Week of PRAYER

Resources for 15 Weeks of Prayer for Children

Adventist® Children's Ministries

INTRODUCTION

With great enthusiasm and a deep sense of responsibility, Children's Ministries at the General Conference is pleased to present this collection of resources for the 15 Weeks of Prayer. Our aim is to provide local churches with faith-based materials that foster the spiritual growth and development of children. This compilation is made with sincere gratitude to Adventist Review for their years of commitment in offering enriching Week of Prayer resources.

We pray that these materials will be used effectively to guide children on their spiritual journeys, drawing them closer to God. As we seek to raise a generation that loves and follows the Lord, we are reminded of Ellen G. White's counsel in Child Guidance that spiritual discipline is key to the formation of strong character. The biblical mandate also echoes this truth: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6, KJV). May God empower each of us to love, teach, and lead children toward His eternal kingdom, helping them grow in faith, character, and wisdom.

With love and prayers,

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ENGAGEMENT

The church is always one generation away from extinction. Accordingly, we must continually be engaged in evangelism (bringing souls into the movement) and revivalism (awakening disciples to a growing and vibrant relationship with Jesus). How much more is this important for our children, engaging them in evangelism and promoting revival in their spiritual walks with Jesus!

It is the privilege of the Adventist Review editors to partner with the General Conference Children's Ministry leadership in developing this Week of Prayer. It is our desire to continue spreading the Advent movement to every continent, but also to every age group including children, and to see them enthusiastic and eager to serve Jesus. May this resource be a blessing to all, but especially to our children.

In His service,

Justin Kim
Adventist Review, Editor
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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Family, **Friends,** *and* FELLOWSHIP

THEME

By: CHARLES MILLS

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2004

DAY 1

Family Reunion

"Now we tell you what we have seen and heard because we want you to have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:3, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Find an old family photo album, and look at the pictures together. Choose pictures of family groups and out-of-town relatives. Ask, "What do you like most about Uncle (name) or Aunt (name)? What stories does Grandfather or Grandmother like to tell? What happened right before or right after this picture was taken?"

Story

I have a picture tucked away in one of my photo albums that's important to me. Taken about six years ago, it shows my mother and her three sisters sitting on a couch. Somebody must have told a joke, because they're all laughing.

I especially like my mother's face because it looks so happy and content, even with the ugly wig she had to wear to hide the results of taking a strong medicine.

Today, three of those four laughing people have gone to their graves, and we wait for Jesus to return and wake them up. But I still see their smiles and remember their laughter whenever I look at that picture. We had been enjoying a family reunion with all our relatives there.

The most fun we had—other than eating way too much food—was sharing the stories and adventures we'd experienced since our previous time together. We played games, sang songs, took pictures, and enjoyed being related to one another.

All too soon the day finished, and we returned to our homes. "Be sure to write," we said. "Keep in touch. We'll be praying for you." How quiet and lonely the house seemed after the last car drove away.

One day in Jerusalem a bunch of people got together to talk about Jesus. They spoke of how He had healed the sick and encouraged

the sad. They laughed at the funny things He'd done and how He ran around playing hide and-seek with children. They spoke of the important lessons He had taught.

Then the room grew quiet as someone remembered the terrible cross and that first lonely Sabbath without Him. I imagine some sniffled and dabbed eyes as they relived that event.

Then I imagine someone saying, "Listen to us. We're sitting around remembering the bad days, when we should be talking about the fact that Jesus isn't in the tomb anymore!"

Shouts echoed around the room as faces that moments before had been sad and crying now smiled and laughed with excited joy. "He's alive! He's Alive!" they repeated again and again.

They were so glad that Jesus wasn't dead anymore that they decided to start a church to which they could come and talk about Him every week. Not only that, but they wanted to share His story with anyone who would listen. They wanted the whole world to know about the beautiful life, tragic death, and glorious resurrection of God's Son. And so they started a church.

Do you know what? You attend that church every Sabbath. You sit with your friends and hear stories and sing songs and enjoy Bible readings about Jesus, who walked this earth and gave His life to save everyone.

Because you love Christ and choose to spend time with Him each week, you, like those people in Jerusalem, can say to everyone you meet, "Now we tell you what we have seen and heard because we want you to have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:3, ICB).

You can enjoy your special church family reunion every Sabbath until Jesus comes.

If there's someone in your church family who can't attend church because of sickness or lack of transportation, ask your parents for help. Maybe you can pick him or her up on your way or stop by for a visit on your way home. Drop off a cassette of the sermon. Include a little note say ing how much you like having them in your family.

Application

Discussion

1. What do you like best about wor-shiping God?
2. How does having that weekly family reunion make you feel closer to Jesus?
3. How would you make your church experience more enjoy able?

Prepare a special song or poem about the fun you have at church, and ask your pastor or Sabbath school teacher if you could share it with the congregation or class.

Activity

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Note

DAY 2

God with Skin On

"If we live in the light, we share fellowship with each other" (1 John 1:7, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Gather some cultural artifacts specific to a certain people or race (Native American leathercraft or wall hangings; African pottery or carvings; German clocks or figurines; Japanese silk kimonos or temple bells; South American blankets or wooden statuettes; etc.). Explain that every culture in the world enjoys a unique way of expressing itself artistically.

Look around your home or Sabbath school room. Ask, "How do we express ourselves artistically? What are the meanings of our pictures, drawings, carvings, and wall hangings?"

Then ask, "As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, how can we, through our lives, show others how much we love Jesus?"

Story

Do you know what a doctrine is?

If you take your pencil, hold it out in front of you at arm's length, and then let go of it, what will your pencil do? Right! It will drop to the ground. Clunk.

Have you ever tried to read a book underwater? No? Why? Oh, yeah, you won't be able to breathe. Besides, the pages would get limp and tear apart.

Let's say you decide to stop eating for a year. No peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, no tomato soup, no strawberry shortcake. Nothing. Would that be a good idea? Why? Oh, your body needs food to stay alive!

The force of gravity, the body's constant need for oxygen, and the importance of food are like doctrines. You believe in them with all your heart. That's why you don't jump out of

airplanes without a parachute, swim underwater without an air supply, or skip a thousand meals in a row.

Your doctrines are also like the beautiful paintings, drawings, pottery, or other artwork of a culture. They reveal aspects of the beauty of Jesus, and they enrich our lives. People can look at you and say, "Hey, you're a Christian, aren't you? I can tell by the way you talk and act and smile."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is made up of people who believe the same doctrines. That's why each Saturday, while others in the neighborhood go shopping or mow their lawns, you and your family hop in the car and drive to church. That's why when someone dies, we can all say, "Won't it be wonderful to see that person again in heaven?" That's why when the world becomes a scary place to live, we can look at one another and smile, knowing that soon Jesus will come and end the trouble and pain.

Late one night a little boy became frightened by a thunderstorm. Crash, bang, boom, the storm shouted. Lightning flashed and thunder rolled.

Finally the boy got up and ran to find his father. "Daddy, Daddy," he cried. "I'm scared."

"Son," the father responded, "God loves you, and He'll take care of you."

"I know God loves me," the boy agreed between sobs, "but right now I want somebody who has skin on.

" What a wonderful illustration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—your church. When the people in a church believe and obey the beautiful laws and doctrines outlined in the Bible, their church becomes like God with skin on. Anyone who drops by on a Sabbath morning will receive a better understanding of Jesus just by fellow shipping with people like you.

Would you like to know more about what Seventh-day Adventists believe? Ask your church pastor, Sabbath school teacher, or Christian caregiver to explain to you the beautiful doc trines of your church. You'll learn interesting stuff about baptism, angels, the Bible, and heaven. Enjoy!

Application

Discussion

1. What do you like best about being a Seventh-day Adventist?
2. If someone said to you, "I don't believe in God," what would you say?
3. What's the best way to learn about Jesus?

Clip newspaper or magazine pic tures that illustrate what happens when people don't believe in or obey God. Paste them on a poster board, and write these words across the top: "I Want to Show These People God's Love." Then at the bottom, draw your self holding a Bible.

Activity

Note

DAY 3

Team Effort

"The apostles were doing many mira cles and signs. And everyone felt great respect for God. All the believers stayed together" (Acts 2:43, 44, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Hold up a picture of a large suspension bridge (such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco). Have the children identify the different parts (roadway, support wires, towers, shore anchors, suspension spans, guardrails).

Suggest that for something to work properly, all the many parts must work together.

Story

Many years ago two friends graduated from a Chicago law school. Overton earned the highest marks of all the students in the school even though he was blind. When he stood up to receive his diploma, everyone cheered. But he lifted his hands for silence. "I must give half the credit for my achievement to my good friend Kaspryzak," he announced.

Heads nodded in understanding. Everyone knew why Overton had made that announcement. The two students met the day school began. Kaspryzak gladly took up the task of leading Overton around the campus, taking him to classes, to the cafeteria, and to the library, where he'd read the assignments aloud for his blind buddy.

But wherever they went, Overton carried their books because Kaspryzak had no arms. They soon figured out how to do everything together, each making up for the other's lack. Overton acted as Kaspryzak's arms. Kaspryzak acted as Overton's eyes. By working side by side, they earned their law degrees, and they excelled in their studies. Maybe you have a friend who helps you be the best you can be too.

Remember that little church in Jerusalem we talked about? Well, those people learned the same lesson that Overton and Kaspryzak

learned. By working together, they could do much more than if they worked alone.

"I can't preach very well," one said, "but I'm good at telling stories to children."

"Well, I can preach," another chimed in, "but whenever I try to tell stories to children, they don't pay any attention."

"Great," yet another announced. "While you two preach and tell stories, I'll prepare the Sabbath meal."

"That works out perfectly," another said, "because when I try to cook food, our dog leaves the house and doesn't come back for a week. I'd better take up the offering and lead the singing."

And so it went, each person finding something important to do.

Jesus said, "Go and make followers of all people in the world. . . . Teach them to obey everything that I have told you" (Matt. 28:19, 20, ICB). Before any church or group of people can do that, they've got to get organized.

Guess what? You have a part to play in accomplishing the mission of God's church today. Yes, you! You're unique. You've got a combination of talents that no one else has. It's your job to discover how you can best serve Jesus in His church. So you'd better get busy!

Make a list of your special talents. Are you friendly? Can you sing or play an instrument? Can you paint a pic ture? Do people say you're a great story teller? Are you handy around the kitchen? Once you've made your list, tell your church pastor or Sabbath school teacher, "I want to be an active member of this church. Here's what I can do to help accomplish the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Application

Discussion

1. When you try hard to do some thing, how do you feel when you get it done?
2. How is your church like your fam ily?
3. What do you think is more important to Jesus, your talents or your desire to be of service to others? Which do you think is more important to the people you serve?

Invite a couple friends to join you to develop one new talent a month for the next three months. If you like music, try learning a new instrument. Enjoy telling stories? Learn a fresh exciting one from your collection of Primary Treasureor Guidemagazines. Like arts and crafts? Tackle a new craft you've never done before.

Activity

Note

DAY 4

All in the Family

"Make me very happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and having one mind and purpose" (Phil. 2:2, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Gather individual pictures of your extended family. Ask the children to examine them carefully, looking for similarities between you and those related to you.

Tell them that even though you don't look like some of the people in the pictures, you are related to them.

Story

When I was a little boy, my family and I lived in the Philippines. As a missionary my father traveled around the many islands there helping churches care for the tithes and offerings dropped in collection plates each Sabbath.

I liked the Philippines. They had trees to climb, mud puddles to splash in, monkeys to watch, and all kinds of colorful sights to see.

Each Friday after sundown worship my mother would say, "Come, Charlie. Let's get ready for Sabbath school."

While most kids simply showed up on Sabbath morning to enjoy the songs and activities, I helped my mom prepare the night before. We cut out felts illustrating Bible stories, painted pictures of birds and butterflies, glued borders on cardboard signs, and wrote memory verses on slips of paper.

The next day at church, people would arrive eager to enjoy the program my mother had prepared.

The kindergarten/primary Sabbath school room filled to overflowing, sometimes with as many adults as children! Every week we sang songs, listened to stories, put money in the offering plate, read verses from the Bible, and prayed.

When I glanced at my mom, I saw her looking

at all those people like she looked at me—with a big smile on her face and a bright gleam in her eyes. "We're a family," she'd tell the crowded room. "We're all brothers and sisters in the family of God."

I didn't understand what she meant. Those people didn't look like me. While my skin was almost white, theirs was a beautiful brown. Our faces, our eyes, even the way we talked, were different. How could they be my brothers and sisters?

Many years later I stood before another group of people, this time in the country of Japan. Now I was the missionary. I suddenly understood what my mom had meant. The men and women in my English language class weren't just my students. They were my family. I cared about them just like I cared about Bill, Bob, and Susie—my brothers and sister back in America. I felt a genuine love for them, exactly like I felt for my uncles and aunts and grandparents. Mom was right! When you love God, everyone is a member of your family.

That's when I knew that I'd never have to feel lonely or afraid. I could walk up to a member of my spiritual family and say, "Excuse me. I'm your brother. You see, we're all part of the family of God." The church is indeed a family.

Skin color? Doesn't matter. Language? Who cares! The house you live in? Not important. We're all related in love. We all have the same heavenly Father. We're family!

Application

For fun, start calling your friends "brother" and "sister." Instead of say ing, "Hey, Tasha, you want to play video games with me?" say, "Hey, Sister Tasha, you want to play video games with me?" Tasha will probably say, "What did you call me?" Then you can explain about that beautiful, exciting, love-filled heavenly family to which we all belong.

Discussion

1. What do you enjoy most about being in a family?
2. When a family member gets hurt or sick, what can you do to help them get better?
3. How does it make you feel to know that God is your heavenly Father?

Activity

Gather some magazines, and create a new family tree. Find pictures of peo ple who don't look anything like you, and paste them on a tree that you've drawn. Include a picture of you, too. Write across the top, "The Beautiful Family of God."

Note

DAY 5

Family of Tears

"God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Show a collection of medical aid equipment, such as a wheelchair, a pair of crutches, bandages, medicine bottles, thermometer, etc. Place a bandage on a child. Let someone sit in the wheelchair or use the crutches. Demonstrate how each item is used.

Ask, "Do Christians need these sometimes? What should we do when a member of our church family gets hurt or sick?"

Story

It was the worst night we had ever spent. No one slept. No one ate. We just held one another's hands, prayed hard, and waited.

It began earlier that day, when my nephew's little son Andrew ate and played at a fast-food restaurant. Suddenly he fell and hit his head. He cried some, but no one thought much about it until later when he threw up. Then he wanted to sleep.

What Andrew's mom and dad didn't know was that when he fell, Andrew hit his head hard right behind one of his ears, and his brain began to swell.

That night an emergency medical team took Andrew to the hospital, where doctors in white gowns and masks, holding sharp stainless-steel instruments and surrounded by flashing, beeping machines, began desperately trying to save his life. My wife and I rushed to the hospital, and what we saw made us cry. Our precious little Andrew was dying.

That's why we spent the night without sleeping or eating, just holding on to one another and praying for the doctors and nurses

working on Andrew. Andrew's grandmother, uncles, and aunts came from far away to join us. We waited as time and time again they rushed our little boy to the operating room.

With the first light of day came hope, and Andrew lived.

Today, Andrew is a bright, happy little boy who likes to tell silly jokes and take part in Adventurer Club activities. He may wonder why, whenever my wife or I see him, we give him an extra tight hug. He doesn't remember that night, but we do. Maybe we're trying to hug away the suffering he experienced for months after the accident. Maybe we're just so glad that he likes to tell silly jokes and take part in Adventurer Club activities. Maybe we're just so thankful that God heard our prayers.

Being a member of a family isn't all fun and games. Sometimes there are tears. But that's exactly why God created the idea of family on this earth. He knew there'd be moments of sorrow, fear, and dread. He put together moms and dads, aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents, to help us face the uncertainties that are part of living in a sinful world.

If you ask Andrew what a family is, he would probably say, "That's who takes care of me where I live." Andrew is part of a big church family, too, made up of people who are willing to encourage one another during dark, stormy nights. Someday he'll understand that loving families often mingle laughter with tears.

Application

Ask your caregiver to take you for a visit to a hospital. Head for the chil dren's ward, and share some small gifts or toys with the boys and girls who must stay there. Tell them that you'll be praying for them. Remind each one that they are part of a big family—the family of God.

Discussion

1. Did Jesus ever cry for His earthly family? Find the story behind His tears.
2. Did you ever have a sick relative in the hospital? What was it like to visit him or her?
3. How do you feel when someone you love gets hurt?

Activity

Watch your local newspaper for reports of sick or injured children. Write them an encouraging letter, and ask your caregiver to mail it to the hospital where they are staying.

Note

DAY 6

The Gift of Joy

"They will have joy and gladness. All sadness and sorrow will be gone far away" (Isa. 51:11, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Prepare a collection of pictures, some showing sad events (funeral, sickness, violence, etc.) and others showing happy events (wedding, picnic, playing, camping, Christmas, etc.). Ask, "Is this a joyful event or a sad event?" Then ask, "What makes this event joyful [or sad]?"

Story

When I was a little boy, I wanted a Lionel train set more than anything else in the world. Whenever I'd visit my favorite toy store, I'd head straight to the train display and watch the big black locomotive puff smoke and pull lines of colorful cars around the shiny metal tracks. It was awesome!

One December I took my father by the hand and pulled him up to the display. "Look," I said. "That's what I want for Christmas!"

Dad admired the handsome train and listened to it chug, chug, chug around the track. Then he bent low and examined the price tag posted at the corner of the display. I heard him whistle softly to himself before walking away.

I didn't sleep much that Christmas Eve. I kept thinking about that Lionel train and its cool collection of boxcars and flatbeds, the coal tender, and the red caboose. I hoped that my set would come with a tunnel, too.

Christmas morning dawned bright and cold. As instructed by my dad, I stayed in my room until he called me. When he did, I rushed down the stairs. There, under the brightly lit tree, was a big black locomotive pulling a line of cars around a shiny track.

"Hooray!" I shouted as I ran across the living

room rug and dropped to my knees beside my new toy. But when I examined the locomotive, I noticed it wasn't as beautiful as the one I'd seen in the store. The cars weren't as colorful. The caboose, less detailed. Then it hit me. This wasn't a Lionel.

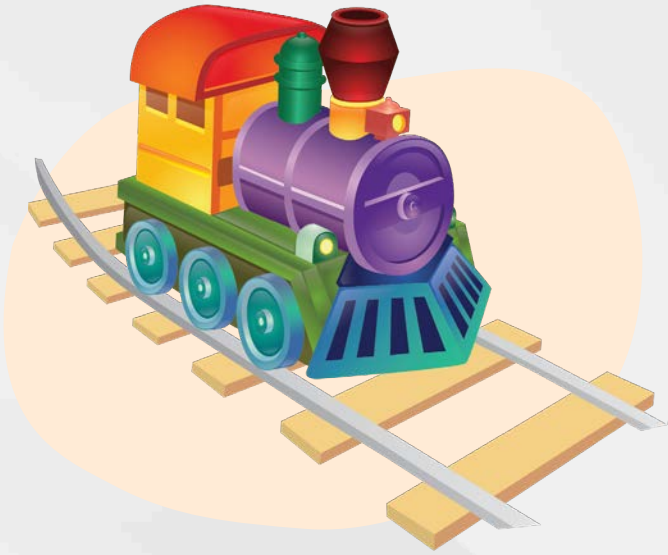
Dad joined me by the tracks. "Do you like it, Charlie?" he asked. "It's not the one you wanted, because Lionel trains are expensive. With you and your sister in church school and your two brothers away at college, we don't have a lot of money to spend. I think you'll have a great time playing with this one, though. See? It's even got some plastic logs on the flatcar!"

I was disappointed. Terribly disappointed. But then I thought about what Dad had just said. While this train wasn't the one I wanted, it was all he could afford. Dad gave me the very best he could under the circumstances. I knew that by giving me this train, he'd have to do without something he wanted. He'd sacrificed for me because he loved me.

Turning, I looked up into Dad's smiling, hopeful face. "It's wonderful," I said. "It's the best train set in the whole world."

Long ago Jesus sacrificed everything for us. He died on a cruel cross so that we could live forever with Him. Each week we have the privilege of coming to church to celebrate that wonderful gift. Even though we live in a painful, sad, imperfect world, someday that will change. That's the joy Christians share. That's the joy that makes us a family.

Why not close your eyes right now and thank your heavenly Father for His amazing gift.



Application

Whenever a sad thought pops into your mind, stop and ask yourself, "What joyful thing can I think about?" Then replace the sad thought with a joyful one.

Discussion

1. Why does Jesus want you to think joyful thoughts?
2. If you could sit down and talk with Jesus, what would you say to Him?
3. What two stories from the life of Christ show that He was a happy per son?

Activity

Make a "Joyful" list, writing down the things for which you're most thankful. Draw pictures if you want. Then place this list where you'll see it every day.

Note

DAY 7

The Beauty of Smelly Feet

"So be humble under God's powerful hand. Then he will lift you up when the right time comes" (1 Peter 5:6, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Show a bird's nest, ant colony, spiderweb, or some other example of the creative work of one of God's creatures. Talk about the hard work and ingenuity that went into the construction. Ask, "Could you do this?" Then explain that humans can do great things, but we shouldn't be too proud of our accomplishments, because the smallest of God's creatures are capable of amazing feats.

Story

You may have noticed now and then that your church family does something unusual. When you walk into the sanctuary, instead of seeing the pastor up front ready to preach a sermon, you notice a table covered by a large white cloth.

After everyone gets seated, the pas tor says a few words, and then most people get up and leave. Is church over?

Nope. Everyone's gone off to get his or her feet washed.

Feet washed? At church? That's right. Why do they do this? And what's under that big white cloth? Let's find out!

First, we follow the adults out of the sanctuary to smaller rooms, where we discover large basins of water. Then, amid smiles and hugs, the adults start washing each other's feet. Do their feet need washing? Not really. They're doing this to remember a time when 12 people with dirty feet met together and Jesus did something amazing.

Before the disciples met in an upper room for what would be their last meal with Jesus before His death, they had spent the day walking on the dusty paths and crowded streets of Jerusalem. Their feet got covered with dust and mud and lots of yucky stuff left behind by

passing animals. Those smelly feet needed a good scrubbing. But as they filed into the room no one in the group offered to do what needed to be done. Servants usually washed feet, and they didn't have enough money to hire one.

So there they sat with their stinky feet, waiting. Then Jesus jumped up, grabbed a towel and basin of water, and got busy. He scrubbed clean every toe, heel, and ankle. Jesus didn't need a servant. Jesus was a servant.

When the adults in your church wash each other's feet, they're saying, "I want to be like Jesus. So I'll wash your feet!"

After everyone returns to the sanctuary, someone removes the white cloth from the table, revealing shiny containers filled with little crackers and tiny glasses of grape juice. "Not much of a meal," you say to yourself. "I hope they have more food at the potluck!"

This isn't a meal. It's a remembrance of a meal—the one that Jesus and His disciples enjoyed after everyone got their feet washed. Knowing He was about to be crucified, Jesus told His disciples, "This grape juice is like My blood that's going to be spilled for you. This bread is like My body that will be broken on the cross."

Your church family listens to Christ's words every time they celebrate the Lord's Supper. When they eat the little pieces of bread, they remember Jesus' sacrifice. When they drink the grape juice, they remember Jesus' blood.

This brings a great feeling of togetherness among church members. They enjoy the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, and so can you. The next time you help someone or enjoy a potluck or drink a glass of juice, remember Jesus and His sacrifice. He became a servant, spilled His blood, and allowed angry people to break His body for you.

When you do something kind for someone, don't think, I did something kind. Instead, think, I did what Jesus would do.

Application

Discussion

1. What are some ways you can be a servant?
2. Has anyone been a servant for you lately?
3. When you think of Jesus, what picture pops into your mind?

Keep track of all the good things your parents or friends do for you during the next seven days. Write them down; then let everyone know that you're thankful for their kindness.

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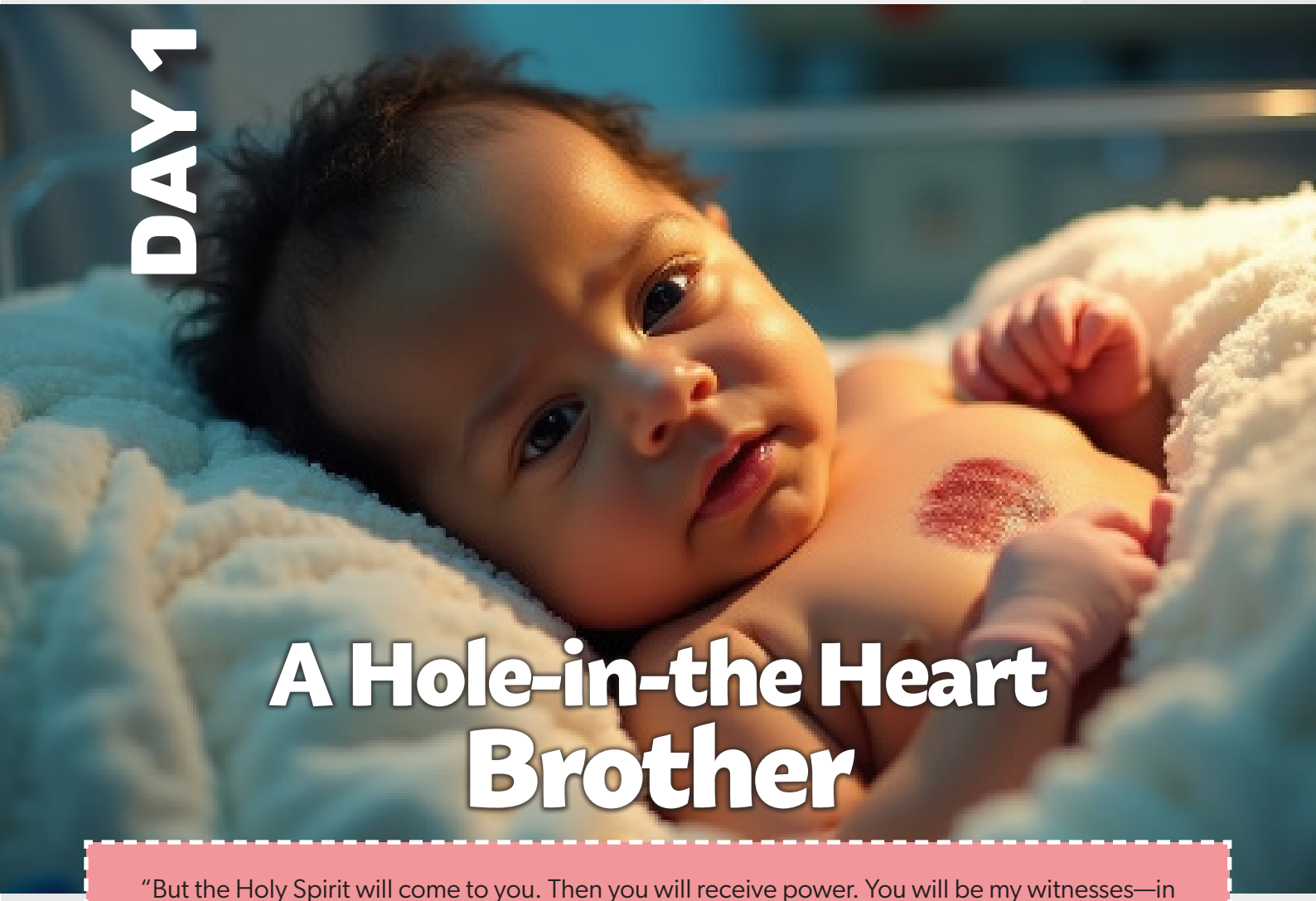
Note

Togetherness in Sharing the Good News of JESUS

THEME

By: LINDA MEI LIN KOH

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2005



DAY 1

A Hole-in-the Heart Brother

"But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world" (Acts 1:8).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Show a series of pictures or a short video clip of a car accident. Ask volunteers to describe what they saw and write what they say on the board or flip chart. Have the children compare the reports of each volunteer. Ask, "Did all those who saw the accident give similar reports? Why do their descriptions vary?"

Explain that anyone who saw or experienced an event is a witness. Jesus wanted His disciples to witness to others about His love. Suggest that Jesus also wants us to witness and share the good news of His love with our friends.

Story

It was bad news! It was heartbreaking news! The Kozinski family had been looking forward to the arrival of a new baby brother. For big brother Ivan it was a dream come true. "Hurrah!" he said. "I'll have someone to play with!"

But all their hopes dashed quickly when they arrived at the hospital. "Why are you crying, Mommy?" Ivan asked softly as he rubbed her gentle hands. Mommy explained that the doctor had announced earlier that Alexandr, their new baby, had a hole in his heart. It was a shock to everyone. But the doctor had added, "There's a chance that the hole will close up by itself after he grows up." Chance! But what is the chance?

The family believed in God. They believed that Jesus could heal Alexandr if it was His will. "Let's rally everyone for sessions of prayer," suggested Father. "I'll contact people to pray for baby Alexandr." Father divided up a list of people they needed to contact. He would take care of the list of church members and relatives,

while Mother would inform her women friends from the associations she was involved in.

"Ivan, why don't you contact your teachers, your classmates, and our neighbors?" Father asked.

"OK, Papa," Ivan answered willingly. Father was on the telephone the whole night. He surely had a long list of people to call. As for Ivan, he went to work immediately the next day after arriving at school. He asked the teachers, the principal, the entire school, to pray for his brother.

Guess what? Within a few days various teams were set up for the prayer marathon. Some were all-night prayer sessions, which seemed too long for Ivan. He joined with everyone else to pray for his baby brother.

And after some months God did answer their prayers.

"Well, it's amazing that the hole has closed up!" announced the doctor in surprise. "It's a miracle! It's a miracle!"

"Ivan, let's call everyone to tell them about the good news!" exclaimed Father. Ivan was so excited to tell his teachers and friends the next morning that he could hardly contain himself! It was something to celebrate about! When you have good news, you simply can't wait to tell it!

Remember the Samaritan woman at the well in the town of Sychar? When she found Jesus, the Messiah, she was so joyful that she "left her water jar and went back to town. She said to the people, 'A man told me everything I have ever done. Come see him. Maybe he is the Christ!'" (John 4:29). Yes, she had good news to share!

On another occasion four lepers found plenty of food and treasures in the camp of their enemies, the Syrians. They started to help themselves, but then they said to one another, "We're doing wrong. Today we have good news, but we are silent. . . . Let's go now and tell the people in the king's palace" (2 Kings 7:9). Such good news at a time when hardly any food was available in the city! Everyone was able to eat to his or her fullest. The lepers were great witnesses!

After Jesus went back to heaven, the disciples became energized to share the good news with people everywhere, telling them that Jesus loved them and had gone to make a place for them in heaven. Jesus promised to give them power. As they gathered in prayer in one place, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages" (Acts 2:4). Yes, the disciples united in their effort to tell the good news that spread throughout the world. Today we have the Christian church. It all started with a few people in that little church in Jerusalem.

Can you think of some good news to share with your friend, your neighbor, your grandpa? Maybe you made an A on your test? Won a contest? Received a special gift you always wanted? Are going on a trip to Japan or some other faraway country? Then make a list of blessings Jesus has given you this month and share that with a friend.

1. Why is it difficult to hold back good news?
2. What are the benefits of working together in sharing good news?
3. What's the best way to tell the good news about Jesus?

Draw two posters to promote some exciting events that may be coming up in your school or church. Decorate them with lots of colors and write mes sages that will captivate your audience.

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DAY 2

A Grand Reunion!

"Don't be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, the one who was killed on a cross. He has risen from death" (Mark 16:6).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Gather some newspapers and look into the obituary pages. Cut out pictures of women who have died, and let children look at them together. Examine each picture and note the number of children and grandchildren they left behind. Ask, "Why are mothers precious to us? How can you honor your mother? Do you remember her birthday?"

Story

It was the most exciting event of the year for me! Our family would be taking our yearly trip to Hong Kong to visit our relatives. Wow! I can't wait to be on this huge ocean liner! I thought. There are always lots of good food and fun children's things to do. We waited impatiently until time to leave for the harbor.

Suddenly the telephone rang. It was Dad. He said solemnly, "Come immediately to the hospital." My aunt rushed us to the hospital. "What's wrong with Mom? Is she going to be OK?" I asked anxiously as soon as I saw Dad. I was very frightened and confused.

Just that morning we'd been happily packing and talking about what we would do during our vacation in Hong Kong. Then Mom decided to go for her usual physical checkup since we had so much time before departure. Right at that moment my little 8-year old mind couldn't figure out why we were at the hospital and not at the harbor.

Dad sat down with us three children and said calmly, "Something has just happened to Mom. The doctors are working on her." But he surely looked very, very sad!

Finally, at 5:00 that afternoon, three doctors came out of the operating room and spoke with Dad. "We've done everything we could," they said. "We just couldn't save her."

Dad cried and wailed loudly. I rushed up to Dad, clinging to his legs and crying, "I want

Mommy. I want Mommy." But the doctors couldn't save Mom. She died on that August day.

At the funeral service the pastor talked about our meeting Mom again when Jesus comes the second time.

She will be raised from the grave. At once I felt better. I looked forward to meeting Mom again at Jesus' second coming.

Similarly, one day in Jerusalem the disciples and many other people who loved Jesus were very sad when they remembered the terrible cross. I am sure there were tears and sobs. But imagine what it was like when Mary reported the good news: "I saw the Lord!" (John 20:18). Yes, Jesus is alive! When Jesus appeared to His followers, they "were very happy when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20).

The disciples and Jesus' other followers were overjoyed that He was alive. They started to preach this good news to everyone in Judea, Galilee, Samaria, and everywhere else. Soon they started a church. They wanted the whole world to know the wonderful sacrifice of God's Son on the cross and His glorious resurrection that gives hope for everyone who accepts Him.

As you sit in Sabbath school and church each week, remember that Jesus loves you and will come back for you. You can join everyone else in singing my favorite song, "Alive! Alive! My Jesus Is Alive!"

Even though I miss Mom dearly, I am not sad anymore, because Jesus has promised that "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain" (Rev. 21:4). "Listen!" He says in the Bible. "I am coming soon! I will bring rewards with me" (Rev. 22:12). I'm looking forward to that grand reunion in heaven. Let's tell others this wonderful news so they won't be sad anymore. Jesus is our hope!

Application

Ask your parents or caregiver to take you to visit a hospital. Go to the children's ward and give some gifts to the children there. Give them little cards that you have created with a message of joy and hope in Jesus. Ask them to trust in Jesus, who is coming again to take us home. Share with each child some Bible verses of hope.

Discussion

1. How do you feel if someone you love is dying of cancer?
2. Suppose someone said to you, "I am not sure if I'll ever again see my dad, who died three years ago"? What would you say? What Bible texts can you use to help him or her find hope?
3. What can you do to cheer up the sick and dying?

Activity

Learn the song "Alive! Alive! My Jesus Is Alive!" and ask your Sabbath school teacher if you can share it with the rest of the children in your class.

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DAY 3

Falling Off the Camel's Back

"Your word is like a lamp for my feet and a light for my way" (Ps. 119:105).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Place a big black box at the front of the room. Ask for volunteers to step into the box and cover it. Ask them if they can see anything. Then give them a book to read. After a short while, give them a flashlight to read the book while still inside the box. Let them out and then ask, "How do you feel, reading in the dark? Did you have to strain your eyes to read the words? How did the flashlight help?"

Story

My husband took a trip to the Holy Land some years ago. Late one after noon the tour group was scheduled to climb Mount Sinai. He was excited about this trip. Wouldn't it be thrilling to climb the same hill that Moses did?

The climb was a steep one, with the guide right at the front. After climbing what seemed like thousands of feet, my husband was tired out. Quite a few others were also slowing down. Suddenly, almost out of nowhere, camels appeared as their keepers shouted, "Cheap ride! Cheap ride!"

Of course, my husband could not refuse. Immediately he climbed onto the hump of one camel. "It should be easy climbing the rest of the way," he smiled to himself.

The sun was setting, and it was getting dark. When darkness finally sur rounded them, it seemed impossible to move on. There was no light to show the way. My husband held on tightly to the reins as the camel was being led by its keeper. "I wonder how the camel knows where it should step?" my husband asked anxiously.

As the train of camels moved along, all of a sudden there was a shout. "Help!" Then there was a thud! And a crash! And a commotion of people talking, dashing here and there. Looking to the left, my husband saw his friend Sonny

falling off his camel.

"Grab my hand!" he yelled. In a split-second Sonny clung to my husband's hand.

The camel keepers rushed toward them with a fluorescent lamp. To their amazement the camel had missed a step, and one of its left hooves was down the side of a cliff. Thank God that the camel didn't fall over. Sonny could have lost his life.

Everyone refused to move on until the keepers' brought lamps and flashlights to guide the way. The remaining path up to the top of Mount Sinai was lit by streams of lights. Now everyone could see where they were going.

The Word of God, the Bible, is very much like these lights. It tells us that "all Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives" (2 Tim. 3:16).

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He used the Word of God to fight off these temptations. Jesus answered the devil, "It is written in the Scriptures, 'A person does not live only by eating bread. But a person lives by everything the Lord says'" (Matt. 4:4). He added, "It is written in the Scriptures, 'You must worship the Lord your God. Serve only him!'" (Matt. 4:10).

King David planned to kill one of his commanders, Uriah, so that he could marry Uriah's wife. The Scriptures pointed out his sin, reminding him of one of the Ten Commandments: "You must not be guilty of adultery" (Ex. 20:14).

Yes, the Bible is an important light and "is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right. Using the Scriptures, the person who serves God will be ready and will have everything he needs to do every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Don't keep it to yourself. Share this with your friends so they can live right too.

Make a list of good things that the Bible teaches you to do. How many times should you forgive others? Do you visit the widows and orphans? Then make a second list of bad habits and behaviors that the Bible condemns. Do you feel proud? Hate your enemies? Disobey your parents? Then share this list with a friend and talk about how Jesus can help you to do two or three of the good deeds on your list each week.

Application

Discussion

1. Does the Bible show you how to deal with the temptations of drugs, alcohol, and reading bad books?
2. How can the Bible continue to be a light for your path?
3. What do you think you can do to make Bible study more interesting?

Look up a book that tells about fireflies. Find out how fireflies give out light. Write a short description of how fireflies are similar to the Bible with regard to giving light.

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DAY 4

Tug of War

"Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy. And he goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat" (1 Peter 5:8).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Place two gift-wrapped boxes on the table. Label the first box with the words Satan Tempts, and the second box with Jesus Wins. Have children write down on strips of paper the temptations they have and put them into the first box. Then on another strip of paper, have each child write out how they can win over Satan for each of those temptations, and drop them into the second box, which says Jesus Wins. Then ask, "Is it easy to stop fighting with Satan?" Have a little discussion.

Story

"I got that airplane first!" Yoyo yelled.

"Who said so?" Rachel said loudly. "I touched it first!"

"It's not fair!" Yoyo shouted, pulling the airplane toward him.

Soon brother and sister were in a tug-of-war. Rachel pulled the wing of the airplane toward her, while Yoyo snatched at the tail as hard as he could.

Crashhh! Suddenly the airplane broke into two pieces, with half of the plane in each child's hands.

"See what you've done!" Rachel snapped. "You wrecked it."

"It's your fault," Yoyo said angrily.

Suddenly he picked up a pair of scissors that was lying on the floor beside him and threw it straight at his sister. The scissors flew by Rachel, missing her face by only a few centimeters, just as Mother stepped into their room.

"What have you done, Yoyo?" Mother asked. "You could have cut your sister's face and hurt her badly."

"I'm really sorry," Yoyo said, looking like he was about to cry.

"I'm sorry too," Rachel said quietly as she put

her hand on her brother's shoulder.

Mother came over and hugged Rachel and Yoyo. They prayed to Jesus, asking Him to help them to love and not hurt each other.

The Bible tells us that there was a fight in heaven. Satan, an angel called Lucifer, thought he was smarter than God. He felt that he was just as good as God's Son. He was angry when God did not include him in all His plans. So Satan turned against God and started a war in heaven. Can you imagine that? Satan was trying to get the angels to fight against God! He told them that God was selfish and that He was not fair. He should not be trusted. Eventually Satan and one third of the angels were thrown out of heaven.

Satan tempted Adam and Eve to choose his side by eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Choosing Satan is sinning, and the price of sinning is death. Although Adam and Eve did not die immediately, they began to pay the price of sinning immediately. They argued and blamed each other. They had to work hard for a living. They had to leave the Garden of Eden.

But God had a plan to fix everything and make it back into what it was at the beginning. That plan was for Jesus to come to the earth as a little baby. He would live on earth and show people what God was like. Then He would die on the cross. The Son of God would save us from our sins. "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Isn't this wonderful? If you believe in Jesus and choose to follow Him, you will live forever with God and Jesus in the earth made new! Let's tell our friends and our neighbors about the terrible fight in heaven. We can help them choose Jesus instead of Satan.

Application

Ask the children, "How do you protect yourself from Satan?" Draw a picture of the armor of God as found in Ephesians 6:11-17 and identify what weapons could help you win in your fight with Satan. Share that with a friend.

Discussion

1. Why do you think fighting is always bad?
2. How is Satan fighting with you in your life?
3. What is the best weapon to fight your battles with Satan?

Activity

Look up five Bible verses that show how to win your battles with Satan. Write them on colored cards. Add your own illustrations to go with each. Pin them up in your room or place them on your desk.

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DAY 5

Bicycle Outreach

"You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light that gives light to the world. . . . Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Hold up a picture of a lighthouse. Have the children identify the uses of the lighthouse. Discuss whether a lighthouse is necessary today in a world of technology and computers. Then ask, "How is your life like a lighthouse?"

Story

Cesar and Juan were both 11 years old. They lived in Arequipa, Peru. They loved the mountains that sur rounded their homes in the village. They also had many special friends in their neighboring region of Cerro Colorado.

"Juan, do you like those small group meetings we attend every Wednesday night?" asked Cesar with a twinkle in his eye.

"They're great!" smiled Juan. "And hey, you are a great song leader!"

"Thanks. Say, why don't we go over the mountain and invite our friends to form a group too?" Cesar suggested eagerly.

"It's a great idea! But how do we do this?" Juan wondered. "It'll take us many days just to walk to Cerro."

"Hey! Don't forget we have our bicycles! That would do," Cesar said confidently. "You can go and invite Pedro, Jacinto, and Ronaldo, while I go to invite Johan, Rosita, and Alberto."

"Let's get to work!" they echoed together.

Cesar and Juan rode their bicycles up the mountain path every day to Cerro to meet together with their friends and neighbors for their small group. Dividing up the Bible topics, they both led out in singing, Bible stories, and sharing of experiences. There were difficulties along the mountain trails, but nothing could dampen their spirits or deter them from their mission. After many months six of their friends decided to follow Jesus and be baptized. What shining lights Cesar and Juan have been!

Remember the little maid who served the wife of Captain Naaman of Aram? She was a light in the household of Naaman. When her master had leprosy, a harmful skin disease, she immediately told her mistress the good news that the prophet in Samaria could heal him. The Bible says, "Naaman went to the king. He told him what the girl from Israel had said" (2 Kings 5:4). What a great life of witnessing! The captain believed in the true God after he was healed.

In the life of Ruth, a girl from Moab, her mother-in-law, Naomi, was like the light in sharing the good news with her. Naomi's kindness and love helped Ruth to understand God's love. Though Naomi suggested that she leave and return home to her people, Ruth answered positively, "Don't ask me to leave you! . . . Every place you go, I will go. Every place you live, I will live. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God," (Ruth 1:16). Naomi was indeed the light and the salt in her home and community.

Discussion

1. Why is it important to treat others with love and kindness? 2. In what way is a true, loving Christian better able to witness for Jesus?
3. What does it mean to be intentional light or salt in your community?

Activity

Clip news items from the daily newspapers that report on some sick children or children involved in an accident. Write a letter or a card for each of them and ask your parents or teacher to mail or take them to the hospital for you.

Application

Invite a friend to join you in a community project. Select a project you can help out with in the community and tell your Sabbath school teacher or pastor about it. Or volunteer in an ongoing community project of the church. Maybe you can spend one hour reading the Bible to an elderly person or tell Bible stories to under privileged children. Write down a few more things you can do to share Jesus with others.

