



THE TORCHLIGHTERS

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Leader's Guide for the DVD

The *Perpetua* Story



From Christian History Institute

L E A D E R



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Introduction to the Torchlighters Series

Torchlighter: *One who commits to serving God
and passing on the light of the Gospel,
even if the going gets tough.*

Kids today have no shortage of heroes. From Hollywood celebrities to music artists and sports figures, it would seem that there are plenty of heroes to go around. The heroes being offered by popular culture are teaching children that physical perfection, financial success, and fame are the most important goals in life. The morals and values presented by these heroes are often in direct opposition to the standards parents want to pass on to their children. So, while there is no shortage of heroes, there is a dreadful shortage of heroes worth emulating.

The *Torchlighters* video series has been created to offer children real heroes who won't lead them astray. The heroes we choose to portray have lived truly great lives—lives marked by moral depth, strength of character, and an unswerving commitment to faith in Christ. By sharing in their struggles and small steps of obedience, we are all challenged to live lives of faith. It is our sincere desire that as children get to know these “torchlighters,” they will be challenged to follow in the footsteps of the greatest torchlighter of them all, Jesus Christ.

Learn more about the mission behind this series and find more free resources at:

www.torchlighters.org



Synopsis of *The Torchlighters:* *The Perpetua Story*

In the year A.D. 202, the Roman emperor has decreed that there shall be no new Christians. Conversions are forbidden on pain of death. The government sees the Christian “sect” as bad news because they refuse to offer the required sacrifice to the emperor. They must be stopped before others join them and upset the system!

Yet, in ancient Carthage, as all over the empire, men and women still come to Christ, risking execution for doing so. Slave and free, rich and poor, old and young, they gather together under the cover of darkness to worship the one true God, strengthening their bond and their faith commitment.



Among the new believers is a privileged young mother named Perpetua. When the Roman soldiers swoop into the peaceful meeting, they arrest all the new believers who are preparing for baptism. Perpetua is arrested along with four others, including her pregnant slave Felicity. Perpetua no longer sees Felicity as a slave, but as a beloved sister in Christ.

Ancient prisons were horrible places: dark, stinking (there were no toilets), hot, crowded, and dangerous. By offering just a simple pinch of incense to the emperor as a god, Perpetua and her companions can be free to return to their families and the comforts of home. Everyone else does it, no matter what gods they worship. But the early believers, though obedient to the government, refuse to do anything that looks like idolatry.

Through her diary, Perpetua leaves a written record of their ordeal and the many ways the Lord comforts them: She experiences great joy when she is allowed to keep her baby in prison; encouragement comes through the visits of fellow believers; one, who may have been their teacher, even joins them in prison in order to share in their ordeal; peace and contentment are strengthened through visions, including one confirming they are to be martyred but will have victory over death with eternal life in heaven.

It is said that many in Carthage found Christ and entered the Church because of the witness of Perpetua, Felicity, and their companions. Perpetua's story encourages each of us to make faith in God our highest priority, and not to be swayed by outside forces. Her faith and actions were radical in her time, and she continues to challenge believers today to walk more fully with the Lord.



Teaching Plan for *The Perpetua Story*

1. PREVIEW *The Perpetua Story* before showing it to your students. This will help you to recognize the major themes and teachable moments that occur throughout the video. In addition, you will gain a better understanding of the flow of the story and will be equipped to answer questions your students may have.

Download and read Perpetua's account of her imprisonment and trial at www.torchlighters.org. The story is only a few pages long, but it illustrates how early Christians lived and thought, and how bravely they faced death.

The major themes presented in this video and study guide are:

- The early church spread through the work and lives of ordinary people.
- Remaining faithful to God should be our highest priority, above wealth, comfort, and even family when necessary.
- God brings us comfort and courage when we suffer.
- Having a strong faith identity helps us stand for our beliefs.

2. REVIEW the Supplementary Information. The sections titled "Key People in Perpetua's Life," "The Ancient World of Perpetua," and "Key Events in the Second Century" will prepare you to answer the kinds of factual questions children might ask. Viewing the documentary *The Passion of Perpetua: Martyr of the Faith*, included as a bonus feature on the DVD, is also an excellent way to learn more about Perpetua's amazing story and witness.

