

**ENDURING BELIEFS  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN FAITH**

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## THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ  
voluntary as a signal  
for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the  
Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and  
teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of  
the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

## THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while  
the classes are being  
arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5  
minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

## THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application  
of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School  
Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

*AME Discipline*

# OVERVIEW

## ENDURING BELIEFS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

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Title: *The Holy Scriptures*

Lesson 2: *December 14, 2025*  
Title: *Our Heavenly Father*

Lesson 3: *December 21, 2025*  
Title: *Christ the Savior*

Lesson 4: *December 28, 2025*  
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#### LESSONS 5 - 8

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# The Holy Scriptures

**LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 1:8-9; 2 Kings 22:8-20; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Psalm 19:17-14; Luke 24:25-32; Acts 17:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:14-15

**KEY VERSES:** “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

## WORDS TO KNOW

**DECREES** – Official orders or truths that are dependable and trustworthy.

**PRECEPTS** – Rules or guidelines that help us know what is right and just in everyday life.

**FEAR (OF THE LORD)** – A deep respect, awe, and reverence for God, not fear like being scared.

**ORDINANCES** – God’s rulings or judgments; they are fair, true, and completely right.

**TRANSGRESSION** – A serious wrongdoing or rebellion against God’s ways.

**INSOLENT (OR PROUD THOUGHTS)** – Arrogant or proud thoughts or behaviors.

**SACRED WRITINGS** – God’s inspired Word passed down through generations.

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: PSALM 19:7-11; 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-15***PSALM 19:7-11**

- 7** The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple;
- 8** the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes;
- 9** the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
- 10** More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.
- 11** Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:14-15**

- 14** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it
- 15** and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

**INTRODUCTION**

Living as a young person in today's world can be overwhelming. You may find yourself in situations where you feel confused, lost, and need help. No one wants to feel alone and be in a situation where they have no one to talk to or express their feelings to. In situations when you may feel you have nowhere to turn, there is an actual guide to help you. You may have laughed to yourself or ignored Ma Dear or Big Mama, but she knew what she was talking about when she told you that the answer was in the Bible. The Bible is more than a book; it is like a spiritual GPS that gives direction. It is the true living Word of God where you will find wisdom, hope, joy, and peace. Speaking of peace, today is the **Second Sunday of Advent**, when we focus on peace. You will find peace when you understand that everything you need to guide you through life is in God's Word. Today's lesson will demonstrate that the Bible is where you get the best advice; it serves as a life map.



## BIBLE STORY

**Knowing God Through Scripture.** You are about to participate in an athletic event, a debate team round, a musical performance, a test, or a class presentation. All of a sudden, you feel a sense of nervousness and wonder if you will do well or crash out. This happens to the best of us. The way to overcome this is to recite that handy scripture you learned years ago. If you have recently been introduced to scripture, it is never too late. Praying is one thing, but adding memorized scripture to the mix takes you to another level. It will help calm your nerves, and you will perform at the top of your game. In Psalm 19:7-10 we are told we can depend on God's Word because it is valuable and full of wisdom. This is not just some fairy tale; it is true. There is power and clarity in knowing God's Word.

**Loving God's Word.** Think about how you feel when you listen to your favorite playlist to lift your spirits. You sing to the top of your voice with joy. You may or may not be able to sing in tune, but your mood is elevated, and you feel a sense of peace. The verses covering Psalm 19:11-14 tell us that when we love God, we find value in God's Word. When we love God, we follow God's words, trusting God even when we do not understand or feel scared. When we love God, we're saying "yes" to the journey with God. You may feel this way when you move to a new school, deal with peer pressure, or try to do the right thing when it's hard. Don't worry, God's Word, your life map, will lead and guide you.

**Serving God Through Scripture.** The scriptures not only help us know and love God, but they also help us to serve God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 gives us a reminder that Paul told Timothy not to disregard the scriptures on which he was raised. Paul explains to Timothy that he can serve as an example for others. There are several ways you can serve as an example. You can especially serve as an example by serving as environmental stewards. When we know God and when we love and serve God, this applies to all of God's creation. When we recycle, save energy, and take care of nature in various ways, we serve God by taking care of God's creation. Climate change is real, and it is up to us to make sure we do our part to make things better. When we walk in God's plan,

God's Spirit often leads us to help others.