Note

DAY 6

All Tangled Up!

"All people have sinned and are not good enough for God's glory. People are made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3:23, 24).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Have children look through some newspapers and identify and make a list of the various types of crimes com mitted: murders? child abuse? robbery? cheating? Then have children make a second list of bad things they sometimes do. Have them compare their lists and then discuss with them the meaning of sin.

Story

Many years ago when I was working as a teacher in the county jail, I met Hugo in my Social Studies class. He was smart and good-looking, but he was arrested by the police for stealing cars. I tried to help him do well on his high school examinations so that he could be let out of jail for good behavior.

"It's no use," Hugo sighed one day. "I can't live straight."

"Why can't you?" I asked, surprised.

"Ma'am, I have no mama, no cash, no nothing," he replied. "Jail is my best home!"

"Do you know that Jesus could help you get rid of your sins?" I asked.

"Jesus? Who is this guy? Never heard of him!" Hugo snorted.

Each Sabbath my husband and I visited Hugo in the jail. We prayed with him, taught him songs about Jesus, and shared the story of Jesus with him.

After eight months of waiting, Hugo was finally released and was free to go home. All four of us teachers gave him good advice: "Goodbye and be good." "Stay out of trouble!" "We are praying for you."

Early Monday morning I went to the jail again to teach. Guess who was in my class?

"Hugo! What are you doing here again?" I asked in disbelief.

"Well, I got out last Friday," he replied, "but I had no cash. So, I just pointed a stick at the back of the cashier in a gas station and got all his dollars. That was smart, eh?"

Hugo was in and out of jail many times. Every time he got out, he was again mixed up in sin. He was all tangled up and just could not get himself loose. Sin is a terrible thing!

The Bible tells us that Satan "goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat" (1 Peter 5:8). He wants to get you hooked on sins. He whispers to you, "It's OK to take your friend's pen. He's got so many that he won't miss one." "Cheating a little is OKas long as you are not caught." "Shoot him if you want to get even with him."

Satan also tempted Jesus to sin when He had no food for 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness. He asked Jesus to change rocks into bread, jump off the top of the Temple, and bow down to worship him. Each time, Jesus answered with a strong "No!"

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve did not say no to Satan. Instead, they chose to disobey God and do what Satan tempted them to do. As a result, they brought sin and death to themselves, to their children, and to everyone who was born after them.

God wanted to fix the horrible things Satan made happen to this world and to His children. So, God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross in our place. Because Jesus never sinned, He could die for the sins of everyone. It was not easy for Jesus to die such a cruel death, but it was the only way to get rid of sin forever. Don't you want to join forces with Jesus to get away from sin and from Satan?

Application

Identify two or three of your weak nesses and pray to Jesus for help so that you can say no. Practice telling Satan, "Go away from me. It is written in the Bible . . ."

Discussion

1. When our friends pressure us to do wrong, is it the same as Satan's temptation?
2. How would you overcome the temptations to be dishonest, to spread lies about your friend, or to hurt someone?
3. Are the Ten Commandments good rules for avoiding sin, or are they old-fashioned?

Activity

With some black yarn, make a spider web on a cardboard base. Weave the web carefully. Then cut out some yellow ovals and write down the temptations many of you are facing. Glue them onto the web. Hang it on your desk to remind you each day to pray for Jesus' help to conquer these sins.

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DAY 7

Daddy's Homecoming

"Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, even those who stabbed him. And all peoples of the earth will cry loudly because of him. Yes, this will happen! Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Find a family photo album with pictures of your daddy. Pick out some photos of Daddy when he was young, when he got married to your mother, and when he was with you and your family. Ask, "How did you feel if your daddy ever had to be away a lot? Why is that so? What special things could you do to welcome him home?"

Story

I really missed Daddy! It seemed he was gone for such a long time. My daddy went away very often because he worked on a huge ship. It could be as long as three whole months! Sometimes he would call us on the phone when his ship docked at a port. That's when I would rush to the telephone to speak with him. "Daddy, Daddy, when are you coming home? Did you get me that special train?" I asked hastily. You see, we had to take turns because Mommy, big sister, and big brother all wanted to talk too. "But I'll be waiting for you, Daddy," I shouted excitedly before he hung up.

It was my ninth birthday, and this year Daddy would be coming home on my birthday! Can you imagine how thrilled I was? I simply couldn't fall asleep that night. My mind was full of ideas and imagination about what Daddy would bring home for my birthday present. I tossed and turned on my bed for a long time before I finally drifted off to sleep.

Early the next morning our entire household was buzzing with anticipation. "Mommy, I've cleaned up my room, and everything is spic and span," I said proudly. "Look, I even made a red and-blue welcome-home card for Daddy. What do you think of it?" I beamed joy fully. I placed it carefully in the living room so he wouldn't miss it.

Mommy was busy with the last-minute

cooking, decorating, and baking so we could have a big welcome-home party for Daddy.

We checked eagerly with the ship's arrival schedule so that we could get to the dock just before his ship pulled into the harbor. "Look for a red handkerchief," Mommy reminded. Oh yes! The red handkerchief that would help us identify our father. It would be almost impossible to spot anyone among hundreds of seamen all dressed in white uniforms. So, the red handkerchief was our little sign!

Soon we saw red! The red cloth was moving vigorously. "There he is. Yes, that's Daddy up on the deck!" I shouted as I waved excitedly. "Daddy, Daddy!" I yelled. "Welcome home!"

One day just before He died, Jesus told His disciples that He would go away for a while. But He promised to come again. "I am going . . . to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am" (John 14:2, 3).

Jesus said, "The Lord himself will come down from heaven. There will be a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God" (1 Thess. 4:16). Isn't this a wonderful promise?

The disciples were very sad and heartbroken when Jesus died on the cross. But soon the crying stopped. When Jesus arose from the grave, they were filled with hope and excitement again. Later, when He was taken up to heaven, the disciples remembered what He had told them earlier. As they watched Him going up into the sky, suddenly two angels stood beside them. They said, "Why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus taken away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go" (Acts 1:11).

We can imagine the disciples saying excitedly to one another, "Let's tell everyone that Jesus is coming again! We want everyone in Jerusalem, Samaria, Judea, and the whole world to be ready for Jesus' homecoming."

But how would they do that? They studied the Bible a lot, prayed for the power of the Holy Spirit, and went out to teach others about Jesus. They also healed and helped.

But what signs should the disciples watch for before Jesus' homecoming? Jesus told the disciples that there would be wars and rumors of war, natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, etc. There would be people who would pretend to be Jesus.

Are you seeing these signs today? What signs have already taken place? Yes, we see many wars happening in many countries. It's so heartbreaking to watch children and adults being killed in Iraq. It's so sad that many lost their houses during the hurricanes. Are you getting ready? Are we telling our friends to be ready for Jesus, too?

Make a list of things you can do to prepare for Jesus' homecoming. Can you join a Bible study group? Help the less fortunate? Clean house for some elderly neighbors? Invite your friends to attend children's retreats or Bible camps? Share your list with your Sabbath school teacher or pastor and tell them you want to volunteer to help in getting others ready.

Application

Discussion

1. How is preparing for your dad's homecoming similar to preparing for Jesus' homecoming?
2. How can your church help you prepare for Jesus' second coming?
3. How can you deal with the temptations of television, the Internet, and other mass media that distract you from being prepared?

Check with your teacher, pastor, or a children's hospital to learn whether any one is coming home after recovery from sickness. Volunteer to help plan a welcoming party for the person. Create welcome cards for him or her. Write an interesting message and draw your best picture.

Activity

Children's Journey of HOPE

Holding on to Hope

THEME

By: MARGARET TAGLAVORE

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2006

DAY 1

Just One Look!

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NCV).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Put up a big banner with the word "HOPE" on it. Then ask, "What does this word mean to you?" Explain that hope means: to desire with expectation getting something; to look forward to; to anticipate.

Story

James hurried to the school door and rushed outside. The cold, crisp winter air felt good on his face. Winter was his favorite time of year. There were so many fun things to do! The ground was covered with fresh snow—perfect for a snowball fight with his friends. His mom wouldn't be home from work for two hours, and James was planning to walk home with his two friends, Josh and Bobby.

James lived in a small town, and his school was only a half mile from his house. There were many interesting things to see and do between his house and the school. Now he waited under the old oak tree for his friends.

"Hey, James!" yelled his buddies.

Josh and Bobby were already packing the soft snow into snowballs. James darted behind the tree and started his own pile of snowballs. The fun began.

"Let's go by the park today." Josh had run out of snowballs and was ready to move on.

"Yeah, the pond is frozen solid, and I can beat both of you getting across," Bobby spoke up as they picked up their books and headed in the direction of home. "Well, guys," James replied, "my mom said the pond looks safe, but sometimes looks can be deceiving. She told me to stay away from the pond."

"I saw the pond this morning, and it looked OK to me," Bobby replied.

"Come on, James," Josh spoke up. "We can just walk past it. We don't have to race across it.

" James hesitated. He knew what his mom had said, and he wanted to obey her. But just a look wouldn't hurt anything.

"OK!" James began to run. "Last one there is a rotten egg!

" When the boys reached the pond, it was a memorable sight. The ice on the top of the pond glistened under the evening sun. It was indeed tempting to skate on its slick surface. In fact, several children had donned their ice skates and were beginning to move out onto the pond.

James, Josh, and Bobby watched. They wanted so much to join the others out on the pond, but they all knew James's mother's warning must be followed. James, Josh, and Bobby had a choice. They could obey Mrs. Martin or take that dare and race across the pond. Suddenly someone screamed! "The ice is cracking! Get off the ice!" Just then a boy plunged into the cold waters of the pond.

"Help!" Everyone wanted to save the boy in the water, but the ice was too dangerous for them to get near him. They could hear the fire-truck siren screaming in the distance, and in just minutes the firefighters were there with their long ladder to rescue the freezing child. The boy was saved. James, Josh, and Bobby bowed their heads for a prayer of thanks.

James thanked God for a wise and loving mother and for the firefighters who saved the drowning child. He thought of Jesus, and thanked God for sending His only Son to die so he could be saved, even when he made bad choices.

Remember Eve, the first woman and mother of the world? Eve made a bad choice. She decided to have "just a look" at that forbidden tree. Soon Eve was deceived by Satan, who was dis guised as a beautiful talking snake. She ate the forbidden fruit and disobeyed God. Yes, Eve had sinned, and because of her disobedience everyone must die. Eventually she and her husband, Adam, had to leave the Garden of Eden. But God forgave her. God gave Eve hope. God gave Eve a promise. He told Eve that He would send Jesus, His beloved Son, to die on earth to save her and all of us who made bad choices. Eve lived many more years expecting the fulfillment of this hope through one of her descendants. Because of this promise to Eve, we also have the hope of seeing Jesus and being in heaven with Him someday.

Look at your life and then make a list of bad choices you have made. Not telling the truth? Cheating on a test? Then make a list of victories you have had this week and share that with one another in the group.

1. Why is it difficult to make good choices?
2. What are the benefits of placing your hope in Jesus in regards to making choices?

Let's make a snowflake to hang in your room with the word "HOPE" on one side and the memory text (John 3:16) written on the other side. You can decorate your snowflake with glitter if you would like.

DAY 2

The Messenger

The Messenger Memory Text: "Jesus said, 'Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you may be where I am'" (John 14:1-3, NCV).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Divide the children into groups of three or four. Provide them with poster-size papers and markers. Ask each group to write down different types of messengers. They could look into history to list messengers of ancient times, such as the Greek messenger who carried the news about military attacks, etc. Tape them all around the room. Then ask the children, "How is carrying messages today different from long ago? Would you rather be a messenger today than be one in ancient times? Why?"

Story

Frank was only 12 years old, but he wanted a job. He had so many things he needed, but no money to get them. His parents told him he would have to earn the money in order to get them. So, he applied for a position as a news boy. He would deliver the newspaper each evening and Sunday morning and would earn the money by himself.

"Frank, get up!" It was Mom. "You must have your papers delivered by 6:00 a.m. This is Sunday morning.

" Frank opened one eye and looked at the clock. Four a.m.! Wow, what an awful time to get up. Then he thought about that new bicycle he wanted and quickly got out of bed and headed for the garage, where he would band his papers and load them onto his old bicycle for delivery.

Every evening Frank rushed home from school and delivered his papers before doing his homework. Needless to say, he had no time for sports! It was all worth it, though. He now had a

brand-new wallet and his own money to put into it.

One day as Frank banded the papers, he started to read some of the stories. To his amazement, most of the stories were ***BAD NEWS!*** Frank started thinking. I'm a messenger of BAD NEWS!

That thought bothered Frank for several days. He did not like being a messenger of bad news. "I want to be a messenger of ***GOOD NEWS***," he reasoned. "How can I do that?"

Frank remembered seeing his mom make a newspaper called ***The Good News*** for the primary Sabbath school. He remembered hearing his mom sing a song that said, "The good news is God made a way."

"That's it! I'll put some good news into each newspaper I deliver."

That is exactly what he did. Frank went to the Adventist Book Store with his mom and tried looking for something that told the good news of Jesus. He wanted people to know about Jesus their Savior. Finally, Frank found a small pamphlet that he could insert into each of the papers as he put the rubber band around them. Frank believed in Jesus and hoped for the day when he would see Him. He wanted to share with the people in his neighborhood this wonderful hope.

Someone in the Bible was also called to be a messenger of hope to many people. His name was Moses. Can you tell me anything about Moses?

Yes! He was hidden in a basket when he was a small baby. He was raised by the Pharaoh's daughter and became an adopted prince. He saw his people being treated badly and wanted to help them. God called him to become the leader of the Israelites to lead them out of Egypt. He was to lead them to the Promised Land—a land they could call their own.

Did Moses get to see the Promised Land? No, he did not, because he got angry and did not follow God's instruction. But even though Moses did not get to see the Promised Land of Canaan, he did not lose hope in God. After his death God raised him from the grave to be with Him in heaven. His hope was only delayed!

Jesus told us He has prepared a place for us and that He will come again to take us to live with Him. Don't let this hope grow dim.

Application

Make a list of things that you can do to be a messenger of hope. Share them with a friend. Then make another list of things you should avoid if you want to bear good news to others.

Discussion

1. If God has called you to be a messenger of hope, what preparation do you need?
2. What qualities can you learn from Moses that can help you to be a good messenger? 3. What are some ways you can share this hope with your friends and neighbors just as Frank did?

Make a "newspaper" with only good news in it. You can entitle the paper HOPE. Write short news clips and draw pictures to illustrate this news.

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Note

DAY 3

Adopted

"Because of his love, God . . . decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:5, NCV).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Try to find a picture of a family with adopted children (or an actual family you know). Tell (or ask the family to talk) about their experience. Can anyone tell me what "adopted" means? Yes! It means to be taken voluntarily into another family. Then ask, "How do you feel if a loving family takes you in?"

Story

Kathy was playing happily with her neighbor Lei when sounds of sirens went fleeting by.

"It must be a fire," she said casually to Lei.

Kathy and Lei were so engrossed in their Barbie dolls that they did not notice that police cars, ambulances, and people were busy at an accident scene. A four-car crash had just taken place at the end of the road, and it was causing a huge traffic jam.

Before long, Kathy heard Lei's mother, Mrs. Wong, calling her urgently:

"Kathy, Kathy!" Mrs. Wong called earnestly. "Come quickly. Something terrible has happened to your mom and dad."

Dropping everything, Kathy ran out to the gate to meet Mrs. Wong. Her heart was beating fast, and her hands were growing cold.

What could happen to Mom and Dad? Kathy thought solemnly.

In a matter of hours Kathy was told that her mom, dad, and brother were all killed in that accident. She cried herself to sleep that night. What would happen to her now? Who would take care of her? After all, she was only 7 years old!

Yes, Kathy had become an orphan! But two weeks later Uncle John and Aunt Sarah came to help Kathy pack up.

"But where am I going?" asked Kathy, with a curious look in her eye.

"We are going to take you home with us, Kathy. You are going to become part of our family. We are going to let you share the room with your cousin Gina. Wouldn't you like that?" smiled Uncle John.

"We are going to adopt you!" Aunt Sarah said excitedly.

"Really?" exclaimed Kathy as tears flowed down her cheeks. "You are going to love me like you love Gina?"

And so it was that Kathy went to live with Uncle John and Aunt Sarah. They loved her just like their own daughter. She attended the Adventist church school and academy. Everything in this school was strange to Kathy. The way the other students talked and dressed. The way they acted. The school had special classes about the Bible, and everyone attended worship in the morning and went to church on Saturday.

Can you guess what happened to Kathy? Yes! Kathy learned to know Jesus! Her life started to change. She became a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

There are many people who do not know Jesus. The Bible mentions Rahab as one. She didn't know Jesus, but she had heard of Israel's God. She took the risk to save the two spies from Israel when the king of Jericho wanted to arrest them. The spies brought her the message of hope, and she accepted it. When the walls of Jericho tumbled down, everyone was destroyed. Only Rahab and her family were saved, because she obeyed the spies' instruction to tie a red thread on her window. She accepted Israel's God. She was adopted into the family of the Israelites, and Rahab became an ancestor of David, who was an ancestor of Jesus.

Application

Make a list of things you can do to help children who have become orphans. Can you visit them, or become a friend to one of them? Perhaps you can pray with them? Can you share your toys and clothes with them? Share this list with your pastor and Sabbath school teacher to see if they could arrange for you to visit an orphanage.

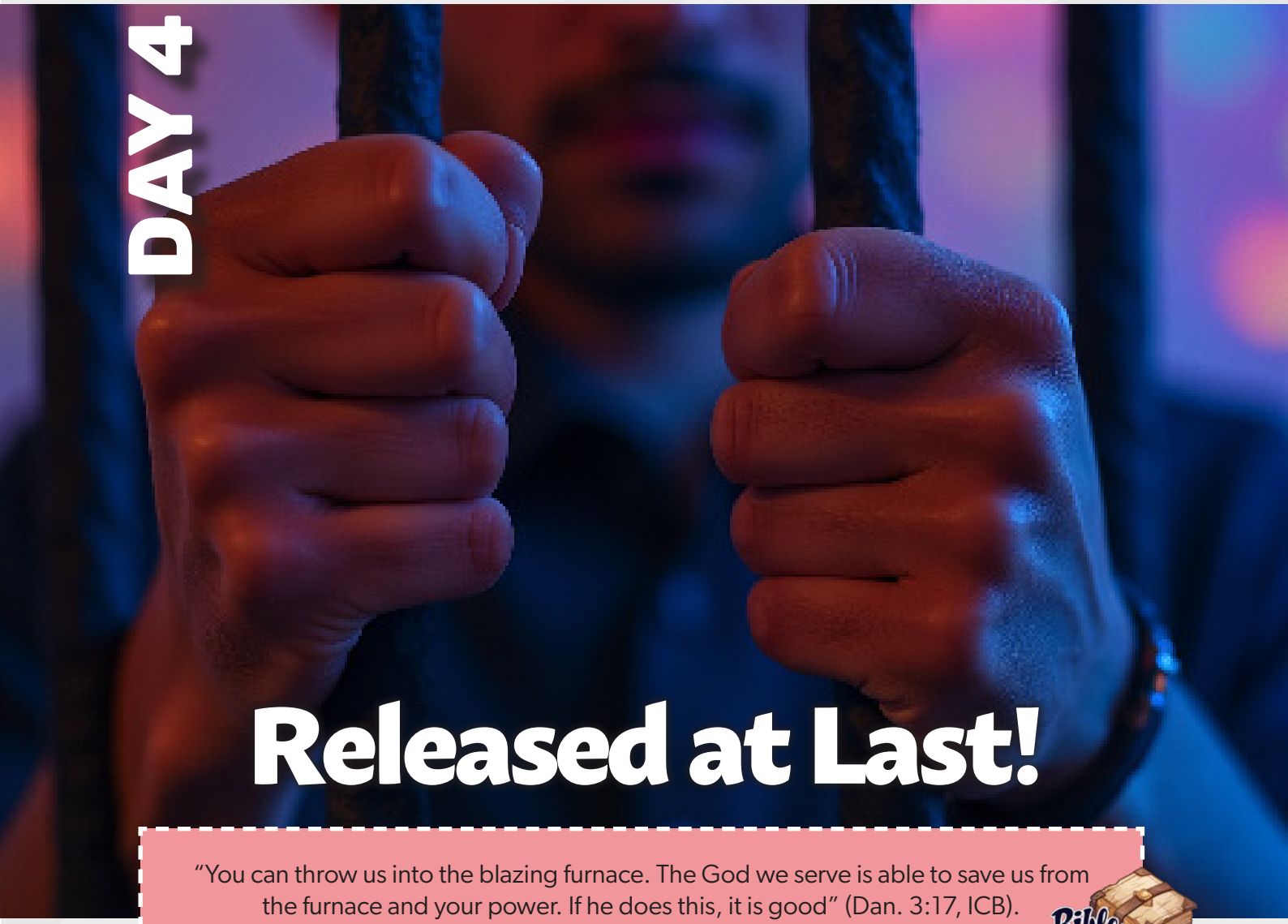
Discussion

1. When you are adopted into the family of Jesus, how should you live your life?
2. How do you help orphans want to become adopted by Jesus?

Activity

Have children weave strands of red yarn into a long string to remind them that God also cares for those who do not know about Him.

Note



DAY 4

Released at Last!

"You can throw us into the blazing furnace. The God we serve is able to save us from the furnace and your power. If he does this, it is good" (Dan. 3:17, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Pass out colored strips of paper to the children and ask them to write down some of the trials people have faced in their lives. For example, were they or someone they know ever wrongly accused of something they didn't do? Do they know of anyone going to prison for believing in Jesus? Have them share their answers. Then ask, "How does it feel when you are wrongly accused, and everything seems hopeless?"

Story

Civil war was raging in the country of Sri Lanka. Two religious groups were fighting and killing each other. Everyone was under suspicion. In fact, no one dared to go out of their house unnecessarily. Even Christians who go to church to worship were under suspicion.

One evening young pastor Alex was home preparing his sermon for Sabbath services when there was a loud banging on his door.

"Open up!" shouted the people outside his house. "Open up!"

Everyone in the house stood together nervously as Pastor Alex opened the door. Several people dressed in police and army uniforms stepped inside. They started to accuse Alex of hiding enemies of the other religious group in his house, and of helping them to escape through the church.

"No! No! I didn't do that," answered Alex loudly. "It must be a mistake! I am a Christian!"

Everything went so fast that before he knew it, Alex was arrested and put into jail in a faraway town. He was away from his family, lying in a damp, dirty prison cell filled with crawling creatures. But Pastor Alex remembered God's promises to deliver His children. He continued

to pray every day, to trust in Jesus, and to share Jesus with the other prisoners. Later he was able to get hold of a Bible to study with the other prisoners.

Do you know how long Alex stayed in prison? More than 15 long years! But he never gave up hope that God is in control and will deliver him. He helped many prisoners to become followers of Jesus, and they were baptized in the prison.

God did not forget Alex! In the year 2000 Alex was released from prison!

Do you remember Daniel? Can you imagine how Daniel felt when he was facing many difficult moments in his life? He was only a young boy when he was taken as prisoner to Babylon. He had to leave his mother and father and go to a foreign land where he didn't know their language or their customs. Everything seemed hopeless! But Daniel remained faithful to Jesus. He did not forget what his parents had taught him. He did not forget to honor God in his daily life, including the food he ate. Eventually Daniel and his three friends were found to be the wis est in Babylon. God gave him wisdom to interpret the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. He was promoted to become a minister under this powerful king for many years.

Once more, when he was wrongly accused and thrown into the lions' den, Daniel could say firmly, "My God sent his angel to close the lions' mouths. They have not hurt me, because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, my king" (Dan. 6:22, ICB).

Daniel lived to an old age, serving three kings. His endurance and trust in God eventually defeated his evil ene mies, and Daniel was placed in the highest position of Babylon.

Application

Make a list of names of people who are facing trials now and pray for each one of them. Maybe some are in prison for their faith. Perhaps an uncle couldn't find a job because he refused to work on Sabbath. Maybe a friend is dying of cancer. Practice praying two to three times a day.

Discussion

1. Why is it important to keep a trusting spirit in difficult times?
2. In what way can a person under trials and difficulties remain faithful to God?
3. If you were misjudged or wrongly accused, how would you handle the situation?

Activity

Write a prayer journal with names of friends who are going through difficulties and pray for them. Send a card to tell someone in trouble that you are praying for them. Cut out a heart from red paper and put a text of hope on one side and the picture of Jesus on the other.

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DAY 5

Mary's Hope

Memory Text: "She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21, NCV).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Bring a bassinet filled with things needed for babies. Ask the children to identify them and discuss what each item is used for. Talk about the excitement of having a new baby brother or sister. "What preparation did your mom make before having the baby?"

Story

(Parents and Teachers—Read Luke 2:1-16 and Luke 1:26-35 before presenting today's reading.)

How many of you have a baby in your house? Babies are special, aren't they? Once a year the world focuses on a very special baby. Can anyone tell me who that baby is? Yes! It's the Baby Jesus. Today, we want to focus on Baby Jesus' mother, Mary. The Bible tells us that Gabriel, an angel from God, was sent to tell Mary she would have Baby Jesus (Luke 1:26-35). Mary wasn't married, and this would be her first baby. Do you think she was afraid? I think she was surprised and afraid. The angel told Mary not to fear—she was chosen by God, and her baby would be very special. The angel told Mary to name the baby "Jesus." Do you know what answer Mary gave to the angel? Yes! She said she was the servant of God and would do everything the angel told her to do.

Mary was so happy to be chosen to serve God and have a special little baby named Jesus. Luke 1:46-55 says that Mary was so happy she praised God aloud for everyone to hear. Do you know why Mary was so excited? Because she knew Jesus was going to be the Savior of the world. God had chosen her to take care of the One who would save us all from the evil one,

Satan.

Mary did all God asked her to do. She took very special care of little Jesus and taught Him to love and honor God and love those around Him. She watched Him grow to be a man, and she let Him go as He went about His mission to teach and heal those around Him. Mary was always aware of who Jesus was and what His mission was on this earth.

Boys and girls, there are many stories in the Bible about Jesus' life on this earth. Can anyone tell me what happened to Jesus? (Let children answer.) Yes, wicked men killed Jesus and hung Him on the cross to die. How do you think Mary felt? Her heart was broken. Even though Mary knew Jesus had come here to save the world from the evil one, her heart was still broken. Mary was still the mother of Jesus. But she believed God's promises, and she knew God was stronger than Satan.

Did Jesus stay dead? No! Jesus arose from the tomb, and when He did, He sealed the hope of heaven for all of us who believe in Him. Mary, His mother, must have sung with joy when she learned that her Son, Jesus, had overcome the evil one who causes death.

Jesus' love for us is hope! Jesus waits for us in heaven, where He is the King of all heaven and earth.

Application

Write down three things you could say to a friend or neighbor about your hope in Jesus. Maybe you want to tell about His love for everyone? Or that He is coming again? Find the time to call on those friends.

Discussion

1. Is there any other way that God could save us without letting Jesus die?
2. What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to us?

Activity

Let each child make a simple cross as a bookmark to carry in their Bible. Ask them to print the words "HOPE" horizontally and "LOVE" vertically on their cross.

Note

DAY 6

Paul: Changed Inside Out!

"If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new!" (2 Cor. 5:17, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Show some newspaper clippings of two convicted teenagers. Have children identify the bad things they have done. Then ask children to write down several ways they could help these convicted teens change their bad ways. Who can help?

Story

Osman was looking forward to attending Ridgewood High School. He had moved from a small country school to the city where his dad had found a new job. The city was always better. At least that's what Osman thought. Life in the city would be more interesting with lots of fun things to do.

He made many friends at Ridge wood High, and they introduced him to many exciting things he had never seen or ever tried. Of course, the par ties were great, and he even tried some beer. He was growing up, all right!

One afternoon as he was packing up his bag to go home, his buddy Hosni called out.

"Hey, Oss, do you want to do something different tonight?" Hosni asked invitingly.

"What would that be?" Osman replied with a look of curiosity.

"Come and see for yourself—just meet at the same old place," reminded Hosni as he dashed out of the door.

That night the five "musketeers," as they called themselves, got together to try a very harmful drug called "speed." They thought at first it was exciting and fun. Many more nights were spent in trying other drugs that were passed on to them.

After six months Osman got so hooked on these drugs that he started stealing his parents' money to buy them from drug peddlers around the school. Soon, his school grades were dropping day by day, and he was beginning to skip classes several times a week. Osman and Hosni were put on probation. One night the two boys even robbed a 7-Eleven store and got away with hundreds of dollars.

Crime does not pay. Soon they were arrested and charged in court. They were sent to a juvenile detention center for special help. It was there that they met Gerry, a Christian counselor, who introduced them to Jesus. Only Jesus could help them change their sinful ways. They had lots of time to read inspirational books and study the Bible.

One year later the joyous day came when Osman gave his life to Jesus. He knew it wouldn't be easy, but he believed that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13, NKJV). Indeed, Osman felt like a new man. He was changed inside out!

Similarly, when Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he surrendered his life to Him. He became Paul the apostle. Instead of persecuting the Christians, Paul became a changed man when he gave his life to Jesus. Paul found the hope in Jesus Christ exciting, and it changed his mission and his goal for life. He was no longer thinking of selfish ambition. He had no concern for fame and popularity among friends.

Mind you, many Christians in the church were suspicious of Paul at first. Was he really truly sorry for his sins? Maybe it was a trick to get more Christians killed. But as Paul commit ted himself to working with the other apostles and believers for several years, they finally believed that his conversion was genuine. He was on fire for Jesus Christ, taking several missionary trips to Asia Minor to preach this hope of salvation.

Paul suffered lots of hardship for Jesus, but he did not mind. Instead, he continued to encourage Christians everywhere to "carry each other's bur dens" (Gal. 6:2), to unite as one in Christ Jesus. Paul's life and ministry lifted the hope that "now Christ is risen from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:20, NKJV), and that we are to "press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called . . . [us] heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

Application

Volunteer to give a testimony in the church or Sabbath school class on how Jesus changed your life after you made the choice to follow Him. Share with a friend in school the joy and hope of believing in Jesus.

Discussion

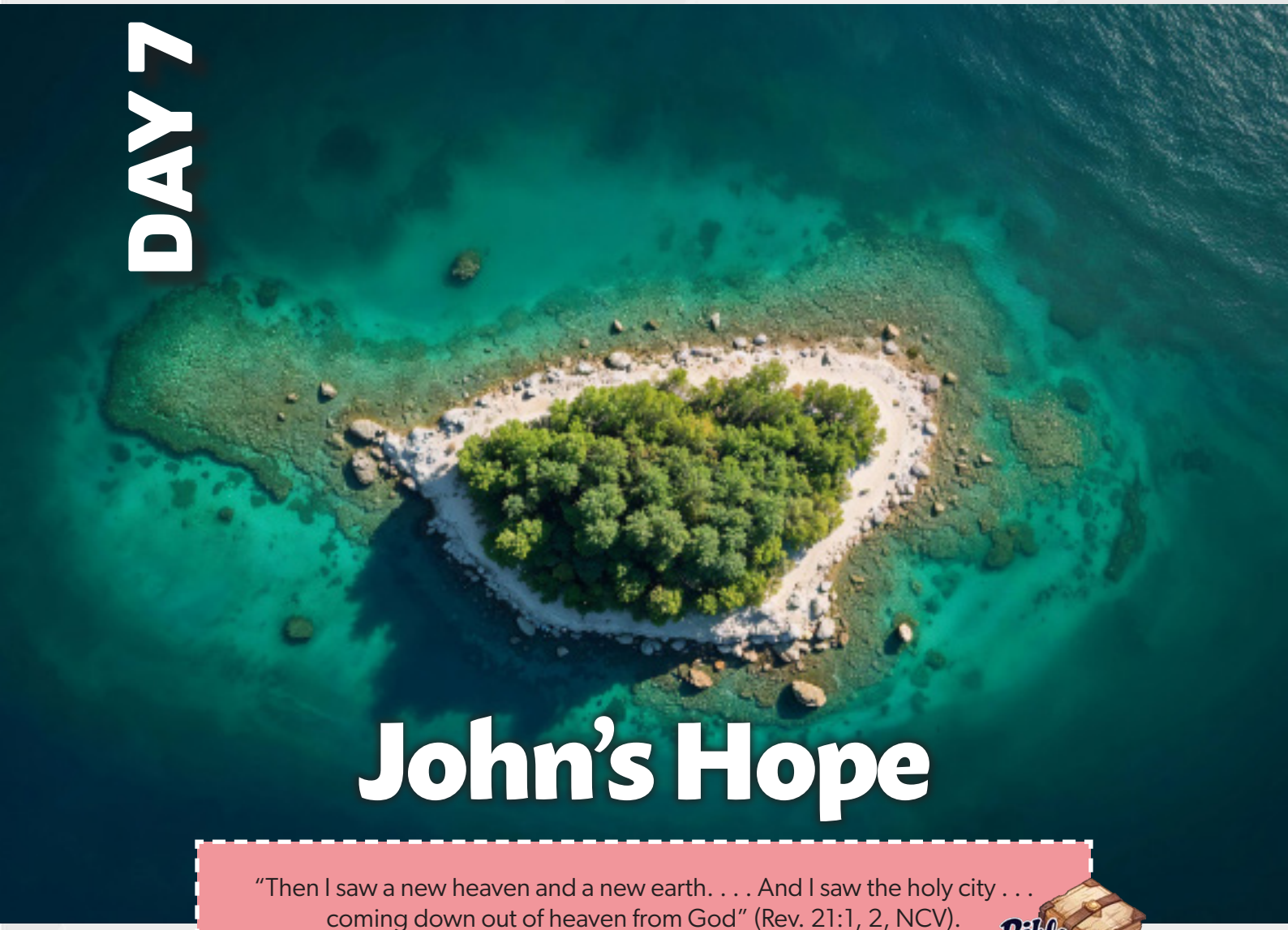
1.If you become changed in Jesus, does it mean you won't get into trouble anymore?
2. Suppose someone said to you, "I have tried many times to stop smoking but have had no success," what would you say? How can you help them find the hope in Jesus?

Activity

Ask your mom or Sabbath school teacher to help you plan a party for a friend who has accepted Jesus. Decorate the room with your drawings and cutouts. Have lots of food. Invite them to tell one change that Jesus helped them to make in their life after they accepted Him.

Note

DAY 7



John's Hope

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . . And I saw the holy city . . . coming down out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:1, 2, NCV).

Bible Treasure

Visual Aid

Show pictures of children with handicaps. Have children identify the various types of handicaps: Hearing loss. Blindness. Speech loss. Then ask, "How would you feel if you had a physical handicap? How would you deal with it at school and in public places?

Story

Bryan sat in his wheelchair near the west window. The warm sunlight made tracks across his lap. It was cold outside, but Bryan was warm with the sun and the lap quilt his aunt Louise had given him. He liked to sit at the window and watch the schoolchildren load onto the buses after school.

All was quiet in the house. Bryan was alone. Both Mom and Dad worked outside the home, and his older sister had not gotten home from her school. Bryan was 10 years old and could take good care of himself for most of the time. He had learned to operate his motorized wheelchair, and the house was built so he could go just about anywhere he wanted. He had a schoolteacher after lunch from 1:00-3:00 p.m. every day during the school year. Although Bryan's legs were crooked with polio, his mind was bright and he was a quick learner. His family did not live near a church school, and his par ents did not want Bryan to attend the public school in their city. They had hopes of getting Bryan and his sister into church school and were working out the transportation problem. But in the meantime, it could get lonely at home.

Although Bryan could not walk, he loved God. He accepted his disability without questioning God. Bryan trusted God and knew that He

would use him and his disability as a witness to everyone around him. Bryan also knew he would go to heaven to live with God and Jesus someday. When he did, he knew he would run like the wind and chase the lion cubs as they played with him. Bryan kept in his heart this hope that we all have: Jesus died to save us and will take us to live with Him in heaven.

Remember John the Beloved, one of Jesus' disciples? He was also alone on the island of Patmos. He was sent there for preaching the hope of salvation. But John was not discouraged, for Jesus appeared to him to strengthen his hope in Him and in the church. He was given many visions about the second coming of Jesus, the new heaven and new earth, where "[God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes. . . . There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. . . . All the old ways are gone" (Rev. 21:4, NCV).

The apostle John was greatly comforted as he recorded all these beautiful messages that Jesus gave him. We can be assured that this hope of meeting Jesus again in the new earth will soon be realized.

Discussion

1. What would you say to another child if they asked, "If there is a God, why didn't He help me to see?" 2. How can you develop a positive attitude and be cheerful?
3. What is one thing you'll like to do when you get to heaven?

Activity

Have the children draw a picture of today's story. Let the children share their pictures with you, then place the pictures on the wall. Also, have them cut a heart from paper and write "God Is Love" on one side and "I Love God" on the other.

Application

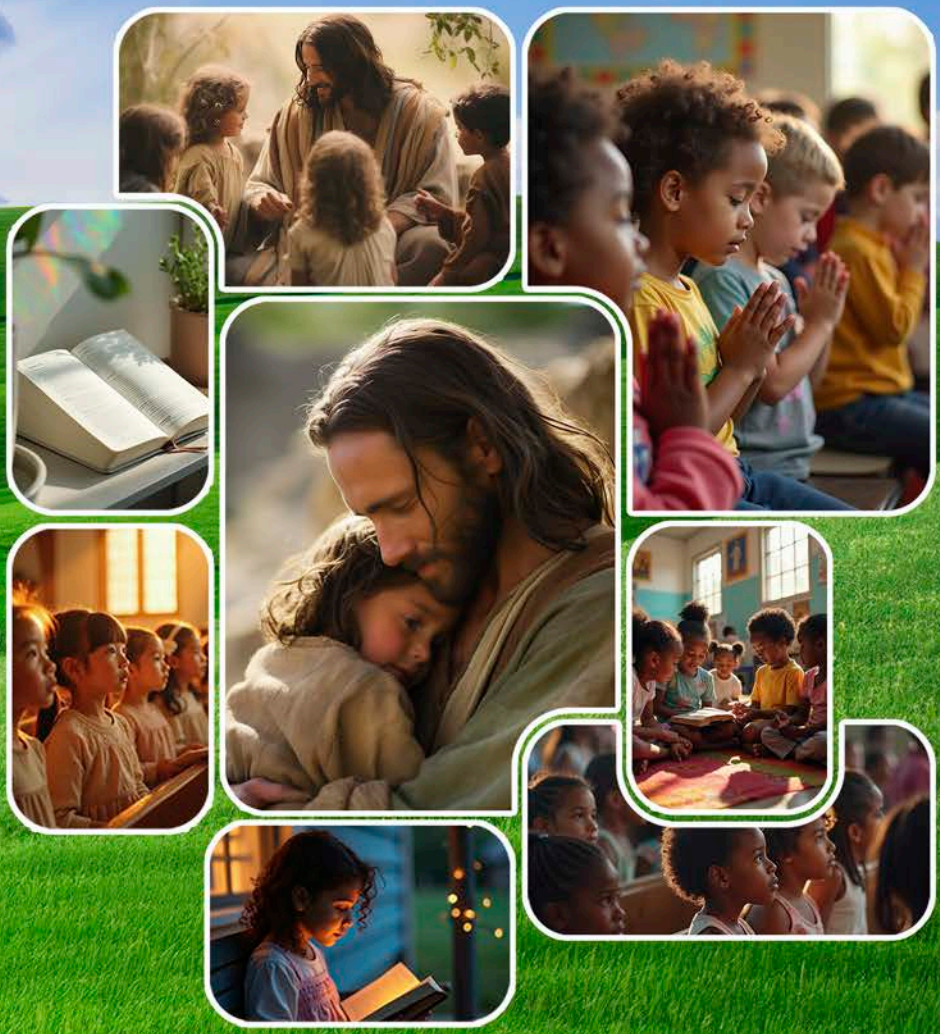
Ask your mom to take you to visit a children's hospital. Talk to different children about the hope of Jesus' coming and heaven. If possible, give them a CD with Bible stories and encourage them to listen.

Note

Hope *in the* Promises *of* JESUS

THEME

By: LINDA MEI LIN KOH



Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2007

DAY 1

Caught in the Storm

"Do not be afraid. I am with you. Do not be terrified. I am your God" (Isa. 41:10, NIV).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Ask the children if they have ever been fishing or seen people fishing. Let them tell you what they know about fishing and fishing boats. Have the children share briefly some of their experiences. Then ask, "What are some of the dangers of fishing?"

Something went very wrong when Alice went ocean fishing with her dad. See if you can figure out why she was able to stay calm.

Story

"Oh, my line is pulling! I've got a fish, Dad!" Alice shouted excitedly.

"Hold on tight and don't let go," Dad instructed Alice as he moved closer to grab her rod. "Wow! What a catch! It's a lingcod!" Dad exclaimed as he opened the fish's mouth to remove the hook.

"The fish are really biting today!" Alice squealed. "May we go farther out for some of those nice pink salmon, Dad?"

"You're getting hooked on fishing, eh?" Dad teased as he tossed the fish into the cooler box.

Indeed, it had been a great day for fishing. Father and daughter had started out very early that Sunday morning, hoping to bring in a great catch by the end of the day. Soon the little fishing boat was moving farther out to sea in search of Alice's pink salmon.

As Alice and her dad were putting away their lunch boxes, Dad noticed some dark clouds in the sky.

"I hope it's not a storm," Dad sighed. "Maybe we should head on home, just in case. We'll get our pink salmon another time."

Alice was listening for the steady put-put of the starting engine but instead the engine sputtered, and her dad cried out, "Oh, no!

We're out of gasoline! I forgot the two gas cans we bought!"

"What should we do? Will we make it home?" Alice fought to stay calm.

"I'll call the coast guard for help," Dad said with some assurance as he fiddled with the boat's radio. "Mayday! Mayday! Sting Ray calling!" He repeated the call for help three times, but there was no response from the coast guard.

By then, dark clouds began hovering over the boat, and the waves were becoming choppier. Fear tightened Alice's chest. The wind was growing stronger and stronger. Her heartbeat fast as thoughts of her mom; her dog, Rover; and her sister, Lillian, popped into her head.

"I'm scared, Dad," she sobbed, curling herself close to her dad. "Are we going to die?"

"Don't worry, my girl. Jesus will take care of us," Dad assured Alice. "Let's pray to Him right now." And they cuddled together under the canvas sheet, praying for God's help.

Alice felt better after they prayed. She knew in her heart that God was present because she felt a sudden calm in her heart. It seemed like hours that the howling winds tossed the little boat to and from in the stormy sea when a foghorn blew loudly in front of the little boat. Dad threw back the canvas and jumped up.

"Help! Help!" he yelled loudly, frantically waving a red towel.

The cargo boat responded to Dad's call for help and towed their little boat back to safety. Dad vowed never again to be so careless loading the boat.

Lesson

Remember the disciples who went with Jesus in a boat one evening? When they were sailing to the other side of the lake, a wild storm started. You can read the story in Luke 8. Jesus was sleeping, and the boat was about to sink. The terrified disciples woke Him up. They couldn't figure out how He could sleep in such a wild storm. Jesus just stood up in that rocking boat, raised His arms, and commanded the winds to be still. He then turned to His disciples and asked, "Why are you so afraid? Don't you have any faith at all yet?" (Mark 4:40). The truth is that the disciples had forgotten Jesus was with them in the boat; they thought it was just the storm and them. But it is never just we and the storm. Jesus is always there with us.

Jesus was present with the disciples through many storms when He was on earth. He was their source of peace. He calmed their fears. And after Jesus went back to heaven, He did not leave them alone. He promised, "I will ask the Father. And he will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever. The Friend is the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17).

When Jesus lives in our hearts by His Spirit, we need not fear. The Bible says, "Turn all your worries over to him. He cares about you" (1 Peter 5:7). That's what Alice and her dad did when their fishing boat was in that storm.