3. SELECT and PREPARE Teaching Material. Our four lesson plans lead children through the story of Perpetua using scripture, activities and handouts. Feel free to mix and match the material to best suit your group and the time available. All material is reproducible and designed to help children apply the teaching themes. **NOTE:** Special supplies are needed for activities and crafts in Sessions 1 and 4. If you plan to conduct the interview as part of Session 4, give your guest plenty of advance notice so he or she can arrange to be there and can prepare.

4. VISIT www.torchlighters.org. The materials in this guide and the Student Handouts are just the beginning. Visit our website for other free resources such as unique ministry ideas, publicity posters, the *Torchlighters* theme song, *Carry the Torch Craft and Relay*, interactive quizzes and much more. If you are planning a teaching series based on *The Torchlighters*, consider using the craft, the relay and the theme song as part of an introductory session based on the question "What is a Torchlighter?"

Are you planning a *Torchlighters* showing or event?

Publicity is easy when you download free posters at

www.torchlighters.org



Session 1 – A Humble Beginning

FOCUS: Christianity began as a small movement and spread through the world as ordinary people put their faith into practice.

- **ACTIVITY: Spreading the Faith** — Before class, prepare a batch of homemade dough (see p. 7 for the recipe). Place the dough in a plastic zipper bag and seal well. You will need the dough and some bright food coloring for this demonstration.

Say: Let's imagine the dough represents all the people of the world. Can anyone tell me how Christianity began? Let's imagine this food coloring represents the Christian faith. The faith started out small, with just a few people believing Jesus' message. (Place a few drops of food coloring on the dough and re-seal the bag.)

Say: If we lived right after Jesus' time, this bit of color might represent how much of the world believed Jesus' message of salvation. (Pass the bag to a student, and have them knead the dough for a bit.) Over time, Jesus' message began to spread. (Continue passing the dough, allowing each student to knead it and spread the color a bit more. Add more food coloring if necessary.)

Say: At first the faith spread slowly, but after awhile it spread more rapidly. Of course, not all who heard of Jesus and His message believed in Him. Let's try to decide when to stop mixing our dough, in order to represent how much of the world believes in Jesus now. (Most researchers believe that about 1/3 of the world's population identify themselves as Christian.) Let's take a look at our dough. Is the colored portion a good representation of the percentage of Christians in the world today?

- **BIBLE CONNECTION:** Share the story of Jesus appearing to the eleven disciples on the mountain, found in Matthew 28:16-20. Stress the concept of the "Great Commission," which challenged believers then and now to spread the Good News of Christianity.

Ask: Who do you think Jesus wants to participate in the "Great Commission"? (All believers, not just the leaders or teachers.)

Ask: How many churches can you think of that are right here in our own town? Imagine how far Christianity had to spread to have so many churches so far from Jerusalem! How can the churches in our town do a better job of spreading the Gospel?

- **ANCIENT CHURCH ACTIVITY: The Ixthus** — Use the two worksheets based on the Ixthus, found on pp. 3 and 4 in the Student Handouts. As students complete the two worksheets, *Ask:* How do you think Christians might have used this symbol to help carry out the Great Commission in early church times? (To mark houses, fence posts, and meeting spots in order to help others find them. Also as a simple tool for explaining faith in Jesus to others, when using the symbols in the fish.) *Ask:* Why would they use a symbol to help others find them?



(Persecution meant they had to keep their meetings secret.) **Ask:** *What Bible stories does the fish symbol remind you of?* (Fishers of men [Matthew 4:19], Feeding the 5,000 [Matthew 14:13-21], The Miraculous Catch [John 21:1-14])

- **PREVIEW:** Show the video preview of *The Perpetua Story*, found at the beginning of your DVD.

Say: *The next time we meet, we will see a video about Perpetua, a wealthy young woman who lived a very long time ago, about 200 years after the time of Christ. Though it was a dangerous thing to do, Perpetua became a Christian. Her faith was put to the test when she had to make a difficult choice.* Invite students to bring a friend next time and use the following project if desired.

- **PROJECT: Ixthus Invitation** — Explain that in the time of the early church, people wrote on papyrus, an early form of paper. Distribute brown paper bags cut into 12x12 inch squares. Have students crumple and smooth their pieces of paper several times, to make them look weathered. Using black markers or black paint, have students draw an Ixthus on their paper. Simplify by omitting the Greek letters, if necessary. Have them also write the date and time of your next class.

