



A MATTER OF TIME

Time Flies

December 24, 2022

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Psalm 31:14, 15 (NIV) • “But I trust in you, Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hands.”

Psalm 89:47 (NIV) • “Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all humanity!”

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NIV) • “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.”

Romans 8:18 (NIV) • “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

James 4:14, 15 (NIV) • “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’”

(More: Philippians 1-4, specifically 4:11-13)

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “A MATTER OF TIME”

Time is one thing we cannot control. Time is the gift that God has given us all. He has given us all days, hours, minutes, and seconds to fill up with things that remind us of Him. As a youth worker, chances are that you have heard the phrase “I’m bored” more than once in your tenure with teenagers. The “bored” attitude sometimes displayed in our young people can come about because of developmental issues; because of the expectations that young people have walking into church; or because they simply don’t know how to be creative with their time in a constructive, Christian way.

This lesson focuses on how young people can use their time wisely, effectively, and productively—perhaps learning, but always doing something that would be pleasing to God. We will be looking at discernment issues when it comes to their use of time, as well as issues surround-

ing their choices of entertainment, devotion, and service. When a young person learns the value of time and how the wasting of time can become a destructive behavior, hopefully they will be compelled to search for avenues that will be more and more uplifting to them and to their church and community. We will also address what the world would have us do with our time and how that fits into the Christian paradigm of activity and behavior.

Last, we will attempt to create opportunities to let the young people become creative in their approach to time and time management and entertainment as well.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "A MATTER OF TIME"

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Evaluate their current use of time, especially free time, in an organized fashion (see p. 143).
2. Determine Jesus' Lordship over their time and how that works out practically in their lives.
3. Understand and plan their specific use and stewardship of time.
4. Creatively look at their free time as opportunities for forwarding the kingdom of God.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) a watch or clock with a second hand, or stopwatch; (Activity B) bag of beans (dry), two empty jars, a watch or clock with a second hand, or stopwatch, table.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Paper, pens or pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN BEFORE

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word. At some point you should distribute or call their attention to their student lesson for this week.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • At the appropriate time, go to the front of the class and ask for the students' attention. Don't demand it as you might on any other day, simply ask for it and wait; looking at your watch is appropriate.

Get set • Once the students are ready, ask them each to follow your directions explicitly. Let them know that all they will need to do is listen to you and do what you ask them to do.

Go • Have all the students of the class sit perfectly silent for two minutes (120 seconds). This will be challenging for them, especially because if they move or communicate with anyone, the time must begin again. (Caution: Don't let this take up all your time, they are earlitesens, and we all know how squirmy they can get.)

Debriefing • Ask: Did these two minutes feel long or short? (Answers should be "long.") What would you rather have been doing during these two minutes? Is it really true that "time flies when you are having fun"? Why is that? Which feels longer: 15 minutes of engaging in your favorite hobby or 15 minutes of devotional time?

Say: Our lesson today is about how you use your time and what kind of steward you are with the time that God has given you.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Have the students divide into two teams. You can do this however you like, a fun way is to have them each take off one shoe and put it in a pile in the middle of the room. Then you divide the shoes; the students have to get their matching shoe, and are on whichever team you have decided.

Get set • Prior to Sabbath School, stack two piles of beans on a table. Then after you have created your teams, let them know that it is a relay race they will be competing in. The instructions are as follows: the two teams have to fill up their jars, one bean at a time. They have to finish all their beans, but they have only one minute. So they really have to hustle as a team.

Go • Begin the game. You will probably want to play the game more than once in order to let the concept really sink in. You want them to understand that there is really not enough time to do everything they need to do in order to win the game. If need be, each time you play, take some of the beans away in order to further illustrate the point. Even though some beans have been taken away, the students still do not have enough time to fill the jar.

Debriefing • Ask: What did it feel like to know you would never have enough time to finish the assigned task? What did it feel like when the teacher would take more and more beans away from the pile, yet you still couldn't finish the game? For what in your life do you feel you don't have enough time? Where in your daily schedule can you create more time for those things that are really important?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story from the life of a youth pastor:

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with \$86,000 that carried over no balance from day to day, allowed you to keep no cash in your account, and every evening canceled whatever part of the amount you failed to use during the day, what would you do? Draw out every cent every day, of course, and use it to your advantage! Well, you have such a bank, and its name is TIME! Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it rules off as lost whatever of this you failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balances, it allows no overdrafts. Each day it opens a new account with you. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against tomorrow.

Psalms 39 gives us some perspective: "You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You" (verse 5, NKJV). To an eternal God, our time on earth is brief. And He doesn't want us to waste it. When we do, we throw away one of the most precious commodities He gives us. Each minute is an irretrievable gift—and unredeemable slice of eternity.

—Sermon Illustrations, www.sermonillustrations.com.

