

A close-up photograph of a lion's face, showing its eyes, nose, and thick golden-brown mane. The image is used as a background for a text overlay. The text is centered within a white rectangular box with a thin black border.

# Exploring Aslan's Country

Growing in Godliness by  
Breathing Narnian Air



INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



§ Exploring Aslan's Country:  
*Growing in Godliness by  
Breathing Narnian Air*

*A Study Guide for The Chronicles of Narnia*

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

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**Exploring Aslan's Country:**  
*Growing in Godliness by Breathing Narnian Air*

A STUDY GUIDE FOR THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

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Table of Contents

<b>Course Syllabus</b>		7
<b>Lesson 1</b>	The Life-Shaping Power of Story	9
<b>Lesson 2</b>	Narnia: Origins and Aims	19
<b>Lesson 3</b>	Is There a Narnia Code?	25
<b>Lesson 4</b>	The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe	33
<b>Lesson 5</b>	Prince Caspian	37
<b>Lesson 6</b>	The Voyage of the Dawn Treader	41
<b>Lesson 7</b>	The Silver Chair	45
<b>Lesson 8</b>	Review	49
<b>Lesson 9</b>	The Horse and His Boy	51
<b>Lesson 10</b>	The Magician's Nephew	55
<b>Lesson 11</b>	The Last Battle	59
<b>Lesson 12</b>	Summary and Review	63
<b>Appendix A</b>	The Planets	67



# Instructor's Introduction

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It is our hope and prayer that God would be pleased to use this curriculum for his glory. Thus, the intention of this curriculum is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ by equipping men, women, and young adults to serve as family, business and community leaders, full-time Christian workers, missionaries, pastors, and teachers. This curriculum is guided by the vision and values of Bethlehem College & Seminary, which are more fully explained at [bcsmn.edu](https://www.bcsmn.edu). On our website, you will find the God-centered philosophy that undergirds and motivates everything we do. May God be glorified in us as we are satisfied in him alone!

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*The Chronicles of Narnia* are some of the most beloved children's books of all time. But are they really just for children? Or is there more in Narnia than meets the eye? This twelve-week course will examine *The Chronicles* book by book as powerful stories designed to shape the hearts and minds of their readers. In the process, we will explore C.S. Lewis' motivation for writing *The Chronicles*, as well as probe the connections between *The Chronicles* and Lewis' other writings. From characters to plot, from symbolism to structure, we will seek to 'breathe the air' of Narnia in hopes of both contemplating and enjoying the Christ-saturated world conceived by Lewis. Our goal will be to heed the words of Aslan: "This was the very reason you were brought into Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you might know me better there."

## 🌀 OBJECTIVES

In this course, we will seek to:

- ▷ understand the origins of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.
- ▷ wrestle with Lewis' goal for *The Chronicles*, especially in relation to his view of education and spiritual formation.
- ▷ explore the layers of meaning within each *Chronicle* and *The Chronicles* as a whole.
- ▷ critically examine Michael Ward's provocative thesis regarding the unity of *The Chronicles*.
- ▷ know Aslan better in Narnia, in hopes of knowing Christ better in our world.

## 🌀 IMPLEMENTATION

As the instructor of this course, it is imperative that you are completely familiar with the curriculum. We therefore recommend that you read this entire section carefully and then skim through the rest of what is contained in this curriculum.

This course is designed to be taught in 12 lessons, ideally in 2 hours of in-class instruction and with approximately 2.5 hours homework each week. However, it is possible to teach the course in 10 weeks by omitting the review lessons (Lesson 8 and 12). To achieve the kind of undistracted focus and academic rigor that maximizes learning, we recommend that this course be taught as a weeknight class. We anticipate, however, that this curriculum might be adapted for a Sunday school, small group, or discipleship setting. If this is necessary or most appropriate, we urge you to establish an expectation among your students that this course will require more concentration and commitment than a typical Sunday school class would. A tone of serious and earnest study should be set by the instructor before the course even begins.

### *First Lesson*

Before the first class session, you will need to decide when and where this course will be offered. Record this information on the syllabus in the box labeled: "Course Information." You may also want to include your contact information in this box. The schedule incorporated in the syllabus does not have assigned dates. Please write the intended dates for each lesson in the corresponding box. Once you have completed filling out the syllabus, photocopy it so that you



may distribute one copy to each student enrolled in the course. The Student's Workbook does not include a syllabus, so your students will not have a syllabus until you distribute one. The syllabus is the only photocopying that is required of you by this curriculum.

During the first lesson, we recommend the following outline to structure your time:

- ▷ **Welcome / Prayer** (5 min): Greet the students as they arrive. Open the lesson by exalting God in prayer.
- ▷ **Personal Introductions** (20 min): Ask each student in the room to briefly introduce themselves by answering the following questions (and answer these questions yourself): What is your name? Can you tell the class a little about yourself? Why are you enrolled in this course and what are you hoping to gain from it?
- ▷ **Syllabus and Workbook Review** (25 min): Distribute your customized course syllabus and then guide the class through it, reading each item and answering any questions that the students might have.
- ▷ **Break** (5 min)
- ▷ **The Life-Shaping Power of Story** (60 min): Guide the class through Lesson 1. In preparation, you should attempt to answer the questions yourself before consulting the suggested answers in the Instructor's Guide. After allowing a few minutes for the students to answer each question, pause to discuss their answers. Then move on to the next question.
- ▷ **Overview of next week / Closing** (5 min): Ensure that they understand what is required of them in preparation for the next class session. Then thank them for coming to the class and dismiss in prayer.

As the instructor, you will be expected to do all the preparation for each lesson that is required of the students and more. We strongly recommend that you obtain a Student's Workbook and attempt to complete the homework on your own before consulting this Instructor's Guide. The Instructor's Guide provides our suggested answers. Some questions in this curriculum are open-ended and could be answered in different ways. You may find that the answers contained in this manual may not be the clearest or most accurate answers possible. Therefore we encourage you to improve upon our answers if you can. It is essential to understand that this Instructor's Guide is meant to be a resource; feel free to adapt the material for your own needs.

Furthermore, we have deliberately omitted lesson outlines for Lessons 2-12.

### *Subsequent Lessons*

Our recommendation is to open the class in prayer and then immediately start to discuss the homework assignment. The discussion could then proceed through each day's study. The **Further Up and Further In** section is included at the end of each lesson is intended as optional additional study for students who have the time and interest to dig deeper into the content. We encourage you, as the instructor, to complete each Further Up and Further In section as part of your preparation.

You will notice that **the material in each lesson should provide you with much more material than you can cover in two hours of thoughtful interaction.** This is not a mistake in design and you should not feel obligated to provide the students with answers for every question. Rather, as the instructor, your responsibility should be to focus on areas where students have questions or interest.

You will also notice that the Instructor's Guide has material that is not included in the Student's Workbook in the form of Teaching Notes. Consult these notes after thoroughly reviewing the lesson.

### *Teaching Style*

It is our conviction that the best teachers foster an environment in the classroom which engages students. Adults learn by solving problems or by working through things that provoke curiosity or concern. Therefore, we discourage you from lecturing for the entire lesson. Although an instructor will constantly shape conversation, clarifying and correcting as needed, they will probably not talk for the majority of the lesson. This curriculum is meant to facilitate an investigation into biblical truth—an investigation that is shared by the instructor and the students. Therefore, we encourage you to adopt the posture of a “fellow-learner” who invites participation from everyone in the class.

It might surprise you how eager adults can be to share what they have learned in preparing for each lesson. Therefore, you should invite participation by asking your students to share their discoveries. Here are some of our “tips” on facilitating discussion that is engaging and helpful:

- Don't be uncomfortable with silence initially. Once the first student shares their response, others will be likely to join in. If you cut the silence short by prompting the students, they are more likely to wait for you to prompt them every time.
- Affirm answers whenever possible and draw out the students by asking

for clarification. Your aim is to make them feel comfortable sharing their ideas and learning, so be extremely hesitant to “shut down” a student’s contribution or “trump” it with your own. This does not mean, however, that you shouldn’t correct false ideas—just do it in a spirit of gentleness and love.

- ▷ Don’t allow a single student or several students to dominate the discussion. Involve everyone and intentionally invite participation from those who are more reserved or hesitant.
- ▷ Labor to show the significance of their study. Emphasize the things that the students could not have learned without doing the homework.
- ▷ Avoid talking too much. The instructor should not monopolize the discussion, but rather guide and shape it. If the instructor does the majority of the talking, the students will be less likely to interact and engage, and will therefore not learn as much. Avoid constantly adding the “definitive last word.”
- ▷ The instructor should feel the freedom to linger on a topic or question if the group demonstrates interest. The instructor should also pursue digressions that are helpful and at least somewhat relevant. The instructor, however, should attempt to cover the material. So avoid the extreme of constantly wandering off topic, but also avoid the extreme of limiting the conversation in a way that squelches curiosity or learning.
- ▷ The instructor’s passion, or lack of it, is infectious. Therefore, if you demonstrate little enthusiasm for the material, it is almost inevitable that your students will likewise be bored. But if you have a genuine excitement for what you are studying, and if you truly think systematic theology is worthwhile, your class will be impacted positively. Therefore, it is our recommendation that before you come to class, you spend adequate time working through the homework and praying so that you can overflow with genuine enthusiasm for the Bible and for God in class. This point cannot be stressed enough. Delight yourself in God and in his Word!

It may be necessary to again stress that **this curriculum is a resource**. As the instructor, you should feel the freedom to structure the class time and to discuss through the material in a way that promotes the maximum learning and enjoyment of your students. Lingering on certain questions, pursuing helpful digressions, examining relevant portions of Scripture, adding other supplemental material, and customizing the curriculum to fit your situation are all heartily approved.

*Questions or Comments?*

If you still have questions after reading this introduction and surveying the curriculum, you may contact Bethlehem College & Seminary at [info@bcmn.edu](mailto:info@bcmn.edu). We are also eager for your comments and suggestions!



## Exploring Aslan's Country: *Growing in Godliness by Breathing Narnian Air*

### SYLLABUS

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#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

*The Chronicles of Narnia* are some of the most beloved children's books of all time. But are they really just for children? Or is there more in Narnia than meets the eye? This twelve-week course will examine *The Chronicles* book by book as powerful stories designed to shape the hearts and minds of their readers. In the process, we will explore C.S. Lewis' motivation for writing *The Chronicles*, as well as probe the connections between *The Chronicles* and Lewis' other writings. From characters to plot, from symbolism to structure, we will seek to 'breathe the air' of Narnia in hopes of both contemplating and enjoying the Christ-saturated world conceived by Lewis. Our goal will be to heed the words of Aslan: "This was the very reason you were brought into Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you might know me better there."