Application

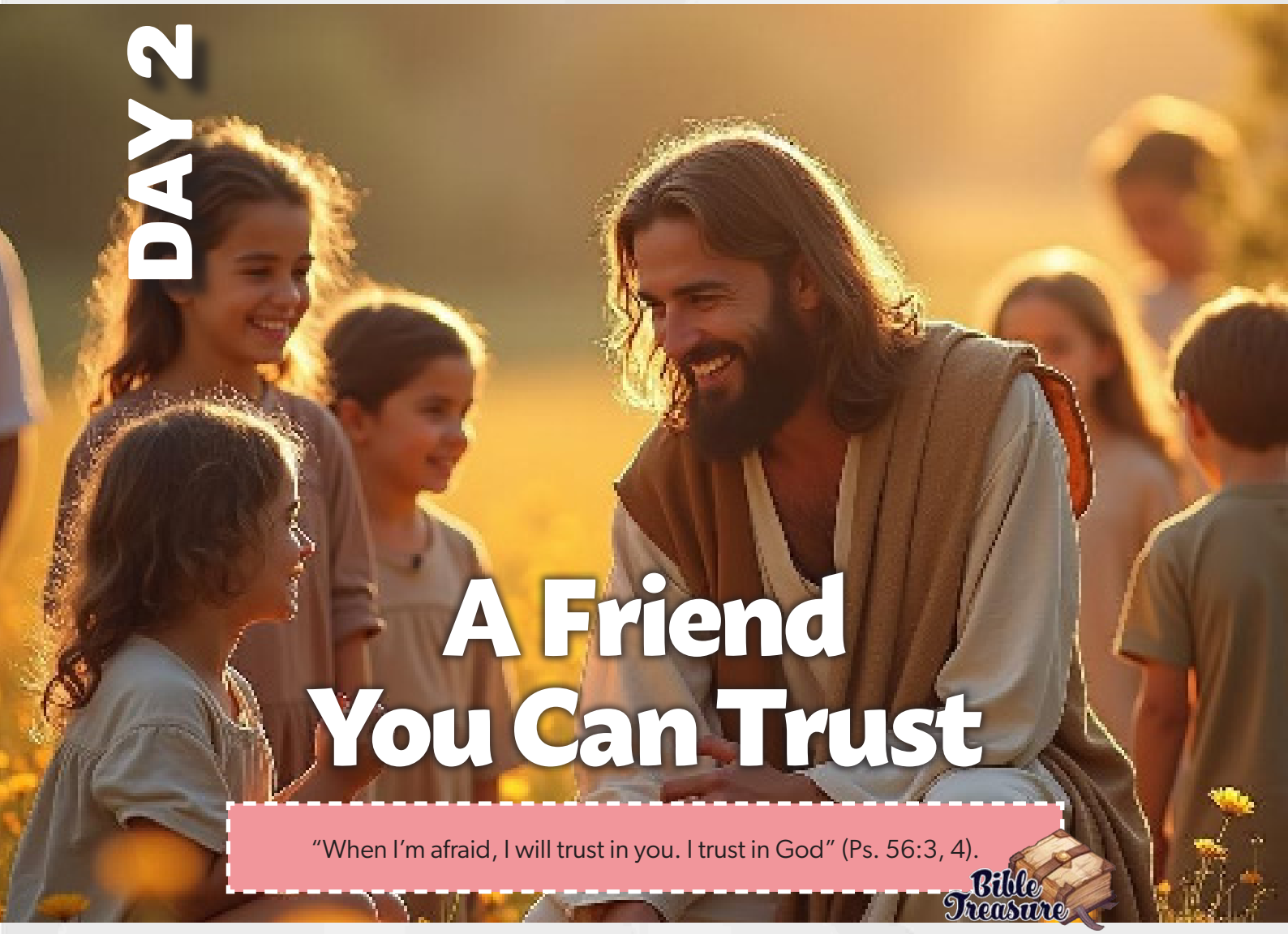
Think for a moment: What is your storm—the thing you are most afraid of? The dark? Or the ocean? Big dogs or bullies? Being alone or getting lost? Or are you scared of sharing Jesus with someone else? Talking to God about your fear always helps. Somebody wisely has said: "Don't tell God how big your storm is; tell the storm how big your God is."

Discussion

1. It is OK for boys and girls to be afraid, but God does not want us to stay afraid. Read 1 Peter 5:7; Luke 8:24, 25; John 14:1, 16. Learn Isaiah 41:10.
2. What advice would you give to a friend who is afraid? What verse or story might help them?

Activity

Learn the song "My God Is So Great!" and sing it to your friends when they are afraid. Yes, "our God is so great, so strong, and so mighty, there's nothing our God cannot do."



DAY 2

A Friend You Can Trust

"When I'm afraid, I will trust in you. I trust in God" (Ps. 56:3, 4).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Ask everyone to find a partner. In each pair, the shortest child will be the guide and tie a handkerchief, scarf, or necktie to blindfold the partner. When the start signal is given, the guide leads the blindfolded partner on a walk around the room, so they don't bump into anything. After the blindfolds are in place, rearrange the furniture to make it harder. After one minute, the children switch places. After another minute, signal everyone to stop and return to their seats. Ask, "What happened when you were blindfolded? Did you trust your guide? Is it easy to trust? What if your guide is your best friend, does that make it easier to trust?"

Story

Wheez! Boom! Boom! went the loud blast in the sky. Everyone was running for shelter from the loud explosions that shattered the homes of the little city of Singapore in 1942.

War had come, and Jin Ping did not understand what it was all about. Life had been happy and safe, but now everything changed. Fear gripped everyone; no one outside the family could be trusted anymore.

One night Jin Ping's father woke him from a sound sleep.

"Get up, son! Get up! We have to get to the boat!" Father whispered urgently.

"What? Where?" Jin Ping stammered.

"Don't ask questions. Just do as I say," Father commanded.

Soon Father, Mother, Jin Ping, and his little sister walked briskly through some dark alleys, stopping and hiding each time a dark figure passed by.

"We have to meet Uncle Poh at Temple Street. He will take us to the boat," Father explained in a whisper.

"Can you trust him?" Mother asked doubtfully.

"He's OK, an old friend of our family; we can trust Uncle Poh completely," Father assured her.

"Why don't we pray before we begin? We want God to lead us to safety," Mother suggested. The family prayed and started out.

After walking for a long time, the family finally came to Temple Street and found a little place to hide in. Father looked left and right, then at his watch again, and soon he sighted three figures walking toward their hiding place. Father was about to get up and go speak with them when he suddenly realized that the three men were enemy soldiers. They were not sent by Uncle Poh. Wow! What a relief that the family was not discovered by the enemy!

The family remained quiet under the shelter for almost two hours. Soon, Father spotted another figure coming toward them. This time he heard someone whispering, "Kok Hua, are you there?" Oh, yes, it was Uncle Poh! He was calling Father's name. He had come to rescue them. They could trust him!

Uncle Poh led the family through several dark alleys before arriving at the riverbank. A little boat was waiting. They jumped in quickly while Father hugged Uncle Poh one more time. Soon, the boatman rowed the boat out to sea. After what seemed like days and nights of sailing and hiding, the family finally reached the little island of Pulau Pinang of Indonesia. It was indeed a narrow escape!

Lesson

The disciples of Jesus were filled with fear and doubt when Jesus was arrested that night in the Garden of Gethsemane. They ran as fast as they could to escape arrest. They didn't want to be associated with Jesus. They couldn't trust anyone. Poor Peter! He was so scared to be recognized as one of the followers of Jesus that he denied Jesus three times. Each time he said, "I don't know the man!" (Matt. 26:72). But Peter soon remembered Jesus' words that He would be raised from the dead. This gave him hope to know that Jesus would rise again. Because he trusted in the words of his Lord, Peter went with the 10 other faithful disciples to a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had promised to meet them. And there Jesus commissioned them to tell the whole world of God's love for them (Matt. 28:16-20).

Application

Have the children make greeting cards decorated with the bible treasure, Psalm 56:3, 4. Encourage them to share the cards with some children in the hospital or orphanage or with a neighbor who does not know Jesus.

Discussion

1. What does it mean to trust someone?
2. Reading your Bible and praying every day grows your friendship with Jesus. What does friendship have to do with trusting? [Answer: It's easier to trust a friend.]
3. Can you think of any time in your life when you had to trust God in a difficult situation? Tell the class about it.
4. If someone said to you, "I am not sure if Jesus is really coming back again," what Bible text can you use to help the individual trust Jesus? Read John 14:1-3.

Note

DAY 3

A Mix-and-Match Family

"I will be your Father. You will be my sons and daughters,' says the Lord who rules over all" (2 Cor. 6:18).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Put up six to eight large pictures of multicultural families with children. Give the children time to observe the pictures. Ask: What are some similarities you see in all these families? What are some differences? What if family members look different? Is it still a family?

Story

"Guess what, Carlos? We are going to bring home another baby sister," Papa said excitedly.

"Really, Papa! Can I hold her this time?" Carlos asked eagerly.

"Oh, yes you may. You are going to come with us to the Children's Home for little Chwee Li," Papa assured Carlos.

The hours of waiting seemed unusually long for Carlos and his five brothers and sisters. But the time finally arrived. All six children filed into the old van with great excitement. Just think, another sister to play with!

Soon Mama uncovered the bundle in her arms to show the children the additional member of the family. There were wows and oohs! Excitement was in the air!

"Look at her eyes; they are so small. Can she see through those narrow eye lids?" Carlos asked with a puzzled look on his face.

"I have big, round eyes," remarked 6-year-old Akeela.

"You are from Africa, but Chwee Li is from China," Mama explained to the children. "Many Chinese babies have slanted eyes. God likes them that way; it's another kind of pretty."

"Why isn't her skin black and shiny like mine?" asked Shackie as he touched the little baby's

hand.

"Mama, at school they call us the mix-match kids. Are we strange?" Junie asked curiously.

"Oh, no!" Mama exclaimed, her eyes lighting up. "You are each special to us. God gave you to Papa and me!"

"We have no children of our own," Papa added as he held Akeela close, "so we looked for a special child to join our family."

"We found Carlos first, and then we saw Junie, Akeela, Shackie, Ohnma, and Rachel. We just couldn't say no. You may be from Africa, Philippines, or Myanmar, but God chose each of you for Papa and me, and we love you all." Mama smiled as she hugged her six children.

"Our family is different, eh? Red and Yellow, Black and White," Carlos said contentedly. "I don't mind that."

"I guess it's OK to be a mix-and match family. We are special!" Shackie chuckled.

Lesson

Just think—you and I also belong to a special family—God's family. In the beginning God created the whole universe (Genesis 1). Tonight look up at the sky and see all the stars and galaxies that He created, and think of God's family, spread out throughout the universe, and know that you and I are part of one huge mix-and-match family.

The apostle Paul says, "He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have. . . . Because you are his children, he gives you what he promised to give his people" (Gal. 4:5, 7). Wow! When we choose Jesus, we inherit everything that God has for us.

John the apostle promised: "How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God" (1 John 3:1). And Jesus promises: "There are many rooms in my Father's house" (John 14:2), one for each of His children. Each person is important to Him— as if we were the only one.

Make a list of fun things you want to do when you live in God's house. What would you like to explore? Where would you like to go? And who do you most want to be with? What will you tell your friends they must do so they can live in God's house? I hope you would say that they only have to accept Jesus as their best Friend and love Him with all their heart.

Application

Discussion

1. God adopts us into His family when we accept Him. What are some things adopted children do to show their love and appreciation to their adopted family?
2. What in this lesson can you share to cheer up a child who lives in an unhappy family or feels lonely, unwanted, or unimportant?

Learn the song "I'm So Glad I'm a Part of the Family of God." Illustrate the song with pictures of different people who are members of God's family and ask your Sabbath school teacher or school teacher if you can share it with the rest of the children in your class.

Activity

Note

DAY 4

Dependable Captain

"Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have. The One who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

How many of you have been sky diving? Who would like to explain what skydiving is? If I were brave enough to try skydiving, what kind of instructor would you advise me to get? How important is it that my instructor be dependable?

Story

The clear blue sky ushered in an excellent day for skydiving. Jason had looked forward to this day with great anticipation. Today he and his buddies, Bryant and Kumar, would be trying out the daring stunt of diving from the sky. That had been Jason's dream since he was 7!

Can you imagine falling from more than 10,000 feet up? Jason had to admit that the idea was still a little scary. But nothing could deter the three from this breath-taking experience. So, at the appointed time, they arrived at the McDowell Skydiving Center and met their instructors, Captain Lee, John Drury, and Mary Thomas.

"Men, today you can experience the thrill of a fall from 13,500 feet on your very first jump," Captain Lee stated.

"Wow! That's quite a fall!" Jason exclaimed uneasily.

"But, Captain, we don't have any experience at all. It's our first time," Kumar reminded.

"Don't worry; I'll be with you," Captain Lee said to Jason with a twinkle in his eyes. "You can count on me!"

"Hey, guys, for all first timers, you are allowed to try only the tandem dive," Mary Thomas announced. Tandem skydiving meant that they would be attached to an instructor by a strong strap. The instructor would help handle the parachute and other equipment. After receiving 30 minutes of training, Jason, Bryant, and Kumar geared up and boarded a plane that would carry them and 10 others up into the sky. The view from the plane was breathtaking. Jason watched the experienced jumpers prepare for their jump. Way too soon Jason felt a jostle on his arm.

"Come on; it's our turn," Captain Lee yelled, helping Jason to his feet.

"OK! I'm ready, but be sure to hold me close," Jason yelled back nervously.

"Ready, one, two, jump," shouted Captain Lee, and he and Jason jumped out of the airplane.

"Oh, I'm feeling dizzy," Jason groaned. "I am dropping too fast!"

"I'm right above you, Jason. You can count on me!" Captain Lee responded, "Just relax and look around you. Look at the beautiful sky!"

Captain Lee came closer to Jason and held his two hands, slowly stretching them out to feel the wind and the thrill of the fall. Each time Jason called out for help; Captain Lee was always

close by to help him. Indeed, Captain Lee proved a very dependable teacher.

Gradually, Jason relaxed and began to enjoy the dive. After what seemed like a long fall, the parachute opened up and together they dropped safely down to the ground. Cheers and claps went up from the crowd of people watching.

"Thanks, Cap. You were wonderful— a dependable teacher!" Jason exclaimed. "I don't mind how many times I try it again with you as instructor."

Lesson

We are not going skydiving, exactly, but we have a dependable Friend who promises to take us out through space on the way to heaven. Jesus is not only totally reliable, but He loves us so much that He willingly died for us so we could take this space trip. God showed prophets thousands of years ago that He would send His Son to save men and women, boys and girls from sin. "But then the right time came. God sent his Son" (Gal. 4:4). God kept His word. We can depend on Him. No wonder King David exclaimed, "Lord, your word lasts forever. It stands firm in the heavens" (Ps. 119:89).

Jesus' promises are always reliable. He delivers on His promises. Before He went back to heaven, He told the disciples not to be discouraged because "I will send the Friend to you from the Father. He is the Spirit of truth, who comes out from the Father. When the Friend comes to help you, he will give witness about me" (John 15:26).

Just as Jesus promised, at Pentecost when the disciples were gathered in one place, suddenly "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in languages they had not known before. The Spirit gave them the ability to do this" (Acts 2:4).

Yes, Jesus promises us, "I am going there to prepare a place for you. If I go and do that, I will come back" (John 14:2, 3). He will come back, and we want to be ready to meet Him.

Discussion

God wants us to tell others how reliable and dependable a friend Jesus has been to us. So, choose a partner and practice telling them about how reliable you have found Jesus.

Application

Ask your students how the following Bible promises have been true for them and encourage them to tell about specific incidents if they can. [Be prepared to tell of your experiences to get them started.] 1. 1 John 1:7—If we "walk in the light" from Jesus, we will "share life with one another." 2. 1 John 1:9—"If we admit that we have sinned, he will forgive us our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done." 3. Psalm 23:1, 6—"The Lord is my Shepherd. He gives me everything I need." Or "I am sure that your love will follow me all the days of my life." You can depend on all the Bible promises because "the One who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23). Repeat the bible treasure together.

Activity

Play the riddle game by identifying the following dependable individuals in the Bible.

1. Moses depended on the spies to bring back a good report. Which two proved dependable?
2. The Jews depended on this brave queen to request the king to save them from their enemies. What was her name?
3. This dependable young man went from prison to be governor of Egypt.
4. This dependable girl was babysitter to a child who slept in a little boat on the water.
5. This dependable young man was a friend to the apostle Paul. (There may be more than one name.) If time allows, have the children make up their own riddles to ask the class.

DAY 5

A Brand-new Home

"I am going there to prepare a place for you. If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me" (John 14:2, 3).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Divide the children into groups of four. Give each group poster-size paper and a marker so they can list items they would want in their new home if they had to move overseas.

Story

There was going to be a big change in the country. Everyone was talking about a new army that was taking over the government of their country.

The Acosta family decided that they should get out of the country before it was too late. They decided Father should cross the border ahead of the family and look for a job and a good place for his wife and two sons to live.

"Goodbye, Papa," Pedro and Juan cried as they gave their father one last hug before he boarded the bus. "Do come for us quickly."

"I will, boys. Take care of your mama," Father replied with sadness in his voice.

Days soon turned into months, and everyday Pedro and Juan waited anxiously for a letter or message from their father. Had he found a job yet? Had he found a place for them to stay?

After what seemed like years, finally someone came to the house with a let ter from Father. Mama read every word of the letter carefully to the boys.

"Good news! Papa has found a place for us. He is fixing it up and making it nice for us," Mama explained happily.

"Oh, great! When will we get to move?" Juan asked excitedly.

"Can we pack our things right away?" Pedro wanted to know.

"Good idea! But pack only the necessary things; we must travel light," Mama reminded them.

Another week went by, and still there was no sign of moving. Pedro was beginning to lose his patience.

"Why is Papa taking so long? Has he forgotten us?" Juan complained.

"Son, stop complaining. Papa promised to prepare a nice place for us, and he will keep his word," Mama reminded Juan.

Finally, after another week, word came from Papa that the family could move. Hoorah! The boys were ready to start out immediately. After days of riding on the bus and walking through dusty roads they arrived safely across the border. Papa was waiting for them!

"Papa, we love our new home!" Pedro exclaimed joyfully. "No wonder you took so long to prepare it for us."

Lesson

Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a nice home for them, too. This is a place for everyone who loves Him and who wants to live with Him. In that special place you can lie beside the lions, and they will not harm you (Isa. 11:6). Won't it be exciting to pet a lion or a leopard?

God has a place for you in His plan. He reminds us: "Before I formed you in your mother's body, I chose you" (Jer. 1:5).

Application

Make some nice cards and draw pictures of that special, unique home that Jesus has gone to prepare. Share this promise with three friends who do not know Jesus.

Discussion

1. What do you think Jesus is doing now that He went ahead of us to the Father?
2. What kind of extra special place is Jesus preparing for you? Look in Revelation 21 and 22 to answer this question.
3. How can you prepare to go to this special home? Stay close to Jesus through prayer and reading your Bible. Ask Him to help you tell others about Him.

Activity

Make up a poem about this "special home" and ask your Sabbath school teacher to let you share it with your friends in the class.

Note

DAY 6

A Glorious Coronation

"I looked, and there in front of me was a white cloud. Sitting on the cloud was One who looked 'like a son of man.' He wore a gold crown on his head" (Rev. 14:14).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Show the children pictures of kings, queens, princesses—royalty of different countries. Ask, "What makes a king or queen different from other people?" Kings and queens first get to wear their crowns at a special service called a coronation.

Story

"Wake up! Wake up! You sleepy head!" Mother called as she tried to pull down the sheet covering Ravi.

"Mmm, I'm tired," Ravi sighed.

"Hurry and get up or you'll miss the big show," Mother urged.

"Maybe we should leave him to sleep on," suggested big sister Premila [PREM-il-a]. "He doesn't want to see the queen crowned."

"OK! I'm ready to see the queen!" Ravi jumped up instantly awake.

This was an exciting day for everyone in Singapore in 1953; a pretty, young queen would be crowned. And the coronation ceremony would be seen on television for the first time across the world. You see, black-and-white television had just become available on the island, and not many homes could afford it yet. But fortunately for the Jeyakumar [JIGH-ya koo-MAR] family, they had one small 14-inch television.

"It's starting now, so you'd better come, or you'll miss it, Ravi," Father called out excitedly.

"Wow, look at that carriage!" Ravi exclaimed. "I would love to ride in it."

"Look! Here comes the young queen!" Premila added. "Isn't she pretty?"

"Just look at her gown! Oh, I like that beautiful long cape!" Mother exclaimed.

It seemed like a long wait before the best moment of the ceremony arrived. Ravi was getting weary. "When are they going to put the crown on her? Why so many prayers and speeches?" Ravi sighed.

"Just be patient," cautioned Father. "Hey, look, the archbishop is getting the crown ready, and he is lifting it up now."

The glorious moment came when the crown, with hundreds of glittering jewels, was placed on the head of the new queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. What a grand, majestic ceremony! Ravi and Premila would never forget it!

Lesson

We will see the crowning of the King of kings, Jesus Christ, coming back in glory for all of us who love Him. He came as a defenseless little baby, and "has been tempted in every way, just as we are," but without doing any wrong (Heb. 4:15). Paul tells us: "He will also come a second time. At that time, he will not suffer for sin. Instead, he will come to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him" (Heb. 9:28).

Our friend, Jesus Christ, will come for us in glory. He is not just the crowned King. The name written on his robe and thigh is "The greatest king of all and the most powerful lord of all" (Rev. 19:16).

And much more! John saw it in a vision and describes it for us: "The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses. They were dressed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:14). Can you imagine the powerful angels that will accompany Him as He travels to our little world? He comes to defeat the forces of Satan that are threatening His people. He is our crowned King!

Application

Ask the children, "Can you describe how Jesus will come in glory? Will He come with bright lights?" Draw a picture of this scene and share it with a friend.

Discussion

1. How can you be certain of Jesus' promise to come back for you? Can you find some promises in the Bible?
2. How can you prepare yourself to meet Jesus, the King of kings?
3. How would you feel if you saw an army of angels coming with Jesus? Remember, they are coming for God's people; they are coming for you. So how does that make you feel?

Activity

Have children cut some colored paper into 2 x 6-inch [4 x 10 centimeter] strips. On each strip of paper write down one Bible promise about Jesus' return. Join everyone's colored strips and form them into a long chain. Hang it in your room to remind you of Jesus' promise that He will come back as the King of kings.

Note

DAY 7

A Splendid Reunion

"'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. But he will come back in the same way you saw him go'" (Acts 1:11).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Show some pictures or a short video clip of a wedding, a birthday celebration, or a family reunion. Ask, "Why are reunions so exciting and fun? What do you do when you get together for a family reunion?"

Story

It was Grandpa's eightieth birthday. Everyone was up bright and early to prepare for the big celebration. Mom and all her sisters were already busy in the kitchen. Uncles and aunts were already arriving. Rene, Bruce, Cheryl, and other cousins were coming too. What an exciting day!

Yolanda had looked forward to this special family reunion when she could show off her new tree house to her cousins. Wouldn't it be fun to have a tea party up there?

"Hey, guys! Great to see you," Yolanda said happily as she hugged Cheryl and Bruce, who had just arrived.

"Oh, there are Rene and Kitty," added Yolanda.

"Guess what!" Yolanda exclaimed with a twinkle in her eye. "Dad built me a tree house. Let me show you." All six cousins had so much fun up in the tree house that they preferred to stay there rather than join the adult party in the garden. But it was Grandpa's birthday, and everyone was to celebrate with him. Besides, there was a huge, delicious birthday cake. All the kids got to help blow the candles out. The party finally ended at 11:00 at night. Yolanda thought reunions were so much fun; she and her cousins were already talking about the next one.

Lesson

Do you know there is another grand reunion coming for you and me? Very soon in the future, Jesus Christ will come to take us home for a grand family reunion of the whole earth. The Bible tells us that "the Lord Himself will come down from heaven. We will hear a loud command. We will hear the voice of the leader of the angels. We will hear a blast from God's trumpet. Many who believe in Christ will have died already. They will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them. We will be taken up in the clouds. We will meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with him forever" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). It will be a reunion of the universe. We were separated from God through sin, but Jesus' death on the cross made this reunion possible.

Wow! Can you imagine Jesus will come personally to escort us to the Father's house? In the past, Jesus took Enoch to heaven (Gen. 5:24). He also came and took Elijah to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11). Now, Jesus is going to take us from a world of sin, troubles, and death. He is taking us to be with Him. "Listen!" He has promised: "I am going there to prepare a place for you. If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me" (John 14:2). That is a promise Jesus will keep! Are you excited about this grand reunion?

Application

Ask your teacher or parents to take you to visit a children's hospital or orphanage. Bring colorful balloons tied with a Bible text to give out to the children. Tell them of the wonderful grand reunion they can celebrate when Jesus comes. Ask them to trust in Jesus who is coming again to take you and them home to His house.

Discussion

1. How would you feel if someone you loved was dying of cancer?
2. Suppose someone said to you, "I am sick and tired of this world. All we have are shootings in schools, terrorist attacks, and kidnappings." What would you say to them? What Bible texts can you use to help that person trust in a better future?

Activity

Compose a song or a poem about the grand reunion in heaven with Jesus and God. Share it with your friends in Sabbath school.

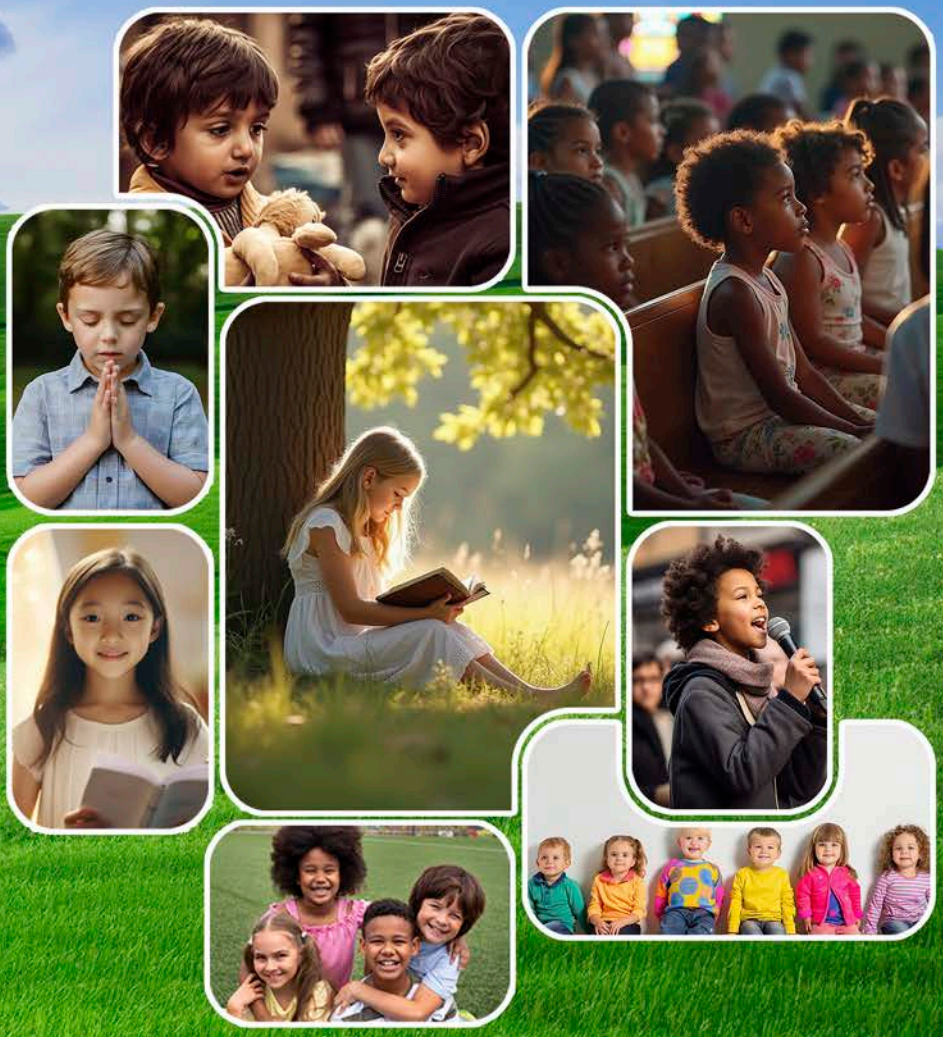
Note

Children of Hope

Living God's Way As We Wait

THEME

By: JEAN KELLNER



Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2010

DAY 1

Homeward Bound

"I am going there to prepare a place for you. If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be where I am" (John 14:2, 3).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

On a map or globe, help the older children find Sudan and Uganda. People in these countries have been living with the threat of war. They badly need something to give them hope. What could give you hope when (1) you've been sick for days? (2) you've been asked to clean up a very messy room? (3) you've been big-time bad and you're about to be punished?

Story

Samuel woke up to the sounds of distant gunfire. He propped himself up on one elbow and squinted to see what was happening in his village. Just as Samuel was about to yell out, his brother, Daniel, jammed his hand over Samuel's mouth.

"Shhhh!" Daniel warned. Then he motioned for Samuel to stay down and follow him.

As they crawled along the damp ground Samuel's mind drifted to the events that had happened earlier that day. Men from a neighboring village in the south of Sudan had fled to his village with the news that rebel soldiers had attacked them, killing many.

"Escape quickly before the same thing happens here," they warned.

Samuel's dad was leaving with the other men. They would distract the soldiers away from the village so their families could escape safely. "Don't make a sound; stay together; and stay in the long grass," he instructed the family. "Head for the refugee camp over the border in Uganda."

As Samuel followed his mother and brother through the tall grass, he was so afraid he wanted to cry. But he didn't dare. He was 9

years old and not a cry-baby. Besides, his dad needed him and Daniel to be strong for their mom and sister.

To keep up his courage, Samuel tried to remember his father's last words: "I will come and find you soon. And we'll build a new home, where we can live in peace." Samuel knew that to stay safe he must trust his dad and follow his instructions. But it was the thought of a new home with his father that kept back his tears and gave him hope.

Lesson

Jesus and the disciples had become very close friends. The twelve believed Jesus was the promised Messiah who would rule Israel and bring peace to the whole world. But now, at their Passover feast, which should have been a celebration, the disciples were sad and afraid. Instead of making plans to set up His kingdom, Jesus talked about being caught by the authorities and being put to death. This was awful.

But Jesus was leaving them with a very important promise. It's a promise for us too! He said, "I am going there to prepare a place for you. If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be where I am.

" When we come to know and love Jesus, we can't help looking forward to His return. Sometimes we may get impatient and wonder, *Why is He taking so long?* But you can be sure that Jesus will come back for us. The promise of Jesus' return for us is what we call "the blessed hope."

Application

We, like Jesus' disciples and Samuel in our story, are homeless. This world is not our home. Home is with Jesus. He is coming back to take us and our families to His home in heaven. Though troubles come our way, we find joy in looking forward to heaven. Jesus gives us hope.

Discussion

1. Read John 14:1-3. What two things does Jesus tell us to do so we can face our problems and find hope?
2. What promises does Jesus make in verse 3?
3. What do we call Jesus' promise that He will come back and take us to heaven?

Activity

Tape paper to a long wall; ask the children to show in words and drawings what they imagine it will be like to see Jesus coming back for His people to take them home with Him.

Note

DAY 2

When Your Boat Is About To Sink

"May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope" (Rom. 15:13).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Read the bible treasure together and sing Scripture praise songs. Ask two volunteers to pray.

Story

Kelly and Justin huddled in their playroom as the rain pelted the sides and roof of their house.

"I don't like this rain," Justin said. "It's been raining for days!"

"Well," Kelly replied, "perhaps someone needs the rain more than we need to be dry right now."

"But I still don't like this rain," Justin said. "There's just been too much of it, and for too long."

Flashes of lightning lit up the dark sky. A huge clap of thunder made Scooter, their cat, jump in fright. Kelly's and Justin's scared shrieks brought their mother running in.

"Why are you scared?" she asked. "You're safe inside the house. Besides, your daddy and I are here to protect you." Kelly and Justin tried to explain about the tiresome rain.

"Oh, don't let the rain ruin your whole day," Mom said. "Hey, remember that time it rained on our camping trip, and we just snuggled together in the tent and told stories, ate popcorn, and played Uno? Why don't you make a tent in your playroom, and I'll make some popcorn. You figure out what games to play." Later as the family relaxed together Dad turned their thoughts back to Jesus and His closest friends.

Lesson

Often the disciples saw Jesus do miracles, and when He told them about our heavenly Father's love and care, their hearts glowed with joy. Yet, much like what happened with Kelly and Justin, one day a storm really got to the disciples.

They were on the Sea of Galilee after a long day of watching Jesus heal the sick. Feeling tired after helping people all day, Jesus just wanted to be someplace quiet with the disciples. He asked them to take Him in their boat across the Sea of Galilee. He was soon asleep.

But suddenly a storm blew up and frightened these grown men. The boat was filling with water and about to sink. Jesus would have slept soundly through the whole thing but for their fearful shouts: "Lord! Save us! We're going to drown!" (Matt. 8:25).

Jesus wasn't panicked: "Your faith is so small! Why are you so afraid?" He asked. Then He got up and ordered the winds and the waves to be still. The surface of the lake became completely calm (verse 26). They had been safe all along because Jesus was there.

Today, if we know Jesus, if we invite Him to live in us, we too are safe in Him. Having Jesus with us brings joy and peace no matter what our storm may be.

There's a wise saying that can help us in stormy situations: "Don't tell God how big your storm is; tell the storm how big your God is." Retelling stories of God's power and care for us gives us courage. Ask the children to share a story about a time when they were afraid, and God took away their fear. Get things started by telling a story from your own experience.

Application

Discussion

Say Romans 15:13 together. How does this verse answer the following questions?

1. Why can we be happy and at peace even when our storm is frightening?
2. Why should the disciples have not been afraid in their storm?
3. What will you remember when you feel scared or sad?

Have the children create bookmarks with words from the memory gem written on them. Tell them to keep the bookmark as a reminder of the joy and peace they have in Christ.

Activity

Note

DAY 3

Trusting in God's Promises

"The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They cheer us up and give us hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Ask students to name people they know they can trust. Make a list of no more than five people. For instance: teachers, parents, police, etc. Read the list one name at a time so the children can vote on the one they trust most.

Story

It was Sabbath night at the Bartlett's house. Mom had invited the whole Pathfinder Club over. After supper all the kids had to go into the next room with Mr. O'Connor.

"Listen up!" he told everyone. "When you hear a knock on the door, one person gets to go back and take an airplane ride."

After a short wait the children heard the knock, but nobody wanted to be first to go. Finally, Sylvia Bartlett agreed to go.

"This board on the floor will be your airplane," Mom explained. "Stand on it and get ready." As Sylvia stepped onto the board her mother tied a blindfold over her eyes. Suddenly Sylvia felt wobbly.

"Don't worry," her dad said. "Put your hand on my head. Are you ready?" Feeling her father close, Sylvia gave the OK. Slowly she felt herself rising off the ground. The board was a bit shaky beneath her feet and she was losing contact with her dad. This must be high, she thought.

"Watch out for the ceiling," her mother called. Sylvia's head touched something hard just as her mother yelled, "Jump! Sylvia, jump! I've got you covered!"

Sylvia froze. The ceiling is a long way to jump from. "Trust me," her dad yelled. "It's OK to jump." After a long pause Sylvia jumped and instantly, she was standing on the floor. She had never been higher than one foot above the

ground. Her parents had made it seem like she was higher by making the board wobble, by her father bending his head down, and by having Mrs. O'Connor hold a book just above Sylvia's head.

The other children found it even harder to jump than Sylvia did. And Mr. O'Connor found it hardest of all. "Are you crazy?" he yelled. "I could break my neck!"

Thinking later about the "airplane" ride, everyone agreed: Trusting is hard to do. But Sylvia thought it hadn't been so hard for her because she knew her parents could be trusted.

Lesson

Can you imagine being Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego (Dan. 3)? They were hostages in a foreign country, slaves to the king of that country and bound by his laws. But when that king decided to build a golden image to himself and have all his subjects bow down to worship it, these three Hebrew young men knew that they couldn't do it. They also knew that not doing it would get them in deep trou ble if they were reported. They chose to trust God anyway.

So, they told the king, "Our God will save us. And if He doesn't, we still can't bow down to your statue."

As the fiery furnace was being stoked for them, all they could do was trust in God's promises to save them. That's all they had to go on. And sure enough, God did save them!

Application

The Old Testament is full of promises that these three friends would have known and trusted. Let's do a sword drill and find some of them. [The children pair up, readers with nonreaders. At your call, "Draw your swords!" the students raise their Bibles and wait for you to call a Scripture reference from the list below. The first child to find the verse stands up and reads it out loud. Repeat until all texts are read.] 1 Samuel 14:6 (last part); Psalm 71:5; Psalm 118:6, 7; Proverbs 3:26; Jeremiah 17:7

Discussion

1. Read Romans 15:4. Do you agree with this text after reading the texts in our sword drill?
2. Which of the sword drill texts gives you hope?

Final Word

William Booth, founder of The Salvation Army, started this Christian movement to take hope to the neediest people in London. He started his mission with no money, and no expectations of earning money. The people he worked for were the poorest of the poor. God blessed his mission, which today is known everywhere. On his deathbed William Booth left a message that gives us all hope: "The promises . . . of God . . . are sure . . . are sure . . . if you will only believe."

Yes, we can truly trust God's promises.

Note

DAY 4

Guided By The Holy Spirit

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

The Bible tells us that once we are saved, God gives us the power to share His love with others. Let's make a list of all the ways we can let others know about Jesus' love and His soon return.

Story

Four-year-old Mariana entered the radio studio with her parents after lunch. As they entered, her mom bent down to get the mail that had been dropped through the mail slot onto the floor. As her mom sorted through the mail she said, "Look, Mariana, all the mail today is addressed to you!"

"Really? Who is writing to me?" asked Mariana.

When Mariana was just 3 years old, she became the youngest radio speaker for Adventist World Radio. Mariana and her parents broadcast the gospel to the people in Venezuela, in the Spanish language.

"Tell me what the letters say, Mommy," Mariana pleaded.

"This one is from a child day-care center here in Puerto Ordaz," said Mother. "They say that they tune in every day to The Children's Hour. The teacher writes, 'We love listening to you as you talk about Jesus' love. The children look forward to it every day.'"

"See, Mariana," said Dad. "The Holy Spirit can use us whatever our age."

Lesson

Did you know that you don't have to be an adult to share God's love with others? Remember the story of Samuel (1 Sam. 3)? He was a great prophet of the Lord. Samuel didn't wait until he grew up to serve the Lord. He worked in the Temple as a boy. And he was sleeping inside the Temple one night when God called him!

Have you ever heard the story of Naaman? He was a great soldier in an army that fought against Israel. But he got leprosy, which is a horrible disease that means you have to live alone, away from everyone. Once when his army fought Israel, they brought back a young girl who became a servant for his wife. We don't even know the girl's name. But when she learned how sick Naaman was, she told his wife that if he would go to see the prophet Elisha, he would be able to pray to God for healing. Naaman traveled back to Israel to see Elisha. Because he listened to the servant girl and obeyed the prophet's instructions, God made him well!

Discussion

1. Can you name three people who have helped you know more about God? How did they do it?
2. Can you think of someone you know who needs to know about God? How can you help them?
3. Read Acts 1:8. What does witnessing mean? And whose help should we pray for before we talk to others about God?

Activity

Think of someone in your church who is sick or who lives alone. Have the children make cards to cheer that person. Then see if you can deliver the cards together or put them in the mail.

Application

Helping others to know about God's love doesn't just mean you have to be able to speak about it on the radio. A little girl named Donna took her Bible picture book to the nursing home where her daddy worked. After school she went from chair to chair in the sunroom, telling Bible stories to the old folk and sharing God's love with them. God spoke to hearts through Donna.

Note

DAY 5

Set Apart for God

"And what kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives" (2 Peter 3:11b).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Point out Vietnam on a map or globe. Let the children know that all around the world, God has children who want to please Him and who want to be ready when Jesus comes.

Story

Nho was a 12-year-old boy living in Ho Chi Minh City. He and his parents were Christians. Even though Vietnam is not a Christian country, Nho grew up learning about Jesus' love. Soon he accepted Jesus as his Savior. He was eager to study everything he could about God's Word, and he wanted to please God.

One day while Nho was playing with the family's shortwave radio, he came across a station he had never heard before. The station examined Bible texts closely and explained truths the Bible taught.

Nho was intrigued and began listening regularly. He thought he was a pretty good student of God's Word. He enjoyed doing his Sunday lessons and looking up Bible verses and memorizing them. One day the Bible radio program talked of something he had never heard before.

After the program was over, Nho went directly to the kitchen where his mom was working. "Mom," he said, "have you ever heard that God wants people to keep the seventh day as the Sabbath, and not Sunday, the first day of the week?"

"No, never," said Mother. "But why do you worry about a day? We are saved by what Jesus did for us, not stuff we do. If the day we worship on is important to Jesus, then, of course, we should pay attention. We love Him and want to

please Him. But remember, son, we do not save ourselves by our religious works. Jesus does the saving. That's what makes being a Christian different than being a Buddhist or Hindu, or any of the other religions."

"Yes, but aren't we supposed to grow in our salvation? And as we learn more about God's will, shouldn't we follow it?" Nho asked. "And how come we have never heard of this in our church?"

"I don't know, Nho," said Mother. "Why don't we look up the Scripture verses that the Bible teacher on the radio gave to support his teaching about the Sabbath? We can pray and ask God to show us what to do."

Lesson

When Jesus was on earth, He loved little children. Lots of the important religious leaders back then didn't make time for little children. So when moth ers brought their children to see Jesus, the disciples would try to send them away. But one time Jesus noticed this and told the disciples, "Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them. What I'm about to tell you is true. Anyone who will not receive God's kingdom like a little child will never enter it" (Mark 10:14, 15).

Then a young rich man, seeing this, fell at Jesus' feet and asked how he could have eternal life. Jesus told him to keep the commandments. But the young man said he had been doing that since he was a little boy. Jesus knew it was true and felt tenderness for him. But Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me" (Matt. 19:21).

Nho wasn't an Adventist when he first started listening to Adventist World Radio; he didn't keep the Sabbath yet. But he was living a holy life—he had accepted Jesus to be first in his life. He was God's child trying to live God's way. And God sets apart people like that as His people—that's what it means to be holy.

