“The real story of the Crusades is not in the great choirs, the thousands in attendance, nor the hundreds of inquirers who are counseled. The real story is in the changes that have taken place in the hearts and lives of people.”

— Billy Graham
Crusades: Communication, Connection, and Conversion

*As a 21-year-old student, ... I discovered it is possible to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ ... at the 1957 Billy Graham Crusade in Madison Square Garden, New York. ... That was the greatest discovery of my life—greater than the MRI—namely, that the greatest purpose a man can find for his life is to serve God.*

—Dr. Raymond Damadian, research scientist and inventor of the MRI machine

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

• Describe the basic plan of organization for a Billy Graham Crusade.

• Identify some of the turning points in Billy Graham's Crusade ministry.

• Identify potential obstacles Billy Graham and the team would have faced when preparing for and executing a Crusade.

3.H.1: Understand how events, individuals, and ideas have influenced the history of local and regional communities.

3.H.1.2: Analyze the impact of contributions made by diverse historical figures in local communities and regions over time.

3.H.2: Use historical thinking skills to understand the context of events, people, and places.

3.H.2.1: Explain change over time through historical narratives (events, people, and places).

3.H.2.2: Explain how multiple perspectives are portrayed through historical narratives.

4.H.2: Understand how notable structures, symbols, and place names are significant to North Carolina.

5.G.1: Understand how human activity has and continues to shape the United States.

Pre-Visit Activities

• Students should read the attached overview and at least one of the following original source documents and review these in a group setting. Documents not used prior to visit may be used for post-visit activities. Questions for consideration include:
  
  - Billy Graham letter to the New York City executive committee: www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/exhibits/NYC57/02sample08-1.htm
    - Who is Billy Graham addressing in this letter?
    - What are his concerns about the Crusade?
  
  - Church handbill: www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/exhibits/NYC57/07sample37-1.htm
    - What were some of the ways that church members could get involved with the Crusade?
    - How was the Crusade advertised? In what ways do you think advertising efforts would be the same today? In what ways do you think they would be different?
  
  - Church brochure: www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/exhibits/NYC57/03sample16-1.htm
    - List the team members shown in this brochure.
    - Why do you think associate evangelists were necessary to the Crusade?
    - What other Crusade locations are listed in the brochure? Why do you think that this list is included in the brochure?
  
  - Crusade timeline: www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/exhibits/NYC57/28timeline.htm
    - What do you think the most important items on the timeline are? Why are these items significant?

Visit to the Library

• Students will walk through The Journey of Faith tour with an assigned guide and should be prepared to take notes in each room. Questions and themes to consider include:
  
  - What was Billy Graham committed to doing throughout his decades of ministry?
  - How did God use Billy Graham's Crusades?
  - What artifacts do you notice that directly relate to Crusades?

Post-Visit Activities

• Ask students to create a poster advertising a Crusade in their hometown. Consider the following questions:
  
  - What information do they think should be included on the poster?
  - What can they do to make the poster both informative and eye-catching?

  - Using the provided Crusade timeline, ask students to create their own Crusade timeline with no more than 15 items. Consider the following questions:
    - Why did you include the items listed?
    - Which items do you think most contributed to the success of the Crusade?
Crusades: Communication, Connection, and Conversion

“Sometimes I’m asked to list the most important steps in preparing for an evangelistic mission, and my reply is always the same: prayer ... prayer ... prayer.”

—Billy Graham

Pre-Visit Reading: Overview

Billy Graham preached to more people face to face than any other person in history. About 215 million heard the Gospel message in person from Graham. He shared God’s love around the world, with evangelistic services in 185 countries and territories on six continents.

In 1950, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association decided to call their large meetings Crusades. The term Crusade comes from the Latin word crux, which means “cross.” Graham believed that people everywhere want truth and hope but that many are uncomfortable visiting a church. So he preached mostly in stadiums, arenas, and parks.

No Crusade took place unless Christian leaders in a city invited Billy Graham to do it. Each one was planned far in advance through partnerships with numerous local churches. It took a lot of work to make each Crusade possible. Graham’s team made sure that the local churches had an important role in each step. This included preparation, promotion, the event itself, and follow-up with each person who walked forward to commit their lives to Christ at the Crusade.

A typical Crusade involved 50 local leaders, 100 volunteer staff members, 10,000 prayer group members, 3,000 volunteer counselors, 4,000 choir members, and 1,000 ushers, from between 500 and 1,200 local churches. Each Crusade had its own identity, but every single one featured the unchanging Gospel message.
During six decades of Crusades, certain ones proved to be extremely important.

**September 1947**
Billy Graham's first citywide Crusade in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is followed through the years by more than 400 Crusades across six continents.

**March 1953**
All segregated seating at Crusades is officially ended.

**June 1957**
ABC broadcasts live meetings of the New York Crusade in Madison Square Garden.

**June 1962**
Billy Graham preaches to rival gangs during the Chicago Crusade. Forty individuals respond by committing their lives to Christ.

**May 1973**
Billy Graham's Seoul, South Korea, Crusade proves to be the largest ever, in terms of audience, with 3.2 million total in attendance.

**June 2005**
Billy Graham preaches at his final Crusade, in New York, New York. More than 240,000 people attend.

**September 1949**
The first Los Angeles Crusade catches the attention of powerful newspaper owner William Randolph Hearst. The resulting national and international news coverage launches Billy Graham into fame.

**March 1954**
The Greater London Crusade, for which Billy Graham faced much criticism from the press, begins.

**July 1957**
Martin Luther King, Jr., offers opening prayer one night of New York Crusade.

**March 1973**
Billy Graham preaches to the largest integrated audiences to date in apartheid-led South Africa.

**June 1985**
Billy Graham's team uses satellite technology to broadcast meetings in Sheffield, England, to 51 locations in Great Britain.