

Case Closed

Solid Evidence for the Faith

APOLOGETICS



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STRONG

curriculum

A world weak on truth needs a strong, trustworthy message. STRONG Curriculum builds stronger churches by teaching all Scripture to produce spiritually mature believers who measure up to the stature of Christ.

A Plan You Can Trust

The Bible has the answers to what adult learners need most. No other book or philosophy contains God's power to save and transform lives. Because of this, we've made it our unwavering commitment to build Strong Adults upon the sure foundation of God's Word. With this curriculum, your church can develop adults who will be strong defenders of the faith.

Strong Adults is designed around the seven teaching aims Jesus modeled in His ministry. Those aims are listed in the box to the right. Note that the first letter of each aim spells out **BuildUP**, a word that captures the curriculum's overall aim to build stronger churches through God's Word.

Every session in the Strong Adults courses addresses one of Jesus' seven teaching aims. Since the **BuildUP** aims are Jesus' aims, you can be confident in their importance and effectiveness. Take time to familiarize yourself with each of the aims. And plan to introduce them to your learners. Look for the **BuildUP** icons in the table of contents and on the first page of each lesson.

The Strong Adults scope and sequence covers every Bible book, the major doctrines, and important topics. The Bible books alternate between Old Testament and New Testament, going in order of their appearance in the Bible. The scope and sequence will begin with the courses on Philipians and Job and proceed to the end of each testament before starting over with Genesis and Matthew.

JESUS' TEACHING AIMS



BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. Jesus taught His students to trust in Him alone for salvation and to share the gospel with others. This aim is obviously fundamental to all the rest.



UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL ETHICS. Jesus instructed His students to live according to moral values. These values provided them with the tools to make wise decisions.



INTERNALIZE GODLINESS. Jesus taught His followers to be godly on the inside. He warned them not to become like the Pharisees, with a mere outward appearance of godliness.



LEARN DOCTRINE. Jesus knew the importance of teaching His students the truth and identified doctrine as one of the means for spiritual growth. Wishy-washy doctrine leads to faulty practice.



DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS. Jesus taught His followers to meet life's challenges in a way that honored and glorified God. He gave them the skills to navigate those challenges successfully.



UPLIFT OTHERS. Jesus' life was all about others. Leading by example, He taught His followers to be all about others too.



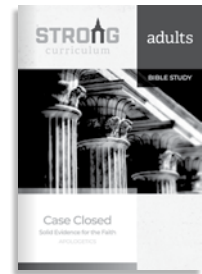
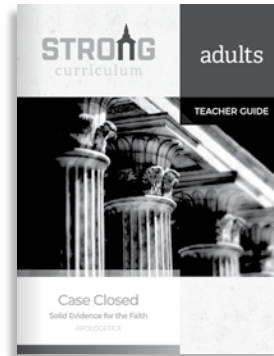
PREPARE TO SERVE. Jesus prepared His followers to serve in the context of local churches that were established soon after His ascension. He emphasized sacrifice and dedication.

STRONG[®] curriculum

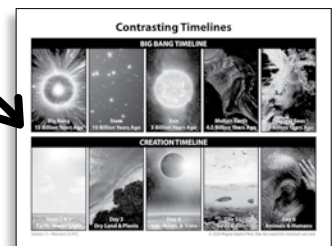
Kit Contents

- ☐ Teacher Guide
- ☐ 6 Bible Study Books
Order one book for each learner
- ☐ Digital Access Download Code
Gives you access to downloadable PowerPoint presentations, Prezis, visuals, promotional materials, and more.
- ☐ Posters

This course provides Biblical answers to common questions about God, Jesus, the Bible, and the world. For example, What is truth? Why are worldviews important? Why is Jesus' resurrection certain? Why does evil exist? The Biblical answers will strengthen students' understanding of the faith and equip them to defend it.



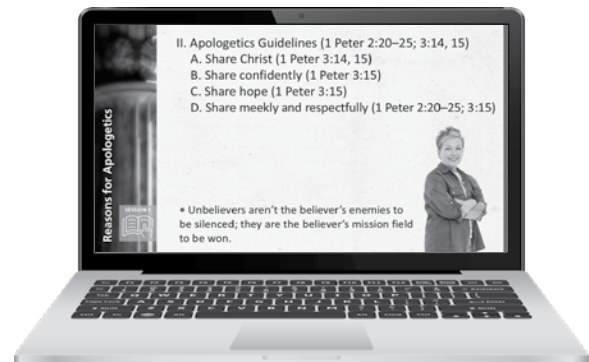
Digital Access Card



Ordering Information

All materials are available from Regular Baptist Press.

