

Kindergarten

Teacher's Guide & Student Workbook



Victory in God



"I will praise you, O Lord,
with my whole heart; I will
tell of all Your marvelous
works."

(Psalm 9:1)

Year 1 Book 3



“For you, O Lord, will bless
the righteous; with favor you
will surround him as with a
shield.”

(Psalm 5:12)

Balaam, the Donkey, and the Angel



Overview

Materials You'll Need

- clothespin
- wiggly eyes
- white paper
- glue
- scissors
- brown markers



Scriptures

Num 22:1-38; 24:10-14

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God wants us to obey Him and do what is right

Behavioral Objective(s)

To follow the will of God; do not disobey God on purpose

Memory Verse

"Only the word that I speak to you,
that you shall speak." (Num 22:35)



Bible Knowledge

Balaam, the Sorcerer

Balaam was a sorcerer, one of many prophets of eastern religions who worshipped all the gods of the land. These false teachers often had great influence. The king of Moab, Balak, paid Balaam to use his powers to place a curse on the Israelites. However, Balaam first asked God's permission to curse Israel. When God told him he could not, Balaam turned away the messengers from Moab. Then Balak sent more people, with more silver and gold, to convince Balaam to help Moab. Again, Balaam asked God for His permission. This time, God said that he could follow the messengers to see what Balak wanted, but he was only allowed to speak what God told him to say. In fact, God was granting Balaam's request to see what he would actually do. Because of his greed, Balaam made up his mind to go even though God didn't really want him to. That is why God's anger was aroused when Balaam left to see Balak. But Balaam was so focused on earning his fee that he refused to pay

attention to the talking donkey and the presence of the angel.

After recognizing his sin, Balaam went on to give four prophecies, none of which cursed Israel. Balaam realized that he could not curse people whom God had blessed. Although this story leads us to believe he turned completely to God, later passages in the Bible show that Balaam couldn't resist the temptation of money and idolatry (Num 31:16; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 1:11). He eventually died in a battle against the Midianites (Num 31:8).

In the New Testament, Peter talked about false teachers and their destructive ways. He described them as "having eyes full of adultery ... enticing unstable souls" (2 Pet 2:14). He wrote that they forsook the right way and followed the way of Balaam.

Donkeys

Donkeys were all-purpose pack animals used for transportation, carrying loads, grinding wheat, and plowing fields. They were usually highly dependable, which explains why Balaam became so angry when his donkey refused to move.



Understanding Your Students

In the story you will be sharing with the students, Balaam was able to hear a direct message from God through the donkey and an angel. The words were plain and simple. No one could have mistaken what God wanted Balaam to do. But we know that this is not a common way for God to communicate with His followers today. That is why many believers often ask how we can really know God's will. It is possible that your students may also ask a similar question: How can they obey God if God doesn't talk to them directly? How will they know what God wants them to do and what God doesn't want them to do?

First, explain to your students that we have been

given direct orders from God that we must always obey. These are the words found in the Bible. These instructions are important even if we haven't heard them directly from God. For example, remind them of God's Ten Commandments. Let your students know that these are rules and instructions that God has given to His people. For us to be considered His own, we must listen to His directions and follow them. We can also remind the students that we need to remember everything Jesus had taught us while He was on earth. He gave us directions on how we should live our lives, and He taught us many stories about people who did or didn't do what pleased Him. Those are good examples for us to learn from. We should always learn from the messages in the Bible, because they are our special instructions from God.



Vocabulary

Curse

to say something bad about another person

Messengers

someone who is giving a person a message, or taking a short trip to run an errand for another person

Bless

to say that good things will happen to another person



Before You Teach

Many characters in the Old Testament communicated directly with God. Abraham and Moses are two examples of people who were able to talk to God on a regular basis. This allowed them to know the will of God and faithfully follow Him. In today's lesson, God also spoke with Balaam—but it didn't strengthen him, nor did it make him any more faithful. Outwardly, it seemed as if he was obedient to God's will because he prophesied that God's people would be blessed, but inwardly, he wanted the riches more than anything else.

Today, many of us wish we could talk to God in a way where we would know His will. It would be so plain and so simple. When we pray to Him and He answers us, there would be no questions as to what to do. But Balaam's example has shown us that it is not so simple. It is only simple when we choose to obey Him, no matter what the answer

may be. We can't hope that the answer will always be the one we want to hear. Otherwise, it would be pointless to even pray to God. Or even if we obeyed God, but did it grudgingly or constantly wishing for a different outcome, knowing His will doesn't help us become more faithful.

Therefore, it really isn't about whether God reveals things to us directly or not. Abraham and Moses were not more righteous and faithful because God spoke to them and let them know what He wanted them to do. It is because they chose to be obedient to His will. The difference between them and Balaam was in the way they responded to God's calling.

In the same way, we should pray to understand God's will. Sometimes, following God's way is not always easy from a human perspective. But many examples in the Bible have shown us that when we choose to be obedient, we will be victorious in the end.



Bible Story

Not long ago, we learned how God helped His people, the Israelites, escape from Egypt. Why did God want the Israelites to escape from Egypt? That's right, because they were slaves there, and God wanted His people to live in a much better place. As the Israelites traveled towards their new land, they experienced many, many miracles. What are some of the miracles they experienced? Yes, the ten plagues while they were still in Egypt and then the crossing of the Red Sea. But it took the Israelites a long time to reach their new and better land because they stopped in many places on the way. Today we are going to learn about one of those places.

The King of Moab Wants to Destroy the Israelites

As the Israelites got closer and closer to their new land, the people living nearby had already heard all about the Israelites and the great miracles they had experienced. They knew there were thousands of Israelites, and that God was with them. After all, God had freed them from Egypt, which was such a powerful country! Then, God had parted the Red Sea for them. The people living in the nearby lands had never heard of such a powerful God before!

So when the Israelites got closer to the land that God had promised them, the people nearby became scared. Why do you think these people were scared? Yes, it's because they knew that if they fought with Israel, they would lose because God was with the Israelites. But they also knew that if they didn't fight, they might lose their land to the Israelites.

One of these nearby places was called Moab, and the people there were very afraid of the Israelites' power. It wasn't just the people of Moab who were afraid, it was also their king! His name was Balak. Balak was very worried and started to think of ways he could beat the Israelites in battle. He didn't want the Israelites to come and take over his land. Finally, he had an idea. He had heard about a wise man named Balaam, who lived in a far away country. So he thought, "Maybe Balaam will come and help me get rid of these people. If this wise man, Balaam, curses the Israelites and says that horrible things will

happen to them, maybe what he says will come true, and I'll be able to beat them in battle." Once he thought of this idea, he sent some important messengers with a lot of money to Balaam.

Balaam Listens to God the First Time

The messengers traveled for a long, long time until they reached the place where Balaam lived. They knocked on his door (teacher can make a knocking sound) and when Balaam answered, they said, "We are sent from Balak, the king of Moab. Our king needs your help in getting rid of some people who have camped near our land. He wants you to come and say that terrible things will happen to them. Then we can beat these people and they will leave. Look at all the money the king will give you if you do this."

Balaam looked at all the money and noticed how shiny it was and thought about all the things he could do with the money. But instead of saying yes right away, Balaam told the messengers, "Stay here overnight, and let me ask God if it is all right. I'll tell you what God says to me in the morning."

The men did as Balaam asked. That night God told Balaam, "Do not go with these men. Do not say terrible things against the Israelites; I plan to bless them and do wonderful things for them."

So the next morning, Balaam told the messengers, "Go back without me. The Lord won't let me go with you."

The King Asks Balaam Again

But King Balak would not take "no" for an answer, so he decided to ask Balaam again. This time, though, Balak sent even more important messengers to Balaam with a great promise of even more money.

When the other messengers arrived at Balaam's house, they told him "The king will make you rich and famous. He will do anything else you want. All he wants is for you to come with us and say that awful things will happen to the Israelites."

Once again, Balaam looked at all the money, and he also thought about how famous he could be, and how he could have anything he ever wanted. Deep in his heart, Balaam wanted to go, but he wanted to look like he cared about God's will. He asked the messengers to stay for a night so that he could see what else God had to say.

That night, God told Balaam that he could go with the men. "But," God warned Balaam, "be sure to say only what I tell you!"

An Angel in the Road

The next morning, Balaam was ready to go. He saddled his donkey and followed the king's messengers. As the donkey clip-clopped along the dusty road, Balaam must have thought about what he would say when he got to Moab. He knew that he would have to say horrible things about the Israelites to make the king happy and get the money he wanted.

God knew what Balaam was really thinking. Balaam wanted to be rich and famous. In his heart, he didn't want to obey God; he wanted to obey the king of Moab! And class, do you think this made God happy? No, God was not happy because Balaam cared more about the money than listening to God.

Even though Balaam didn't have a pure heart, God still wanted Balaam to say only what God told him to say. To do this, God worked a miracle! He sent an angel with a sword to stand in the middle of the road where Balaam was traveling. The amazing part, though, is that only Balaam's donkey saw him! That's right, Balaam didn't see him, nor did his servants—just the donkey!

The donkey wanted to protect Balaam from the angel's sword. To do that, the donkey turned off the road and went into a field. Since Balaam didn't see the angel, he was wondering, "What is my donkey doing?" When the donkey didn't go back to the road, he hit the donkey and yelled, "Get back on the road!" So the donkey listened and began to walk on the road again.

They traveled a little bit further. Then they came to a place where the road passed between two walls. There stood the angel again! This time, the donkey tried to squeeze past the angel by pressing against the walls. This crushed Balaam's foot and made Balaam very angry. "Ouch!" cried Balaam. What do you think he did? Yes, he hit his poor donkey again!

The angel went further down the road and stood in a place so narrow that the donkey couldn't get by at all. The donkey didn't know what else to do, so she just stopped and lay down in the road. This really made Balaam very angry. And what do you think he did? Yes, he hit the donkey for the third time. Then God did something very amazing. He allowed the donkey to talk!

Imagine Balaam's shock when he heard his donkey suddenly say, "What have I done to make you hit me three different times?"

Balaam knew that donkeys didn't talk, but he was so angry that he didn't think about it. He just answered, "Because you've made me look foolish. I'm so angry I wish that I could punish you right now!"

"You've ridden me for many years," the donkey said to Balaam. "Have I ever done this to you before?"

"No," Balaam admitted.

Then God opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road. He saw that the angel had a sword in his hand. Balaam was very frightened and he bowed low before him.

"I was standing in the road," said the angel. "The donkey saw me even though you couldn't." Then Balaam knew that God had sent the angel to give him an important message.

"When you get to Moab," the angel told Balaam, "you must say only what God tells you to say." After the angel's message, Balaam knew that he had to listen to God. He couldn't obey the king of Moab even though he wanted to.

Balaam Blesses the Israelites

When Balaam finally got to Moab, the king tried again and again to make Balaam say terrible things to frighten the Israelites. Instead, he blessed the Israelites and said the good things that God had told him to say.

How do you think the king of Moab felt? Yes, he was angry because his plan was ruined. Now the Israelites were blessed instead of cursed. "Go home," he told Balaam. "I won't give you any money."

Balaam knew God had planned to do good things for the Israelites. And even though Balaam wanted to do something that God did not like so that he could get rich, God made sure that His will was done in the end. Today's story teaches us to always remember to obey God's will.



Check For Understanding

1. Which king was worried that the Israelites were going to take over his land? (The king of Moab.)
2. Who did the king of Moab send for to speak to the Israelites? (Balaam.)
3. Did Balaam obey God while he was riding on his donkey to speak to the Israelites?



Life Application Story

Obeying Mom is Also Obeying God

When Mrs. Lewis opened the door to Tommy's room, she almost fainted. His room was a mess! His socks covered the floor and his schoolbooks were under his bed. Mrs. Lewis even spotted an empty bag of chips on his desk. Needless to say, his room needed a good cleaning, so Mrs. Lewis poked her head out of the room and called out, "Tommy, can you help me do something?"

Tommy wasn't feeling too helpful. His favorite cartoon had just come on. He yelled back impatiently, "What, Mom? Can you please wait? My show is not over yet."

Mrs. Lewis was not happy that Tommy was watching television. Because he watched so much of it, she and Mr. Lewis had decided to limit the times he could watch, and right now was not one of those times.

Once again, Mrs. Lewis called out, "Tommy, you're not even supposed to be watching television now. Can you please clean up your room instead? It is a mess!"

"I know I wasn't supposed to turn on the television, but can I please finish watching this cartoon? Then I promise I'll clean up," Tommy pleaded.

"Tommy, please listen to me and turn off the television. You need to clean up your messy room," Mrs. Lewis said firmly as she walked downstairs.

Tommy pretended that he couldn't hear what Mrs. Lewis was saying and kept on watching the

(No, he was just greedy for money.)

