Foreword

The church must always seek to convey to its children their heritage. This course in the Martin Luther: Life & Legacy series has been designed to bring students a greater understanding of their Reformation heritage. As the Holy Spirit works through God’s Word, may those who use this course hold fast to their Savior, serve Him with all their energies, and grow in their appreciation of God and His love for those who belong to Him.

This series of four lessons for kindergarten through grade 2 is based on familiar biographical information about Luther, a hero of faith. Each of the lessons makes a special effort to bridge the gap of 500 years and to help children identify with Luther as a real person. He was a hero, to be sure, but someone not much different from any of us before he was called by faith to serve the Lord in a unique way.

Objectives

At the completion of this course, the students will be able to
1. describe the basic facts of Luther’s life;
2. appreciate the significance of the Reformation and the contribution that Luther made to the church;
3. talk about the three great biblical doctrines stressed by the reformers:
   a. God loves us and sent Jesus to earth to be our Savior.
   b. God gave us the Bible to teach us about Jesus.
   c. All who believe in Jesus are God’s children and will someday live with Him in heaven.

Time Schedule

You can teach the basic activities in each lesson in this Teacher Book and the Student Book in about thirty minutes. If you have more time available, choose from the supplementary activities listed at the end of each lesson in this Teacher Book to meet the interests of the class. Supplementary activities could be assigned to different groups of students.

Kindergarten activities can be chosen at the teacher’s discretion. Use the big book The Adventures of Martin Luther to review or tell the story. Use the big book What Does This Mean? to help students recognize the relevance of faith to their life and worship. Clarifying these basics as centered in the crucified Christ was the heart and core of Luther’s work.
Numerous activities that involve the senses—tasting, moving, listening, watching, singing, chanting, making—are offered as options. Teachers of grades 1 and 2 can begin to involve students in more written activities. Again, teacher judgment will determine the best approach for a specific group of students.

The lessons have been designed for flexibility. Perhaps you will cover the material of each chapter in one day; or, using the supplementary activities, you might extend the lesson over a number of days. This unit would work nicely in connection with social studies or language units during October. Following session 4 are optional culminating activities summarizing the events and concepts of the unit. Recording the story will give children a chance to review it in the listening center. A letter home to parents explaining the unit topic would be helpful.

Introducing the Study

Point to October 31 on a calendar (or have a child do so). Ask, What is important about this day? Most students will probably say Halloween. This day is important for another reason. On that day a long time ago, a man named Martin Luther (hold up a picture of Martin Luther) nailed a special piece of paper to the door of a church in Germany. He had written some sentences on that paper. These sentences told about wrong things that were being taught in the churches. From that day on, the people who agreed with Martin Luther’s sentences wanted to make changes in the church. We say they wanted to reform the church. Every year since then, many Christians have remembered October 31 as the beginning of changes in the church. They have even given that day a special name instead of Halloween. We call October 31 Reformation Day because on that day Luther nailed to the church door the paper that led to the reforming of the church. As we learn about Martin Luther, we are also going to learn why many Christians celebrate Reformation Day each year.
Preparing for the Story

1. Print these specialized vocabulary words on individual word cards. Post them in the classroom.
   - Martin Luther, Germany, Mrs. Cotta, Bible, St. Anne, monk
2. Ask the students to tell what they know about Martin Luther. After some discussion, have them “tell their story” in a few sentences. Print their words on a large sheet of chart paper. Then read the sentences together.
3. Lead into the story by taking a walk to a large tree, if possible. Have the children sit under the tree as you tell the story.

Sharing the Story

Tell the story in words like this:

A long time ago, long before you were born, even before your grandfather and grandmother were born, a little baby boy was born in a country called Germany. The very next day, his father took him to the church to be baptized. He named the baby Martin—Martin Luther.

When Martin Luther was four years old, he went to school far away from his house. He had to walk all the way to school. There were no cars or buses or bicycles for him to ride. But sometimes his father or a neighbor boy carried him on his back to school. Then Martin would not get so tired walking. Martin studied hard in school. He learned all he could. His father wanted him to become a lawyer.

After Martin Luther finished grade school, his father sent him to high school in another city. Martin had a fine voice, and he loved to sing songs. His teachers asked him to sing in the choir. After school, the choirboys often went from door to door and sang for the people.