- Web: www.StrongCurriculum.com
- E-mail: orders@rbpstore.org
- Toll-free orders in the United States:
1-800-727-4440
- Fax: 1-847-843-3757
- Canada: Contact your distributor.



The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

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|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures • Only one true God • The Trinity of the Godhead • The Holy Spirit and His ministry • The personality of Satan • The Genesis account of creation • Original sin and the fall of man | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The virgin birth of Christ • Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ • The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ • Grace and the new birth • Justification by faith • Sanctification of the believer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The security of the believer • The church • The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper • Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal • Obedience to civil government • The place of Israel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pretribulation rapture of the church • The premillennial return of Christ • The millennial reign of Christ • Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous • Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked |
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How to Teach **STRONG** adults Lessons

Leading a Student to Christ

STRONG ADULTS has been designed to help you clearly present God's Word to your students. Each lesson will guide students through the Bible, encouraging them to interact with the material and apply it to their lives.

Familiarize yourself with the teaching resources so you can maximize your effectiveness in the classroom. Find the download card in your kit. Follow the instructions on the card to gain access to the teaching resources you will need throughout the course. The downloadable resources include a PowerPoint for each session, a Prezi presentation for select sessions, visual resources, and promotional materials.

Encourage students to do their Bible study book lessons before class so they are ready to interact when you ask the questions during your lesson. Note that the questions and commentary in this leader's guide match those in the Bible study books.

Some of the PowerPoint presentations contain additional slides that obviously tie into the teacher guide lessons. Make sure you review the PowerPoint presentations before teaching.

Before Each Lesson

- Read the **Scripture Focus** passage several times. Read and ponder the **Teacher Preparation** section on the first page of the lesson.
- Read the **BuildUP Theme, Measurable Response, and Session Summary** to get an overview of the lesson. Work on the **Memory Verse**.
- Read the **Bible Study** and the passages referenced in the lesson. Read the questions and answers. Consider additional questions and answers to add to the session.
- Plan how to use the PowerPoint or the Prezi. Practice using them along with the lesson.
- Prepare any materials you will need for the **Session Starters**.
- Read the steps and questions in the **Session Application** section of the lesson. Consider how to personalize the application.
- Pray for yourself, your students, and your lesson.

AS A TEACHER, your most important concern is the personal salvation of your learners. Talk to them about whether they know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Consider giving your students several minutes to write out an answer to a question like, How can a person get to Heaven? Collect their answers and read them during the following week. Talk to any of your students who seem confused about salvation. Present the gospel to them and provide the opportunity for them to trust in Christ. If possible, deal with students individually.

The Plan of Salvation

- Everyone is a sinner. No one can live up to God's perfect standard (Romans 3:23).
- Sin's penalty is death (Romans 6:23).
- God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sin. Christ died in our place (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- When people place their trust in Jesus' payment for sins, Christ becomes their Savior. God forgives their sins and grants them eternal life (John 1:12; 5:24). Everlasting life begins the moment we trust in Jesus (John 3:36).
- Once people are saved, they are always saved. Nothing could take them out of God's hand; they are secure (John 10:27–29).
- The experience of the new birth (being born into God's family) is not based on a feeling, but on confidence in God's Word (1 John 5:11, 12).

Encourage students to pray, but explain that prayer does not save a person. Prayer is how we communicate our inward thoughts to God. Ask new believers to explain what they have done and what has happened to them.

Discipleship

Give new believers guidance in reading the Bible and explain the importance of prayer. Connect them to someone to who can invest in teaching them how to live the Christian life. Your goal is for the new believer to become a disciple maker him- or herself.

SESSION 1

reasons for apologetics

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

John 16:7–11; 1 Peter 3:14, 15,
20–25

BUILDUP THEME



BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

God expects us to prepare to
defend and share our faith.

MEASURABLE RESPONSE

The students will assess their
readiness to defend and share
their faith.