Say: *One way you can participate in the Great Commission is to bring a friend to class! Use this paper as an invitation for a friend to join us next time we meet, when we will see The Perpetua Story.*

- **CLOSING PRAYER:** *Lord, You have challenged us to spread the Gospel into “all the nations,” but sometimes it’s even harder to share the Good News with our own friends and neighbors! Help us to know if there is someone we could tell about You. Help us also to invite friends to our church and to our class. Amen.*

Homemade Dough:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 1/4 cup salt

Mix all ingredients in a non-stick pan. Stir over medium heat until thick and smooth. Remove from pan and knead until soft. Place in zip bag and seal well.

NOTE: Purchased white play dough may be substituted, but be sure to knead it well before class, as it will not be as smooth and elastic as homemade dough.



Session 2 – A Strong Identity

FOCUS: View *The Perpetua Story* and consider Perpetua's strong faith identity.

- **REVIEW:** Use the Ixthus worksheet and the dough demonstration from last time to challenge students to remember the discussion about the early church and the spread of faith. Be sensitive to new students, being sure to include them. Choose one of the following activities, either **Identity Quest** or **Say What?**, as an opening activity.
- **ACTIVITY: Identity Quest** — Prepare small paper tags with short “identities” that students in your class might have, such as: daughter, son, brother, soccer player, pianist, artist, friend, student, and volunteer. Randomly attach these tags to students' backs with clothespins, so they cannot see what is on their own back.

Say: Each of you has a tag on your back with an identity that could be true of someone your age. It is not necessarily an identity that you personally have. You may ask your classmates Yes or No questions and try to figure out your identity. This will be a “free for all” where you can roam around the room. You may take guesses on your identity at any time. End the activity when most of the students have figured out their identity.

Ask: How did it feel not to know your identity?

- **ACTIVITY: Say What?** — Use the handout on p. 5 of the Student Handouts to help students uncover the word “Catechumen,” which means someone who is learning the basic principles of faith, usually referring to a new believer.

Say: Catechumen is a word that describes Perpetua. Does it describe you?

- **PERPETUA'S STORY: Say:** Today we are going to see the story of Perpetua, a young mother who lived around the year 200. Perpetua knew who she was and she wasn't afraid to say it. She had a VERY strong sense of identity. As you watch, look for a time when Perpetua uses a vase to help her father understand who she is. Look for the one word she uses to describe herself.
- **SHOW the 30-minute program *The Torchlighters: The Perpetua Story*.**
- **STUDENT QUESTIONS:** Allow students time to process the video and ask questions about flow and content. *Ask:* Did you notice the scene where Perpetua uses the vase to illustrate her point? What does Perpetua say she is?
- **DISCUSSION:** Lead discussion using questions from the “Dig into the Story” and “Dig Deeper” sections (pp. 6 and 7 in Student Handouts). Refer back to these discussion questions as needed during the remaining two sessions.



- **PARENT LETTER:** Distribute this letter to help parents understand the lessons you are sharing in class. (p. 12 in Leader's Guide)
- **PRAYER:** *Lord, we thank You for Perpetua's life and example. She knew who she was and she was willing to stand up for her beliefs. Thank You that she left a legacy through her writings, so we can know of her story. Help us to know what we believe and to be willing always to stand up for the truth. Amen.*
- **CLOSING: Say:** *Next time we will explore a bit more about how we define ourselves as Christians and how we are known to others.*





Session 3 – Who am I?

FOCUS: Explore the values and beliefs that define us.

- **REVIEW:** Use the “Story Mix-Up” worksheet (p. 8 in Student Handouts) to help review *The Story of Perpetua*.

Ask: Who remembers the one word Perpetua used to describe herself? (Christian) How do we know that Perpetua’s faith was strong?

- **ACTIVITY: Who Am I?** — Pass out copies of “Who Am I?,” found on p. 9 of the Student Handouts. Have students answer the questions without putting their names on the pages. Collect the papers, shuffle them and then hand them back out in a random fashion. Challenge students to guess whose paper they have, based on the descriptions. *Ask:* If you had to choose just one word to describe yourself, what word would you use? How important is it to know who you are and to be ready to stand up for your beliefs?
- **ACTIVITY: Character Counts** — Use the worksheet on p. 10 in the Student Handouts to help students understand how the early Christians were distinguished from others in their time.

Ask: What sets Christians apart today? Are there things on this list that Christians are still doing? How do modern people learn about Christianity if they’ve never heard? Which characteristic from the word search best describes you? Which one would you like to be better at?