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, we will seek to:

- ▷ understand the origins of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.
- ▷ wrestle with Lewis' goal for *The Chronicles*, especially in relation to his view of education and spiritual formation.
- ▷ explore the layers of meaning within each Chronicle and *The Chronicles* as a whole.
- ▷ critically examine Michael Ward's provocative thesis regarding the unity of *The Chronicles*.
- ▷ know Aslan better in Narnia, in hopes of knowing Christ better in our world.

#### REQUIRED BOOKS

- ▷ C.S. Lewis. *The Chronicles of Narnia*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.
- ▷ Michael Ward. *The Narnia Code: C.S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2010.
- ▷ Joe Rigney. *Live Like a Narnian: Christian Discipleship in Lewis' Chronicles*. Mpls, MN: Eyes & Pen Press, 2013.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- ▷ Douglas Wilson. *What I Learned in Narnia*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2010.
- ▷ Michael Ward. *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- ▷ C.S. Lewis. *The Abolition of Man*. HarperOne, 2009.
- ▷ C.S. Lewis. *The Discarded Image*. Cambridge University Press; Reprint edition 2012.
- ▷ C.S. Lewis. *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. HarperOne; HarperCollins REV ed. edition (March 2001).
- ▷ C.S. Lewis. *On Stories*. HarperOne; Reissue edition (February 14, 2017).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A person will pass this class if they:

- ▷ Attend 10 of 12 classes.
- ▷ Complete 80% of the assigned reading.
- ▷ Complete the Exploring Aslan's Country Student Workbook.

## SCHEDULE

Lesson	Date	Lesson Title
1		The Life-Shaping Power of Story
2		Narnia: Origins and Aims
3		Is There a Narnia Code?
4		The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe
5		Prince Caspian
6		The Voyage of the Dawn Treader
7		The Silver Chair
8		Review
9		The Horse and His Boy
10		The Magician's Nephew
11		The Last Battle
12		Summary and Review

# The Life-Shaping Power of Story

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# 1

## 🔗 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- ▷ begin to discuss whether it is right to read the Narnian stories for the sake of discipleship.
- ▷ describe what makes the Narnian stories so enjoyable to us.
- ▷ explore the ability of stories to shape and form us.

## 🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- ▷ introduce themselves and have opportunity to become comfortable sharing thoughts with each other and the class.
- ▷ read aloud and evaluate Peter Leithart's two articles.

## 🔗 ASSIGNED READING

- ▷ None.







The goal of this lesson is to introduce your students to each other and to help them become comfortable enough to share their thoughts with each other. Some students may be more shy, so use this class as an opportunity to draw them out as much as possible. The more comfortable they are sharing their thoughts, the better the discussions will be later in the course. At the same time, other students may be eager to talk and may see any quiet moments as further opportunity for them to give their thoughts. In order to draw everyone into the discussion, it may be helpful for you to ask non-threatening questions like, “Sally, what are your thoughts on this?”

One way to encourage group participation is to have the entire group read aloud the two short articles from Peter Leithart. Go around the group and have each person read a paragraph at a time. This can help students to become more comfortable speaking out in the discussion.

This lesson is also broader than the Narnian stories themselves, so feel free to let the discussion roam to other books, characters, or stories that have influenced them.

Finally, here are a number of additional quotations on the power of story to shape us. Feel free to bring these up in the discussion as ways to encourage further thoughts and reflections.



§ QUOTATIONS ON THE POWER OF STORY

*“When we are at a play, or looking at a painting or a statue, or reading a story, the imaginary work must have such an effect on us that it enlarges our own sense of reality.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“When we read the poem, or see the play or picture or hear the music, it is as though a light were turned on inside us. We say: ‘Ah! I recognize that! That is something which I obscurely felt to be going on in and about me, but I didn’t know what it was and couldn’t express it. But now that the artist has made its image—imaged it forth—from me, I can possess and take hold of it and make it my own, and turn it into a source of knowledge and strength.’”<sup>2</sup>*

*“As Booth points out, during the process of reading, the author through the book is promoting a particular ‘pattern of desire.’ A story encourages us to respond with a variety of emotions to characters and their situations. Readers hope that Darcy will propose to Elizabeth Bennet again, fear that the White Witch has triumphed over Aslan, and regard Kafka’s Gregor Samsa with an odd mixture of pity and laughter following his unexpected metamorphosis into a giant insect.*

*But such emotions can be rightly or wrongly directed. I have frequently had the experience of rooting for the protagonist in a movie, only to realize once the thrill was over that I had been rooting for a thief to escape, a murderer to get off, a wife successfully to betray her (inevitably oafish) husband so that she can be with her (gorgeous, if raffish) true love.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“There are many mysteries in trying to unravel how reading shapes the self... Mimesis or imitation is one of the fundamental realities in the formation of the self. Children learn language, manners, gestures, parenting (!), and a host of*

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1 Excerpt from *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* by Madeleine L’Engle, copyright © 1980, 1998, 2001 by Crosswicks, Ltd.. Used by permission of Convergent Books, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

2 Sayers, Dorothy. “Towards a Christian Aesthetic”. Originally published in *Unpopular Opinions*, London, 1946.

3 Peter Leithart, “Authors, Authority, and the Humble Reader” in *The Christian Imagination*, ed. Leland Ryken (New York, NY: Shaw Books, 2002).

*other habits and passions from their parents, without either parents or children putting much conscious effort into it. And the dance of mimesis does not end with childhood: Disciples become like their masters, soldiers are molded by their commander, and college basketball players (and many flabby former players) aspire to 'be like Mike.' It is absurd to suggest that fictional characters, whom most readers know more intimately than they know their own parents, do not have a similar effect. Earlier critics took it for granted that literature, an imitation of life, presents models for imitation to the reader.”<sup>4</sup>*

*“In fiction, metaphor is extended to character and story, and this kind of extended metaphor shapes the reader by shaping his self-perceptions. Metaphor embraces mimesis, and we begin to ‘see ourselves as.’ We imagine ourselves embarked on a pilgrimage to the Celestial City, and start sniffing around for Vanity Fairs and Pliables. Or, we see our own courtship as a ‘taming of the shrew’ or ‘much ado about nothing.’ Or, we hear of a compassionate foreigner who cared for a man fallen among thieves, and go and do likewise. We seek meaning in life by seeking to discern a narrative shape, and the stories we read provide metaphorical models for understanding the story that God is telling us.”<sup>5</sup>*

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4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.



## STUDY GUIDE

Follow up questions might include: “If you’ve read The Chronicles before, what questions did you have as you tried to make sense of their unity or themes?”  
OR “What critiques of The Chronicles as valuable literature have you heard or read?”

Spend some time exploring this question with the group. Don’t worry about correcting opinions on this question. The goal is to get the group comfortable discussing and talking about the books.

Again, the goal is simply to get the students talking with each other. One of the things that will make later group discussions fruitful is that the people in the group are used to engaging with each other about what they love about the books.

1. Why are you participating in this study of The Chronicles of Narnia? What do you hope to get out of it?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

2. What questions or issues do you hope to explore in this course? Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary. Attempt to draw out questions from the group.*

3. The course’s sub-title is “Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles.” Do you think it’s faithful to Lewis’ intention to read the Narnian stories in order to become a more faithful Christian? Why or why not? If yes, what do you think it means for us to read the stories in order to be disciplined by them?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

4. If you have read the Narnian stories before, what have you enjoyed the most about them? Are there particular books, characters, scenes, or quotations that you love? Share them with the others.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Read the following short essays by Peter Leithart and discuss the questions that follow.

*For Christians, the question at a certain level answers itself. We read because we are people of the book, the people of Moses, David, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Matthew, Paul, and John. We read because in reading we encounter the God who is Word. Christians extend this argument easily to “edifying” reading. If we must read the Bible, then we also, it seems, have all good reason to read theology, church history, lives of the saints, devotional guides, Bunyan, always Bunyan. No one raises a protest when a Christian sits down with a serious tome (and, frankly, are tomes ever frivolous?).*

*It’s sometimes a different story when the question “Why read?” means “Why should we read poetry, or fiction, or drama, or screenplays?” Ask that question, and you may get, at best, a blank stare, and at worst a harangue on the dangers of imagination. The more orthodox your interlocutor, the more likely you’ll get the harangue rather than the stare.*

*Few Christians are self-conscious Platonists, but we are often instinctive Platonists, suspicious of imagination, fearful that fiction will distract them from the serious business of Christian living, worried about getting caught up in fictions that are no more than images of images. With so many things to pray for, so many unbelievers to evangelize, so much of the Bible still obscure and almost unintelligible – how can a Christian justify spending time with the likes of Dickens and Dostoevsky, not to mention Nabakov or Updike?*

*My defense of reading here and in a second essay is this: We read fiction and poetry for “pictures” and to make new “friends.”*

*One of the perennial debates at our family dinner table revolves around the classic scholastic question, “Is Mickey Mouse real?” I have debated this question with my children for years. The youngest of them think they know the answer: “Of course not, Daddy,” they say with a scoff. I have always argued strenuously in the affirmative, and as my children have grown they have come to see the wisdom of*

**“Why Read? Part I”**  
by Peter Leithart

*my position and bowed to the weighty conclusiveness of my arguments.*

*At times, I approach the question by asking whether the children think that “Mickey” is his real name or a stage name, or what Mickey does on his weekends, or whether he grimly smokes cigarettes and listens to the blues while drinking whiskey and bitterly remembering the glory days (Ahh, Steamboat Willie!) in dusky bars on lonely Saturday nights.*

*Those whimsies distract from the real force of the question, which is trickier than it might appear. When I ask “Is Mickey Mouse real?” I am not asking whether he is a real mouse, or whether he has an existence separate from the cartoons in which he appears, whether he had a sad childhood. I’m asking whether he has the sort of reality appropriate to a cartoon character. I’m asking whether or not Mickey has an objectively real presence in the world of entertainment, cartoons, movies, lunch boxes, and Disney Store stuffed animals. To that question, the answer is obviously Yes. Mickey is as real as it gets. Fictional characters and fictional events have the same sort of objective reality as Mickey Mouse, and they can have substantial effects on what we mistakenly think of as the “real world.”*

*We cannot know for sure whether or not Achilles ever existed, but even if he did, the influence of Achilles has been entirely the influence of the fictional Achilles. That influence has been huge. It was the fictional Achilles who inspired Alexander the Great. Alexander believed he was actually descended from Achilles through his mother (and from Herakles through his father’s family), yet all his information about Achilles came from Homer’s epic, and he grew up dreaming of accomplishing deeds and winning fame like the great Homeric hero.*