MEMORY VERSE

“But sanctify the Lord God in
your hearts, and always be ready
to give a defense to everyone
who asks you a reason for
the hope that is in you, with
meekness and fear”
(1 Peter 3:15). NKJV

“But in your hearts honor Christ
the Lord as holy, always being
prepared to make a defense
to anyone who asks you for a
reason for the hope that is in
you; yet do it with gentleness
and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). ESV

Teacher Preparation

- ☐ Read 1 Peter 3:14, 15. Peter wrote to believers about facing persecution for their faith. Such persecution is a blessing in that it means God’s Word is going forth and having an impact. It is also a blessing in that God rewards believers for suffering for their faith. But not all believers are prepared to stand for Christ and confidently share their faith. So Peter called believers to get ready to take a stand, beginning with sanctifying the Lord in their hearts and including being ready to defend their faith.
- ☐ How prepared are you to defend your faith? Have you thought about how you would answer someone who doubts God exists or that Jesus actually rose from the dead? Do you know how to defend the fact that the Bible is the trustworthy Word of God? Do you have an answer for the presence of evil and suffering in the world?
- ☐ This course will prepare you and your students to have an answer for those who question your faith. It will give you confidence and make you effective witnesses for Christ.

Session Summary

The word “apologetics” comes from a Greek word meaning to “speak away.” The word describes the answer a defendant gives in response to an accusation. Guidelines for apologetics include focusing on sharing Christ, sharing truth with confidence, sharing one’s hope in Christ, and sharing truth with meekness toward others and respect toward God. Apologetics includes making a positive case for Christianity, refuting opposing beliefs, and persuading unbelievers to trust Christ. God expects all believers to practice apologetics as part of their daily lives.

Session Starters

Option 1—Bad Beliefs

Steps

1. Share a wrong belief you held as a child. Perhaps you had a misunderstanding of who someone was, what a word meant, or how something worked. Share what contributed to your misunderstanding of reality and what helped you come to understand the truth.

2. Discuss beliefs with your students.

ASK: What wrong beliefs did you hold as a child? (Q1)

ASK: What, if anything, did you do to defend your wrong beliefs? (Q2)

ASK: What caused you to recognize and accept the truth? (Q3)

3. Transition to the Bible study.

Many people have wrong beliefs about God, the Bible, Jesus, and the origins of the world. Some have dedicated their lives to defending their wrong beliefs and attacking Christianity. They sometimes sound convincing. This course will help us know how to respond to such attacks and how to defend Christianity.

Option 2—Ready to Answer

Gather

- Paper and pens.

Steps

1. Read the following true or false questions. Have students write their answers.
 - True or False: There are errors in the ancient manuscripts of the Bible. *True.*
 - True or False: The New Testament contains and promotes myths and legends. *False.*
 - True or False: Truth is determined by what a person believes is true. *False.*
 - True or False: There are no good arguments for the existence of God. *False.*
 - True or False: The existence of evil proves God isn't real. *False.*
 - True or False: The evidence for the big bang is irrefutable. *False.*
 - True or False: The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is irrefutable. *True.*

2. Review the questions and have the students give their answers.
Discuss being ready to talk on the topics referenced in the questions.

ASK: Which of the topics covered by the quiz questions would you like to learn more about?

ASK: How prepared are you to talk about them?

3. Transition to the Bible study.

This course presents a defense of the Biblical truths about God, Jesus, the Bible, and the world. Such truths are objective and consequential truths rather than simply our opinions. This session will help us begin to understand apologetics, the process of answering questions about the basis of our faith.

Bible Study

I. Defining Apologetics

The word “apologetics” has nothing to do with apologizing or admitting wrongdoing. It means the opposite in a sense. “Apologetics” comes from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning to “speak away.” The word was used in ancient court rooms to describe the answer a defendant gave in response to an accusation. The defendant claimed he was innocent of charges of wrongdoing and spoke on his behalf to prove his innocence before a judge.

Christian apologetics, then, is generally a defense of the Christian faith. All believers should be working to become good defenders of their faith. It is our duty and not something to be left to intellectuals or scholars. Peter made clear that apologetics is for all believers.

II. Apologetics Guidelines (1 Peter 2:20–25; 3:14, 15)

Peter talks about defending the faith in his first epistle. From his instructions, we can draw four important points to guide our apologetics.

