

CONTENTS

Lesson 1: Introduction and The Abiding Glory.....	4
Lesson 2: Jesus Christ, Born of the Jews.....	8
Lesson 3: The Death of the Messiah.....	11
Lesson 4: The Easter Proclamation.....	14
Lesson 5: The Church of the Apostles.....	16
Lesson 6: The Growth of the Early Church.....	18
Lesson 7: The Age of the Martyrs.....	20
Lesson 8: The Gnostics.....	22
Lesson 9: Alexandria in the Early Christian Centuries.....	24
Lesson 10: Constantine the Great and the Birth of Christendom.....	26
Lesson 11: Cities of the Desert: The Rise of Monasticism.....	28
Lesson 12: Christianity in Armenia and India.....	30
Lesson 13: Ancient Splendour: Christianity in Ethiopia.....	32
Lesson 14: One God in Three Persons: The Earliest Church Councils.....	34
Lesson 15: The Age of the Fathers.....	36
Lesson 16: The Fall of Rome and the Rise of a New Western Christendom.....	38
Lesson 17: Western Monasticism and the Preservation of Western Learning.....	40
Lesson 18: Christendom.....	42
Lesson 19: The Formation of Orthodox Christology.....	44
Lesson 20: The Last Epoch of the United Christian Empire.....	46
Lesson 21: The “Church of the East”: The Nestorian Missions.....	48
Lesson 22: A New Power in the World: The Rise of Islam.....	50
Lesson 23: Charlemagne.....	52
Lesson 24: The Face of God: The Iconoclast Controversy.....	54
Lesson 25: Franks and Byzantines: The Widening Gulf.....	56
Lesson 26: The Conversion of the Slavs.....	58
Lesson 27: The Great Schism.....	60
Lesson 28: The Early Crusades.....	62
Lesson 29: Byzantine Zenith and Nadir.....	64
Lesson 30: The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages.....	66
Lesson 31: The High Middle Ages.....	68
Lesson 32: Reason and Superstition: Medieval Contradictions.....	70
Lesson 33: The Oriental Churches in the Later Middle Ages.....	72
Lesson 34: Byzantine Twilight.....	74
Lesson 35: The Last Caesar.....	76
Lesson 36: Renaissance Christian Thought.....	78
Lesson 37: Spain and its Inquisition.....	80
Lesson 38: The Reformation Begins.....	82
Lesson 39: The Growth of the Reformation.....	84
Lesson 40: The Anabaptists and the Catholic Reformation.....	86
Lesson 41: Schism and War: Early Modern Europe.....	88
Lesson 42: Colonies and Missions.....	90
Lesson 43: The Church and the Scientists.....	92
Lesson 44: Deism, Enlightenment and Revolution.....	94
Lesson 45: Eastern Orthodoxy in the Early Modern Period.....	96
Lesson 46: The 19th Century: A Time of Radical Doubt.....	98
Lesson 47: The 19th Century: A Time of Fervent Faith.....	100
Lesson 48: The 20th Century in America.....	102
Lesson 49: The Most Violent Century in History.....	104
Lesson 50: The 20th to the 21st Century: The Rise of a New Christendom.....	106
QUIZZES & TESTS (Reproducible).....	109
QUIZZES & TESTS: Answer Key.....	125

LESSON 7: The Age of the Martyrs

THINGS TO KNOW

Restoring the Lapsed

One result of the persecutions of the early Church was to raise the question of what to do about the *lapsed* (those who denied their faith under threat of persecution). After the end of persecutions, many of the lapsed sought to be restored to the Church, which created conflict over how to deal with these individuals. A good many people did give in to the threat of persecution and either denied their faith outright or by offering sacrifice to the emperor. Some resisted to the point of death. Still others fled to safe areas. Those who fled, and those who denied their faith, came under criticism from those who suffered for their faith. Those who suffered during the persecutions came to be known as *confessors*, and it was to these individuals that the lapsed often came, seeking forgiveness for denying their faith. This angered many of the bishops, who felt it was only their office that possessed the authority to offer forgiveness, if forgiveness could be offered under any circumstances. This controversy lasted for many years, stretching into the reign of Constantine.

The Importance of Apologetics

Apologetics (from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning “to speak in defense”) dates from the earliest days of the Church. The goal of apologetics is to offer a defense of the Christian faith against its challengers and detractors. We see the first use of apologetics in the book of Acts, in the sermons of Peter and Paul, and the defense of the faith continues to our own age, and is used in answer to the so-called *new atheists*, such as Richard Dawkins.

QUESTIONS FROM YOUR READING

1. What is the meaning of the word *martyr*?
The word *martyr* means “witness.”

2. Why did Rome have some measure of toleration toward Judaism?
Rome had some measure of toleration because it was such an ancient religion.

3. From what requirements were the Jews exempted by Rome?
The Jews were exempted from honoring the gods of the Empire, venerating (worshipping) the Emperor, and offering prayers to the gods for the welfare of the Empire.

4. What Roman Emperor was first to launch a persecution against Christians?
Nero was first to launch a persecution against Christians.

5. In the course of his investigations, Pliny the Younger found that the “depravity” of the Christians consisted of what?
It consisted of gathering for a weekly meeting at dawn; singing hymns to Christ “as to a god”; vowing to never commit fraud, adultery, or breach of trust; and sharing a meal.

6. What apologist wrote to Roman emperors to argue against the persecution of Christians?
Justin of Caesarea wrote to Roman emperors.

7. What instructions did the Emperor Trajan provide to Pliny about the persecution of Christians?
Emperor Trajan’s instructions were that they should not be sought out; those accused and found guilty should be punished as proscribed, unless they repent and make offerings to the gods; and anonymous accusations should be ignored.

8. Who are some of the emperors who instigated persecutions against the church?
Some of the emperors were Maximus Thrax (235), Decius (250), and Valerian (257).

IDEAS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. Is there a good way to receive members back into the church after they have denied their faith under persecution?
2. Why are some leaders in power so afraid of people’s beliefs that they put them to death?