



# God the Preserver

## OBJECTIVE

To create a Theme Event that helps groups understand and experience God as their loving protector who continually shields them from harm and preserves them from evil.

## FOCUS THIS WEEK

God is like a life preserver, always ready and able to help us stay afloat in rough seas. So what? It's tough being a teen today. Traditional support structures (family, school, community, church) have eroded. At the same time, pressures have increased (drugs, sex, economics). It can easily seem like we're on our own. However, God has placed "agents of love" (parents, friends, pastors, teachers) in our lives, and promises to never leave us no matter how dark the night gets. Cling to God!

## FAITH5 SMALL GROUP TIME



**SHARE** highs and lows to set the stage for a more open and meaningful discussion. Pair group members up one-on-one to share the best and worst things that happened this week. After a short while, return to small group and invite each person to share their partner's highs and lows. Encourage youth to write their personal highs and lows, those of their partner, and a short prayer on their FAITH5 Small Group Time Handout.



**READ** and highlight the theme verse, Nahum 1:7-8, in your Bibles and circle key words. A musical version of this Scripture verse can be found at [www.faithink.com](http://www.faithink.com), FINKlink AC03.



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to today's highs and lows. Supplement your discussion with some of the following.

### A. IMAGES IN WORDS AND ART

Take a look at the theme art and cartoons. What do you see in the art? Ask youth where they are in the art. How might the art and the theme verse apply to your group highs and lows today?

### B. CATECHISM ENCOUNTER

Open Luther's Small Catechism to the explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed. What does it say about God as protector and preserver? Flip over to the explanation to the sixth and seventh petitions of the Lord's Prayer. What do these explanations tell you about God as protector? Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers.

## C. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

**1. Talk/write about things that scare you. What do you do when you are afraid?** Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers. See Psalm 56:3.

**2. Name three people or groups who need protection today. How can God work through you to help offer protection?** Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers. Groups can include children, women, those others make fun of, the disabled or challenged, even animals can be included in this list.

**3. A friend at school tells you: "There is no God. We're all alone here. And if there is a God, he, she or it certainly doesn't care for puny humans!" How do you answer?** Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers. Look at creation, love, relationships, etc. Of course, you could always go ask the pastor. (When in doubt, put the pastor on the hot seat!)

**D. QUOTATIONS** Ask youth to choose a quotation and share their thoughts and questions about it.

**E. TERMS OF THE WEEK** Review these key terms and write definitions.

**Creator:** A name for God that acknowledges God as the source of all that exists.

**Preserver:** One who protects from injury or peril.

**Protect:** To keep from harm, attack or injury; to guard.

**Stronghold:** A safe place reinforced against attack.

**Afraid:** To fear or dread something

## F. GROUP BUSINESS

**1. Servant Event Idea:** Arrange for your group to visit an organization that works for the protection of animals or children. Discuss what the organization does and how your group can help. Have the small group plan and organize a way for the whole congregation to work toward the protection of children and animals.

**2. FAITH5 Home Huddle:** Encourage youth to take a few minutes for FAITH5 with their families each night at home, using the FAITH5 Journals or the Home Huddle Handout.

**G. WRAP UP** Summarize the event with your group, assigning someone to share what you learned at closing.

- One new thing we learned today
- One thing we already knew that is worth repeating
- One thing we would like to know more about
- The highest highs and lowest lows which our group will bring to the closing prayer



## PRAY

for one another. Praise and thank God for your highs. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in your lows. Include your friend's highs and lows in your prayers. Toss a newspaper into the center of the group or invite youth to think of something going on in the world that calls for prayer. **Tip:** Gather in a circle. Hold hands, lock arms or go shoulder-to-shoulder to bond your group!



## BLESS

one another by name. Trace a cross on each hand or forehead. Look them in the eyes and give them a smile. As for their blessing as well!