Questions:

- ❖ Can you think of a time when you depended on knowing God's Word to help you? Explain.
- ❖ How can you serve God as an environmental steward? Give some examples.
- ❖ What's one scripture that's helped you get through a tough time? Can you say it is a good life map? Explain.

## SANKOFA

Sankofa, a word from the Akan people of Ghana meaning “go back and get it,” reminds us to return to our faith, culture, and identity as we move forward with strength and purpose. Sankofa reminds us that looking back while preparing for a better future is a way to honor God. Honoring God means honoring all creation, including people, diverse global traditions, and nature. As stewards of God's creation, we are called to serve not only locally but globally as well. As part of a global connection, the AME Church has 20 Episcopal districts, with districts 14-20 outside of the States. Get ready to stamp your “spiritual passports” because this quarter, we will take a virtual trip around the world to enhance our global awareness, identifying various countries that include AME churches. Google Lens the flags and search the Episcopal districts on social media to learn more.

Our first stop is in the **14th Episcopal District**, visiting Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.



Nigeria



Togo



Benin



Ghana

No matter what is going on in other countries with the youth, one thing is in common: they seek direction from God. God's work is for everyone no matter the country or environment. The



Sankofa principle reminds us to take wisdom from the past and use it today. The Bible is the life map that keeps you on track. All teens can learn that part of their “life map” includes scriptures that will encourage them to live a godly life. Teens across Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana may live in different places, but you all share the same God and the same Bible, providing scriptures as the ultimate life map.

Questions:

- ❖ What can you learn from youth in these countries?
- ❖ What kind of activities can you do as environmental stewards?
- ❖ How is loving God’s creation, including nature, showing love for God? Explain.

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

**“Shine Bright Like a Diamond!”** The singer Rihanna makes a great point in this song. You can shine bright and feel on top of the world reading your Bible because it will help with your mood and mindset. You know your favorite songs word for word and beat for beat. When you make it a habit to read your Bible, you can become familiar with encouraging scriptures just the same. The scripture reminds us that we are beautiful and can use God’s Word for guidance. You do not have to be perfect in this knowledge; many adults do not know the Bible as much as they should. Do not worry if you have to search for scripture or ask for help. When you notice the beauty of the scripture, it will show you just how beautiful you are. You are made in God’s image. God is; therefore, you are.

As mentioned previously, today is the **Second Sunday of Advent**, in which we focus on peace. You already have so much going on in your life that you may, for example, turn a blind eye to situations involving someone being bullied online. You feel it doesn’t have anything to do with you, but remember, it is good to show love and serve all of God’s creation. You may be afraid to report bullying for fear of being a snitch or being bullied yourself. Read your “life map” and find strength in alerting an adult you can trust to let them know what is going on, and they will make

sure you are not revealed. Put yourself in the shoes of the victim and be encouraged knowing you did something that brings glory to God. Remember Rihanna says, “Find light in the beautiful sea” and “choose to be happy.”

Questions:

- ❖ How would your life change if you treated the Bible like your daily map?
- ❖ How can the Bible help you when it is time to make hard decisions?
- ❖ Do you have any adults you trust to report bullying? Explain.

## SUMMARY

The Bible is the guide where you learn how to know, love, and serve God. When you are stressed, dealing with fake friends, schoolwork, sports, and other activities, it takes a lot to keep your cool and focus. You may even find yourself being tempted to do something you know isn’t right just to fit in or cope with different situations. The Bible is the manual for life and builds a foundation. When you are comfortable enough to seek scriptures for guidance, it “hits different” when you find a solution to your situation on your own. God’s Word is the ultimate guide or life map for your success, strength, and peace.

Questions:

- ❖ Do you believe the Bible can guide your choices or goals? Explain.
- ❖ How can reading the Bible strengthen you to love God and God’s creation? Explain.
- ❖ Who is someone in your life who has taught you by the way they live by serving God?

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Briefly discuss what you can post on social media that reminds you of the holy scriptures being a life map. Post a song, a Bible verse, or your own words. Use the hashtags #LifeMap #ScriptureGlowUP #ScriptureStrong #WordGotMe #BibleInMyBag #PeaceInThePages

and others. Tag at least two friends.