4. Who did God send to stop Balaam? (An angel.)
5. How many times did Balaam hit his donkey? (3 times.)
6. What did the angel tell Balaam? (The angel told him he should speak only good things about the Israelites.)
7. What can we learn from this story? (Always remember to obey God's will.)

cartoon show. Mrs. Lewis walked over to the television set and turned it off.

"Tommy, when God looks down from heaven and sees you here watching TV when you're not supposed to and I am asking you to clean up your room, do you think He is happy? Do you think God is saying, 'Wow, that Tommy, he's a wonderful boy?'"

Tommy looked down at the ground. "I guess not," he grumbled.

"Do you remember why Dad and I put a limit on your TV time?" asked Mrs. Lewis.

"Yes, because it takes away time I should be doing other things like my school work."

"Right, and what do you think would make God happy right now?"

"He would want me to listen to you, turn off the TV and clean up my room."

"That's right, Tommy. Do you think you could do that? It would make God and me happy."

Tommy paused for a moment and then hugged his mom.

"I'm sorry, Mom. I'll go clean up my room now, and I'll stick to the plan you, Dad and I agreed on. I know it doesn't always look like it, but I want to obey God."

"I know you do, Tommy. Come on! I'll help you with your room. We can start by throwing out that empty bag of chips on your desk!"

Questions to Think About

1. What did Mrs. Lewis want Tommy to do? (She wanted him to clean up his room and turn off the television set.)

2. **What did Tommy do when Mrs. Lewis called him?** (He made a lot of excuses and also pretended not to hear her.)
3. **Does Tommy want to obey his mom and God and be a good boy?** (Yes, but sometimes it is

hard to do.)

4. **How is obeying our parents the same as obeying God?** (Let students answer.)



Activity 1

What Was Balaam Thinking?

What was Balaam thinking about when he was on the donkey? (He was thinking about making money. He did not listen to God.)



Activity 2

Greedy or Not?

Look at the pictures. How are the children being greedy? Fill in the blanks. He is being greedy by not sharing his _____ (food). She is being greedy by not sharing her _____ (toys). Look at the person standing at the back. How do you think she feels? (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 3

Donkey Clip Puppets

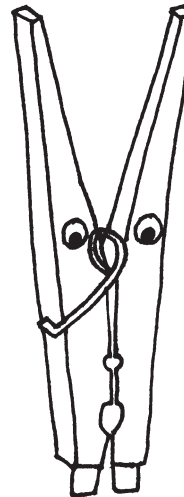
Materials:

1. clothespin (1 per student)
2. wiggly eyes
3. glue
4. white paper
5. scissors
6. brown markers

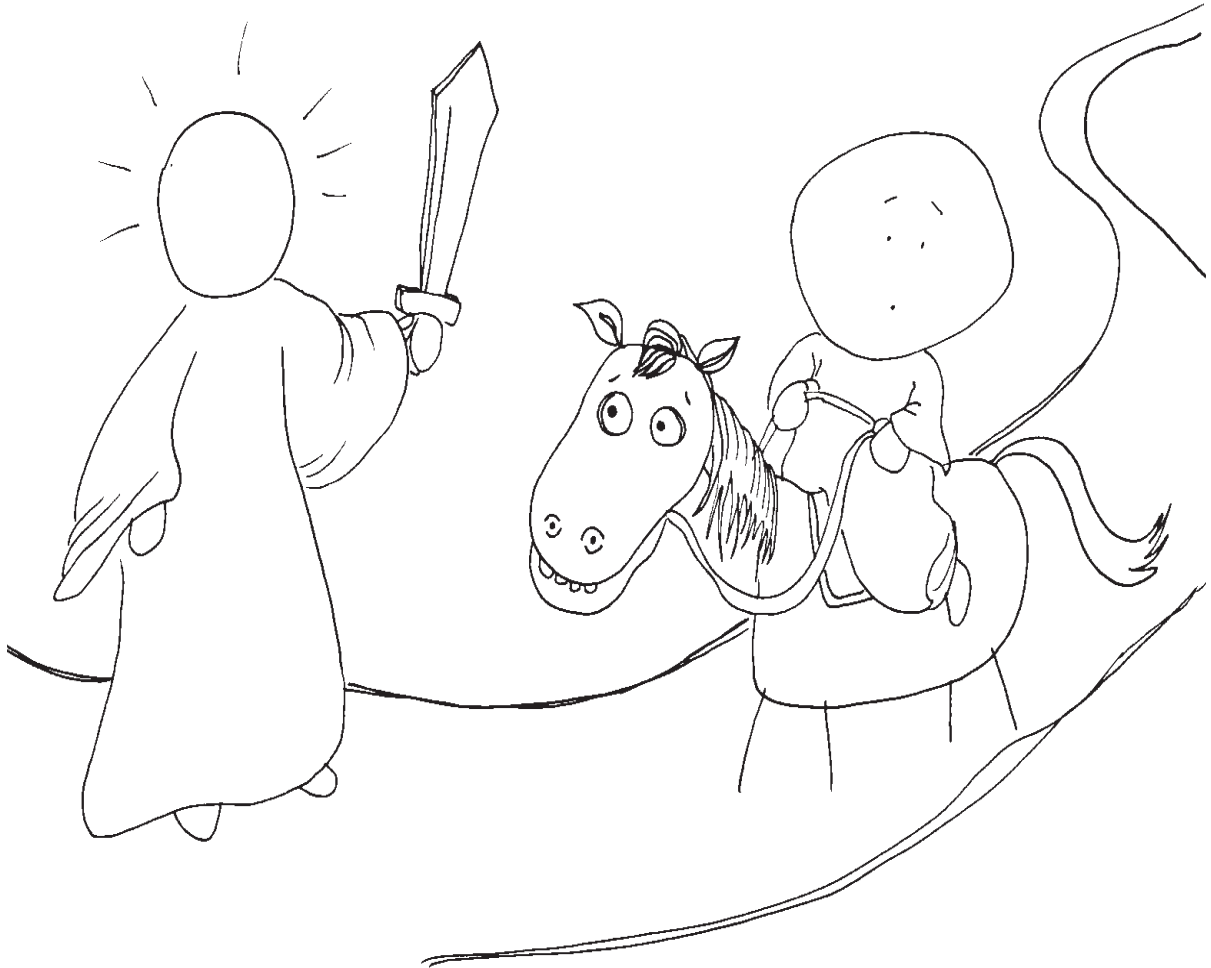
Directions:

1. Give each student a clothespin. Have them color in the pin with a brown marker.
2. Glue the wiggly eyes onto the clothespin near the bottom of the "V".
3. Help students cut out two small rectangular shapes out of the white paper and glue them onto the clothespin as teeth (see diagram).
4. Show the students how the donkey can "talk" by opening and closing the pin.

5. As the students are creating this craft, have them answer the following questions:
 - *Why did God use the donkey to talk to Balaam?
 - *Have you ever heard a donkey talk before?
 - *How would you feel if you heard a donkey talk?
 - *God wants us to listen to Him. In what ways can God talk to us?
6. After the craft, and if time permits, you may wish to ask the students to role play being the donkey, talking to Balaam.



What Was Balaam Thinking About?



What was Balaam thinking about when he was on the donkey? Circle the answer.

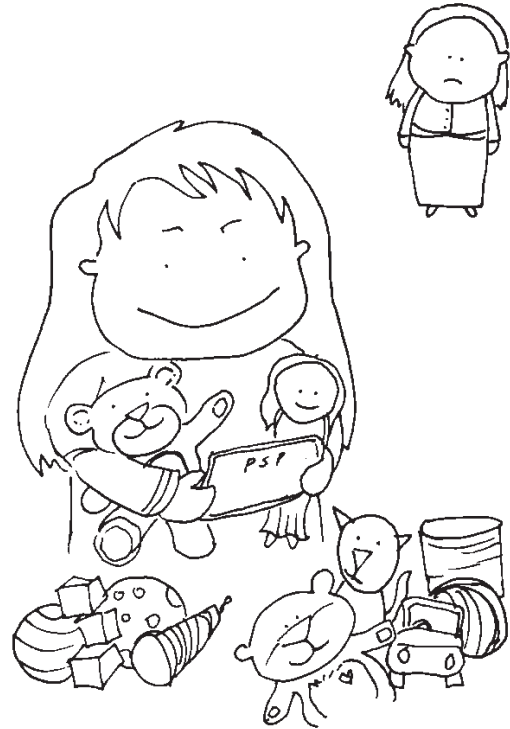
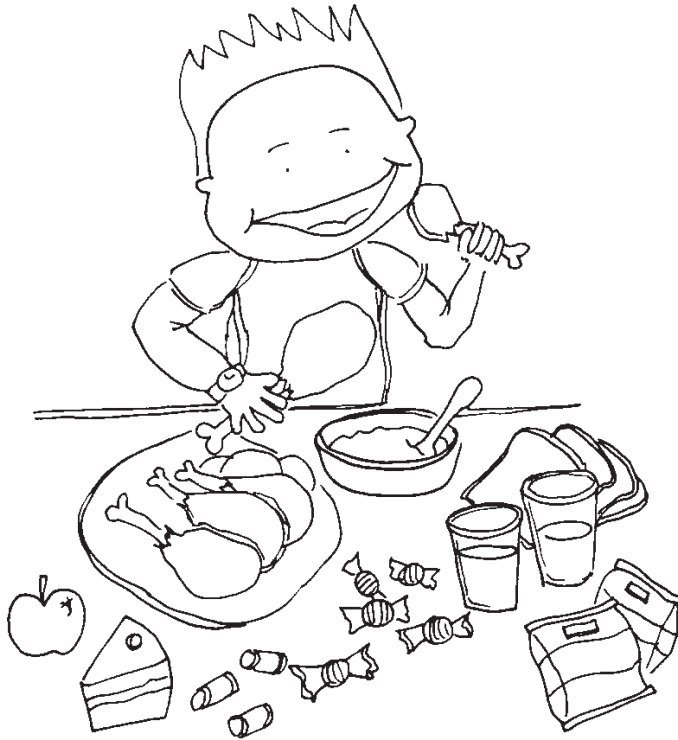
GOD

MONEY

Activity 1:2

Greedy or Not?

Look at the pictures. How are the children being greedy? Fill in the blanks.
Look at the person standing at the back. How do you think she feels?



He is being greedy by not sharing his _____.

She is being greedy by not sharing her _____.

The Twelve Spies

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- small paper plates
- markers and crayons
- scissors
- glue
- cellophane
- craft sticks



Scriptures

Num 13:1-14:38

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God keeps His promises

Behavioral Objective(s)

To believe God and trust in His ways; to show our obedience to God with actions

Memory Verse

"The Lord is with us. Do not fear them."
(Num 14:9)



Bible Knowledge

Canaan

God told the Israelites that the Promised Land was rich and fertile. As the twelve spies discovered, the land of Canaan was indeed magnificent. The Bible often calls it "the land flowing with milk and honey." Although the land was only 150 miles long and 60 miles wide, its lush hillsides were covered with fig, date, and nut trees. It was the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Israelites' Lack of Trust in God

When the spies returned to Kadesh from scouting the new land, the people had to decide whether to enter the land or to retreat. They chose to retreat because they were afraid of the fortified cities and the fierce giants that lived there. They once again failed to trust in God's guidance and strength. As a result, the Israelites were condemned to wander for forty years in the wilderness. Aaron and Miriam, the brother and sister of Moses, would end up dying there as well. God was not exaggerating when He

said in Numbers 14:22 that the Israelites had already failed ten times to trust and obey Him. Here is a list of their ten failures:

- 1) Lacking trust at the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 14:11, 12);
- 2) Complaining over bitter water at Marah (Ex 15:24);
- 3) Complaining in the wilderness of Sin (Ex 16:3);
- 4) Collecting more than the daily quota of manna (Ex 16:20);
- 5) Collecting manna on the Sabbath (Ex 16:27-29);
- 6) Complaining over the lack of water at Rephidim (Ex 17:2, 3);
- 7) Committing idolatry by constructing the golden calf (Ex 32:7-10);
- 8) Complaining at Taberah (Num 11:1);
- 9) Complaining over the lack of delicious food (Num 11:4);
- 10) Failing to trust God and enter the Promised Land (Num 14:1-4).



Understanding Your Students

In this lesson, it is important to stress that the ten spies did not have faith to trust that God would give them what He promised. But it is also important to let the students understand that many of the people lacked this faith because they were scared. They were scared because they didn't have any experience engaging in battles. They were scared because the people of the land seemed to be bigger than they were. We need to let the children know that it is perfectly okay to feel scared. Everyone feels afraid some of the time. (You may wish to share a phobia you have or talk about other common phobias.) Some people are scared of the dark and have to sleep with a light

on. Others are afraid of heights and are scared to climb up a ladder. So when the Israelites were scared of the things they saw, they decided that it was better to go back to the land that they had come from.