- **BIBLE CONNECTION:** Share the story of Daniel and the fiery furnace, found in Daniel 6. Stress how Daniel was faithful to God, even when the laws of the land meant he might be put to death for following his beliefs. Draw parallels with Perpetua’s story.

Ask: Are there times today when it is hard to obey what we know God wants us to do?

- **PRAYER:** Lord, You died for our sins and You have called us to be Your people. Yet sometimes we fail to even acknowledge You. Sometimes we live only for ourselves. Please forgive us and help us to make wise choices and to put You first in our lives. Amen.
- **CLOSING: Say:** Perpetua kept a journal to record her experiences. Next time we will interview a friend who uses journaling to record experiences and remember important events.

NOTE: Refer to the answer key on page 20 for answers to selected student pages.



Session 4 – A Lasting Legacy (Special Guest Interview)

FOCUS: In this session, students will consider the importance of recording their own thoughts and experiences for the benefit of themselves and others. They will hear of the experiences of someone who values journaling.

- **REVIEW:** Introduce your special guest to the class. Ask the students to give a summary of Perpetua's story for your guest.
- **ACTIVITY: Preserving Our Stories** — Hold up one of the invitations that was made from crumpled paper bag in session 1.

Ask: Who can remember what kind of paper Perpetua might have written on? (papyrus) We know of Perpetua's story mostly because she kept a diary. Let's look at some other ways people throughout time have recorded their stories and the history of their time and place. Use p. 11 of the Student Handouts to complete this activity.

- **INTERVIEW: Journal Writer's Interview** — Invite someone who keeps a diary or a prayer journal to come and share about this with the class. Use the interview questions (page 12 of the Student Handouts) to get the discussion going.
- **BIBLE CONNECTION:** Rather than tell a specific Bible story, discuss the four Gospels. Point out that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John took the time to record the life of Jesus, so we would all know of the things He taught and did. Imagine if no one had taken the time or effort to record Jesus' life story! Read the very last verse of the book of John (John 21:25). Imagine together the meaning behind this statement regarding the immense number of miracles and teachings that were never recorded.
- **PROJECT: Journals** — Use p. 13 of the Student Handouts to lead students in making their own journals. As students work, discuss the kinds of things they could write in them.

Ask: What will be the value of your journal in 5 years? How about in 50 or 100 years?

- **PRAYER:** *Lord, we thank You for the example of Perpetua's life and faith. Help us to remember the lessons we've learned. Help us always to remember to put You first in our lives. Amen.*

NOTE: Refer to the answer key on page 20 for answers to selected student pages.

Dear Parents,

Today in Sunday school, your child viewed a *Torchlighters* DVD depicting the life of Perpetua, a young woman who lived in the time of the early church in Carthage, North Africa.

In the Roman Empire at the dawn of the third century, it was dangerous to become a Christian, but that didn't stop twenty-two-year-old Perpetua from professing faith and joining those who worshiped the one true God. When Roman soldiers stormed their meeting, all the new converts were arrested, including Perpetua, her slave Felicity, and three others. A sacrifice of incense to the Roman emperor would secure their freedom, but these brave Christians held fast to their faith and refused to bow down to worldly idols. For this they endured the horrors of prison and eventual martyrdom, but through it all found strength and comfort from the Lord.

Perpetua's ordeal is known because of the diary she kept, the earliest known writing by a Christian woman. Through her story, children find a hero who would not be moved by the winds of society. Worldly wealth, social status, comfort and convenience were nothing in comparison to the joy of following the Lord with all her heart. Perpetua's example of placing God as the highest priority of her life is an inspiration to us all. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



Key People in Perpetua's Life (In order of appearance in Perpetua's diary)

Revocatus, Felcitas, Saturninus and Secundulus – The story begins with the arrest of these four, who were described as “young catechumens” (new believers being instructed in the faith and awaiting baptism) and “fellow slaves.” Felicitas is Perpetua’s slave and Revocatus is Felicitas’ husband. Secundulus dies while in prison.

Vivia Perpetua – Perpetua is described as “being among them (those arrested), respectably born, liberally educated, a married matron.” Not much is known about her husband. Some think he was away on business and others suggest he may have left her due to her faith. She has a child she is still nursing. She is about 22 years old.