**Before the prayer, scan the QR code and listen to “Your World”  
by Jonathan McReynolds**



***Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank you for providing us with the best life map to guide and help us with everything we need. Remind us to take care of ourselves and each other as we are stewards of this earth. We know you've got the whole world in your hands, so guide us as we learn to know, love, and serve you and your creation. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

SAMPLE

# Our Heavenly Father

**LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 34:4-7; Psalm 103:1-5, 10-14; Isaiah 40:27-31; Matthew 6:24-34; John 3:3-6; 4:20-24; 8:40-47; Romans 2:2-11; 8:14-17; 1 John 4:7-16

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 6:24-34

**KEY VERSE:** “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”  
Matthew 6:34

## WORDS TO KNOW

**SERVE** – *To be loyal to someone or follow something. The scripture tells us we can’t serve both God and money at the same time.*

**WORRY** – *Stress adds anxiety about things you are not able to control. You cannot worry about the future, money, or what others may think of you.*

**KINGDOM OF GOD** – *Living God’s way where his words lead your life. It is not just about heaven in the beyond, it is how you live now with God as your guide.*

**RIGHTEOUSNESS** – *Doing what is right in God’s eyes. This is when a person is kind, fair, and faithful.*

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 6:24-34*

- 24 “No one can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.
- 25 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?
- 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?
- 27 And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life?
- 28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,
- 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.
- 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?
- 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’
- 32 For it is the gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.
- 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- 34 So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

**INTRODUCTION**

Do you make up scenarios in your head, wondering what will happen in the future? Do you worry about how many likes or followers you get on social media and if you will make the varsity team or not? You can hardly sleep, wondering and worrying about tomorrow. You have to live today and not worry about or stress over the future. Today is the **Third Sunday of Advent**, a time for reflection on joy. When we place our worries on him,

we can experience joy. The concerns you face as teenagers are real, but the scripture tells us directly not to worry and let Jesus show us he will help us. Today's lesson will discuss letting go of worry and trusting that our heavenly Father will take care of us.

## BIBLE STORY

**The Struggle Is Real.** When it comes to having faith and trying to do what is best in your life, it may be a struggle to understand why people say to not be crazy about money. The scripture is not telling you not to want money; it is telling you not to be enslaved to money. As young believers, if you say you know who God is, you will put God first. God already knows what we need, and he will provide; we just have to know God for ourselves because he is in control. People worry about food, clothes, and life essentials, but today's scripture will remind us not to worry about tomorrow. Jesus is telling us not to worry in this scripture because God will take care of you. He will take care of you on campus, on the school grounds, in your activities, at home, and at school. Life may not be easy, but you have to trust God to take care of you. When you learn who God is, you know he is your provider, protector, and sustainer. God promises to take care of our needs as well. God is already working things out. We just have to trust him.

**Putting God First.** Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:33 to seek God first, which means to place the things of God as a priority. When we truly love God, we will seek him, not chase worldly things. Now listen, nothing is wrong with having nice things; the problem is when we put those nice things over our love of God. When Jesus said seek the kingdom first, that means you are making your relationship with God top priority. When you put God first and have him prioritized, all the things you wish and hope for will come to you. Jesus tells us we should not stress over what we need, or what we eat, or what we wear. He can put us in places and positions we can't even imagine. We have to be mature enough to handle what God wants to give us. Instead of worrying and stressing, pray and ask God for help.



**Live With Faith, Not Fear.** Tomorrow is uncertain, so why put extra stress on your head? How can you serve God when you are not fully focused on what you can do today? We do not have all of the answers, but God is the answer. In the lesson scripture, Matthew 6:34 tells us “not to worry about tomorrow” because you will waste your time focusing on something you are not certain about and lose sight of what you can be doing today. When we serve God, we serve him by living and appreciating the gift of today. We can focus on serving others because God wants us to be available and present today. We can trust him for what comes tomorrow because we can do nothing about it. Live in the now, have faith, and do not make up things in your mind that will bring about fear. When you stress, you rob yourself of your joy.

Questions:

- ❖ What’s one thing you’ve worried about this week?
- ❖ How can you help a friend at church or school who might be stressed or anxious?
- ❖ What would it look like to truly give your worries to God?

