

Monuments or Footprints?

The topic Christian life as a journey

The object Make footprints this way: mix a small batch of poster paint, and pour it into a shallow container. Dip an old boot or shoe in the paint and make a footprint on a piece of paper. Find a miniature monument or landmark of some kind. For example, you can buy a miniature Washington Monument, Statue of Liberty, Gateway Arch (St. Louis), Sears Tower (Chicago), the Alamo, Space Needle (Seattle), Golden Gate Bridge, Cape Canaveral, Chimney Rock (western Nebraska).

The lesson You can think about the Christian life in two ways: 1) always pointing back to some monumental experience—last summer at camp or last February on the

ski weekend or when

I was a child in

vacation Bible

school. That

approach to the

Christian life is best

symbolized by a

monument.

Or 2) looking at it as a journey, an adventure that continues to unfold. Instead of looking back to experiences that happened last year or last summer or 30 years ago when I first joined this church, it's an attitude that enjoys what God is doing



in my life right now and looks ahead toward where he's leading me—an attitude best symbolized by a footprint.

Not that there's anything wrong with looking back toward monumental experiences. Just make sure it's a milestone or marker, not a tombstone. There are already too many Christians who are justified, sanctified, and petrified.

The Word Philippians 3:12-14

Discussion starters

1. How do we "forget what is behind" **without totally forgetting what God has done for us and taught us in the past?**
2. What does Paul mean by "straining toward what is ahead"?

Life changers

1. Which best summarizes your life: the monument or the footprint?

Bonus!

Give students a paper with the text of Philippians 3:12-14 printed across the bottom, then let them make their own footprints on it—using their own shoes or their own bare feet. Or make a "baby footprint" (it's a little easier than an actual footprint, too): make a fist, and set it in the paint as you would slam your fist on a table (but don't slam your fist in the paint!). You'll have an uncanny, convincing infant's footprint. Create small prints this way on heavy stock, cut out around them, and kids will have a convenient, pocket-sized footprint they can use as Bible bookmarks or otherwise carry around with them as reminders to keep on walkin' toward the goal.

Or use the same methods to make a huge mural for the youth room, with all the kids' footprints on the mural. Paint the text of Philippians 3:12-14 across the bottom of the banner.