



– FAMILY –
DEVOTIONS
for WORSHIP

BASED ON THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE

Introduction

Picture the scene: A group of first generation, newly freed slaves and their children, no strangers to the promises and power of their God, are finally brought to the brink of entering the long-awaited promised land to live as a free people to declare and display the goodness of God to the nations. This was a promise first made to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), then reaffirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:24) as well as his son, Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15). With divine and patriarchal authority, Moses tells Pharaoh the purpose behind the ten plagues, “to show Gods power, so that His name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (Ex.9:16). At the end of the inaugural Passover celebration, Moses commands the people to “observe this rite at a statute for you and for your sons forever. When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as He has promised, you shall keep this service” (Ex. 12:24-25). This would be a community where the knowledge of God, His power, and His care for them would be the centerpiece of family life.

Knowing he would not lead the people into the Promised Land, Moses later re-iterates God’s purposes for giving them their own land, as well as instructions for how to accomplish that purpose. In Deuteronomy 6, Moses tells the people that the primary strategy for making the name of God famous in the land hinges on one thing. Surely He must be referring to the dynamic leadership of Joshua and Caleb to lead the people well. Or perhaps, as the people waited with bated breath, he would unveil another “Cloud and Fire” manifestation of Gods power. Instead, Moses gives the people the most obvious, and natural way that the name of God would be known, adored, and worshipped in the land:

“This is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:1-9

And that was it. Love God, and teach your children diligently to do the same. The quality of the teaching would be dependent on the way their parents loved God, which kept the whole family in a position of being continual students. Notice the command for parents to teach their children was done both informally (when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise) as well as formally (bind them as a sign, write them on the doorposts). The informal instruction would have taken place naturally throughout the day as parents spent time with their children, and formed the way they viewed the world through the lens of the power and purposes of God the Father. Though no less diligent, this kind of instruction would have been “caught” by the children as well as “taught” by the parents. Formal instruction would have been just that: diligently teaching the children in the home about who God is, what He had done for His people, re-telling the stories of old as well as celebrating what He is currently doing.

Where had they seen this kind of instruction before? Modeled by God their Father, who spoke to Abraham, His son, and his son’s son beforehand. As the parents were to teach their children in a way that invited further instruction to future children, God instituted his plan for parents to diligently teach their children as the means by which He would be known in all the land.

It is to that end this aid to family worship was put together. Many parents feel ill-equipped to train their children at all, much less by having formal family devotions. The good news is the same God who gave you your children is one who calls you qualified. The qualification does not rest on your knowledge of Scripture, but your knowledge of your children. Parents who love the Lord their God will also love their neighbor as themselves. In this instance, those neighbors are in the next room!

I am deeply convinced that God has given mothers and fathers the primary responsibility for teaching, training and shepherding their children. This book is designed to equip you as parents to lead your children in family devotions using the *Jesus Storybook Bible*. This excellent resource written by Sally Lloyd-Jones takes various stories in the Bible, arranged chronologically, and points to how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Through the book, we see Jesus as the promised Rescuer in the Old Testament and as the God who became that in the New. This is a great way to introduce your children to Biblical Theology, and though written for children, has deeply encouraged my wife and I personally.

This study guide is designed for parents of younger children (3-7) with age appropriate questions and craft activities to visually serve the point of the story. Older children are encouraged to participate through helping the younger ones with the craft, which ensures they are hearing and processing the story as well as being taught to care for their siblings.

I pray this tool creates confidence in you as a parent to be able to engage with your children’s hearts for a lifetime.

Using *The Jesus Storybook Bible* for Family Worship

- 1) **Begin in prayer/song.** If you are able to play an instrument, encourage the children to play along with shakers, tambourines, etc... This keeps their attention and helps them learn the songs. If not, just sing together, using the instrument God already gave you! Help your children develop a “prayer language” that encourages them to be comfortable addressing God in prayer. Encourage any small steps on the way there from your kids.
- 2) **Read the Story.** If possible, have the children act it out. Most of the stories recorded in the JSBB work well if acted out. Read the Story with inflection, heart and try to capture the tone of each story for the children. You may want to have a Bible open next to you to remind your kids that these are true stories from the Scriptures.
- 3) **Have the children re-tell the story.** When done reading, ask them to re-tell the story in their own words. As they become accustomed to retelling it immediately, it will help them learn to listen and retain.
- 4) **Ask discussion questions.** Most questions included in this guide can be answered directly from the chapter of the Jesus Storybook Bible just read. For further instruction, the main themes of each Story are included to help you guide the discussion as a parent. Don't be afraid to ask good follow up questions, and allow these discussion questions to open up dialogue with your children.
- 5) **Use the crafts and activities as visual reminders of the story.** You will not be able to do every craft suggestion listed in the devotion. Choose one that sounds like fun with your kids, and have all the necessary materials ready to go. You may even want to get them started on certain crafts before you read the story and ask questions.
- 6) **Close in prayer/song.** Model for your kids that God is worthy of our praise and thanks. Let them hear you talking out loud to God as your heavenly Father.

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Chapter 1: The Story and the Song (pg.12)

Introduction (Psalm 19, Hebrews 1)

THEMES

God communicating with mankind, Knowing God through His creation, The Bible as story and special revelation

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Depending on prior knowledge/age group, you might ask the kids to re-tell what they know of the story.

Is the Bible a book of rules, a book about heroes, or a storybook?

A storybook, a true fairytale

Why is the Bible called “God’s Word”? In what way is it God’s Word?

God speaks to us through the Bible

What is this story about?

Jesus, and His rescue of sinful man

How is God’s creation like a song?

Every inch of His creation reveals something about him. God is revealing himself through the song of creation.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

If this story is “an adventure story about a young hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure”, or “a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne – everything – to rescue the one he loves”, have the kids fill in the blanks about this story. Get them thinking about where this hero came from, why he left everything to go on this mission, where his adventure led, what was his lost treasure, etc... The goal is not theological accuracy at this point, but imaginative storytelling.

Write a worship song with the kids! Use existing music and change the lyrics, or create an entirely new song.

Ask the children to choose 4 or 5 things that best represent them. These could be favorite toys, books, maybe a stuffed animal with special meaning. Have the kids bring them out to show everyone and share why each item is special to them. In advance print out 4 or 5 objects God created, ie; A volcano, a duck-billed platypus, tornadoes, Mount Everest, the Rainforest, or a fruit tree. Ask: If each of these were created by God, and tell us something about Him, what can we learn? Guide the kids towards creativity, majesty, beauty, humor, goodness, provision, etc...

Chapter 2: The Beginning: A Perfect Home (pg.18)

Genesis 1-2

THEMES

Creation, God's power, Perfect life before the fall

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did God create in this story?

Everything

What does he say about his creation?

That it is good.

Why is creation called "good"?

Because God is good, and His creation is an expression of His goodness

What did God want for Adam and Eve?

To be happy with Him, forever.

What does it mean to be created in God's image and likeness?

That we bear a moral and spiritual family likeness to God.

What do we learn about God in this story?

His Word has the power to create, He is loving, good, perfect, creative, eternal

What do you like best about this story?

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Act out the story of creation. Gather the family together in a dark room. When God creates the light, turn on the lights. When God creates the animals, place stuffed animals in a circle. Be creative and remember that acting it out reinforces the story!

As a family, illustrate what it looks like to make something out of nothing. Use a large piece of butcher paper as a blank canvas as create something. It could be a drawing, painting, or get real creative and use glue, macaroni, glitter, popsicle sticks, etc... Allow the kids to fingerpaint while you read the story to them, and guide them in painting what God is speaking into existence.

Chapter 3: The Terrible Lie (pg.28)

Genesis 3

THEMES

Sin, Satan, Trusting God, God initiating redemption

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What kind of a relationship did Adam and Eve have with God? With Each Other?

Complete trust and honesty. Mutual love and respect.

Why did God put a tree with fruit they couldn't eat in the garden? What did He want them to do?

He wanted them to obey him, and to choose to follow His word even when something else looked attractive.

What did God say would happen if they ate fruit from the tree?

They would think they didn't need God. They would start to doubt God. Sadness and death would result.

Who was the snake? How did he get in the garden?

Lucifer (Satan) was cast out of heaven because he wanted to be like God. (See Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:11-19.

How much of the fruit did Eve have to eat to introduce sin into the world?

Just a bite. Even a little disobedience is sin.

Why did Adam and Eve hide from God? Do we do the same thing when we sin?

They were ashamed. We also want to hide when we know we have sinned.

Why did they have to leave the garden?

They could no longer live forever in the garden, like God intended.

Was this the end of the story? Why or why not?

No, God already promised to rescue them from sin (Gen.3:15), and provided clothes for them before they left (Gen.3:21).

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Assign a role or two to each child, and act out the drama of The Fall. Make finger puppets and act out the story.

Coloring sheets are always helpful for younger kids while they listen to the story, or to color right after the story.

Chapter 4: A New Beginning (pg.38)

Genesis 6-9

THEMES

The widespread effects of sin, Noah called God's friend, God promises rescue, Trusting God, The opinion of man vs. God, Obedience, God keeps His promises,

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did God flood the earth to destroy everything? What went wrong with His perfect creation?

Sin had spread from Adam & Eve to all mankind, even to the earth itself. The heart of every human was completely evil.

What is different about Noah?

He is called a friend of God

Even though humans chose sin over God after the flood, how does God feel about us?

Compassionate- He promised not to destroy the world again. Loving- He already had planned to send His Son for the ultimate rescue.

How do you think Noah felt building a large boat in the desert where there had been no rain?