Debriefing • Ask: Is there any activity in your life that takes up way too much time? Do you get bored easily? (assuming the answer to the previous question was "no") Why do you think you don't get bored? Are you spending your time with the awareness that we must give account to God for how we spend our time? How can you improve how you are spending your time?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

When you look at the story of the life of Jesus Christ, you have an interesting view into the use of time. Never did we see Jesus wasting time. In fact, when He was particularly busy, He would take time out to pray and spend more time with His Father in heaven. This is particularly impressive when you see what His task was—to save the world. For us, it is important to take Christ’s life as an example.

Another example of someone who made incredible use of his time is the apostle Paul. Paul even used the time he was in prison to write letters of encouragement to those churches he had founded. If you take a look at the book of Philippians you will hear a person who, despite incredible personal hardship, was able to overcome his situation and be a blessing to others. In **Philippians 4:11-13** Paul tells us the secret that he has discovered for living an exciting and contented life. You would think that someone who was in prison would be bored, but not Paul. Paul was excited about being in the service of Jesus Christ. In fact, he even says that nothing is impossible with the help of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the story of Paul it is obvious that he is never bored, no matter what the situation. As well, it is plain that Paul was interested in becoming a useful tool for Jesus Christ and wanted to waste NO time that could be used in helping the cause of Christ and the kingdom of God be advanced in this world.

Ask: What example can we take from the epistle to the Philippians? How can we model our attitude after that of Paul’s? What can we do in order to become a blessing in others’

lives? Does every minute need to be filled with Christ’s purpose for us? (The answer to that question is “yes”—however, that might scare young people, so we need to unpack that concept. Of course, every minute of the day is filled with Christ’s purpose, but that does not mean we can’t enjoy life. However, we can choose such activities and hobbies that are in line with God’s purpose for our lives.)

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Ask: Did you figure out who this story was about? (yes, King Solomon). **Do you have a way of gauging your free time? What are some more beneficial ways of spending your time?**

Try to lead teens toward acts of service, and have some practical ideas ready for them.

As well, challenge your students to take a week to turn off all sorts of entertainment, and commit the use of their time to advance the kingdom of God. How can they do that? This is where you will need practical service ideas. In fact, you should plan a couple evening activities over the upcoming week in which students can get involved in service to their church, school, and community. (These will vary according to geographical location and the schedule your group is used to.)

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

Let’s say you have come home after school, you have finished your homework and your chores, there is one solid hour before dinner and you have to decide what to do. There are so many options, some of which are beneficial, some of which are not. How do you make a good decision about what to do with that hour? What sort of opportunities for service exist at your house that can be done in a short time? Is there any way that you

can be a blessing to someone in the next hour?

Have the students refer to the texts in the Wednesday section of the lesson. **Ask: What kind of eternal principles can we find for the use of time? What is the best way to spend our time? Are there some activities that might be beneficial simply because it gets us out of the house and allows us to use our bodies and our minds, something that forces us to be creative rather than always be a consumer? What do we know about heaven and the types of things we might be doing there?** (This should be a great point for a discussion about time spent in heaven and what heaven might be like.)

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Refer students to the schedule in Friday's APPLYING section of the student lesson. How much time have they spent in the following activities: homework, television, eating, video games, talking with family, talking on the phone or Instant Messaging on the computer, getting ready, sleeping, hanging out with friends, devotional life and prayer, helping others? Have them report their overall totals in the various categories.

Debriefing • Ask: What was the activity that took up the most time (outside of school and sleeping)? **Where does your devotional life fit in? is it on the top of the list or the bottom? If God is supposed to be our Friend, yet we spend very little time with Him, how are we becoming closer to Him? What can you do to create more time in your schedule?**

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How many hours are there in a day?
2. What does God ask for in tithe? What percentage of our money?
3. Since there are 24 hours in a day, is it too much to ask for 24 minutes of your day to be given to God? Just as we set aside a tithe of our income to be given to God, shouldn't we be willing to set aside a portion of our time to spend with Him?
4. Ask the students to commit themselves to 24 minutes a day with God. Approach it as you would a discussion of tithe (even though we're not talking about a strict 10 percent), with the challenge God gives us to test Him on it. See if there are any students willing to write up a contract with you that includes giving God His "tithe" of their time.

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

God has given us each 24 hours. Perhaps you can find the best part of your waking day, and ask God to become a part of those 24 minutes. As well, we have to take a look into our schedules to see what it is that we are spending our time doing, and figure out if we are really using our time wisely, especially in relationship with Jesus Christ.

We would like the students to take practical steps toward a relationship with Christ that will affect their everyday lives.



STUDENT LESSON

A MATTER OF TIME Time Flies

December 24, 2022

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them” (Ezekiel 20:12, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 20, The Sabbath:** “The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God’s kingdom. The Sabbath is God’s perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 100, 101

TIME FLIES

There once lived a very wise man. When he was young, he dealt with fairness. He was able to solve very difficult riddles. Everyone was amazed at his knowledge and wisdom in finding solutions to challenging situations. He was also very wealthy, but he used his wealth for his own purposes. He built palaces, temples, and a fleet of ships, and accumulated lots of gold. People from far and near came to see him and learn of the wisdom God had given him.