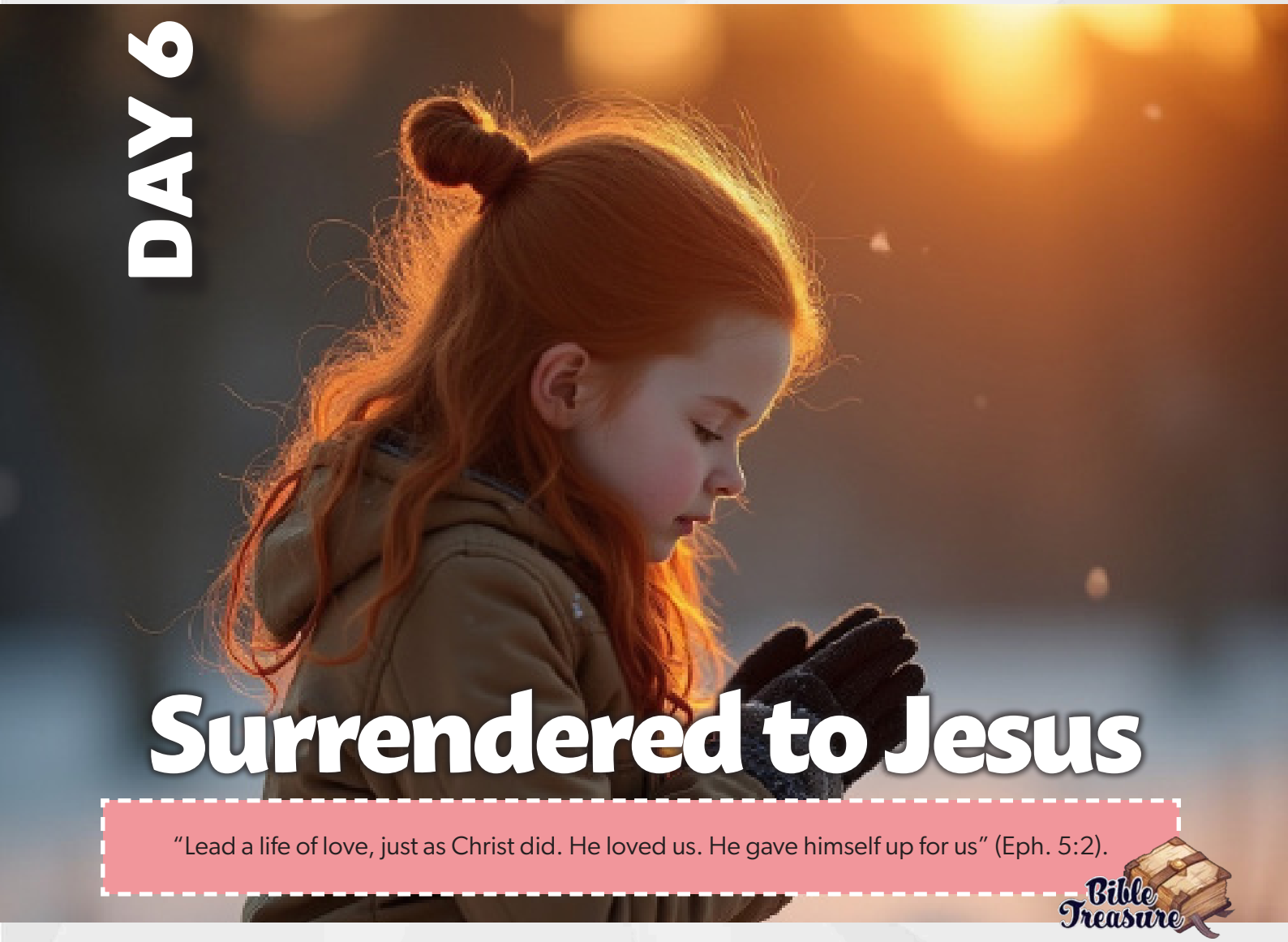
Application

Discussion

1. What is it about little children that would make Jesus say that the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like them? [They love Him and trust Him.] 2. Jesus said only God is good. So how can you and I be "good"? [When we are set apart for God, we are covered by His goodness.]
3. Is obeying God's commandments enough? Why not? What else is important to God?

Make a large drawing of a tree but omit leaves and blossoms. Have those cut out separately and distribute them to the children along with markers. Ask them to list one characteristic of holiness on each leaf or blossom. Then have them go up to the tree and add their leaves/blossoms to the branches. When all the leaves/blossoms are added to the tree, explain that the tree represents Jesus, who is the one who makes us holy. Without the tree there are no branches or blossoming leaves. Jesus is like the tree, nurturing as we cling to Him.

Activity



DAY 6

Surrendered to Jesus

"Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave himself up for us" (Eph. 5:2).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Ask the children if they have any trinkets or money or even their shoes and socks that they would surrender to you right now. Let them know that this isn't a temporary surrender; it is for keeps. Any takers? Giving something up can be easy—if it doesn't mean all that much to you! But surrendering a favorite item is much tougher.

Story

Mia was a young girl who had very long, beautiful hair. All the other girls at school admired her hair. Several said they wished they could have hair like hers.

One day, though, Mia had to make a decision. Would she hold on to her hair, or would she donate it to help another little girl?

Amber, a friend of Mia's, had become very sick and had missed a lot of school. Mia asked her teacher, Miss Lee, about Amber.

"I talked to Amber's mom yesterday," Miss Lee explained, "and she told me that she's going to homeschool Amber. She's too sick to return to school right now."

"What's wrong?" the students wanted to know.

It turned out that Amber had lymphoma, a type of cancer. The doctors were hopeful that Amber would fully recover. But her medicine was making her feel too weak to come back to school. Besides, Amber was sensitive because the medicine was making her hair fall out.

"If she's worried about that, she can wear a wig, can't she?" one of the boys asked. This led to a discussion about the difficulty of finding a wig that was just right for a child.

Mia knew her hair would make a good wig for Amber. All she would have to do was get a haircut, and her long, beautiful hair would be

used to help someone else.

It was a difficult decision. But Mia did it because she knew that people who love Jesus are people who surrender everything to Him. They surrender themselves so God can use them to help others.

Lesson

One day as Jesus was teaching the crowds, He started talking about how hard it was to enter God's kingdom. In fact, He said that a camel could get through the eye of a needle easier than a rich person could get into heaven. This shocked the disciples because everyone knew that rich people could get anything they wanted.

They asked one another, "Who can get into heaven, then?" Then Jesus told them that for a person it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. This upset Peter. He blurted out, "But we have left everything to follow You!"

Jesus let Peter know that God valued his sacrifice. He explained that in the kingdom of heaven the twelve apostles would have a special place. And everyone—including you and me—who has surrendered all for Jesus will receive a hundred times more in heaven as well as a life that lasts forever.

Sometimes, as Christians, we're asked to do something more than just getting a haircut. Jesus asks us to totally surrender ourselves to Him and trust Him with our lives. People who surrender everything to Jesus don't regret it, because Jesus gives them so much in return. We have the hope of living forever in the most wonderful place we could possibly imagine.

Application

Discussion

1. What did Jesus surrender for us? (Phil. 2:5-11)
2. What do you have that you can give God to bless others and bring joy to Him? [They should include talents and resources that they have, such as cheerfulness, time, etc.]
3. What else might God be asking you to surrender to Him today?

Ask for children to pair up and stand one behind the other, the tallest at the back and both facing forward. Once they are in position, explain that the child in front takes a short step forward, stands rigid, and then falls back ward when you call "Ready to fall? Fall." The child standing behind is to hold out his or her arms and catch the child in front of him or her. Afterward, have the children tell how they felt about this activity. Point out that it is easier to sur render ourselves when we know the other person. That's why it is important to read the Bible and pray every day. That helps us stay fully surrendered to Jesus.

Activity

DAY 7

Keeping On Going

"Blessed is the man who keeps on going when times are hard" (James 1:12).

Bible Treasure

Readiness

Ask the children if they know what it means to endure—to keep on going even when the going is tough. What have they endured at the doctor's office? at a swim meet? in church?

Story

"How on earth are we ever going to do all this?" Jasper asked Gretchen as they stared at the blanket of fallen leaves that covered their front lawn. "We just raked the yard last week, and here we are with even more leaves than before!"

"Well," Gretchen replied, "someone has to keep the yard tidy."

Jasper sighed. His sister was right. But this was so much work: raking the leaves into piles and then bagging every pile for pickup. Jasper would much rather play football with his friends. "If only I had superpowers," he moaned.

"Well, you don't!" Gretchen shot back. "But you do have a rake. Let's start using it. And then keep on going!"

Lesson

As Jesus returned to heaven to be with His Father, He knew that Satan was going to try to undo His work on earth. He knew that His followers would need God's help to stand up to Satan, who roams the earth like a roaring lion seeking to devour us.

Let's look at Ephesians 6:13-18 and see what the apostle Paul tells us about how to hold our ground against Satan's attacks.

Notice, we are not to go off in our own strength to try to pick a fight with Satan. We

must put on the armor of God and stand firm. By the way, what do we stand on? The Rock Christ Jesus. Why does the Rock give us confidence? Because at the cross Jesus already won the battle against Satan. And Jesus is on our side.

What armor do we wear to help us stand firm? The belt of truth, the breast plate of Christ's goodness, and the shoes of readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. What else do verses 16 and 17 say is part of the armor? And when we get that armor on, look what verse 18 tells us to do next—to pray, and keep on praying.

Raking up a yard full of leaves might seem easy by comparison to battling Satan. At least yard work comes to an end, but the battle with Satan keeps going on until Jesus comes. But wait! There's a bright side. We don't battle alone; Jesus is right beside us. And James 1:12 tells us: "Blessed is the man who keeps on going when times are hard. After he has come through them, he will receive a crown. The crown is life itself. God has promised it to those who love him."

Application

Discussion

1. What must we stand firm against?
2. What pieces of armor do we wear?
3. Why are we sure of success?

Have the children draw a huge shield on a sheet of paper. Inside the shield have them write the memory gem. They can hang this up in their room as a reminder that Jesus will keep them going.

Activity

Note

Home to Eden

THEME

By: CHARLES MILLS

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2011

DAY 1

A Home for God

"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go" (Gen. 28:15).

Bible Treasure

Story

It was kinda scary. Even my horse seemed to be just a little bit nervous as we stumbled and clumped down the narrow gorge between the high rock cliffs towering on each side. But I had come to this part of the Middle East to see some interesting houses, and I wasn't about to let any silly fear turn me around.

Suddenly we were there. The narrow gorge opened up and deposited my horse and me at the base of a tall, beautiful structure some call "The Treasury"—a building complete with stately columns, statues, and perfectly cut awnings. But this wondrous marvel wasn't made of brick or wood or steel. This building, and the hundreds of others I'd see in this extraordinary valley, was cut into pure rock—carved into the very face of a cliff. When you walked through the tall front door of The Treasury, you didn't enter a room. You entered a cave.

Petra was a very worldly place when it existed as an occupied city. The people there worshipped many gods, some of whom, they insisted, demanded human sacrifices. I know this is true because I saw stone altars high on the hilltops surrounding the city where people were killed in the name of one deity or another. I wasn't too sure if I wanted to live in Petra, among those stony houses and stony hearts. It was a city without God.

The Home in the Garden

Before God made Adam and Eve, He built them a home. He didn't exactly visit the local building supply store and stock up on lumber, nails, paint, and window frames. But Adam and Eve seemed to be perfectly happy with their

garden home—at least, for a while. The Creator loved to walk and talk with them, showing them the beauty of their amazing world.

God has always wanted to live with us. He's always wanted to move into our home and set up housekeeping right in the middle of all of our stuff—whether that stuff happens to be a simple table and cot in a hut, or stacks of video games in a modern, Internet-accessing, cable-ready, richly appointed, brightly painted bedroom. He just loves settling in, putting on His royal slippers, stretching out on the couch, and saying, "So, what's for supper?" He wants to eat with us, sleep with us, play with us, even laugh with us when we hear a funny story. He just can't get enough of us!

That's why, when Adam and Eve listened to the evil serpent and disobeyed God's direct order to NOT EAT OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT, God's mighty heart was broken. His children chose to move from God's house to Satan's house.

The Home in the Desert

Many years later we find Moses and a multitude of complaining, angry ex-slaves living in the middle of a hot desert after escaping from Egypt. The people are confused, uneducated, and totally fed up with wandering around looking for some "Promised Land."

So what did God do? He decided to move in with them!

God told Moses, "Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

It was the first time that God had actually lived with His people since Eden. "Then," the Bible says, "the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34). In other words, God moved in. "So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels" (verse 38). In other words, God moved in . . . to stay.

What's it like to have God living with you? We'll find out this week.

Share

Draw a picture of the type of sanctuary you'd build for Jesus today. Decide what materials you'd use and what design would show your love for Him to the world. Keep in mind that Jesus loves nature and would want you to enjoy worshipping Him there. Title your drawing "My Sanctuary for God."

DAY 2

"Where's My Mommy?"

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb. 13:5).

Bible Treasure

Story

I could see the terror in her eyes, and I knew that if I didn't do something fast, she would go absolutely wild with fear.

Anyone who has ever been to a General Conference session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church knows what a huge gathering looks like. This was the scene in the Georgia Dome not too long ago. I was sitting off to one side watching the tide of people flow by when I caught sight of a little girl—probably about 6 years old—moving in the opposite direction of the crowd. There were tears streaming down her flushed cheeks, and her hands were trembling as she stumbled along. I heard her call out in a hoarse voice, "Mommy? Mommy where are you?" but her words were swallowed whole by the noise and commotion.

I hurried after her, trying to determine the best way to offer help. I knew she'd probably been taught not to trust strangers. But desperate times call for desperate measures. "Excuse me," I said, kneeling beside her, "have you lost your mommy?"

She nodded between sobs.

"Well, if you'd like, I can help you find her." I motioned for a woman passing by to join us. The lady took one look at the little girl and knew immediately the situation. I smiled and pointed. "This kind woman will be happy to take you over to that security guard, and together you can find your mommy. Would that be OK?"

The lost girl looked at the woman, then at the security guard, then at me. "OK," she whispered.

"Now, don't be afraid," I told her. "I'm sure your mommy is looking for you right this

moment, and she'll be so happy to see you."

I hurried back to my post beside the stream of people and waited. If I knew mommies—and I think I do, because I grew up with one of the best—I'd soon be seeing a desperate woman stumbling in the opposite direction of the crowd with the same look of panic on her face that I'd noticed on the little girl.

Sure enough, about five minutes later, there she was, bumping into people, her hands trembling, searching the crowds, hoping to see the most precious person in the whole world to her. "Excuse me, ma'am," I called out. "Are you looking for a little girl with brown eyes and a yellow dress?" I thought she was going to faint.

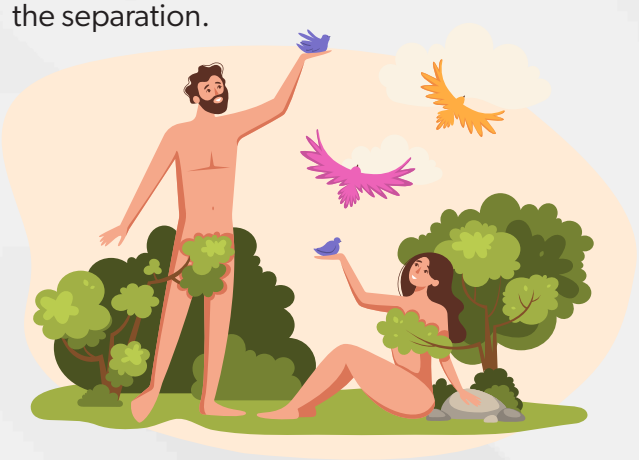
"Yes," she said. "Have you seen her?" "She's just around the corner out in the quiet hallway waiting with a security guard and a kind woman. She'll be so happy to see you!

" I wish you could have been there to witness that reunion. There were tears of joy, words of love, and plenty of tight, tight hugs. The nightmare was over. The separation had ended. Happiness returned to two hearts that day in the Georgia Dome.

The Fall

When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they did more than choose Satan's way of life over God's way of life. Because of their sin, Adam and Eve had to move out of God's garden home. Sin and rebellion can't live where God lives. It would be like trying to mix oil and water.

Immediately our heavenly Father was hard at work, organizing a plan to bring them back—they and everyone who would want to live again in God's house. God wanted the nightmare to be over. He wanted the separation to end. He longed for happiness to return to all sin-sick hearts. But there would be a price to pay to end the separation.



Share

Sometimes, when people can't find their favorite pet, they put up posters around the neighborhood asking others to look for the missing pet and call if they find it. Divide up into groups and have each group create a "missing persons" poster that God would put up if He were looking for your group. Include a picture (or drawing) of each person in the group. Remember, you are God looking for you. What would you say on the poster?

Note

DAY 3

God's Law of Love

"Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you" (Deut. 6:18).

Bible Treasure

Story

Near my grandparents' home was a community swimming pool with lots of sparkling waters and laughing kids. It was divided into two sections—shallow end and deep end. I found that the shallow end was where most of the action was, with boys and girls playing games, tossing big inflatable balls around, and standing on their heads underwater with their feet sticking out in the air.

However, there was something amazing waiting at the far edge of the deep end. It was a high dive unlike any I'd ever seen. It towered up, up, up into the blue sky like a ladder to the clouds.

My grandfather would drive me to the pool, drop me off for the afternoon, and before leaving say the very same thing: "Have fun, Charlie. Play nice, be safe, and don't jump off the high dive."

But this particular day, my eyes kept wandering to the deep end, to the towering high dive, and the breathtaking sight of screaming bodies hurling through space before splashing down majestically in the cool waters.

Grandpa has no idea how much I've grown since last year, I thought to myself. *It's time for me to experience new adventures reserved only for boys who are almost men.*

The High and the Mighty

I made my way along the side of the pool until I stood at the base of the towering dive. Slowly, steadily, I climbed the stairs leading up the structure. In my world, with my rules, I was the bravest, most daring person alive. I was about to show my grandfather and anyone else who happened to be watching that Charlie Mills was the servant of no one, and a force unto himself.

With a nervous smile on my face, I raised my arms and stepped out into space.

Down, down, down I fell, feeling the wind whistling by, unable to breathe, unable to move, unable to do anything but fall.

Seconds before I slammed into the water, some boy decided that he needed to be swimming right where I was going to land. I saw his body approaching fast, but there was nothing I could do. CRASH-SPLASH! I hit the water and the boy at the same time.

I apologized as best I could with gallons of water sloshing in my mouth and hurried to the ladder at the edge of the pool. I stumbled back to the shallow end and dove into its welcoming waves.

When Grandpa returned, I took my place beside him on the front seat of his car. "Did you have a good time?" he asked. "Grandpa," I gasped, "how did you know what would happen?"

He looked at me for a long moment. "Charlie," he said, "did you jump off the high dive?"

"Of course I did!" I blurted. "That's why you made the rule. You knew I was going to land on someone, didn't you?"

Grandpa shook his head as a look of love and understanding shone from his eyes. "Charlie," he said softly, "I didn't know you were going to jump off the high dive. I made the rule because I thought you might."

Laws of Love

When God moved in with the children of Israel in the desert, He brought with Him a suitcase full of rules and regulations.

Why did He do that? Because the children of Israel were a bunch of bad people who wanted to do bad things all the time? No. He knew that some might want to follow Satan and his rules, which would bring them great pain and suffering. He did it because of what they ***might do***, because He loved each one of those desert wanderers, just like He loves us.

Share

What type of laws would you make for your group in order for each one to enjoy worshipping God together? Come up with a list of 10 suggestions and write them on the board. Be sure to include why you made that law and how that law would improve your worship of the Creator.

DAY 4

The Big Double Doors

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4).

Bible Treasure

Story

Four-year-old Bobby wasn't used to being sick. He was used to running around the house and yard playing fort with his older brother, Billy.

"Bobby?" his mother said as she watched her normally hungry child push away from the supper table. "Are you OK? You didn't eat much."

Bobby shook his head. "My throat hurts." Mother gathered her young son in her arms. "I'm taking you to see Dr. Rue," she announced.

The warm evening air felt good on Bobby's face as the car hurried along the road leading to the Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital on the outskirts of Seoul, Korea. Mother and Father served as missionaries in a beautiful country filled with wonderful people.

Dr. George Rue took one look down Bobby's throat and shook his head. "I can see the problem clearly," he stated. "A simple operation and he'll be fine."

"No!" Bobby said, crossing his arms over his chest.

"But it's a simple operation," Mother reasoned. "You'll be asleep and won't feel a thing."

"NO!" Bobby repeated, even though saying the word hurt his throat.

Older brother Billy was standing nearby listening to the conversation. He knew that Dr. Rue was a good man and could help his brother stop hurting. He knew that Bobby wouldn't get well if he didn't have the operation, so he stepped forward and said something that shocked everyone.

"I'll go with you, Bobby," he announced in his best big brother voice. "I'll let Dr. Rue operates

on me, too. That way you won't have to be afraid."

Bobby studied his brother for a long moment. "Really?" he asked.

Billy nodded. "I'll be right there with you."

Through the Big Double Doors

The very next day, Dr. Rue walked into the hospital waiting room smiling broadly. "You ready, Bobby?"

Ready," the little boy stated. Then he paused, "Billy's coming too."

"I know," Dr. Rue said. "We've decided that since Billy will someday need the same surgery, we have a bed all ready for him. You'll wake up right beside him after the operation."

Confidently Bobby and the doctor walked through the big double doors of the operating room. The little boy's fears were gone. His big brother was going to share the experience with him.

When it came time for Billy to walk through those big double doors, it took every bit of courage he had to rise to his feet. Making a promise was one thing. Keeping that promise was proving to be a very, very big challenge.

At long last those doors swung open again and a smiling Dr. Rue walked out with the older boy held snugly in his arms. "Here's your brave child," he said, handing the sleeping form to his father. "You can carry him to his room and put him right beside Bobby. They'll both be fine in a few days.

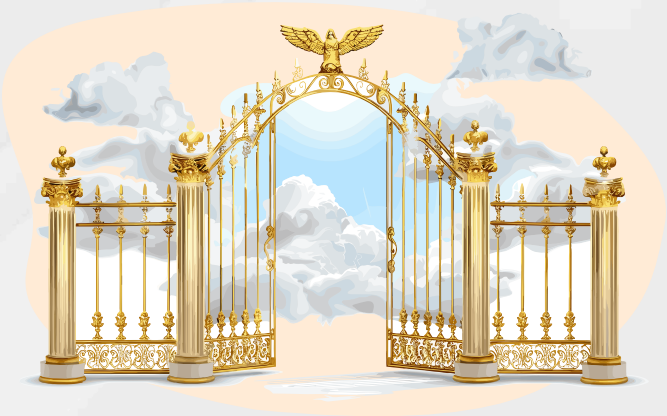
" Father smiled and glanced down at his firstborn son. But what he saw made him feel suddenly weak. There were tearstains running from Billy's eyes, over his flushed cheeks, and back into his hair. The bravery. The confidence. The courageous words. They'd all been an act! In truth, his son had been terrified of the surgery, even though he'd made his younger brother believe all was well.

"Thank You, God," the man whispered. "Thank You for giving me a son who showed me what Jesus did for me."

Substitute in the Desert

The children of Israel were instructed to offer daily, weekly, and yearly sacrifices at God's desert sanctuary. These sacrifices were designed to remind each man, woman, and child of a terrible sacrifice to come. Eventually it wouldn't be a lamb or goat that died. It would be Jesus. He would pay the price for our sins so that we could live forever with Him in heaven.

Jesus walked through His own big double doors so that, someday, we could walk through the pearly gates of heaven.



Share

Think about the neighborhood around your school or church. What are some ways that your group could help that neighborhood? Choose one project and do it together with the adults in your school or church leading the way.

Note

DAY 5

Mediator

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Heb. 4:15).

Bible Treasure

Story

You're in your favorite sporting goods store, checking out stuff that interests you. Since you're into bird-watching, the binocular display catches your eye.

One particular pair grabs your attention. Lifting them to your eyes, you begin to scan the store's nooks and crannies.

You discover your friend Justin standing by the fishing reels and are about to call out to him when you see him take a small box of lures from the counter and slip them into his coat pocket. Across the aisle you see your other friend Dave look around the store for a moment, then hide a pair of leather gloves in his schoolbag.

You can't believe they actually did it. They'd been talking about how easy it would be to steal stuff from Mr. Larson's sporting goods store. You thought it was just talk.

Now, through those powerful binoculars, you witnessed your friends making good on their word to help themselves to some merchandise. They stare back at you expectantly, waiting for you to make your move. You know stealing is wrong; however, you want them to like you and think you're cool. So, you glance around and see that Mr. Larson is helping another customer by the cash register, then sneak the instrument into your schoolbag.

Sleepless

That night you can't sleep. You've committed a crime, and you feel awful. That's when you decide to return the binoculars first thing in the morning.

Mr. Larson greets you with a smile as he

unlocks the front door of his place of business. "What brings you out so early?" he asks.

You laugh self-consciously and make some excuse about wanting to see if the canoes are still on sale.

Once inside, you move quickly to the binocular display and, while Mr. Larson is unlocking his cash register on the other side of the store, you slip the binoculars out of your satchel and return them to their rightful place on the counter display.

Then you hear Mr. Larson calling, "I've got to go upstairs to the store office for a minute. If you need anything, I'll be right back. Gotta turn on the video surveillance system I installed last week. Oh, and the canoes are over there."

The blood drains from your face as your hands turn suddenly cold. Mr. Lawson has videotape of you and your friends stealing his merchandise. What he doesn't have is videotape of you putting the binoculars back just moments ago.

A minute later Mr. Larson returns from the store office and finds you waiting by the cash register. Approaching him with head bowed, you say, "Sir, I need to tell you something."

Evidence

Eventually the videotape of the day you stole the binoculars is reviewed by the town's sheriff. He sees your friends pocket the loot. He sees you slip the binoculars into your schoolbag.

But then Mr. Larson turns off the video player and points at the tape. "There's something you didn't see, Sheriff," he says. "The boy who stole the binoculars brought them back the very next morning. He asked me for forgiveness."

The sheriff grins broadly. "Oh, that's good news!" he says. Mr. Larson became your "mediator"—someone who represents you to someone else.

In the Desert

In the desert sanctuary, the children of Israel had mediators called "priests."

Today we have just one mediator between God and humankind: Jesus Christ. He's constantly in the presence of His Father working shoulder to shoulder with Him making sure that when you ask forgiveness for a sin, that request blots out the evidence of that sin.

Share

Divide into groups of two and have each member learn about their partner: what fun things do they like to do, what are they afraid of, what do they want to become later in life, what talents do they have? Then have each member stand before the group and introduce their partner, explaining how they are going to be an effective worker for God and how they will share God's love with others, taking into account their skills and limitations.

Note

DAY 6

Cleaning Inside Out

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

Bible Treasure

Story

Saul wrapped his headdress tightly around his forehead and squinted into the brilliant glow of the sun. He was behind schedule and knew it. "Faster," he told his traveling companions as horses' hooves and chariot wheels crunched over the rocky soil. "I want to reach Damascus by sundown."

The group's pace quickened as animals and men continued their journey northward, leaving a trail of dust to mark their passage.

Their leader, Saul, was on a mission—a mission to silence those who dared preach about the man Jesus. He'd heard about this supposed "savior of mankind." He'd listened to people talk about His supposed miracles and how He rose from the dead after being crucified. Saul chuckled to himself. Imagine believing such nonsense—normally smart people wanting to worship a god who could be so easily killed.

Suddenly Saul noticed that the desert seemed to be brighter than it was a moment ago. It was as if the sun was moving closer, its burning glow intensifying with each second. Then the light became blinding, and Saul found himself slipping from his saddle and onto the ground as he shielded his face from the mysterious, brilliant glow. "What's happening?" he called out.

"Saul," a voice echoed from within the light. "Saul, why do you persecute Me?" "Persecute You?" Saul responded, his voice trembling with fear. "I don't even know You. Who are You?"

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." The voice in the light continued to speak. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Then, as quickly as it had come, the light faded, leaving Saul kneeling on the ground, surrounded by questioning eyes. Those traveling with the man had heard a noise but had seen no person or recognized any words. They just noticed that their leader had fallen to the ground and was talking to the air.

As Saul was helped to his feet, he opened his eyes. But now, instead of a brilliant light, he saw only darkness. "Help me," he gasped. "Please help me." Then, trembling with fear, blind Saul was led, groping his way toward Damascus.

Changed Person

In Damascus Saul met a man named Ananias. Ananias told Saul that God had sent him to heal Saul's eyes of their blindness. And not only were Saul's eyes healed—his heart was healed of the anger and hatred he felt against God's people. Saul was so affected by his encounter on the road that he even changed his name. He would no longer be known as "Saul, the persecutor of God's people," but rather "Paul, the leader of God's people."

Something happens to people when they come face to face with Jesus. That meeting is seldom as dramatic as having a brilliant light shine down on you on a desert road or hearing a voice talk to you. It's usually more like a quiet voice echoing in your thoughts, making you realize things you never realized before, understand things you never understood before, and helping you deal with troubling situations at school or home.

Here's an interesting idea. If God wants to live in our hearts (that means in our thoughts and actions), what does that make us? That's right. We become a "house of God"—a temple; a walking, talking, ball-playing, bike-riding, iPod-listening temple of the Most High God.

This means two very important things. One, we have to make sure our "temple" is a fit place for God to live, and two, we have the privilege of representing (mediating—remember?) God's love to others.

Thank You, Jesus, for wanting to live in our hearts!

Share

Turn your room into a restaurant called "The New Earth Restaurant." Then create a menu on the board with only food items that you'll find in heaven. Ask someone to draw the dish of food on the board beside its name. Remember, nothing will hurt nor destroy animals in heaven. Create fun foods like "New Jerusalem Stew" or "Pearly Gates Grillers." Don't forget dessert!

Note

DAY 7

Cleaning From The Inside Out

"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come" (Rev. 14:7).

Bible Treasure

Story

He was small both in stature and in character. As chief tax collector, he went around forcing his neighbors to pay taxes to the despised Romans who forcefully occupied their land. Not only that, he wasn't honest, and often collected more than necessary, making himself very wealthy. Is it any wonder that his neighbors hated him?

One day as Jesus was entering Jericho, Zacchaeus was in town doing what he did best— cheating people out of their hard-earned money. Hearing about the famous rabbi who healed the sick and—most amazing of all—actually spoke to the poor and needy, taxman Zacchaeus decided he want to see this Guy.

Being someone who never let his lack of height interfere with his tall plans, the tax collector glanced around and discovered a sycamore-fig tree just down the road. It had sturdy branches and enough leaves to hide his curiosity. So up he went, until he had an unrestricted view of the road on which Jesus was traveling.

Along came the Master Teacher surrounded by attentive disciples, a group of recently healed sick people, the gaggle of questioning admirers, and even a few hecklers. Zacchaeus smiled inwardly. He'd found the best seat in the house. Reaching the tree, Jesus stopped. Slowly, with a smile spreading across His rugged, sun-tanned face, He looked up—right at Zacchaeus. The taxman grinned self-consciously. "Hello," he called down.

"Hello, Zacchaeus," Jesus responded. The taxman blinked. *He knows my name. He*

probably knows what I do for a living. He probably knows that I've been cheating people out of their hard-earned money. I'm going to get it now!

"Zacchaeus," the Master Teacher continued, "come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."

What? Did He just say what I think He said?

Amazed, the short man made the long journey from his tree limb to the ground. "You want to come to *my* house?" he gasped.

Christ nodded.

"This way," Zacchaeus stammered, pointing down the road.

The people couldn't believe their eyes. "Look at that," they said. "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

Later, after Zacchaeus and Jesus had spent some time together, an incredible thing happened to the little man. He grew up. Not in height, but in character. "Look, Lord!" he announced: "Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8).

That day in Jericho, Zacchaeus the tax collector met Jesus the judge face to face, and a sinful life changed forever.

Before the Judge

There will come a day when you and I will stand in judgement before the King of kings and Lord of lords. This will happen in order to reveal to the universe who is king of our hearts. Like the dishonest tax collector Zacchaeus, we're going to stand before God the Father and God the Son. It is important for us to invite Jesus now into our hearts so that in the judgment He may grant us what He granted Zacchaeus: permanent fellowship with Him.

I like what Saul—who became Paul—says about that moment. He writes: "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

The judgment? Bring it on. We're ready. Because God is living in us!

Share

Ask someone in your group to be the father of everyone in the group (that would make everyone else brothers and sisters). Then have each member make up a sin that they have committed (lying, cheating, making fun of someone, being violent, etc.) and have each member come to their "father" and admit to that sin. Have the "father" deal with that sin as a real father—one who loves Jesus—would. That's how God judges us.

Note

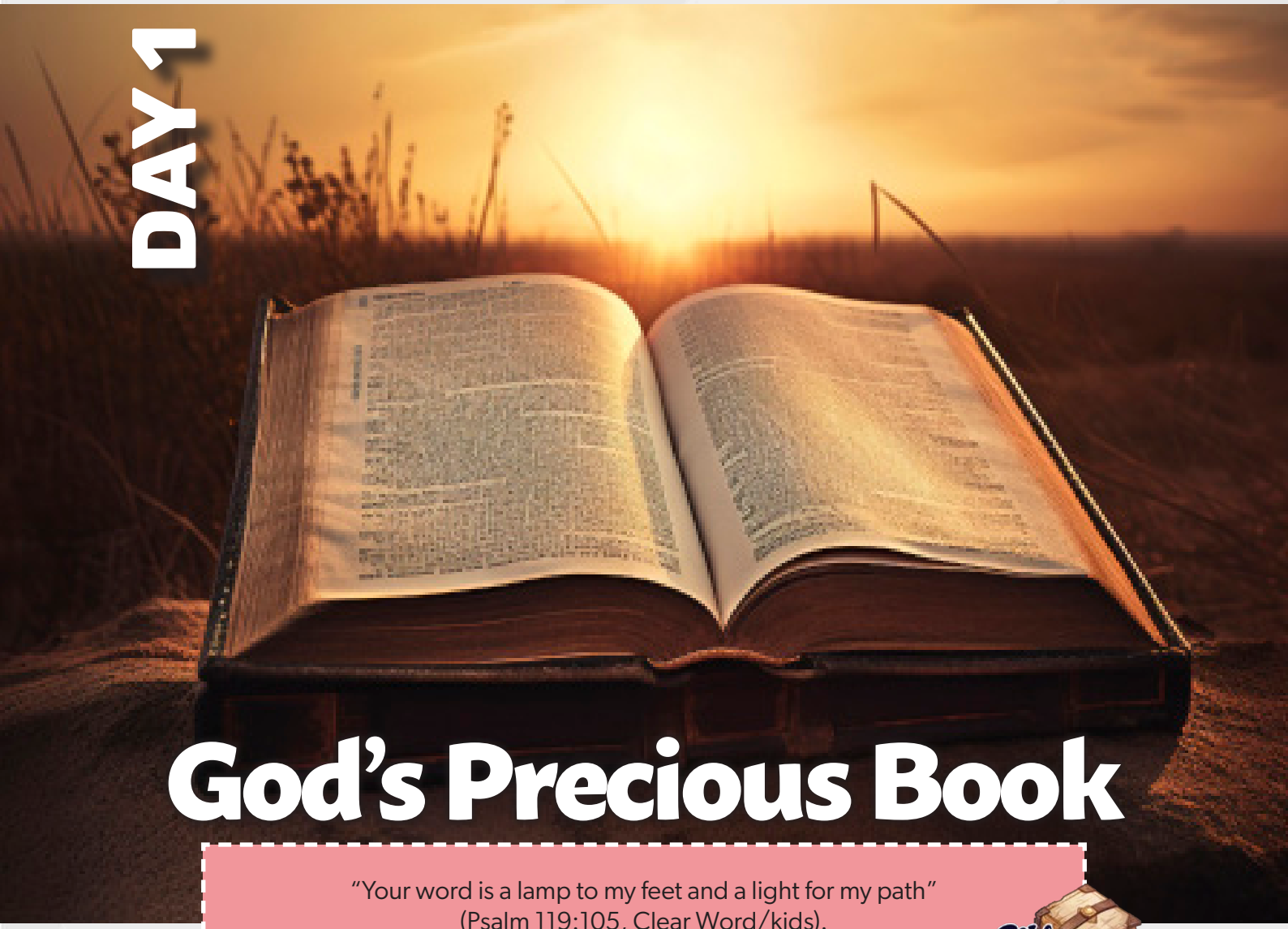
Jesus *Our* Friend

A Week of Prayer Adventures

THEME

By: ANNE-MAY WOLLAN

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2012



DAY 1

God's Precious Book

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path"
(Psalm 119:105, Clear Word/kids).

Bible Treasure

Story

High up in the mountains of northern Italy and France lived a group of people called the Waldenses, who loved God. They loved the Bible and tried to live faithfully according to God's Word. When the priests and the monks of the Roman Church were the only ones allowed to read and teach the Bible written in the Latin language, the Waldenses had a copy of the Bible, and they translated it into their own language. Many of them even memorized portions of the Bible.

The Roman Church taught people to pray to the virgin Mary and to confess their sins to the priests. But the Waldenses believed what the Bible taught them: that they could pray directly to God. Whenever the Waldenses met people who showed an interest in God's Word, they shared what the Bible says about a loving God who had sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. The only thing they had to do was believe in Jesus, confess their sins, and ask Him for forgiveness. When the priest and the monks heard what the Waldenses were teaching, they became very angry and threatened to put them in prison and even kill them if they did not stop. But the Waldenses faithfully continued to study the Bible and share its message. The pope became angry and decided to send his soldiers to punish the Waldenses. When the news that Rome's soldiers were on their way, the Waldenses fled to the mountains and hid in caves and deep valleys, where the soldiers could not find them. But sometimes the soldiers did find some of them and put them to death. The Waldenses were not afraid to follow God's Word.

They trusted in Jesus as their good friend who

helped them through many difficulties. Jesus also gave them courage to share His message with others. Their lives were changed as they followed what the Bible taught them. They became kinder, more helpful, and braver to witness for God. That meant revival, and they understood how important it was to live their lives according to God's will.

The Israelites and God's Word

The Israelites were a special people chosen by God to be an example to those living around them. God gave the Israelites instructions, through the prophets, not to worship other gods besides Him. He also told them how they were to live and treat each other. They obeyed God most of the time, and as long as they did, everything went well for them. But then they looked at their neighbors' gods and said, "We want a god that we can see, just like the ones our neighbors have."

So, they started to make themselves gods out of stone and precious metals, and they bowed down and worshipped them. God became angry and sent His prophets to tell the Israelites they would be punished for their unfaithfulness. The Israelites realized that they had done something really wrong, so they destroyed their idols and begged God for His forgiveness. God loved the Israelites and forgave them and blessed them with riches and freedom. The Israelites experienced a revival, which means they changed their ways and worshipped God with all their hearts.

Share

1. Look up the meaning of the word "revival." Share something you can do when your life is changed by Jesus.
2. Memorize a favorite Bible text and share it with a friend.

Note

DAY 2

God's Word in My Heart

"I have put Your words in my heart so I won't sin against You" (Psalm 119:11, Clear Word/ kids).

Bible Treasure

Story

Pierre and his wife, Blanche, and their three children, Hubert, Paula, and Gabrielle, lived high up in the mountains in one of the Waldensian valleys. Here among the mountains Pierre built a hut out of stones for his family to live in, and a barn just for the farm animals.

One summer day as Hubert and his two sisters watched their cows and goats up in the hills, they saw a band of Rome's soldiers coming up the valley. They knew right away that the soldiers were coming for them. They ran as fast as they could down the hill, over the field, and into the small kitchen, where Mother had just finished making bread dough. All three children tried to tell their mother what they had seen.

"The soldiers are on their way up the valley!" Hubert shouted fearfully.

"If they find our Bible, they will take it and burn it, and we will be put in prison," Paula continued.

"What shall we do, Mother?" Gabrielle asked with tears in her eyes.

Blanche thought for a few seconds and quickly said, "Bring me the Bible."

Hubert hurried and brought it to his mother. Blanche took the bread dough and rolled it out flat, then wrapped the Bible in a kitchen towel, placed it in the dough, and wrapped it around the Bible so it looked like a loaf of bread. She quickly put the bread into the oven to bake.

Minutes later soldiers banged their fists on the door. Blanche opened the door and invited them in.

"We are looking for forbidden Bibles," the captain of the soldiers snarled. "And we have orders to search your house."

The soldiers looked everywhere but found

no Bible in the house or in the barn. They even looked in the oven but saw only a loaf of bread baking.

"Oh, Mother," said Hubert after the soldiers had left, "I am so happy that they didn't find our Bible. But just in case they come back one day and take it from us, I want to learn even more of it by heart, because nobody can take away what's in my heart."

A Man After God's Own Heart

Do you remember how King Saul wanted to kill David? David had done nothing wrong but was always faithful toward Saul. One day David cut off a piece of Saul's robe. And another time, David sneaked into Saul's tent and found him asleep but did not kill him.

"God forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed," he declared.

So, David took Saul's spear and his water jug and went a safe distance from Saul's camp. He stood on top of a hill and called out: "Saul, why do you want to kill your servant?"

"Where are your spear and your water jug?" he continued.

"Look, here they are," he shouted. "I could have killed you while you were sleeping, but how can I do such an evil thing toward God's chosen king?"

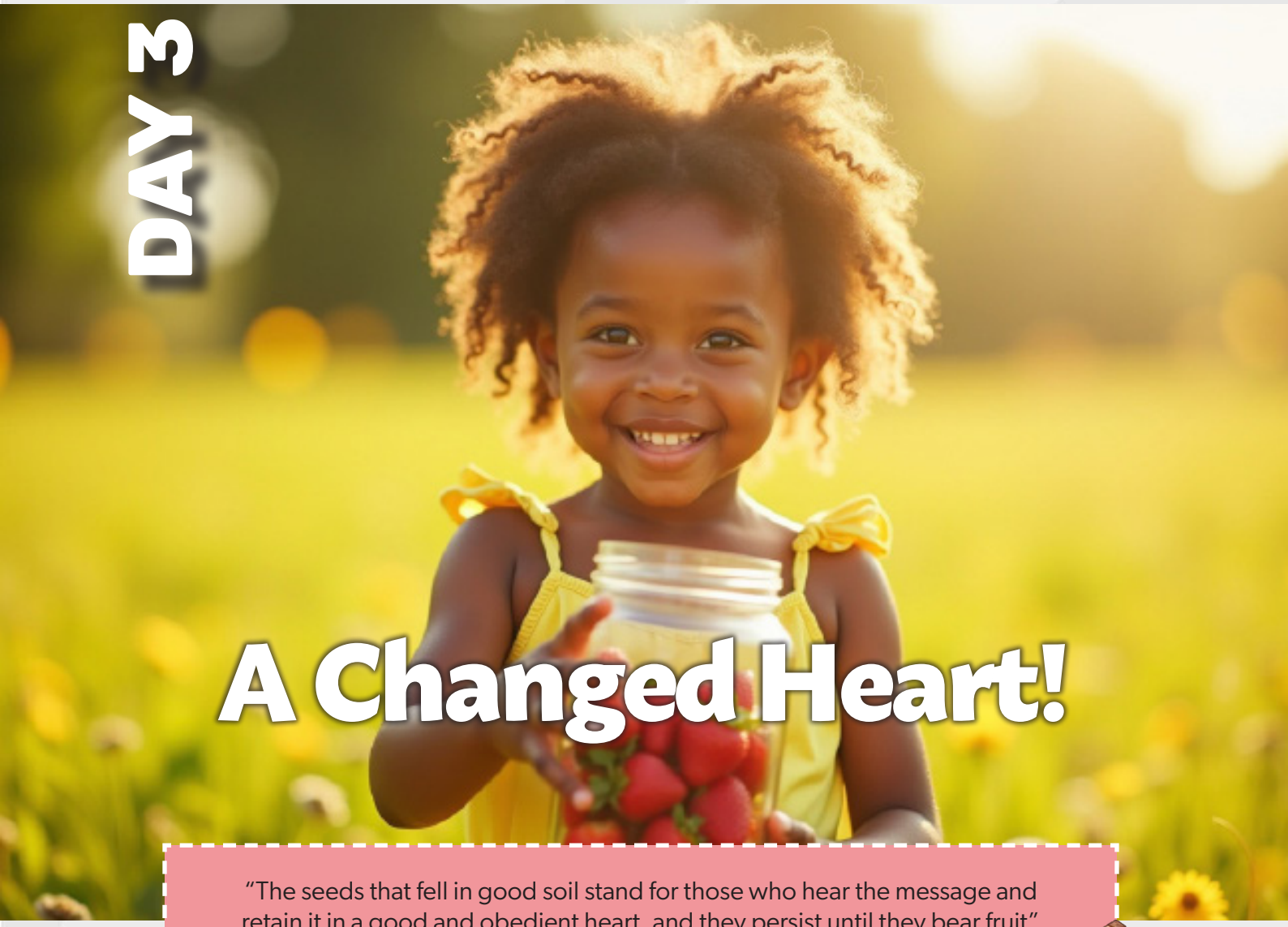
David was a man who kept God's word in his heart.

Share

1. Why do we need to keep God's word in our hearts?
2. What difference can it make in our lives?
3. Make red hearts and paste on them five Bible texts that can help us do what Jesus wants us to.

Note

DAY 3



A Changed Heart!

"The seeds that fell in good soil stand for those who hear the message and retain it in a good and obedient heart, and they persist until they bear fruit" (Luke 8: 15, TEV).

Bible Treasure

Story

Twelve-year-old Paula was known for her kindness and love for Jesus. One day her mother asked her to bring a jar of preserved fruit to Louisa, a poor old woman in the village.

Louisa answered Paula's knock. As Paula entered Louisa's home, a beautiful black cat followed her in.

"Ah, here comes Cordero!" Louisa explained, "He's my only friend."

