about your home? What are things you’d like in a home in the future? Why does it matter to have a home?

SAY: We saw in the George Müller Story how God provided homes for the children to live in. What a gracious blessing! We all need places to live, and thanks to the Bible stories we’ve read, we see how God provides for the physical needs of his people. But did you know cares for us beyond our need for a physical home? All the things we have in this life point us to what God gives us in the next. God will provide a greater home—an ETERNAL home with him in heaven! Let’s open God’s Word and find out what this home is like. Our theme verse comes from the passage we’ll read together now.

READ: Revelation 21:1-7.

DISCUSS: What do these verses promise to God’s people? What kind of home does God have planned for us? Why would you want to live there?



SAY: Revelation is a book of the Bible that tells us about the things to come in the future. The book includes many promises about God's good plan for his people. For those who trust in Jesus as their Savior and become a part of God's family (John 1:12), a heavenly home waits—the "new Jerusalem." This is a home unlike anything we've ever experienced! A picture of it is given to us in Revelation 21:9-27.

READ (or summarize) the passage, focusing on the splendor and glory of the city instead of the minute details.

SAY: This description tells us about a home we can't even begin to imagine; it's that magnificent! What it does tell us is that ultimately, this world we live in now is not our final home. In fact, Hebrews 11 says that people of faith have always lived as strangers on earth, "longing for a better country—a heavenly one." The passage goes on to say that God "has prepared a city for them" (v. 16). The city—the one described in Revelation, where God lives with his people and takes away all pain, fear, and sadness—is the best possible home he could give us. God will be with us, and he promises to be everything we could ever need. With him, we have place to belong forever, surrounded by his love and light.

DISCUSS: Why is it good news that God provides a home with him forever? What are some ways that you can prepare today for your heavenly home?

- **DWELLING PLACE COLLAGE:** Refer students to pp. 13-16 in the Student Pages for templates and instructions.
- **DECODE THE QUOTE WORKSHEET:** Complete the activity on p. 17 of the Student Pages.
- **PRAYER:** *Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us all that we need now and for providing a home with you in the future. We praise you that you want to live with us forever! Help us to remember your promises and to store up treasures that will last in heaven. Amen.*

NOTE: Refer to the answer key on p. 23 for answers to selected Student Pages.

Dear Parents,

Today in class your child viewed a *Torchlighters* DVD depicting the life of George Müller, a missionary and minister who lived by radical prayer.

George was born in Prussia (Germany today) in 1805. After an adolescence marked by stealing, gambling, and drunkenness, George became a believer and his life changed forever. He entered the mission field and then the ministry. While serving as a pastor in Bristol, England, George discovered the sad state of orphaned children and decided to do something never done before—open an orphan home that relied entirely on God’s provision. Though he never asked for a single penny from anyone, George’s homes miraculously grew to serve thousands of the city’s destitute children—a lasting testament to the goodness and power of God.

During our time together we will focus on the theme, “God provides.” We will explore the ways in which God provides for his people, culminating in the provision of their greatest need—redemption accomplished through Jesus Christ. If you have any questions or comments, please don’t hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



Key People in The George Müller Story

GEORGE MÜLLER (SEPTEMBER 27, 1805–MARCH 10, 1898) Born in Kroppenstaedt, George Müller lived a wild youth in Prussia (present day Germany). A thief, gambler, and known liar, George stole government money from his tax collecting father and spent his adolescence drinking and doing stunts in prison. His father provided a religious education for a comfortable state-ordained clergy position, but George squandered his learning and his father's money until 1825, when a friend invited 20-year-old George to a prayer meeting. There George's life changed as he understood his need for salvation. Instead of entering the pastorate as his father desired, George became a missionary. Refusing his father's money and stepping out in faith, George moved to England in 1829, where he first ministered to Jews and then later became a pastor. After meeting Henry Craik and Anthony Norris Groves, George committed to a radical life of dependence on God through prayer. He married Mary Groves in 1830, refused a salary from his church, and co-founded the Scriptural Knowledge Institute (SKI) with Craik. In 1835, George felt led to open an orphanage on prayer alone, building his first orphan homes in 1836. George's orphan work continued throughout his life, eventually serving thousands of orphaned children. At age 70, George traveled the world and preached in 42 countries over 17 years. He died in Bristol at age 92.