Perpetua's Father – A respected man, of a higher social status. He was a pagan who repeatedly begged his daughter to give up her faith and save her life. Respectable as he was, he was “thrown down and beaten with rods” by the Roman authorities, apparently in an attempt to make his daughter recant. After she is sentenced, he refuses to let her see her son. Perpetua does not tell us what official position he held, if any.

Perpetua's Mother – Not much is known about her.

Perpetua's Brothers: Perpetua had two brothers. One is also a catechumen, but wasn't arrested. Another had died, but she sees him in a dream which is recorded in her story.

Perpetua's Aunt – She is mentioned briefly in the diary, but we know nothing about her.

Tertius and Pomponius – Deacons who ministered to the prisoners. They bribed someone to get in and to get their friends better treatment.

Hilarianus – The successor to the deceased proconsul Minucius Timanianus and the man who sent the Christians to their deaths.

Dinocrates – Perpetua’s deceased brother, whom she sees in a vision suffering in a gloomy place, still bearing the wounds from which he died. After she prays for him, she has another vision in which she sees him healed.

Pudens – A soldier and assistant overseer of the prison “who began to regard us with great esteem.” He allowed the prisoners’ friends in to see them.

Saturus – Joins the prisoners and is also martyred with them. He is thought to have been their teacher. He also has a vision of the martyrs entering Heaven.

Jocundus, Saturninus, Artaxius, and Quintus – Martyrs “who had suffered the same persecution,” who were seen by Saturus in his vision. (Saturninus is a different martyr from Perpetua’s companion.)

Opatus, the Bishop and Aspasius, the presbyter (meaning priest) – Also seen in the vision of Saturus.



The Ancient World of Perpetua

The Roman Empire

At the time of our story, the Roman Empire controlled over 2.5 million square miles of land, from Britain in the west through what is now France, Germany, and Switzerland. To the south it covered almost all of northern Africa above the Sahara Desert. To the east it stretched through Macedonia, Palestine, and Arabia and on down the coast of Africa. The enormous amount of territory meant the need for control was also great, causing the leaders to become wary of threats to the security of the empire. It was the greatest empire ever known since the conquests of the Macedonian Alexander the Great 700 years before, and it lasted longer.

At the dawn of the third century, the Empire was under the military dictatorship of the Emperor Septimius Severus, who ruled from 193 to 211. The emperor faced many problems, including threats from the fierce German tribes in the West, the fearsome Goths in what is now Russia, and the Sassanids in Iran.

He also had the growing numbers of Christians to worry about. It has been estimated that in the year 200 there were about 220,000 Christians in the Empire. This was only about one-third of one percent of the population, but the number had been growing steadily despite every attempt to wipe out the young church. The number would jump to an estimated 1.2 million in 250, and keep growing to an estimated 34 million and 56% of the population one hundred years after that.

Why the Romans Feared Christians

Rome tolerated local religions as a way of keeping peace in all the countries they conquered. As long as they thought of Christianity as a Jewish sect, the church had some protection, but as the difference gradually became clearer and Christianity began to be treated as a separate religion, it lost that protection.

While the Empire was threatened by outside forces, the Christians were perceived as an inner threat to peace and unity because they did not worship the Roman gods, and in particular did not offer the simple act of worship to the Emperor required of everyone. Even worse, these Christians worshiped a man the Empire had put to death. They claimed that God had raised this Jesus from the dead, proving that their God was more powerful than the Empire.

Romans thought Christians were “atheists” and their religion a superstition, because for the Romans religion was a social institution and its observance demonstrated loyalty and unity. In the Third Century the Roman Philosopher Porphyry wrote: “How can people not be in every way impious and atheistic who have apostatized from the customs of our ancestors through which every nation and city is sustained? . . . What else are they than fighters against God?” Keeping the Empire together was crucial, and any threat had to be dealt with harshly.



Furthermore, the Christian religion itself offended many. As Jesus warned the disciples, “You will be hated by all for my sake” (Luke 21:17). The world will hate his disciples because “they are not of the world” (John 17:14). This proved true in many ways in the early Church.

Christianity was an exclusive religion in a world that considered everyone's gods as equal. The Christians' claim to a unique truth angered many. Christianity's moral teaching was often felt to be a reprimand to the morals of the day, and the Christians' distance from normal pagan society made them look suspicious and offended the many pagans. At times, wild rumors were spread about the Christians because people misunderstood Christian practices. Christians were said to be having secret cannibal feasts, for example, because of references to the body and blood of Christ in Communion. Even the equality of people within the Church upset Romans for whom social divisions were essential to social stability and prosperity.