"I am your friend too," Paula said. "And there's another friend who has sent you this gift!" She placed the preserved fruit in the hands of the old woman.

"Is this for me?" Louisa asked. "How can I thank you? No one has ever brought me anything; no one even takes time to speak to me."

Paula understood how lonely Louisa had been, so she spent some time visiting with her.

It was getting late, and Paula had to leave. Louisa took her hands gently and said, "How can I ever thank you for coming to visit a poor old woman like me whom nobody loves? Do come and see me again soon."

"Oh, Louisa," exclaimed Paula, "There is One who loves you. Do you know Him?"

Louisa shook her head sadly. "No, nobody loves me."

"Jesus loves you, Louisa!" exclaimed Paula excitedly.

"Jesus? Tell me about Him; I have heard that name—who is He?"

And Paula told Louisa about the Lord Jesus, who died on the cross, rose again, and now is in

heaven waiting for Louisa to give Him her heart because He loves her.

"He wishes to be your friend," said Paula. "Just ask Him and give Him your heart."

That afternoon Louisa prayed and gave her heart to Jesus.

The Fertile Soil

Once when Jesus was teaching, He told His listeners a parable about a farmer who went out to sow seeds in his field. As he scattered the seeds, some of them fell on the road, and the birds quickly came and ate them up.

Some of the seeds also fell among the rocks, where there was very little soil. These seeds quickly sprouted and grew because the soil wasn't deep. When the sun came up, the plants dried up and died.

Some seeds fell among thorns and thistles, and the weeds grew so quickly that they overpowered the plants. But most of the seeds that the farmers scattered fell on good soil, and the plants bore lots of grain.

When the disciples asked Jesus what the meaning of the story was, He explained that the farmer is out sowing God's Word. Some people are like the seeds that fall on the road: as soon as they hear God's Word, Satan comes and takes the seed or truth away.

Some people are like seeds that fall among rocks. As soon as they hear God's Word, they accept it with their heads but not with their hearts. When problems come along, they give up and leave God.

Others are like the seeds sown among the thorns and the thistles. They hear God's Word, but the love of money and all the things they want to do get in the way of their desire to follow God's word.

But some people are like the seeds sown in good soil. They hear God's Word, accept it, and live their lives according to it. They bear fruits of kindness, helpfulness, and love to people around them. Many learn to love and follow God's Word, because only God's Word can change us.

Share

1. How can we bear lots of good fruits in our lives? at school? in the community?
2. Make two or three get-well cards and decorate them. Then write a message in each and give them to people in need of encouragement.

Note

DAY 4

God's Word in Our Hearts

"Don't forget to read what Moses wrote. Do it in the morning and at night, so you won't forget what I said. I will bless you and give you success" (Joshua 1: 8, Clear Word/kids).

Bible Treasure

Story

Autumn had come, the harvest was over, and the hay for the animals and grain and vegetables were all stored away for the winter. Paula and Gabrielle loved this time of year. It was perfect for indoor activities, such as carding wool, weaving, and knitting. But most of all they loved it, because the neighbors would take turns hosting everyone at their individual huts for worship. Gabrielle loved the singing at these worships, especially when a guest came to the valley and would teach them new songs. Paula loved to listen to her uncle read and teach from the Bible. Sometimes the children would have a chance to recite Bible chapters they had learned. Paula already knew most of the book of Matthew by heart, and she had started to memorize the book of Luke as well. Hubert, who had been away at the School of the Barbas (ministers), knew most of the New Testament by heart. He was studying to become a traveling missionary and by the end of his schooling would learn most of the Bible by heart, as well as copy it by hand. The Bible was important to Pierre's family, for a time could come when they would not have one. Therefore, it was important for them to have it stored in their hearts.

Stones as a Reminder

The Israelites had been walking in the desert for 40 years. After Moses died, God appointed Joshua as their new leader. God asked Joshua to remember every day and night to read what Moses had written.

Then He told him: "Today I will show all the

Israelites that I am with you just as I was with Moses."

Finally, the day came when the Israelites could cross the river Jordan and enter into the land that God had promised them. God had told Joshua how the crossing should be done, so now Joshua stood on the banks of the river and commanded the priests, who were carrying the ark, to be the first to walk into the river. As soon as the priests' feet touched the water, the flow upstream stopped. The flow downstream also disappeared. The priests were told to stop in the middle of the river, on dry ground, and stand there until all the Israelites had crossed over. When everyone had crossed over safely, Joshua commanded one elder from each of the tribes of Israel to go into the riverbed where the priests were standing and collect one rock and bring them to him. When all the rocks had been delivered to Joshua, he told the priests to come out of the riverbed. As soon as the priests were safe up on the riverbank, the waters of Jordan returned.

That night when the Israelites camped for the first time in their promised land at a place called Gilgal, they gathered for worship. Joshua took the 12 stones from the Jordan and piled them up. Joshua did this so that every time the Israelites passed by these stones, they would remember that God is powerful and worthy of their respect and honor, and that His Word should always be in their hearts.

1. Why is it important to study God's Word?
2. Try to memorize today's memory gem and five other Bible verses. Then share them with your Sabbath school teacher and friends.
3. If you memorized one verse from the book of Matthew every day, how many chapters would you know by the end of the year?

DAY 5

Ruth's Special Friend

"I will talk about your laws before rulers with no shame whatsoever. I will rejoice in your commandments because I love them" (Psalm 119:46, 47, CEB).

Bible Treasure

Story

In the valley where Pierre and his family lived, there was a hut completely hidden among the trees. Eleven-year-old Ruth and her family lived there. When Ruth was just a little girl, she had fallen into the open fireplace and burned her face badly, and now she was very scarred. The children in the village were not nice to Ruth, and they used to tease her and call her "catface."

Laura liked Ruth, so she decided she would be her friend. When all her chores were done, Laura would run down to the hut in the forest and visit with Ruth. The little girl was very shy and also scared that Laura might tease her. But as the weeks passed by, Ruth started to trust Laura. One day she asked her, "Why do you come here?"

"I want to be your friend!" Laura answered.

"No one wants to be friends with me," Ruth said sadly. "I am too ugly to have friends."

"Who told you that?" Laura asked.

"The children in the village," she answered.

"Well, I want to be your friend," Laura answered, "and I know of someone else who also wants to be your friend."

Ruth's eyes lit up, and she exclaimed, "I have never had friends before, and now I have two. Who is my other friend?"

"Jesus," Laura answered. "Jesus is also your friend."

Ruth bowed her head and with sorrow in her voice said, "He is not going to be a friend to someone like me."

"Oh, Ruth, He loves you just the way you are. To Him you are beautiful, and He is your friend! You can talk to Him about anything, and He

can take away the hurt and sorrow that you feel because of your scars."

"I want to be His friend as well," Ruth said. "Help me, Laura; won't you help me tell Him that I want to be His friend as well?"

Together the two girls prayed, and Ruth accepted Jesus as her friend. Most of all, she thanked Him for loving her as she was.

The Slave Girl's Testimony

Do you remember the Bible story of the little Jewish maid who was captured by the Syrian king's soldiers? She was captured and sold to be the servant girl for the wife of Captain Naaman.

When the little Jewish maid learned that her master, Captain Naaman, had leprosy, she went to Naaman's wife. "I wish that my master could come before the prophet who lives in Samaria. He would cure him of leprosy," she said.

Immediately Naaman's wife told him what the Jewish maid said, and it brought hope to his heart.

When Naaman finally arrived at Prophet Elisha's house, Elisha sent his messenger out and said to Naaman:

"Go and wash seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will become clean."

Naaman became really angry and left.

"I thought for sure that he'd come out and call on the name of the Lord his God and cure the leprosy," he said. "I could just as well have washed myself in the rivers in Damascus."

But Naaman's servants said to him, "If the prophet had told you to do something difficult, wouldn't you have done it? All he said to you was 'Wash and become clean.'"

So Naaman went down to the river Jordan and washed himself seven times, and when he came out of the water the seventh time, his skin was clean.

He hurried back to Elisha and said, "Now I know for sure that there's no God anywhere on earth except in Israel."

Though Laura and the little Jewish maid were just children, they were willing to witness for God in heaven. They shared Jesus with others, and the results were amazing.

Share

1. How can you share Jesus with your friends at school and in your community?
2. Make a bookmark and write your favorite Bible text on it. Give it to a friend at school who doesn't know Jesus.

Note

DAY 6

A Secret Friend

"So we have no choice but to preach to the Gentiles so that they can be saved. This is what the Lord has told us to do" (Acts 13:47, Clear Word/kids).

Bible Treasure

Story

Pascal lived in the plains below the Waldensian valleys. He was a rich man who believed in the Roman Church. After Pascal met Pierre, who taught him from the Bible, he began protecting the Waldenses. One day Pascal heard that Rome's soldiers were marching toward the Waldensian valleys, and he knew that Pierre's family and the other Waldenses were in danger. He took his fastest horse and rode up into the valley to warn Pierre and the others of the danger. On his way up the valley, he stopped at every little hut and shouted, "The soldiers are coming!"

Finally, he came to the top of the valley, where Pierre and his family lived.

"The soldiers are coming to kill all the Waldenses!" Pascal shouted urgently. "Pack up today and flee to the mountains in France."

An hour later Pierre, Blanche, Hubert, Paula, and Gabrielle started their long and dangerous walk across the mountains to safety.

A Persecutor Becoming a Follower

Saul, like the soldiers in the Waldensian story, persecuted the followers of Jesus. Saul believed with all his heart that this traveling preacher, Jesus from Nazareth, who had recently been crucified, was a false prophet and his followers had to be put to death. He had already gotten many Christians killed, and now he was traveling to Damascus with a letter from the high priest giving him permission to take all Christian men, women, and children as prisoners to Jerusalem.

He was getting close to Damascus when suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed all around him. Saul fell to the ground, hiding his

face. Then he heard a voice coming down from heaven saying, "Saul, why do you persecute Me?"

"Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked fearfully.

"I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting." The voice replied. "Now get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told what to do."

The soldiers traveling with him were completely speechless. They had heard the sound but had not seen anyone. Saul slowly stood up and opened his eyes to see, but to his horror, he could not see anything. He was blind!

The soldiers led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days Saul was blind. But God told Ananias to go and heal Saul, saying, "Go! I have chosen this man, and he is going to be a missionary for Me to the Gentiles."

Ananias went to the house where Saul was staying. He put his hands on Saul, and his sight returned. Saul was changed when he met Jesus. He became Paul, a follower of Jesus who traveled all over the Mediterranean preaching and teaching about Jesus. He was no longer a persecutor.

By meeting Jesus, we are changed. Pascal became a protector of God's people, and Saul became a powerful preacher.

Share

1. Why is God's Word able to change people?
2. Make a list of things you stopped doing after you made Jesus your friend.

Note

DAY 7

A Temptation Almost Too Big

"Man can't live on bread alone but needs the Word of God"
(Matthew 4: 4, Clear Word/ kids).

Bible Treasure

Story

Many of the other Waldensians from the valley joined Pierre and his family as they made their way up the mountain. For supper that first evening Blanche gave everyone just one small piece of bread. They had many more days of traveling, and the food they brought along had to last for the entire journey.

Three days of walking went by, and only one mountain pass had been crossed. Gabrielle was tired and hungry, and all she could think about was food and sleep. That evening she cried herself to sleep, and when morning came, she didn't want to get up. Paula was worried about her little sister and promised her she would give her some of her bread if she would get up and get ready. At once Gabrielle got up and was ready for the day's walk.

Later that day as they continued their climb, Gabrielle saw something fall off the back of their neighbor's mule. It was half a loaf of bread!

I'll hide it under my coat and not tell anyone. Then I can eat it when I get hungry, thought Gabrielle.

They will be really hungry when they have nothing to eat, she thought again. This is not right. It is stealing.

The Bible says it is wrong to steal, her conscience kept telling her.

She could not do it—it was wrong. So she took the bread out from her coat and ran up to the family and told them it had fallen off their mule. That evening Gabrielle was happy for the small piece of bread that was given to her.

Jesus and the Tempter

Remember Jesus was also tempted in the wilderness where He spent 40 days praying

and not having anything to eat. After 40 days of fasting and Jesus was really hungry, Satan appeared as an angel before Him.

"If You are the Son of God, You could turn these stones into bread."

Jesus knew it was Satan who was tempting Him, so He answered:

"Man can't live on bread alone, but needs the Word of God."

Satan was not about to give up, so he took Jesus with him to Jerusalem, to the highest point on the Temple, and said to Him:

"Show me how much faith you have in God by jumping off this wall. The Bible says that God will send angels to take care of those who love Him."

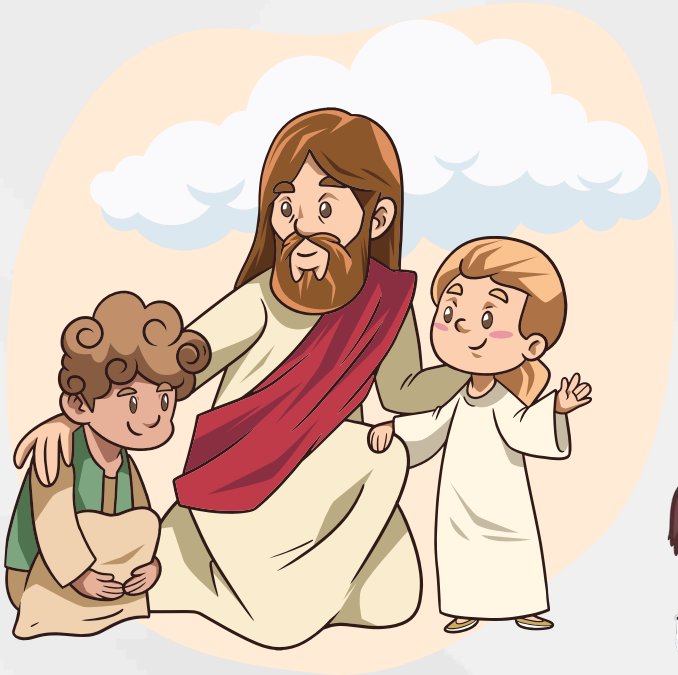
But Jesus knew that Satan was mixing truth with untruth and said:

"God does not want us to show how much we trust Him by doing something foolish."

Satan did not want to give up, so he took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him a beautiful view of the world and said to Him: "You don't have to die to save the world. I'll give You all this if You'll just bow down and worship me."

"Get away from Me, Satan. For it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve Him only. God is the one who owns this world," said Jesus.

Immediately Satan left. Jesus was so weak from going without food and water for 40 days that He was close to dying, but God sent His angels to help Him and give Him strength.



Share

1. How can God's Word help us resist temptation? List four or five ways.
2. List two Bible texts that can help us resist Satan's temptations.

Note

Discovering God's Love

THEME

By: SAUSTIN MFUNE

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2013

DAY 1

God's Precious Book

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

Bible Treasure

Story

We had just moved to a new area, and our new house was not ready yet. Since it would take us about three weeks to put the finishing touches on our new home, friends took us in. They had a 6-year-old girl who had a very pleasant personality and was very smart. One day when she returned from school, she walked in with two small flowerpots that held plants. One plant looked very healthy, and the other was shriveled and dying.

I could tell that she had some big news to share. She put her plants down and told me the plants she carried were her class project. She explained that before we moved in, her teacher gave them two plants to plant in flowerpots when they returned home. They were to put one pot where there was plenty of light and the other in a very dark place. The plant that would be in darkness would not be fertilized, but the one in the light would be. While the plant in the light would be watered lightly once or twice a week, the plant in the dark would be watered only when planted. They were told to bring the pots to school after two weeks.

The girl's mom helped her with the planting, and at the end of the two weeks she collected both plants and took them to school. She discovered that her plant, and all her classmates' plants, that were in darkness were dying. Her teacher explained the reason the plants were dying was that they lacked nutrients, which helped them grow. Without light, fertilizer, and proper food, a plant cannot grow, and for a plant to do really well it needs moisture, air, sunlight, and fertile soil. As this child walked away with her two pots, I could

not help thinking that it is the same thing with our spiritual lives. If we don't get the right spiritual nutrients, we will not grow.

Read the verses below then do the crossword puzzle.

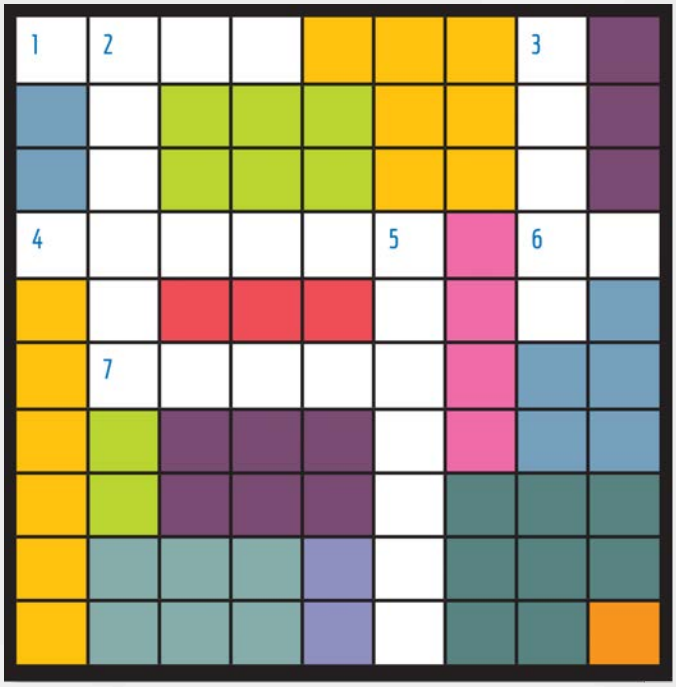
"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4, 5).

ACROSS

1. This is where branches grow from.
4. This is what a person should do in order to bear a lot of fruit.
6. If Jesus remains in _____, we will bear much fruit.
7. What you produce when you remain in the vine.

DOWN

2. No branch can bear fruit by _____.
3. Who is the vine?
5. How much can we produce if we are not in the vine?



DAY 2

Throwing Stones

"Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT).

Bible Treasure

Story

When I was in elementary school, my friends nicknamed me Shorty. But whenever somebody called me that, I threw stones at them. I was about 11 years old when the following incident happened. Some girls called me Shorty when I was walking home from school one day. I found a stone and threw it at them. It hit one of the girls above her right eye, and when I saw that, I quickly took off. Arriving home, I zoomed past my surprised parents and went straight to my room and thought about what might happen to me.

Suddenly I heard crying coming from outside. I looked through the window and I saw the girl and her parents. She looked as if somebody had poured blood on her. After talking with my parents, the girl and her parents left. My visibly angry father immediately came to my room and asked me to follow him. We walked for a long way into the woods and sat down under a tree. I sat far away from his arms' reach.

My father looked at me and asked why I had thrown stones at the girls. "Because they called me Shorty," I replied angrily.

"And how much have you grown after stoning them?" he asked.

I had no answer.

"Throwing stones at your friends will not make you any taller," my father said. "You have to make a decision. Either you are going to live the rest of your life throwing stones at people, or you are going to accept yourself the way you are, because you will not grow much taller than this. But the truth is you just cannot go through

life throwing stones at people."

I was silent. "Look at it this way," my dad said. "God is building a house, and He knows exactly where this short brick (pointing to me) will fit into the plans. In John 9:1-3 there is a story of a blind man. When people asked Jesus who had sinned, Jesus answered that neither the parents nor the blind man sinned but that the man was blind so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

"God allows certain things to happen to us for His glory," he added. "Remember that when God created Adam and Eve, He made them in His image. You are also made in God's image. And know this: God does not make junk."

After Dad finished speaking, we prayed together and walked home.

That discussion with my father changed me completely. I accepted myself just the way I was. Though I am short, I know I am made in the image of God. Through my father, God re-created me, and I stopped throwing stones at people.

Do the exercise below to find out something about Creation.

1. Choose any even number between 1 and 10 and write it on the line provided. _____
2. Add the next higher even number to it. Write the total on the line provided. _____
3. Add 8 to your total in number 2. _____
4. Divide your total in number 3 by 2. _____
5. Subtract the original number from your total in number 4. _____
6. Add 2 to your number in number 5. _____

If you read Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 2:1-3, you will find that the answer you have in number 6 is the number of days it took to create the world, including the Sabbath rest. Out of a shapeless, dark, and void earth, God made a beautiful world. He can do the same thing for you. He is able to forgive all your wrongs and make you a new creation, a loving and lovable person.

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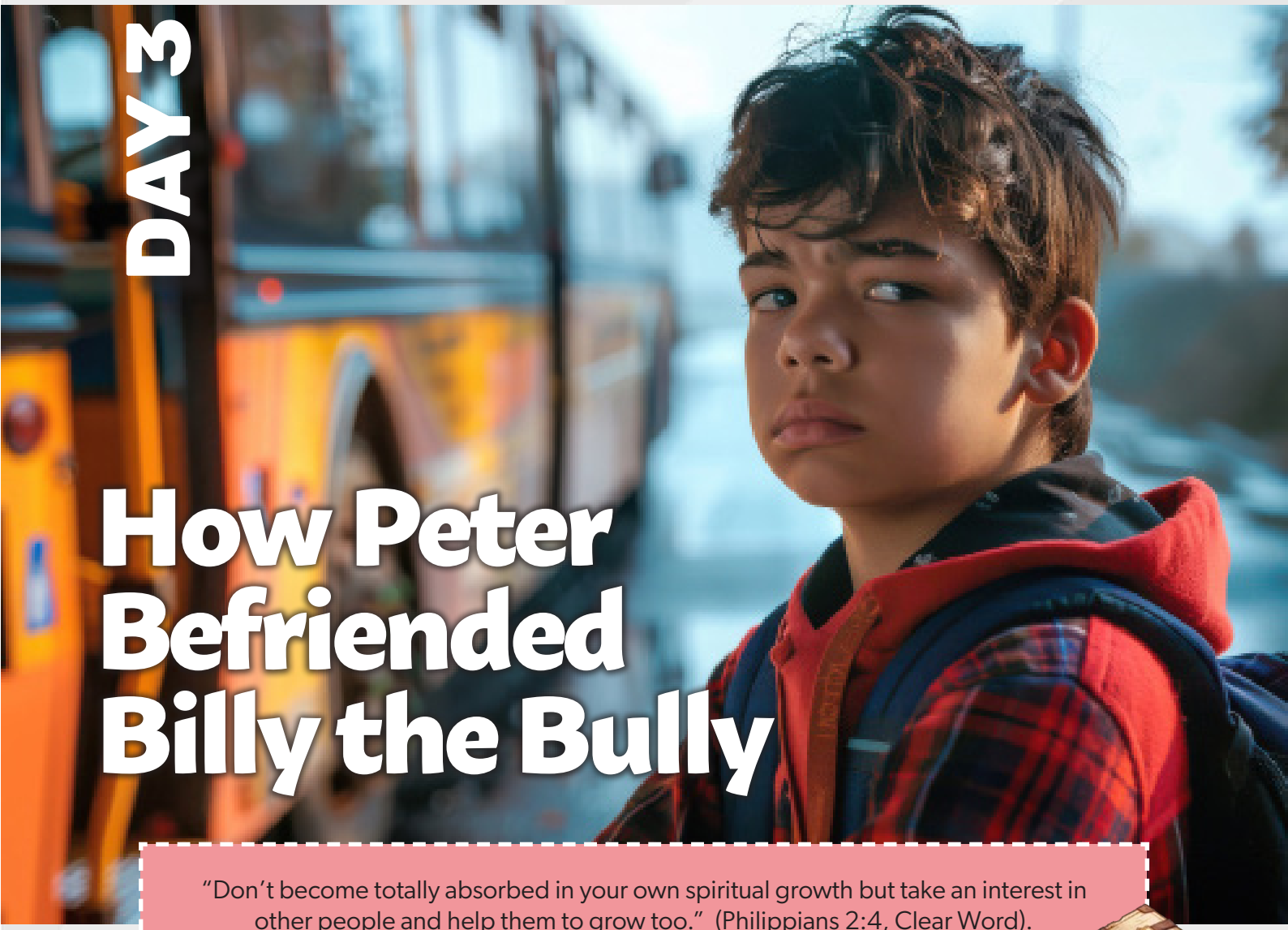

DAY 3

How Peter Befriended Billy the Bully

"Don't become totally absorbed in your own spiritual growth but take an interest in other people and help them to grow too." (Philippians 2:4, Clear Word).

Bible Treasure

Story

Peter and his parents moved to a new town. On Peter's first day on the school bus, he heard kids saying, "Billy, there's the new kid." He turned around and saw a boy built like a weightlifter coming toward him.

"Go for him, Billy," the kids chanted. As Billy walked toward Peter, his biceps seemed to dance with every step. Peter, who was a good athlete, smiled as Billy approached, and watched as he took a seat across from him.

"I am Billy the Bully," he said. Peter nodded his head. "Do you have breakfast for me?" Billy asked.

"I did not plan for you, but I can give you one of my sandwiches," Peter replied. Peter opened his lunch box and gave Billy a sandwich. He took a bite, and the kids cheered and shouted. In between bites Billy looked at Peter and said, "Your sandwich is too dry. I need something to drink." The kids laughed, but Billy turned around and told the other kids to keep quiet or else.

When Peter returned home, he told his parents what had happened. "What you did was good," they said.

"But what annoys me is that I know I am stronger than Billy," Peter replied.

"Remember what the Bible says, son: 'Love those who persecute you,' "his mother encouraged.

Billy continued doing this for about two weeks. One day after school, while all the other kids were already on the bus, Billy came running. And as he tried to board the bus, he missed the steps and smashed his face onto the steps of the bus. When he lifted his head, there was blood gushing out of his mouth and

forehead. He staggered into the bus and found a seat. Some kids began to giggle, but Billy was in too much pain to do anything about it. As the bus driver called the school nurse, Peter walked over to him and put his hand on his shoulder. "Is there anything I can do for you?" he asked.

"I think I'll be fine," Billy replied through cut and swollen lips. Peter offered Billy some water to rinse out his mouth.

The following day on the bus Peter saw Billy in the back. His lips and forehead were still swollen. Soon Billy came over and apologized for the way he'd treated Peter, saying that he could not understand why Peter was kind to him. Peter told him that the Bible tells us to be nice to those who mistreat us. From that time onward, Billy and Peter became the best of friends, and Billy changed completely.

The Bible Heart Transplant Game

Dr. Christiaan Barnard did the first heart transplant on a human being on December 3, 1967, at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa. Unfortunately the patient, Mr. Louis Washkansky, did not live long. He died 18 days later of pneumonia. Jesus has been transplanting hearts for thousands of years. Place the vowels (a, e, i, o, u) in the text below to find a verse that talks of Jesus transplanting hearts. Then ask an adult to help you find the Bible text and write it on the line provided.

"__ w__ll g__v__ y__ __ __ n__w h__ __rt __nd p__t __ n__w sp__r__t __n y__ __: __ w__ll r__m__v__ fr__m y__ __ y__ __r h__ __rt __f st__n__ __nd g__v__ y__ __ __ h__ __ rt __f fl__sh."

_____, NIV

Peter's humbleness helped Billy's heart change. You can do the same to help someone else become a better person.

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DAY 4

Blindness

"Finally, my brothers, fill your minds with things that are true, honest and just. Think about things that are noble, pure and lovely. Focus on good reports about others. If any good has happened or there's any reason to praise man or God, think about those things" (Philippians 4:8, Clear Word).

Bible Treasure

Story

We take our eyes for granted. Have you ever played the blindfolding game? The game is fun only because we know that after the game we will see again. But can you imagine if you were blindfolded for the rest of your life? That would not be fun at all. I know a boy who was born blind. Though this boy has many talents, such as playing a guitar, and singing beautifully, and though he always wears a smile, he once told me that he wished he could see just like other boys and girls.

Blindness is not fun. And the devil knows it. He wants to blindfold you for the rest of your life so that you are not able to see the goodness of Jesus. Unfortunately, there are some who have let him do that to them and they don't see the good things God has for them.

Note

Unscramble the last word in each of the sentences below to find some of the things people who are blindfolded by the devil are not able to see.

Not see god's **vole** _____.
Not able to see god's **nksinsde** _____.
Not able to see god's **cotopretin** _____.
Not able to see god's **adignuce** _____.

The Blindfolding Game

There are pictures of four children below who are blindfolded. Underneath each picture is a line. On each line, write one thing the devil can use to blindfold you so that you don't see the goodness of Jesus.

_____

_____

_____

_____

When the devil blindfolds you and you are not able to see the goodness of Jesus, you will not be honest, truthful, kind, and just. Ask Jesus to help you remain in Him all the time and not to be blindfolded by the devil. Pray to Him daily to give you power to overcome the devil's temptations and give you the desire to read your Bible and other Christian books daily. With Jesus leading your life daily, He will help you: obey your parents and your teachers, go to church and enjoy being in church, listen to good Christian music, watch only Christian, educational, and character-building programs on TV, be temperate with your cell phone and other media gadgets, and many such things. He will help you so that only good things should fill your mind.

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DAY 5

"Mr. iPhone" Makes Things Right

"So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body" (Ephesians 4:25, NLT).

Bible Treasure

Story

Jonathan was probably the coolest guy anyone had ever seen. The list of things he could do seemed endless. He was nicknamed "Mr. iPhone" because kids at his school believed that an iPhone could do almost everything. Jonathan actually had no mobile phone, though a number of children at the school did.

One winter morning Bill, Jonathan's classmate, happily zoomed into class waving an iPhone that he had been given as a birthday present. The other classmates gathered around Bill as he demonstrated how this bundle of technology worked. Jonathan was filled with jealousy because Bill had the kids' attention—and he even had an iPhone.

During recess, about a week later, Jonathan entered the bathroom just in time to see Bill walk out of a stall. When Jonathan walked in, he could not believe his eyes. Right in front of him, lying on the floor next to the seat, was Bill's iPhone! He quickly picked up the phone, turned it off, and put it inside the pocket of his thick coat. As Jonathan walked out of the bathroom and into the hallway, he met Bill, who was running into the bathroom with a desperate look on his face.

Jonathan quickly walked into the classroom and took his seat. Then he saw Bill, sadness written all over his face, enter the classroom. With a tearful voice Bill asked the class if they had seen his phone. "No," the kids responded. When the teacher and the principal quizzed the children, they all denied seeing Bill's phone.

Jonathan was relieved when classes were over, and he could board the bus for home. When he got home, he dashed to his bedroom, locked

the door behind him, and turned on the phone, being careful to put it on vibration mode.

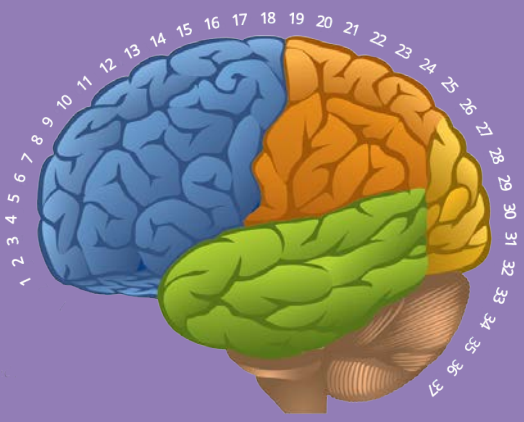
Soon it was suppertime. Jonathan left the phone under his pillow and went down to eat. His father excused himself from the table so that he could slip a surprise gift into Jonathan's room. As his father put the gift on the bed, he heard a vibrating sound. When he lifted the pillow, he saw the phone. He put the pillow back and returned to continue eating with the family.

After the meal, Dad asked Jonathan if he had something he wanted to tell the family. Jonathan said no. His father told him that when he had gone to put a gift on Jonathan's bed, he'd heard a vibrating noise coming from under the pillow. Jonathan looked at his parents, and tears began to roll down his cheeks. He confessed to his parents that he had stolen Bill's iPhone.

Jonathan told his parents that he would return the phone and confess to the class what he had done. His father went with him to school the following day, and Jonathan made things right. Though Jonathan does not have a mobile phone, he is now a happy boy.

Below is a diagram of the brain with numbers around it. Next to the diagram are columns with letters and numbers in them. Write the letters in the columns on the corresponding number on the brain to find a beautiful plea from God. Then find the verse hidden (numbers 38 to 47) and write it on the line below the columns.

I (38)	W (7)	: (45)	R (13)	O (35)	S (27)	H (32)	I (44)
N (18)	O (17)	A (40)	D (37).	M (3)	A (15)	T (19)	C (1)
E (4)	I (46)	Y (29)	U (11)	H (24)	T (10)	O (6)	S (39)
T (23)	E (14)	O (20)	E (9)	S (16)	R (36)	E (25)	S (12)
L (8)	G (21)	A (28)	T (31)	O (2)	R (26)	I (41)	8 (47)
S (30)	E (22)	E (33)	A (42)	H (43)	N (5)	L (34)	



Answer: _____.

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DAY 6

Winning Others to Jesus

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Bible Treasure

Story

In 1999, when I worked in Zimbabwe, I took a group of young people visiting from Sahmyook University in South Korea from Harare to the Kariba hydroelectric dam, one of the largest human-made dams in the world.

The young people, along with their leader and my friend, Pastor Song, had come to tell others about Jesus. There is a large fishing community near the dam, which is where we were going. Pastor Song spoke some English. Most of the young people in the group hardly spoke any English, but this did not dampen their enthusiasm for influencing others for Jesus.

We arrived about 10:00 p.m. As we approached Kariba from a hill, I saw a big "city" down below. Then the road curved to the right, and we drove up another hill to the guest house. I told Pastor Song that I had no idea there was such a big city at the Kariba dam.

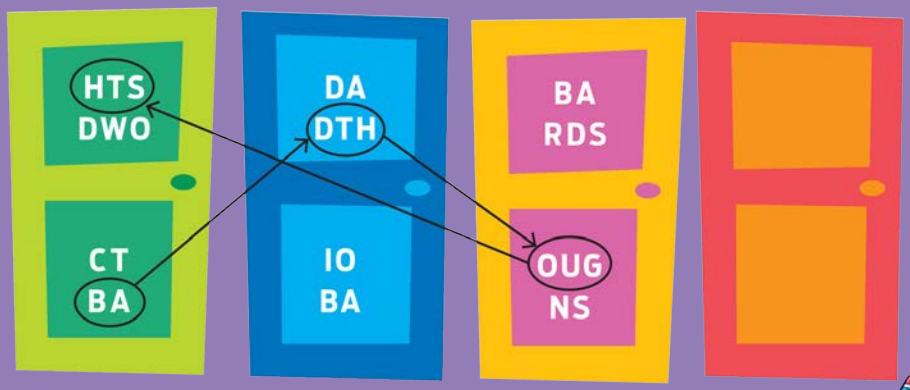
After breakfast we walked out to see the city. To our surprise, all we saw were water, three canoes, and a boat. There were a number of kids playing in the water, and some men mending their nets on the shores of the dam. Turning to one of the guest house workers, we asked him where the city was that we had seen the night before. He smiled and told us that we had seen people fishing. He explained that the best time to catch fish is at night, and lights are one of the techniques the fishers use. They take bright lamps with them onto the lake. Fish are attracted to the light, and they come around the boats. The fishers use their nets to catch them. The Korean pastor asked if they also catch fish during the day. The worker told us that they do, but not as much as during the night. He pointed

and said that some of the people we saw were catching fish with hooks. He looked at us, smiled, and said, "Though you can fish at any time of the day, the best time to fish, and catch lots of them, is at night." We thanked him and walked away. Pastor Song translated what the worker had said to the rest of the group.

Soon the local pastor joined us with a group of about 25 kids. He told us that since it was a school holiday, the kids had volunteered to help us distribute tracts and handbills to the people.

Later on, after organizing ourselves, we distributed tracts door to door and office to office. It was great to see young people from Korea, who could hardly speak English, and children from Kariba, who chose not to play with their friends in the Kariba dam, work side by side distributing tracts and inviting people to come and learn about Jesus. These young people knew that God gave His Son to die for us so that we could be saved. They also realized that many people don't fully know this good news. And with such an eager group, it was just the right time to share God's message.

When you preach to other people, it helps you grow in Jesus. It also helps some of your listeners accept Jesus and close the doors on many evil things. Below are four doors. Draw lines connecting a set of letters from door to door until you have made the right word. There are three phrases. One phrase is "Bad Thoughts," and it has been connected for you. Find the other two phrases. Here is a clue: all the phrases begin with the word "bad." After you have connected them, write your phrases on the fourth door.



Key: Bad Thoughts, Bad Words, Bad Actions

DAY 7

A Trip to Masai Mara

"You can be sure that no one who . . . is greedy, or who values anything as more important than God can have a part in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Ephesians 5:5, Clear Word).

Bible Treasure

Story

NeeQua and Billy were not really bad children. The problem was that NeeQua liked watching TV all the time, and Billy liked fiddling with his mobile phone. It made Dad and Mom very sad that the children enjoyed playing with their gadgets more than attending family worship.

Their father, an auditor, traveled a lot and had received lots of frequent flyer miles. One day he told his family that they would use his frequent flyer miles and travel to Kenya to see animals at the Masai Mara game reserve.

Dad took his smartphone and satellite phone, and Mom carried her mobile phone. These phones could get a signal anywhere in the world. After many hours of flying, the family arrived in Nairobi, Kenya. They enjoyed a good night's rest before departing in the morning for Masai Mara, which was about 170 miles west of Nairobi.

About four hours later they arrived at the game reserve. It was breathtaking. They saw animals as far as their eyes could see. But after a number of hours they began to get worried, because they hadn't seen any lions. Then they saw a car flash its lights. Their driver told them that the flashing lights meant there were lions ahead.

Soon they were thrilled to see a pride of lions sleeping under an anthill. They joined the semicircle of cars, and Dad took lots of pictures. Since they were the last ones to arrive, all of the cars had gone by the time the family decided to start off for Nairobi. The driver turned the ignition key, and all they heard was a clicking sound. He tried again and again. Nothing happened.

Dad and Mom looked at their mobile phones. They had no signal. Even Dad's satellite phone did not work. Everyone was horrified when they

saw the lions stand up and walk toward the car. Dad suggested that they pray. NeeQua and Billy did not even complain. Dad's prayer was short: "Lord, help our car to start. Amen." He then told the driver to start the car. You could almost hear five hearts beating frantically.

The car responded with a roaring sound, and the fearful lions scampered away. After arriving in their hotel room, NeeQua and Billy looked at their parents and told them that they were sorry they valued their gadgets more than they valued prayer. They asked for forgiveness. Dad and Mom were thrilled and told their children that technology may fail them, but they could always depend upon prayer. This experience helped the children not only to love prayer but also to become very obedient in everything. And they learned to value God more than anything.

Hidden in the activity below is a sentence explaining how you can help your friends value God more than anything. To find out the sentence, write the colored words in the boxes on the lines matching the color.

involved with boys and	Help them	hopeless life
not to get	lead them into a	girls who will try to

_____ (RED) _____ (BLUE) _____ (GREEN)

_____ (PURPLE) _____ (BROWN) _____ (BLACK)

The sentence you have written above is paraphrased from Ephesians 5:11.

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Serving *like* Jesus

THEME

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2014

DAY 1

The "Serving with a Smile" Doctor

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." (Matthew 4:213, NKJV)

Bible Treasure

Story

Dr. Lee was rushing through the narrow alleys of the dirty city with his medical bag to help a sick neighbor who had just collapsed on the floor of his home. After propping the man up on the bed and giving him some medication, Dr. Lee left quickly. He got into his car and drove immediately to the Sunshine Orphanage, where he helped check all 30 children for tuberculosis. What a busy day!

"You must be tired, dear," Mrs. Lee said to her husband. "Come and rest awhile. I'll give you a massage on your shoulders."

"That feels good!" exclaimed Dr. Lee as he relaxed on the long sofa. Suddenly a loud knock was heard at the front door. Dr. Lee sat up as Mrs. Lee ushered in a young couple carrying a girl. She was grimacing in pain.

"Please, please, Doctor, our eldest daughter is in great pain," begged the young father. "We don't know what is wrong with her."

Dr. Lee immediately placed the sick girl on the couch and examined her thoroughly with his stethoscope and by pressing different parts of her tummy.

"She needs surgery immediately," explained the doctor briskly. "It looks like appendicitis. I'll meet you at the hospital."

Early the next morning, after catching just five hours of sleep, Dr. Lee stopped by to check on the girl, who was sleeping peacefully after her operation. Then he looked at his watch and said to himself: I'd better hurry.

Yes, another fund-raising event was waiting for the busy doctor to help launch for the public

to raise money to buy wheelchairs for the physically disabled children. Dr. Lee loved to serve the people. Though tired, he served with a smile.

Think About

- In what way was Dr. Lee doing what Jesus said?
- What does it really mean to serve others? At your age, is that possible?
- What benefits do you get in helping others in need?

Live it Out!

- Plan together with your parents or guardians and list two things you can do to serve and help in your community.
- Make a get-well card prayer card and give it to a church member or neighbor who needs such encouragement.

Note

Activity

a) _____ LAJI STIYMNIR
b) _____ PLHE ESETRT DECIHRLN
c) _____ DEFE ETH OPRO
d) _____ SIITV NDA PYRA ROF HET YEDERLL

Answers: (a) jail ministry; (b) help street children; (c) feed the poor; (d) visit and pray for the elderly

DAY 2

Sleepyhead Jeremy!

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:30, NKJV).

Bible Treasure

Story

Wake up, Jeremy, wake up!" yelled Mother. "Get up now! You'll be late for school!"

"Just two more minutes, please!" begged Jeremy as he turned over on the bed.

Jeremy had to be dragged out of bed practically every morning. He missed his school bus quite frequently. Soon his teacher called to say Jeremy was found sleeping in class quite a few times and that he did not turn in his homework.

"What's happening to you, son?" asked Father and Mother one evening with great concern. "We have to talk!"

"Since you got your own computer, you have been going to bed very late," said Mother with a note of sadness.

"I see you are missing Sabbath school, too," Father interjected, also concerned.

"Sorry, Dad, I'm just too tired to get up," apologized Jeremy.

"We have to limit your time with the computer starting today, Jeremy," Father said firmly. "You need to go to bed early and have enough rest."

"Do you know that your body is the temple of God?" asked Mother seriously.

"What does this have to do with my sleep?" Jeremy asked.

"A whole lot!" exclaimed Mother.

"It says in the Bible that God created us, and we are to honor Him with our time and energy. When we don't have our eight-hour sleep, our bodies will not be able to rest enough to repair themselves. We'll lose concentration, feel tired, and lack interest in many things, including spiritual things," Mother continued.

"Remember, it works both ways. When you

have a strong faith in God and your spiritual life is 'thumbs up,' you are healthier emotionally," Father added with a smile.

"Guess I haven't been studying my Sabbath school lesson regularly, and I've even missed Sabbath school, Mom and Dad," said Jeremy with his head bowed.

"Do you know Satan is happy when you don't take care of your body because you will have no energy for yourself and no time for Jesus?" Mother lovingly explained.

"Sorry, Mom. Will you pray for me that Jesus will give me power to live healthily—not to destroy my body temple?" requested Jeremy. "Let's do that right now," said Father as the family knelt down together.

From the theme thought below, make as many word or phrases as possible that show you are a disciple of Jesus through good health.

Activity

Think About

- How does living a healthy life affect our love for Jesus?
- What example in the Bible can you identify that relates healthy habits to a growing faith and honoring God? Find a Bible text.

Live it Out!

- Make a pledge card and decorate it beautifully. Write in what you plan to do to help you have personal time with Jesus, and honoring God? Find a Bible text.
- Make a chart to write down the time you go to bed each night and your performance overall for a whole week. Then compare it with your performance when you go to bed very late.

Note

DAY 3

Untiring Mission

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16, NKJV)

Bible Treasure

Story

Young people, can you all help us today at the disaster relief shelter?" asked Mrs. Calkins earnestly as she gathered supplies from the church storeroom. "Sure, ma'am, what can we do?" answered five of them.

"We need all the help we can get to serve food and pass out hygiene supplies for hundreds of these flood victims. Oh, and there are many children who need someone to hold them!" Mrs. Calkins explained.

"Mei, Jerry, Jose, Zach, and any willing soul, let's go," summoned the head leader of the neighborhood community center.