MARY GROVES MÜLLER (1797–FEBRUARY 6, 1870) Sister of Anthony Norris Groves and spouse of George Müller.

HENRY CRAIK (AUGUST 8, 1805–JANUARY 22, 1866) Preacher and friend of George Müller. In 1826, he became a tutor in the home of Anthony Norris Groves, later introducing George Müller to the Groves family and exposing him to the movement known as the Plymouth Brethren. Craik and Müller worked together and co-founded the Scriptural Knowledge Institute (SKI) in 1834.

ANTHONY NORRIS GROVES (FEBRUARY 1, 1795–MAY 20, 1853) English missionary and friend of George Müller. Considered the father of faith missions, Groves left his career in dentistry to serve in Baghdad and later India. Anthony's 1825 booklet, "Christian Devotedness," deeply impacted George Müller, leading George to worship with the Plymouth Brethren and ultimately to live on faith and prayer. Their friendship and leadership in the Plymouth Brethren lasted through sectarian splits in the movement.

WILLIAM READY The orphan "Billy" is based off William Ready who grew up in one of Müller's homes and later became a preacher.



19th-Century England and the Industrial Revolution

Known as the Victorian era due to the extensive reign of Queen Victoria, the 19th century was a time of relative peace, prosperity, and progress for the British Empire. The Industrial Revolution took place between 1760 and 1840, transitioning the United Kingdom from an agriculturally based society to a primarily manufacturing or industrial economy. Leading the charge in the developed world, Great Britain innovated this change on a massive scale, and many in society benefited from its success. In general, living standards improved and birth rate increased; however, the lower classes suffered disproportionately in the new industrial era.

In cities like London and Bristol, living conditions for the poor were deplorable. Overcrowding due to infrastructure expansions led to increased homelessness and extreme poverty among the underclass. Poorhouses or workhouses existed to address this problem by offering shelter and food in exchange for trivial duties, but low opinions of the working poor and a desire by workhouse governors to turn a profit led to increasingly worse conditions and more demeaning work. Philosophically, workhouses were run more like a correctional facility than a charitable shelter, and workhouse occupants were treated as little more than slave labor.

Children, the disabled, and the elderly suffered the most in these circumstances. Lack of labor laws or safety measures meant children worked long hours with no breaks in appalling conditions. Moreover, 19th-century Poor Laws allowed workhouses to detain orphans or children with “unfit” parents and force them to work for their keep. Undoubtedly, they collected these street children in earnest, eager for free labor. By 1839, almost half of the workhouse population were children. Common jobs included picking oakum—the tedious, painful, and monotonous process of pulling old ship ropes apart strand by strand—beating out dirty rugs, bone crushing, and sometimes being sold out to textile mills and other factory jobs. Any rebellion or disobedience within workhouses was often met with unimaginably cruel punishment. There are many documented cases of violent sexual and physical abuse of workhouse children.

While Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839) brought these terrible conditions to light and mobilized the public to aid the poor in the following years, society at large ignored or were oblivious to their plight. George Müller’s steps in faith not only to care for orphaned children but also to do so without certain funding was monumental, leading Dickens to write in 1857 that Müller “has accomplished in his own way a substantial work that must secure for him the respect of all good men, whatever may be the form of their religious faith.”