*One of Alexander’s boyhood teachers called Alexander “Achilles.” He saw his early crusade against Persia as a second Trojan war. On the way east, he stopped at Ilium to offer sacrifices at the supposed tombs of Achilles and Ajax, while he and his bosom friend Hephaestion laid wreaths on the purported tombs of Achilles and his bosom friend Patroclus. Curtius Rufus, a first-century Roman historian, wrote that after Alexander conquered Gaza, he dragged the city’s ruler around the city as Achilles had done with the body of Hector: “straps were drawn through his ankles while he was yet alive, and horses dragged him tied to the chariot around the city, while the king gloried that he was imitating Achilles, whose descendant he claimed to be.” One of Alexander’s modern biographers, Peter Green, calls Achilles “Alexander’s hero.”*

*Abraham Lincoln credited Harriet Beecher Stowe with causing the Civil War, not because people mistook Uncle Tom’s Cabin for journalism but because they believed*

Stowe's fictionalization of slavery got to the truth of the institution. On the other hand, Mark Twain – playfully, but with the serious edge of all playfulness – once blamed Walter Scott for the Civil War, suggesting that Scott's stories of medieval chivalry filled Southern heads with ridiculous notions of honor and the glory of combat. Dickens did much to create the image we have of a home as a “haven in a heartless world,” his Christmas stories have given many pictures of what the holidays should look like, and his attacks on industrialism and the factory system had an enormous effect on real-life attitudes and probably on government policies. How many people are sad at Christmas because their Christmas is not sufficiently Dickensian?

Parables often have a very specific picture-forming function. The Bible's parables are often stories designed to unsettle and overturn the way that the hearer pictures himself, and also to offer an alternative self-image for the hearer. The Pharisees who complained about Jesus' table companions did not think of themselves as surly older brothers. But that's the picture of them in the “Prodigal Son” parable (Luke 15).

Fictional characters, fictional events, fictional places implant pictures in our heads, or present pictures to our eyes and ears. Fictions can paint pictures of worlds that attract us, and if the attraction is strong enough those pictures evoke a desire to realize that world. They might also plant pictures of worlds that repel us, and evoke a response of “Never.”

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Character is shaped by what I've called “pictures,” by the models that we strive to imitate and the worlds we attempt to bring into being. But so what? Who needs pictures? Why can't we deal with reality?

## “Why Read? Part II” by Peter Leithart

In fact, we all live out of pictures, images, models, and metaphors all the time. Pictures of an ideal marriage shape our aspirations and actions, and pictures of an ideal career can inspire hard work and perseverance. Some of these pictures come from real-life acquaintances and experiences. But not all. All of us have been shaped by living role models, people we admire and seek to imitate, and knowing fictional characters and worlds adds to the store of models that we have, models to imitate and to avoid.

Character, in short, is shaped by imagination and also by the company we keep, by our associations and friends. St. Paul knew that “bad company corrupts good morals.” Our bumpings-up against other people are not like the bumpings-up of one

*billiard ball against another. We can be radically changed by bumping against the right, or the wrong people.*

*It is a myth, and a destructive one, that each of us is a hard little atom of humanity rolling about independently of everyone and everything around us. We recognize that we are affected by people around us, but live under the delusion that those connections don't change the real me, the me nestled within the hard outer shell of my life. This is an absurd way of thinking about life. Consider speech. Our accent and our use of language are among the most distinctive things about us. We know each other by our voices.*

*I have many friends in the South whose accents identify them by their region, and while living in England I learned to distinguish different accents from various shires. Yet, those Southerners who talk funny do so because their Mommas and Daddies did. The Northumberlanders who are known by their accents didn't make up their own patterns of speech, but inherited them.*

*Now, fiction is a kind of keeping company with other people. Reading a novel involves making a set of friends (or enemies). In fact, we get to know fictional characters better than we know many of our closest friends. Only the most intimate of companions share their thoughts as fully as Hamlet, Emma Woodhouse, or Sidney Carton.*

*We cannot be simplistic about these things. Characters in fiction are not presented to us as people come to us in the real world. In the real world, we experience and notice what Providence brings to us. But the fictional world, and fictional characters, are always filtered to us through a narrator, the author or a fictional speaker through whom the author writes. We think we're learning a lot about Emma or Elizabeth Bennet, but of course we're only learning what Austen chooses to show us. As Wayne Booth points out, if we were looking at Emma from another perspective than her own, if we saw her through the eyes of Harriet Smith or Mr. Elton, for example, we'd see a spoiled butt-insky who was not nearly so innocent or endearing as the character we know. Because we see things through Emma's eyes, we have a particular angle on the whole story, and see only what the author wants us to see. Tom Stoppard has experimented with this in his absurdist version of Hamlet, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and John Updike does something similar by telling the pre-history of Hamlet in his novel *Gertrude and Claudius*.*



*These contemporary writers enable us to see the backside of characters whose front sides were shown in the original works.*

*Remembering the mediating role of author and narrator is important for Christians who object to their children reading books about unsavory characters. If the narrator directs the reader's attention to the unsavoriness of the unsavory character, then we are actually being trained in wisdom and virtue by reading the book. We're learning to taste unsavoriness when we encounter it in life.*

*Still, bad company corrupts good morals here as well, even if the company is fictional, and Christian readers are right in their instinct to prevent readers, especially immature ones, from being exposed to the wrong kind of fictional company. But it also means that fictional company can extend our experience. If growing up with Southerners encourages us to speak Southern, growing up with Othello and Pip, Alyosha and Tom Sawyer will shape our speech, and our character, in enriching ways.*

*None of us escapes the influence of fictional pictures or fictional friends. Imagination is not something we can take or leave. Our thoughts and actions, and our character, are always guided and shaped by some form of imagination. The issue is always whether our imagination is richly or poorly stocked, whether it is shaped by nightmares or molded by dreams. The issue is whether our imaginations are stuffed with pictures drawn from the M-TV or pictures drawn from Melville, whether we make fictional friends at the cinema or meet them in Shakespeare.*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CLASS: Questions 5–7 will be discussed in class after reading Leithart’s articles.

Ask the members of the group if they can think of particular stories or movies that have shaped the way they view the world. Are there particular scenes or places that they really wish were true? Ask students if they agree with Leithart’s assessment that “unsavory characters” can teach us wisdom. When have you read stories where this is done well or poorly? You might also ask if there are particular “unsavory characters” in Narnia or other stories that provide the anti-model, the person not to emulate.

5. According to Leithart, what is the first reason that we should read fiction, poetry, drama, and screenplays? Do you agree with him?

• **ANSWER.** *Leithart says that literature gives us pictures of the world which can either draw us in or push us away. They shape and form our expectations and desires for the world in which we live, in some cases deeply affecting our actions (as in the case of Alexander).*

6. “Fiction is a kind of keeping company with other people.” What does Leithart mean by this? How would this apply to reading the Narnian stories?

• **ANSWER.** *Literature introduces us to new friends, characters that we come to know intimately and that can influence us in subtle but profound ways. If we spend time with and come to admire immoral characters, then we are likely to become immoral ourselves (in the same way that we would if we had actual immoral friends). The reverse is true as well. In terms of Narnia, we can become better people by emulating worthy characters like Peter, Lucy, Caspian, and Lune.*

7. Are there any other ways that stories shape us? Give examples, if you have them.

• **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

# Narnia: Origins and Aims

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# 2

## 📖 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- ▷ explore the origins of the Narnian Chronicles.
- ▷ differentiate between allegory and ‘supposal’.
- ▷ discuss Lewis’ critique of modern education.

## 📖 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- ▷ demonstrate the ability to distinguish between an allegory and a ‘supposal’ by identify each or providing examples of each.
- ▷ discuss the seven stages of Lewis critique of modern education as described in Joe Rigney’s article.
- ▷ recognize that we are justified in intentionally reading the Narnian stories for edification, encouragement, sanctification, and discipleship.

## 📖 ASSIGNED READING

- ▷ “Learning to Breathe Narnian Air” in *Live Like a Narnian* by Joe Rigney.



Parts of this lesson may feel very complicated to the students, especially the section on *The Abolition of Man*. Because of this, it will be helpful for you to read *The Abolition of Man* in its entirety and mark key passages that can help your students understand Rigney's summary. At the same time, don't get bogged down in the details of that book; it is not necessary to master Lewis' vision of education in order to be educated by the Narnian stories. The bottom line is that Lewis' understanding of education is essentially what we would call 'discipleship' today. Here are number of quotations that may help to make this point.

*It's All in Plato*

*"In the Republic, the well-nurtured youth is one 'who would see most clearly whatever was amiss in ill-made works of man or ill-grown works of nature, and with a just distaste would blame and hate the ugly even from his earliest years and would give delighted praise to beauty, receiving into his soul and being nourished by it, so that he becomes a man of gentle heart. All this before he is of an age to reason; so that when Reason at length comes to him, then, bred as he has been, he will hold out his hands in welcome and recognize her because of the affinity he bears to her.'" (Abolition of Man, p.29)*

*Moral Education*

*"Moral education does not look much like teaching. One cannot have classes in it. It involves the inculcation of proper emotional responses and is as much a 'knowing how' as a 'knowing that'...The picture we get when we think of a 'knowing how' is the apprentice working with the master. And the inculcation of right emotional responses will take place only if the youth has around him examples of men and women for whom such responses have become natural...Lewis, like Aristotle, believes that moral principles are learned indirectly from others around us, who serve as exemplars...This is also the clue to understanding the place of the Chronicles of Narnia within Lewis' thought. They are not just good stories...Rather, they serve to enhance moral education, to build character..." (Gilber Meilaender, *The Taste for the Other*, pp 212–213)*

*Discipleship and Education*

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,*

*Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:18–20)*

The essays from *On Stories* that are listed in the “Further Up and Further In” section provide more background on how Lewis came to write the stories. They may be of assistance if you choose to spend time discussing whether fairy tales are appropriate for both children and adults. They also can put away some simplistic notions about how Lewis came to write the stories and how they differ from allegories like Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Your main goal should be to help your students recognize that we are justified in intentionally reading the Narnian stories for edification, encouragement, sanctification, and discipleship.



## Day 1

Read “Learning to Breathe Narnian Air” and answer the following questions.