At the center everyone was so busy tending to so many needs of the young and old that they forgot how many hours they had been standing.

"Here, take some hot soup and bread to keep warm," Zach said, smiling as he handed out bowls and bowls to hundreds of people who needed the meal at that moment.

"Let me help you, ma'am. You'll need some dry clothes," Mei said to a mother with two young children who were clinging tightly to her leg.

All these young volunteers worked tirelessly for the next three days at the shelter, doing their best to help those affected by the massive floods. A month later Mei, Jerry, Jose, Zach, and some others started to run the Neighborhood Bible Club for the children of these flood victims.

Prema and Paula helped out a couple of times a week with the after-school care program down at the church. Many other church members volunteered for follow-up visitations

of the affected families.

"But, Pastor Kim, I thought we already did so much to help so many people affected by the flood. Why are there more of these clubs and visitations?" Mei asked.

"Yes, Mei, Jesus taught us to serve people, but our concern must go beyond meeting people's physical needs," beamed Pastor Kim. "We must extend our love and service to their spiritual condition as well."

"Oh, yes, our goal is to show the children who Jesus is and how He can change them and help them live a better life," echoed Mrs. Calkins.

"Remember, when we serve and help others, we want to reach the whole person! The whole is greater than the sum of its parts!" said the pastor.

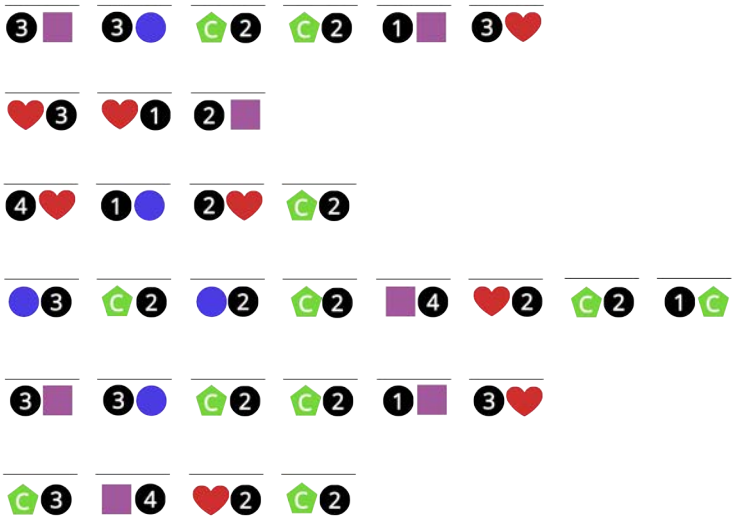
Think About

- What challenges do you have when you are trying to serve and reach the world person?
- Can you identify from Jesus' ministry on earth how He reaches the whole person of individuals He helped?
- Isn't it easier just to donate some money to help the needy? Why? Why not?

Live it Out!

- Plan together with your parents or teacher one project you can do to help serve others as well as reach the whole person of those in your project.
- Use a notebook as a prayer journal and pray for one specific classmate or friend who does not know Jesus. After 10 days, try inviting him or her to some church-related program.

Using this chart, match the number-letter pairs to decipher the Bible verse below.



	1	2	3	4
●	A	C	R	J
⬠	O	V	Y	H
♥	D	E	G	K
■	L	U	F	I

Answer: Freely you have received, freely give

Activity

DAY 4

Tutti-frutti Health

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8, NKJV).

Bible Treasure

Story

Hey, do you want to join us after school for a burger at McDonald's?" asked Erika excitedly.

"No, I don't think so," Yuko declined politely.

"Why not? It's yummy and cheap!" beamed Erika with a twinkle in her eyes. "Hey, girls, don't you agree?"

"Don't you know it's not good for you?" a surprised Yuko asked. "Just look at all the grease and fat in the burger."

"Don't be such a health nut!" replied Erika. "One burger won't kill you!"

"My mom said that if we eat healthfully, we grow stronger and smarter like Daniel. One more thing: we can be a good disciple of Jesus and can witness for Him," Yuko said confidently.

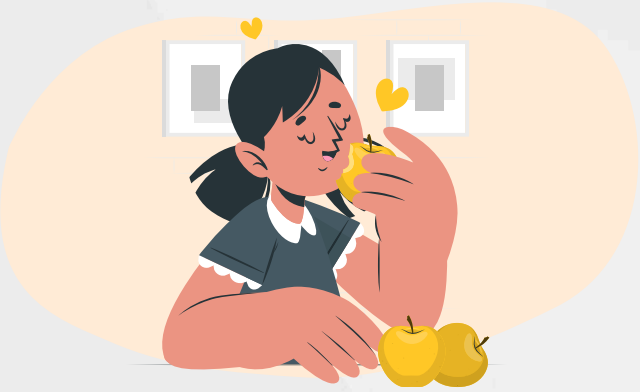
"Is that why you always get good grades?" Erika added sarcastically.

"I agree—our science book said we should eat more fruits and vegetables," interjected Kylie.

"Hey, why not eat some fruits or salad?" suggested Yuko eagerly. "I know of a great place for that!"

"That's boring!" replied Erika with a sigh. "Are you sure you girls want to do that?"

"Well, let's try to be healthy. Let's go for the fruits and salads!" echoed the girls in unison.



Think About

- Identify one or two Bible text that highlight the importance of having a healthy body. How should you treat your body?
- What does Psalm 139:13, 14 tell you about how you were made? Does this indicate how you value yourself?

Live it Out

- Prepare your own recipe of fruit salad and share it with your parents and friends.
- Make chart showing the nutritional values of your favorite fruits and vegetables.

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Note

Follow the directions to determine the location of each letter in this phrase. It tells us about something special that our body is considered by God.

___ North of W	___ East of H	___ East of Z	___ West of F	___ South of A	___ North of N
___ South of H	___ West of R				
___ North of F	___ West of N	___ South of L			

T	Q	G	Z	M
W	P	F	R	A
H	E	S	C	L
O	N	I	V	D

Activity

DAY 5

Cheerful Mary Ann

"A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." (Proverbs 17:22)

Bible Treasure

Story

Good morning, Jenny. It's a wonderful day!" beamed MaryAnn as she drew back the curtains to let in the sunlight.

"Another dreadful day. What's there to be happy about?" murmured Jenny with a frown.

"We can always rejoice in the Lord for another day of life, for the beautiful mountains that our eyes can see. What about great friends?" MaryAnn shouted joyfully.

"I'll like to share Isaiah 43:2 with you. God has promised that He will be with us even through tough times," MaryAnn said with great assurance.

Soon MaryAnn was maneuvering her wheelchair to the room of Carlos to brighten his day with a promise from the Bible and a prayer. over?" asked Carlos curiously.

"Thanks a lot, MaryAnn—you just keep me going each day," Carlos smiled with great appreciation.

Soon all the individuals from this nursing home gathered in the central hall for their morning activity, with MaryAnn leading out in joyful singing.

"Tell me one thing, MaryAnn: what makes you happy all the time? With your arthritis, knee replacement, heart problem, allergies, and other health problems, how can you be thankful and smiling all the time when you are aching all

"When I am happy to live every moment of each day, I live longer. My health improves. Do you know that studies have shown that being happy and trusting in Jesus daily makes us able to deal with sickness and illnesses better?

A positive mental attitude is about believing in

yourself, accepting whatever comes along, and learning to use whatever comes to grow and help others. You have less stress, and laughing a lot is excellent medicine!" exclaimed MaryAnn enthusiastically.

MaryAnn continued to cheer others and serve these residents of the nursing home for many more years. Indeed, her positive attitude was remembered fondly by many who had been blessed by her.

Think About

- Study Proverbs 17:22 again and identify why a happy heart is good medicine.
- How can you develop a positive attitude?

Live it Out!

- Find two friends you can cheer up.
- Get some smiley stickers or draw them yourself; give one to anyone you meet who looks sad or are unhappy. Tell them to trust Jesus.

Note

DAY 6

Paired Witnesses

"After these things the Lord appointed [a]seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go" (Luke 10:1, NKJV)

Bible Treasure

Story

An-Na and Cheng-Chi hurried home after school to drop off their school bags. It was time for sharing the gospel with their neighbors. Yes, both good friends were challenged by their church pastor to share Jesus in their city neighborhood.

"Hurry, An-Na, let's go before the rain comes!" exclaimed Cheng-Chi.

"Be patient, my friend. Oh, did you take some tracts and books to give away?" asked An-Na excitedly.

"Yes, I did. Let's pray before we go. I am getting nervous, and we need Jesus to help us speak boldly," Cheng-Chi suggested.

Soon the girls arrived at the first house at the end of the road. Cheng-Chi rang the doorbell, and a middle-age woman opened the door.

"What do you want? If you are selling me something, I don't need anything," the woman answered grouchily.

"Oh, no, we're not selling anything," ChengChi said with a smile. "We just want to give you some free books and share Jesus with you."

"Can you give us two minutes of your time, ma'am?" asked Cheng-Chi with a twinkle in her eye.

"OK, better make it fast, for I have to prepare dinner," said the woman with a smile. "Well, why don't you two come in, then?"

"Do you know Jesus loves you? He came to die for you and me. Look at this piece of paper," Cheng-Chi continued to talk and tear the paper till it unfolded into a cross.

"Remember, we can go to God's house in heaven only when we believe in Jesus, who died

on the cross for us," echoed An-Na.

"That is a beautiful story, girls!" the woman responded warmly. "Thank you for sharing that with me. Thank you for this free book. I will try to read it to see what it's all about."

"God bless you," An-Na and Cheng-Chi waved happily as they went on to the next house to share the gospel story with another neighbor.

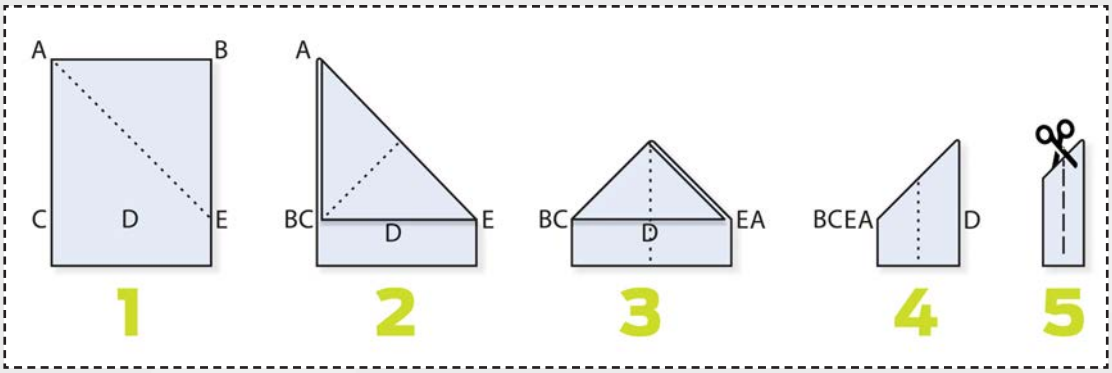
Live it Out!

- Partner with a good friend and plan a schedule together to identify the place of the individuals you would like to share the gospel with.

Think About

- Why do you think it is helpful to go in twos for sharing the gospel? Can you go alone?
- Is sharing the gospel a really difficult thing to do in the city? Why? Why not?

Note



SHARING-JESUS DEVICE

1. Think of a beautiful place that is so far away that even an airplane can't take you there. **(Diagram 1: Fold the top short edge AB across to AC.)**
2. This place is God's house that He has promised to take us to someday. **(Diagram 2: Fold point A down to E to give you Diagram 3.)**
3. The house is so far away that even flying in a rocket cannot get you there. **(Diagram 3: Fold BC over to EA to give Diagram 4.)**
4. There is only one way you and I can get to live in this beautiful house: accept Jesus, who died for us on the cross, and follow Him. Only then can you go to this special home in heaven. **(Diagram 4: Fold BCAE over to D to give Diagram 5.)**
5. Cut Diagram 5 into half and then unfold it to show the shape of the cross.

Activity

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DAY 7

Gospel in Shoes

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14, NKJV)

Bible Treasure

Story

Listen up, juniors, we are going to participate in a wonderful project this month," Mr. Salazar said excitedly.

"What are we doing?" Carlos asked.

"Beginning today, and for the next four Sabbaths, we are going to pass out flyers and The Great Controversy to every home in our city of Buenos Aires," explained Mr. Salazar.

"Wow! That's a lot of weeks! Why are we doing that?" asked Yesely.

"Didn't Jesus give us a command in the Bible that we are to go to all the world to preach the gospel?" asked Paulos.

"Yes, you are right, Paulos. Many people have not heard of the name of Jesus. That's why we are all joining in this venture," explained Mr. Salazar excitedly.

"OK, I would like to share Jesus!" Belchus exclaimed eagerly. "I'll take 10 books."

"Great! Count me in too! I'll take 15 books," echoed Jemina.

That afternoon a group of 20 energetic juniors gathered in the church parking lot, ready to get out to reach the huge city of Buenos Aires with the gospel flyers and books. They were ready to walk the streets to reach the world for Jesus!

"Boy, our legs are tired!" exclaimed the youngsters as they sat down after several hours of walking the city streets.

"Of course, we are tired, but do you know you are Jesus' gospel in shoes?" Mr. Salazar said with a big smile on his face. "It's as good as preaching a sermon!"

Think About

- Why did Jesus tell the demon-possessed man who was just healed by Him not to go with Him, but to return home to his house? Read Luke 8:38, 39
- Identify two ways you can use to reach your classmates, friends, and community with the gospel message.

Live it Out!

- Select two books or pamphlets you can share with your friends and classmates.
- Draw a card to give to someone who does not know Jesus.

Note

Solve this mathematical puzzle about sharing the gospel.

57	36	27	27		9	57	66	36	41	44		
79	66	13	57		82	36	44	80	44		77	25	77
91	9	41		86	9	80	.					

A = 12+1
B = 20-1
E = L + O
I = 21+4
J = 71+11
H = I+R
D = 84-7
F = 91
L = 35-8
O = 9
R = 63-22
S = 44
T = S+A
U = 90-10
W = 79
Y = 80+6

Activity

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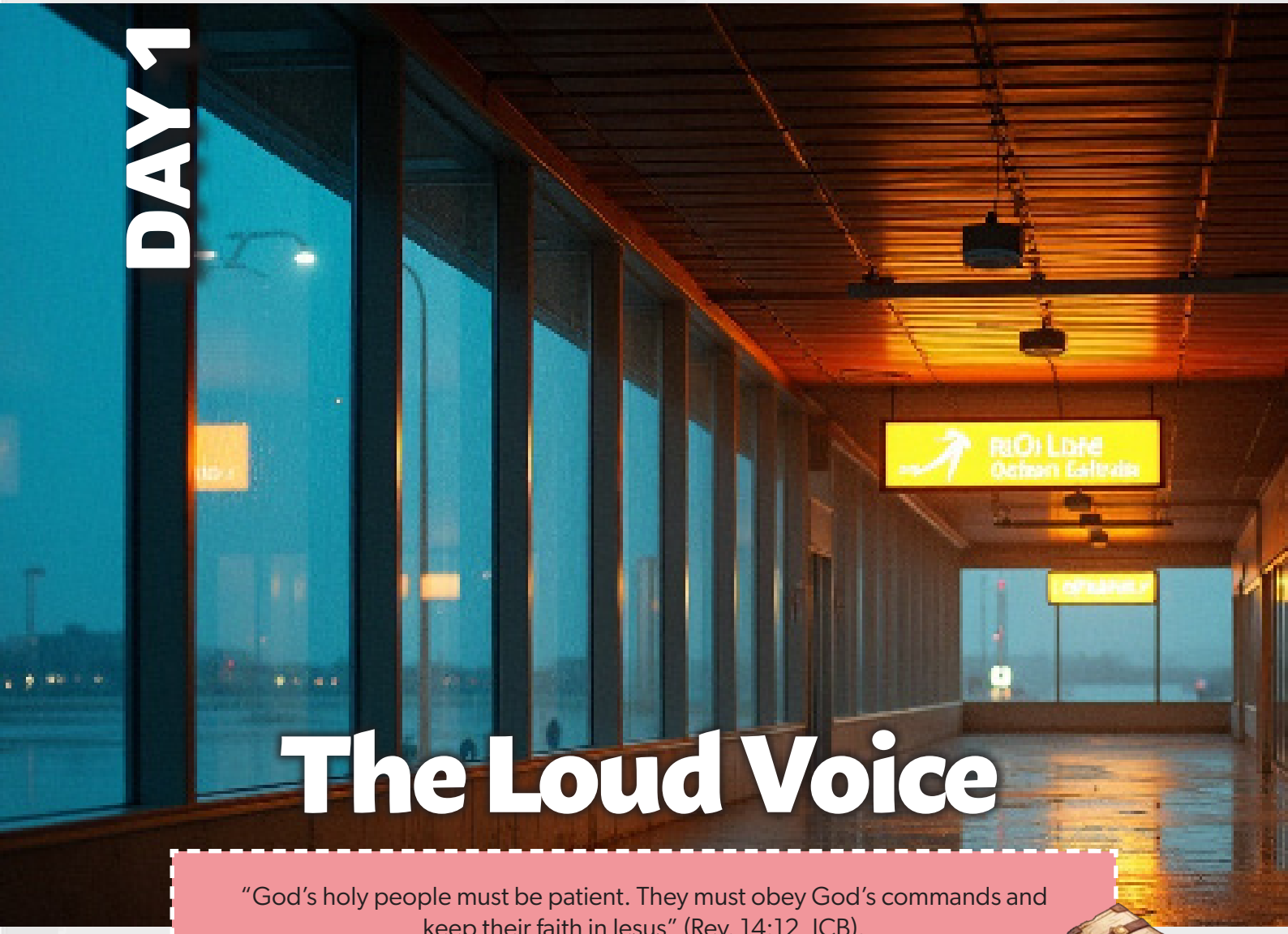
God's Promises *for* Me

THEME

By: CHARLES MILLS

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2015



DAY 1

The Loud Voice

"God's holy people must be patient. They must obey God's commands and keep their faith in Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

I was very tired, and the airport waiting room was so cool and comforting. For weeks I'd been traveling around the Caribbean taking pictures and making a movie about the many activities of fellow church members there.

I'd filmed pastors and laypeople sharing God's love with everyone they met. I'd seen doctors healing sick people, and students studying to become doctors and preachers and teachers. I'd met real heroes who'd sacrificed so much to worship the God they loved. I'd photographed young people sharing information about overcoming illness and disease. I'd heard music and powerful preaching, and watched people get baptized. Now it was time to go home.

I closed my eyes as I felt the pressure of my busy schedule slip away. Soon I'd be home in my own bed.

Suddenly I became aware that I couldn't hear anyone talking near me. The waiting room, moments before filled with passengers, children, ticket agents, was empty. All that remained was silence and the sound of jet engines spooling up.

I panicked. My flight home! The journey that would return me to my home had left without me. I'd missed it! I'd fallen asleep, and while I dozed, I was left behind.

That's when I heard a loud voice echoed from the speakers of my lonely airport waiting room. "Your attention, please. Your attention, please. This is the final boarding call of Flight 982 to Miami. All passengers should be on board the aircraft at this time. If you have a ticket for Flight 982, you must proceed immediately to the boarding gate. This is your final call."

I probably created a record for the fastest sprint to the boarding gate. The door to the airplane was about to close when I raced up to the counter and shouted, "Wait! I'm on that flight. I have a ticket! See? Here's my boarding pass, too. Please let me on! I want to go home!"

Did you know there is a "loud voice" calling out to you right now? This "loud voice" is calling out to everyone in the whole world. It's God's voice echoing from the lips of three high flying angels who've been sent from heaven to do two things: (1) to warn of coming dangers, and (2) to share what we need to do in order to go home with Jesus.

One time a loud voice woke me and told me to get on an airplane right now. God's loud voice has a similar message. Only this time we won't be going to Miami; we will be headed for heaven! So let's all be sure to stay awake and listen for it.

* Scriptures credited to ICB are quoted from the International Children's Bible, New Century Version, copyright © 1986, 1988, 1999 by Tommy Nelson, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee 37214. Used by permission.

If you were God, what would you say to this world to invite everyone to go to heaven with you? Write that message down and e-mail it to everyone you know.

DAY 2

Good News School

"The angel had the eternal Good News to preach to those who live on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people" (Rev. 14:6, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

I don't want to go to church." Justin sat with his arms crossed over his chest, pouting.

"Why?" his father asked, watching the road ahead. "I thought you liked church!"

"I'd rather do other things today, like play baseball or watch one of my favorite movies on the Internet. Sometimes church is boring."

Justin's dad nodded slowly. "Well, you're right. Compared to an exciting baseball game or a movie about battling dinosaurs, church can be kinda boring."

The boy blinked. "You agree with me?"

"Sure," his father said with a smile. "That's why we're not going to church today."

"We're not?"

"Nope."

"Wow," Justin gasped, squirming excitedly against the seat belt.

"And," his father continued, "we're going to a place where you learn how to be an angel. As a matter of fact, you're going to learn how to stop wars, make your friends healthier, and bring love into people's homes."

The two sat in silence for a long moment. "Who's going to teach me all this?" the boy asked.

"God," Dad said.

Justin frowned. "How do you know God's going to do all that?"

His father shrugged. "Because He said He would. 'Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone' [Mark 16:15, ICB].

"Do you think God wants us to just head out into the world without learning how to do that? That, my friend, takes practice and knowledge.

Learning, too. It requires that you do something very special once or twice a week—something that teaches you how to be a loving angel to the whole world. That takes—"

Dad steered his minivan into a parking lot filled with cars and smiling faces.

"That takes church," Justin said with a shy smile when he recognized where they were.

"People in Bible times had their sanctuaries and temples. Today we have churches. But the goal of these places is all the same: to learn how to spread the good news of God's love. Do you understand?"

Justin nodded. "Yes. And you know what, Dad?"

"What?"

"I'm glad we have this little church to come to. I'm sorry I complained about it. I do want to be an angel for God. I do want to spread His love to everyone."

Father and son walked from the car and headed for their church.

Share

If you were the pastor of a church, what would you do to make sure everyone had a fun learning experience there? Make a list and share it with your pastor. Then get ready to help him or her in any way you can.

Note

DAY 3

Getting Ready

"What will happen to show us that it is time for you to come again and for the world to end?" (Matt. 24:3, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Lisa was as excited as a 10-year-old could be. "Do you see her yet?" her mother called from the doorway, holding a sizzling raspberry pie fresh from the oven. "Raspberry pie is her favorite, you know."

"I know!" Lisa said beaming. "And she likes baked apples and watermelon and Spanish rice."

Mother placed the hot pie on a cooling shelf by the window and sat down wearily on the porch swing. "You've missed your big sister, haven't you?" she said.

Lisa nodded. "Sarah's ship has been to so many interesting places," she said excitedly. "Each time she is depl—deplo—."

"Deployed," Mother interjected.

"Yes. That's it," said Lisa. "Each time she's deployed, the Navy sends her someplace really exotic. That means 'strange, mysterious, and out of the ordinary.' I looked it up." The girl paused.

"I've never been to anyplace exotic, unless you count Daryl's bedroom."

Mother laughed. "I think even he has cleaned up his act for Sarah's arrival. The whole house is as neat as a pin."

Lisa smiled. "Nothing's too good for Sarah. I want her to feel right at home."

Mother sighed. "I wish people worked this hard for someone else who's coming back soon."

The girl frowned. "Who's coming back?"

"Jesus," Mother stated. "He's coming back to this earth."

Lisa gasped. "When?"

"Soon," her mother responded. "Jesus told

His disciples that before He returned, the world would be a dangerous place. That's why Sarah joined the Navy. She's trying to keep the world peaceful."

"Oh, yeah," Lisa said. "Those were the signs Jesus talked about, the signs that He would be coming soon."

More Signs

"You knew Sarah was coming back, so you've been busy cleaning your rooms, scrubbing the floors, picking beautiful flowers from the fields, washing your clothes—you want everything to be special for Sarah. I do, too. I've been making all of her favorite foods, like this pie. Why are we doing all those things?"

Lisa grinned broadly. "Because we love Sarah and want her to feel welcome when she gets here."

"You know what? I like to think it's the job of every Christian to show signs of loving service to the world, so everyone will know that something special and wonderful is about to happen. Our best friend Jesus is coming back, and we need to be the signs to show everyone that He's coming soon."

Just then a car appeared at the curve in the road, and Lisa started jumping up and down. "Here she comes! Here she comes," she called out. Mom and Lisa waved and smiled at the approaching vehicle. They knew that everything was ready to welcome someone they'd missed greatly and was now coming home again.

Share

List five ways you can be a joyful sign to your friends and neighbors that Jesus is coming soon. Then write a song about your joy.

DAY 4

Evidence

"It is important for you to understand what will happen in the last days" (2 Peter 3:3, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

You don't look so good," Kim's dad said as his son stumbled into the kitchen. The teenager stood in his pajamas holding a half-empty glass of orange juice in one hand and a bottle of vitamin C pills in the other.

"Oh, I'm fine," Kim answered, "except for this cough, runny nose, scratchy throat, high fever, and bothersome ringing in my ears."

Dad laughed. "Poor baby."

Kim frowned. "You called me baby." I'm 13 years old and prefer to be called 'young person' or 'adult in training.' "

Dad shook his head slowly from side to side. "I know exactly what's wrong with you."

Kim blinked. "Well, Dr. Dad, what's your diagnosis?"

The man pointed a finger at him. "It's obvious you've got a bad case of twisted ankle."

Kim studied his father for a long moment. "Twisted ankle?"

Dad's eyebrows rose. "What do you think you have?"

"Dad," the teenager said, "I have a cold."

"So," the man pressed, "you have a cold based on the evidence, right?"

Kim nodded. "Right."

"And," Dad continued, "we should make decisions based on evidence, right?"

The boy hesitated. "Right."

"Then why is it so hard for you to believe that Jesus is coming soon?"

Kim gasped. "What does Jesus' coming have to do with my cold?"

Old-fashioned

Dad's eyes softened. "Last night you said that you didn't think Jesus was coming soon. You said that we should just love others and be kind and enjoy God's forgiveness, and that talking about the Second Coming was totally old-fashioned."

"Yes," Kim responded.

"So, what about the evidence?" the man pressed. "Evidence?" Kim asked. "What evidence?"

"Jesus told His disciples that near the end of time there would be famines and pestilence and that people would be so afraid that their hearts would stop beating! And what about all these sudden illnesses like plagues that keep popping up? We've got people mistreating poor persons and making themselves rich off the suffering of others. That's all evidence, Kim. That's evidence that Jesus is coming soon and we have to tell people about it."

"If that's true, why hasn't He come yet?" Kim asked.

"I don't know," Dad responded with a shrug. "I'm sure He has His reasons. But if you believe the evidence, you have to believe and trust the promise. I think we need to be telling people about the evidence and about the promise."

Kim nodded slowly. "OK, OK. You're right," he said between coughs. "I guess I should take the Second Coming more seriously. I guess I should tell others about it too." He turned to leave, then paused. "And I will start doing that right after I get over this twisted ankle."

Dad smiled proudly. "That's my . . . young person."

Share

Draw a picture of three activities you can do in your home, your community, or your church to remind people that Jesus is coming back. Include this text with your drawings: "Listen! I am coming soon!" (Rev. 22:12, ICB).

Note

DAY 5

Waiting for the Harvest

"Those who have died and were in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Terry stood and stared at the freshly turned soil. Overhead, spring birds sang their sweet songs and clouds drifted in the bright blue of the sky. It had been three hours since he'd watched his father carefully plant seeds in the dirt, and yet nothing was happening. To his 5-year-old mind, that was simply not acceptable.

Dad had worked hard preparing the ground, adding just the right amount of fertilizer and dropping each group of corn seeds into perfectly spaced piles along perfectly straight furrows. Now the sun shone overhead and a cool wind blew through the branches of the tall oaks behind the house. It was time. But nothing was happening!

Dad walked up beside his young son and smiled down at him. "Are you talking to my garden?" he asked.

Terry pointed. "I'm talking to the seeds. You put them in the garden this morning, and I want corn on the cob for supper. What are they waiting for? The seeds are just lying there."

"Oh, but they're doing something important," Dad urged.

"What?" Terry wanted to know. "They're waiting.

They're waiting for the days to become longer, the sun to become brighter, the air to become warmer, and summer rains to bring moisture down into the soil so they can drink of the life-giving water. Then something amazing will happen."

"What?" Terry asked, bending low for a closer look.

"They'll send shoots up through the soil to

the surface while pushing roots down, down, down into the earth," Dad stated. "Then they'll take energy from the sun and grow up, up, up, forming stalks and leaves and finally ears of corn ready for hungry 5-year-old boys to enjoy with mashed potatoes and string beans. All that takes time, but it will be worth the wait."

Terry frowned. "Why does it take so long?"

"Well," Dad said, looking out over his garden, "everything has to be just right. Everything has to happen in a special order for things to grow. But as long as there's a sun overhead, rain coming down, and rich soil below, the seeds in my garden will grow just as they have since God created this world."

The man paused. "It's the same with people who die—like Grandma and Uncle Jarrod. Remember? We placed their coffins in the ground. But someday soon Jesus will come and call them from the earth. They'll be alive once more, and we'll be so happy to see them. Then we'll all go to heaven with Jesus, where nothing will ever die and my gardens will grow delicious food forever. Would you like that?"

Terry thought for a long moment. "OK. Then I'll wait too. I'll wait for my corn on the cob, and I'll wait for Jesus to make Grandma and Uncle Jarrod alive again."

"Good plan," Dad said, taking his son by the hand and walking toward the house. "Waiting isn't always fun, but it will be worth it. You'll see."

Share

Has someone in your family died? If so, draw a picture of some beautiful tombstones with their names on them. Include the sun overhead to help you remember what Jesus will do someday soon.

Note

DAY 6

A Safe Place

"Blessed and holy are those who share in the first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over them" (Rev. 20:6, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Elsa looked at the falling leaves and dying grasses. She noticed great lines of geese flying high overhead as a chilly wind blew up the valley, making her shiver and move closer to her mother for warmth. "I don't like autumn," she said, jamming her hands into her pockets. "It makes me worried."

"Worried?" Mother repeated. "Why?"

"Because of the animals," the girl stated, pointing at the trees and meadows surrounding them. "See those squirrels and chipmunks and birds? And what about the foxes and bears and groundhogs and the whitetail deer? What's going to happen to them when the snows come? It gets so cold that Miller Pond freezes solid, and all their food goes away. They don't have a nice, warm fire like we have in our house. All they have are the woods and the snow. That can't be good."

Mother thought for a moment. "Well, you're right," she said. "They don't have a big home like ours, but they have God. When He created this world, He made sure that everyone had a home. As a matter of fact, the earth was one great big happy home for everyone. People and animals lived in the meadows or under the shade of beautiful trees—just like our animal friends out there.

"But after sin came along, Adam and Eve built their own home. Soon people were building houses and cities and living a life very different from what God had in mind. The animals continued to do many things as God intended. Sin created cold winters and brought many dangers into their lives—especially dangers

from humans. But the animals dug into the ground or burrowed into trees, or flew south to faraway, warmer places. Many learned to sleep during the cold winter months in cozy dens while others figured out how to find food under piles of fallen snow. Animals are living in the arms of nature, doing what God taught them to do—survive."

The woman paused. "The same God who made us promised to protect us if we'd let Him. Someday heaven will be our home, and even though sin is destroying everything, we'll be safe and sound there. We'll learn more about God and worship Him. The birds, bears, foxes, squirrels, and deer will join us there too. One big happy family again."

Elsa thought for a moment, then nodded.

Mother smiled. "Hey, would you like to help God care for the animals?"

"Really?" the girl gasped. "We can do that?"

"Sure. Let's go to the hardware store. We can buy some birdseed and dried corn. Then, when it snows, we'll put out plenty of food for the squirrels and rabbits and deer and birds to eat. They can carry some of that food back to their dens and tree cavities for later. It won't be the Garden of Eden, but we can love and care for them just the same."

And that's exactly what they did.

Share

Put up some bird and animal feeders in your backyard this coming winter. You'll make a lot of critters—and the God who made them—very happy. Invite your friends to do the same

DAY 7

Worship the Creator

"Worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water" (Rev. 14:7, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

One day I was taking a Sabbath afternoon walk with my wife. We were enjoying the colorful summer leaves and listening to the birds chirping in the branches.

I stopped to take a picture of a flower as my wife continued walking, admiring the butterflies and blossoms. Soon she was some distance from me.

Suddenly a large shaggy dog burst from the yard of a nearby house and headed straight for my wife at full speed. By the look of his bared teeth and the sound of his deep snarl, I knew he didn't want to play fetch with her.

I had three choices. One, I could call out to the dog in a friendly manner. "Excuse me, Mr. Dog," I could say. "I would really appreciate it if you didn't try to eat my wife. Please return to your yard, and we'll just continue our walk in peace and tranquility."

Or, two, I could have tried to reason with him. "Mr. Dog, your actions don't seem friendly.

Being friendly is much more pleasant and rewarding than being all snarly and gruff. Besides, you might get into trouble. Why don't you simply bark a few times, and then head back home again?"

Or, three, I could do what I did. I shouted, "HEY! HEY! STOP! BAD DOG! BAD DOG! GET OUT OF HERE! GO HOME! GO HOME!"

That third solution worked like a charm. The dog hurried back toward his own yard. Whew! That was too close for comfort.

Snarling Dog Satan

In the fascinating book of Revelation the Bible reports that God sent three angels to warn everyone in the world that sin is destroying

them. That old snarling dog Satan is on the attack. The Bible says they used a "loud voice." And one of those angels, the very first one, while using a very definite outdoor voice, said something strange. He shouted: "Worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water." In other words, he told everyone: "GOD CREATED YOU, SO YOU SHOULD WORSHIP HIM!"

Why would an angel have to remind everyone that they were created by God?

So many people have forgotten that fact. They think we came from monkeys, or just evolved from pond scum. These people worship science or technology; they bow to human leaders, or use worldly ways of thinking and reasoning. That first shouting angel had news for them. Science, technology, humans, monkeys, or pond scum can't save a single person. Not one. Only God the Creator can do that.

I'm not suggesting that you go to your friend's house, knock on the door, and, when they come to answer, say in a loud voice, "HEY! GOD LOVES YOU. HE WANTS TO SAVE YOU FROM SIN. WANT TO PLAY SOCCER?"

Instead, you can say with an indoor voice, "Hey, how about some soccer?" And then you enjoy an honest, fair game, showing your friends exactly how Jesus would play and treat others.

And our kind testimony should work like the angels'.

Share

Ask your pastor to preach a sermon about how God created this world and everything in it. Then invite a few of your friends to come and listen with you.

Note

Missionaries *for* JESUS

THEME

By: LINDA MEI LIN KOH

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2016

DAY 1

God's Little Missionary

"So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Eight-year-old Mateo was excited to tell his papa and mama his great plan! As soon as he got home from school, he went straight to look for Papa.

"Papa, Papa, I want to do something for Jesus," said Mateo excitedly, "I want to run a small group for my friends and our neighbors!"

"That's a great idea, Mateo!" Papa responded with joy. "I'll teach you how."

"OK, Papa, show me how to give Bible studies. I can teach them songs and tell the kids Bible stories," Mateo said enthusiastically.

Mateo visited each of his neighbors to invite them to his small group. He invited his classmates to come too. His first small group meeting started with just eight children and adults. Mateo taught them many songs about Jesus and told them Bible stories. The people listened with great interest.

They were given Bibles to use during the meetings. Pretty soon more and more people joined Mateo's small group, and it swelled to 15 in attendance. Mateo gave his first Bible studies on John 3:16. He just loved the story of God loving the world so much He gave His only Son to save everyone.

"Papa, I think I want to be a pastor when I grow up," Mateo said passionately. "I want to be a missionary, telling people everywhere that Jesus loves them and wants them to be with Him in heaven!"

"Wonderful, son! Start being a missionary right here in your neighborhood," said Papa with a big smile as he ruffled Mateo's hair. "I know Jesus will be very happy."

Activity

Grab a pencil and a separate piece of paper to write down your answers for each devotional.

Try it Out!

Make a few invitation cards, decorate them, and write a message to invite two friends or classmates to your Sabbath School.

Note

DAY 2

A Sunbeam for Jesus

"Jesus said, 'Go home to your family and friends. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you' " (Mark 5:19, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Mom, the stories of Albert Sch- weitzer and David Livingstone are fascinating!" Gabriela exclaimed. H S "

Yes, these men sacrificed a great deal to help those who were sick and those less fortunate in Africa," mother explained. "They risked getting diseases and dying."

"I think I want to be a missionary when I grow up. Do I have to be baptized first?" asked Gabriela seriously.

"You don't have to be baptized before working for Jesus. In fact, every one of us who loves Jesus is a missionary for Him!" replied Gabriela's father.

"Do you remember the demon possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes? After Jesus healed him, the man wanted to go with Jesus. But what did Jesus say?" asked mother. "He told him to go home and tell his family about his marvelous healing." Gabriela answered. "That's right. Jesus wants us to share the good news with our families, friends, and neighbors. They are all around us, and they can see the change in us!" Mother exclaimed.

"You can start right now, Gabriela. Look around you and see how you can serve and share God's love with others," Father suggested.

"OK. I think I know someone I can help," said Gabriela thoughtfully. "Wonderful, daughter," Mother said. "Remember the song 'Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam'? Being a missionary is like being a sunbeam for Jesus."

"Someday I may be a missionary to Russia, but for now we all can be missionaries right here!" Gabriela said earnestly.

Try it Out!

Choose one activity from the following on how you want to become a sunbeam for Jesus.

Heart-Shaped Love Notes

- Cut out heart shapes from colored paper and have kids write or draw messages of God's love (e.g., "Jesus loves you!").

Application: Encourage them to give these to friends, family, or church members.

Sharing God's Love Coloring Pages

- Give kids coloring sheets of Bible verses about love (e.g., John 13:34, 1 John 4:7).

Application: Have them share their artwork with someone who needs encouragement.

"Secret Servant" Challenge

- Each child draws a name from a hat and secretly does kind things for that person all week.

Application: At the end, reveal names and discuss how it felt to share God's love.

Identify three individuals from the Bible who were great missionaries. How did they share the good news of salvation?

Bible Search

Note

DAY 3

An Unforgettable Summer!

"You will be his witness to all people. You will tell them about the things you have seen and heard" (Acts 22:15, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Summer vacation was coming soon, and everyone in Christopher's class was already talking about the exciting adventures they would have with their families. But this summer would be different for Christopher. His heartstrings tugged at him to go a different way, to go on a different adventure! After last week's presentation and appeal by one of the returned missionaries from Central America, Christopher and his buddy, Allen, felt called to join a mission trip organized by their school.

"Mom and Dad, can I join the mission trip to Guatemala this summer?" Christopher asked excitedly. "I want to do something to help others."

"That's a wonderful idea! OK, you need to raise some funds for your ticket, and we will match you half," Dad responded without hesitation.

June 20 arrived, and Christopher, Allen, and 10 others said goodbye to their families as they headed off to Guatemala City. After almost seven hours of flying they finally arrived. The group immediately transferred to a minibus for another three-hour journey before reaching their mission station. What a relief!

Christopher and Allen were asked to lead song service for the community children's worship in the morning. They were happy to share Jesus with kids who had never heard of Him. In the afternoon they joined adults in laying bricks for building the jungle chapel. It was backbreaking work!

"I guess being a missionary is not that easy," Christopher said to Allen with a sigh.

"You're right! I hope we can last for the

next 13 days, Chris," Allen replied with some apprehension.

By the fourth day Christopher was really enjoying his work. He loved teaching kids. But it was most satisfying to see the chapel completed after 10 days of hard work. There was a big celebration to thank God as they dedicated this building of worship to Him.

Soon the mission trip was over, and the tired students headed home. Christopher felt a joy and satisfaction he had never felt before. Yes, getting involved in missions transformed him. He immediately went to work to start a fund-raising project to purchase school supplies for poor children in Guatemala. He couldn't stop sharing the joys of mission service with others at school and at church!

"We have received so many blessings from God that we need to share them with poor people," Christopher said.

Remember the apostle Paul, who went on many missionary journeys? He simply loved to share his blessings!

Bible Search

From the Bible texts below, can you find out the secrets of becoming a new and changed person? • John 15:4-8 • John 4:1-42

Try it Out!

With your parents or friends, plan one specific mission project to help those who are needy and poor in your community.

Note

DAY 4

Unselfish Service

"The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them" (Luke 19:10, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Rain was pouring down as Pastor Chong got into his car to visit a newly baptized couple that was having problems with their 2-monthold baby. Some of the roads were flooded, but the pastor finally got to their house.

"I came immediately after you called," said Pastor Chong briskly as he stepped into the apartment. "How's the baby?" asked the pastor as he stroked the little one's face.

"He's hot all over; let's take him to the emergency room right away!" the pastor said as he rushed the baby to the car with both parents following him, each grabbing a blanket and other necessary supplies on the way out the door.

Pastor Chong prayed earnestly, pleading to God to save the baby. He stayed with the parents at the hospital throughout the night. Thankfully, the baby's condition stabilized, and the fever subsided. What a night! Before he left, Pastor Chong gave some money to help the couple.

After catching a little sleep, the pastor was up and ready for his counseling sessions with two young people who were struggling to quit smoking. Their parents were members of Pastor Chong's church, and they begged the pastor to work with these two young men. No one liked them or trusted them.

Pastor Chong had known Elmo and Jeffrey since they were born. He watched them grow up and attend academy. But both dropped out of school by their senior year. He understood the struggles and temptations they faced and wanted to help them. But he also wondered if their parents were too busy for their sons. Could it be? "

You guys are making progress; I'm proud of you!" Pastor Chong said with a smile on his face. "Have you been following those steps each day?"

The battle was not over yet. But the pastor was always there to encourage them, to prod them on, and to pray with them. Some members felt the pastor was wasting too much time on these boys. They made sure their kids didn't get near Elmo and Jeffrey. But the pastor believed Jesus Christ could change anyone if only they would let Him. He thought the church must love the boys, understand them, and accept them.

When Pastor Chong climbed into bed that night, he was thankful for what God had done for Elmo and Jeffrey. He beamed with joy over a new idea that popped into his head. He would take these two young men with him tomorrow when he visited those who were sick. Involving them in ministry to those less fortunate would be a life-changing experience!

Bible Search

Identify three individuals from the Bible texts below and describe how Jesus treated each person. a. Luke 7:1-10 b. John 8:1-11 c. Luke 19:1-10

Try it Out!

List two things you can do for someone who doesn't have very much. Write a poem about ministering in your community.

Note

DAY 5

Kids' Haven

"Open your homes to each other, without complaining" (1 Peter 4:9, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Look at those poor kids out there," Donna said sadly. "They're searching for food in the garbage dump."

"We need to help them," suggested her husband, Dan. "I have an idea!"

Soon the couple began feeding these street kids home-cooked meals. At first about 10 children came and ate everything on their plates. For the first time their stomachs were full, and they could sleep better at night. Pretty soon more and more children came, lining up outside the Vargases' garage on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Before long, several friends of Donna and Dan joined the ministry and dreamed big! They started building a shelter nearby on property donated by a church member. They had plans to feed these homeless children, educate them, and teach them practical skills.

"Let's call our center 'Kids' Haven,'" said Donna. "I love those smiling faces! They give me joy!"

"Donna, you're really Jesus' disciple," her husband said with a twinkle in his eyes. "You have such compassion for these kids. It's amazing what you're doing for them."

"I'm only following what God wants us to do. Remember Isaiah 58? True dedication and fasting is to care for needy and poor individuals," Donna reminded her husband.

"I love those Bible stories about Jesus helping those who are poor," she added. "They inspire me to help others too."

Together with their team of volunteers, Donna and Dan continued to feed the homeless children, sharing the love of Jesus, all while

teaching them skills to help them earn a living. Kids' Haven became a little heaven on earth for hundreds of children.

Read Matthew 8 and 9 and identify the mission of love shown here: List five individuals that Jesus healed and ministered to.

What kind of people did Jesus help? How was He different from the Pharisees, Sadducees, and other religious leaders of His time?