Silly, Self-conscious, but he had to listen to God over people.

What was the meaning of the rainbow?

God always keeps His promises, He always takes care of us, He gives us hope

What do we learn about God from the story of Noah's Ark?

God is powerful, controlling even the rain and animals. God must punish sin. God personally designed the ark and planned Noah's rescue. God gives us chances: He warned Noah what was going to happen, just like Adam & Eve, and Cain. God knows all things, and knew the evil on the earth.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Build an ark using items around the house. Anything from lego bricks to one half of a walnut shell with a toothpick and some paper for a mast can make a boat! Put the ark in the middle of the sink or bathtub, and let the water slowly fill the area. Begin to talk about how Noah felt during the building and flooding time. Did he ever doubt God? Was he scared, even though God had made a promise to keep him safe? Keep the ark in the bathtub for the kids to play with, and remember the story.

Using poster board or butcher paper, have each child draw a large rainbow in different colors. Inside each colored bow of the rainbow, have children think of one of God's promises to write down. Once the rainbow is filled with God's promises, color it in and hang it up! Use it as a reminder that God always keeps His promises.

Chapter 5: A Giant Staircase To Heaven (pg.48)

Genesis 11

THEMES

The desire to be like God, Trying to live apart from God's rule, Man's desire to reach heaven apart from God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did the people build such a large tower?

To make their name great, so others would see them.

Why was God angry with the people?

They were trying to reach heaven without Him, trusting in themselves. They would never be happy or safe apart from His plan.

Why did God confuse their language?

To stop the work, so they would scatter, which was His original command for them.

Where else in the Bible do we see language or speech play a big part?

Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost (The reversal of the this story, where God gives them the ability to understand one another). Revelation 7:9-12 (Representatives of every language worshipping God together in heaven).

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Using blocks or other stackable items, have a contest to see who can build their biggest/tallest tower. Afterward, talk about how we feel better about ourselves when we are "better" than someone else. Where is that seen in the story? Point out that no matter how tall our towers are, we can never reach high enough to get to heaven. As the story points out, heaven comes down to us in the person of Jesus.

As an alternative, have another tower building contest. This time, one person is the builder, the other gives instructions on how and where to put the bricks. The child giving instructions cannot talk, but only use hand motions.

OR: Have each child make up their own silly language and try to communicate to others how to build a tower. Get them to see how difficult and frustrating it would be to not understand each other.

Chapter 6: Son of Laughter (pg.56)
Genesis 12-21

THEMES

Family, Rescue, Trusting God, Faith & Unbelief

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What kind of a relationship did Abraham have with God?

One of love, trust, regular communication

Why would God ask Abraham how many stars are in the sky?

To impress on Abraham the vastness of God's redemptive plan, to show that God's ways are higher than our ways, to show His power

What did God promise to Abraham?

To give him a large family (become the father of many nations), To bless and protect him, and to rescue the world through one of his children.

What was God's Secret Rescue Plan?

To send a person to earth (Jesus) who would bring people back to God

How would the birth of Jesus be like the birth of Isaac?

Only God could have done it through miraculous circumstances, both were promised children.

Have you ever had a hard time believing God?

That's why Sarah laughed, because she only believed what she could understand.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

If possible, plan to look out at the night sky and try to count to the stars. Read Psalm 8 and talk about how the glory of God is seen in creation. Ask them to imagine how Abraham felt looking up at the stars, talking to their Creator.

For really imaginative kids who like to play pretend, have one toy/stuffed animal take another one prisoner. With your kids, carefully plan out a Secret Rescue Plan that involved traveling to different parts of the house, etc... Explain how we were help prisoners by sin(Rom. 6:6), but God had planned to rescue us through Jesus from the beginning(Gen 3:15).

Chapter 7: The Present (pg.62)

Genesis 22

THEMES

Trusting God, God's Provision, Obedience

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does it mean to trust God?

To believe in His goodness and authority, and to obey.

How did God ask Abraham to trust Him?

By sacrificing Isaac, his son.

Why would trusting God have been very hard for Abraham this time?

He had lived his entire life without children before Isaac, who was a gift from God. God now wanted Abraham to offer up the thing that mattered most to him.

What do we learn about Isaac in this story?

He trusted his father the way his father trusted God.

What were sacrifices in the OT?

Animals that were killed to show worship and trust in God. A present that people gave to God to say "I love you" (pg. 62).

What is Jesus called at the end of this story?

The Lamb of God

How is Jesus a sacrifice?

God's rescue plan required a sacrifice, this time as a gift God would give to people to say "I love you". God would offer the thing that mattered most to Him.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

This is an intense story for younger kids to act out. Instead, begin by asking each child to think of something they have that matters the most to them (toy, stuffed animal, etc...) and to bring it out. Discuss its significance, why it is so special and appreciated. Talk about how Abraham was used to giving God gifts to show his love. What kind of gift could we possibly give God? Ask the kids to draw a picture of the gift they would give God.

You can always use cardboard or heavy stock paper to draw: a knife, an altar, wood, and a ram. If possible, collect small twigs outside for wood, build an altar big enough to hold the wood, glue cotton balls to the ram cutout, or use a stuffed animal. Have the kids color in each item and use them during the story.

Chapter 8: The Girl No One Wanted (pg. 70)
Genesis 29-30

THEMES

Beauty, God's love, Acceptance, Favoritism

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Who was Jacob?

Isaac's son.

Why was Leah so sad?

She felt unnoticed, unloved and unwanted.

What was Leah's baby's name? Why is he important?

Judah, who would become part of the lineage of Jesus.

Do we have to be beautiful for God to love us?

No, God loves us just as we are.

How did Jesus show love to unlovely people?

By living a perfect life for sinners. By dying on the cross and serving people who hated God.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Draw a family tree from Abraham to Jacob, and list the sons he had with Rachel and Leah. This will help the children place Patriarchal names and relationships in the right order.

Help the children pick out 10 different toys, ranging from whatever is newest, or most popular in the house at that time to old, ratty toys they don't play with anymore. Ask them to choose five toys that they enjoy playing with the most. Ask them to tell you why they chose those toys. Next, talk about how God chooses the least of us (the old, worn toys) and gives us value. Encourage the children to remember that every single person has value to God when they deal with their friends and family.

Chapter 9: The Forgiving Prince (pg. 76)
Genesis 37-46

THEMES

Favoritism, Sacrifice, God's Control of bad situations, Forgiveness, Sovereignty of God

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where else did we see Jacob showing favoritism?

To Rachel over Leah.

How do you think Joseph felt after his brothers sold him to slave traders, and he ended up in prison?

Sad, Unwanted, Forgotten by God

Why were Joseph's brothers scared when they traveled to Egypt and saw him again?

They thought he would have them killed.

How is Joseph a picture of Jesus?

He would leave His home, be sold for pieces of silver, punished for something He didn't do and forgive the people who killed Him.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Ask the children if there is anyone in their lives who has treated them badly. How could they imitate Joseph and Jesus by forgiving those who hurt them? What would that look like? If appropriate, help the children make a card for that person, color them a picture, etc...

As a family, remember some of the bad things that have happened, and guide the children towards remembering the good that came out of those situations. Talk about the sovereignty of God over all things.

Cut strips of different colored cardboard paper to create a coat of many colors. Give each child a different color, and ask them to draw something about Joseph's life on it. After they have drawn different scenes (Joseph receiving the coat, in the pit, being imprisoned, head of Egypt, etc..) have the children put them in the correct order. Tape each strip from the back and ask them how Joseph probably felt at each point in his life.

Chapter 10: God To The Rescue! (pg. 84)
Exodus 3-13 (Moses and the Exodus)

THEMES

God's Concern for people, God's power, Corrupt Rulers, God calls Moses, Sacrifice, Fear of Man

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How did God's people become slaves in Egypt?

A new king began to rule who didn't know Joseph and was scared of God's people.

What does God tell Moses in this part of the Story?

I have heard my people's cries and seen their tears, so I have come to rescue them.

What does that tell us about God?

He is a Savior, a Rescuer. He pursues His people.

Why was Moses afraid of Pharaoh? Why did he not need to be?

Moses thought Pharaoh would kill him. He didn't need to be afraid because God was going to be with Him.

Why did the people need to kill the best lamb?

God would see the blood and know that the lamb died instead of the people.

Why is Jesus called "The Lamb of God"?

Just like the Passover lamb, he was going to die for the people.

What did God's people call this Rescue Mission?

Passover

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

This part of the story is very visual for kids. If you have a plastic lamb toy in the house, take it, pour ketchup on it and pretend to sacrifice it. God wanted His people to see how bloody it is for a lamb to die in our place, allow your kids to grasp how messy redemption is.

Take the kids for a long "exodus" walk. After telling the story, tell them to get ready to go quickly, then head out. As you are walking, ask the kids questions: What do you think the Israelites thought of as they had to leave quickly? What kind of possessions that they left behind do you think they missed? How would we feel if someone was following us right now? Imagine leaving your home and not ever returning. Where would they have gone? The goal is to get the kids imagination going with this story.

Chapter 11: God Makes A Way (pg. 92)

Exodus 14-15 (Moses and the Red Sea)

THEMES

God's Concern for people, God's power, God makes a way where there is no way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What do you think the Israelites were the most excited about the new home God was going to give them?

Freedom. No foreign rulers. Able to worship God alone.

Why did God send them a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night?

To cool their path during the day and keep them warm at night. As a visible sign of His presence. Also to hide them from their enemies.

What would you have done if you were Moses?

Where else in the Bible does God make a way where there is no way?