It is hard to face our fears. We don't know what to expect and usually our minds tell us to just give up or stay away. Sometimes, we need to listen to our minds and do just that because some things are really too scary to try. But there are also times when we know we can trust in God and He will help us. For example, when we are trying to ride our bike without training wheels or when we are joining a new class and have to meet new people. These can be scary situations, but God has promised to help us. In our heart, we can say a prayer and ask God to guide us. He will be there to show us the way.



Vocabulary

Israelites

God's chosen people

Canaanites

the people who lived in the land of Canaan

Spies

people sent to another place to find out more about it

Courageous

to be brave

Unfaithful

having little faith in God

Comfort

to make someone feel better

Fear

a feeling of being afraid/scared

Wilderness

a place that very few people live in, such as a forest or desert



Before You Teach

The Bible records that Joshua and Caleb (and those who were under the age of 20 at the time of the Exodus) were allowed to enter into the land of Canaan. This was because of their faith in God and His promise. They were able to stand out from the crowd and make up their own minds about what they believed in. It was not an easy thing for them to do. It was ten against two. It would have been much easier for them to go with the tide and agree that it was just too difficult to conquer Canaan. After all, what the ten spies reported was true, even if the facts were slightly stretched. But Joshua and Caleb chose to speak up and say what their hearts

compelled them to.

As Christians, we often know what we should do. But to do it is another matter. We know we should pray before every meal, but we skip it sometimes for the sake of convenience or fear of embarrassment. We know we should spread the gospel, but we excuse ourselves because we lack eloquence. We know we should stay away from ungodly movies, parties, or even certain friends, but we convince ourselves they are not big deals. We still have God in our hearts and that is what matters. It is easy to go with the flow of the world and just give in. But our faith depends on every decision we make. God has told us that the path to heaven is a narrow one. God did not say that the road to eternity would be easy, but He did promise us eternal and everlasting life when we choose to stay true to His teachings.



Bible Story

Children, do you remember who God asked to lead the Israelites out of Egypt? Yes, it was Moses. After Moses brought the people out of Egypt, God asked him to go to Mount Sinai, a very high mountain, where He wrote the Ten Commandments on stone tablets for Moses to bring back. Do you remember what God's Ten Commandments are? (Let students raise hands to share.) The Ten Commandments are the very important laws God wants His people to obey. But while Moses was on the mountain, the Israelites started to get really worried. They thought that maybe something happened to Moses on the mountain and that he would never come back. So they asked Moses' brother, Aaron, to make a golden idol that looked like a cow for them to worship. God was very angry and sad about this. He didn't want to take the Israelites to the land of Canaan. However, Moses loved the Israelites so much that he begged and begged God to change His mind. Finally, God was touched by Moses' great love and agreed to continue to lead the way.

The Twelve Spies Are Sent Out

Children, do you know anything about the land of Canaan? What was so wonderful about the place that God wanted to bring His people to? (Let children share.) Well, it was a beautiful land where many fruits and vegetables grew. God wanted to bless His people with the land so that they could rest and enjoy their lives there.

As the Israelites got closer to the land of Canaan, God asked Moses to send twelve men to spy on the land. Do you know what spies had to do back then? (Let students share.) These twelve men had to see if the people in Canaan, the Canaanites, were weak or strong, few or many, whether the land was good or bad, whether the people lived in cities or in camps, and whether there were trees and fruit. They were also asked to bring back some of the ripened fruits they found there.

These twelve spies were very brave! They climbed over hills to reach the land of Canaan. There they saw lots of big grapes hanging on the grapevines. (Show picture of grapes or real grapes, if in season!) Have you eaten grapes before? Do you like them? Which kind is your favorite, green or red?

Can you show with your hands the biggest grape you have ever eaten before? Well, the grapes in the land of Canaan were sweeter and bigger than any the spies had ever eaten. The grapes were so big that it took two people to carry them! They brought back some of the delicious grapes, and other fruits like pomegranates and figs. (Also show pictures of pomegranates and figs for students to see.)

After forty days, the spies came back to report to Moses. The Israelites were waiting excitedly to hear the good news. The spies said to Moses, "The land of Canaan is a really good place. Look! These are some fruits that we brought back." The people were so happy when they heard the reports and saw with their own eyes the huge, delicious fruits.

The Unfaithful Spies Report Bad News

But not all of the spies said good things about the land. Ten of them were unfaithful. Children, do you know what "unfaithful" means? When we say that these ten spies were unfaithful, this means that they had very little faith in God. They didn't believe that God was going to help them. They said that although the fruits were big and good, the people who lived there were strong and very, very tall—like giants. They also said that the Israelites were as small as grasshoppers compared to the Canaanites. (You may wish to draw to scale so that the students can see the size difference.) How many of you think that the Canaanites were really that strong and huge? (ask students to raise hands) The Bible says that Canaanites were about seven to nine feet tall (the height of the classroom), and the Israelites were about five feet tall. It is true that the Israelites were shorter, but they were definitely not as small as grasshoppers. These spies were not telling the truth! They only said these things because they were very afraid, and did not want to fight against the Canaanites.

The unfaithful spies also said that the cities had very tall walls all around, and they were guarded by soldiers day and night. The Israelites would never be able to take over the land of Canaan. When the people heard these reports, they became so sad that they cried all night. The Israelites complained to Moses and Aaron saying, "We enjoyed staying in Egypt, but you led us to this place, and now we are going to die fighting the Canaanites. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" The Israelites had forgotten about the power of God.

The Faithful Spies Comfort the Israelites

How many spies did Moses send out in the beginning? Yes, twelve spies. Among the twelve, two were faithful—they were Joshua and Caleb. When Joshua and Caleb saw that the Israelites were so angry and sad, they tried to comfort them and said, “The land that we went to see is a very good land. Our God is the Almighty God and He will lead us to the land of Canaan peacefully. He will give us the land. If God is with us, there is nothing to be afraid of.”

Children, can you imagine how courageous and brave Joshua and Caleb must have been, to stand in front of the people and tell them to do what was right in the eyes of God? When everyone else wanted to just quit and forget about God’s promise, Joshua and Caleb reminded them that they should not be afraid because God would give them the power they needed to take over the land. Do you think the people listened to Joshua and Caleb? (Thumbs up if you think the people listened, thumbs down if they didn’t.) No! The people did not listen to them. They didn’t have faith, and they even wanted to throw stones at Joshua and Caleb.

God was very sad when He saw that the Israelites didn’t trust Him. So God said, “You cannot

have this land yet. You will have to travel many more years in the wilderness.” Instead of going to the beautiful land of Canaan, where the Israelites could rest and enjoy God’s blessing, they lived in the wilderness for a total of 40 years.

Have Faith in God

Have you ever felt lonely and scared at night? Let me tell you a story. Johnny was one of many children who was afraid of the dark. He didn’t like to go to sleep by himself, and would often cry himself to sleep. One Sabbath, Johnny was in his RE class listening to Joshua and Caleb’s story just like all of you are doing. He learned how brave Joshua and Caleb were, and how much faith they had in God. He decided to ask God to give him faith to overcome his fear, so that he wouldn’t be afraid of the dark anymore. That night before Johnny went to bed, he prayed really hard and he remembered how his RE teacher once said that even when we feel like we are alone, we are never really alone, because God is always beside us protecting us! So after Johnny prayed, he closed his eyes and thought about all the blessings God had given him. All of a sudden, he felt very safe and peaceful, and he fell asleep that night without feeling afraid anymore. Children, how can we be more faithful like Joshua and Caleb?



Check For Understanding

- 1. How many spies did Moses send to look at the land of Canaan?** (Twelve spies.)
- 2. What kind of fruits did they bring back?** (They brought back many grapes, pomegranates and figs.)
- 3. How many spies gave bad reports and were afraid of the Canaanites?** (Ten) **What were the ten spies afraid of?** (That the Canaanites, who were strong and tall, might kill them.)
- 4. How did the Israelites feel when they heard the unfaithful spies’ report?** (The Israelites were so sad that they cried all night.)
- 5. How many spies said that God would give**

them the land of Canaan? (Two: Caleb and Joshua)

- 6. How did the Israelites feel after Caleb and Joshua comforted them?** (They didn’t have faith, and didn’t want to listen to Caleb and Joshua to rely on God. They were mad and even wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua.)
- 7. How do you think God felt when the Israelites did not want to trust Him?** (God was very sad that His people didn’t want His guidance.)
- 8. What did God tell the Israelites because they didn’t trust Him?** (God said that the Israelites had to wander in the wilderness for many more years. Since they didn’t trust Him, they would not be able to go into the land right now.)



Life Application Story

Ask God For Courage

One morning, before school started, Tommy Lewis met up with his best friends in first grade, Ben and Andy. He loved hanging out with them whenever there was a break. When the first bell rang, Tommy and his friends went in to their usual classroom and greeted their teacher, Mrs. Lee. Tommy sat down in his seat and began coloring quietly at his desk. Not long after, Ben whispered to Tommy.

"Tommy, look!" Ben was pointing to Mrs. Lee's desk.

"Shhh ... it's coloring time now. Don't talk or you might get us in trouble," Tommy whispered back to Ben.

"But Tommy, I see some really brightly-colored erasers on Mrs. Lee's desk. They look so cool. I wish I could have one," said Ben.

Ben couldn't concentrate on his coloring work for the rest of the morning. All he could think of was how wonderful it might be if he could have one of Mrs. Lee's brightly colored erasers. When it was time for morning recess, Tommy, Ben, and Andy got together to share their snacks. Once again, Ben asked his two friends if they had seen those brightly colored erasers on Mrs. Lee's desk.

Ben kept asking, "I wonder why Mrs. Lee brought those erasers to school today?"

"Remember, she said that she was going to bring some special prizes for the students who have been good all week," Andy answered. "They really look pretty cool! If I get to pick, I want the neon green one," Andy added.

Ben was quiet for a few seconds, and then he suggested, "Hey, guys, let's sneak in the classroom now and pick out our favorite colored erasers. Mrs. Lee will never know. Plus, she's not in the classroom now—I saw her talking with another teacher in the office a few minutes ago. She would never notice that a few were missing from that whole box of erasers. Let's go, guys, before it's too late!"

"Are you sure you want to do that, Ben?" Andy asked.

"Yes, come with me so you get to pick one for yourself too," said Ben excitedly.

Ben turned to Tommy and said, "Come on,

Tommy, don't be a scaredy-cat! Mrs. Lee won't know. Let's go!"

Poor Tommy had to make a decision about whether to follow his friends or not. He knew that if he went with Ben, he would be stealing. He quickly remembered the Ten Commandments that he learned at church. One of them is "Do Not Steal." Tommy knew that God would be very sad if he stole from Mrs. Lee. But Ben and Andy were his best friends. He wanted to do what they did, and didn't want to be called a "scaredy-cat." What should he do?

Tommy knew that he should not steal no matter what. So he prayed quietly in his heart to ask God to give him courage, so that he wouldn't be afraid to tell his friends that stealing was not a right thing to do.

After Tommy said a short silent prayer, he went up to his friends and said, "Guys, you know that taking the erasers is not right. We shouldn't take Mrs. Lee's stuff, plus we might get into trouble if we are caught stealing. Let's just be super good every day this week, so that we can be the ones to get the eraser as a prize from Mrs. Lee."

Tommy felt good when he told his friends that stealing was wrong. It was hard, but he had done it! Before anything further could happen, the bell rang again. It was time to go back to class.

Ben and Andy decided to listen to Tommy and be good all week. Mrs. Lee was very happy with their class behavior throughout the week. On Friday, when the names of the students were called, Ben, Andy and Tommy all got to pick their favorite colored eraser.

Questions to Think About

1. **Who did Tommy like to hang out with at school?** (Ben and Andy.)
2. **What was Ben's reaction when he saw Mrs. Lee's brightly-colored erasers?** (Ben really liked them. He first wished that he could have one, then he wanted to steal one from Mrs. Lee.)
3. **How did Tommy feel when his friends wanted him to take the erasers without asking?** (It was hard for Tommy. At first, Tommy wanted to please his friends and do what they did. But he knew that God would not be happy with this.)
4. **What would you do if Ben asked you to sneak into Mrs. Lee's room to steal erasers with him?** (Let students answer.)

5. **What did Tommy do to ask God for courage to do what is right?** (He prayed in his heart to ask God for courage, so he could be brave enough

to tell his friends that stealing is wrong.)



Activity 1

The Twelve Spies

How many spies were sent out? Write a number on each of them to count how many.

What kinds of things did the spies see in the promised land? Can you name them and color them in?



Activity 2

Who is Listening to God?

Look at each set of pictures. Who is listening to God? Circle the right picture. Tell what they are doing that shows they are listening to God and His teachings.