1. According to Lewis, where did the idea for the Narnian Chronicles come from?

- **ANSWER.** *The Narnian stories began as images that bubbled up in Lewis’ mind. As these images bubbled, they began to form themselves into a story, and then Lewis began to consciously shape them into the form that he wanted.*

2. How does Joe Rigney suggest we view the Narnian stories? What use can we make of them? How does the shaping power of Narnia relate to the Scriptures?

- **ANSWER.** *Rigney argues that we ought to view the Narnian stories as components of Christian discipleship. They are equivalent to other forms of edification and encouragement such as devotional books, theological books, sermons, and small group accountability. Rigney argues that the Narnian stories were intended by both God and C.S. Lewis to accomplish this purpose.*

When discussing answers, it may be helpful to read the “Moral Education” quote by Gilbert Meilaender

## Day 2

3. What is the difference between an allegory and a ‘supposal’? Why are the Narnian stories not allegories?

- **ANSWER.** *An allegory takes an invisible reality in our world (like love or depression) and gives it a physical or concrete depiction (such as Cupid or a Giant). A supposal imagines another, secondary world and then asks what it would have been like for events that really happened in our world (like the Incarnation of the Son of God) to happen in that world. The key difference is that allegories keep us in this world, whereas supposals take us*

For an example of an allegory written by Lewis, see *The Pilgrim’s Regress* in which Lewis imitates but modernizes Bunyan’s allegory by creating a fictional character who travels the philosophical landscape of 20th century Europe.

*into another world. The Narnian stories aren't allegories, because most of the action takes place through the wardrobe in Narnia, not in England.*

4. How does Lewis respond to those who think that fairy stories are unsuitable for children? Why are 'realistic' stories in some ways more fraught with danger? Have you ever experienced the sort of danger that Lewis describes?

- **ANSWER.** *Realistic stories are more "unreal" (and dangerous) because they can give children the false impression that things that happen in the story will necessarily happen in real life. On the other hand, children quickly learn that the events of fairy stories happen in an imaginary world, and therefore they are able to distinguish the positive characteristics that they can learn from in the fairy story from the fictional events that surround them.*

5. What are the two types of fears that Lewis describes?

- **ANSWER.** *The first type of fear is a paralyzing phobia, as when a child is inconsolably terrified of something. No one wants to stoke such fears in children. The second kind is fear of actual dangers in the real world (death, pain, etc). Fairy stories help children to deal with both because alongside the dangers and fears of the fairy world, they also show bravery, courage, and endurance. They ennoble the imagination of children so that they are able to fight back against the terrors of the night.*

See the Lesson 2 Teaching Notes for additional quotations along these lines.

6. How does Lewis respond to those who think fairy tales are only suitable for children (and therefore, adults who read and enjoy them are being childish)?

- **ANSWER.** *Lewis argues that growing up involves the addition of loves and delights, not mainly the replacement of loves and delights. Good fairy stories operate on multiple levels, and adults are able to appreciate more in the stories than even the children. There is no virtue in growing up and becoming so self-conscious about what others think that you cease to enjoy things that really are delightful. This is why we often describe the oldest and wisest people we know as "young at heart."*

### Day 3

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7. Rigney summarizes Lewis' critique of modern education in *The Abolition of Man* in seven stages. List the seven stages, along with any questions or confusions that you have about them.

· ANSWER.

- A1. *Marginalization of Value Statements.*
- A2. *Separation of Fact and Value.*
- A3. *Creation of 'Men Without Chests'.*
- A4. *Elevation of Instinct as an Ultimate Value.*
- A5. *Man's Attempt to Conquer Nature through Science and Technology.*
- A6. *The Tyranny of the Conditioners.*
- A7. *The Abolition of Man.*

8. According to Rigney, what are three key dimensions of Lewis' alternative vision of education? Note any questions or confusions you have about them.

- A8. *The Tao: there is a givenness to the world that should be acknowledged.*
- A9. *The Doctrine of Objective Value: things in the world have objective value, not just the value that we subjectively ascribe to them.*
- A10. *The Principle of Proportionate Regard: we should value things according to their value.*

### Day 4

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9. According to Rigney, how do the Narnian stories flow out of Lewis' vision of education? What biblical analogy does Rigney use to explain the relationship between Narnia and Jesus?

· ANSWER. *The Narnian stories are Lewis' attempt to show children Truth, Goodness, and Beauty (and their opposites), so that children are shaped and molded by such pictures. The goal is that when they grow up, they will more readily embrace and accept the Truth, Goodness, and Beauty of the*



*gospel of Jesus Christ (in all of its glory) because they have been prepared. In this way, the Narnian stories are like John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus by raising up the valleys and laying low the mountains so that all flesh could see the glory of the Lord in the face of Christ.*

10. What ‘paralyzing inhibition’ does Lewis describe in the closing section of the essay? Have you experienced these types of inhibitions? How does fiction help us to “steal past the watchful dragons”? Do you agree with Lewis and Rigney on this point? What dangers might be present in using fiction in this way?

- **ANSWER.** *The ‘paralyzing inhibition’ is the inability to feel what we should about something (that is, to value things according to their value) because we know that we are supposed to feel something. The obligation has a strange way of killing the joy. The Narnian stories bypass this obligation because children (and adults) don’t read the stories with a sense that they must enjoy and delight in them. Instead, the joy and delight are spontaneous. This type of joy can then be transferred over to the things of God, once we recognize what Lewis is doing.*

Spend some time exploring this question with the students. Let them describe their own experience with paralyzing inhibitions and how they have sought to sneak past the watchful dragons.

## Day 5

Review the past week’s discussion and open the conversation to any questions that linger in the students’ minds or clarifications that need to be made.

### 🔗 FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ C.S. Lewis, “On Stories,” “On Three Ways of Writing for Children,” “Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What’s to Be Said” in *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1986).
- ▷ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996).



# Is There a Narnia Code?

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# 3

## 🔗 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- examine Michael Ward's thesis about Lewis' aim in *The Chronicles*.
- seek to understand the basic features of medieval cosmology.
- attempt to connect each Chronicle to one of the planets of the medieval system.

## 🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- understand and articulate Ward's thesis about *The Chronicles*.
- be able to distinguish between what Lewis means by Enjoyment and Contemplation as well as astronomy and astrology.
- attempt to match each Narnian story with a specific medieval planet.

## 🔗 ASSIGNED READING

- Michael Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Chapters 1–3.





This lesson may be controversial to some students. They may doubt whether Lewis would write the stories to express the qualities associated with the medieval planets. Help such students to keep an open mind; they don't have to be persuaded by Ward, but they should at least try to hear him out. What's more, stress that Ward's planetary argument is not in any way at odds with the Christian meaning of the stories. If anything, it strengthens it by providing another layer of unity in the stories.

The point of Question 1 is to help students put into words the distinctive characteristics of each story. Obviously, this question only applies to those that are already familiar with the stories. The hope would be that some of the qualities that they intuitively associate with each story would match up with Lewis' understanding of the planets as expressed in his poem.

Pay careful attention to some of Ward's qualifications in Chapter 3. His positive portrayal of "astrology" may not sit well with some. Help them to see the difference between what Ward is describing and the modern, pagan practices that the Bible (and Lewis and Ward) reject.

Lewis' essay "On Stories" (mentioned in the previous chapter) is particularly helpful in understanding the importance Lewis placed on the atmosphere of a story. It is this qualitative element that has the power to shape us in subtle yet profound ways. Spend some time reflecting on the difference between Enjoyment and Contemplation, between 'looking along' and 'looking at' the beam of sunlight.



## § STUDY GUIDE

### Day 1

Try to answer Question 1 before reading Ward.

1. Write down seven words or phrases that capture the mood or tone of each of the Narnian Chronicles (seven words per Chronicle). In other words, when you think of each *Chronicle*, what words or phrases or emotions come to mind?

· *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe.*

· *Prince Caspian.*

· *Voyage of the Dawn Treader.*

· *The Silver Chair.*

· *The Horse and His Boy.*

· *The Magician's Nephew.*

· *The Last Battle.*

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

### Day 2

Read Chapter 1 in *The Narnia Code* and answer Questions 2–4.

2. List some of the ‘oddities’ that Ward mentions in Chapter 1. Are there other aspects of the stories that puzzle you? Are there particular

It would be helpful to mention this question at the end of lesson 2 and encourage students to really spend some time thinking about their answers. Encourage them to think in imaginative and aesthetic categories.

Spend some time drawing out things that have puzzled the students in the book. Ward's thesis may help to explain a number of them, so it's best to get them out on the table early.

plots, events, or characters that don't seem to 'fit' with the Christian symbolism?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

3. According to Ward, why should we look for some kind of unity amidst all of the oddities of the Narnian stories? Why is it unlikely that the stories truly are a “jumble” (as some critics allege)? Give specific reasons.

· **ANSWER.** *Ward argues that Lewis was a very careful and logical thinker who was known for his academic rigor. It would be uncharacteristic of him to write something in a slap-dash, hodge-podge fashion. Ward also points out that Lewis admired medieval and Renaissance writers who wrote complex literary works that had a deep unity underneath the surface. He loved stories that at first looked planless, though all is planned. Finally, Lewis' poetry evidences that he was capable of writing intricate and complex poems that showed a deep attention to detail.*

4. Why is the idea of a secret code for the Narnian stories not far-fetched? According to Ward, why would Lewis keep such a secret?

· **ANSWER.** *Lewis had a fondness for secrecy, writing under pen names and getting married without telling anyone. He also valued literary secrecy since it allowed those who took the time to notice the intricate details to see the deep unity, while “those outside” were kept in the dark..*

### *Day 3*

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Read Chapter 2 in *The Narnia Code* and answer Questions 5–9.

5. According to Lewis and Ward, what is the difference between Enjoyment and Contemplation? Give examples of the difference.

· **ANSWER.** *Enjoyment is the knowledge that we have of an experience when we are experiencing it. It is knowing something from the inside, as when we know what laughter is through the act of laughing, or pain in the midst of pain. Contemplation is the knowledge we have when we step*

*outside of our experience to consider it more abstractly. We put distance between ourselves and the experience so that we can see it in a different light. For example, at a party we enjoy the experience of the company and conversation of friends, delicious food, and perhaps an intriguing game. This is Enjoyment. However, it is not until the next day or later that week when we reflect back and recall how good the food was or what a delightful conversation we had that we begin to know through Contemplation. Both types of knowledge are valuable, but it is important that we don't equate them.*

6. What is the central point of Lewis' "Meditation in a Toolshed" and "The Man Born Blind"? Why might this be relevant for the Narnian stories?