Jesus is the Way, but also Abraham, Sarah & the birth of Isaac, Daniel in the lions den, Joshua's army and Jericho, David & Goliath, etc...

What does that tell us about God?

God allows us to be in situations where He is our only hope. God wants us to trust in Him.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Give children a pair of scissors and have them cut a large cloud shape out of construction paper. Have the children color one side of the construction paper with red, yellow and orange crayons to look like a pillar of fire. Have the children tape a popsicle stick to the middle of the back of the cloud to be a handle. Have the children glue cotton balls on the back side to form the cloud.

Show your children this scene from "The Prince of Egypt": <http://bit.ly/13sJwAN>

Ask them what they might have thought if they were part of Pharaoh's army watching this happen. How about someone following Moses?

Chapter 12: Ten Ways To Be Perfect (pg. 100)
Exodus 16-17, 19-40 (Moses and the Ten Commandments)

THEMES

The Purpose of the Law, Love God First, Complaining, Trusting God

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is the longest you've ever walked? How did you feel? How long were God's people walking for?

40 years.

What had the people just seen God do?

Give them a cloud by day to cool them and fire by night to warm them, part the Red Sea, deliver them from their enemies, set them free.

How did God provide for them in the desert?

He made it rain food! Bread from heaven, water from a rock.

Why weren't the people happy then?

They didn't trust God or obey him.

Why did God bring his people to them mountain to talk to Moses?

He wanted to help them know him better, tell them about the Promised Land and how He wanted them to live so that everyone around them would know Him too.

What is the first, most important commandment?

To love God more than anything else. The very thing that was causing all their complaining in the desert.

Were the people able to keep the rules? Why?

No, they weren't. It wasn't because they didn't try hard enough, it was because it was impossible for them to keep all of them perfectly.

Why would God ask His people to follow rules they couldn't keep?

In order to show them their need for a savior, Someone who would keep all the rules.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Guide children through the Ten Commandments, asking them when they failed to keep them. Help them to see loving toys or objects more than God and others is idolatry, or “having other gods”. Explain the word ‘covet’ in language they can understand, using examples of toys in the mall, something a friend has that they now “*need*” to have. Talk about Jesus as the One who kept all these commands perfectly for us.

For multiple children: After you have reviewed the Ten Commandments, have the family sit in a circle to play a game of Hot Potato. Pass a block, potato or toy around the circle while singing a song or playing music in the background. When the music stops, the person who has the potato in his hands must say one of the commandments. If he can't do so, then that person is out of the game. Keep going until all of the commandments have been said, or there is only one person left in the game.

Chapter 13: The Warrior Leader (pg. 108)
Joshua 3 and 6 (Joshua and the Battle of Jericho)

THEMES

Trust, Obedience, Faith

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did God promise His people?

He would always be with them and never leave them. If they did what He said, their lives in the new land would be happy and everything would go well.

Why couldn't the people just enter the Promised Land?

They had to get through Jericho, the fortress-city.

What did God ask Joshua to do?

March around the city, then make as much noise as they could.

What did Joshua tell the people to remember before they entered their new home?

Only God could make them happy, so don't worship pretend gods.

Were the people able to keep their promise?

No, they weren't.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

This is an easy and fun story to act out. While you are reading the chapter, have the kids color and decorate cardboard paper. Have them roll them into a trumpet shape and tape or staple the sides. Build a model of Jericho using books, cardboard bricks, Lincoln Logs or Tinkertoys. Have the children march around it 7 times, then blow their trumpets as you knock Jericho down.

Play a game of "Simon Says" with your children, asking them to do increasingly bizarre things. How does this game relate to the story we just read? Talk about how our lives are like one big game of "God Says", learning to do all that He commands.

Using large and small marshmallows, peanut butter and/or icing and toothpicks, let the kids build walls of different sizes, using the peanut butter or icing for cement and toothpicks to hold it together. Then tear it down by eating it!

Chapter 14: The Teeny, Weenie... True King (pg. 116)
1 Samuel 16 (Samuel Anoints David)

THEMES

The Lordship of Christ, God our King, Judging people based on what they look like,
Listening to the Spirit

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After taking over the land, God's people wanted a king. Why?
To be like the nations around them, to have a king they could see.

Why wasn't Saul a good king?
He became proud and stopped listening to God, obeying God and loving God.

Why did God choose David as the new king?
He had a heart like God's, full of love.

Does God choose people to serve him because of what they look like?
No, God looks at the inside to see if we love Him.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Have the children make crowns using cardboard paper. Talk about what it means to be a king, and what God says makes a good king.

Tell the children to pretend that they must choose a king to lead all of God's people. Beforehand, print out different pictures for them to choose from: A strong, Bodybuilder, a small child, a Roman Soldier, a king fully dressed sitting on a big throne, a firefighter, a schoolteacher, etc... Ask: Who looks like they would make a good king? Why? Is Jesus our King? What did he look like when he came? *A baby.*

Chapter 15: The Young Hero and the Horrible Giant (pg. 122)
1 Samuel 17 (David and Goliath)

THEMES

Faith, Jesus as the Hero, Trust in God's Power, Courage

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Who was Goliath actually fighting by challenging the Israelites?

God

Why did David, a young boy, think he could defeat Goliath, a seasoned soldier?

David knew it was God's battle and He would help.

Who is the other Hero spoken of at the end of this story? Who would He fight?

Jesus, the Hero who would fight sin and Satan.

If David is a picture of Jesus, who are we in the story?

The soldiers of the army, afraid of Goliath (sin) until he was defeated. If Jesus can defeat the biggest giant, then we can face our smaller ones.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

This is another fun story to act out. Have the kids re-tell the story

Go for a walk, looking for smooth stones, like the ones David found. Have the kids identify their fears, and write them (if possible) with paint or marker on the smooth stones. Have them keep the stones as a reminder that Jesus is the one who goes to battle against our fears and enemies.

Chapter 16: The Good Shepherd (pg. 130)
Psalm 51, 2 Samuel 7, Paraphrase of Psalm 23 (David the Shepherd King)

THEMES

Redemption, Grace, God's Guidance, Protection, Rescue and Love

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is a Psalm?

A song in the Bible to help people pray, trust, and worship God

What is a Shepherd?

Someone who cares for, leads, protects and helps sheep

Do you think David's job as a shepherd helped him when he became a king? How?

He knew what it looked like to care for sheep. God's people are called the sheep of His pasture. David learned how to care for, lead and protect people in the same way he did for his sheep.

Why does Jesus call Himself the "Good Shepherd"(John 10:11)?

He was the ultimate Shepherd who came to care for, lead, protect, help, and save us. Jesus was everything that David could never be, because Jesus is God.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Read John 10:1-18. Have the kids act out what Jesus is talking about in this passage.

Some ideas: Create two doorways, one that is wide and unguarded another that is narrow with a shepherd standing in front of it (v.1-3, 7). In the wide door, place scary looking traps inside to represent danger. In the narrow door, place good food and fun toys to represent a 'pasture'(v.9). Talk to the kids about how the wide door initially looks good, but inside is death. The narrow door looks hard to get in, but inside is life. Have the child that is playing the shepherd call out to the sheep (v.3-5). How do we, as sheep, know God's voice? If there are several children participating, have one go in the wide door and another child pretend to be a wolf (v.11-13), attacking the other (gently and playfully, especially if you have boys!) Another child pretends to be Jesus, laying down his life for the sheep being attacked(v.11) He then leads the sheep to good pasture. How did Jesus lay his life down for us (v.16-18)?

Find/Create the tools of the shepherd from Psalm 23. You will need someone to be a Shepherd who will call the others to good pasture (food). He will help them to lie down and rest, standing over them to protect them. You will need a rod (a weapon, like a sword or a stick). The shepherd will use the rod to drive away dangerous animals (stuffed, or children acting like animals – have fun with this!). You will need a staff, which was used to guide sheep, gently helping them find their way. You will need a table, filled with all the good things from the first exercise. This table can be placed inside of a makeshift tent (created using chairs and blankets) to represent dwelling in the house of the Lord.

Connect these things to Jesus as the Good Shepherd by asking: How does Jesus call us to better pasture? *Through His written Word, The Bible and His Spirit.* How does he give His people rest? *We have nothing to fear because of his love for us, and power to protect us. Through the cross, we can rest in His finished work.* How is His rod a comfort to us? *We know He is able to protect us from danger.* How does Jesus use His staff to guide us? *Through His Holy Spirit, sent to teach us (Jn. 14:26), guide us into truth (Jn. 16:13).* Talk to the children about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, especially what it means to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-24, Rom. 8:1-11).

For younger kids, a craft is an easy way to describe the relationship we are to have to Jesus as our shepherd. Draw an outline of a sheep, and have the kids glue cotton balls on the sheep. Print out a coloring picture of a shepherd from the internet, and ask the kids why the sheep can be happy when their shepherd is near.

Chapter 17: A Little Servant Girl and the Proud General (pg. 136)
2 Kings 5 (The little slave girl and Naaman)

THEMES

Our inability to save ourselves, Forgiveness, Revenge, Loving our enemies, Pride

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What disease did Naaman have?

Leprosy, a non-curable disease that stops us from feeling in our bodies.

How is sin like leprosy?

We can't cure our own sin, it stops our hearts from working properly and stops us from feeling anything, it will kill us.

How is the slave girl a picture of Jesus?

She forgave her enemy and wanted to see him healed. She knew where he could go for help.

Why was Naaman upset when He came to Israel to visit Elisha?