Activity 3

Magnifying Glass

Materials:

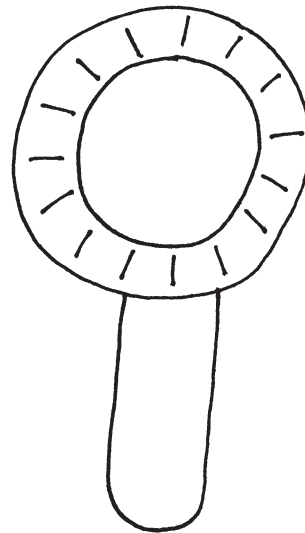
1. small paper plates (two per student)
2. markers and crayons
3. cellophane
4. scissors
5. glue
6. craft sticks

Directions:

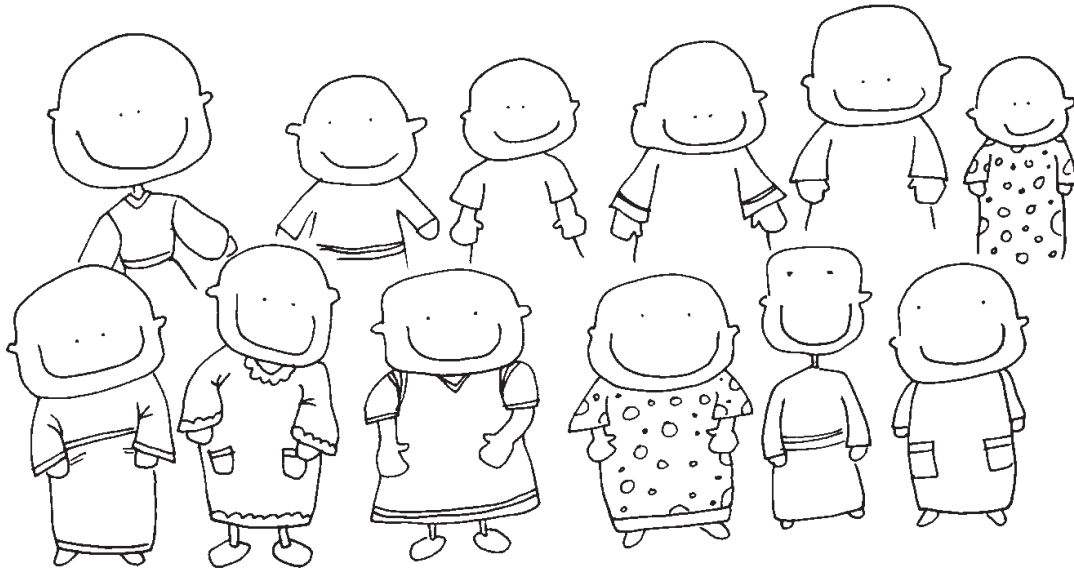
1. Give each student two paper plates and have them stack the plates on top of each other. Help them cut the middle of the plates out, so the plates look like a donut.
2. Pull the two plates apart and glue a piece of cellophane (large enough to fit in the circle) around the rim of one plate.
3. Glue a craft stick to the edge of the same plate.
4. Now glue the other plate to the first plate to cover up the stick and cellophane. Once the plates are aligned, the students should have a

magnifying glass.

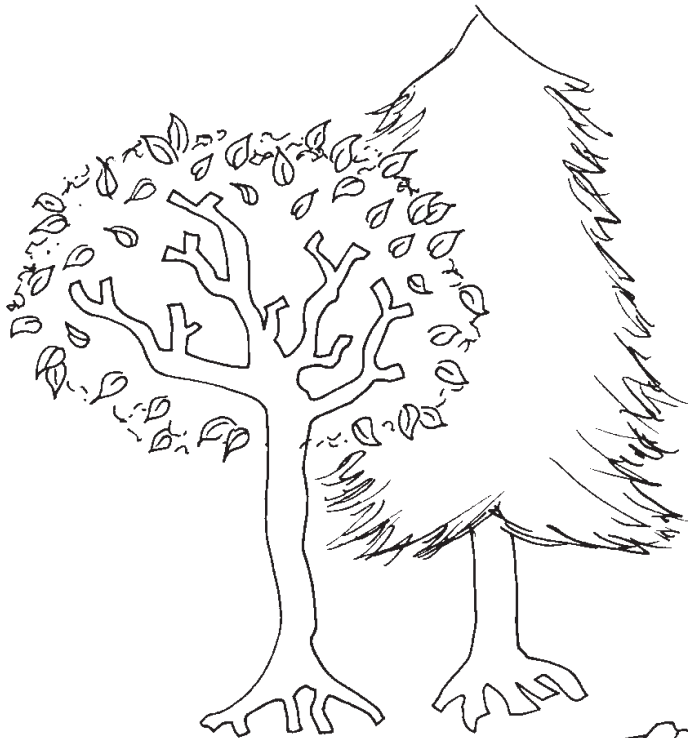
5. The students can decorate the plates with the markers to personalize the magnifying glass. As the students create their craft, review the story of the spies by pretending they are the spies. They can use a magnifying glass to “to see things better.”



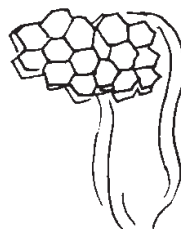
The Twelve Spies



How many spies were sent out?
Write a number on each of them to
count how many.



What kinds of things did the
spies see in the promised
land? Can you name them and
color them in?

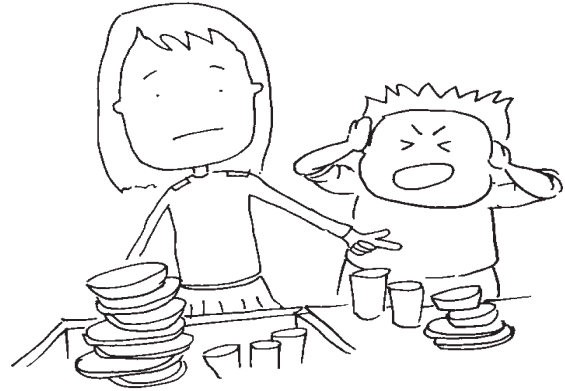


Activity 2:2

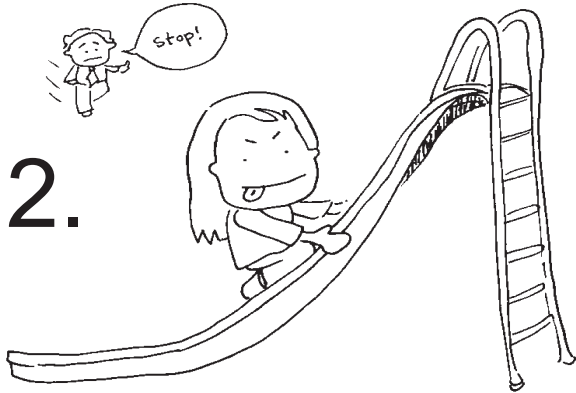
Who is Listening to God?

Look at each set of pictures. Who is listening to God? Circle the right picture. Tell what they are doing that shows they are listening to God and His teachings.

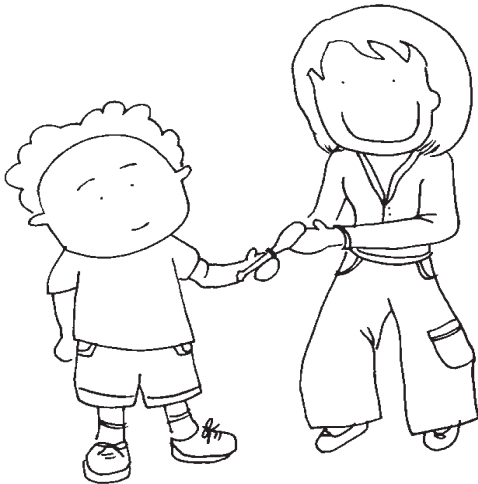
1.



2.



3.



Rahab and the Spies

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- toilet paper rolls
- yarn
- scissors
- assorted stickers and scrap papers
- hole punch
- tape or stapler



Scriptures

Josh 2:1-22

Bible Truth Objective(s)

Only Jesus Christ alone can save us

Behavioral Objective(s)

To be brave and courageous helpers of God; to identify ways we can be brave helpers

Memory Verse

"He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (Josh 2:11)



Bible Knowledge

Joshua, a New Leader

Joshua was selected by God to succeed Moses as the leader of the Israelites long before Moses' death (Num 27:15-23; Deut 31:14-15, 23). Before he led the people into the promised land, Joshua began as Moses' servant. He was on the mountain when Moses received the Ten Commandments (Ex 32:17). He was also one of the spies sent out to survey Canaan, and only he and Caleb returned with a favorable report of what they saw.

Joshua sent the spies secretly because the last time spies were sent, the report they brought back caused problems (see Num 13:1-14:4). While he did not want to move ahead without information, Joshua did not want to cause the people to stumble once more. Joshua was indeed a great military and spiritual leader.

Rahab

There are some possible reasons why the spies stopped at the house of Rahab, the prostitute:

1. It was a good place to gather information and have no questions asked in return.
2. Rahab's house was in an ideal location for a quick escape because it was built into the city wall.
3. God directed the spies to Rahab's house because God knew her heart was open to Him and that she would be an instrument in the Israelites' victory over Jericho.

Even though Rahab was a heathen and a prostitute, she was willing to risk everything she had for God. She recognized that God is all-powerful. Her simple faith saved her entire household!

City Walls

In Joshua's day, it was common to build houses on town walls. Many cities had two walls about 12 to 15 feet apart. Houses were built on wooden logs laid across the tops of the two walls. Rahab may have lived in such a house with a window that looked out over the outside wall.

Flax was harvested in the fields and piled high on the rooftops to dry. It was then made into yarn which was used to make linen cloth. Flax grows to a height of three or four feet. Stacked on the roof, it made an excellent hiding place for the spies.



Understanding Your Students

Being courageous is a quality that is very difficult for children of all ages. Acts of courage usually involve a person having to stand up for another against a social group or in a dangerous situation. Having to stand out from a group of people to help another may be a serious concern for a lot of your students since acts of courage generally involve risks. Since the students are still young, you can start by encouraging them to help one another in all kinds of situations, in a supportive and risk-free classroom atmosphere. As they grow accustomed to assisting each other, it will become natural for them to want to help others in need, even if it might require them to take on courage to do so.

In the lesson you will be teaching today, it is pos-

sible that your students may question Rahab's actions in the story. In the biblical account, Rahab was forced to lie to the officers to protect Joshua's spies. Your students may wonder if it is okay for them to also lie to keep others from getting hurt. It is important for them to know that God does not want anyone to lie. We should never lie to hurt another people on purpose (Ex 20:16). However, we should need to remember the principle Jesus taught His disciples (be wise as serpent and harmless as dove, Mat 10:16). Even though we should not lie, we should also show discernment. We would not want our students telling strangers any information and may put them in danger. It is always important to encourage your students that God can provide a way out in any situation. In the same way, if your students are determined not to lie, God will surely help them.



Vocabulary

Spy

to watch someone in secret (verb); a person who is watching someone or something in secret (noun)

Flax

a material from a plant used for making cloth like linen

Protect

to keep someone or something safe from harm



Before You Teach

Although it is true that Rahab had to tell a lie in order to save the lives of the spies, it is also true that it took great faith on her part to do so. She could not have predicted what the king's messengers might have done after she lied. They could have stormed into her home and searched her entire house. And if they had discovered the spies, her life, as well as that of her family's, could have very well been over.

When we read stories in the Bible, it always seems matter-of-fact that events unfold the way they do. But many acts recorded in the Scriptures took great faith to perform. We often say Abraham knew that God would keep His promise of giving him a son and that is why he did not hesitate to sac-

rifice Isaac. But how many of us could have done that without giving it a moment's thought? When Moses faced the Red Sea, God told him to trust Him and He would open up a way. With millions of Israelites following him, Moses did exactly what God told him.

What gave these characters their faith to act upon God's will? In Hebrews, it records that faith is trusting and hoping for things we cannot see. None of these people could see what they were promised. They had to believe that things would happen as God had planned.

We often try to evaluate our faith. Do we have great faith or just a little? But these examples teach us that faith really cannot be measured on a scale. Once God has chosen us, we need to come before Him wholeheartedly. Faith is believing He always keeps His promises and will never let us down.



Bible Story

Last week, we learned how Moses sent some spies into Canaan. Does anyone remember how many spies Moses sent? That's right, he sent twelve spies who went throughout Canaan to see what the people and the land were like. Now two of the spies were very faithful. Do you remember their names? Yes, they were Caleb and Joshua. Why were they faithful? They saw how wonderful the land was, and they trusted that God would give it to the Israelites. But not all the spies gave a report like Caleb and Joshua's. What did the other ten spies have to say about Canaan? They said that the land was good and the fruit was very beautiful and large, but they were scared of the people. The ten spies said that the Israelites were like grasshoppers compared to the people in Canaan, and they did not really believe that God would help them. When the Israelites heard the report of the ten spies, they got so upset, they wanted to go back to Egypt—where they were slaves! God knew they weren't ready to go to Canaan yet, so He had the Israelites walk in the wilderness for another thirty-eight years. And after all those years, we come to this week's story.