You may have questions here about whether Contemplating the Narnian stories in this course or by reading Ward's book destroys our ability to enjoy the stories by "looking along." Read Joe Rigney's "A Word to the Reader" in which he describes how "stories are irreducibly stories" and yet defends the value of Contemplating the stories.

- **ANSWER.** *The central point is that "light is not something you see; it's something you see by." We know light mainly through Enjoyment, through "looking along" it so that we see everything else. We don't spend most of our time trying to "look at" light in Contemplation. This is relevant for the Narnian stories because Ward will argue that Lewis is trying to help us to Enjoy something rather than merely Contemplate it. He wants us to immerse ourselves and "breathe" a certain kind of air, rather than read mere descriptions of the qualities and objects that Lewis wants us to enjoy and be shaped by.*

7. According to Ward, what is the most challenging aspect of trying to write a story "about Christ"? What does Lewis mean when he writes that God "walks everywhere incognito"?

For further insight read from Lewis' book *Letters to Malcom: Chiefly on Prayer* (San Diego: Harvest, 1964), p75.

- **ANSWER.** *It's very difficult to communicate the fact that "in Christ all things hold together." The Bible teaches that Christ is the integration point of all of reality, that we live and move and have our being in God. God is everywhere present, and he communicates and reveals himself in everything. This means that everywhere we look, we can "see" God.*

8. What does Lewis mean by "The Kappa Element in Romance?" Describe this "kappa" element in your own words? How does it help to explain why we re-read stories (or re-watch movies)? If we already know the



ending, why do we enjoy reading them again? Give an example of a story or movie that you feel this way about.

- **ANSWER.** *“The Kappa Element in Romance” means “The Hidden Element in Stories.” It refers to the quality or atmosphere of the story, the almost unspoken ambience that is present through an author’s descriptions. It’s the “feel” of a story, which the author often creates through implicit descriptions, through “describing around” something so that the reader fills in the gaps in his imagination. It is this hidden element that accounts for our desire to re-read stories after we know the ending.*

9. After reading these first two chapters, do you think that it’s possible, likely, or impossible that Lewis embedded a secret layer of meaning within the Narnian stories? Explain your answer.

- **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

For more on this, see Lewis’ essay entitled “On Stories.”

At this point in the lesson make sure any students who flatly reject Ward’s thesis do so with an open mind. It may be helpful to ask them if they think Ward’s thesis is in any at odds with Christian meaning of the stories.

## Day 4

Read Chapter 3 in *The Narnia Code* and answer questions 10–13.

10. List the seven planets of the medieval heavens and note which day of the week they are linked with.

- A1. *Luna/Moon – Monday*
- A2. *Mercury – Wednesday*
- A3. *Venus – Friday*
- A4. *Sol/Sun – Sunday*
- A5. *Mars – Tuesday*
- A6. *Jupiter/Jove – Thursday*
- A7. *Saturn – Saturday*

11. Compare and contrast the medieval view of the heavens to our modern view of outer space. What does the older view have that our new perspective lacks?

· **ANSWER.** *Medieval men felt that the heavens were an organized cosmos, almost like a cathedral. When they looked up, they felt that they were looking into the heavens, and that the heavens were inhabited by angelic beings that governed the wandering planets. We moderns feel as though we are looking out into outer space, and that space is empty, black, and chaotic.*

12. According to Ward and Lewis, what did medieval man mean by “astrology?” How does it differ from modern astrology? What types of astrology were forbidden? According to Ward, what is a possible modern equivalent to the influence of the stars?

· **ANSWER.** *Astrology was the study of the stars. It was not mainly concerned with horoscopes; in fact, for Christians, such fortune-telling was forbidden. Instead, astrologers studied the “influence” of the stars on people, events, and the earth, much in the same way that geneticists study our genes to find out how they influence us.*

13. Lewis thought that the characters of the medieval planets have “a permanent value as spiritual symbols.” What does he mean by this?

· **ANSWER.** *Certain qualities were associated with each planet, and these qualities were valuable for us to know and be shaped by. Thus, the planets could have enduring value, even if our understanding of the cosmos has changed since the middle ages. We can still be influenced and shaped by these qualities through the planetary symbols.*

## Day 5

Read Appendix A: “The Planets” and answer Questions 14–15.

14. As you read Lewis’ poetic meditation on the medieval planets, attempt to match each planet with a corresponding Narnian story. (Attempt to match the stories on your own without consulting Ward’s chapters).

· ANSWER.

- A1. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* – Jove
- A2. *Prince Caspian* – Mars
- A3. *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* – Sol/Sun
- A4. *The Silver Chair* – Moon/Luna
- A5. *The Horse and His Boy* – Mercury
- A6. *The Magician’s Nephew* – Venus
- A7. *The Last Battle* – Saturn

15. Write down any additional questions that you have about Ward’s overall thesis.

It may be helpful to read each section of the poem aloud and then have the students give their answers. Let them give their own reasons for their matches.

## § FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ C.S. Lewis, “The Heavens” in *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- ▷ C.S. Lewis, “Imagination and Thought in the Middle Ages” in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- ▷ Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “A Word to the Reader” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.



# The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe

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# 4

## 📖 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- ▶ explore the layers of meaning in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*.
- ▶ examine the character and quality of Jove and how Lewis shapes it into a story.
- ▶ seek to breathe Narnian air and thus become Jovial ourselves.

## 📖 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- ▶ summarize the plot and describe the characters in *The Lion*.
- ▶ identify at least three specific examples of the Jovial character in *The Lion*.
- ▶ discuss their agreement and disagreement with Ward's analysis.
- ▶ reflect on how *The Lion* can assist in becoming Jovial themselves.

## 📖 ASSIGNED READING

- ▶ *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
- ▶ Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 4.





The remaining lessons will not include answers to each question. Ward's chapters should assist you as you explore the connections between the planets and the books, as well as the main plot, sub-plots, and the depiction of Aslan. As you work through the questions, invite the students to share their own reflections on the books, including their agreement or disagreement with Ward. Also, feel free to deviate from the planetary themes and focus on key characters or scenes from the books. The Teaching Notes will mention a number of possibilities that you as the instructor may choose to explore. You may wish to have these ideas in mind as you read the book, so that you're able to mark particular passages for discussion.

- I. Compare and contrast the values and effects of Aslan and the White Witch. The Witch brings winter without celebration or joy (no Christmas), whereas Aslan brings Father Christmas, spring, and festivity. Highlight specific examples of this contrast throughout the book. How does Jesus embody this same emphasis on new life and festivity?

Key passages for this contrast are seen early in the book. First, the White Witch's reign is emphasized with the phrase "always winter and never Christmas" (23, 42, 57, 98). Second, Aslan brings an atmospheric change at the end of chapter 11 and beginning of chapter 12. Take the students to those places to contrast the Witch & Aslan.

Also see *Planet Narnia*, 58 and Joe Rigney's Chapter 2 "The Witch's War on Joy" in *Live Like a Narnian*.

- II. The climax of the story centers on Deep Magic and Deeper Magic. Spend some time reflecting on the difference between them. Do these two types of 'Magic' exist in our world?

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 1 "Deep Magic, and Deeper" for further insight.

- III. Trace the transformation of Edmund throughout the story. Notice how his actions at the beginning of the story. How does his trajectory affect his experience in Narnia? What does his encounter with the Witch do to his sinful tendencies? How does it affect his relationship with his siblings? What lessons can we learn from Edmund about the importance of our character and the reality of grace?

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 3 "We Will Be Who We Are Becoming" for further insight.

- IV. How is Aslan introduced to the readers and the children in the story? How does Lewis build anticipation for the revelation of Aslan? What emotions and responses do you think Lewis is trying to achieve? What was your reaction to the sacrifice of Aslan? Did it help you to "sneak past the watchful dragons" and see the death and resurrection of Jesus in a new light?

Aslan is first described as "King of the Beasts" to the children. Ward notes that Aslan is referred to as King in only two other books, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and *Horse and His Boy* (*Planet Narnia*, 60).



## STUDY GUIDE

The first goal of your reading is to immerse yourself in the books. Breathe Narnian air. Don't think mainly about analyzing the books. *Enjoy* them. And then, every now and again, come up for air, and try to answer the following questions. Try to answer all of the questions on your own *before* reading Ward.

### *Day 1 – Day 3*

Enjoy reading *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Be sure to highlight the climax at the Stone Table and discuss Deep Magic and Deeper magic.

1. In 1–2 sentences, describe the basic plot of the book, as well as any major sub-plots. (The plot is the main 'movement' of the book or what the story is about, whereas sub-plots are mini-narratives that are significant but not the central part of the story).

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary.*

Note Aslan's Kingship. See note IV in Teacher Notes.

2. How is Aslan depicted in the story? Note any distinctive characteristics that he displays in this particular story.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary.*

Discuss Edmund's transformation in the story.

3. Note how the main characters are portrayed (both heroes and villains). Identify any major transformations that occur among the characters, including how they began and how they finished.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary.*



## Day 4

After finishing the book, answer questions 4–7.

4. Review the section of “The Planets” that describes Jupiter (Jove). Note any connections between the book and the planet. (Remember, answer this question before reading *The Narnia Code*.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary.*

5. Identify any scenes that you found particularly moving and briefly describe why they moved you. Also, note any models or examples of people or actions that are worthy of imitation (or worthy of rejection and avoidance). Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary.*

6. Note other comments, observations, or questions that you have in the space below.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary.*

7. Summarize at least three things that you are taking away from your reading of this book. This could include lessons, personal applications, new insights about God, yourself, or the world, or anything else that has influenced you from your reading.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary.*

## Day 5



Ask students which observations they made were confirmed after reading Ward.

Read *The Narnia Code*, Chapter 4, and add any additional comments or insights to the above questions.



### FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Deep Magic, and Deeper” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “The Witch’s War on Joy” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “We Will Be Who We Are Becoming” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.

# Prince Caspian

# 5

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## 🔗 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- explore the layers of meaning in *Prince Caspian*.
- examine the character and quality of Mars and how Lewis shapes it into a story.
- seek to breathe Narnian air and thus become Martial ourselves.

## 🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- summarize the plot and describe the characters in *Prince Caspian*.
- identify at least three specific examples of the Martial character in *Prince Caspian*.
- discuss their agreement and disagreement with Ward's analysis.
- reflect on how *Prince Caspian* can assist in becoming Martial themselves.

## 🔗 ASSIGNED READING

- *Prince Caspian*.
- Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 5.





Below are a number of possibilities that you as the instructor may choose to explore in this lesson. You may wish to have these ideas in mind as you read the book, so that you're able to mark particular passages for discussion.