He was offended, because he was proud. He thought he had to do something to earn his healing. Elisha never came out to meet him and treat him like an important man. He didn't like Elisha's way of healing him, because it didn't make sense to him.

Where else in the Bible do we see water being used to clean people's sin?

The Bronze Basin in the Tabernacle/Temple in Ex. 30:17-21, God using water to cleanse us in Ez. 36:25 / Heb. 10:22, Jesus giving us Living Water in Jn. 4:14, 7:38-39, Blood and Water from the side of Jesus in John 19:34, fulfilling prophecy of Zech 13:1.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

As you give the kids a bath that night, help them to remember that while water cleans our bodies, it is a symbol of how God cleans our sin (Isa. 1:18). Water is a constant reminder of our need for Jesus to be the one who cleans us from the inside out.

Have kids color a Styrofoam cup blue to represent water. Parent writes "Naaman obeyed God and was healed" around the rim. Cut out one stick figure on cardboard paper. Have the children draw dots and a frown face on one side, and a clean one with a smiley face on the other. Attach to a popsicle stick with tape or glue. Using the bottom of the popsicle stick, poke a hole in the bottom of the cup. When you get to the part where Naaman goes into the river to be healed, have the kids make their Naaman cutout with the leprosy go up and down in the water 7 times, then turn the cup to show the clean Naaman. Talk about how our sin is cleansed by Jesus.

Have a discussion about the last time one of your children was hurt by the words or actions of another (possibly a friend or sibling). Like the little slave girl who forgave and helped Naaman, and like Jesus who forgave and saved His enemies, how can we forgive and help others who have hurt us? Guide the children towards heart change to the person that hurt them. We are all sinners who need Jesus, and God calls us to forgive others the way God in Christ forgave us. Is there something we can do to show the person who hurt us forgiveness? A card or letter, or an act of service? Model praying for those who hurt us to your children.

Chapter 18: Operation “No More Tears!” (pg. 144)
Isaiah 9, 11, 40, 50, 53, 55, 60 (The Rescuer Will Come)

THEMES

Rescue, Virgin Birth, Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, An unexpected Hero

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does Isaiah’s name mean?

God to the Rescue

Who was Isaiah, and what did he do?

A prophet, whose job was to listen to God and tell people what he heard.

Why was God going to rescue us?

We were like sheep that wandered away from him, and were lost. We were walking in darkness.

What was God’s plan to rescue us?

He would send a Shepherd to carry us home. This Shepherd would come from King David’s family, born as a baby. He will be a King without a palace, a Servant, a Hero to fight for his people and rescue them. He will live a perfect life, but be hated by some and must suffer and die. God will raise Him from the dead, and one day, He will rule forever.

Did the people listen to Isaiah and his good news?

No, they didn’t believe him. Sin had caused their hearts to stop responding to God properly.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Talk about how Isaiah wrote down the messages that God gave him for the people. If God were going to write a letter to your family, what would he say? Have the kids who can write, create a letter to your family from God. Allow everyone to give input on what he would say. Guide children towards passages like Ephesians 5-6, Deut 6:7-9, Matt 22:34-40, etc.. Emphasize that God would not stress what we must do, but who we are in Him first, then how we express that towards others in obedience, service, caring, love, etc...

Using the description of this Rescuer from page 148, have the kids draw what the people might have expected him to look like. Talk about how he looked nothing like what they hoped.

Chapter 19: Daniel and the Scary Sleepover (pg. 152)
Daniel 6 (Daniel and the Lions Den)

THEMES

The Exile, Prayer, Faith, Doing the right thing under hard circumstances, Obeying God over man, God's authority

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What happened to God's people for not listening to Isaiah's message?

They were taken from their land, and had become slaves (again).

What made the Babylonian King notice Daniel?

God gave Daniel wisdom to interpret dreams ("understand lots of difficult things")

Why did the king's other helpers not like Daniel?

Pride. They wanted the king to like them best.

How did God save Daniel from the lions?

He sent an angel to close the lions' mouths.

What was the king's response to God saving Daniel?

He made a new law that people should pray to the God that saved Daniel.

How is Jesus like Daniel?

He was a brave hero, who loved God and would do whatever God said, even if it meant he would die.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Make lions for the kids to act out the story, and keep as a reminder that obeying God is always the right thing to do. Draw a lion's face in the middle of a paper plate. If you need help, search online for a lion kids craft and print out a template. Even better, have the kids draw their own lion's faces. Cut out holes for the eyes, and glue a popsicle stick or tongue depressor to the back as a handle. Let the kids glue on pre-cut pieces of yellow or orange yarn for a mane. As you tell the story have them pretend to be lions. Ask them how they think Daniel would have felt. Help them to understand both fear and faith.

Using the lion masks you just created, play a game of 'Daniel Says'. Choose a child to play Daniel, and place the other children with lions masks around him. Whenever the child chosen as Daniel gives the command, "Daniel Says" followed by an action, the lions must obey and do whatever Daniel tells them to do. If one of the lions perform an action that was not preceded by the words, "Daniel Says," then they are out of the game. The last child standing in the game gets to play the role of Daniel the next time around. Talk about God's power and authority to command even the animals.

To play this game, first designate a counting area and a strong tower. While standing on the counting area, Daniel must count while the Lions go and hide. After Daniel finishes counting, his goal is to get from the counting base to the safety base, without being attacked by the lions, who have come out of their hiding places. If one of the lions successfully tags Daniel on his way to the safety base, that person gets to play the role of Daniel the next time around. Talk about how God is called our strong tower (Ps. 61:3), and what it looks like to run to Him.

Chapter 20: God's Messenger (pg. 160)
Jonah 1-4; Hebrews 1:1-2 (Jonah and the Big Fish)

THEMES

Obedience/Disobedience and the consequences of it, Compassion, Forgiveness

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What was the job of a prophet?

To listen to God and tell the people what God said.

What did God ask Jonah to do?

Go to Nineveh and tell them to repent and receive the forgiveness of God.

Why did Jonah not obey God right away?

They were bad people, and he thought didn't deserve another chance.

Did Jonah deserve to be saved after disobeying God?

No, but God forgave Him, just like the Ninevites.

How is Jesus like Jonah?

He was God's messenger, with the same message of forgiveness. Like Jonah, Jesus would spend three days in darkness, but rise again.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Clean out an old plastic gallon milk jug. Turn the jug onto its side so that the handle is at the top. With the marker, draw a mouth shape on the bottom, extending partway up the sides. Cut along the lines with scissors, creating mouth that's able to scoop things up. Using a permanent marker, outline the edge of the mouth and add eyes and a blowhole. This big fish craft can be used to act out the story of Jonah during bathtime!

Take an 8.5x14 piece of paper (or two taped together) and make a dotted line to break it up into several different sections (depending on how much your kids can handle). Create a fold up book of Jonah by having the kids re-tell the story of Jonah in pictures, by drawing in different sections. It should minimally include, God giving Jonah the message to go to Nineveh, Jonah going the other way, Jonah being swallowed by the big fish, Jonah being spit out, and Jonah preaching to the Ninevites.

Like most of these stories, this is an easy and fun one to act out. Create the inside of a big fish by using a tent or fort decorated like a fish if you have the materials. Help the kids understand more fully what God's message to the Ninevites was, then go and tell it!

Chapter 21: Get Ready! (pg. 170)
Nehemiah 8-10, Malachi 1, 3 and 4, Ezra 7 (God's people return from being slaves)

THEMES

The Law vs. Grace, The purpose of the law, God's rescue through Jesus, God wants his people to be happy (Neh. 8:10-12)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What happened when God's people returned from exile (slavery)?

They forgot how God wanted them to live, who He created them to be.

What did Ezra and Nehemiah do to help them?

They read the commandments God had given Moses. When the people saw they couldn't obey the law, they reminded them what God had done for the nation of Israel from the time of Abraham on.

What did God do to help them?

He told them He was getting ready to send The Rescuer of His people...soon.

Was God going to punish his people?

No, he was coming to rescue them.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Create a list of the kids chores. Have them write down everything that they are expected to do. The longer the list, the better. Talk about how the law is like the chore list. To show the kids what the ministry of Jesus was like in regards to the Law, allow them to watch you do their chores for them the first time. This is what Jesus meant when He said he came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17). Explain to the kids that Jesus perfectly did everything God asked, for us. The next day, help them find creative ways to do their chores. This is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit; He empowered His people through His Spirit to accomplish His works (Jn 14:15-31). Jesus calls the Holy Spirit "The Helper" for that reason.

For an additional craft for the above activity, make a scroll to write the kids chores on, to remind them that Ezra read from the Book of the Law. Give each child a piece of white construction paper. With a marker, tell them to write down their chores, then have them rip the edges of the paper and crumple it to make it look old. To make it look like parchment, have them paint the paper with brown watercolor, diluting it with a lot of water so they can still read what was written. When the papers are dry, roll both edges around a pencil so they curl inward. Roll the two edges inward until they meet and tie a piece of twine or brown yarn around the scroll.

Play a game of Bible Memory, using index cards created by the kids. Take 12 index cards, and write (or draw) six important commandments from God on each card, then create duplicates. Put the cards facedown on the table and have the kids play a game of Memory. Talk about how the Israelites had forgotten God's commandments during their time in exile. Ezra reminded them what God had said by reading from the Book of the Law.

Chapter 22: He's Here! (pg. 176)
Luke 1-2 (The Nativity)

THEMES

The birth of Christ, Faith, Obedience, Reversal of human values

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you were a Jewish boy or girl living during this time, what would you have expected the Rescuer to look like?