The Great City of Jericho

Finally, it was time for the Israelites to start moving into Canaan one more time, but to do that, they would have to battle a lot of people and cities. Do you think the Israelites were scared to go into battle with lots of people and cities? Well, most likely yes, but the Israelites also knew that they had an all-powerful God on their side, so they knew that God would take care of them. One of these people who had faith in God was Joshua. Remember him from last week? Well, even after thirty-eight years, he still had faith in God and knew that God would guide the Israelites as they entered Canaan.

Joshua knew that God's time for the Israelites to enter Canaan had finally come, so he secretly sent two spies to go into the land. Before they left, he told them, "Find out anything you can about Canaan, especially about the city of Jericho." So the two spies left their camp and made their way to Jericho. From far away, they could see what a great city it was. The city had these huge, thick walls that circled all

around. There were also houses that were built into the walls. Can you imagine in your head what these walls looked like? (You could ask a student to come up and draw on the board what they think the houses might look like on the walls. You may need to first draw two walls to help them visualize it.)

Rahab Hides the Spies

Even though it was dangerous, the two spies snuck into the city of Jericho. They did what Joshua asked them to and took a good, long look at the land and the people. They tried to be very careful so that they wouldn't be caught. But after a long day, it was becoming dark. The two spies needed a place to stay. They decided to stay at a woman's house. Her name was Rahab. Remember those houses that were built right into the city walls? Well, Rahab lived in one of those houses, so she had a window that could take someone out of the city. It was a good idea for the spies to stay at Rahab's house because if the spies needed to leave the city quickly, they would be able to escape through the window.

But someone from the city saw these two spies going into Rahab's house and knew that they were probably Israelites trying to see what the city was like. When the king of Jericho found out about these two spies, he sent Rahab a message.

"Let us have those two men who are staying with you. They have come here to spy on us!"

But Rahab had already hidden the spies. She hid them under piles of flax that were on her rooftop. In those days, the rooftops were flat, not pointed. This made it easy for the spies to stay on the roof. Rahab put the flax on her roof so that it could dry. Flax comes from a plant used for making cloth. Rahab did all this to protect the spies!

She told the king's messengers, "The men were here, but I don't know where they came from. They left when it was time to close the city gate, just when the sun was going down. I don't know where they were going, but maybe you can catch them if you hurry."

After the king's messengers heard this, they went after the spies. As soon as they had gone, the city gate was closed.

Rahab's Strong Faith

The two spies had almost been caught. But

once Rahab knew that the messengers were gone, she went up on the roof and said to the spies, "I know that the Lord has given you this land. Everyone in this city is shaking with fear because of you. We heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea so that you could leave Egypt, and how He had destroyed other people and kings. Look around—everyone in this city is scared because we know that the Lord your God rules in heaven and on earth. Please promise me in the Lord's name that you will be as kind to my family as I have been to you. Do something to show me that you will save me and my family later on."

The Spies Make a Promise to Rahab

The spies replied, "If you save our lives, we will save yours! Don't tell anyone about what we are doing, and we promise to help you when the Lord gives us this land."

To get them out of her house and into safety, Rahab let the spies down by a rope through the window of her house. Remember, her house was in the city wall. So once she let them out, they would be outside the city of Jericho. Then it would be easy for them to go back to their camp.

Before the spies left, she said, "Hide in the hills! Otherwise, you may run into the king's messengers. They are trying to look for you, but they won't be able to find you in the hills. They will give up and

return after three days. After three days, you can go back to your camp."

Before the spies left, they told Rahab, "We will keep our promise to you. But this red rope must be tied on your window when we invade the land. Also your parents, your brothers, and everyone else in your family must be here with you. If anyone leaves the house, they may be killed, and we will not be able to save them. If you tell anybody why we were here, we won't have to keep our promise."

"I'll do exactly as you have said," Rahab promised, and she said good-bye. The spies climbed down the rope, and she made sure that the red rope stayed tied to her window.

The Spies Come Home Safe and Sound

For three days, the spies hid in the hills while the king's men searched along every road for them. After the men had given up and gone back, the two spies left the hills and crossed the river. When they came back to Joshua, they told him everything that had happened with Rahab and the king's messengers. They also said, "We are sure the Lord has given us the whole country because the people shake with fear every time they think of us."

So Joshua knew and had faith that God's time had really come for the Israelites to go into Canaan. Joshua knew that God would help them win the battle against the great city of Jericho.



Check For Understanding

- 1. How many spies did Joshua send? (Two.)**
What city did he send them to spy on?
(Jericho.)
- 2. Where did the spies hide when they were in the city of Jericho? (They hid at Rahab's house.)**
- 3. Where in the house did the spies hide?**
(They hid on the rooftop, under piles of flax.)
- 4. What did Rahab ask the two spies for before they left her house? (She asked the**

spies to save her and her family when they would later attack and capture the city.)

- 5. How did Rahab help the spies leave the city? (She let them down through a window by a rope. But since her house was built into the city walls, they spies were able to get out of the city.)**
- 6. What did Rahab tell the spies to do to stay safe? (She told them to stay in the hills for three days so that the king's messengers would not be able to find them. Then it would be safe for them to return to the camp.)**



Life Application Story

God's Brave Helper

One day, a new girl joined Michelle's class in school. Her name was Erika, and even though she had a warm smile and a friendly face, Erika did not speak English as well as the other kids.

Mrs. Jones, the teacher, introduced Erika to the class and said, "Class, please welcome Erika. She will be with us from now on. Because Erika is just learning to speak English, it is our job to help her."

But when Mrs. Jones sat her next to Adrienne, Adrienne began to whine, "Mrs. Jones, I don't want to sit next to her."

"Why not, Adrienne?" Mrs. Jones asked.

"Because ... because ... because I don't want to," said Adrienne.

When Erika saw what was happening, tears started to well up in her eyes, but she swallowed hard and tried her best to keep her tears in.

Erika could tell that Mrs. Jones was about to say something to Adrienne, so she quickly said in her best English, "It's okay, maybe I sit there?" Erika pointed to an empty seat in the back that was next to a girl named Veronica.

Mrs. Jones thought for a moment and replied, "Well, that is fine, Erika. Veronica, please get Erika a book from the back so that Erika can follow along with us." And with that, Mrs. Jones turned her back and began to write on the board.

Usually, Veronica was very polite, but when she saw that Adrienne refused to sit with Erika, Veronica also did not want to help her. Before Erika even began to walk towards the back of the room, Veronica quickly put some books on the empty chair so that Erika could not sit there. Erika could no longer hold back her tears. She cried softly as she stood unhappily in the middle of the room, unsure of where to go.

Michelle saw what was happening and wanted to help. She raised her hand and asked the teacher, "Mrs. Jones, I know you said she could sit next to Veronica, but I have an empty seat next to me too. I would really like it if she could sit here." Michelle turned towards Erika and gave her a big smile.

Mrs. Jones said, "Of course, Michelle. How wonderful of you!"

As Michelle and Erika went to the back of the room to get a book, Michelle whispered to Erika, "I hope we can be friends. You seem like a really nice person."

Erika's eyes opened wide. "You want to be friend?" she asked.

"Sure, I do," replied Michelle. "Do you want to be mine?"

Erika was too happy for words and just nodded. When Michelle saw how happy Erika was, she thanked God in her heart for having the courage to be different from everyone else. Her heart had been pounding when she raised her hand to speak, but she knew it was the right thing to do.

Once the other boys and girls in the class got to know Erika and she also learned to speak more English, they all slowly became friends with her too. Even though Erika made many friends after that first day of school, she always feels an extra special bond with Michelle, who was the only one to have enough courage to be her first friend in a new place.

Questions to Think About

1. **Did Erika feel welcomed at first?** (No, no one wanted to help her or be her friend.)
2. **Who was brave enough to be Erika's first friend?** (Michelle raised her hand and asked the teacher to let Erika sit next to her. She was glad God gave her the courage to do what was right.)
3. **How can you be a good, brave helper for God?** (Let students answer.)



Activity 1

Rahab Helps the Spies

Look at the pictures. Answer the questions and color

in the pictures. Rahab hid the spies on the _____ (roof). Rahab used a _____ (rope) to help the spies out of the city.



Activity 2

The Path to Jericho

Help the two spies reach the city of Jericho.



Activity 3

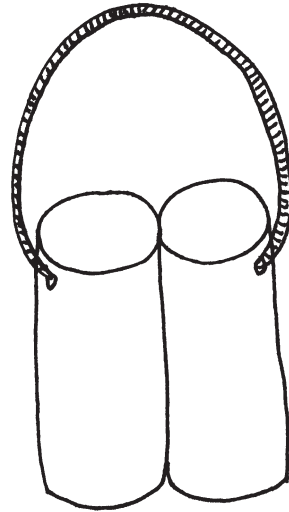
Spy-Noculars

Materials:

1. toilet paper rolls (2 per student)
2. yarn
3. stickers and scrap papers
4. hole punch
5. scissors
6. tape or stapler

Directions:

1. Give each student two toilet paper rolls. Lay them side by side (the long way) and tape (or staple) the two rolls together. Now it should look like a pair of binoculars.
2. Help the students punch two holes, one on each roll, near one end of the binoculars.
3. String a piece of yarn (long enough for the students to hang the binoculars around their necks without hurting themselves) through the holes to create a loop and tie it off.
4. Allow the students to decorate their binoculars with stickers or scraps of paper.
5. As the students are creating this craft, have them answer the following questions:
 - *How do you think the spies felt when they went into the city of Jericho?
 - *Do you think Rahab was glad she helped the spies?
6. After the craft and if time permits, you may wish to ask the students to pretend to be the spies, entering the city of Jericho.

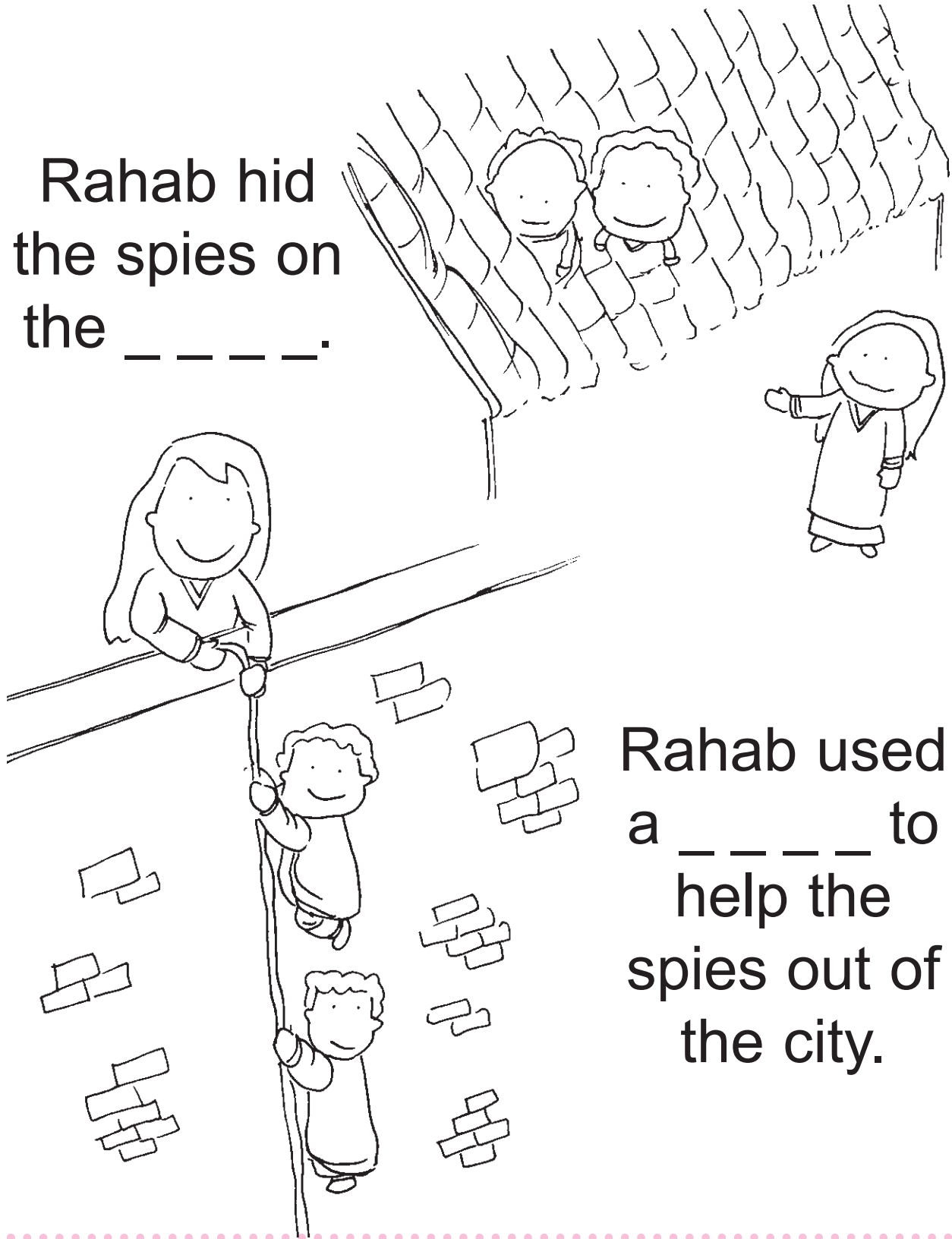


Activity 3:1

Rahab Helps the Spies

Look at the pictures. Answer the questions and color in the pictures.