Yet when he became old, he looked back over his life and recognized his failures. He realized that he had squandered much precious time on selfish pursuits. He regretted bitterly that he had not lived his life completely dedicated to God. Sadly, he could no

longer bring back all those wasted days—they were lost forever. The precious opportunities he could have invested in eternal values were lost. He failed to be a good example to his wives, children, nation, and future generations. Most important, he had disappointed God, who had given him wisdom to be used for the benefit of others. There was nothing he could do to change the consequences of his selfish actions and wasted opportunities. So he decided to write down his advice to future generations, warning everyone not to make the same mistakes he had. He didn’t want his children or those who would hear about his life to waste their time on things that didn’t really matter.

At the beginning of each day, God gives everyone 24 hours. Everyone needs to decide how to use the precious opportunities God has given. Ask yourself, “How could I invest my time in worthwhile pursuits that would best prepare me for a life of usefulness that honors God and blesses others?”

—Kathleen D. Sowards (References: Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 77-86).

Because God has our best interest at heart, He has given us a gift of time each week during which we can rest from the daily preoccupations that absorb our time, attention, and energies. God set apart the seventh-day Sabbath to be a memorial of Creation, an oasis in time, when we have the opportunity to reconnect with the Creator. The Sabbath reminds us of God’s work of creation and salvation, as well as of His power to restore in us the image of our Maker. The Sabbath helps us set priorities for the use of our time and to refocus our attention on pursuits that have eternal value. What a privilege it is to spend time with the Creator each Sabbath and to praise Him for His marvelous love for us!

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15.
- » What takes up the most time in your day (besides going to school)? Where do you enjoy spending your time the most? How much time do you spend with God? If you have a strong relationship with God, how will that affect how you spend your time on various activities during the day? Would Jesus accompany you in all the activities that take up your time? What does it mean to you to spend time with God? What does spending time with Him look like in your daily life?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE SABBATH

- » Read Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13, 14; Hebrews 4:1-11.
- » "One day alone is ours, and during this day we are to live for God. For this one day we are to place in the hand of Christ, in solemn service, all our purposes and plans, casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 101).



See activity at the end of this lesson.

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read and compare Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:12, 20. What are the common elements between these verses?

- » How is the Sabbath important to your life?

- » There is only so much time in this life to do all those things we want to do, and all those things that God wants us to do. When we find

ourselves wasting too much time, we are also wasting God's time.

- » We can all be powerful instruments for God's kingdom, but we have to make sure we schedule it in. These lives we lead are very busy, so we need to get to our calendars before the other priorities fill our lives with stuff that really is a waste of time.
- » At the bottom of the lesson is a graph on which you can write down how you spend your time this week. Take three days and try to be as accurate as possible. This exercise can really be eye-opening if you are honest.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS



See activity at the end of this lesson.

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Luke 4:16. What does this text tell us about Jesus? How is Jesus an example to us in keeping the Sabbath?
- » Review the memory text.
- » At this point you should have at least one day finished on your schedule tracker. What are you learning? Are there places in your day that you could fill with more productive activities? What about your tithe in time? Have you found a place where you can give back to God 24 minutes as a type of tithe of the 24 hours He gives you?
- » "Christ has given us no promise of help in bearing today the burdens of tomorrow. He has said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee' (2 Corinthians 12:9); but, like the manna given in the wilderness, His grace is bestowed daily, for the day's need. Like the hosts of Israel in their pilgrim life, we may find morning by morning the bread of heaven for the day's supply" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 101).

Friday
APPLYING

- » Try keeping track of your time for three days this week. Write down what you are doing each hour of the day that you are awake (such as: devotional time, study of the Bible, prayer, helping others, eating, homework, hobbies, talking with family, talking on the phone or messaging on the computer or on other electronic devices, getting ready, sleeping, hanging out with friends)

Time	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
7:00–8:00 a.m.	_____	_____	_____
8:00–9:00 a.m.	_____	_____	_____
9:00–10:00 a.m.	_____	_____	_____
10:00–11:00 a.m.	_____	_____	_____
11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon	_____	_____	_____
12:00 noon–1:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
1:00–2:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
2:00–3:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
3:00–4:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
4:00–5:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
5:00–6:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
6:00–7:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
7:00–8:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
8:00–9:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____
9:00 –10:00 p.m.	_____	_____	_____

Monday activity

Decode the message by finding each substitute letter or symbol.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

" R C F U F K C V F U G S M C M J M K H ; U V L S ,
 S M C L K X Q S E M H Q S F U Q X V L K X U G
 S M C K A L G H V Y V L J Q 31 : 14, 15, G U I "

Wednesday activity

Please read the following Bible references and match the texts with the correct references. All references are from the *New International Version of the Bible*.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	James 4:14, 15
Psalms 89:47	Romans 8:18
Matthew 6:34	Psalms 31:14, 15

- "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." _____
- "Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" _____
- "But I trust in you, Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands." _____
- "Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all humanity!" _____
- "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to fear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace." _____
- "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." _____