A king with an army, someone strong, a powerful adult.

Why did Mary believe the words of the angel Gabriel?

She trusted God more than her eyes could see.

What does the name Jesus mean? Why is that important?

Jesus means 'God with us', or 'God has come to live with us'. His name tells us about who He is (God) and where He was from (heaven).

Do you think other people would believe Mary and Joseph that the Promised Rescuer had come as a baby?

Most people probably wouldn't.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Family Life has an interactive nativity where kids open seven small gift boxes (similar to Resurrection Eggs) with the last box containing a mirror to explain the Christmas story as well as what God wants for Christmas – us! This is a great way to create a Christmas tradition with younger kids that gets them reading about the Nativity while having something to do with their hands. Every box has a figure of someone important in the story that they can arrange in a little nativity scene. You can find the set, called “What God Wants For Christmas” on the Family Life website:

<http://www.shopfamilylife.com/what-god-wants-for-christmas.html>

Have the kids make their own manger to remind them of where the King of the Nations was born. Using a juice box, milk carton or other rectangular box, cut out the top portion to make a feeding trough. If possible, find sticks and ‘straw’ outside to fill the inside. Easter grass also works well. Have them draw the Nativity Story on construction paper, and tape it around the sides of the manger.

To help the kids understand how God’s people might have seen this event, tell them at the beginning of family devotions that you have a surprise for them...but it’s not here yet. Keep building up the surprise during the devotion, telling them how much they’re going to love it, how great it is, etc... Then towards the end, bring in a plate of cookies and juice. Ask them how they felt as they waited? Was it easy or hard to wait for it? What did you think it was going to be? Were you disappointed with it? Why?

Chapter 23: The Light of the Whole World (pg. 184)

Luke 2 (The Story of the Shepherds)

THEMES

Light and darkness, Jesus the Messiah, God as Shepherd

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did God cause one star to shine brighter over Jesus?

To be a spotlight, showing people the way to Him. Jesus, the light of the world, had a star driving the darkness away.

Why would God announce the message to Shepherds first?

God isn't impressed with outward appearances. God was shepherding His people back to Him through Jesus. Shepherds would have understood what Jesus meant years later when He called Himself "The Good Shepherd".

What was the angel's message?

Good news! God's Son, The Rescuer had been born.

Why is Jesus called 'The Light of the World'?

Like the star, He would point people to God. He would chase away darkness and help people to see.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Make a Jesus is the Light of the World candle. Take an empty roll of toilet paper, and cover the outside with white construction paper. Have kids color the outside and write on the top "Jesus is Light of the World". Then color or cut out a red or orange piece of construction paper to serve as a candle light for the top, have the kids glue or tape it on top.

Make a light switch cover so the kids can remember that Jesus is the Light of the World every time they walk in their room. Get measurements of a single switch light cover in the kids room, then cut those dimensions out of thicker construction paper. Draw a rectangle in the center for where you will need to cut for the light switch, then have the children decorate around it. Write John 8:12 on it someone as a Bible reference to the truth of Jesus as the Light. This craft could also be done purchasing new light switch covers and painting the outside of them as well.

If you already have plastic glow in the dark stars, choose several smaller ones and one large one to stick on the ceiling. Hold them up to the light before the story so they will glow brightly, and have the kids in a dark room with just the bright stars on the ceiling. If you live somewhere where stars can be seen outside brightly, tell the story outside while the children look up at the stars.

Chapter 24: The King of All Kings (pg. 192)
Matthew 2 (The Story of the Three Wise Men)

THEMES

Worship, Generosity, Service, Jesus as King of Kings, Fulfilled prophecy

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did the wise men travel to Jerusalem first?

They expected a baby this important to be born in a palace in the city.

Why was Herod upset when he heard that a king had been born?

He didn't want anyone else to be king but him.

What was the wise men's response when they met Jesus?

Joy and Worship. They gave him gifts.

How is this story a fulfillment of Psalm 72:11?

Foreign kings from all nations were bowing before him as the King of Kings!

The wise men brought gifts to Jesus to worship Him. How can we give gifts as a way of worshipping Jesus?

By blessing people with unexpected gifts to say we love them. By sharing with others in need, and inviting those less fortunate into our celebrations. When we give with a generous heart, it is a way of worshipping Jesus.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Help the kids create crowns and trunks of gifts to act out the story. Take a paper plate, facing down and the table, and cut upside down V shapes in the top all away around about 1 inch from the edge of the plate. The plate should fit comfortable on top of the child's head with the top cut out, like a crown. Have the kids decorate their crowns. Create treasure boxes using milk cartons or juice boxes with three straight lines cut into the top to form a lid. Print out pictures of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the kids to get a picture of what these gifts looked like. Tape the pictures inside of the treasure box.

On a piece of construction paper or butcher paper, have the kids make a list of all the ways we could be generous to others as a way of worshipping Jesus like the wise men. Guide them towards tithing to the church, cleaning out their toy box to give to a rescue shelter, giving our time to serve the church wherever it is needed, etc...

Make a star using popsicle sticks to remind them of the star that led the wise men to Jesus. You'll need ten popsicle sticks for each star. Line them up in the shape of a star, and glue the tips together. Attach fishing line to the top of the star to hang. Try coloring the star with glow in the dark paint and hang it in the kids room.

Chapter 25: Heaven Breaks Through (pg. 200)
Matthew 3, Luke 1, 3, John 1 (The Story of John the Baptist)

THEMES

Baptism, Evangelism, Obedience, Repentance, The Holy Spirit

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What was the job God had for John?

To tell people about Jesus, and prepare them for his ministry.

How does John see Jesus in his song?

As a light shining in darkness.

What did John do to prepare people for Jesus?

He told them that the Rescuer was coming, and baptized them.

Why did the people get baptized by John?

To show they wanted to follow God and begin a new life.

Why did John baptize Jesus?

God asked him to, out of obedience.

What was different about Jesus baptism?

God the Father spoke from heaven, affirming God the Son being baptized, with God the Holy Spirit coming down like a dove.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Prepare snacks beforehand for kids to eat when they learn of John's diet. Use crescent roll dough and shape them into bugs. Use raisins or M&M's for eyes, pretzel sticks or string licorice for antennae. Serve with honey.

Create a dove as an opportunity to talk about the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life. On cardboard paper, trace the outline of a dove (you can find templates online). Each child should have a bird to color, decorate, and cut out. Decorate with yarn for feathers, glue googly eyes on the sides, and glue or clip a clothespin on the back of the dove.

Adapt the craft from Naaman: 'A little servant girl and the proud general'. Have kids color a Styrofoam cup blue to represent water. Parent writes "John baptizes Jesus" around the rim. Print a small dove figure out and glue a popsicle stick on it. Cut out two figures for John and Jesus on cardboard paper. Glue John and Jesus on an upside down large foam cup. Using the bottom of the popsicle stick, poke a hole in the top of the cup. As Jesus is baptized, show the dove descending and have a child repeat what God says "This is my son, and I am very pleased with Him. Listen to Him". Talk about the role of God the Father, Son and Spirit in the life of Jesus.

Chapter 26: Let's Go! (pg. 208)

Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 4-6 (Jesus is tempted in the desert and chooses His helpers)

THEMES

Baptism, Evangelism, Obedience, Repentance, The Holy Spirit, Temptation, Following Jesus

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did God lead Jesus to the desert?

Jesus needed a quiet place to pray to God and prepare for his new life.

What happened to Jesus in the desert?

The old enemy, Satan, the serpent from the garden came to test Jesus.

What did Jesus do that Adam did not?

He remained obedient to God, withstanding temptation.

What kind of people did Jesus choose to help Him with the Rescue Mission?

Ordinary people, like fishermen, who needed Gods help.

What kind of helpers is Jesus looking for now to help with his Rescue Mission?

People like you and I, ordinary people who need God's help.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Talk about how Jesus used the Bible to fight against temptation. Take a piece of Scripture that talks about God helping us in temptation, such as Prov. 4:23, 1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Cor. 5:17, 1 Pet. 5:8 and help the kids memorize it, section by section. For younger kids, re-phrase the Scripture in a way they can understand and remember.

For an activity that is a good visual for younger kids to remember the power of the Word of God, talk about the “fiery darts of the evil one”(Eph. 6:16) that Satan tempted Jesus with in the desert. Jesus used the Word of God to protect him. Write “The Bible” or “The Word of God” on a large piece of paper and using safety pins, attach to a pillow. For fiery darts, Nerf guns work well, but you can just as easily use any small, softer toy the kids have. One person get to block the darts by using the Word of God at a time. Make sure everybody has a turn holding the pillow. Talk about how it is not enough to have the Word of God like a pillow, we also have to use it to block temptation by reading and memorizing it.

Jesus called his helpers to be fishers of men. Tie a string or fishing line to a stick to make a pretend fishing rod. Tie or glue a magnet to the end of the line. Draw the 12 disciples, or print out kids pictures online, and glue a magnet to the back of the pictures. Have the children fish for men, and say the name of the helper that Jesus chose. Talk about what it meant to the fishermen to become “fishers of men”.

Chapter 27: A Little Girl and a Poor Frail Lady (pg. 214)
Luke 8 (The story of Jairus' daughter)

THEMES

Faith, Prayer, God's timing, Healing, Resurrection

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did Jairus look for Jesus?

He had heard He was healing people and knew Jesus could heal his daughter.

Who do you think was more important to heal in this story: an older woman who had been sick for 12 years, or a little girl about to die? Why? What does Jesus do?

The little girl about to die, since time was running out for her. Instead of running directly to her, he spends time healing the sick woman, knowing he would heal both.