Rahab hid
the spies on
the _____.

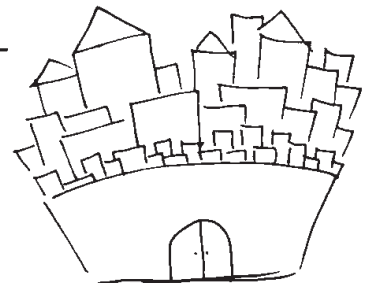
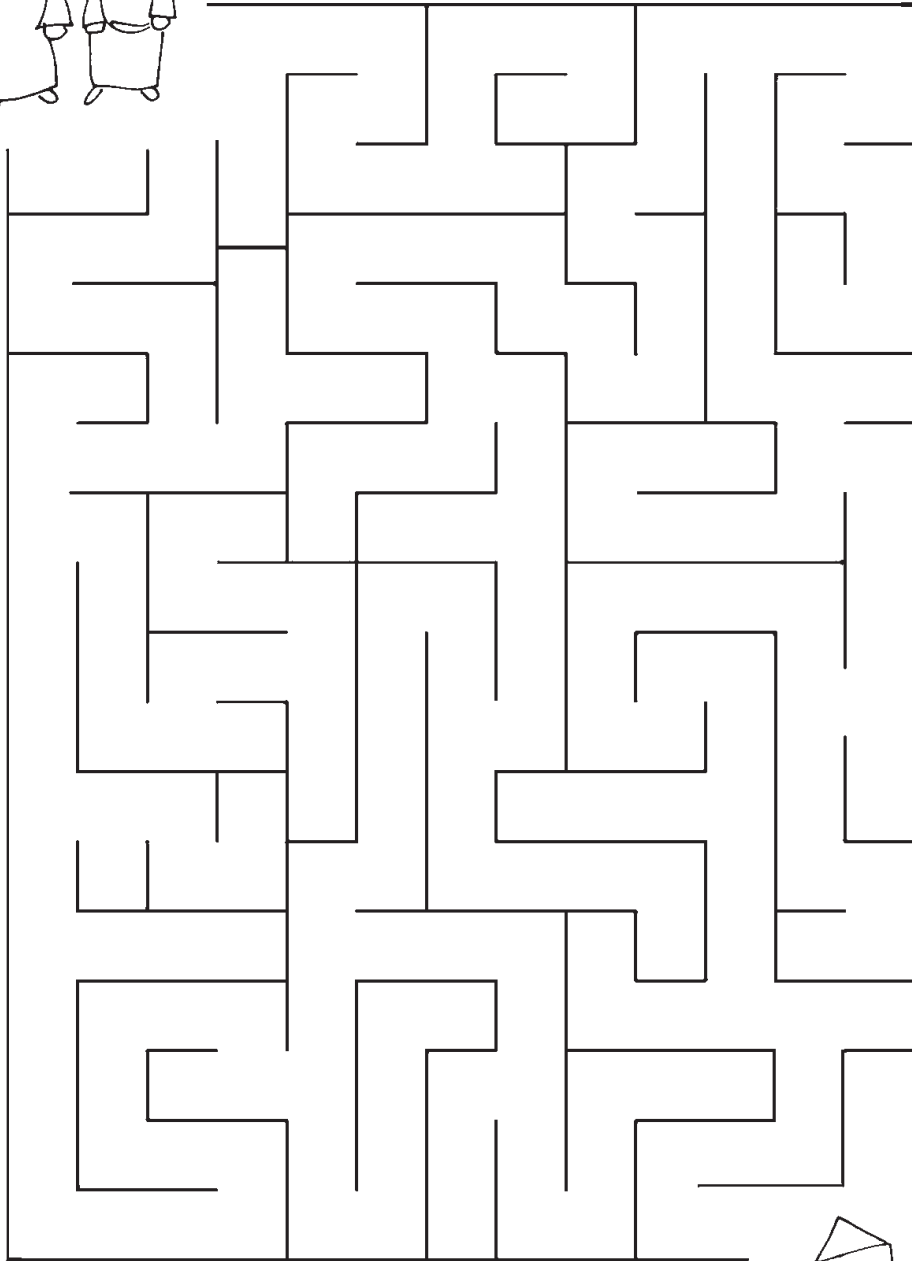
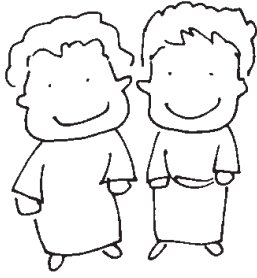


Rahab used
a _____ to
help the
spies out of
the city.

Activity 3:2

The Path to Jericho

Help the two spies reach the city of Jericho.



The Water Stops Flowing

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- footprint pattern and white blank paper
- blue construction or tissue paper
- scissors
- markers



Scriptures

Josh 2:23-3:17; 4:15-18; 5:10-12

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God is powerful and helps His people in need

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify the things God controls through His mighty power; to give thanks to God for these things

Memory Verse

"The Lord will do wonders among you."
(Josh 3:5)



Bible Knowledge

The Jordan River

The Jordan River means "the descender." It rises from the foot of Mount Hermon and flows into the Dead Sea. As the river flows, there are many twists and turns; and the full length of the river is more than two hundred miles.

Many important events in the Bible involve the Jordan River. In today's lesson, the Israelites crossed the river on dry ground to enter into the land of Canaan. Elijah and Elisha also performed many miracles at the Jordan River. Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist at this very same river.

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River at the time of the year when the water was at its fullest. The Bible records that they crossed on the tenth day of the first month (Josh 4:19), which corresponds to March or April. The waters of the river would have been very full from the melting snow from the rain season. The timing may have been a part of God's plan for a number of reasons. The Canaanites would have been less prepared for an

attack, not expecting many people to be able to get to them. In addition, God wanted to show the Israelites His great power in making the gushing and flowing water come to a standstill.

The Ark of the Covenant

In Joshua chapter 3, the ark of the covenant is mentioned more than 10 times. It was obviously very important. The priests were responsible for carrying it. But they had to carry the ark on poles and were not allowed to touch it. This is because the ark symbolized God's presence among His people; that is also why the people were instructed to keep a distance from it as the priests carried it.

The Canaanites

In Joshua 3:10, seven groups of Canaanites are mentioned. Little is known about many of these people. They were likely divided based on the areas in which they lived. For example, the Perizzites may have lived in the forested areas of central Palestine while the Jebusites lived in Jerusalem.



Understanding Your Students

Trust is developed when one person has to depend on another person. To your students, their parents are the most trustworthy people in this world. It's easy for them to place their trust in their parents because they're visible and they've also had plenty of opportunities to meet the needs of their children. When children are scared, their parents protect them. When they promise their children that they will do something, they try their best to fulfill their promises.

Somehow, though, you will need to teach your students that God is more trustworthy than anyone. He loves them just as their parents do, if not even more. This might be difficult for your students to understand. God is not able to be seen, and His acts of faithfulness aren't always easily observed. This is why

stories from the Bible and personal testimonies are so important. Whenever possible, point out instances where God has been faithful to His people. Recall specific promises in the Bible that God made to His people that He kept. Remind them of God's promised Holy Spirit, and that He will always work for the good of those who love Him. Remind them of the story of Noah, and how God's promise was established by the rainbow. Your students will see that just as God kept His promises to the people in the Bible, He will keep His promises to us, in our lives.

As time goes on, your students will run into occasions where they will need to trust in God. They will recall the discussions on God's faithfulness, remember His promises for them, and have a firm understanding that God will be with them through all.



Vocabulary

Defeat

to beat something

Celebrate

to remember a special time, like birthdays or holidays, by doing special things

Priests

Levites who were responsible for the holy things of God

Ark of the Covenant

a special box that carried the holy things of God, for example the Ten Commandment stone tablets

Officers

the people who were responsible for keeping everyone and everything in order



Before You Teach

God had parted the waters of the Red Sea to let the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex 14), and now many years later, He parted the Jordan River to let them enter Canaan. The Israelites crossed the Jordan River in the spring when its banks were overflowing. God chose the time when the river was at its highest to demonstrate His power, parting the waters so that the entire nation could cross on dry ground. This testimony of God's supernatural power served to build the Israelites' hope in God and to give them a great reputation with their enemies, who greatly outnumbered them.

These miracles showed Israel that God keeps His promises. The first generation of Israelites left Egypt forty years ago, and lost their chance to

enter the promised land. Now, a new generation of Israelites was about to experience the fulfillment of a promise that was made to the generation before them. Even after all these years, God's promise holds true. The crossing of the Jordan River is the first fruit of this promise. He was with them at the end of the wanderings just as He was with them in the beginning.

If God kept His promises to the Israelites long ago, and across generations, surely we can trust that He will keep His promises to us today. Usually, in hindsight, we see how God had been constantly by our side through a difficult situation. No matter how hard things seem to be, we can be sure that God is there. History and our own experiences testify that God never breaks His promises and will abide with us. He never lets us down and will always be there to lift us up.



Bible Story

The Israelites Get Ready to Enter Canaan

Last week, we learned that two spies visited Jericho. They were sent to the land of Canaan because Joshua wanted to see what everything was like in this land. The spies found out that the people in the land of Canaan were afraid of the Israelites because they had heard about all the miracles God did for them. The Israelites knew that God was going to help them finally enter into the promised land.

After the two spies gave their report, the Israelites packed up their things at the camp and got ready to enter into Canaan. The Israelites walked some more, and soon, they reached the edge of the land of Canaan. They were almost there! The people were excited and really wanted to have their own land. There was only one more thing they had to do. They had to cross the Jordan River because Canaan was on the other side. But how could so many people, with their children, cross the big Jordan River? No one had ever been there before; how would they even know where to go? God had big plans for the Israelites and a wonderful miracle to show them. He was powerful and He loved them very much.

The Israelites Get Ready to Cross the Jordan

The Israelites decided to camp next to the Jordan River for three days. They probably wondered, "How are we going to cross this river? We have never been here before!" It was the flooding season, which means that the river was very deep, and the water was very fast. On the third day, some officers told the people what to do.

They said, "When you see the Levite priests carry the ark of the covenant past you, gather your things and follow them. If you follow them, you will know which way to go. But be careful and don't get too close to the ark!" Remember, the ark of the covenant was a special box that carried things that belonged to God, like the Ten Commandments. Only the priests were allowed to carry it. Priests are people who work for God, like how pastors work for God today.

After that, Joshua told the Israelites, "Prepare yourselves, because tomorrow God will do amazing things for you!" Something exciting was going to happen tomorrow, so the people got themselves ready for whatever God had planned for them.

The Israelites Cross the Jordan

The next day, the people packed up their belongings and their tents, and Joshua said to all of them, "Come here and listen to God's words! This is how we will know that God is living among us. He will defeat our enemies. The ark will go into the Jordan River ahead of all of us. Once the priests who carry the ark step into the river, the water flowing down the river will be cut off and stop flowing. Then we can all walk on dry ground across to the other side. From this miracle, we will know that God is with us, and that He will keep His promise to us and give us the land of Canaan."

Joshua told them that God was going to make the water stop flowing, so that there could be dry land for the Israelites to walk on! This was a special day because God was going to perform a miracle to show the Israelites that He was with them, and He was going to keep His promise to them. Remember, a long time ago, God promised them that He would take them into the wonderful land of Canaan, and now, God was going to keep His promise.

After Joshua told them what to do, everyone gathered their families, and followed the priests who were carrying the ark. They got very close to the river. Remember, the Jordan River was flooding, which means there was a lot of water moving very fast. Yet, as soon as the priests carrying the ark stepped into the river, the water from up the stream stopped flowing! It piled up in a big heap far away, and now, in front of the Israelites was a dry path for them to walk on. Now they could cross the river! It was just like when God opened the Red Sea for them 40 years ago, when Moses was leading them. Can you imagine what that was like? It was like God stuck His hand out and blocked the water from coming down the river. The priests carrying the ark stood in the middle of the river so that it would keep dry, and all the Israelites walked across the Jordan River. The priests stood there for a long time, until all the people, even the little children, crossed.

After everyone crossed the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark walked across too. After they crossed the river, God let the water go, and it came flowing down fast and strong, just like before! This was the amazing thing that Joshua told the people God would do for them. God would hold back the water long enough for the Israelites to pass

through. But once everyone was safely at the other side, the water would flow again.