DAY 6

Olie's Testimony

"Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have" (1 Peter 3:15, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Olie settled comfortably into his seat and buckled his seat belt. He was ready for a smooth ride to Kalimantan, Indonesia, for an exciting mission trip. He had looked forward to it for the past month, and now it was finally happening! He looked around and saw several of his friends seated comfortably behind him.

Just as Olie was getting ready to close his eyes, the gentleman next to him leaned over.

"So where are you heading to, young man? You look excited!" the stranger said as he nodded his head.

"Well, I'm going on a mission to help dig wells and build latrines for the people in a village in Kalimantan," beamed Olie with a big smile.

"Why would you do that?" asked the gentleman. "Wouldn't it be more fun going on a holiday than doing that?"

"The Bible teaches us to help and serve others, and I want to do that," Olie responded confidently.

"Wow, that is some conviction you have!" the gentleman replied with a thumbs-up. "Tell me more. I'm surprised to find such strong faith in young people like you."

For 30 minutes Olie spoke of how he got to know Jesus Christ. Just imagine: Olie walked into a Seventh day Adventist school as a Buddhist but became a born-again Christian! He talked about the difficulties he faced from his family when he decided to follow Jesus.

"Sorry, I've spoken too long. Here, I have a book to share with you," said Olie as he gave a booklet to the gentleman.

"Thank you, young man; I'll try to read it. You impressed me with your conviction," the gentleman chuckled. "I wish you well. God go with you!"

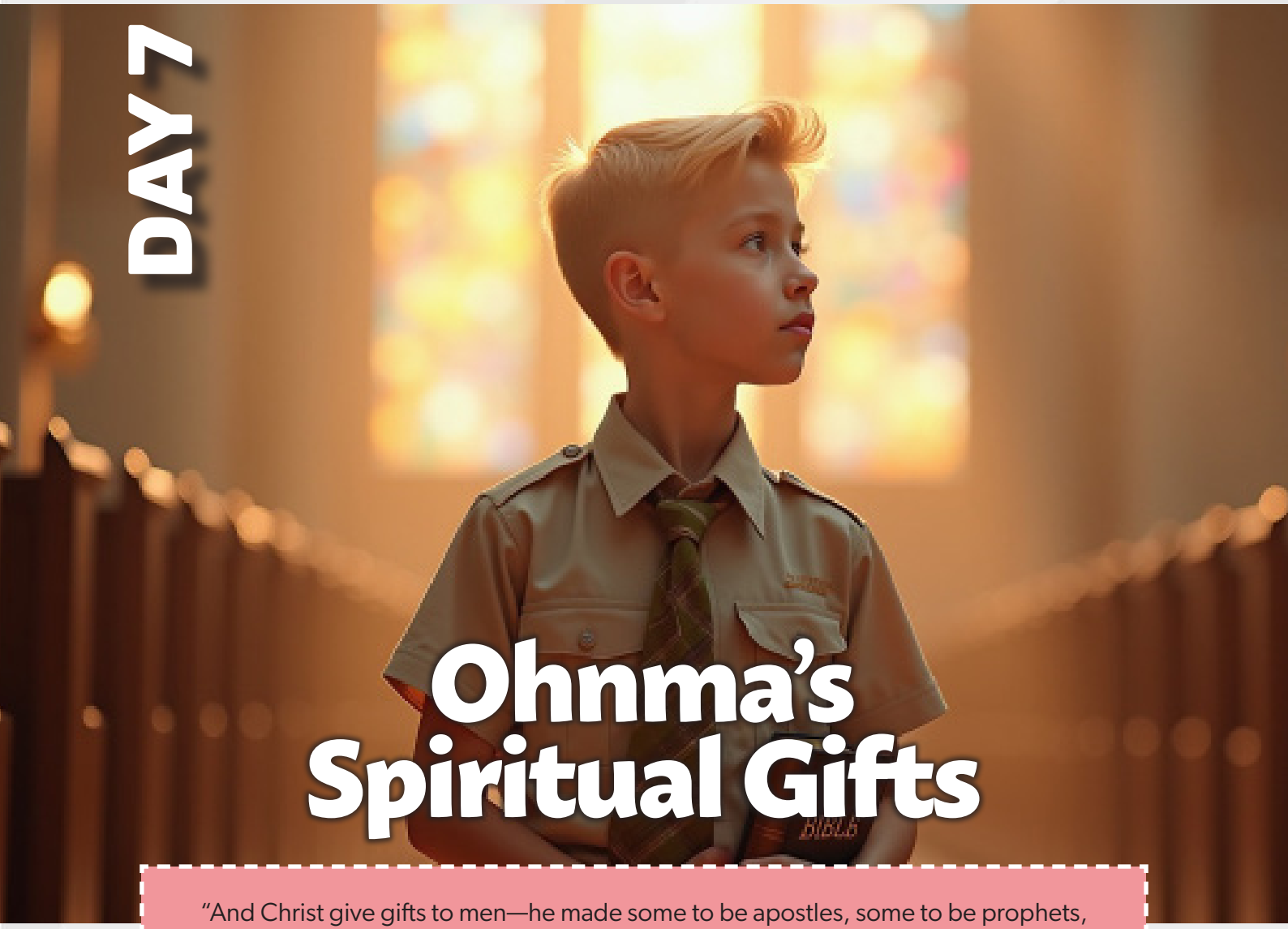
Read Acts 9:20-22. What did Paul do, and what gave him such strength?

Bible Search

With your parents or friends, plan one specific mission project to help those who are needy and poor in your community.

Try it Out!

Note



DAY 7

Ohnma's Spiritual Gifts

"And Christ give gifts to men—he made some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to go and tell the Good News, and some to have the work of caring for and teaching God's people" (Eph. 4:11, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Ohnma had just been baptized at the recent evangelistic campaign because she loved Jesus. On her f irst Sabbath at church the pastor's wife, Mrs. Lywin, was at the door to welcome her.

"Ohnma, could you help serve as a counselor to a group of juniors in our Pathfinder Club?" Mrs. Lywin asked with a twinkle in her eye.

"Um, I'm not sure how to do that. I don't think I have the talent," Ohnma said hesitantly.

"Oh, don't underestimate your abilities. I can see you already have at least two gifts God has given you," exclaimed Mrs. Lywin.

"Really? I just love to talk and share," Ohnma declared confidently.

"That's what we need! Do you know that God has given each of us different spiritual gifts and talents for His work? Read Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. You may discover that you may be a great teacher," smiled Mrs. Lywin.

"Every follower of Jesus is a missionary," continued Mrs. Lywin. "So use your gifts to teach, help, and share the love of Jesus with others around you. You don't have to go to Africa to be a missionary!"

Before long, Ohnma joined the Pathfinder Club as a counselor to a group of juniors. Soon she was out Try It Out! with others running a Vacation Bible School. What a joy it was to share Jesus with kids who didn't know Him. How exciting it was to work with Pathfinders!

Read John 4:4-30 about the Samaritan woman. In what way was she a missionary on the day she met Jesus?

On any colored construction paper, make a circular button measuring three inches (7.5 centimeters) in diameter. Write the words "ASK ME" with a marker. Attach it to your blouse or shirt. Knock on your neighbor's door. When they open the door, simply point at your button. If they say, "Ask you what?" you can start to share Jesus with them.

Note

Little Hearts, **Big** Prayers

THEME

By: GARY WAGNER AND DEENA BARTEL-WAGNER

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2017

DAY 1

The Truth About God

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right" (2 Timothy 3:16, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

It's time for family worship," Dad called out. "Bring your Bibles."

Luc, Tess, and Jake grabbed their Bibles, and after prayer Dad asked, "Did you know there was a time that people didn't have Bibles in their homes?"

"Didn't they have money to buy them?" asked Jake.

"Bibles and others books were very expensive because they were copied by hand," Mom explained. "Also, Bibles were written in Latin, and most people couldn't read them."

"So how did they learn about Jesus?" Tess asked.

"The pastor told them stories from the Bible at church," said Dad. "The problem, though, was that some people said God was harsh and wanted to hurt people. Luc, would you please read Psalm 11:7 for us?"

Luc read, "The Lord does what is right, and he loves justice [ICB]."

"This verse tells us God is always right. He never says, thinks, or does anything that is wrong," said Dad.

"In the Garden of Eden Satan told a lie to Eve, and she believed him," said Jake. "She didn't trust what God had said."

"God wanted to be with all His friends on earth," said Dad. "But as earth became more populated, some people began telling Satan's story about God being harsh and unloving."

"Martin Luther, a boy who lived in Germany,

heard these stories about a harsh God and was sure that God was angry with him. So he tried to live a perfect life," said Mom. "He learned to read Latin and studied to be a lawyer. One day during a terrible storm Martin vowed that he would work for Him. He became a pastor and studied his Bible even more. This didn't make Martin any happier, though. He still believed he had to live a perfect life. The harder Martin tried, the more miserable he became."

"If Martin loved Jesus, why was he so unhappy?" asked Tess.

"We'll talk more about that tomorrow during our worship time," said Dad.

If you didn't have a Bible, how could you remember the things God wants you to know about Him?

Thought Question

When you think of God, what pictures do you see in your mind? Draw a picture of God to share with your family.

Activity

Note

DAY 2

God's Rescue Plan

"Lord, you do what is right. And your laws are fair" (Psalm 119:137, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Luc was eager to have family worship. He wanted to hear more of the story of Martin Luther.

After Tess prayed, Dad reviewed that sin happens because of disobedience and separates people from God. He also reminded the family that Satan wants people to believe that God is harsh and unloving. Martin Luther believed this and was always trying to do things on his own to live a perfect life.

"One day as Martin was reading the book of Romans, something changed his life," said Dad. "Let's read Romans 1:16, 17:

"I am not ashamed of the Good News. It is the power God uses to save everyone who believes. . . . The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself. God's way of making people right with him begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, 'The person who is made right with God by faith will live forever [ICB].' "

Luc asked, "Isn't the good news the story of Jesus and His life?"

"That's right," encouraged Dad.

"Then Paul is saying that if people believe the story and that Jesus died, God can save them," Luc said. "I'm not sure what the 'made right' means, though."

"It means a person who isn't blamed by God for anything wrong," said Dad. "Romans 3:10 says there is no human being who is sinless. God is the only one who is always right. Martin realized Romans 1 tells us that God had a plan to rescue humans from sin. When Jesus died on the cross, that was part of the plan. We must have faith that He will save us."

"Martin then began to tell other people," said

Mom. "He even made a list of 95 ideas about this and nailed it to the door of his church in Wittenberg, Germany. Others then learned that God wanted them to trust His plan."

"About this same time a man named Johannes Gutenberg invented a printing press that could be used to print Bibles," said Dad. "And scholars began translating the Bible into English. Soon many people were able to read and own their own Bibles."

I'm going to study my Bible every day, thought Luc.

Activity

- Find the city of Wittenberg, Germany, on a map.
- Make a list of reasons you want to tell others about God.

Do you think it took courage for Martin Luther to nail his list of ideas to the church door?

Thought Question

Note

DAY 3

Reaching for Jesus' Hand

"There is only one way that people can reach God. That way is through Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 2:5, ICB)

Bible Treasure

Story

Luc and his family opened the storage shed door and began taking out yard tools. A windstorm during the night had caused a lot of damage. Tess and Jake began picking up sticks. Mom sent Luc to help his dad, who was setting up a ladder next to the house. Dad was going to clean the branches the storm had blown onto the roof.

Dad climbed the ladder up to the roof.

"You're a long way up," said Luc.

Dad quickly pulled all the branches off the roof, then moved back to the ladder and looked down at Luc.

"This ladder reminds me of our worship talks," said Dad.

"How can a ladder have anything to do with sin and being righteous?" asked Luc.

"Run get Mom, Tess, and Jake," said Dad.

As soon as everyone gathered, Dad said, "We've been studying about sin separating us from God. This ladder made me think about Jesus, His death, and what that means for us. Even if we stretched our arms as far as we could, we wouldn't be able to touch each other. When Adam and Eve sinned, they created a gap between themselves and God."

"But God sent Jesus to die for our sins," said Tess. "Didn't that take care of the gap?"

"That's right," said Dad. "Jesus became the mediator between God and each one of us."

"Mom, would you climb halfway up the ladder?" asked Dad. "After Jesus lived a sinless life, died, and rose again, He filled the gap between us and God. Now, if I stretched my

arm out to Mom and she stretched her arm out to me, our hands could touch. Now, Luc, you step on the bottom ladder rung and reach up to Mom."

Luc carefully stepped on the ladder and reached out and touched Mom's hand

"When we accept Jesus, we move toward Him and stretch out our hands. He reaches out to us, but doesn't let go of His connection with God," said Dad. "He is the connection between us and God."

Activity

Luc and his parents stretched out their arms to show how Jesus is the mediator between people and God. Try this with your family.

Thought Question

What would happen if Jesus wasn't holding out His hand to us and to God?

Note

DAY 4

Washing Off the Dirt

"But he was wounded for the wrong things we did. He was crushed for the evil things we did. The punishment, which made us well, was given to him. And we are healed because of his wounds" (Isaiah 53:5, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Luc, Tess, and Jake were working in the family vegetable and flower garden when Mom called them inside. "I have something to show you," she said.

Luc, Tess, and Jake hurried to wash the dirt off their hands and went into the house. Mom was standing at the counter in front of two vases of white flowers.

"When I put the flowers in the vases, I began to think about our worship time," Mom said. "We've been talking about how Jesus' death justified us before God. These flowers reminded me of what happens after we are justified. I'm going to put some coloring in the water of one vase. See how the water changes colors?"

"It turned red!" said Jake."

"That's right," said Mom. "The red water symbolizes the blood of Jesus, and the white flower is our life. Keep watching the flower and see what happens. We know that when Jesus died, He shed His blood for us."

Mom then explained: "Another word for Jesus' dying and shedding His blood for us is "atonement." It means that the blood of Jesus takes away our sin and makes us spiritually clean. Until we accept Jesus and His death, our lives are dirty, just as your hands were before you washed them."

"Look, the white petals are turning red!" Luc said excitedly.

"The red coloring in the water is being absorbed into the flower petals," Mom said. "Our lives are like that when we accept Jesus and follow Him. We begin to change and

become different in how we act and treat other people. When we ask Him to help us to say and do the right things, we can overcome the bad things we want to do."

Mom added, "Jesus' life flows into ours, just as the colored water made the white f lower red."

"I love Jesus and want to be changed," said Luc.

"Me, too," said Tess.

Activity

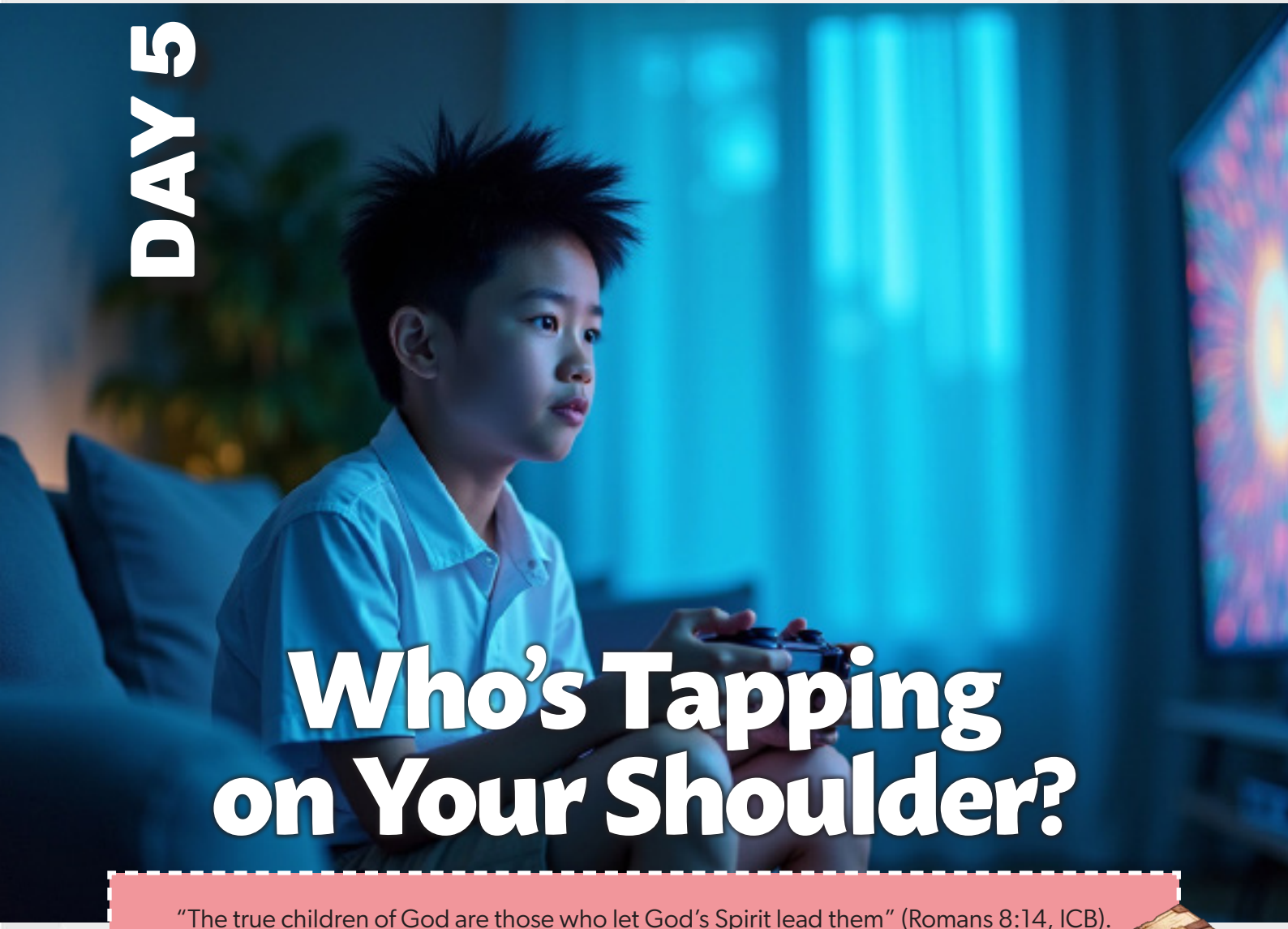
The blood of Jesus washes away our sins and makes our lives new again. With your family, sing the song "Nothing but the Blood of Jesus."

Thought Question

How can you be like the f lowers in the story and let Jesus fill your life?

Note

DAY 5



Who's Tapping on Your Shoulder?

"The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them" (Romans 8:14, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

School was out for the day, and Luc's new friend Simon wanted to play video games. Luc didn't want to ask permission to go to Simon's. He already knew what Mom and Dad would say.

"Hi, Mom. Can I go over to Simon's?" Luc said quickly as he dropped his backpack by the door. When Simon asked him to come over and play video games, Luc was too embarrassed to tell him he wasn't allowed to play them.

"Are his parents at home?" asked Mom. "And what are you going to do while you are there?"

Mom asked the two questions he dreaded the most.

"I don't know if his parents are home," Luc admitted. "Simon wanted to hang out and play video games."

When Simon joined their class six weeks ago, Luc invited him to sit with him at lunch. Simon seemed nice, but some things he said made Luc uncomfortable.

"I'm glad you are trying to make Simon feel a part of your class," said Mom. "It's important that we treat everyone kindly. But you know that you aren't allowed to play video games without us checking them out first."

Silence filled the room as Mom waited for Luc to speak. "Simon is new and doesn't have many friends. I want to try to reach out to him. But he does and says things that make me feel uncomfortable," said Luc.

"When you feel uncomfortable about something that you know is wrong, that is the Holy Spirit nudging you," said Mom. "Do you remember when we talked about asking Jesus every day to take over our lives?"

"Yes, and I've been praying that every morning," said Luc.

"Jesus is answering your prayers by sending the Holy Spirit to you," said Mom. "The job of the Holy Spirit is to help us think about what we are doing and whether it is right or wrong.

"You have asked Jesus to be part of your life," Mom continued. "The Holy Spirit wants to help you make right choices. As you let Him work in your life, others will be able to see it."

Mom paused, then asked Luc, "So what are you going to do now?"

"I think I'll call Simon and see if he can come over here," said Luc. "I need some help building my backyard fort!"

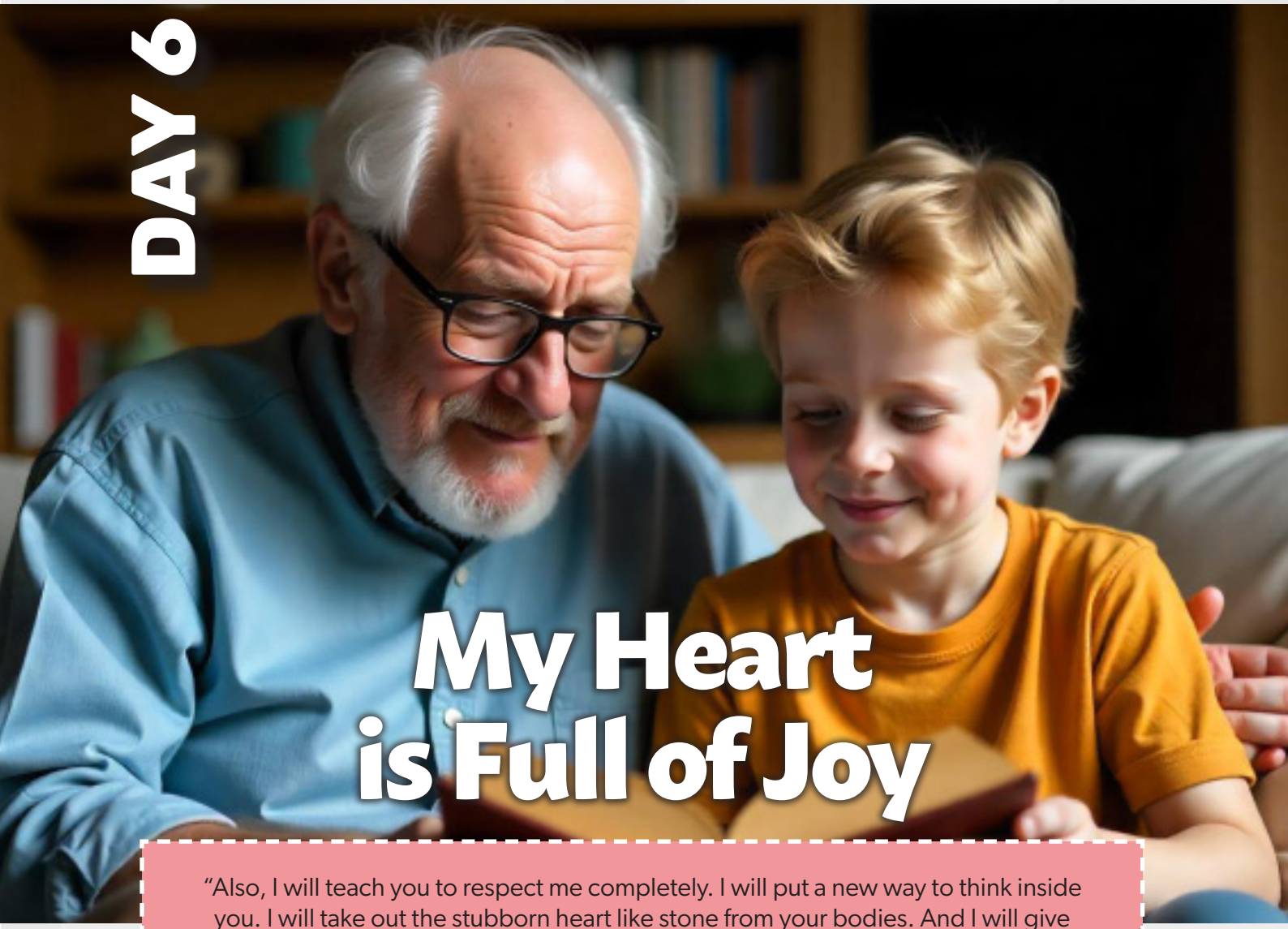
Activity

Wrap up in a blanket and imagine that the blanket is the Holy Spirit wrapping around you. How does it make you feel?

Thought Question

If we can't see the Holy Spirit, how do we know He is with us?

Note



DAY 6

My Heart is Full of Joy

"Also, I will teach you to respect me completely. I will put a new way to think inside you. I will take out the stubborn heart like stone from your bodies. And I will give you an obedient heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Luc looked at the bags sitting beside the door. Excitement filled him knowing that in just a few hours he would see his grandparents.

During the trip Luc thought about his grandparents. Grandpa always told them stories and Grandma cooked and baked wonderful food. A warm feeling came over Luc as he thought about them, and he soon fell asleep.

"Hey, sleepyhead." Luc rubbed his eyes.

"Are you going to sleep this entire visit?" the voice asked again.

"Grandpa!" Luc cried with happiness. "I guess I must have fallen asleep on the trip."

Luc grabbed his bag with one hand and Grandpa's hand with the other. Together they went into the house. The smell of freshly baked bread tickled Luc's nose.

As the family ate their evening meal, everyone shared about what was happening in their lives. Soon the meal was over, and it was time for worship. Grandpa prayed to begin things. "Tonight, I'd like everyone to share something they are thankful for and why," said Grandpa. "Jake, let's start with you."

Finally, it was Luc's turn. "I'm thankful that I have a family that is so happy," said Luc. "Some of my friends have families who fight all the time. I'm glad mine doesn't."

When Luc looked at Grandpa, he noticed tears in his eyes.

"What you said means so much to me," said Grandpa. "You see, there was a time when I was just plain mean."

Luc was shocked. Grandpa couldn't be mean.

He was one of the nicest people Luc had ever met.

Grandma confirmed it: "A long time ago Grandpa had a very bad temper."

Grandpa looked off into the distance and remembered something from long ago. "Grandma is right. I didn't have any control over my temper or my attitude," said Grandpa. "That was before I accepted Jesus into my heart. When I confessed my sins to Him, I asked for Him to change me and take away my bad temper."

"Every day I prayed that Jesus would help me keep my temper under control," said Grandpa. "Some days I did. Then I would thank Jesus for helping me. Some days I would get really angry. Then I would have to ask God to forgive me again. With God's help I eventually controlled my temper."

"Wow!" said Luc. "We've learned about the fruit of the Spirit, such as peace, kindness, joy, and self-control. I think you have the fruit of the Spirit, Grandpa!"

Grandpa chuckled. "That's right, Luc. When we accept Jesus and confess our sins, our lives are changed."

Activity

Mix four tablespoons of white vinegar with one teaspoon of iodized salt. Drop several coins in the mixture and allow them to soak for several minutes. Take the coins out of the solution and dry. What happened to the coins?

Thought Question

What in your life do you need Jesus' help to change?

Note

DAY 7

What Can I Say?

"Jesus said, 'Come follow me. I will make you fishermen for men' " (Matthew 4:19, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

It was raining, so the planned fellowship lunch in the park had to go indoors.

Mr. Jones came and stood by Luc. "I'm disappointed we couldn't go to the park," said Mr. Jones. "The park is a great place to eat lunch and find people to witness to."

"You find people in the park and witness to them? How?" asked Luc.

"Sometimes I look for a person who looks sad," said Mr. Jones. "I'll smile at them and tell them I hope they have a good day. Sometimes they will talk about what things bother them. I listen and then ask if I can pray for them."

"You could do the same thing at school. I'm sure there are other students who have struggles," Mr. Jones added.

"I've seen some of them, but was never sure what I should say," admitted Luc. "I'd like to tell my friends at school about Jesus, but I stumble over the words. It's really embarrassing."

"I have just what you need, and you can make it yourself," said Mr. Jones. He pulled a little book out of his pocket and handed it to Luc.

The book had a green cover. Inside were blank pages that were black, red, white, and yellow. "How can a book with no words help me remember what to say?" Luc asked.

"The colors will help you," said Mr. Jones. "Black reminds us that we are sinners who do wrong things. This is what our life is like with sin."

Mr. Jones turned to the red page. "Red reminds us that Jesus died and shed His blood on the cross for us."

The next page was white. "White means that our sins are washed away!" Luc said excitedly.

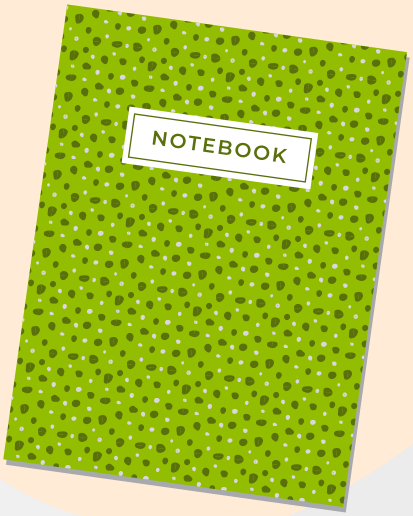
"And here's the best part—yellow promises we can go and live with Jesus forever! What does the green cover mean?" asked Mr. Jones.

"Green usually means growing things," said Luc.

"That's right," said Mr. Jones. "Once we accept Jesus, we have to grow in our new life. We do that by reading the Bible, sharing Jesus with others, and spending time in fellowship with other believers."

"I just happen to have some sheets of colored paper with me. Would you like to make a witnessing book after lunch?"

"I sure would," said Luc with a grin. "I can't wait to show this to my friends at school!"



Activity

Make your own witnessing book. You can use colored paper, cloth, or felt.
You will need:

black (2 1/2" x 3" square) red (2 1/2" x 3" square)
white (2 1/2" x 3" square)
yellow (2 1/2" x 3" square)
green (5" x 3" rectangle)

1. Place the colored squares on top of each other in this order: black, red, white, and yellow.
2. Wrap a length of green paper, cloth, or felt around the colored squares to form a book binding.
3. If you are using paper squares, staple the edge of the book that is the spine. If you are using cloth or felt squares, sew a one-inch seam down the green felt side, making sure to sew through all colored squares. The seam should bind the book and its pages together.

Thought Question

How can you overcome being afraid to share your wordless witnessing book with others?

Note

Finding Treasure *in* God's Word

THEME

By: JULIE WESLAKE

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2018

DAY 1

Why We Treasure the Bible

"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:20, 21).

Bible Treasure

Story

Gemma had made a special little box and decorated it with pictures. She wanted Grandma to have it, because she loved Grandma. Gemma knew exactly where she would put it. She had noticed where Grandma put her treasures, so she placed it carefully on the shelf beside some other ornaments and photos that Grandma liked to look at.

Sitting on the shelf was a book. Gemma thought that this must be a special book because it was on the special shelf. But as she opened the pages, she was very concerned because someone had written in the book and underlined some of the words and paragraphs. Gemma knew that you should never write or draw in books, so she asked Grandma why her special book was underlined and written in.

Grandma explained that this book was indeed a special book. It was called a Bible. Grandma said she read it every day. The words in it, particularly the underlined words, were treasures that she wanted to remember because they connected her to Jesus and His love for her. Grandma said that the words showed her how to love Jesus and how to be like Him. The messages gave her purpose for each day and hope for her future. Grandma said she could not live without reading the messages God gave her each day.

Gemma was excited. She also wanted to love Jesus and find out more about Him. She wanted the treasure words to make her life happier. So, she asked Grandma to show her how to read and understand the Bible and live with Jesus as her best friend. Grandma was also excited. She said that there was nothing more important than

sharing the words in the Bible. She explained that the Bible was like having a treasure map, and that when you spend time reading the Bible, it is like digging to find gold, silver, or precious gems.

In Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus urges us not to spend our lives trying to get treasures here on earth. We should rather spend our time and money on things that Jesus would have us spend them on, so that our treasure will be in heaven. Because where our treasure is, our hearts are there also.

In a story found in Matthew 13:44-46 Jesus told His disciples that heaven is like treasure in a field. You might want to sell all you have to buy that field so you can have that treasure. The joy of being with Jesus in heaven and living with Him forever is just as precious. To get to heaven we will be happy to give up lots of things in our lives and spend time reading the Bible.

Let's Talk

What could you spend your time and money on to receive the treasures offered in the Bible?

Let's Pray

Ask Jesus to help you find the important treasures in His Word that you need to live a holy life. Thank Him for the treasures He's already given you.

Let's Make

Draw a treasure map for around your room, church, or home. Hide Bible texts and show on the treasure map where to go to find them. When your friends and family have found them, read them out together.

Note

DAY 2

Read the Bible
It Can Be Trusted

"From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:15, 16).

Bible Treasure

Story

Grandma showed Gemma where it says that the Bible is God's book. It is called the Holy Scriptures because it tells us about God and how to give our hearts to Him and live for Him. Grandma explained that the Bible was not really one book, but 66 smaller books written by different people, after God had given them ideas and words. The people wrote down what they remembered about what happened long ago, and some wrote about when Jesus was on earth. Some wrote songs or poems, and some wrote about things that were going to happen in the future.

The Bible tells us that the messages in the Bible didn't just come from the writers' own imaginations. "For prophecy never had its origins in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

One book in the Bible tells us about a boy called Timothy who found Bible treasure. He discovered the Bible through his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother Lois. They knew how precious the words of the Bible were and decided that it was important to sit with Timothy every day and teach him how to "dig for treasure" in the Bible and give his heart to Jesus.

Because the Bible was inspired by God, Timothy developed a faith in Jesus that gave him courage and passion for sharing Jesus and leading other people to live for him.

People in Thessalonica believed Silas and Timothy when they told them about the Bible treasure and turned from loving idols and started to love Jesus, the living God. Paul praised God for this. He wrote to the

Thessalonians saying, "And we also thank God continually for you, because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human, but as it actually is, the word of God which is indeed at work in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Grandma asked Gemma if she knew what trust was. Gemma said it was like believing that Daddy would catch her when he told her to jump into the deep end of the swimming pool.

Grandma said that reading the Bible, trusting its words, came from God; and doing what it said was like reading and following a recipe and trusting that what you made would bake into a cake.

Let's Talk

What are some of the books and programs you have read or seen that you know are not real? What books and programs do you have that are real and true?

Let's Pray

Ask Jesus to help you focus on Bible stories that can help you grow, rather than on untrue stories that are just entertainment.

Let's Make

Arrange the chairs in a room into an obstacle course. Write directions for someone to read to help another person who is blindfolded get through the obstacle course. For example, write down how many steps left, how many steps right or forward, they need to take to get along safely.

Note

DAY 3

Explore the Bible

How I Read the Bible

"In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14).

Bible Treasure

Story

Gemma told Grandma about a time when she was with Mommy exploring a new park and they couldn't find the place birds were kept. They had to stop and look at a park map to give them directions to get on the right path. It was funny because they had been going around in circles when the aviary was only a five-minute walk away.

Grandma laughed and said that sounds like some people who try to find God and His purpose and joy for their lives. Sometimes they look everywhere and try lots of things, but God is so close. They just need to read their Bibles. Many people think the Bible is too hard to read, that it is too complicated. Sometimes they don't trust that the Bible is really God's Word for them. Sometimes they think the Bible is just full of rules.

The best way to start exploring the Bible is to pray first. God's Holy Spirit will help us understand what we read. When Jesus went back to heaven, He promised that He would send "the Spirit of truth" to be with us forever. "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things," He said. (John 14:17, 26).

Dear Jesus, please help me today to understand what I am reading in Your Word, the Bible.

Grandma told Gemma that she wished she could give her special Bible reading glasses so that when she put the glasses on she would see who God was and what He was like. If such glasses existed, they would show us that the most important thing about God is that He loves us. When we explore all the many words

in the Bible, we need to wear our "God is love" glasses. It's easy to see God's love in these verses:

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in them" (1 John 4:16). "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The Bible's key love message about God is that He sent His Son Jesus, to die for us: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:9, NIV).

God loves us so much that he will search for us like a shepherd searches for a lamb that has wandered away, become lost, and can't find its way home. God is both the treasure map and the treasure.

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us, even though we don't deserve it. Help us to see Your love in everything we read in the Bible.

Let's Talk

What other ways can you receive the Bible message other than reading?

Let's Pray

Ask God to share His plan for your life as you faithfully study His Word.

Let's Make

Design and make some special Bible reading "God is love"-glasses. You could make these from cardboard and clear plastic or cellophane. Or you could make them from bending pipe cleaners.

Note

DAY 4

Applying God's Treasure

The Bible Guides Me

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5, NIV).

Bible Treasure

Story

Gemma actually loved making things for people and being helpful at home and at school. But sometimes she just didn't feel like helping, and she sometimes felt that she made the wrong choices when people made her feel angry or sad. She said that she tried really hard at times, but it didn't seem to make any difference. She wondered if treasures in the Bible would help her love people more and help her make the right decisions.

Grandma assured her that everybody makes mistakes, and that the treasures we read about in the Bible can help. The first Bible treasure to remember is that even though we don't feel any different, we just need to keep on reading the Bible. Jesus told His disciples that it works like a grapevine: As long as the branches (we) are connected to the vine (Jesus), the grapevine will keep producing lovely grapes (John 15:5). So, every day we need to connect with Jesus through reading the Bible. This connection helps us act more like Jesus and make the right decisions every day. When the grapevine bears fruit, others will enjoy eating it too. When we bear Bible-treasure fruit, we can be a blessing to others.

Like the story that Gemma remembered from the Bible about a young Israelite slave girl who told her master about God's healing power when he was sick. Because she cared and shared her knowledge of God that she had from Bible treasures, her master, Captain Naaman, was healed. You can read this story treasure in 2 Kings 5:1-14.

Grandma explained that all the good things we do come from Jesus, and that we should

thank Him for helping us. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4).

Gemma really wanted to be like Jesus. Grandma explained that it takes a lifetime to be like Him, and it's only through our daily reading and prayer that we grow little by little: "And we are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Stay connected to Jesus through reading His words and He will give you His heart, His voice, His hands, and His feet so that we can share His love with others.

Let's Talk

If you could spend a day with Jesus, what would you talk about? Where would you go? What would you do?

Let's Pray

Ask Jesus to send someone to you today with whom you can share some of the treasure words you have discovered in the Bible.

Let's Make

Study the lifecycle of a monarch butterfly or a frog. Notice the big changes that are made by God's power. We also have this power to change when we ask for it and are connected to Jesus through the Bible.

Note

DAY 5

The Bible Shows Me Jesus

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21, NIV).

Bible Treasure

Story

It's interesting to find out why we were given our names and what they mean. Gemma was excited to find out that her name in French means "jewel," and in English it means "precious stone." When God's Son was to be born, an angel of the Lord appeared and told His earthly father, Joseph, that he was to give Him the name "Jesus." It was specially chosen by God because it means that He would be the Saviour of the world.

The Bible uses many names for Jesus, and they all reveal who He is, His character, and His mission. Grandma asked Gemma to go and get her Bible, so they could explore the verses and find the different names for Jesus. They wrote all the names down on a big piece of paper. Here are some of them:

Immanuel, Matthew 1:23: "'The virgin will conceive give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**' (which means, 'God with us)." God didn't want to be a distant God, He wanted to live among us. Jesus was God on earth.

Son of God, John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only **Son**, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." At Jesus' baptism God confirmed Jesus as His Son. "And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my **Son,** whom I love; with you I am well pleased'" (Mark 1:11).

Son of man, Mark 10:45: "For even the **Son of Man** did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus is also called Son of Man. Jesus was God but He was born from an earthly mother, Mary. That makes Jesus very special because He was the Son of mankind, and He was also the Son of God.

Word of God, John 1:1, 14: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word** was God.." "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." Jesus revealed God to us. He was the Word of God. In the beginning, He spoke the world into existence! "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth" (Colossians 1:15, 16, NIV). Not only did Jesus inspire the Bible, which is God's Word to us, but Jesus is the Word of God. If we know Him, we know God.

There are many more names for Jesus in the Bible. Ask your parents or teachers to help you discover some more of them. Here are a few places to start:

Lamb of God: John 1:29, 36
Alpha and Omega: Revelation 22:13
Bread of Life: John 6:35

Let's Pray

Ask Jesus to help you understand the precious meaning of all His names as you study the Word of God.

Let's Make

Write names of Jesus on strips of paper that are the same length. Make a paper chain and hang it between a picture of Jesus and a picture of you and your family.

Let's Talk

Find out what your name means, and why you were given that name.

Note

DAY 6

Understanding the Treasure of Hope

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

Bible Treasure

Story

Gemma loved school, but she always looked forward to the holidays. This year they were going to fly to visit Grandma. Mommy bought the tickets months before the trip, and it seemed to Gemma as though the holiday was never going to arrive. She told Grandma this on the phone.

Grandma tried to encourage Gemma. She explained that looking forward to something was called having hope. You plan for it, buy your tickets, and pack your clothes. Grandma also wished that the holidays were already here. Grandma promised to give Gemma a big hug at the airport.

Grandma and Gemma talked about the hope that the Bible gives. Because Adam and Eve decided to listen to Satan, Romans 1:25 tells us that people started to worship and serve created things rather than God as the Creator. People began to do lots of things that were wrong and hurtful, and not spend time learning about God and trusting Him. But because God loves us so much, He made a plan to save those who would turn to Him. God's plan would stop Satan and sin from hurting people. God's Son, Jesus, would come to earth as a baby. Even though Jesus never did anything that was wrong, He died for our sins, so that we could be forgiven and live with Jesus in heaven forever. God's love gives us hope that we will go to heaven and be able to live with Him forever. Grandma shared a treasure text with Gemma where Jesus said:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My Father's

house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And . . . I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:1-3).

As Gemma thought about the holiday, she thought how nice it will be when Jesus comes. Then she and Grandma could be with Jesus forever. Suddenly Gemma couldn't wait for Jesus to come. She phoned Grandma and told her. Grandma was so happy to hear that Gemma was excited for Jesus to come. "We have a wonderful hope, Gemma," Grandma said. "It's a hope that makes my heart sing. It is the hope that one day Jesus will be seen in the sky, and He will even wake up the dead people who loved Him."

"After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Gemma said she couldn't wait! Can you?

Let's Talk

How would you explain hope to another boy or girl?

Let's Pray

Ask Jesus to help you give your heart to Him every day, so that you can go to heaven with Him when He comes.

Make a promise box. Make a little box and decorate it with drawings and stickers. Cut out small pieces of paper the same size and write your favorite hope texts on them. Roll them up and stand them in the box until the box is full. Read one text every day, or give the promise box to a friend.

Let's Make

Note

DAY 7

Right From Wrong

The Bible Helps Me Tell the Difference

"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' . . . 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Mark 12:30, 31).

Bible Treasure

Story

Grandma could see that Gemma looked worried. She had heard her fighting during a game with her brother that morning. Angry words had been spoken. When Mommy asked her to say she was sorry, Gemma had chosen to close her mouth so tight that no words came out. Now Gemma sat outside on the step looking sad. Grandma knew that there were many Bible treasure texts that could help Gemma choose to do the right thing. She reminded Gemma to put on her "God is love" glasses. Then they opened Grandma's Bible and began to read and talk.

In Mark 12 Jesus said that the greatest commandment was to love God with all the passion, time, and energy we have; and that the second greatest commandment was to love our neighbor as ourselves. Grandma explained that when we are not sure what to do, we should think, I wonder how I can best love God and my neighbor? "Gemma," Grandma said, "I'm pretty sure that Jesus counts your brother and all the people in your life, even in your street and beyond, as your neighbor."

"If you love your brother, then you will try to say nice things to him. When we start to feel angry we can walk away until we have calmed down. If we want to treat Mommy with Jesus' love, then we will obey her. In Proverbs 15:1 we can read, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (NIV).

Gemma thought for a while and then went off to find Mommy. There were some "I'm sorry" words she wanted to say to her.

First John 2:3-8 tells us that we know Jesus if we obey His commands, obey His Word, and walk as Jesus did. Some of the most important commands from God were given through Moses to the children of Israel, and to us. Jesus lived these Ten Commandments. The first four tell us how to love God, and the second six tell us how to love each other. Grandma read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 to Gemma and explained them to her.

Grandma said, "Gemma, everybody makes mistakes. But we can all ask God to forgive us, and work hard at staying connected to Jesus. Jesus promised that one day we will live and love as He does. First John 3:2 tells us that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12).

Let's Talk

What is a good guide for working out what is right and wrong?

Let's Pray

Ask Jesus to help us say we're sorry to others when we've been wrong.

