

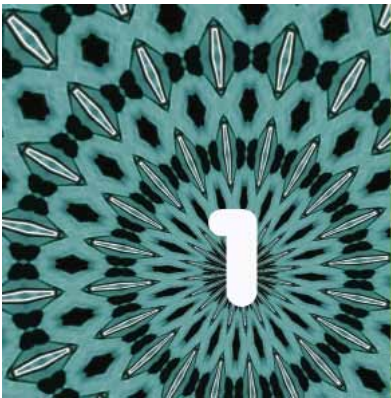


Back to School

I have always loved this time of year. There are so many new things to look forward to—new clothes and school supplies, new clubs to join, new friends to make...the possibilities are endless. When you think about school, you probably think about class schedules, football games, and hanging out with your friends. This month, we're going to look at a very special class schedule and consider ways it can help us improve our witness for God at school.

FIRST PERIOD

GEOGRAPHY



In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His disciples, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." In other words, we are to be witnesses for Christ WHEREVER we are.

School is one of the most important mission fields in your life. In our country, it is becoming harder and harder for teachers to share about the Gospel of Jesus. There are laws prohibiting them from talking about spiritual matters with students. But YOU have the freedom and the power to make a difference for Christ in your school.

There are lots of ways for you to witness at your school. Start close to home, just like Jesus instructed His disciples in Acts 1:8. Think about your school. Where is your Jerusalem? Maybe it's a team you are on, maybe it's your group of friends, maybe it's your homeroom class. Think about the kids in that group. Are all of them saved? Have you told all of them about Jesus? Have you invited them to church? How can you be a witness in this area? _____

Once you get started in Jerusalem, then you can move on to Judaea, Samaria and beyond.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Watch the movie *Facing the Giants* with some friends and talk about how the kids on the football team helped start a revival in their school. List some ideas for things you and your friends can do, like starting a Bible Breakfast Club that meets before school once a week or having a short Bible study during break time or lunch. _____

SECOND PERIOD

INTRO TO TECHNOLOGY



As the school year begins, you will probably be making some new friends and trying to stay in touch with old ones. This is especially true if you have moved to a new town or if you are moving up to high school and leaving some middle school friends behind. One of the coolest ways to keep up with friends is through online communities like Facebook or MySpace.

It seems like almost everyone has a Facebook page now. Even some teachers have them to post reminders about class and different assignments. Technology is amazing and it can be a really fun way to stay in touch with friends. It can be tempting to spend hours in front of the computer, chatting with old friends and searching for new ones.

The Internet is a great tool we can use to strengthen our witness for God. This study is posted on the Internet each month. I write Bible studies and thoughts from my devotions on my on-

line blog and my Facebook page. I use email and Facebook to stay in touch with old friends from high school. While the Internet can be a great thing, it can also be a dangerous place for girls like you and me.

1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” We use the Internet for good things, but there are people on the Internet who don’t have the same good intentions . Be careful what you put online.

games. Since then, she has also given her testimony at one of our district Women Active for Christ meetings.

She stepped out of her comfort zone to tell others what Jesus has done for her. Public speaking is her Judaea. What’s yours?

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Talk to your parents about how to stay safe on the Internet. Look at your online profiles. Are there any people on your Friends list that you don’t know personally? If so, delete these persons from your profile. Don’t accept friend requests from people you don’t know. Don’t put personal information like your address or phone number online. Find an “Accountability Buddy”—like your mom or youth pastor—and add that person to your friend list. This person can help you make sure you don’t give out too much information about yourself and that everything you write while you’re online will bring glory to God.

THIRD PERIOD

CHEMISTRY 101



You and your friends are sitting in class, kind of bored. Your eyes are starting to glaze over as you look at the posters of the Periodic Table of Elements and the beakers and bottles scattered all over the room. Science is just not your thing.

But then your teacher makes an interesting announcement. She’s going to assign each of you a lab partner for the year. You perk up instantly and cross your fingers under your desk, hoping you will be paired with your best friend, when the teacher calls out your name and says that you will be paired with Kyle, the quarterback of the football team and your long-time crush. Suddenly, chemistry seems like it might not be such a bad class after all...