The Israelites Celebrate

That day, the Israelites made camp in the plains of Jericho, and celebrated Passover. Do you remember the first time the Israelites celebrated Passover? It was when they were in Egypt still, and God saved His people from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In the last plague, God had an angel pass over the houses in the land and the angel killed all the first born children of the Egyptians. After this tenth plague, Pharaoh finally let God's people go. The Israelites celebrated Passover because their firstborn children did not die, even though the Egyptians' firstborn children died. To celebrate Passover, they had roasted lamb and special vegetables. Now, they were celebrating it again in Canaan after they crossed the Jordan River because they were remembering that God always saved them when they were in trouble.

Can you imagine how excited the Israelites were! For forty years, they ate only manna, but on this special day, they ate bread and roasted grain! They were able to eat these things because they

could pick the grains from the land of Canaan. Now that they ate from the promised land of Canaan, the manna would stop coming down. God had given them manna in the wilderness because there was nothing to eat there. But now, they could eat the fruit and vegetables of Canaan. They didn't need manna anymore.

God showed that He loved the Israelites by making something so hard, like crossing the mighty Jordan River, easy for them. God also kept His promise to them by taking them across the river into Canaan, and now they were able to enjoy the grains and vegetables of the land. In the next lesson, we will see how God continued to take care of the Israelites, and helped them defeat their enemies. Today's lesson teaches us that God loved the Israelites very much, and always kept His promises to them. He also loves us and helps us too!



Check For Understanding

- 1. What is the name of the river that the Israelites had to cross before they could enter into the promised land?** (River Jordan.)
- 2. What were the priests carrying?** (The ark of the covenant.)
- 3. What happened when the priests stepped into the water?** (The water stopped and the Israelites walked on dry ground through the river.)
- 4. What happened after everybody crossed the river?** (The water flowed back again.)
- 5. Who made this miracle happen?** (Our God is an Almighty God. He led the Israelites across the Red Sea and once again performed a

miracle to let them cross the River Jordan without drowning.)

- 6. What did the Israelites do after they crossed the Jordan River?** (They celebrated Passover by eating from the land of Canaan. They did not have to eat manna anymore.)
- 7. Do you have any testimonies about God helping you or your family? How about sharing with everyone? God wants us to share testimonies because it will help others strengthen their faith. But most of all, God's name is glorified. Therefore, let us remember how God has helped us in times of need. He is the Almighty God.**



Life Application Story

Watching the Stars and the Moon

One night, Benjamin went to David's house to watch the stars with him. Benjamin was very excited because it was his first time looking at the stars using a telescope. Because the stars and planets are so far away, they are hard to see with just our eyes. A telescope is a very powerful instrument that is used to look at stars and planets. Benjamin could not wait to see if they could find bright, shiny stars. David was a few years older than Benjamin but had invited him to his house the last time they saw each other in church.

At first both Benjamin and David could not see the stars with the telescope. Benjamin was disappointed. He thought he had gotten all excited for nothing. But then, David realized why.

"I forgot to turn off the lights," David said. The light in David's room was too bright for them to see the stars clearly. After David turned off the lights, they could see the night sky much better. David moved the telescope around.

"What do you see, David?" Benjamin asked impatiently.

"I see some twinkling stars. Here, you take a look," David said, as he handed Benjamin the telescope.

"Wow, David, I see the stars glowing! They are even prettier and bigger than I thought they would be. Awesome!" said Benjamin excitedly.

"Hey, Ben, have you ever thought about how powerful God is for creating the whole earth and the entire universe, including the stars, the moon, the planets, and the sun?" David asked.

"No, I've never really thought about God's mighty power until now. God is really amazing! The stars are far away and there are so many of them," said Benjamin.

"God is able to hold up each star so it doesn't fall down. Holding up millions of stars is hard, but God makes it look so easy and beautiful! Just looking at the stars tells us that God is real and He is the powerful creator of the entire universe! Let's try to see if we can spot the moon with the telescope," David suggested.

The boys took turns to see the moon with the

telescope.

"Come to think of it, God loves us a lot. He created stars for us to look at and enjoy. The moon also brightens a part of the earth at night, and the sun keeps us warm and gives us light during the daytime. God loves us so much," David explained.

"Thanks for inviting me over, David. I really enjoyed looking at the night sky. At first, I thought I was just coming over to look at the sky. But after looking at the stars, and listening to you, I know God is great," said Benjamin.

"You're welcome. When my parents first got me this telescope, I thought I was just going to have some fun looking out in the sky. But after a few times, I also saw God's power. When everything is quiet and I just sit here staring out the window, it is so peaceful and also very beautiful. God is really great and loves us a lot to give us all these stars and planets to look at."

Benjamin agreed with David and they looked at the stars some more through the telescope.

Questions to Think About

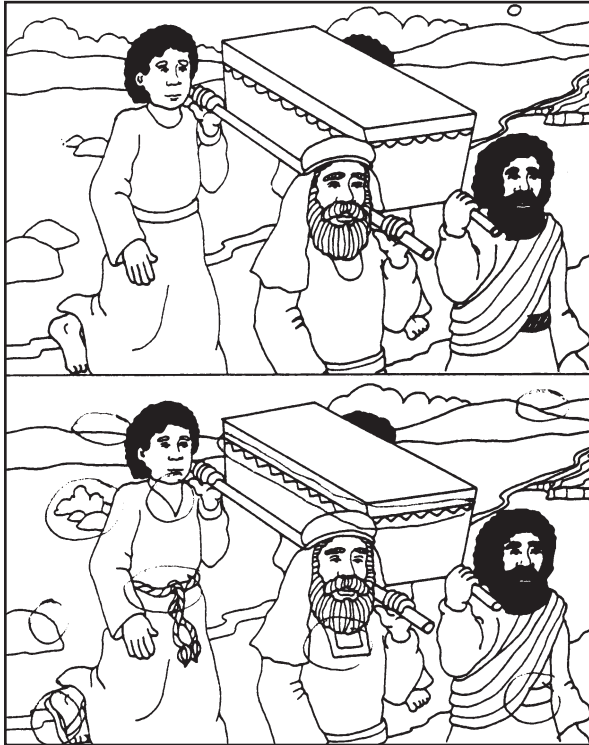
1. **What was Benjamin excited about?** (He was excited about going over to David's house and looking through a telescope.)
2. **What did the two boys see through the telescope?** (They saw stars and the moon.)
3. **What did Benjamin think of God after looking at the stars through the telescope?** (He thought God was great and amazing. No one could ever have made so many stars and keep them twinkling in the sky for so long.)
4. **What do you think of when you see the stars and the moon?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

Can You Spot the Differences?

Look at the two pictures of the priests holding the ark. There are some things that are different in the second picture. Can you find them? (Answers are circled below.)



Activity 2

What Does God Control?

What does God control? Write down the answer under each picture. How can you give thanks for each of these things? (1. God controls the food that grows. 2. God controls the sun, moon and stars in the sky. 3. God controls the plants, trees and flowers. 4. God controls the four seasons.)



Activity 3

Let's Walk Across the Jordan

Materials:

1. footprint pattern and white blank paper
2. blue construction or tissue paper
3. markers
4. scissors

Directions:

1. Cut out the footprint pattern.
2. Take seven blank white sheets of paper and cut out seven footprints, using the pattern as a guide.
3. Now use a heavy marker and write the memory verse on the footprints, using one footprint per word. "The Lord will do wonders for you."
4. Place the footprints on the floor so that they are arranged in such a way the students can walk on each word in order and be able to recite the memory verse.
5. Now place blue construction or tissue paper around the footprint to create the "Jordan River."
6. Invite each student to take turns and walk on the "dry ground" footprints, as the Israelites did. Remember to ask them say the memory verse as they step on each footprint.

Activity 4:1

Can You Spot the Differences?

Look at the two pictures of the priests holding the ark. There are some things that are different in the second picture. Can you find them?

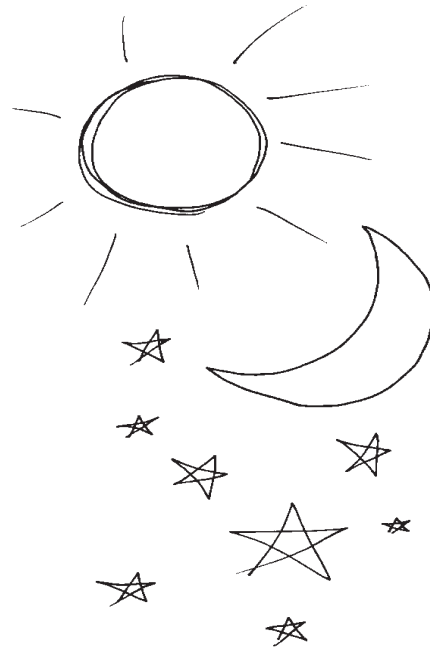


Activity 4:2

What Does God Control?

What does God control? Write down the answer under each picture. How can you give thanks for these things?

1. God controls the _____
that grows.



2. God controls the _____
_____ in the sky.

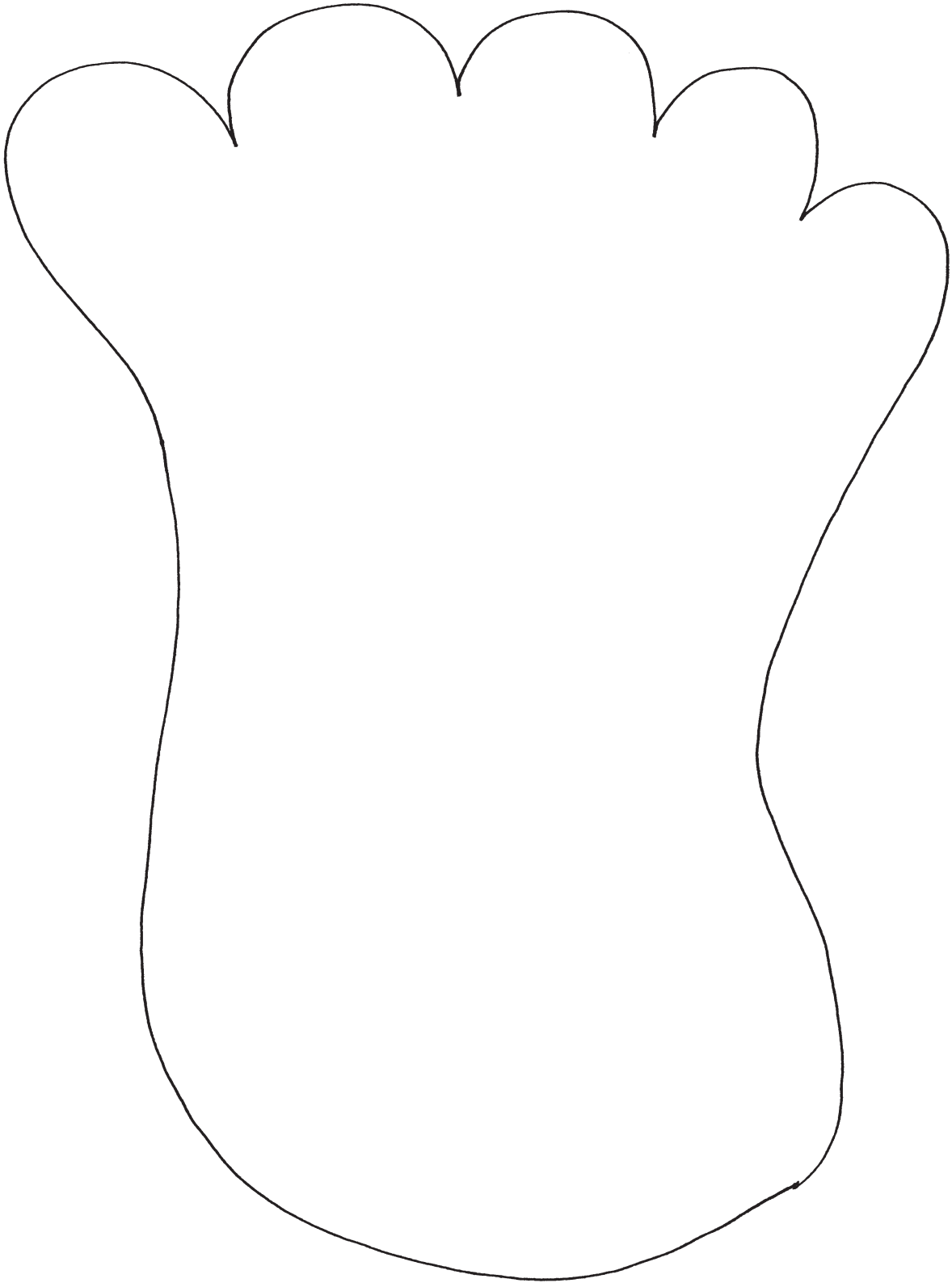


3. God controls the _____
_____.

4. God controls the four
_____.

Activity 4:3

Footprint Pattern





The Walls of Jericho

Fall Down



Overview

Materials You'll Need

- small round rice cakes (store bought)
- cream cheese or frosting
- plastic spoons or knives
- graham crackers
- paper plates
- old newspapers
- gummy bears



Scriptures

Josh 6

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God's plan is always the best plan; God can help us and give us courage

Behavioral Objective(s)

To trust God by obeying His words; to have courage that God can help us even when things are hard

Memory Verse

"Shout! For the Lord has given you the city." (Josh 6:16)



Bible Knowledge

Jericho

The city of Jericho is one of the oldest cities in the world, and was built thousands of years before Joshua was born. It is situated in the lower Jordan Valley. According to Genesis 13:10, this valley was well watered and compared to "the garden of the Lord." With such rich soil and a warm climate, Jericho was an attractive area to live in.