## SANKOFA

Sankofa, a word from the Akan people of Ghana meaning “go back and get it,” reminds us to return to our faith, culture, and identity as we move forward with strength and purpose. Sankofa reminds us that looking back while preparing for a better future is a way to honor God. Honoring God means honoring all creation, including people, diverse global traditions, and nature. As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to serve not only locally but globally as well. As part of a global connection, the AME Church has 20 Episcopal districts, with districts 14-20 outside of the States. Get ready to stamp your “spiritual passports” because this quarter, we will take a virtual trip around the world to enhance our global awareness, identifying various countries that include AME churches. Google Lens the flags and search the Episcopal districts on social media to learn more.

We continue in the **14th Episcopal District**, visiting Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.



Côte d'Ivoire



Liberia



Sierra Leone

The concept of Sankofa teaches us to look back and learn from the past to move forward wisely. Teenagers are learning to trust God in all issues they may face. It is important to find strength beyond your worries. Understand that even when you don't have control over things around you, you can still choose to keep the faith by letting go of fear, anxiety, and worry. Our heavenly Father will take care of you. Just like the Spirit helps us when we don't have the words, God is near, reminding us to pray and let it go. Whether you are in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, or anywhere else in the world, you are not alone.

#### Questions:

- ❖ Name something you can do to let go of fear and worry to find joy.
- ❖ How do you feel when you are worried?
- ❖ Do you think it is easy to stop worrying?

### REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

**“Not an Easy Road.”** Jamaican singer Buju Banton sings this with his whole heart. The life of a youth is not as easy as most would think. You have things you worry about to the point you may not even realize it. School, friendships, and everyday life can become overwhelming. Teens everywhere have things they worry about, but Jesus told us not to worry. It may not be easy, but worrying steals your joy and peace. There are things you can't change, and then there are things you can. You may want to get things off of your mind by volunteering in beach or street clean-up projects and other environmental stewardship activities. The key is to release your worries and keep your joy. When you give your worries to God, you will feel better.

As mentioned previously, today is the **Third Sunday of Advent**, when we focus on **Joy**. Some people might think you have it

easy just because you look happy or blessed. It is okay to look and feel your best. Joy isn't about having a perfect life. Even on the tough days when you have to break up with a friend, or outgrow a friend, or find out the friend was never a friend. Don't worry, God promises to restore what is lost and give you what you need most. Forget about what others think. As the song goes, "They see the glamor and the glitter, so they think a bed a roses." Yes, they may see your glory, but they don't know your story. Whether you're a teen in **Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, or Sierra Leone**, remember that God already knows exactly what you need and will keep your joy alive.

Questions:

- ❖ Think about how you can spread joy to someone you think could use it.
- ❖ Give an example of when you decided to stop worrying, and God handled the situation.
- ❖ How do you usually handle worry—do you talk to someone, pray, keep it to yourself?

## SUMMARY

Life isn't always going to be easy, like Buju Banton tells us, "*Everybody a try to make every end meet.*" We all have struggles, a social life, school demands, peer pressure, feeling alone, or trying to figure out our future. Remember, God's Word reminds you who you are, and you can find joy in knowing this. Today, being the **3rd Sunday of Advent**, reminds us that even with all the things going on in our lives, we can still have joy because God takes care of his children. Don't worry about tomorrow! Turn your worries into worship!

Questions:

- ❖ God sees you and your situation. Do you believe this? Why or why not?
- ❖ Do you feel you are loved or alone? How can you find joy?
- ❖ How can sharing joy help others? Do you have any examples?

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Take a moment to briefly discuss what you can post on social media that reminds you of joy. Post a song, a Bible verse, or your own words. Use the hashtags #ChooseJoy #DontWorryBeJoyful #JoyInJesus #GodGotMe #BlessedAndJoyful #NotAnEasyRoad and others you think of. Tag at least two friends.