Let's Make

Make Pack a box of clothes. Label each clothing item with an action or character trait. Some will be labeled with such words as gentleness, sharing, reading the Bible, and praying. Others will be labeled with such words as playing lots of video games, being selfish, lying, and stealing. Sort the clothes and pack the clothes we are packing for heaven into a suitcase.

Note

I Will Go to Be **His** Witness

THEME

By: TANYA MUGANDA

Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2023

DAY 1

Be a Witness!

Genesis 15:12-18

Bible Treasure

Story

It was a quiet night, and Abraham was outside. God surprised Abraham with a message: "Abraham, it's time for you, Sarah, and your family to move to a new land where you will have lots of children and your name will be known." Abraham thought to himself, *Wow, God is promising me a new land and more family. I can't wait to tell Sarah.*

Sarah came outside with a surprised look. "Why are you out here in the dark? Are you OK?"

Abraham replied excitedly, "God has told me to move our family to a new land to reach more people—a land where we will be known for future generations as a huge family." 24

Sarah had a confused look on her face and said, "I'm nervous about this move because we are leaving everything we know." Abraham encouraged Sarah, letting her know that God would make a way. Abraham had lived in the land called Ur his whole life, but He trusted God's promises to make the big move.

Can you imagine being told by your parents that you must move to a new school, church, or neighborhood, where you must make new friends?

On the way to this new land, Sarah, Abraham, and his nephew Lot carried their dishes, furniture, and clothes on their camels. Sarah complained, "It's so hot in the desert."

Lot grumbled, "I feel weak and thirsty."

Abraham responded trustingly, "I am feeling tired too, but we are almost there." God protected them till they arrived safely.

During this trip Abraham, Sarah, and Lot walked a lot along with their camels. They saw

interesting towns as they got closer to their destination. They finally arrived in the land of Haran.

Then God told Abraham to move again! This time God said that Abraham would move to what was called Canaan. Sarah and Lot were surprised that they would need to pack up and move again. It was another long trip of walking, but God got them safely to this new land.

In Canaan God would make this land Abraham's, where he would have many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Abraham, Sarah, and Lot unpacked all their clothes, dishes, and furniture and set up their tents for their new home in this land. It was a foreign land, but God would help them as they would witness to others around them. Abraham was a stranger in a foreign land. He was a witness to the love and power of God. You too can be a witness for God in a new neighborhood or church.

It's Your Turn

- What would you take with you on a trip? Draw something that you would take with you on your trip
- What was the name of the final land that Abraham, Sarah, and Lot moved to?
- Have you ever had to move to a different neighborhood, country, or city? How did you feel?
- What can you share with others when you move to a new place with strangers or new friends?

DAY 2

Witness Even When Life Is Unfair

Genesis 39:20–41:43

Bible Treasure

Story

"This can't be happening!" Joseph muttered under his breath. Joseph had just been put in prison for being falsely accused of mistreating Potiphar's wife. Joseph was sad because things were looking bad. He had been sold as a slave by his brothers to a foreign land called Egypt, and now he had been thrown into jail for doing nothing wrong. It was cold and dark. The food was terrible. Joseph felt alone and afraid. There were so many questions that he had. He wondered if this was all God's plan. Joseph had some doubts, but he still trusted God's plan.

"I know God will help me through this tough time," said Joseph. While he was in prison, he helped the prisoners. Some of the prisoners started having dreams that they couldn't understand. "Joseph, can you help me understand this scary dream that I had?" Joseph asked what had happened in these dreams. They described these weird dreams, and Joseph, through God's help, was able to explain those dreams. One of the prisoners left the prison and went back to work for Pharaoh, but he never mentioned Joseph's name. Joseph had been forgotten.

The jail guard was impressed at how Joseph was helpful toward the prisoners. Joseph had been put in charge by the jail guard. Despite how bad things were, Joseph wanted to help others around him in prison. Would you be able to help others when you are going through a tough time? Joseph did show that despite everything going wrong, he wanted to be God's witness. Joseph waited on God while God worked behind the scenes.

A few years went by. Now Pharaoh was struggling with some strange dreams, but no one in the palace could help him. "I know of someone in prison who can help interpret your dreams," said Pharaoh's butler.

"Go get him. What are you waiting for?" said Pharaoh.

Pharaoh told his dreams to Joseph: "Well, I saw these thin-looking cows eat the healthy cows that had gone to eat grass." God helped Joseph to understand and explain to Pharaoh that there would be a famine. Pharaoh was amazed at the wisdom and saw that Joseph would be a good leader. Joseph was given the job as the ruler over all of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh!

Joseph's witness was not easy, with all the bad things that had happened to him, but he continued trusting God through prayer. We can learn from Joseph's story that no matter how hard it gets, we can trust God to help us. God has a plan for each of us.

It's Your Turn

- What happened to Joseph when he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife?
- Would you have responded the way Joseph did?
- What would you do if you were mistreated by a classmate or friend? Would you continue to pray and trust God?
- List some things that can help you witness even when you feel misunderstood and alone.

DAY 3

The Strangest Disease

Genesis 39:20–41:43

Story

"What is that spot on your skin?" asked Naaman's wife.

"I just noticed it recently," said Naaman. Naaman had something strange going on with his skin. He started getting white spots all over his body. There was no cure, and nothing was working.

"It looks like you have leprosy," said Naaman's wife.

"Oh, no. How can I continue to be a commander with this disease?" sighed Naaman. Naaman was the commander in chief under the king of Syria. He was in charge of all the soldiers in the king's army.

There was a young maid from Israel who worked in their household and overheard their conversation. She felt bad that Naaman had white spots on his 26 body. She decided to witness to her master about the prophet Elisha.

Bible Treasure

"I have good news about curing the master's leprosy," she told Naaman's wife. "God can heal him," said the young maid. Naaman's wife ran quickly to tell her husband. Naaman didn't know what to think, taking advice from a young slave girl, but he listened. The young maid had mentioned a prophet by the name of Elisha who was led by God. Elisha could help Naaman. Naaman would have to go to prophet Elisha in Israel to find out what he would need to do to be healed from leprosy.

It was a long journey to go to Elisha's house in Israel from the kingdom of Syria. Naaman went with some of his men and servants to find out if there was going to be a miracle for this disease that he had. Naaman arrived safely in Israel.

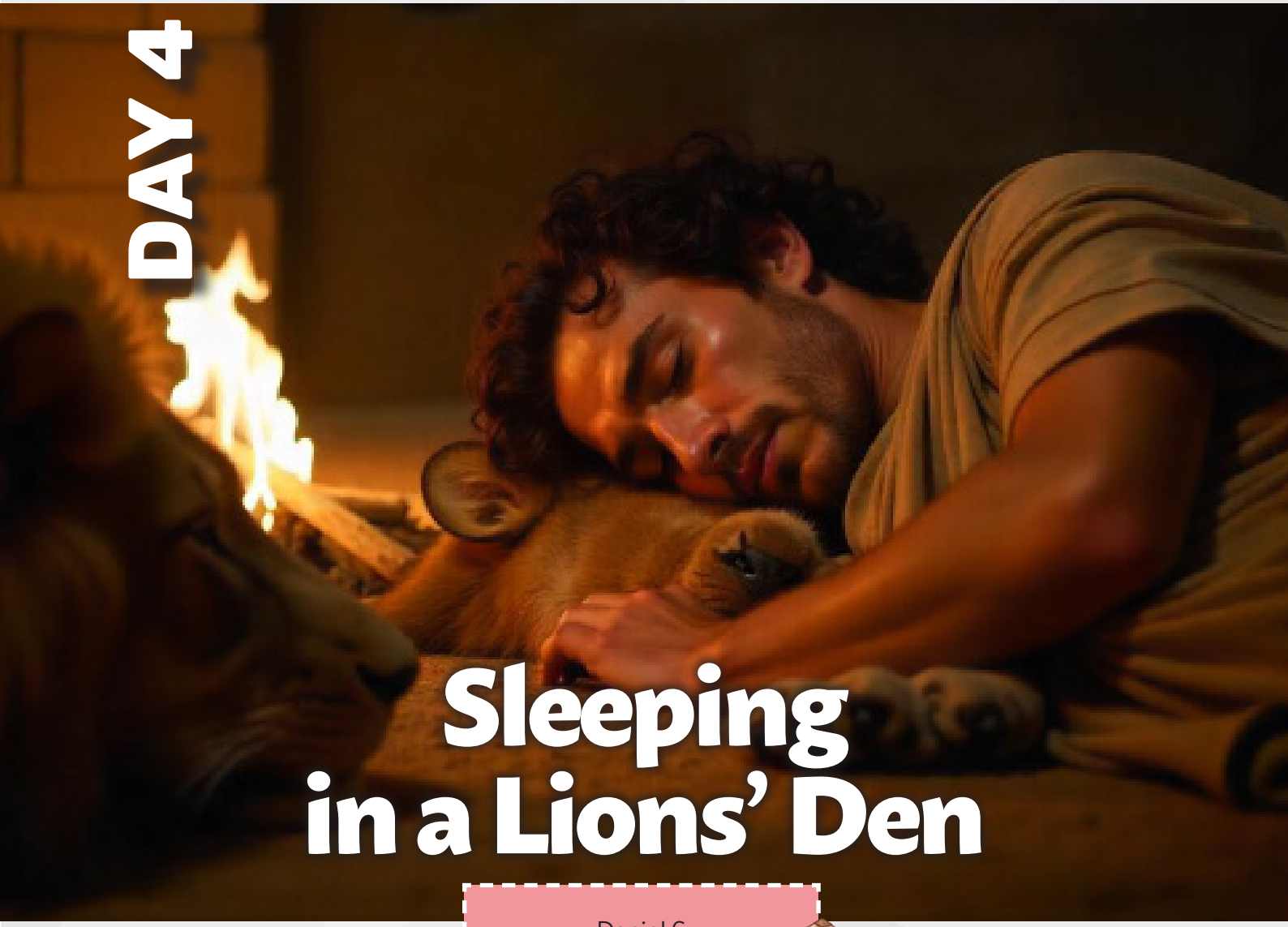
The instructions were specific. Naaman would have to go dip himself into the Jordan River seven times! "Is that even possible, that I could

be cured by dipping myself in dirty water?" Naaman asked. One of his servants encouraged him to listen to the prophet's message. With a scared look on his face, Naaman went into the water seven times, and when he came out, his skin was new again.

"This is truly a miracle! There is no other true God than the God of Israel!" exclaimed Naaman. The young maid didn't just work for Naaman, but became a good friend. The young maid's faith in God and witness helped others like Naaman to see how powerful God is. It doesn't matter what age you are; God will give you the strength to help someone in need. The next time you feel sick, remember this story and how God can heal you.

It's Your Turn

- What did it take for the little maid to witness to her master? Why was it difficult?
- Share with two friends how God healed you when you were sick.
- How did your friends respond when God healed you?



DAY 4

Sleeping in a Lions' Den

Daniel 6

Story

Daniel loved God. Daniel lived in the land of Babylon. He prayed three times a day and knew that God would never leave him. Daniel had been put in charge of various things in the kingdom, and King Darius trusted him.

But not everyone was happy with him. "Hmm, Daniel thinks he is better than us. We will get him!" some said. These bad men were thinking of ways to get Daniel in trouble and have King Darius hate him. The bad men suggested an idea to the king to make a law that everyone worships only him.

"OK, it's now a law, and anyone who breaks this law will be thrown into a lions' den," said the king.

"Aha, now Daniel has no choice but to obey this law," said the bad men.

When Daniel heard of this new law, he continued to pray, and he did not stop praying! The bad men couldn't believe their eyes! "How can Daniel not obey this law? He is in trouble now," echoed the bad men. Daniel was not afraid, for he knew that God would be with him.

Daniel was a witness showing there is a God of heaven. Daniel was not afraid to pray even though the bad men were watching him. These men reported what they saw to the king, who was disappointed, because he liked Daniel. He had no choice but to throw Daniel into the lions' den for disobeying the law. Daniel was not afraid, but still trusted God to save him.

"Look at Daniel. It's over for him; we will see if his God will save him, ha-ha, ha-ha," the bad men laughed.

As Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, King Darius watched sadly. "Daniel, I hope

your God will save you," he said. Daniel was in the lions' den all night. Early the next morning the king went to check to see if Daniel was still alive. "Daniel did your God save you?" asked the king. Daniel yelled out that he was safe. The king was happy to hear that Daniel was kept safe from the lions. God had protected him! The bad men were so angry that their plan had failed.

It won't always be easy when you are put through tough things, but God can protect us, too. Sometimes when you stand for God, you will be hated by your friends, but He has promised: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10, NIV).

It's Your Turn

- Have you ever been tempted to disobey your parents or your teacher at school?
- Read Matthew 5:16. In what way was Daniel's witnessing a light for the king?
- Try some creative ways to pray. Maybe do a prayer walk with an adult and friends in your community.

DAY 5

Frenemies

John 4:1-26

Bible Treasure

Story

It was a hot day. Jesus walked in the desert for a long time. He decided to stop at a well to rest His dusty feet. Jesus was very thirsty. As soon as Jesus sat at the well, He saw someone coming toward Him. A Samaritan woman stopped by the well to get water. In those days there was no store to buy water; people would have to go to a well for it. The wells back in those days were deep and needed some type of bucket with a rope to get down to get water. Imagine having to carry around a bucket just to get water from a well. That was how life was for many people back in those days.

"Please, can I get a drink of water?" asked Jesus. The Samaritan woman was surprised.

"Why are you asking me for water?" she said. In those days Jews and Samaritans did not talk to or befriend each other, so it was a surprising encounter for the Samaritan woman. It did not matter to Jesus who the woman was or where she was from. Jesus loves everyone and was not afraid to ask for water.

"If you knew who I was, you would have asked Me for living water," said Jesus.

"What do you mean, living water? You can't even get water from the well!" the Samaritan woman responded. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that anyone who drinks from the well will thirst again, but those who drink living water from Him will never thirst again. The living water 28 that Jesus was talking about was the message of salvation and everlasting life with God.

"Wow, tell me more about this living water!" said the Samaritan woman. She asked more questions. Then Jesus explained to her that He was the Messiah! "You have made my day; I finally get to meet You in person!" said the

Samaritan woman. The Samaritan woman got so excited that she ran off to tell everyone that Jesus was there and to go see Him. A crowd came right behind the Samaritan woman as she came closer to Jesus. What a sight it was. The rest of the Samaritans believed the woman because of what she had told them, and she was encouraged by Jesus' love and the way He treated her even when she made bad decisions. When you share the story of Jesus, more people will come to know who He is.

It's Your Turn

- Have you ever been friends with someone no one liked?
- What does the story of the Samaritan woman teach us? How would Jesus want us to treat others?
- Is it easy to share Jesus with a friend?
- Think of something nice that you can do for a new child in your school or church. Maybe give them a new Bible, a card, or a care package.

DAY 6

Second Chances

Acts 9:36-43

Story

There were beautiful quilts laid out in Tabitha's living room. She had a special gift for being generous, and she would sew quilts, clothes, and blankets for people in her town. She was a friend and helper to poor people. Tabitha was also known as Dorcas. She lived in a town called Joppa, which was a busy port by the sea. Many boats came to Joppa with visitors.

Tabitha was known as an apostle or helper of Jesus because of the love she had shown making clothes for those who needed them. "Hey, Tabitha, thanks again for that pretty scarf you made for me," said a visitor standing outside her door.

"No problem; I just want everyone to have what they need," said Tabitha. Everyone loved Tabitha. She welcomed everyone into her home with a warm meal and a gift of something she made. If a family didn't have enough money to buy new clothes, Tabitha made sure to help by making clothes for some of these families. Many people were encouraged and thankful for someone like Tabitha. God gave Tabitha not just a gift of hospitality but also the gift of sewing. Tabitha loved God and loved people.

One day Tabitha got very sick. She got worse and worse, and the doctor could not find any medicine to help her get better. After a while Tabitha died. What a shock it was to those who loved her. Everyone in that town was heartbroken and cried. Her body was washed and prepared for burial.

Meanwhile, some people heard that Peter was nearby in another town. Some of the people remembered that Jesus' disciples not only healed but also brought people back to life. They believed that Peter could bring Tabitha

back to life. They sent some men to find Peter and ask him to come to help them. "Peter, please come as fast as you can; Tabitha has died!" they said. Peter went with the men, and when he got there, he went upstairs to the room where Tabitha was lying. "I need all of you to leave the room, please," Peter said. He knelt and prayed to God. Then he looked at Tabitha and said, "Get up!" Tabitha opened her eyes and got off the bed. As she walked out of the room, everyone looked with amazement and praised God.

"A miracle from God has happened. Tabitha is alive!" they said.

The people started telling everyone what Peter had done through the power of God, and many started to believe in Jesus. God brought Tabitha back to life to show how marvelous He is.

It's Your Turn

- What good things can you do to help others in your community or church? Maybe you could pick up trash at a park, help the needy by donating money with the help of your parent, or give away clothes that you don't need anymore.
- How is helping the poor and needy a good way to witness?

DAY 7

Tentmaking for Jesus

Acts 18:1-3

Story

Have you ever seen tents made from animal skin? Aquila and Priscilla were known as tentmakers. There were no sewing machines, so they sewed large tents by hand with huge needles. Tentmaking was a good job for them to bring home money.

They were a loving Christian couple. Paul, also a tentmaker, met Aquila and Priscilla when he was traveling to different cities. They welcomed Paul into their home and worked with him in the city of Corinth. Priscilla and Aquila also made tents with Paul. As they all worked together, Paul would share God's Word with them. They 30 They landed at Ephesus, which was one of the largest cities at that time. They would travel to different places telling people about Jesus. People were very excited to hear about the Word of God, and many people believed and became Christians. It must have been such an amazing sight to see crowds come to hear about God. Aquila, Priscilla, and Paul stayed for a while in Ephesus. Paul left Aquila and Priscilla behind in Ephesus to continue traveling and sharing the Word of God. Many people turned their hearts and lives to God and became Christians. Because of the hospitality of Aquila and Priscilla to Paul and many others, people came to know the one true God. There are many ways that we can share the good news about God too. God can give you a talent or gift to help others. You can serve God through music, preaching, teaching, sewing clothes, or many other ways. learned a lot from Paul. Paul stayed a long time in Corinth and continued sharing the gospel during that time. Aquila and Priscilla wanted to help Paul teach the Word of God to others. They enjoyed it so much that they decided to go on a mission

trip with Paul. It would be a new experience, but they were happy to share how good God was to them.

"Paul has been such a good friend to us. I'm so excited that we are joining him on this mission trip," Priscilla exclaimed joyfully.

Aquila agreed with Priscilla. "Yes, God has been blessing us through this ministry of tentmaking and friendships." Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla packed up their belongings to go on the mission trip.

They traveled by boat to share the gospel with as many people as they could. It was like a tour of many cities, to share the love of God.

They landed at Ephesus, which was one of the largest cities at that time. They would travel to different places telling people about Jesus. People were very excited to hear about the Word of God, and many people believed and became Christians. It must have been such an amazing sight to see crowds come to hear about God.

Aquila, Priscilla, and Paul stayed for a while in Ephesus. Paul left Aquila and Priscilla behind in Ephesus to continue traveling and sharing the Word of God. Many people turned their hearts and lives to God and became Christians. Because of the hospitality of Aquila and Priscilla to Paul and many others, people came to know the one true God. There are many ways that we can share the good news about God too. God can give you a talent or gift to help others. You can serve God through music, preaching, teaching, sewing clothes, or many other ways.

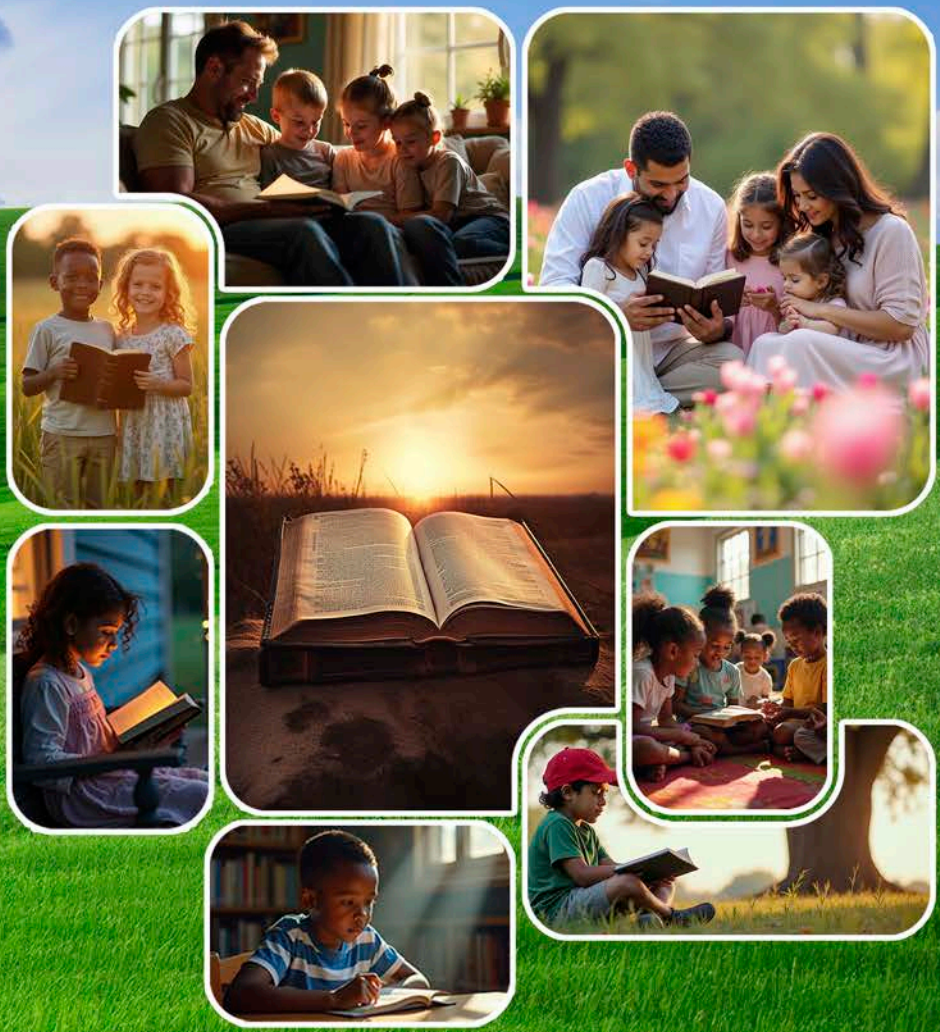
It's Your Turn

- Have you ever traveled on a world tour of countries or maybe visited some states where you live? Did you meet new people and taste interesting foods?
- If you can't travel to many places, can you still tell others about Jesus? Suggest some ways.
- Do you have friends that can help you share the love of God? What creative ideas could you come up with together?

The Bible is God's Word to Me

THEME

By: BETH THOMAS



Source Credit: Adventist Review, 2024

DAY 1

All About God's Word

"No prophecy ever came from what a man wanted to say. But men led by the Holy Spirit spoke words from God" (2 Peter 1:21, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

What do a pen, pencil, and paintbrush have all in common? One, they all start with a letter "p." Two, they are all instruments used by someone. An artist uses a paintbrush to create art pieces. A student uses a pen or pencil in school to complete their homework. An author uses a pen or pencil to draft a book.

What is your favorite book? What do you think makes one book more valuable than another? You see, the importance of the book is not necessarily the pen it was written with, but the content and the author who wrote it.

This week, we will be learning about the Bible. Did you know that the Bible is the most printed and read book in the world? It is written in more languages than any other book. Why do you think millions of people believe that the Bible is the most important book for our life? Here is essential information: the Bible itself explains how it was written!

Let us look at one of the passages that helps us better understand the Bible. It is found in 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

"Most of all, you must understand this: No prophecy in the Scriptures ever comes from the prophet's own interpretation. No prophecy ever came from what a man wanted to say. But men led by the Holy Spirit spoke words from God" (ICB).

The acronym P.E.N. can help us remember 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

Prophecy comes from God.

Each thought written is guided by the Holy Spirit.

No prophecy is written based on the prophet's own ideas.

The Bible is unique in that it gives us a picture

of what will happen in the future. That is what we call "prophecy." When we study the Bible, we see many 24 prophecies that have already come true. The men who wrote these prophecies did not write them from their own thinking. Instead, the primary author is God, who guided the writers through the Holy Spirit.

This means that they were the penmen God worked through, but God was the primary author. The Bible states that God knows the beginning and the end and that He used people called prophets to write what will take place so that we will know and not be afraid. Why is that important? Well, there are terrible things happening today. But the Bible says that one day soon Jesus will return and restore everything back to the way He created it. He will get rid of evil, sickness, and death. And those who already died believing in Jesus will be brought back to life. Isn't that exciting? I am so grateful that God gave us the Bible to give us hope and understand that at the end, God wins, God restores, and God is in control. This makes me want to read and learn more about it. How about you?

Thinking Together

1. Why is the Bible different from any other book?
2. What is one thing you can do to help you learn the Bible better?

DAY 2

God's Word Gives Me Hope

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Romans 15:4, NIV).

Bible Treasure

Story

Our memory verse tells us that the stories in the Bible were written to teach us lessons of faith, so that we might have hope! One story that is special to me is the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, found in 1 Kings 17.

The prophet Elijah was hiding from King Ahab beside the brook Cherith. God told Elijah to drink from the brook and that ravens would bring him food. Everyday Elijah's needs were taken care of. When the water dried up, the Lord told Elijah to go to Zarephath, where He had instructed a widow to supply him with food.

When Elijah got to Zarephath, he found a woman gathering a few sticks. He asked her for a drink of water and a piece of bread. What could she do? There was only enough flour and oil to make bread for herself and her son, and then they would not have any more food.

Elijah told her not to be afraid, but to make some bread for him first, and then make bread for herself and her son, for God had promised that the flour would not run out and that the oil would not run dry. The woman did as Elijah told her, and just as God had said, the woman and her son always had enough to eat (1 Kings 17:7-16).

Several years ago, I found myself wondering where our next meal would come from! There just never seemed to be enough money or food to go around. Our simple pantry contained oatmeal, rice, beans, and flour, but it was often almost empty. Each day we prayed, "Lord, You know our needs, and You have promised to take care of us."

A young couple had been camping in the woods near our house, and we became friends. One day the wife came to my house crying! I asked her what was wrong, and she told me that they had run out of food and didn't know what they would do. God impressed me to give them some food.

How could I do this? I barely had enough for our own family! But I took a box and went into my pantry and started to fill it up. I scooped up some beans and put them into a bag, then rice, oats, flour, and salt. I added a small container of oil, then put some potatoes and onions in the box. Whatever I had, I shared with her. I was amazed that I was able to share, not one box, but more than three large boxes of food with my friend! And, miraculously, I had more food than I had started with! Just as God provided for the widow, He provided for my family.

Thinking Together

1. Why did it matter that the woman made bread for Elijah first?
2. Has your family experienced a miracle from God?

DAY 3

God's Word Is Different from Other Books

"You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. The Scriptures are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

Bullets and musket balls flew around Charles Merrill's head as he and his brigade of soldiers pressed forward toward the opposing army. Suddenly, as he stepped forward, a bullet struck him in the right eye, sending him reeling backward. As he fell, he felt the impact of a second bullet as it hit his chest. But something stopped it on its path. That morning, as Charles hurried out of his tent, he had grabbed his New Testament Bible and stuck it into his front pocket. The Bible stopped the bullet!

The Bible saved Charles' life, and it can save yours, too—for eternity. It is the only book with God's words of life. In John 6:63 Jesus says, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." Every time God's Word tells us to do something or promises something, His power is there to help us do it.

Jesus used the Scriptures to overcome the power of Satan. When Satan tempted Him three times, He answered, "It is written . . . ," and Satan was defeated. Just as Jesus used Scripture, you can too! That's why the Bible is the most feared book by Satan and his angels: because, through it, so many people have been set free from their control. There is no other book with such power! Throughout history millions have found God's words to be faithful and true. Those struggling with addiction, anger, and more have found the strength to stop. Through God's Word they can live free.

There are many books with interesting stories, but the Bible tells the true story of how our

world began and how it will end. How do we know the Bible can predict the future? Because it has correctly done so in the past. Did you know there are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus' first coming? These prophecies were written by many different people hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, yet they all came true exactly as predicted.

The Bible is the most precious book because it shows us how much God loves us by giving us Jesus, His Son, to die for our sins so that we can live forever with Him. Many religious books claim that the only way people can have eternal life is through doing lots of good works, but the Bible tells us that we can be saved only through the mercy of Jesus.

The Bible, God's Word, offers us, through Jesus Christ, a pathway to eternal life and freedom from sin. It is a book filled with promises of hope. Start with Jesus every day by exploring His Word.

Thinking Together

1. Ask an adult how the Bible has changed their lives.
2. Can you find, in the Bible, a prophecy that later came true?

DAY 4

God's Word Is My Guide

"Your word is like a lamp for my feet and a light for my way" (Psalm 119:105, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

When you think of a happy animal, what do you think of? Maybe a sea otter or a dog? Or maybe your very own pet, if you have one! I think of the bottlenose dolphin. I love to watch dolphins swim playfully together. They look like they're always smiling! Did you know that dolphins can swim more than 18 miles (about 29 kilometers) per hour? And they can jump up to 20 feet (six meters) into the air! Dolphins are social animals. You will almost always find them with their friends and family rather than all by themselves. Do you know what a group of dolphins is called? A pod!

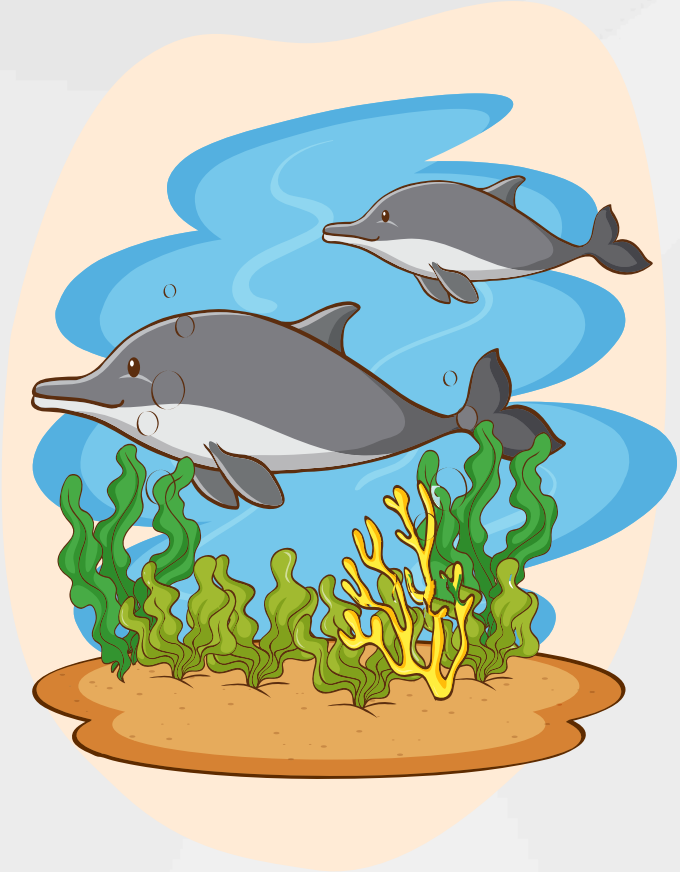
Dolphins have a unique way of talking to each other. They make a whistling sound that is carried through the water to the other dolphins in their pod. Each dolphin has their own unique whistle that all the other dolphins can recognize. They have been shown to have very long memories by being able to recognize the whistle of a dolphin that they haven't heard in up to 20 years!

Dolphins have an amazing system for finding food. It's called echolocation. The dolphin makes a clicking sound, then listens for the echo of their clicks to bounce off nearby fish that they can eat. This system helps them know which direction to swim for their food and how close it is to them. So even when they can't see what they need, they trust the echoes that they hear to help them find their way.

Even though your eyes may work perfectly, and you can see everything around you, it may be hard to know what you should do next or how you should feel. Sometimes we know that we need Jesus, but on our own we aren't sure how to find Him. Whether you are happy or sad,

confident or confused, God's Word, the Bible, is always there to lead you in your next steps! That's why King David described God's Word as a light when he said, "Your word is like a lamp for my feet and a light for my way" (Ps. 119:105, ICB).

Just as God created the dolphins with special ways to find what they need, God has given you His Word to help you find Him! You are a priceless treasure to Him! That's why He was willing to give His Son in your place so that you could be in heaven with Him. So open your Bible and let the light of God's Word direct your path as you walk with Him!



Thinking Together

1. How is echolocation similar to spending time with Jesus in His Word every day?
2. Is it OK for us to skip our daily time with God? Why not?

DAY 5

God's Word Helps Me Grow

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11, NIV).

Bible Treasure

Story

Have you ever wondered how you can grow closer to God? Well, let me tell you a little secret—it's all about His Word! God's Word is like a special seed that, when planted in our hearts, helps us grow in our relationship with Him.

Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart 28 (ICB). This verse reminds you to show kindness and pray for your sibling, even when you're upset. You're able to react differently this time! That's hiding God's Word in your heart! that I might not sin against you" (ICB). Imagine having a treasure chest in your heart (which is really your mind), where you store God's Word. When you hide His Word in your heart, it's like planting seeds of goodness that help you do what is right. We can then live in a way that pleases God.

So how can we hide God's Word in our hearts? Well, it's not like hiding a toy under your bed! Instead it means memorizing verses from the Bible, understanding what they mean, and letting them guide your thoughts and actions.

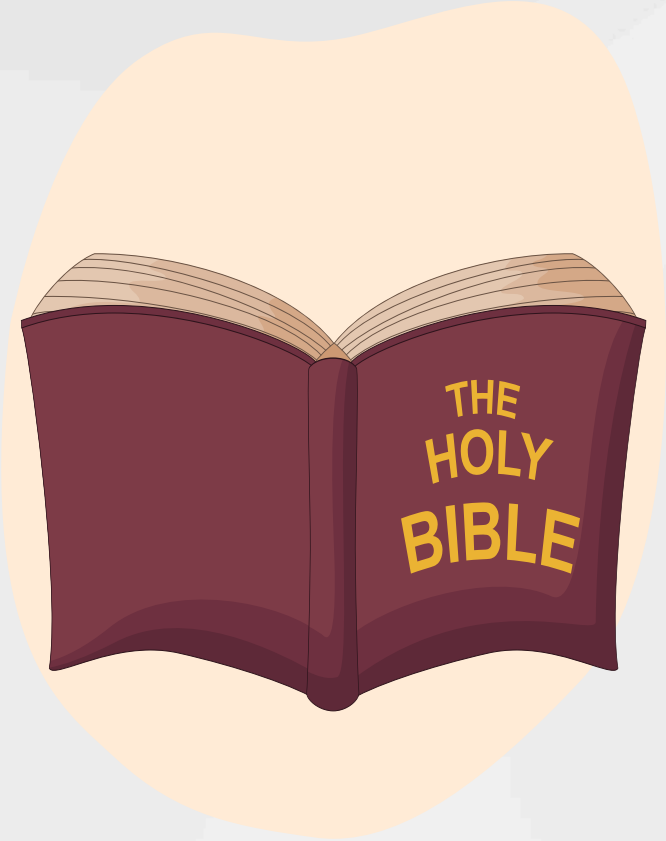
For example, maybe you're feeling really angry with your brother or sister for breaking something that was special to you. Instead of yelling at them or breaking something of theirs, you remember what King David wrote in Psalm 133:1: "It is good and pleasant when God's people live together in peace!"

As you grow older, you'll face different challenges, such as making friends, dealing with difficult situations, or choosing what's right rather than what's easy. God's Word has guidance for every situation! The more you read and learn from it, the more you'll understand

God's love and His plan for you.

Think of your relationship with God the way you'd think of a beautiful garden. Just as plants need water, sunlight, and good soil to grow, you need God's Word to grow spiritually. The more you water your heart with His Word, the more you'll bloom into the amazing person God created you to be!

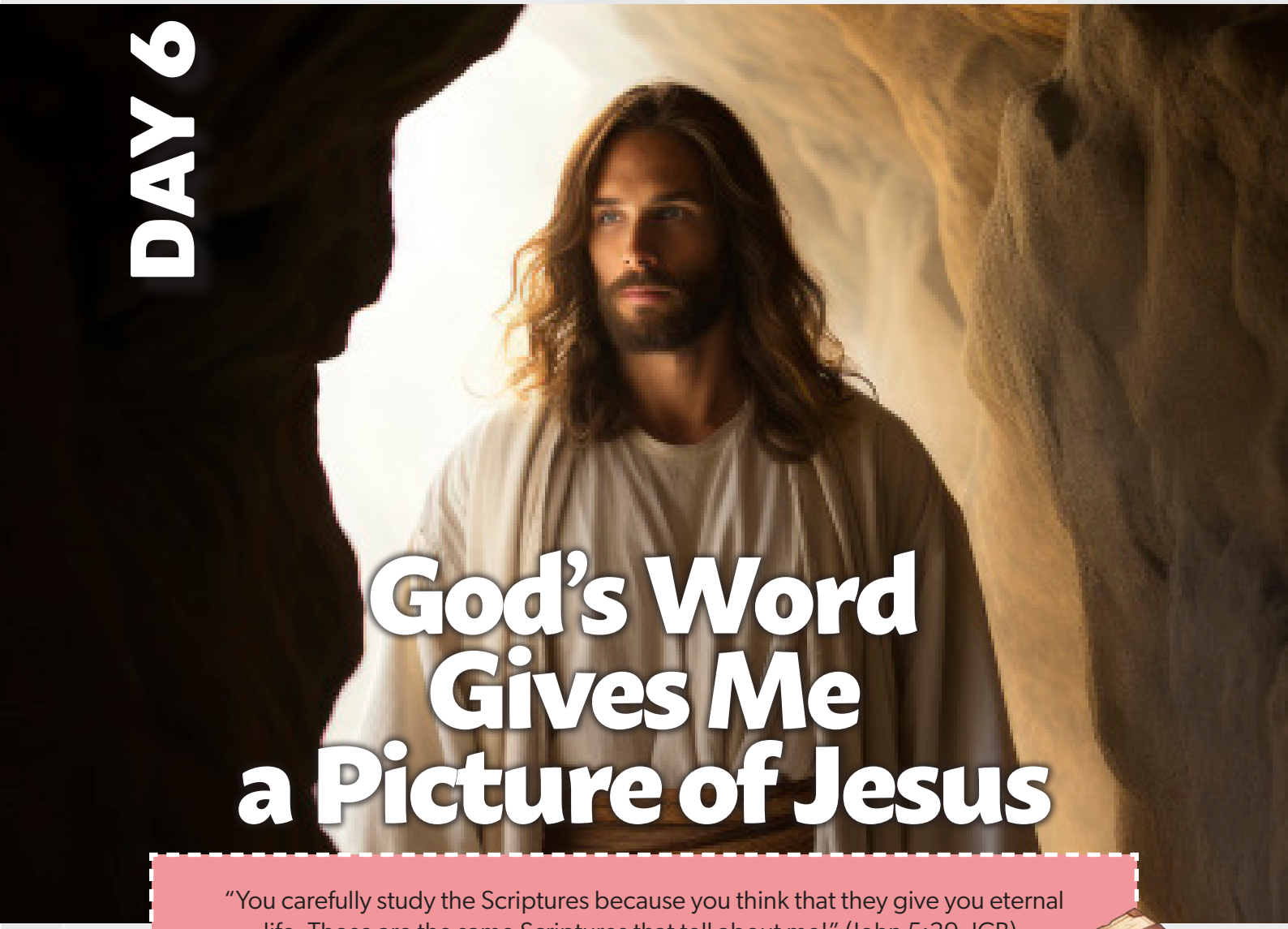
So, my dear friends, let's make a promise together today—to hide God's Word in our hearts, to let it shape our lives, and to grow closer to Him every day. With God's Word as our guide, there's no limit to how much we can grow in His love and grace!



Thinking Together

1. Do you have a special verse you've memorized?
2. It's funny to think of God's Word as a seed that grows. Maybe next time you're near a garden or see a packet of seeds, it will remind you of the Bible!

DAY 6



God's Word Gives Me a Picture of Jesus

"You carefully study the Scriptures because you think that they give you eternal life. Those are the same Scriptures that tell about me!" (John 5:39, ICB).

Bible Treasure

Story

When Jesus lived here on earth, not everybody liked Him, including many of the religious leaders. God's people, the Jews, were privileged to have the Scriptures. They studied it because they looked forward to the special promise of a Savior—someone they thought would save them from the cruel Romans who ruled their land.

Unfortunately, many studied the Scriptures without allowing God to help them understand what they were reading. Many read the Scriptures because they felt they had to, without knowing that it had living power. This blinded them to the truth of how the Savior would come. They missed out on what the prophet Isaiah had written in Isaiah 53 that the Savior would come as a humble person. Many missed out on making Jesus their friend, yet He lived with them every day. They missed out on seeing God's love and character shown through Jesus' life. Jesus came to show us how to obey God and how to love each other no matter how difficult life is.

Just as many in Jesus' time did, it's easy for us to fall into the trap of reading the Bible every day and missing out on making Jesus our friend. The Bible has the power to bring healing to our broken hearts and set us free from our sinful habits. But we can experience this power only when we choose to interact with the Bible for what it truly is, God's living Word.

Growing up, I used to go to church, but never thought that God loved me, because I had gone through some difficult stuff. I thought that God was punishing me. I tried to become a good person by going to church and doing nice

things for others, but my heart did not connect with God or other people around me. One day I read John 3:17, which says, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." This scripture took away the pressure I had put on myself to be a good person. I learned that making Jesus my friend is the only path to peace and living a victorious life.

Jesus wants to be special friends with you so that He can show you the secrets He has for you in His Word and the special work He has for you in this world. Will you invite His Holy Spirit to guide you every time you read the Bible? Will you take time to pause and listen to His voice as He speaks to you? I pray that you'll experience God's inexpressible love and presence as you connect with Jesus through the Bible.

Thinking Together

1. What did God's Word do for Teacher Faith?
2. What have you learned about Jesus by reading His Word?

DAY 7

God's Word Gives Me Peace

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV).

Bible Treasure

Story

What does "peace" mean? Peace comes when everything feels calm, quiet, and happy. It's snuggling up in your favorite blanket, feeling warm and cozy. Peace is not being scared or worried about anything.

Did you know that there's a special place where you can always find peace? It's in God's Word! In John 16:33 it says, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (NIV). This verse is a special message from God, reminding us that even when things get tough, we can find peace in Him.

When I was young, I used to be scared of the dark. I remember being so afraid that I wouldn't even turn my back away from the wall in bed, just in case something spooky happened behind me. The only way I could sleep was with my back against the wall. But even then it would take me a long time to fall asleep. In the morning I'd wake up feeling tired because I hadn't slept well.

My mom noticed I was always tired and asked me why. I told her about my fear of the dark and how I could sleep only with my back against the wall. She gave me a great idea to help me feel better. She said, "Tonight when you go to bed, open your Bible to Psalm 91 and read it out loud. Then leave the Bible open next to your pillow all night." At first I didn't see how that would help me fall asleep. But you know what? The first night was OK. By the second and third nights, I started feeling calmer and more relaxed every time I read Psalm 91 before turning off the lights. It really worked! It gave me peace. And

you know what else? I even learned the whole psalm by heart! Now whenever I feel stressed or worried, I recite Psalm 91, and it helps me feel peaceful again.

How does the Word of God give us peace? It helps us feel better inside, giving us peace in our hearts. It reminds us that we don't need to worry, and encourages us to think positive, happy thoughts. It reminds us that we're never alone. When we follow God's Word and live according to His teachings, we experience a sense of peace in our hearts.

Remember, God's Word is like a precious gift we can turn to whenever we need peace and comfort. The next time you feel worried or troubled, open your Bible, read a verse, and let God's peace fill your heart.

Thinking Together

1. How do you think remembering Jesus' promise of peace can help you feel better during tough or scary times?
2. Can you think of a time reading a Bible story or hearing a Bible verse helped you feel peaceful or brave?

For additional children's resources, you may scan the QR Code provided above.

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