Dealing with crushes and boyfriends is just a part of growing up. We’ve all daydreamed about romance and doodled our names as Mrs. So-and-so in the back of our notebooks. Your parents probably have rules about dating—how old you have to be, the kind of boys you’re allowed to go out with, what time you should come home. Those kinds of rules are great, even though you might not agree with them sometimes. Remember, your parents are just trying to do what is best for you. (Plus, we are commanded to honor our parents in Exodus 20:12).

But it’s also a good idea for you to set some of your own rules for dating. If you set boundaries before you start dating, you will be less likely to get into compromising situations later. When I was a teenager, my mom gave me a purity commitment card to keep in my purse. Check it out:

*I am committed to Purity for my future mate because my Heavenly Father has lovingly instructed me to do so.
With God’s help, I will do my best to:*

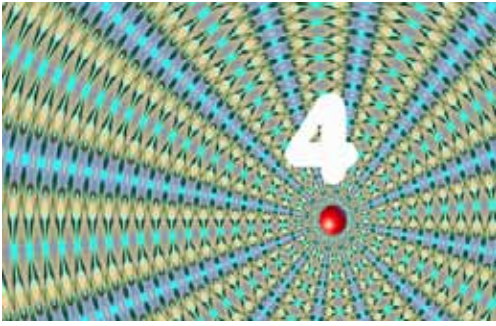
- 1. Plan my dates and outings so that I will not put myself in compromising situations.*
- 2. Understand that true love really does wait.*
- 3. Read God’s word and seek Him daily for wisdom and strength.*
- 4. Inform my family and friends about my commitment so I can be held accountable.*
- 5. Trust in the Lord for His strength in my time of weakness.*
- 6. Yield to the Lord’s instructions, trusting that His love and plan for my life is truly the best.*

©Dickson’s Inc.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Reread the six Purity Commitments above and find some Bible verses that go with them (*Need help? You can use the keyword/topic search on BibleGateway.com. or look up key words in a Bible concordance.*) List these verses here.

Talk to your parents or an older friend about establishing your own set of purity commitments.

FOURTH PERIOD



PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND BAND

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus tells a story about a master who went on a trip and left his servants with different amounts of talents (or money). When the master returned, he asked his servants what they had done with the talents he left them. The first two servants had handled the money wisely and were able to give their master more money

than he left with them. The third servant was afraid of losing his money, so he buried it. When the master came back, all he had to give him was the money he had been given. The master was angry with this servant and punished him.

School is the perfect place for you to find and use your talents. God has blessed all of us with some kind of talent we can use for Him. When you're in middle school or high school, you can try all different kinds of teams and clubs to discover what your special talents are and how to use them for God.

Some people are natural athletes. They can use their talents by forming relationships with teammates and being examples of good sportsmanship. Others are blessed with leadership abilities. They can make a difference by encouraging others through clubs like Student Council. Others are gifted with musical abilities, artistic abilities or academic abilities.

Whatever your gift, God expects you to use it. He doesn't want you to hide your talent from the world. He wants you to show people that He has blessed you and share that blessing with others.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: What are you good at or what do you enjoy? How do you think you can use your talent for God?

As you go back to school this year, I hope you are excited to see what God has in store for you. I know there are great things in your future, because God promised that He has plans for your life (Jeremiah 29:11). As you head into the new year, "be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:9). Commit yourself to God and He will guide you in the way you need to go.

Love,

Christina



PARENTS:

I recently read the book, *Predator*, by Terri Blackstock. This Christian fiction book is about an online predator and how he uses online communities like Facebook and MySpace to find his victims. I would highly recommend that you read this book and let your older teenage children read it as well.



ABOUT THE WRITER:

Christina Hopper is 23 years old. She attends Sulphur Springs FWB Church in Northport, Alabama where she teaches the Junior Youth Group and coaches a Bible Millionaire team. Get your parents' permission to check out her Facebook page or email her at cmhopper.warrior@gmail.com. She would love to hear from you.