A. Share Christ (1 Peter 3:14, 15)

Peter wrote to a group of believers who faced persecution or at least the possibility of suffering at the hands of unbelievers. He wanted the believers to know that suffering for being godly brings blessings.

READ: 1 Peter 3:14.

The blessing for suffering as a righteous person comes in the form of deep joy. That’s what “blessed” means. That joy comes from God and is not normal. People normally get angry or sad when enduring suffering.

In Greek, the preposition *apo* means “away” and the word *logia* means “speech.” The apologist fends off accusatory speech, showing it to be false.

Isaiah called on Israel to fear God rather than their enemies. Instead of making sinful alliances with foreign powers, they should have trusted in God, their rock and sanctuary. Isaiah warned Israel that God would become a snare to them if they decided to rebel against Him by making alliances (Isa. 8:12–15).

ASK: What forms of suffering might you endure for being righteous? Which ones have you endured? (Q4)

Peter, quoting Isaiah 8:12, told his audience not to be afraid of the possibility of suffering for Christ's sake. Instead, they were to put their focus on Christ.

READ: 1 Peter 3:15.

Believers are to make Christ the Lord over their hearts. Our "hearts" are where we make decisions that affect our thoughts, actions, and direction in life. To sanctify the Lord in one's heart means to treat Him as holy, or set apart, from everyone else. Jesus is to be the most important Person in our lives. We should take our cues from Christ rather than living in response to threats from unbelievers. When we do, we will gladly share Christ with the lost.

B. Share confidently (1 Peter 3:15)

When believers set Christ up as the most important Person in their lives, they need to be ready to talk about their relationship with Him. Peter commands believers to be ready to give a defense, or to speak to the validity of Christianity. Peter means to be ready to "speak away" the attacks on Christianity and to present truths that validate their faith. He also means to be bold and confident in defending the faith.

ASK: Some believers set themselves up as the most important person in their lives. How do you think they will respond to ridicule for their faith? (Q5) *Many will cave to the threats and not defend their faith, choosing to fit in or go unnoticed instead.*

READ: Mark 14:66–72. **ASK:** On the night Jesus was arrested and tried, whom do you think Peter had set up as the most important person in his heart? (Q6) *He had set himself up as most important. He claimed Jesus was first in his life (Mark 14:29), but his actions betrayed his heart's sinful condition.*

Peter spoke from experience when he wrote 1 Peter 3:15. He had learned the importance of making Christ holy, or first, in his life. After his miserable failure and after Christ's death and resurrection, he successfully faced many threats, choosing to give an answer for the hope that was in him instead of cowering in fear. Christ's example impacted his life (1 Peter 2:21–25). In the end, Peter died as a martyr, just as Christ had predicted (John 21:18, 19).

READ: John 21:18, 19. **ASK:** What do you think Peter concluded about his life as he was being carried away to be martyred for his faith? Did he consider himself blessed? Was he glad he had defended his faith in the face of threats? (Q7)

C. Share hope (1 Peter 3:15)

Once Peter committed to live for Christ, he lived with certainty that Christ will prevail and that all of God's promises will come true. All believers share Peter's eternal hope. And when we cling to our hope in the face of persecution or ridicule (1 Peter 3:15), we present a strong argument for the validity of God, Christ, and the Bible. Believers who live full of hope in God will stand out in a world of uncertainty and despondency.

ASK: What might hope look like in a believer's life? (Q8) *The person is filled with joy and optimism rather than discouragement and worry.*

ASK: What practices cause a believer to become filled with hope? (Q9) *Building a deep faith in God through studying His Word; living with eternal values in view; loving others with Christ's sacrificial love.*

ASK: Has anyone ever asked you about the hope in you? What were the circumstances? What did you say? (Q10)

The darker and more hopeless the world becomes, the greater the opportunity believers have to shine the hope of Christ. We must be intentional in conveying our hope to the world through our words and actions.

D. Share meekly and respectfully (1 Peter 2:20–25; 3:15)

The hope-filled believer should also be meek and respectful—meek toward others and respectful toward God (1 Peter 3:15). Believers represent Christ to the world, so they should not be heartless or aggressive in defending their faith and hope in Christ. Unbelievers aren't the believer's enemies to be silenced; they are the believer's mission field to be won. Heartless and aggressive defense of the faith ruins Christ's testimony. Believers must meekly serve unbelievers, caring for their lost souls as they present to them their case for God, Christ, and the Bible.