What does this story tell us about the way God answers prayer?

He doesn't always do it like we would. Sometimes He waits, but His timing is always perfect.

What was Jesus doing by helping and healing all these people?

Beginning to fix God's broken world, making the sad things come untrue.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Bring in different supplies from a first aid box like band-aids, bandages, aspirin, etc...

Let the children talk about what each one is used for. Then talk about how Jesus wants us to be well, not sick and he has power to help us just like the two people in this story.

Discuss praying for healing with the children.

Chapter 28: How to Pray (pg. 222)

Matthew 6, paraphrase of the Lord's prayer (Jesus teaches people about prayer)

THEMES

Prayer, Humility, Trust

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did Jesus teach the people to pray?

The people thought you had to be extra super holy for God to hear you.

What did Jesus teach the people about prayer?

God is our Father and always listening, He knows what we need before we ask, we don't need to use big words or special voices. Prayer is just like talking to someone you love.

What does Jesus teach us to pray in His prayer?

To be close to God, asking Him to make things right again, doing what is best for everyone. To ask for forgiveness and rescue. Protection from our enemies.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Prayer Box: Make a prayer box with the kids to keep track of the way God has answered your prayers. Use an old tissue box and cover it using construction / butcher paper. Let the kids color and decorate the paper that you will use to cover the box. Give each child a slip of paper and have the older kids write down a prayer request (parents write for the younger) and after praying together, put each slip of paper in the prayer box. The next time you get together to pray as a family, take the old requests out and talk about what God has done for you since.

Prayer Napkin Rings: Cut out strips of cardboard paper about 2"x10". Have the kids write "Give us this day our daily bread" on the strips, then color and decorate the rest. Form a circle with each strip, then tape the end to hold. This can be used for regular disposable napkins as well as re-usable ones. Use them to remind the kids of the Lords Prayer.

Chapter 29: The Singer (pg. 228)
Matthew 6, 9 and Luke 12 (The Sermon on the Mount)

THEMES

Worry, Trusting God, Jesus' compassion

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why does the story say "When Jesus saw all the people, his heart was filled with love for them"?

They were like a little flock of sheep without a shepherd to care for them.

When the Bible describes Jesus as "The Good Shepherd", what does that mean?

He watches over his sheep, keeps them from danger, makes sure they have everything they need and gives them rest. Read Psalm 23 with the kids.

What does Jesus say they don't need to worry about? Why?

Food and clothing (material things). Their Father in heaven knows what they need and will provide for them.

Why is this chapter called "The Singer"?

It is a poetic way to describe the way God speaks to our hearts. It is a song about God's love, care, and provision seen through Jesus.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

To illustrate the idea of Jesus as a Shepherd, read John 10:1-18. Appoint one parent as shepherd, one child as a wolf and as many sheep as you have. Have the sheep pretend they are sleeping, with the shepherd laying down at the door, or entrance to the area. The wolf then tries to enter to steal the sheep but the shepherd fights them off. Incorporate the idea of the sheep listening to the shepherds voice as he leads them to safety.

Make a mobile with the "birds of the field" to remind the kids of God's care for them. You will need a wire clothes hanger, string/yarn/twine, and cutouts of birds. You can draw or print out pictures of birds, punch a hole in the top, and attach the string to both the birds and the hanger.

Chapter 30: The Captain of the Storm (pg. 236)
Mark 4, Matthew 8 (The Storm on the lake)

THEMES

God's power, fear, Jesus as rescuer

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Have you ever been on a boat? How was the weather?

Have the kids talk about a time they went out on a boat.

Can you imagine being in a small boat during a big storm? How do you think Jesus' friends felt?

Scared. They were more focused on the huge storm outside of the boat than the creator of water inside the boat.

Do you think they were upset that Jesus was asleep?

Yes. They thought Jesus didn't care.

Do you think Jesus was upset they woke him?

No, it was for this reason he had come – to show His power by rescuing them.

What does this story tell us about Jesus?

He is more powerful than even the ocean! His word can calm storms.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Make a boat out of a walnut shell, a toothpick and some paper for a sail. Hollow out half of a walnut shell. Use sticky tack or Silly Putty to attach the stick to the middle of the shell, and poke a hole vertically through the paper with the toothpick to create the sail. Have the kids act out the story, creating waves in the tub or sink with their hands, or by pushing an empty milk jug.

Talk about a time in their lives, or the life of your family when you have been scared. What might help us feel secure instead of afraid?

The disciples ask, "What kind of man is this, that the wind and waves obey Him"? Ask your children the same thing, and have them make a list of the attributes of Jesus we see in the NT. Read John 14:9 and Col 1:15. Talk about knowing Jesus means knowing what God the Father is like.

Chapter 31: Filled Full! (pg. 244)
Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9 (The Feeding of the 5,000)

THEMES

God's Provision, Miracles, Jesus is enough

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What would you have done in the same situation? Do you think the disciple's idea was bad?

Guide the kids towards identifying with Jesus' friends.

Why do you think the little boy offered his lunch?

Make sure the kids know that he didn't know what Jesus would do, only who He was.

Why does the story tell us there were leftovers? Does that matter?

Yes. The Bible records this to tell us that Jesus doesn't just barely provide, He provides more than enough. (See Luke 6:38)

According to this story, what does this miracle tell us about what God does?

"Taking the nothing and makes it everything. Taking the emptiness and filling it up. Taking the darkness and making it light."

Does Jesus still want us to offer him food? What does He want us to offer Him?

Our entire life. Show kids how only God can take our lives and make something from what He gave us. Without Jesus, we have nothing. With Jesus, we have more than enough.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Make sugar cookies in the shape of fish. While reading the story together, put two fish cookies on a plate and set in the middle of the table. Keep adding cookies as they are eaten by the family. If your kids are really young, it can be fun to pretend that there are no more cookies, but make sure they keep appearing ☺

For a simple craft for younger children, have kids draw bread and fish on construction paper, then let them glue goldfish crackers on construction paper.

Make an expandable fish to illustrate the miracle. Fold a piece of paper like an accordion. Draw the outline of a fish and cut it out, making sure you cut through each layer of folded paper, but leaving the fish uncut on the folded sides. When finished, unfold the paper for a long string of connected fish!

Chapter 32: Treasure Hunt! (pg. 250)
Matthew 13, (The Story of the Hidden Treasure)

THEMES

The Kingdom of God, Parables, The Cross

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where is the Kingdom of God?

Wherever God is King among His people now.

How do we enter His Kingdom?

By submitting to His rule over our lives. According to the story, "When we stop running away from Him and we love Him."

What is a parable? Why did Jesus speak to the people in parables?

A story that illustrates a spiritual reality. Sometimes people couldn't understand what Jesus was saying, so he told them stories to help them understand.

In this story, what does Jesus say the Kingdom of Heaven is like? Why?

Hidden Treasure, because finding life in God's Kingdom is as wonderful as finding hidden treasure!

If you knew there was a treasure chest buried in the backyard filled with good things (contextualize for your kids), how long would you dig and search for it?

Emphasize the point of the story being that if God is the greatest treasure, it's worth anything we have to give to get it.

What was God's treasure? How far did he go to get it?

God's treasure was His people, and there was no cost too high to win them back. We know of His great love because Jesus gave everything He had to take God's children from the Kingdom of Satan (sin) and bring us into God's Kingdom (Salvation).

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

If possible, before telling the story, organize a treasure hunt. This could be as elaborate as digging in the ground to find a treasure you hid beforehand, or simply by organizing a scavenger hunt around the house. Make sure you have something hidden that your children would really value – a new toy, fun dessert, etc... Start by hiding 4-5 clues in different places. The first clue is where the second is hidden, the second clue for the third and so on. When they have found the hidden treasure, allow them to enjoy it while you tell the story.

Read Matthew 13 or Mark 4 and identify a truth about God that Jesus uses a parable to illustrate. Tell the kids that truth (The importance of hearing and doing the Word of God, Big things start small, a little sin ruins everything, etc...) Help them to make up their own story to illustrate that truth. Make sure they use illustrations that are appropriate to their age and life. After they have thought of one, read them the parable Jesus told to do the same.

Chapter 33: The Friend of Little Children (pg. 256)
Matthew 18, 19, Mark 10, Luke 18 (Jesus and the Children)

THEMES

God's love, Faith like a child, Humility

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why were the disciples arguing about who was the most important helper?

They thought Jesus would like them best if they did something special for Jesus.

Why couldn't they (and we) do anything to make God love us more?

Because it is a free gift to be received.

If we can't do anything to make God love us more, can we do anything to make Him love us less?

No, His love is based on His character, not our actions.

Why did the disciples try to send the little children away from Jesus?

They thought He was too busy and too important to talk to kids.

What does this story tell us about the kind of relationship Jesus wants with us?

He wants us to know that He loves us, and loves spending time with us. This should lead us to run to Him, without feeling like we have to do something to earn it.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Talk to your children about their friends. Ask them what it means to be a friend? How do they know _____ is a friend of theirs? What do friends do together? How can we be friends with Jesus, if He is not physically present to talk and play with? How can you as a family treat Jesus as a personal friend rather than an impersonal lawgiver?

Using wooden craft sticks, or popsicle sticks, show the kids how to make a picture frame. Help the children to glue the sticks in a square frame. Write "I Belong to Jesus" on the top of each frame and let the children decorate them using markers, glitter, stickers, etc... Add a self adhesive magnet to the back of each frame for the refrigerator or a stand for a shelf. Put the kids pictures in the frame and use it as a reminder that we belong to Jesus because He first loved us. Remind them that Jesus wants to be their friend, and help them grow in that friendship.

