



Annual Theme Scope & Cycle

What if the story we were telling wasn't
just about *me*—but about *we*?

The Bible doesn't start with us. It doesn't begin with our dreams, our struggles, or even our faith. It starts with Jesus.

It's His story first. The story of what God has done through His Son—through His life, His death, His resurrection. The story of how love moved toward the world, even when the world pushed love away.

But here's the beautiful thing: the story doesn't end with Jesus alone. It keeps going—through His people. Through a family formed by grace, not by genetics. A people called the Church. A *we*.

The Bible tells the story of Jesus—and then the story of the people who follow Him. It's a story full of broken people and unexpected heroes. Of failure and forgiveness. Of God sticking with His people, even when they wander.

It's not just a story we read. It's a story we're *in*. Because following Jesus was never meant to be something we do by ourselves. It's not a solo climb or a private journey. It's a life we live together.

We belong to each other.
We grow alongside one another.
We carry one another's burdens.
We cheer each other on.

This is why we matters. Because faith was always meant to be shared. Not just my story of what God is doing in me—but our story of what God is doing through us. The life of Jesus leads to the life of His people.

The story of *me* always finds its place inside the bigger story of *we*.
And that's where the real beauty begins.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

One Priority

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

MATTHEW 22:37-39, NIV

Three Relational Motives



Move kids to **love God** by inciting wonder.



Move kids to **love life** by provoking discovery.*



Move kids to **love others** by fueling passion.

*In the Middle School Phase, the **DISCOVERY** dial is turned all the way up.

Nine Core Insights

Design of God's Creation

What I see around me reveals a Creator who cares about me.

Identity based on God's Image

I am created in the image of God and have unique potential and worth.

Connection because of God's Love

I live in pursuit of an infinite God who desires an eternal relationship with me.

Faith in God's Son

I believe in Jesus and will continue to trust Him even when life doesn't make sense.

Transformation by the power of God's Spirit

God's Spirit is transforming my unique and imperfect life into the character of Jesus.

Truth according to God's Message

What Jesus said and did impacts how I should respond to God's Word in my everyday life.

Restoration through participating in God's Story

I am designed to participate in God's story to restore a broken and hurting world.

Compassion that reflects God's Character

My faith in Christ is revealed by my compassion and care for others.

Community in the context of God's Family

I choose to live in the complexities of family and community because God values them.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Three Basic Truths

In the middle school years, kids are beginning to personalize and own their own faith.

**I will follow Jesus because
He knows me better than I
know myself.**

**I will love God because
God will never stop loving me.**

**I will live out God's story so
others can know who Jesus is.**

PHASE

The Middle School Phase

Sixth–Eighth Grade



➔ What is a phase?

A phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future.

At each phase, your job is simple . . .
Know what can be expected of them and
know how they think so they will hear what
you say and know what to do.

**It's just a phase,
don't miss it.**

➔ Thinks like . . .

A middle schooler thinks like an engineer.

Engineers solve problems by connecting concepts so they work together.

Like an engineer, middle schoolers learn best when they personalize an idea by connecting pieces of information. They can think more abstractly, understand multiple perspectives, and think critically about themselves and others. Keep instruction clear and simple if you hope to be heard.

➔ How they relate to God . . .

God's story redeems my story.

Middle schoolers who think like engineers need to know that God can rebuild a story—even when things haven't gone according to the plan. They relate to a God who overcomes impossible odds to rebuild what is broken, bring stability, restore peace, resolve doubt, give hope, and redeem everyone.

➔ Wants to know . . .

In middle school, tweens and teens challenge authority and personalize what they believe.

The way a middle schooler resolves the "Who...?" questions determines the framework for their relational stability.

The best way to resolve a middle schooler's relational questions is to affirm their personal journey.

Who do I like? Who likes me?

Sixth graders need an overdose of acceptance to combat the storm of changes. When adults recruit other affirming leaders and peers, kids gain stability.

Who am I?

Seventh graders are increasingly self-aware and self-conscious. When adults acknowledge positive qualities and strengths, kids discover uniqueness.

Who do I want to be?

Eighth graders can set goals, build their own plans, and follow through on them. When adults patiently support the process, students experience purpose.