- I. Compare and contrast the characters of Nikabrik, Trufflehunter, and Trumpkin. What is their attitude toward Aslan and the old things? Note any transformations that occur. Trumpkin says, "I know the difference between giving advice and taking orders. You've had my advice, and now it's time for the orders." Why is this such an important moment for his character? How might we apply this wisdom in our own lives? See John 7:17 for a relevant biblical passage.
  
- II. Peter is the embodiment of a perfect knight. He is a formidable warrior, but also tactful, thoughtful, self-controlled, courtly, generous, and merciful. Note key instances of these qualities in Peter, especially in his relationship with Caspian and his siblings. Also, note the contrast with Miraz. If you have the chance, read Lewis' essay on "The Necessity of Chivalry." This essay will provide additional background for Lewis' understanding of knighthood. Biblical passages that may be worth mentioning: Ephesians 5:25–32, 1 Peter 3:7, Matthew 20:25–28.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 4 "Trumpkin's Surprising Obedience" for further insight.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 5 "The Lost Art of Chivalry" for further insight.



## STUDY GUIDE

The first goal of your reading is to immerse yourself in the books. Breathe Narnian air. Don't think mainly about analyzing the books. *Enjoy* them. And then, every now and again, come up for air, and try to answer the following questions. Try to answer all of the questions on your own *before* reading Ward.

### *Day 1 – Day 3*

Enjoy reading *Prince Caspian*.

1. In 1–2 sentences, describe the basic plot of the book, as well as any major sub-plots. (The plot is the main 'movement' of the book or what the story is about, whereas sub-plots are mini-narratives that are significant but not the central part of the story.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

2. How is Aslan depicted in the story? Note any distinctive characteristics that he displays in this particular story?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

3. Note how the main characters are portrayed (both heroes and villains). Identify any major transformations that occur among the characters, including how they began and how they finished.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

## Day 4

After finishing the book, answer questions 4–7.

4. Review the section of “The Planets” that describes Mars. Note any connections between the book and the planet. (Remember, answer this question before reading The Narnia Code.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

5. Identify any scenes that you found particularly moving and briefly describe why they moved you. Also, note any models or examples of people or actions that are worthy of imitation (or worthy of rejection and avoidance). Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

6. Note other comments, observations, or questions that you have in the space below.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

7. Summarize at least three things that you are taking away from your reading of this book. This could include lessons, personal applications, new insights about God, yourself, or the world, or anything else that has influenced you from your reading.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Consider Ward’s analysis of the section in “The Planets” on Mars (*Planet Narnia*, 78–79).

Ask students which observations they made were confirmed after reading Ward.

## Day 5

Read *The Narnia Code*, Chapter 5, and add any additional comments or insights to the above questions.

### § FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Trumpkin’s Surprising Obedience” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “The Lost Art of Chivalry” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.



# The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

# 6

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## 📖 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- explore the layers of meaning in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.
- examine the character and quality of Sol and how Lewis shapes it into a story.
- seek to breathe Narnian air and thus become Solar ourselves.

## 📖 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Summarize the plot and describe the characters in *The Voyage*.
- Identify at least three specific examples of the quality of Sol in *The Voyage*.
- Discuss their agreement and disagreement with Ward's analysis.
- Reflect on how *The Voyage* can assist in becoming Solar themselves.

## 📖 ASSIGNED READING

- *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.
- Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 6.





Below are a number of possibilities that you as the instructor may choose to explore in this lesson. You may wish to have these ideas in mind as you read the book, so that you're able to mark particular passages for discussion.

- I. Reflect on the transformation of Eustace. What is he like at the beginning of the story? What are the key events that begin to change him? How does Aslan factor into his transformation? What is the evidence of his transformation?
  
- II. Look carefully at the conversation between Ramandu and the crew toward the end of the book, especially the difference between what a star is and what it's made of. What point do you think Lewis is trying to make in this conversation? Lewis' scholar Clyde Kilby wrote a number of resolutions that seem to fit with Lewis' vision of the world. They can be found by searching "Clyde Kilby's Resolutions for Mental Health" at [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org).
  
- III. Aslan jumps in and out of the story at a number of different places and in a number of different ways. Note some of them and any Christian resonance that Aslan's appearances may have.
  
- IV. The Dufflepuds are fascinating characters. Why do you think Lewis included them in this story? What do you think they are supposed to represent?

Portions of Joe Rigney's Chapter 8 "Parents, Educrats, and Bureaucrats" describe Eustace's family and suggests why Lewis created this character.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 6 "The Folly of Nothing-Buttery" for further insight.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 7 "Post Tenebras Lux (After Darkness, Light)" for further insight.

It is possible that Lewis intends for us to see ourselves in the Dufflepuds. Attempt to draw out the implications of this. Do we fear and misunderstand the discipline of our good Lord?



## STUDY GUIDE

The first goal of your reading is to immerse yourself in the books. Breathe Narnian air. Don't think mainly about analyzing the books. *Enjoy* them. And then, every now and again, come up for air, and try to answer the following questions. Try to answer all of the questions on your own *before* reading Ward.

### *Day 1 – Day 3*

Enjoy reading *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

1. In 1–2 sentences, describe the basic plot of the book, as well as any major sub-plots. (The plot is the main 'movement' of the book or what the story is about, whereas sub-plots are mini-narratives that are significant but not the central part of the story.) Be warned that this book's plot is difficult to summarize because there is no clear climax. Instead, note the movement of the voyage and trace how the stories at each island connect.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

2. How is Aslan depicted in the story? Note any distinctive characteristics that he displays in this particular story?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Make sure to explore the character of Eustace as you discuss this question with students.

3. Note how the main characters are portrayed (both heroes and villains). Identify any major transformations that occur among the characters, including how they began and how they finished.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

## Day 4

After finishing the book, answer questions 4–7.

4. Review the section of “The Planets” that describes Sol (the Sun). Note any connections between the book and the planet. (Remember, answer this question before reading *The Narnia Code*.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Consider Ward’s analysis of the section in “The Planets” on Sol (*Planet Narnia*, 102–103).

5. Identify any scenes that you found particularly moving and briefly describe why they moved you. Also, note any models or examples of people or actions that are worthy of imitation (or worthy of rejection and avoidance). Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Consider the difference between Governor Gumpas of the Lone Islands and Prince Caspian as positive and negative models.

6. Note other comments, observations, or questions that you have in the space below.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

7. Summarize at least three things that you are taking away from your reading of this book. This could include lessons, personal applications, new insights about God, yourself, or the world, or anything else that has influenced you from your reading.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

## Day 5

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Ask students which observations they made were confirmed after reading Ward.

Read *The Narnia Code*, Chapter 6, and add any additional comments or insights to the above questions.

### FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▶ Joe Rigney, “Post Tenebras Lux (After Darkness, Light)” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▶ Joe Rigney, “The Folly of Nothing-Buttery” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▶ Joe Rigney, “Parents, Educrats, and Bureaucrat” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.

# The Silver Chair

# 7

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## 📖 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- explore the layers of meaning in *The Silver Chair*.
- examine the character and quality of Luna and how Lewis shapes it into a story.
- seek to breathe Narnian air and thus become Lunar ourselves.

## 📖 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- summarize the plot and describe the characters in *The Silver Chair*.
- identify at least three specific examples of the Lunar character in *The Silver Chair*.
- discuss their agreement and disagreement with Ward's analysis.
- reflect on how *The Silver Chair* can assist in becoming Lunar themselves.

## 📖 ASSIGNED READING

- *The Silver Chair*.
- Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 7.



## TEACHING NOTES

Below are a number of possibilities that you as the instructor may choose to explore in this lesson. You may wish to have these ideas in mind as you read the book, so that you're able to mark particular passages for discussion.

I. How has Eustace changed in this book? What signs are evident that his previous 'un-dragoning' is continuing to have an effect?

- **ANSWER.** *Eustace appears as a major character in three books, and his transformation is both fascinating and profound. By the end, he no longer deserves his name, but he's also the sort of boy who wouldn't mind that he had it.*

II. Jill's attempt (and failure) to "remember the Signs" is a great picture of spiritual disciplines. Look carefully at Aslan's command to her on the mountain and compare it to Deuteronomy 6:4-9. How can Jill's experience encourage us in our own spiritual disciplines? How do we see the grace of Aslan in Jill's failures?

- **ANSWER.** *Lewis portrays the absolute necessity of spiritual disciplines in *The Silver Chair* ("Remember the signs. Nothing else matters"). We live down here in the fog where it's hard to think. The signs elevate us to Aslan's country where we know what we're here for. They guide us and lead us when we meditate upon them day and night. And, of course, when we miff them, Aslan gives grace and still guides us. As Puddleglum says, "There are no accidents."*

Return to Joe Rigney's Chapter 8 "Parents, Educrats, and Bureaucrats" for further insight into Experiment House and the Scrubb family.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 9 "Breaking Enchantments With Burnt Marshwiggle" for further insight.

III. Lewis' descriptions of Experiment House are very instructive for us. Note what things are taught at Experiment House (and what things aren't). How is the school managed and what problems does this create? You might also reflect on Lewis' portrayal of the Scrubb family in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

IV. The encounter with the Green Witch after Puddleglum and the children release Prince Rilian is worth extended reflection. In this section, Lewis



is putting arguments that many atheists often use against Christianity in the mouth of the Green Witch. Draw out the connections between the Witch's words and arguments that you've heard or read about. How does Puddleglum break the enchantment? What do you think of his final speech and his reasons for continuing to embrace Aslan?

- V. Puddleglum is one of the more interesting characters in the Narnian stories. Describe and illustrate his characteristics (cynicism, pessimism, steadfastness, endurance, etc). In what ways should we emulate him?

- **ANSWER.** *Puddleglum's faithful and obedient confession to the reality of Narnia amidst the Green Witch's magic demonstrates his deep commitment to his own experience of the truth of the Overworld, Narnia, and Aslan. In this way, Puddleglum is a model for all true Narnians (and all true Christians).*



## STUDY GUIDE

The first goal of your reading is to immerse yourself in the books. Breathe Narnian air. Don't think mainly about analyzing the books. *Enjoy* them. And then, every now and again, come up for air, and try to answer the following questions. Try to answer all of the questions on your own *before* reading Ward.

### *Day 1 - Day 3*

Enjoy reading *The Silver Chair*.

1. In 1–2 sentences, describe the basic plot of the book, as well as any major sub-plots. (The plot is the main 'movement' of the book or what the story is about, whereas sub-plots are mini-narratives that are significant but not the central part of the story.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

2. How is Aslan depicted in the story? Note any distinctive characteristics that he displays in this particular story?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

3. Note how the main characters are portrayed (both heroes and villains). Identify any major transformations that occur among the characters, including how they began and how they finished.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

## Day 4

After finishing the book, answer questions 4-7.