**Before prayer, scan the QR code and listen to “God Provides” by Tamela Mann**



***Prayer:*** *Dear Lord, help me to give my worries to you because I know you have everything under control. Help me to trust you with my life. I ask this in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.*

LESSON 3

DECEMBER 21, 2025

(FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT)

# Christ the Savior

**LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Luke 2:11, 30-32; 15:3-7; John 3:14-17; 10:9-11, 14-16, 27-28; Acts 3:1-18; Romans 5:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11; 2 Timothy 1:9-10

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE:** Luke 15:3-7; Romans 5:6-10

**KEY VERSE:** If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Romans 5:10

## WORDS TO KNOW

**REPENT** – To turn away from doing wrong and choose to follow God instead.

**RIGHTEOUS** – Living in a way that pleases God or being made right with God.

**JUSTIFIED** – Being made right with God, as if your record of wrongs has been cleared.

**RECONCILED** – Being brought back into a good relationship, like making peace after a fight.

**WRATH** – God's anger against sin and evil, not random rage but justice against wrongdoing.

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: LUKE 15:3-7; ROMANS 5:6-10***LUKE 15:3-7**

- 3** So he told them this parable:
- 4** “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?
- 5** And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.
- 6** And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’
- 7** Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

**ROMANS 5:6-10**

- 6** For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
- 7** Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die.
- 8** But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.
- 9** Much more surely, therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.
- 10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.

**INTRODUCTION**

Think about the panic you feel when you lose or misplace your phone, earbuds, or wallet. You search everywhere, your heart races, and it feels like the world is about to end. Once you retrace your steps and find what you lost, you get a feeling of instant relief. That panic disappears, and you feel safe again. That moment of feeling secure is something we all want. Jesus told stories that remind us God loves us and makes us feel safe and secure, especially when we feel lost. God loves us so much that



Jesus died for us. Speaking of love, today is the **Fourth Sunday of Advent**, a time to reflect on God's deep, unshakable love. No matter how far we've strayed or how we feel inside, God is waiting with open arms — offering love, safety, and the peace of knowing we are never truly lost.

## BIBLE STORY

**Knowing God Through Scripture.** God loves us so much that no matter where we've been or how far we've wandered, he finds us and brings us back to safety. Luke 15:3-7 tells us about the story of the lost sheep and Jesus says the shepherd rejoiced. Some will say it was only one sheep, but the shepherd cared enough to go after that one until it was safe. To know how much he loves us is a blessing! Instead of just being happy with the 99 he still has, the shepherd goes out and searches until he finds the missing one. This shows us something important about who God is. God cares about every single person, including those who feel far away or forgotten. Knowing God means understanding that God values you individually.

**Loving God's Word.** Love is an action. In Romans 5:6-10, Paul makes it clear: we weren't perfect, not even close, but Jesus still died for us. That's real love. He did not wait for us to get it all together. He doesn't tell us to come back when we are worthy. Jesus died to cover our sins and made a way for us to be good with God again. That means we don't have to walk around feeling lost, ashamed, or like we've messed up with no way to return. Jesus already handled it. God made the first move, and God did it out of love. To say you love God means you show and appreciate what God did for you. You don't just talk about grace; you live like it matters. You live like you know you've been saved on purpose, with purpose. And even on your worst day, his love still holds you up. God's got you!

**Serving God Through Scripture.** When you know you're safe in God's love, you don't have to hold back. You can love and serve without fear. Being secure in Jesus means even when life gets rough, you can still forgive, love, and move forward. Serving God

means living like you know that you belong to him. It shows up in how you treat people, how you help them find their way back, and how you offer the same grace that was given to you. Just like that shepherd in Jesus' story, he wants you to have that same peace and help others feel it too.

Questions:

- ❖ Why do you think Jesus cared so much about finding just one lost sheep?
- ❖ Have you ever felt "lost" in life? What helped you feel found again?
- ❖ Do you know God loves us even when we mess up? How?

## SANKOFA

Sankofa, a word from the Akan people of Ghana meaning "go back and get it," reminds us to return to our faith, culture, and identity as we move forward with strength and purpose. Sankofa reminds us that looking back while preparing for a better future is a way to honor God. Honoring God means honoring all creation, including people, diverse global traditions, and nature. As stewards of God's creation, we are called to serve not only locally but globally as well. The AME Church is a global connection, with 20 Episcopal districts, which include districts 14-20 outside of the States. Get ready to stamp your "spiritual passports" because this quarter, we will take a virtual trip around the world to enhance our global awareness, identifying various countries that include AME churches.

Sankofa reminds us to reach back and learn from our past so we can walk boldly into the future. As we think about being safe and secure in God's love, we remember that love transcends borders and cultures. Continue to grow in faith because it gives you a spirit of calm that will help you on your journey. The love of Christ reaches teenagers and families across the world. Today, let's take a stopover at the **15th Episcopal District** with Namibia, the Kalahari Desert area, South Africa, and Angola. Google Lens the flags and search the Episcopal districts on social media to learn more.