Chapter 34: The Man Who Didn't Have Any Friends (None) (pg. 264)
Luke 19 (The Story of Zacchaeus)

THEMES

Redemption, heart change, restitution.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did people not like Zacchaeus?

He was a tax collector, who stole their money.

Do you know someone that other kids don't like? Why don't they?

Talk about how kids that are different or disabled are considered strange, and may not have a lot of friends. Talk more about whether your kids agree with why other kids don't like them.

How do you think Zacchaeus felt when out of a whole crowd of people, Jesus talked to him?

He probably felt special, and honored that Jesus wanted to come to his house.

How do you think other children at school or church who don't have many friends who feel if you talked to them?

The same as Zacchaeus.

What made Zacchaeus want to change? Why would he give up stealing from people and give them their money back?

Because Jesus knew all about him and his sin and still loved him.

By acting this way with Zacchaeus, what was Jesus showing people in this story?

Who God is like, showing them a picture of His love.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Help younger children make a pair of binoculars with two toilet paper rolls wrapped with tape. Cover the front with black paper so the kids can't see. Ask them to look for something (a picture or toy) in the room they are in. Explain how Zacchaeus searched for Jesus, but couldn't see Him, so he climbed into a tree. Take off the black paper, and ask the kids if they had difficulty finding the picture or toy using only the binoculars, and explain how sin makes it hard for us to find Jesus.

Play a version of "pin the tail on the donkey" using a cutout of Zacchaeus and a picture of a tree. Using butcher paper, or larger construction paper, have the kids draw and decorate a tree with branches on it. Tape the tree to a wall. Using thicker construction paper, cut out a figure of a man for Zacchaeus. Attach tape to the back of the cutout, blindfold children, and have them see who can get closest to putting him on the highest tree branch.

Chapter 35: Running Away (pg. 272)
Luke 15 (The Story of the Lost Son)

THEMES

Authority, Desire to be God, Love of Pleasure, Repentance, God's Agape Love

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Have you ever felt that you would be happier if you got to make the rules, like the boy in the story? Why?

Ever since Adam & Eve in the garden, humans have been tempted to avoid and replace God.

Why do you think the Father in the story gives his son what he wants, even if it's wrong?
Because He loves His son too much to force him to stay.

What happens to make the boy want to return home?
He gets so hungry that he eats food for the pigs.

Why was the boy worried about returning home? Do you think he was right?
He was right to be worried that his Father wouldn't accept him back after all that he did.

What does the Father in the story do when he sees his son coming in the distance?
He runs to him, then hugs and kisses him.

What does this story tell us about God? Ourselves?
God is always pursuing us, and wants us to be with Him. He never gives up on His children. We see that we are asking the same question as the boy in the story who wondered if his Dad really wanted him to be happy.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Before the lesson collect some play money, a toy pig, some food scraps in a plastic bag or bowl, a party invitation or balloon, binoculars, and shoes. After reading the story, show your child the items, one at a time, and have them tell you how it relates to the story:

Money- Prodigal wanting His Fathers money. **Pig** – He got a job feeding pigs. **Food Scraps** – He was so hungry He ate the pigs food. **Party Invitation or balloon**- "Let's have a feast and celebrate. " **Binoculars** - "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him" **Shoes** – Running away from God, God running to us.

Using popsicle sticks, make a pigpen. Cut out pig shapes from cardboard, and let the kids decorate them on one side. On the other side, have the kids write the sins that led the boy to the pigpen. Let them use their own words and way of expressing them, but guide them towards: a desire to be in control, not wanting anyone telling them what to do, independence from God, love of pleasure.

Chapter 36: Washed With Tears (pg. 280)
Mark 14, Luke 7, John 12 (A Sinful Woman Anoints Jesus)

THEMES

Worship, A sinful woman forgiven, Legalism, Loving Jesus

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think the woman started to cry when she knelt before Jesus?

Guide your children towards how we respond to God in worship.

Why were the Important People angry?

They thought it was a waste of expensive perfume. Jesus was friendly towards a sinful woman instead of them.

Why did the Important People think they didn't need a rescuer?

Because they kept the rules and looked good on the outside.

Is Jesus more concerned about how we look on the inside or outside? How does the story tell us this?

Jesus is more concerned about the inside. He praises the woman not because she looks good on the outside like the Pharisees, but because inside, she knows she needs Jesus to rescue her.

Why did the Important People want to kill Jesus?

They were afraid others would follow Jesus instead of them, and they were jealous and angry.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Print out a coloring page with a pair of feet on it. Use watercolor paint to color in the feet. Talk about the water mixing with the color to make paint being like the woman's tears mixing with her faith in Jesus to produce worship.

Illustrate the idea of Jesus seeing "inside" people for your kids by cutting out a large heart shape through four pieces of construction paper. Take two at a time, and use a hole punch around the outside edges of the heart, and use string or ribbon to thread the hearts together. On separate slips of paper write the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, etc... On other slips write the works of the flesh: strife, jealousy, anger, envy, etc... In one heart, put the fruit of the Spirit, in the other the works of the flesh. Ask the kids to guess which heart is the good heart and which is the bad one. Ask them how they would know, if they both look the same on the outside? How does Jesus know what's in our hearts?

Chapter 37: The Servant King (pg. 286)
Mark 14 and John 13-14 (The Last Supper)

THEMES

Jesus as the Passover lamb, Servanthood, Communion Elements

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did God's people celebrate Passover for?

To remember how God rescued them from being slaves in Egypt.

What was Jesus getting ready to do?

To die on the cross as the forever Passover lamb, and rescue His people from sin.

What were Jesus' friends arguing about?

Stinky feet, and who had to wash them!

Why did Jesus offer to wash their feet? Shouldn't they have done that for Him?

He was serving them to be an example of how they should treat each other.

How else was Jesus planning on serving His friends?

By going to the cross to take away their sin and clean them from the inside out.

What was Judas' bad plan? Did Jesus know about it?

Judas was going to help the leaders capture Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, and Jesus knew it.

How was the bread and wine like Jesus' body and blood?

His body would be broken and His blood would be poured out.

Use this story to talk to your kids about celebrating communion. Talk about what it is, why we celebrate it, and when you feel they are ready to do so as well.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

If your kids are old enough to celebrate communion, find a creative way to use bread and juice as a visual to this story. Have it set on the table as you are telling the story, and as the story gets to how Jesus will rescue (pg. 292), break the bread and pour the juice into another cup.

Talk about chores around the house that no one likes doing. Remind them that washing feet was a dirty job that everyone hoped someone else would do. Challenge the kids to look for one chore that no one wants to do and serve their family by doing it.

Chapter 38: A Dark Night In The Garden (pg. 294)
Luke 22, Mark 14 and John 18 (The Garden of Gethsemane)

THEMES

Trusting God, Sin, Jesus as the sin substitute, injustice, submission

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did Jesus go with His friends into the garden?

To talk to His Father.

Are there times in our lives that, like Jesus, we need to be alone to talk to God? When?

Let the kids talk about when they think praying is important, and when they do.

What does this story call the sin that Jesus would die for? Why?

Poison, because it kills our relationship with God and each other.

What punishment was Jesus going to endure?

Having the sin of the world poured into his body and being separated from God.

Why was Jesus able to trust God in the Garden?

Jesus trusted God as His good and loving Heavenly Father. He knew God would not ask Him to do something like this unless it were really important.

Why does this story say the death of Jesus was God's Plan?

The death of Jesus is how God would rescue His people: by becoming sin, dying for it, and rising from the dead again.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Game: Father May I? Although the Father answered Jesus' prayer request with a "No," Jesus stayed obedient. If you have more than one child, line them up in the back of the room. If you are unfamiliar with the game "Mother May I?", the "mother" gives out a command that causes one of the kids to advance forward. For example, the mother may say "Jeff, hop forward three steps," or "Mary, leap forward one step." The student must respond with "Mother, May I" to gain permission to follow the command before she actually follows the command. If she fails to do this, she must go back to the starting position. The first student to reach mother, wins. Use this to reinforce the lesson of Jesus asking the Father.

Sometimes children have a hard time remembering what to pray for. Make a prayer box, covering a tissue box in cardboard paper, colored and decorated by the kids. Or use a mason jar and do the same thing. Cut small slips of paper to write prayer requests on, and encourage the kids to write down (or ask you to) prayer requests that come up. At dinner time in the evening, pray together as a family.

Chapter 39: The Sun Stops Shining (pg. 302)
Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 19 (The Crucifixion)

THEMES

Jesus on the cross, God's anger against sin and love for His people, Redemption

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why would Jesus let the soldiers beat him if he could have rescued Himself?
He knew that this was God's plan, and the only way to rescue those He loved.

Why did God not answer Jesus when He spoke to Him on the cross?
God cannot be in the presence of sin, so He turned away and abandoned Jesus while he was on the cross.

Why does creation act up (earthquake, sky going dark, etc...) while Jesus is on the cross?
Because the author of creation was being crucified.

Why did Jesus alone have to feel God's anger and punishment for sin?
It was the only way God could destroy sin and not destroy His children whose hearts were filled with sin.

Why would Jesus die for us?
To show us His love, and bring us back to God, sin-free.

Why does this story say the death of Jesus was God's Plan?
The death of Jesus is God would rescue His people: by becoming sin, dying for it, and rising from the dead again.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

The Resurrection Eggs by Family Life are a great way to re-tell this story using different objects in eggs for the kids to open and explain. These are also a great way to get the kids involved hands on and retain the story year by year as they learn to tell it themselves.