One fact is important to understand the story of Perpetua and her companions. When the emperor forbade conversions to Christianity, he did not forbid those who were Christians from remaining so. This explains why, after the new believers are arrested, the two deacons and others were able to visit them in prison. Still, his ruling made being a Christian much more dangerous, because local officials or even local mobs could decide to expand his ruling to include Christians who had been believers before. The Christians who came to visit the prisoners were, in a way, painting a bull's eye on their back.

Carthage

Perpetua lived in Carthage, an ancient city in North Africa. The ruins of Carthage are to be found in Tunisia, a country just across the Mediterranean Sea from the island of Sicily. Roman historians wrote that Carthage was founded by the Phoenicians, or “Sea People.” The Phoenicians were powerful traders who lived along the coast of the Mediterranean.

In the centuries before Christ's birth, Carthage became very powerful. It was the major world power opposed to Rome. This rivalry resulted in a long struggle called the Punic Wars. One of their leaders, Hannibal, became so great that he actually invaded Italy. Eventually, the Romans, under Scipio the Younger, conquered Carthage in the year 149 B.C. The old city was destroyed and in 29 B.C. rebuilt by the Romans, who settled it with Roman colonists and traders from around the known world. At the time of Perpetua's story, over 200 years later, Carthage was the second greatest city in the western part of the Empire, after Rome.

Carthage must have felt the effects of the political and ethnical unrest that troubled the Empire during Perpetua's short life. Persecutions of Christians in North Africa began after the emperor, Septimus Severus, issued orders that conversions to Christianity were unlawful. The emperor may not have been directly responsible for these terrible persecutions, because he let the Church in Rome at peace under his reign and he is believed to have had Christians in his household.

Local magistrates in Africa, fearful of any political unrest and of the growing power of the Christian Church, seem to have been the villains. Those in Carthage had reason to fear unrest, for Carthage was



not very well protected. Most of the Roman army in Africa was in Numidia, and the city had only a few soldiers under the resident proconsul. They were little more than a local police force.

The trouble was the number of Christians was growing. They appeared to be dangerous revolutionaries, or the kind of people who might become dangerous revolutionaries. Who would protect Carthage from them if they became a threat?

Living in Carthage

The Roman way of life was dominant in Carthage, since Rome had re-founded the city as a Roman colony. The meticulously planned city was set out in a grid, with carefully placed public services such as baths. Roman government and law was rigorously enforced. As the major port in the southern Mediterranean, the city was now large, wealthy, and cosmopolitan.

Perpetua's father was well respected, and so was his family. They probably lived in a very comfortable house with all the amenities available in such a large city, including slaves. Wealthy people built villas like those in Rome and Pompeii. There were public baths, theatres, and everything to make urban life more pleasant. Poor people lived in much less comfortable conditions, but Perpetua, while probably not wealthy, was one of the fortunate ones.

The Church in Carthage seems to have been flourishing. The early second century Church Father Tertullian has left us some stories of the Church there. About forty years after Perpetua's death, the city would produce one of the major theologians of early Christianity, St. Cyril of Carthage, who was bishop of the city.



Important Events in the Second Century

- 96-180 Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, ruled during the period known as the *Pax Romana* (Peace of Rome). They were succeeded by Commodus who was mad.
- 110 Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, martyred in Rome.
- 144 Building of Hadrian's Wall in Britain. This was to protect the Roman colonies from the wild hordes in the North (Scotland). The heretic Marcion was making trouble for the Church at this time.
- c.150-211/16 Clement of Alexandria, the Christian theologian and Early Church Father, also teacher of the theologian Origen at the great Catechetical School in Alexandria, Egypt.
- c.155-c.220 Tertullian, Christian Theologian: He wrote for Christian and pagan audiences to try to explain Christianity. He also preserved Perpetua's writing. Tertullian wrote: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," and "The more you mow us down, the more numerous we grow."
- 165 Justin, Christian Apologist, martyred.
- 177 Persecution in Lyons/Lugdunum and Vienne, Gaul (France) Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons and Early Church Father, is martyred. He was a disciple of Polycarp who is said to have been a disciple of the Apostle John. Also martyred: Blandinus and Pothinus. Total of 48 martyred.
- 180 Twelve from Scilli (N. Africa) are martyred.
- c.?180/185 Perpetua was born in the 2nd century. During her short life, the Roman Empire faced many threats.
- 193 Septimius Severus comes to the throne, bringing many changes; his dynasty is known as "the military dynasty" because he so favored the military. He was faced with the threat of Germans from the West, Goths in what is now Russia and the Sassanid Empire in Persia (Iran).
- 202 Septimius Severus forbids conversions to Christianity and to Judaism.
- 203 or 209 Martyrdom of Perpetua. Perpetua wrote: "I prayed for him every day until we passed over into the prison of the camp, for we were to fight in the camp-show. Then was the birthday of Geta Caesar." Geta was not made Caesar until 209, so, the traditional date of martyrdom as 203, is suspect.
- 211 The emperor Septimius Severus dies. Rome is plunged into civil war.