4. Review the section of “The Planets” that describes Luna (the Moon). Note any connections between the book and the planet. (Remember, answer this question before reading The Narnia Code.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

5. Identify any scenes that you found particularly moving and briefly describe why they moved you. Also, note any models or examples of people or actions that are worthy of imitation (or worthy of rejection and avoidance). Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

6. Note other comments, observations, or questions that you have in the space below.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

7. Summarize at least three things that you are taking away from your reading of this book. This could include lessons, personal applications, new insights about God, yourself, or the world, or anything else that has influenced you from your reading.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Consider Ward’s analysis of the section in “The Planets” on Luna (*Planet Narnia*, 126).

Make sure to consider the scene where Puddleglum breaks the Green Lady’s spell.

## Day 5

Ask students which observations they made were confirmed after reading Ward.

Read *The Narnia Code*, Chapter 7, and add any additional comments or insights to the above questions.



### FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Parents, Educators, and Bureaucrats” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Breaking Enchantments With Burnt Marshwiggle” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.

# Review

# 8

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## § LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- review the contents of the course thus far and seek to answer any remaining questions.

## § LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- ask and discuss any lingering questions about the power of stories to disciple, Lewis' view of education, or Ward's thesis.
- review any unanswered or incomplete questions from the study guide.
- summarize the first four Chronicles read and Ward's analysis of them.

## § ASSIGNED READING

- Review your notes from previous lessons as well as the first four of *The Chronicles*.

## § OPTIONAL READING

- This week would be good time to read the articles in the Further Up and Further In recommended reading section.





Plan this review lesson around two things. First, return to any parts of the previous lessons that you had to skip or skim because of time. Second, review portions of the lessons or readings that you found to be poignant or important for the students.





# The Horse and His Boy

# 9

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## 🔗 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- explore the layers of meaning in *The Horse and His Boy*.
- examine the character and quality of Mercury and how Lewis shapes it into a story.
- seek to breathe Narnian air and thus become Mercurial ourselves.

## 🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- summarize the plot and describe the characters in *The Horse*.
- identify at least three specific examples of the Mercurial character in *The Horse*.
- discuss their agreement and disagreement with Ward's analysis.
- reflect on how *The Horse* can assist in becoming Mercurial themselves.

## 🔗 ASSIGNED READING

- *The Horse and His Boy*.
- Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 8.





Below are a number of possibilities that you as the instructor may choose to explore in this lesson. You may wish to have these ideas in mind as you read the book, so that you're able to mark particular passages for discussion.

- I. “[Shasta] had not yet learned that if you do one good deed your reward usually is to be set to do another and harder and better one.” Discuss the relevance of this quotation for the Christian life. Give examples from your own life when you've found this to be true.
  
- II. Compare and contrast Narnian and Calormene society. How are they similar? How are they distinct? Note in particular the relationship between rulers and subjects and the relationship between family members. Look carefully at the Shasta's first encounter with the Narnians on the streets of Tashbaan. What is your response to Lewis' description?
  
- III. Describe the transformation of Bree. What is he like at the beginning of the story? What are the key events that cause him to change? How is he different at the end of the story? How does Aslan factor into his transformation?
  
- IV. Look closely at the character of King Lune. What words are used to describe him? Why is his joviality so remarkable? How does he describe true kingship? How does Lune practice what he preaches? How might this offer us a picture of Christian manhood? Give examples.
  
- V. Reflect on Shasta's story. Note all of the tragedies and suffering that he undergoes. How does this prepare him for his meeting with Aslan? What is your reaction to Shasta's encounter with the Lion? Why does Aslan say, “Tell me your sorrows”? What lesson can we learn from Shasta's story?

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 10 “Shasta's Hard Lesson” for further insight.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 11 “A Society of Self Regard” for further insight.

The latter portion of Joe Rigney's “A Society of Self Regard” can provide further insight.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 12 “The Heart of the Laughing King” for further insight.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 13 “Tell Me Your Sorrows” for further insight.



## STUDY GUIDE

The first goal of your reading is to immerse yourself in the books. Breathe Narnian air. Don't think mainly about analyzing the books. *Enjoy* them. And then, every now and again, come up for air, and try to answer the following questions. Try to answer all of the questions on your own *before* reading Ward.

### *Day 1 - Day 3*

Enjoy reading *The Horse and His Boy*.

1. In 1–2 sentences, describe the basic plot of the book, as well as any major sub-plots. (The plot is the main 'movement' of the book or what the story is about, whereas sub-plots are mini-narratives that are significant but not the central part of the story.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

2. How is Aslan depicted in the story? Note any distinctive characteristics that he displays in this particular story.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

3. Note how the main characters are portrayed (both heroes and villains). Identify any major transformations that occur among the characters, including how they began and how they finished.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

## Day 4

After finishing the book, answer questions 4–7.

4. Review the section of “The Planets” that describes Mercury. Note any connections between the book and the planet. (Remember, answer this question before reading The Narnia Code.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

5. Identify any scenes that you found particularly moving and briefly describe why they moved you. Also, note any models or examples of people or actions that are worthy of imitation (or worthy of rejection and avoidance). Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

6. Note other comments, observations, or questions that you have in the space below.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

7. Summarize at least three things that you are taking away from your reading of this book. This could include lessons, personal applications, new insights about God, yourself, or the world, or anything else that has influenced you from your reading.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Consider Ward’s analysis of the section in “The Planets” on Mercury (*Planet Narnia*, 151).

## Day 5

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Ask students which observations they made were confirmed after reading Ward.

Read *The Narnia Code*, Chapter 8, and add any additional comments or insights to the above questions.



### FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Shasta’s Hard Lesson” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “A Society of Self Regard” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “The Heart of the Laughing King” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Tell Me Your Sorrows” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.

# The Magician's Nephew

# 10

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## 🔗 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- explore the layers of meaning in *The Magician's Nephew*.
- examine the character and quality of Venus and how Lewis shapes it into a story.
- seek to breathe Narnian air and thus become Mercurial ourselves.

## 🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- summarize the plot and describe the characters in *The Magician's Nephew*.
- identify at least three specific examples of the Venereal character in *The Magician's Nephew*.
- discuss their agreement and disagreement with Ward's analysis.
- reflect on how *The Magician's Nephew* can assist in becoming Venereal themselves.

## 🔗 ASSIGNED READING

- *The Magician's Nephew*.
- Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 9.







Below are a number of possibilities that you as the instructor may choose to explore in this lesson. You may wish to have these ideas in mind as you read the book, so that you're able to mark particular passages for discussion.

- I. Compare and contrast Jadis, Uncle Andrew, and Digory. In what ways are they similar? How do they treat other people? How is Digory delivered from becoming more like the evil Queen?
- II. A major plot of the story is Digory's relationship to his mother. How does this relationship affect Digory's actions in the story? Notice how it affects him when he's faced with temptation at the end of the story.
- III. Describe Digory's encounters with Aslan. What is your emotional response to their conversations? How do you see both the firmness and tenderness of Aslan?
- IV. Compare the various responses to Aslan in the story (the animals, Jadis, Andrew, Frank). What do their responses reveal about them?
- V. Describe the relationship between Polly and Digory. How is Polly a good friend? Give specific examples.

Read Joe Rigney's Chapter 14 "A High and Lonely Destiny" for further insight.

Consider the middle portion of Joe Rigney's Chapter 13 "Tell Me Your Sorrows" for further insight.



## STUDY GUIDE

The first goal of your reading is to immerse yourself in the books. Breathe Narnian air. Don't think mainly about analyzing the books. *Enjoy* them. And then, every now and again, come up for air, and try to answer the following questions. Try to answer all of the questions on your own *before* reading Ward.

### *Day 1 – Day 3*

Enjoy reading *The Magician's Nephew*.

1. In 1–2 sentences, describe the basic plot of the book, as well as any major sub-plots. (The plot is the main 'movement' of the book or what the story is about, whereas sub-plots are mini-narratives that are significant but not the central part of the story.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

2. How is Aslan depicted in the story? Note any distinctive characteristics that he displays in this particular story?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

3. Note how the main characters are portrayed (both heroes and villains). Identify any major transformations that occur among the characters, including how they began and how they finished.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

## Day 4

After finishing the book, answer questions 4–7.

4. Review the section of “The Planets” that describes Venus. Note any connections between the book and the planet. (Remember, answer this question before reading The Narnia Code.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

5. Identify any scenes that you found particularly moving and briefly describe why they moved you. Also, note any models or examples of people or actions that are worthy of imitation (or worthy of rejection and avoidance). Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

6. Note other comments, observations, or questions that you have in the space below.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

7. Summarize at least three things that you are taking away from your reading of this book. This could include lessons, personal applications, new insights about God, yourself, or the world, or anything else that has influenced you from your reading.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

## Day 5

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Ask students which observations they made were confirmed after reading Ward.

Read *The Narnia Code*, Chapter 9, and add any additional comments or insights to the above questions.



### FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ Joe Rigney, “A High and Lonely Destiny” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.

# The Last Battle

# 11

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## 📖 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- explore the layers of meaning in *The Last Battle*.
- examine the character and quality of Saturn and how Lewis shapes it into a story.
- seek to breathe Narnian air and thus become Mercurial ourselves.

## 📖 LESSON OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- summarize the plot and describe the characters in The Last Battle.
- identify at least three specific examples of the Saturnine character in The Last Battle.
- discuss their agreement and disagreement with Ward's analysis.
- reflect on how The Last Battle can assist in becoming Saturnine themselves.

## 📖 ASSIGNED READING

- *The Last Battle*.
- Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 10.





Below are a number of possibilities that you as the instructor may choose to explore in this lesson. You may wish to have these ideas in mind as you read the book, so that you're able to mark particular passages for discussion.

For each of the questions below read Joe Rigney's essay "A Dark Night of the Soul" for further insight.

- I. Notice how everything goes wrong in this story. Highlight every plan that the heroes make, and then notice what happens shortly thereafter. How do they respond to each disaster? What do you think we can learn from their response?
- II. What can we learn from Tirian's desperate plea for help and Aslan's apparent silence?
- III. Note how Shift the ape manipulates Puzzle. Give specific examples. Why is Shift a good warning for us? Have you ever acted like him in your own relationships?
- IV. What do you think about the character of Emeth? What do you think Lewis is trying to communicate through Emeth's story? How do you know that Lewis is not treating all religions as though they were the same (hint: Tashlan)?
- V. This story contains numerous examples of judgment. How are the following characters judged?
  - Ginger the Cat.
  - Shift the ape.
  - Rishda Tarkaan.
  - The Dwarves.
  - All of the animals and people when Aslan brings the world to an end.
- VI. Lewis provides a glorious picture of heaven. Why is true Narnia such a paradox? What is it like? What is present in true Narnia? What is absent?