Namibia



South Africa



Angola

Sankofa reminds us to never forget how far God has brought God's people in every land, in every generation. You are loved, and in Christ, you are always safe and secure. As a global family in the AME Church, youth worship in different languages, wear different clothes, and have unique traditions. But God's love is the same for all of us. So, whether you are a teenager living in Namibia, near the sands of the Kalahari, South Africa, or Angola, you can find rest in knowing that you are safe and secure with God's love.

#### Questions:

- ❖ Name some ways or ideas to reach out to other cultures in the AME Church.
- ❖ What can you do or say to encourage someone that they are safe and secure with God?
- ❖ What makes you feel safe and secure?

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

**All for One and One for All!** Today is the **Fourth Sunday of Advent**, and the focus is Love. Love is intentional and includes everyone, especially those who are left out. Let's say you are a part of a community soccer team. One of the soccer players on your community team says it will be cool to take a group picture for the group chat cover photo. You politely remind the group that you can't take it on the date they selected because you have an excused absence to receive an award by the city. The coach, administration, and entire team are aware of this outstanding achievement, but the rest of the soccer team agrees to take the group pic without you. Now, is this fair? No, it is plain jealousy. You know they ignored you on purpose and left you out. That hurts. Love was not shown by the soccer team. Jesus teaches us to love like a shepherd loves. In Luke 15:3-7, even though 99 sheep

Sample  
were safe, the shepherd went after the one missing. It is not that he felt one was more important, but all sheep matters. You matter.

Romans 5:6-10 reminds us that even when we feel far from God, when we think we don't deserve his love, he still gave his life for us. Now, that is true love. That is security. That silly team left you out of the picture on purpose, but God will never leave you out. Do not let them or that situation make you feel uncomfortable or break your confidence. You are safe and secure in the love of Christ. Even when fake friends do not show you love, Jesus always will. And get this, the people who matter in your life will always celebrate you. God sees you.

Questions:

- ❖ How do you feel if your friends or people you know leave you out?
- ❖ How can the Bible help you know you are safe and secure with God?
- ❖ Would you stand up for someone being left out? Explain.

## SUMMARY

Even when things seem out of control and our so-called friends turn their backs on us, God's love gives us security. Like the lost sheep, we are never too far from God to be found. God says we are all important and God loves us. The secure foundation gives us the power to face things that will happen, helps us to stay encouraged when others are jealous, and care for ourselves, each other, and take care of our world. God rejoices when we come back to God, so remember no matter what we face, God's love is the true safe place.

Questions:

- ❖ Do you believe the Bible can guide your choices or goals? Explain.
- ❖ How can reading the Bible strengthen you? Explain.
- ❖ Who is someone in your life who has taught you by the way they live by serving God?