2025 THEMES

Find Your People

AUGUST

Find Your People: A series about friendship and Biblical community

What If

SEPTEMBER

What If: A series about science, faith, and the One who created everything

First Things First

OCTOBER

First Things First: A series about following the Greatest Commandment by loving God, others, and ourselves

Domino Effect

NOVEMBER

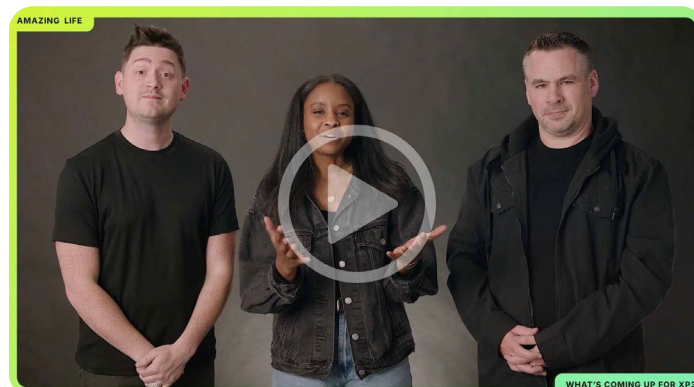
Domino Effect: A series on influence

Not Just On Christmas

DECEMBER

Not Just On Christmas: A series about Advent

New theme art coming soon!



BEGINNING IN 2026

We believe that your faithfulness—week in and week out—plays a big role in a student's story. And we want to keep walking alongside you to reach this generation with a faith they can carry into adulthood.

Starting January 2026, Orange Students will launch a brand-new XP3 curriculum experience. We're not just refreshing a product. We're reimagining what curriculum can be—together.

[Learn More](#)

2025 THEMES

August

Find Your People

CORE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

Community, Restoration, Transformation

RESPONSE

Healthy Relationships, Serving Others

EMPHASIZED RELATIONSHIPS

God's Son / Faith

MEMORY VERSE

"A friend loves at all times." (Proverbs 17:17)

Week One: Luke 6:31 NLT, John 13:4-5 NIV

Bottom Line: Be the kind of friend you want to have.

Week Two: Proverbs 12:26 NIV

Bottom Line: Be wise about the friends you choose.

Week Three: Acts 15:36-40 NIV

Bottom Line: Friendships change, and that's okay.

Week Four: Practice (New application format!)

September

What If

CORE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

Design, Faith

RESPONSE

Ultimate Authority

EMPHASIZED RELATIONSHIPS

God

MEMORY VERSE

God's Son was before all else, and by him everything is held together. (Colossians 1:17 CEV)

Week One: Genesis 1:1-25 NLT

Bottom Line: Creation points to a Creator

Week Two: Genesis 1:1 NLT, Genesis 1:26-27 NLT, Genesis 1:31a NLT

Bottom Line: Science and faith can work together to show us more about God.

Week Three: John 9:8-11 NIV, John 9:17-19 NIV, John 9:24-25 NIV

Bottom Line: We can have questions and still follow God.

Week Four: Practice (New application format!)

2025 THEMES

October

First Things First

CORE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS
Design, Identity, Connection, Faith, Transformation, Truth, Restoration, Compassion, Community

RESPONSE
Authentic Faith

EMPHASIZED RELATIONSHIPS
God, Self, Others

MEMORY VERSE
Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love you neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV)

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Week One: Matthew 22:36-40 NIV
Bottom Line: God’s love is for you.

Week Two: Luke 15:3-7 NLT
Bottom Line: Our value is determined by God.

Week Three: John 4:7-9 NIV, John 4:39 NIV
Bottom Line: Everyone matters to Jesus, so everyone should matter to us.

Week Four: Practice (New application format!)

November

Domino Effect

CORE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS
Restoration, Compassion, Community

RESPONSE
Healthy Relationships

EMPHASIZED RELATIONSHIPS
Self, Others

MEMORY VERSE
In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven. (Matthew 5:16 NIV)

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Week One: John 6:11-13 NLT; John 6:8-14 NLT
Bottom Line: Jesus can use what you have to do big things.

Week Two: Acts 2:42-47 NLT
Bottom Line: Doing big things starts with small steps.

Week Three: Luke 22:56-57 NIV, John 21:15 NIV
Bottom Line: Jesus doesn’t allow our mistakes to be the end of our story.

Week Four: Practice (New application format!)

2025 THEMES

December

Not Just On Christmas

CORE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

Image, Connection, Restoration, Compassion

RESPONSE

Authentic Faith, Serving Others

EMPHASIZED RELATIONSHIPS

God, Others, Self

MEMORY VERSE

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6 NLT)

Week One: Jeremiah 33:14-16 NIV

Bottom Line: Because of Jesus, there is always hope.

Week Two: Isaiah 9:6 NIV, Luke 2:14 NIV

Bottom Line: Because of Jesus, there is always peace.

Week Three: Luke 2:10-11 NIV, Hebrews 12:2b NIV

Bottom Line: Because of Jesus, there is always joy.

Week Four: Practice (New application format!)