ASK: What might motivate a person to be heartless and aggressive in defending Christianity? (Q11) *They are self-centered and make personal any opposition to Christianity. They are aggressive and heartless because they want to dominate and silence their opposition.*

To fear God is to respect His place of authority in our lives and trust His perfect wisdom in directing our lives. He commands us to give an answer for the hope that is in us, and He tells us to do it with meekness. Our fear of God will motivate us to obey God in the manner He directs.

READ: 1 Peter 2:20–25. **ASK:** How did Christ show meekness and fear as He faced the cross? (Q12) *He patiently endured suffering*

and refused to retaliate because He respected God the Father and had committed to carrying out the Father's plan to save the world.

Peter pointed to Jesus as the believer's example of suffering for doing good. He also noted that Jesus' suffering makes our righteous obedience to God possible. So Jesus gives us an example of meekness and then enables our meekness.

III. Purposes for Apologetics

Historically, apologists have recognized four main reasons for apologetics. Each of them will be evident throughout this course.

A. Provide evidence of Christianity

Apologetics validates Christian belief, setting forth positive evidence for Christianity. It communicates that Christianity is reasonable and worth accepting. Paul, for example, appealed to creation as evidence of God's existence (Rom. 1:20).

READ: Romans 1:20.

This function of apologetics includes a careful examination of scientific and philosophical evidence. The apologist presents the Christian worldview alongside opposing worldviews to show the validity of Christianity. If Christianity is all it claims to be, then facts should align with its claims.

ASK: What facts would you set forth as evidence that Christianity is a valid belief system? (Q13)

B. Defend attacks against Christianity

Apologetics also deals with attacks unbelievers lob at Christianity. For instance, unbelievers will attack the Bible as being full of errors and ultimately unreliable. Apologetics gives answers to those attacks. The answers clear away obstacles that keep unbelievers from considering Christ. The answers also dispel arguments that Christianity is unreasonable.

ASK: What about Christianity might seem unreasonable to unbelievers? (Q14) *That God will condemn "good" people to the Lake of Fire; that Christ is the only way to salvation.*

READ: 2 Peter 1:20, 21. **ASK:** What arguments against Christianity did Peter address in this passage? (Q15) *That the Bible is a product of human writers and therefore biased and untrustworthy.*

C. Refute arguments for opposing beliefs

Unbelievers hold a variety of views that are opposed to Christianity. They, like Christians, give their defense of their views, listing what they consider

to be irrefutable evidence. Evolutionists, for example, teach that they have clear evidence for the evolutionary origin of all living things.

ASK: How is “evidence” for evolution presented in public schools, secular museums, and on secular websites? (Q16) *As established fact.*

Generations of unbelievers who have gone through public schools believe evolution is a fact rather than a theory. They see the world, including themselves, as a byproduct of random chance rather than part of God’s plan. Apologetics examines the “evidence” for evolution and other systems of belief to expose them as unreasonable and even impossible.

D. Persuade unbelievers to trust Christ

No one can make someone believe in Christ through carefully crafted arguments. But the Holy Spirit can use the Biblical truth shared during an apologetic defense to draw the unbeliever to God.

READ: John 16:7–11. **ASK:** What is the Holy Spirit’s role in the life of an unbeliever? (Q17) *The Holy Spirit convicts unbelievers of their sin, their need to meet God’s righteous standard, and God’s coming judgment on sin.*

Believers must make God’s Word an integral part of their apologetics because the Spirit uses God’s Word to help unbelievers understand their need for salvation (Heb. 4:12).

Session Application

Steps

1. Read the following questions that this course will answer.
 - What is truth?
 - How do we know God exists?
 - Why is Christ’s resurrection important and certain?
 - Is the New Testament reliable?
 - Did Jesus claim to be God?
 - How old is the earth?
 - Why does evil exist?
2. Ask your students how prepared they feel to answer the questions.

ASK: Which of the questions could you comfortably answer? (Q18)

ASK: Which of the questions have unbelievers asked you? How did you respond? (Q19)
3. Pray for your students to put Christ first in their lives and to build their confidence in giving a reason for the hope that is in them. (Q20)