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

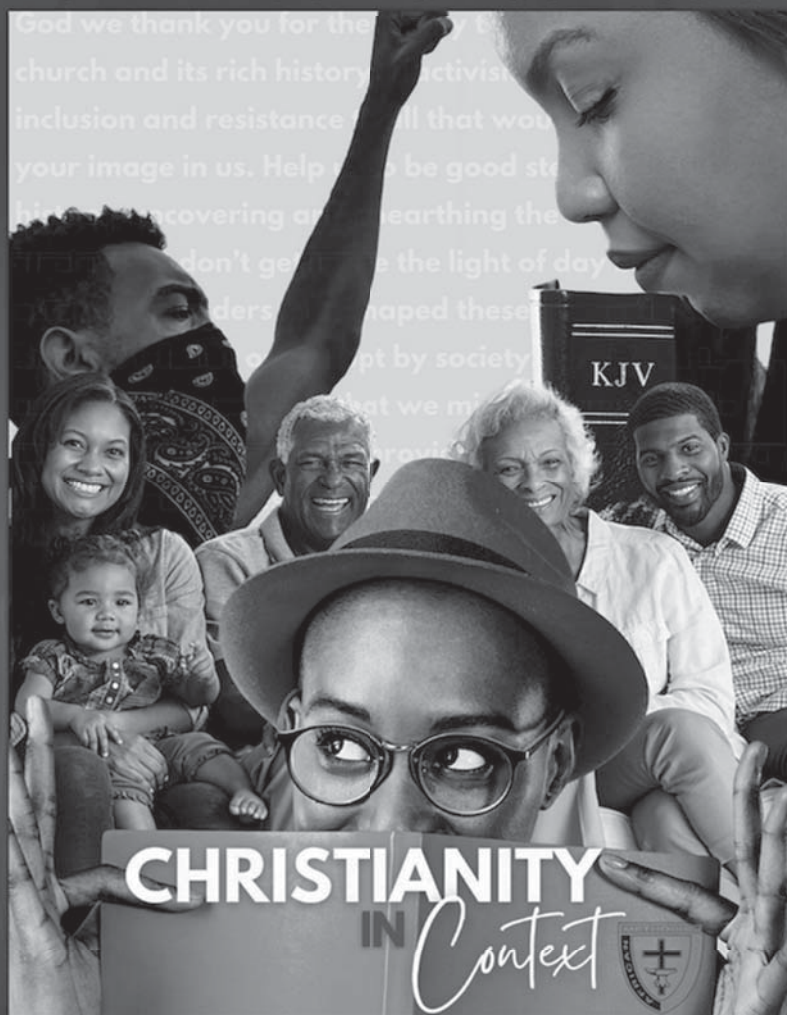
Take a moment to briefly discuss what you can post on social media that reminds you of being safe and secure. Post a song, a Bible verse, or your own words. Use the hashtags #CoveredByTheWord #SafeAndSecure #LoveInAnyLanguage and others you think of. Tag at least two friends.

**Before prayer, scan QR code and listen to “Jireh” by Elevation Worship & Maverick City**



***Prayer:*** Dear God, thank you for loving us even when we are lost. Thank you for sending Jesus to bring us back to you. Help us to see others the way you do and to share your love with everyone. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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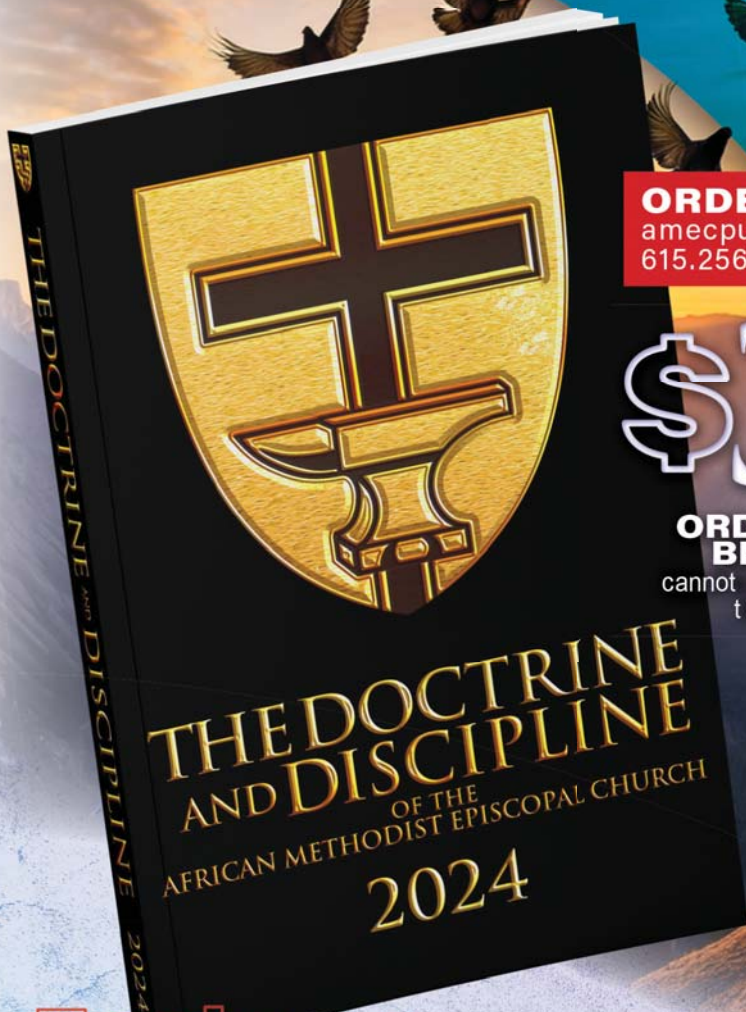
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