Additional Materials

The Passion of Perpetua, Martyr of the Faith – Be sure to watch this stunning documentary available on your Torchlighters DVD. Filmed on location, this bonus resource features interviews with Early Church experts Dr. Rex Butler and Dr. John Mark Yeats, along with footage of ancient sites in Carthage.

DVDs (available from Vision Video at www.visionvideo.com or 1-800-523-0226)

- ***The Trial and Testimony of the Early Church*** – This gripping, award-winning series of six half-hour programs takes you on location to show what the early church was like, how it spread, and the persecution it endured. Teens and adults will enjoy this docu-drama.
- ***Polycarp and Perpetua*** – A close-up look at two early church martyrs, Perpetua and Polycarp, who would face anything, rather than deny Christ. This docu-drama is excerpted from the series *The Trial and Testimony of the Early Church*. Recommended for teens and adults.
- ***Stephen's Test of Faith*** – 12-year-old Stephen is mocked and ridiculed for his faith. During a dream, he travels through history meeting others who have been persecuted for their faith. Stephen awakens with a stronger faith and returns to witnessing. Recommended for ages 7-13.
- ***Agent Abbey*** – Abbey, a Christian teenager, has never heard about Christians suffering for their faith. While in China with her father, Abbey finds herself on a daring mission and vows to take the message of the persecuted church back to America. Recommended for ages 10 and up.

Books

- ***Great Women in Christian History***, edited by A. Kenneth Curtis and Daniel Graves. Read the fascinating stories of 37 women whose faith left a lasting legacy, including Perpetua and Felicitas. Available through Vision Video at www.visionvideo.com or 1-800-523-0226.
- ***The Passion of Perpetua*** – A free translation of Perpetua's diary can be found at www.torchlighters.org. Reading it is a great way to get more familiar with the real story of Perpetua.

Websites

- **www.torchlighters.org** – Visit our website to learn about other exciting *Torchlighters* episodes and download valuable ministry tools. Sign up for e-mail updates to get the latest news on Torchlighter releases.
- **www.persecution.com** – The website for The Voice of the Martyrs features information and resources on modern-day persecution around the world.
- **www.kidsofcourage.com** – A special site from The Voice of the Martyrs designed specifically for kids, featuring stories, quizzes, activity books, and more. Sign up for their quarterly newsletter, *Kids of Courage*.

Give us your feedback: Christian History Institute values your input. If you have comments or recommendations on the *Torchlighters* series, please share them through our website at www.torchlighters.org.



The Torchlighters: Heroes of the Faith Series

Jim Elliot - Jim Elliot spends his youth preparing to share the Gospel with those who have never heard it. But nothing can prepare him for the dangers and challenges he faces in the jungles of Ecuador. Will Jim and his fellow missionaries ever be able to break through and carry a torch of faith to the remote Auca tribe, determined to attack all outsiders?

William Tyndale - In 16th-century England, translating the sacred Scriptures into English is William's calling. It won't be easy with the English government and the established church planted firmly against anyone who even speaks the Scripture in English. Follow this brave fugitive on a journey of faith as he works to complete his task.

John Bunyan - To stop preaching just to save his own skin is unthinkable for this hero. But, how will his work continue from the confines of a cold, hard prison, while his wife and blind daughter struggle to survive alone? Watch as John serves his Lord in the most trying of circumstances, and writes an all-time best seller, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Eric Liddell - This hero has committed his Sundays to worship and rest, and he intends to keep that commitment. But with all of Scotland begging him to run for Olympic gold, it will be difficult to stand firm. Watch as the fastest man in the world chooses to honor God rather than chase a gold medal. Then watch how God uses Eric to bring the Gospel to China.