George Müller Timeline

- 1805** George Müller is born in Kroppenstaedt, Prussia.
- 1819** Müller's mother dies.
- 1821** At the age of 16, Müller spends five weeks in prison for debt.
- 1825** Müller enrolls at Halle University to study theology; his friend Beta takes him to a Bible study, after which he becomes a Christian.
- 1826** Müller decides to become a missionary. Refusing to accept his father's money, at one point he lives for two months in free lodgings in an orphan house.
- 1829** Müller moves to London to train for missionary work. He becomes ill and goes to Teignmouth, Devon, for rest and meets Henry Craik. Invited to become minister of Ebenezer Chapel, he moves to Devon.
- 1830** Müller marries Mary Groves. He renounces his regular salary and eliminates the renting of church pews at Ebenezer.
- 1832** Müller moves to Bristol to serve with Craik as pastors of Gideon Chapel and Bethesda Chapel; George and Mary's daughter Lydia is born.
- 1834** George and Mary's son, Elijah, is born, but lives only 15 months. Müller co-founds the Scriptural Knowledge Institute to support missionaries at home and abroad, provide a source of cheap Bibles and tracts, and support day schools and Sunday schools for adults and children.
- 1835** Müller feels led to start an orphanage because of a worsening cholera epidemic and the increasing number of orphaned children who are forced into the workhouse or the streets.
- 1836** The first Orphan Homes are opened on Wilson Street, Bristol. The first 30 female orphans live in the Müllers' own home.
- 1837** Third Wilson Street home opened to accommodate boys seven and up.
- 1840** Craik and Müller focus on preaching at Bethesda Chapel; Müller will continue preaching and leading there until his death.
- 1845** Müller receives a letter of complaint from the neighbors about the noise caused by the orphans (now numbering about 130).

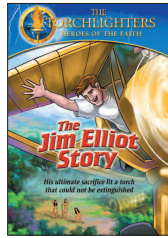


- 1846** Müller buys land at Ashley Down. He does not allow building to begin until he has all of the money to complete the project.
- 1847** Building starts on Ashley Down.
- 1848** The Brethren split into “Open” and “Exclusive” groups over the willingness of Bethesda Chapel to receive believers from Benjamin Newton’s assembly. Müller associates with the Open Brethren.
- 1849** The first home at Ashley Down is opened, accommodating 300 children in dormitories. Each house has its own dining room and its own infirmary.
- 1851** Müller makes the decision to expand; there are 78 children on the waiting list.
- 1854** Work starts on the second orphan house at Ashley Down.
- 1857** Work on Orphan House Number 2 at Ashley Down is completed.
- 1858** Work begins on Orphan House Number 3.
- 1861** Müller decides to accommodate 2,000 orphaned children and acquires more land.
- 1862** House Number 3 is completed, housing another 450 children. Capacity is now 1,150.
- 1868** A further 450 orphans are accommodated in Orphan House Number 4, bringing the total number of orphans cared for at Ashley Down to 1,600.
- 1870** House Number 5 is completed; Ashley Down can now house up to 2,050 children. Mary Müller dies; James Wright is appointed assistant and successor to George Müller.
- 1871** James Wright marries Lydia, the Müllers’ only surviving child. George Müller marries Susannah Grace Sanger.
- 1875** Müller begins 17 years of missionary travel at age 70. He will travel over 200,000 miles, address over 3 million people, and preach in 42 countries.
- 1890** Lydia (Müller) Wright dies.
- 1894** Susannah Müller dies.
- 1898** George Müller dies in Bristol.

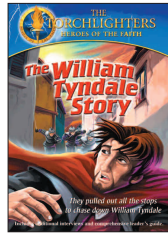
(Adapted from *Christian History* issue #128: George Müller. See full timeline here.)



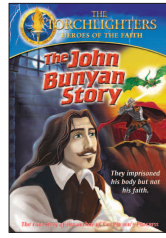
The Torchlighters: Heroes of the Faith Series



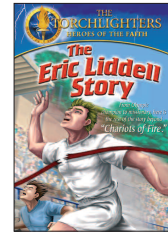
JIM ELLIOT
Missionary
to Ecuador



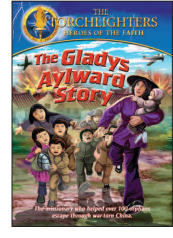
**WILLIAM
TYNDALE**
Bible translator



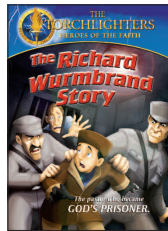
JOHN BUNYAN
Author of *The
Pilgrim's Progress*