For further study, read *The Great Divorce* and *The Weight of Glory*, by C.S. Lewis.



## STUDY GUIDE

The first goal of your reading is to immerse yourself in the books. Breathe Narnian air. Don't think mainly about analyzing the books. *Enjoy* them. And then, every now and again, come up for air, and try to answer the following questions. Try to answer all of the questions on your own *before* reading Ward.

### *Day 1 – Day 3*

Enjoy reading *The Last Battle*.

1. In 1–2 sentences, describe the basic plot of the book, as well as any major sub-plots. (The plot is the main 'movement' of the book or what the story is about, whereas sub-plots are mini-narratives that are significant but not the central part of the story.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

2. How is Aslan depicted in the story? Note any distinctive characteristics that he displays in this particular story?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

3. Note how the main characters are portrayed (both heroes and villains). Identify any major transformations that occur among the characters, including how they began and how they finished.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*



## Day 4

After finishing the book, answer questions 4–7.

4. Review the section of “The Planets” that describes Saturn. Note any connections between the book and the planet. (Remember, answer this question before reading The Narnia Code.)

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

5. Identify any scenes that you found particularly moving and briefly describe why they moved you. Also, note any models or examples of people or actions that are worthy of imitation (or worthy of rejection and avoidance). Be specific.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

6. Note other comments, observations, or questions that you have in the space below.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

7. Summarize at least three things that you are taking away from your reading of this book. This could include lessons, personal applications, new insights about God, yourself, or the world, or anything else that has influenced you from your reading.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

Consider Ward’s analysis of the section in “The Planets” on Saturn (*Planet Narnia*, 168).

## Day 5

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Ask students which observations they made were confirmed after reading Ward.

Read *The Narnia Code*, Chapter 10, and add any additional comments or insights to the above questions.



### FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▶ Joe Rigney, “Tirian’s Trials and Tragedy” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.

# Summary and Review

# 12

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## 🔗 LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will:

- ▷ reflect on the books, the course, and the lesson.
- ▷ seek to answer remaining questions.
- ▷ solidify the lessons and impact of the books in our lives.

## 🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- ▷ evaluate Ward's thesis as a whole, specifically how the planetary symbols and qualities aid one's view of Christ.
- ▷ discuss how the Narnian stories disciple those who learn to breathe Narnian air.
- ▷ state at least one way the stories have shaped them through the course.

## 🔗 ASSIGNED READING

- ▷ Ward, *The Narnia Code*, Ch. 11–12.





For the final lesson, feel free to simply reflect on your favorite parts of this study. Summarize what you've learned, especially when it comes to the practical application. Feel free to revisit certain questions or themes or books. Give ample time for the students to offer their own reflections about how Narnia has shaped and molded them. It's entirely appropriate for you as the instructor to give a closing word about how God has used the stories to increase your love for him.

Be sure to close with prayer that God would continue to do above and beyond anything that you can ask or think, even (or especially!) through children's stories.



## STUDY GUIDE

Ward: King, Commander, Light,  
Mirror, Word, Life, Mystery

1. How does Lewis' use of the planetary symbols and qualities help to fill out what it means for the stories to be "about Christ?"

· **ANSWER.** *The planetary symbols provide different angles and perspectives for us to learn about Christ. Like the four gospels, they are different windows from which we can view the fullness of who Jesus is.*

2. How is Aslan distinctly portrayed in each book? Use Ward's summaries, or your own.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

3. How is what Lewis has done in Narnia similar to what God has done in creation?

· **ANSWER.** *Lewis sought to communicate certain qualities and characteristics in a subtle, hidden way that is obvious once you know what to look for. In the same way, God reveals himself in his creation ("the heavens are telling the glory of God"), and those who have ears to hear hear it quite clearly. In this way, we can draw a parallel: As the Bible is to the world, so Michael Ward's book (or perhaps *The Planets* poem) is to Narnia itself. The Bible is the "key" that helps us to see all that there is to see in the world. Through it, we learn what God is doing and how he speaks to us everywhere and then we go and find him everywhere. Likewise, Ward's book helps us to see what Lewis has always been communicating through his stories.*

4. After taking this course, which is your favorite Narnian chronicle and why?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

5. What are the main applications that you are taking with you after reading through the stories and discussing them?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary.*

#### FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Epilogue” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.
- ▷ Joe Rigney, “Appendix: A Short Q&A with the Author” in *Live Like A Narnian: Christian Discipleship in C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles*.





# The Planets



## Appendix A

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Lady LUNA, in light canoe,  
By friths and shallows of fretted cloudland  
Cruises monthly; with chrism of dews  
And drench of dream, a drizzling glamour,  
Enchants us—the cheat! changing sometime  
A mind to madness, melancholy pale,  
Bleached with gazing on her blank count'nance  
Orb'd and ageless. In earth's bosom  
The shower of her rays, sharp-feathered light  
Reaching downward, ripens silver,  
Forming and fashioning female brightness,  
—Metal maidenlike. Her moist circle  
Is nearest earth. Next beyond her  
MERCURY marches;—madcap rover,  
Patron of pilf'rers. Pert quicksilver  
His gaze begets, goblin mineral,  
Merry multitude of meeting selves,  
Same but sundered. From the soul's darkness,  
With wreathed wand, words he marshals,  
Guides and gathers them--gay bellwether  
Of flocking fancies. His flint has struck  
The spark of speech from spirit's tinder,  
Lord of language! He leads forever  
The spangle and splendour, sport that mingles  
Sound with senses, in subtle pattern,  
Words in wedlock, and wedding also  
Of thing with thought. In the third region  
VENUS voyages...but my voice falters;  
Rude rime-making wrongs her beauty,

Whose breasts and brow, and her breath's sweetness  
Bewitch the worlds. Wide-spread the reign  
Of her secret sceptre, in the sea's caverns,  
In grass growing, and grain bursting,  
Flower unfolding, and flesh longing,  
And shower falling sharp in April.  
The metal copper in the mine reddens  
With muffled brightness, like muted gold,  
By her fingers form'd. Far beyond her  
The heaven's highway hums and trembles,  
Drums and dindles, to the driv'n thunder  
Of SOL's chariot, whose sword of light  
Hurts and humbles; beheld only  
Of eagle's eye. When his arrow glances  
Through mortal mind, mists are parted  
And mild as morning the mellow wisdom  
Breathes o'er the breast, broadening eastward  
Clear and cloudless. In a clos'd garden  
(Unbound her burden) his beams foster  
Soul in secret, where the soil puts forth  
Paradiseal palm, and pure fountains  
Turn and re-temper, touching coolly  
The uncomely common to cordial gold;  
Whose ore also, in earth's matrix,  
Is print and pressure of his proud signet  
On the wax of the world. He is the worshipp'd male,  
The earth's husband, all-beholding,  
Arch-chemic eye. But other country  
Dark with discord dins beyond him,  
With noise of nakers, neighing of horses,  
Hammering of harness. A haughty god  
MARS mercenary, makes there his camp  
And flies his flag; flaunts laughingly  
The graceless beauty, grey-eyed and keen,  
—Blond insolence—of his blithe visage  
Which is hard and happy. He hews the act,  
The indifferent deed with dint of his mallet

And his chisel of choice; achievement comes not  
Unhelped by him;—hired gladiator  
Of evil and good. All's one to Mars,  
The wrong righted, rescued meekness,  
Or trouble in trenches, with trees splintered  
And birds banished, banks fill'd with gold  
And the liar made lord. Like handiwork  
He offers to all — earns his wages  
And whistles the while. White-feathered dread  
Mars has mastered. His metal's iron  
That was hammered through hands into holy cross,  
Cruel carpentry. He is cold and strong,  
Necessity's son. Soft breathes the air  
Mild, and meadowy, as we mount further  
Where rippled radiance rolls about us  
Moved with music—measureless the waves'  
Joy and jubilee. It is JOVE's orbit,  
Filled and festal, faster turning  
With arc ampler. From the Isles of Tin  
Tyrian traders, in trouble steering  
Came with his cargoes; the Cornish treasure  
That his ray ripens. Of wrath ended  
And woes mended, of winter passed  
And guilt forgiven, and good fortune  
Jove is master; and of jocund revel,  
Laughter of ladies. The lion-hearted,  
The myriad-minded, men like the gods,  
Helps and heroes, helms of nations  
Just and gentle, are Jove's children,  
Work his wonders. On his white forehead  
Calm and kingly, no care darkens  
Nor wrath wrinkles: but righteous power  
And leisure and largess their loose splendours  
Have wrapped around him—a rich mantle  
Of ease and empire. Up far beyond  
Goes SATURN silent in the seventh region,  
The skirts of the sky. Scant grows the light,

Sickly, uncertain (the Sun's finger  
Daunted with darkness). Distance hurts us,  
And the vault severe of vast silence;  
Where fancy fails us, and fair language,  
And love leaves us, and light fails us  
And Mars fails us, and the mirth of Jove  
Is as tin tinkling. In tattered garment,  
Weak with winters, he walks forever  
A weary way, wide round the heav'n,  
Stoop'd and stumbling, with staff groping,  
The lord of lead. He is the last planet  
Old and ugly. His eye fathers  
Pale pestilence, pain of envy,  
Remorse and murder. Melancholy drink  
(For bane or blessing) of bitter wisdom  
He pours out for his people, a perilous draught  
That the lip loves not. We leave all things  
To reach the rim of the round welkin,  
Heaven's heritage, high and lonely.

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# Exploring Aslan's Country

## Growing in Godliness by Breathing Narnian Air

*The Chronicles of Narnia* are some of the most beloved children's books of all time. But are they really just for children? Or is there more in Narnia than meets the eye? This twelve-week course will examine the *Chronicles* book by book as powerful stories designed to shape the hearts and minds of their readers. In the process, we will explore C.S. Lewis' motivation for writing *The Chronicles*, as well as probe the connections between *The Chronicles* and Lewis' other writings. From characters to plot, from symbolism to structure, we will seek to 'breathe the air' of Narnia in hopes of both contemplating and enjoying the Christ-saturated world conceived by Lewis. Our goal will be to heed the words of Aslan: "This was the very reason you were brought into Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you might know me better there."

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