Gladys Aylward - With war raging about her and soldiers closing in, the wounded missionary Gladys Aylward sets out on a 100-mile trek over the mountains to a safe haven. But it's not her own safety that concerns her, it's the safety and well-being of the 100 abandoned children in her care. Watch as Gladys' strength and faith are stretched to the limit, all for the sake of the children.

Richard Wurmbrand - In war-torn Romania, there is only one way for churches to get the protection of the government: give their support and allegiance to the ruling communists. Instead, Pastor Richard Wurmbrand chooses to speak up for Christ. When Richard's choice lands him in a communist prison, his faith and witness are tested to the limits. See how this Torchlighter's amazing story continues to impact the world today.

Perpetua - In the days of the Early Church, this young mother and new believer is imprisoned, charged with being a Christian, a traitor to the Roman gods. A simple offering of incense to the gods would set her free. Will she remain true to her new faith in Jesus?

Amy Carmichael - As she makes her rounds preaching in the countryside of India, Amy learns of the terrible plight of the temple girls. These girls are given to the temple "gods" at a very young age, never again to taste freedom. Though she is warned repeatedly, there is nothing she can do, but Amy will not give up. Can this determined missionary and her team work against entrenched customs and superstitions to free a special girl named Preena?

William Booth - This hero is determined to bring the life-changing Gospel to London's worst neighborhood, the East End. But when the local pub owners realize some of their best customers are becoming Christians, they hire big strong thugs to get rid of the preacher once and for all. Watch as William's ragtag band of followers marches into the East End with Bibles and Prayer as the weapons of choice. William's legacy lives on through The Salvation Army.

Samuel Morris - Since his father can no longer meet his captors' ransom demands, young Prince Kaboo knows he is to be tortured until death. But when a blinding light appears and the ropes that bind him fall away, a heavenly voice urges him, "Run, Kaboo, Run!" The dramatic events that follow lead the boy prince to take the new name "Samuel Morris." Nothing will stop Samuel from sharing his growing faith with all who will listen.



Visit www.torchlighters.org for resources and up-to-date information on new releases.



Answer Key for Select Student Pages

A Secret Symbol, p. 3

IXTHUS

The Ixthus, p. 4





JESUS
CHRIST
GOD
SON
SAVIOR

Say What, p. 5

CATECHUMEN (CAT + ECHO – O + UP – P + MEN)

Story Mix-Up, p. 8

Story Mix-Up
These pictures of Perpetua's story are all mixed up.
Number the pictures in the correct order.

3  <small>Perpetua is allowed to have her baby while in prison.</small>	6  <small>The pastor decides to join the prisoners.</small>
8  <small>Perpetua is taken to the arena.</small>	4  <small>Perpetua explains to her father that she is a Christian.</small>
1  <small>The believers meet in secret to worship.</small>	7  <small>Perpetua records her experiences in a diary.</small>
5  <small>Perpetua will not make the sacrifice to the emperor.</small>	2  <small>The group of believers discuss.</small>

Character Counts, p. 10

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+ + + + + L + + C + + + + + + +
+ + + + + + + U A + + + + + + +
+ + + G + + + R F + + + + + E
+ + + + E + I + + P + + + + + V
+ + + + N + + + I + + + + + I
+ + + + G + E + + + H + + + + S
+ + + + + R + + + S + + + U
F A I T H F U L O + + + R + + L
+ + + + + + L U + + + O + C
+ + + + + + U + + S + + + W N
+ + + + + + F + + S + + + + + I
+ + + + + R + + + H E V A R B + +
+ + + + E + + + A + + + + + +
+ + + Y + + + + R + + + + + +
+ + A + + + + + I + + + + + +
+ R + + + + + + N + + + + + +
P + + + + + + + G + + + + + +
    
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(Over, Down, Direction)

- BRAVE (15, 12, W)
- CARING (10, 1, SW)
- FAITHFUL (1, 8, E)
- GENEROUS (4, 3, SE)
- INCLUSIVE (17, 11, N)
- PRAYERFUL (1, 17, NE)
- SHARING (10, 11, S)
- WORSHIPFUL (16, 10, NW)

Preserving Our Stories, p. 11

- 1 Verbal passing of stories
- 2 Hieroglyphics
- 3 Scrolls or papyrus
- 4 Books
- 5 Photos
- 6 Tape recording
- 7 Videos
- 8 Internet