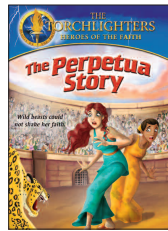
ERIC LIDDELL
Olympian
and missionary



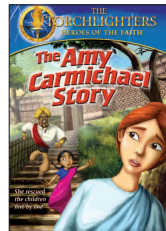
GLADYS AYLWARD
Missionary
to China



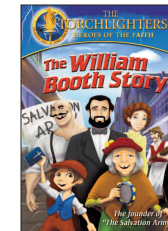
**RICHARD
WURMBRAND**
Founder of The Voice
of the Martyrs



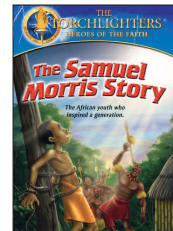
PERPETUA
Early church
martyr



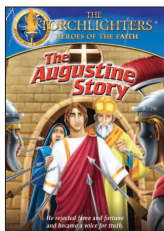
AMY CARMICHAEL
Missionary to India



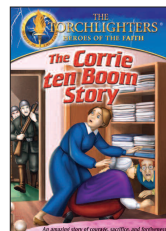
WILLIAM BOOTH
Founder of
The Salvation Army



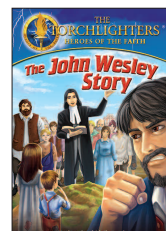
SAMUEL MORRIS
African prince turned
missionary



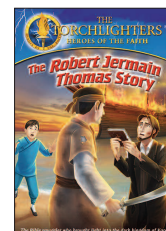
AUGUSTINE
Early church
theologian



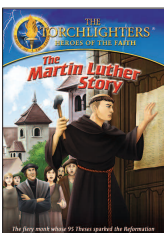
CORRIE TEN BOOM
Rescuer during
World War II



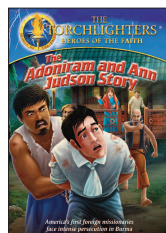
JOHN WESLEY
Founder of the
Methodist movement



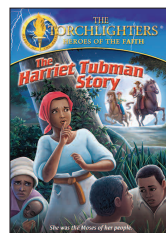
**ROBERT JERMAIN
THOMAS**
Bible smuggler
to Korea



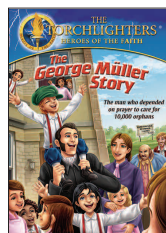
MARTIN LUTHER
German monk who
sparked the Reformation



**ADONIRAM AND ANN
JUDSON**
Missionaries to Burma



HARRIET TUBMAN
“The Moses of her people”



GEORGE MÜLLER
The man who
depended on prayer

Coming soon: *The Patrick Story!*

Visit www.Torchlighters.org for up-to-date information on new releases.



Answer Key for Select Student Pages

Prayed and Provided, p. 7

- C I Samuel 1 & 2
- F I Kings 18:20-40
- D Exodus 14
- A Mark 5:23
- E Acts 12:5
- B Luke 1

Story Mix-Up, p. 8

Student Handouts for the DVD *The Torchlighters: The George Müller Story*

Story Mix-Up
These pictures of George Müller's story are all mixed up.
Number the pictures in the correct order.

7 The landlord tells George he must move.	4 The children play outside of the Müller orphan home.
2 In the workhouse, Charlie and William hear about George Müller's orphan home.	1 Many of Bristol's orphaned children sleep on the streets.
8 God provides a home! Henry, the Müllers, and the children celebrate.	6 God provides breakfast! The baker brings fresh bread.
3 The boys try to escape the workhouse!	5 There is nothing to eat, but George trusts God to provide anyway.

Learn more about *The Torchlighters: Heroes of the Faith* programs at www.torchlighters.org.

Escape the Workhouse Maze, p. 12

Student Handouts for the DVD *The Torchlighters: The George Müller Story*

Escape the Workhouse Maze
Help the boys escape the workhouse and find their way to the safety of the orphanage!

Learn more about *The Torchlighters: Heroes of the Faith* programs at www.torchlighters.org.

Decode the Quote by George Müller, p. 17

“Be assured, if you walk with Him, look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you.”