Martin and the other choirboys walked through the streets, stopping to sing at one house after another. Kind people gave them some bread or sausage. Sometimes they even got a little money.

Martin Luther and his friends stopped often to sing at one lady’s door. They knew that this lady was very kind. Sometimes, instead of just giving the boys bread, she invited them to come into the house and eat supper with her family. One evening while the boys were singing, the lady thought, “That one boy has a beautiful voice. I would like to have him come and live with us.” The lady went to Martin Luther and said, “My name is Mrs. Cotta. Will you tell me your name?”

“My name is Martin Luther,” he said. “I go to the high school.”

Mrs. Cotta asked, “Martin Luther, would you like to live at my house? You may have a room of your own, and you may eat all your meals with us.”
Martin Luther answered happily, “Oh, yes! I would like that.” So he moved in with Mrs. Cotta and her friendly family. There he spent many happy days.

Martin Luther liked to read books. One day, while he was still in high school, he walked into the library. There he saw a large book chained to a desk. He began to read it. He read a story about a boy named Samuel and some stories about Jesus. What book do you think Martin had found? Pause for answers: Bible. Yes, it was the Bible. (Hold up a Bible.)

In the Bible, Martin Luther read about how God loves us. Martin wondered about this because he was afraid of God. He thought that God was an angry God, not a loving God. People in those days thought that whenever something bad happened to them, God was punishing them for a sin they had done. People were always trying to do good things so that God would not be angry with them. Martin wished that he could own a Bible and read more about God’s love. But there were not very many Bibles in those days, and they cost a lot of money.

When Martin Luther went to the university, he lived at the school with all the other boys. Sometimes he went home to visit his family. One night, after a visit with his family, Martin was walking back to school. As he walked along, a terrible storm came up. The wind blew, and the sky grew dark. The thunder roared, and the lightning flashed across the sky.

Martin Luther quickly ran under an oak tree for shelter. Just then lightning struck the tree, and Martin fell to the ground. He was very afraid. He thought that God was angry with him. He cried, “Help me, St. Anne!” Like most people in those days, Martin Luther believed that saints—certain good people who had died long ago—could help him. That’s why he prayed to St. Anne. He also made a promise. “Save me,” he said, “and I will become a monk!” Soon the storm stopped, and Martin Luther continued walking back to school. He was not hurt, but he was still very much afraid.

Applying the Story

Use these questions to review the story.

What was the name of the baby we heard about at the beginning of our story today?

Martin Luther. Where did Martin’s father take him the day after he was born? To church. Why? To have Luther baptized. What happens in our hearts when we are baptized? The Holy Spirit puts faith in our hearts and we become God’s children. God wants us to believe in Jesus and be baptized so that someday we can live with Him in heaven. Ask your father or mother to tell you about the day you were baptized. If you are not baptized, find out from your parents, teacher, or pastor how you can be baptized.

How did Luther get to school when he was a little boy? He walked; sometimes his father or a big neighbor boy carried him. What did Luther and the choirboys often do when they were in high school? Went from house to house and sang for the people. What did the people sometimes give the choirboys? Gifts, food, and money. What was the name of the lady who liked Luther? Mrs. Cotta. What did Mrs. Cotta invite Luther to do? She asked him to live with her family. Why was Luther afraid of God? He thought God was angry with him for his sins; he thought he hadn’t done enough good things. Why didn’t Luther have a Bible? There were few Bibles and they cost too much. Where did Luther run for shelter when he was caught out in a thunderstorm? Under a tree. When he was afraid, whom did Luther ask for help? St. Anne. What promise did Luther make? To become a monk. Next time, we will hear more about Martin Luther and how he worked for God.

Using the Student Pages

A Happy Home for Luther

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1. Review the story of Luther singing from house to house with his classmates. Tell how Mrs. Cotta invited young Martin to stay in her home. Stress how we show our love for Jesus by being kind to one another. Have students apply the stickers of Luther, the other choirboys, and Mrs. Cotta to the page.

2. Talk with the students about things we do to make guests feel welcome in our homes. Mention that Jesus, our Savior, is a welcome guest in the home of everyone who loves and trusts in Him. Talk about ways we show that Jesus is present in our homes.