There are literally hundreds of crafts associated with the cross. Avoid kids crafts that trivialize the cross instead of use it as a means of remembrance. A simple cross craft can be done by taking a sheet of construction paper and laying popsicle sticks on in the shape of a cross. Glue sticks to the construction paper. Cut other sheets of papers in various shapes and sizes. Glue to cuttings to the outside of the sticks and inside the area of the cross to create a mosaic. Once completely dried, trim the solid construction sheet and have the children write "Our King" on the crosses.

Chapter 40: God's Wonderful Surprise (pg. 310)
Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 19 (The Resurrection)

THEMES

Resurrection, New Life, Eternal Life

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How do you think Jesus' friends felt the day He died? Why?

Disappointed, sad, hopeless, crushed. They thought sinful humans had ruined God's plan.

What do you think the woman thought when they came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away?

They thought someone had stolen Jesus' body.

What did Jesus mean when He told Mary she would be able to hold on to Him later?

Because of His death and resurrection, Jesus had made a way for God's people to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

How does the resurrection make everything sad come untrue?

It is the sign that God is for us, no matter what we do or what happens to us. It is proof that God loves us and is for us.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

The Resurrection Eggs by Family Life are a great way to re-tell this story using different objects in eggs for the kids to open and explain. These are also a great way to get the kids involved hands on and retain the story year by year as they learn to tell it themselves.

Using paper plates (not the foam kind), make an empty tomb with your kids. Fold a paper plate in half and use a hole punch around the outside edge. You will lace the paper plate shut later, but first cut a hole out of one side of the paper plate to represent the empty tomb. The kids will use the cutout as a stone to roll away. Now lace the paper plate shut using some yarn, and have the kids color the outside of the plate to look like a rock. The small cutout can also be colored to look like the stone that was rolled away. Inside the hole where there should be blank paper plate, draw the angel that spoke to the women. Using other action figures from their toybox, have them re-create the story and tell what is going on.

Chapter 41: Going Home (pg. 318)
Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 14 (The Ascension)

THEMES

The resurrected Christ, The ascension, New Heavens & New Earth

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why were Jesus friends scared when he appeared?

Even though they were hiding, Jesus (who was supposed to be dead) walked in.

Why did Jesus eat food to prove that He was alive to his friends?

Ghosts can't eat food. It is a personal touch to this story that Jesus would do something he used to do every day with them (share a meal).

What does it mean when the story says "Not only were the sad things coming untrue, they were becoming new again". What does it mean for God to make everything new? *God is using the resurrection of Jesus as the beginning of making everything on earth new. Point kids to the future reality of the restoration of all things (Rev. 21:1-5), and Jesus' resurrected body as a firstfruit of the dead (1 Cor. 15:20-28).*

What was the last thing Jesus asked His friends to do?

Go everywhere and tell others the happy news, that God loves them and sent Jesus to die for their sins so that they too can live forever with God in heaven!

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Using construction paper, trace each child's feet to make a cutout. On the cutout of their foot, write this verse: "Go into all the world and preach the Good News", Mark 16:15. Talk about how to actually do this. What is the good news? What makes it good? How is it "the truth that overcomes the terrible lie"? Have the children tell you ways they can participate in telling others this good news and have them write in on the foot (or write it for them). You may want to glue a magnet to the back and put it on the refrigerator as a reminder.

Find, print and cut out an image of Jesus. Start with a piece of blue construction paper, and either have the kids color grass and clouds, or use green and white construction paper to cut out some clouds and grass to create a nature scene. You may also want to use cotton balls for clouds as well. Thread a piece of string through the top of Jesus head, or use a hole punch and tie string to the top. Thread the other end through the front of the blue paper near the top, attaching the loose string to a popsicle stick. Pull gently on the stick to make Jesus ascend.

Chapter 42: God Sends Help (pg. 326)
Acts 1-5; John 15 (Pentecost)

THEMES

The Holy Spirit as helper, fear and faith, empowered to be witnesses

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did Jesus tell his friends to wait for?

The special present of God's Holy Spirit to help them do what Jesus asked them to do.

How can Jesus be with them and leave them at the same time? (See ch. 41)

He had to go back to the Father, but was sending the Spirit to live inside of them.

Through this Spirit Jesus would speak, teach and empower them.

How did the Holy Spirit first appear?

Like fire that didn't hurt or burn.

What miracle happened when Peter went to tell others the Good News? What other Bible story does that remind you of?

People from all over the world heard Peter's message in their own language. There is an intentional parallel here with the Tower of Babel. In Gen 11, man gathers together to make their way to God, ending in a confusion of languages. In Acts 2, God descends on man to give them His Spirit, ending in an understanding of language and belief.

What is the word used for this special people who believed the message and became part of God's family?

The Church. Emphasize the church as people rather than a place.

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

Print black and white pictures of cities around the world that you find online, one for each child. They do not need to be detailed, and for this craft, the less details, the better. Let them dip a finger in red and orange tempura paint, and draw flames above the city scenes. If there is a distinctive landmark where you live, consider printing a picture of that. Talk about how God sent the Holy Spirit to help us tell this Good News to the whole world, and how that same Holy Spirit is already at work anywhere we could go.

Create "fire" to use when acting out this story, using an empty tube of toilet paper and strips of red, orange and yellow streamers/fabric taped to the sides to represent the Spirit's descent. Have the kids act out the story, and when telling you the part where the Spirit fills the room, turn on a fan to the highest setting, and hold the "fire" on top of the kids heads. Have one of them be Peter, telling the Good News to others, and when they start to give the gospel, hold the "fire" above their heads to show how God empowers us when we tell others.

Chapter 43: A New Way To See (pg. 334)
Acts 6-9, 12-28; Colossians 2, Romans 8, Ephesians 2 (The Story of Paul)

THEMES

Repentance, Legalism vs. Grace, How God transforms a person

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did Saul hate anyone who loved Jesus?

He had never met Jesus. Saul was a good rule follower, and proud of His goodness.

How could Saul be blind for three days and yet “see for the very first time”?

Saul used to see every wrong thing that others did and not see his own sin. After meeting Jesus, Saul was understanding, or “seeing” (cf: Eph.1:17-18) for the first time.

What was different about Paul’s message after he met Jesus?

Paul taught people that keeping rules couldn’t make God love them more than He already did. He taught about God’s grace – the free gift of salvation through Jesus!

Why would Saul change his name to Paul?

To reflect that he was truly a different person. The man who used to think he was very important changed his name to show that he saw himself very differently (Paul means ‘small’ or ‘humble’).

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

To illustrate how the light of Jesus blinded Paul, and left him blind for three days, gather the kids in a very bright room. Show them a picture of Jesus from the Jesus Storybook Bible and have them stare at it for as long as they can. Ask them to describe the scene for you until they have it in their minds. Turn all the lights off so it becomes as dark as possible (a large closet could work well), and ask them to tell you about the last thing they saw. Talk about how Jesus was the last thing Paul saw for three days, and was left thinking about it that long. As an alternate way of illustrating this, print out this optical illusion of Jesus: <http://bit.ly/7OH0JL>. Have the kids stare at the picture for 30 seconds, then look at a blank sheet of white paper and ask them what they see.

Compare Saul’s transformation to that of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. Take a large coffee filter and let the kids each color their own, using bright colors. With a spray bottle, wet the filter with a couple of sprays and let the colors run together, then dry. While it is drying, use a pipe cleaner as a caterpillar. Talk about how the caterpillar is immersed in a cocoon (like Paul being blinded), and emerging as a butterfly. Tie the pipe cleaner around the middle of the filter, and fashion two antennae on either side.

Chapter 44: A Dream of Heaven (pg. 342)
Revelation 1, 5, 21-22 (John sees into the future)

THEMES

Heaven, Jesus' return, God making all things new

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did Jesus want to show John?

What would happen in the future, when Jesus returned.

Why would Jesus want John to write down what would happen in the future?

So all of God' people would "wait with happy excitement", knowing that Jesus would come back for them.

What was John's vision?

Of Jesus on the throne as King of all, with people bowing down before Him. A beautiful city coming to earth from heaven for God's people to live without fear, sickness or pain. A vision of God making all things new again.

Why didn't John finish his book with "The End"?

Because this Story is not over yet. Jesus is still alive, and we are now to live for Him!

CRAFTS / ACTIVITIES

The Bible ends with a vision of Heaven coming down to Earth, and God making everything new. Using construction paper, cut an arch with doors opening on either side. Make the door large enough to show a picture underneath. You may want the kids to glue cotton balls to represent clouds around the gates of Heaven. On a different sheet of paper, have them draw their own picture of the beautiful city described in John's vision, and glue it behind the construction paper with the doors. On the doors write Revelation 3:20, and have the kids look up the verse. Talk about how Jesus is the way to become part of this new city, and His invitation to us.

Make a chair using cardboard. Boxes from food or diapers would work well. Next cover the chair with tin foil, to make it look like a throne. Next, make two cutouts: one of a person, the other of Jesus. You can use a regular piece of paper for this. We want our kids to know that when we want to be in control (on the throne) of our lives, things go badly. When Jesus is in control, things go well. Using the themes of sickness/health, tears/joy, fear/confidence, draw pictures of faces with these emotions and cut them out. Have the kids put the cutout of a person on the throne and ask them which face describes what life looks like when we are on the throne. Repeat with the cutout of Jesus. Talk about how the heavenly city John saw was so beautiful and perfect because Jesus is the unchallenged King on the Throne.