The city of Jericho, at the time of Joshua, was not a large city. It measured less than half a mile in circumference. Therefore, it would not have been difficult to march around the city, as God had commanded the Israelites to do. However, as the Bible describes, the city was well-fortified. In some places, the wall could have been built up to 25 feet high and 20 feet thick. Soldiers standing guard on top of the walls could see for miles. Though it was a small city, Jericho was a symbol of military power and strength. When God made the walls fall flat at the mere sound of the shouts of the people, it demonstrated His great power.

God's Instructions

Why did God give Joshua complicated instructions for the destruction of Jericho (Josh 6:1-5)? It was because God had intended to test the faith and willingness of the Israelites to follow Him completely. God was making it undeniably clear that the battle would depend upon Him, and not upon Israel's weapons.

God also demanded the Israelites to destroy everything and everyone in Jericho. Although it may seem harsh, God wanted to keep His people from defiling themselves. Because of their evil practices and intense idolatry, the Canaanites were a stronghold of rebellion against God. God's purpose in all this was to keep the Israelites' faith pure, without contamination. It was God's intention to obliterate all Canaanite practices. When the Israelites did not follow God's instructions perfectly, there were disastrous results (i.e. the defeat at Ai).

However, Rahab and her household were saved because she had faith in God, and she had helped the Israelite spies.



Understanding Your Students

As with the previous lesson, this lesson aims to teach the children about trusting in the Lord. In this story, we can show them a concrete way in which to demonstrate their trust in God: to obey the Ten Commandments. While trust is quite abstract, obedience is not, and the story of the Israelites' victory at Jericho shows that to obey God means to trust God. Children can easily grasp the notion that they are to obey their parents; that is, to do what they tell them. This can be extended to following instructions from teachers in church and at school. Remind the students that when they obey their parents, it means that they trust in them. Likewise, when they obey God's commandments, they are trusting in God. Review some of the Ten Commandments with them (e.g. keep the Sabbath, don't be greedy, obey their parents, etc), and give them ideas about how they can obey

them.

As they grasp the idea that to trust in God means to obey Him, show them that people who trust in God by obeying Him are protected. In this story, the Israelites trusted in God and obeyed rather odd instructions. As a result, the great city of Jericho fell to the Israelites without a single Israelite casualty. When the Israelites ate manna, they were given specific instructions on how and when to gather it. As long as they followed those instructions, they always had food to eat. God protects and cares for those who exercise their trust in Him by obeying Him. Teach the children that if they obey God regularly in their lives, God will always protect and care for them. Even if it seems hard at the time, everything is always in God's plan, and under His protection. This is a lifelong lesson; however, examples like this story, coupled with testimonies, can help the students begin to build a foundation of trust in the Lord.



Vocabulary

Defeat

to beat something

Instructions

words that tell us what to do

Destroy

a get rid of something

The Ark of the Covenant

a special box that carried the holy things of God, for example the Ten Commandment stone tablets



Before You Teach

From the story of how the Israelites conquered Jericho, we can learn how to conquer the "Jericho" in our hearts. What are the "Jerichos" in our hearts? Perhaps it is pride, selfishness, or the inability to forgive others. We all have things that are difficult for us to overcome on our own. But what we can do is to rely wholly on God's power to defeat them. The walls of Jericho might have seemed insurmountable to the Israelites who had little, if any, experience in warfare. Yet, because they depended completely on God and obeyed all of His instructions, they were able to conquer the city. It is God's intention that we live our lives "Jericho-free," and if we follow His instructions, as

the Israelites did, victory is sure to be ours.

As they conquered Jericho, God also asked His people to destroy all the things of the city because He didn't want the Israelites to be defiled by the Canaanites evil practices. Although it may have seemed unreasonable to get rid of everything, God did this because He was protecting the Israelites. It is also critical for us to remember to destroy all remnants of the "old city" once the "walls" in our hearts come tumbling down. In order to do that we need to build God's kingdom in our hearts by being filled with the Holy Spirit. Today's lesson teaches us that if we want to triumph over sin, so that it is completely eliminated, we must be obedient and loyal to God and His teachings.



Bible Story

Rahab Saves the Spies

Children, do you remember one day Joshua sent two spies into Jericho to see how strong the city was and how many soldiers there were?

Even though the two spies got a good look at the land, someone saw them in the city. The two spies had to hide before they were found. They hid in a home near the city wall. A woman named Rahab hid them until it was safe for them to leave the city. Because she saved their lives, they promised Rahab that when they attacked Jericho she and her family would not be killed.

When the spies returned to the camp, the people were very happy because they had come back safely. What they had done was dangerous but God had protected them. That really encouraged the people to believe that God would give them the land He had promised.

Going to Jericho

After the Israelites decided to go to Jericho, they knew that they would need help. Jericho would be a hard city to win, because it had strong, high walls surrounding it. The high walls would keep anyone from getting in so the people inside would be protected. How could the Israelites break through the thick, tall wall in order to defeat the people of Jericho? The Israelites didn't have a plan, but they relied on God, and God had a plan. What do you think God's plan was? Do you think God's plan was to take lots of big hammers to break down the wall? Or maybe He would ask them to use fire to burn down the wall? No, neither of these plans would work because the wall was made of stone, and even a very large hammer would not knock it down. And fire can't harm stone. God had a better plan, and it was a strange and funny plan.

God told the people going to Jericho to line up. Soldiers would be first, next the priests with trumpets, then priests carrying the ark of the covenant and last more soldiers. Do you remember what priests do? Priests are people who work for God. Some priests worked for God by playing instruments, like the trumpet, which goes "TOOT!" Other priests worked for God by helping to carry the ark.

Remember, the ark is a special box that contained things that belonged to God. God told them to line up in this order: soldiers, priests with trumpets that go "TOOT!", priests with the ark, and then more soldiers. After everyone got in line, they weren't allowed to talk. Only the priests with the trumpet could blow the horns, but everyone else had to be very quiet. They would march in a straight line to Jericho, march around the city once, and then go home. Do you know what it means to march? Can someone raise their hand and show me what marching looks like? (Take a volunteer; if no one knows, demonstrate by stomping feet on ground, alternately.) This was what God wanted them to do: march around the city, and be very quiet, except for the tooting trumpets. Isn't this a funny plan? God told them that for six days, they had to wake up early, line up, march around Jericho one time, and then go home. No talking, only trumpets playing. Now, how is anyone going to knock down a big, tall wall just by marching around it? And if you take a trumpet and blow into it as loud as you can, do you think you could break down the walls in your own house? No, of course not! But God had His plan and He wanted the Israelites to trust Him.

The Israelites trusted God by obeying His commands. On the first day, they did just what He asked them to. They lined up, marched around the city, and went home. On the second day, they woke up early, lined up, walked around the city, and went home. They did the same thing again on the third day, the fourth day, the fifth day, and the sixth day (use visual aids to demonstrate six days, crossing out each day or posting up each day as it progresses). Were the Israelites obedient? Obedient means you do something exactly the way your mom or dad tells you to do it. The Israelites did exactly what God told them to do: line up, walk around the city, and then go home. They did all this without talking. Only the trumpets were playing. They followed God's instructions very carefully.

Can you imagine what the people of Jericho thought as they watched the Israelites march around their city tooting trumpets? They probably thought the Israelites were being silly. Imagine if someone came to your house and marched around it once, blew a trumpet and then went home. Wouldn't you wonder what that person was doing? It would be funny to see that, and the people inside

Jericho must have thought the Israelites were funny people. What were they doing walking around the big, thick wall? How would that help them get inside? Only God knew the answers to these questions.

The City Walls Collapse

On the seventh day the people got up early in the morning to start their march once more. But today, God wanted them to do something a little bit different. The last six days, God said that they just had to walk around Jericho once, but today, the seventh day, God told them to walk around it seven times! Around and around and around the city they marched—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. The Israelites were obedient to God, because they did exactly what God told them to do. They must have been so tired from walking around so much. But after the seventh time, they all stood still. What did God want them to do next? God had already told Joshua and now Joshua was ready to tell them.

"Shout! When the priests blow the trumpets, you need to shout!" cried Joshua, "For the Lord has given you the city! But don't take anything for yourselves. Everything is for God! Remember, once we get into the city, don't take anything in the city for yourselves!"

Remember that on the first six days of marching, the people weren't allowed to say anything. But now, God wanted them to shout as loud as they could. So the soldiers and the people listened to God and shouted together, while the priests blew their trumpets as loudly as they could! Can you imagine how loud it

was? So many people were shouting all at once, and not only that, there were trumpets playing too. It was very loud. After they shouted, something amazing began to happen. The great strong walls began to shake and tremble. They were falling down! Crash! Crash! The strong walls fell flat to the ground with a great noise. God had made the big, tall walls around Jericho fall down! Isn't that amazing? Then God's people went into the city and made Jericho their own land.

Rahab and Her Family Are Saved

The people of Jericho did not know what to do as the Israelites entered the city. They did not expect to see their great and strong wall just fall apart because the Israelites played their trumpets and shouted loudly. They weren't ready to fight. So the Israelites destroyed everything God had asked them to, including the people. Only Rahab and her family were saved because she had helped the two spies before.

After the walls of Jericho fell down, the Israelites learned that God's plan was the best, and that they should trust in God for everything. At first, they didn't know how they were going to go through the tall, thick walls around Jericho, but they followed all of God's instructions, and God made it easy for them to take the city. The walls just fell down after they shouted. When they didn't know what to do, they just followed God's words, and God took care of them. The Israelites trusted in God, and God helped them.



Check For Understanding

- 1. What was the name of the city the Israelites were trying to enter?** (Jericho.)
- 2. What did God ask the Israelites to do on the first six days?** (God told the people to march in a straight line to Jericho without saying one word, walk around the city wall one time while the priests blew their trumpets, then return to camp.)

- 3. What did God ask the Israelites to do on the seventh day?** (God told the people to march in a straight line to Jericho, walk around the city seven times and shout as loudly as they could afterward while the priests played their trumpets.)
- 4. What happened when the people shouted?** (The walls fell flat to the ground. Then the people could enter the city of Jericho.)
- 5. Who were the only people who were saved?** (Rahab and her family because she had helped the spies.)

6. **Why did God want to destroy all the people?** (The people in the city did not worship God.)

7. **Why were the Israelites able to win?** (God

helped them and they followed all of His words, even though it was a strange plan. But the Israelites learned that God's plan is always the best.)



Life Application Story

The Terrible Earthquake

Ricky and Juan were reading in the family room one afternoon. It was quiet and they were enjoying the sun shining through the window. Then Ricky noticed something strange.

"Did you feel something, like the ground shaking?" asked Ricky.

"No, you must have been reading for too long," laughed Juan.

But as soon as Juan had finished saying that, the ground began to shake and shift in every direction.

Immediately Ricky yelled, "It's an earthquake! Hallelujah! Please protect us from harm, God!"

"Hallelujah! God please help us!" Juan yelled. It all happened so quickly that the two brothers didn't know what to do. They watched as the bookshelf shook. They thought all the books would come falling down on top of them. Even though it seemed like a very long time to Ricky and Juan, the earthquake stopped after about 5 seconds. Juan ran to Ricky right away, as soon as the shaking stopped.

"I'm scared, Ricky," said Juan. But no sooner had Juan said those words, the room started shaking again. Juan held onto Ricky as tightly as he could. This time Ricky grabbed Juan and they both hid under the big desk. They kept saying, "Hallelujah, God please help us!"

Ricky and Juan closed their eyes and waited for the earthquake to end. After five seconds, the ground stopped shaking. The boys waited under the desk for a few more minutes. When Ricky was sure it was really over, they came out.

"Thank God! He saved our lives, Juan," Ricky said as he held onto Juan. "Are you okay?"

"Yes," replied Juan, still a little bit shaken up. "But look Ricky, your books have fallen off from

the bookshelf."

"Thank God we were not harmed," Ricky said. "I hope Mom and Dad are okay at work too."

"I want to check out my room, Ricky. Do you think it's safe to go?"

"I think so. I'll go with you," Ricky said.

As soon as Juan saw his room, he became sad.

"Oh no! All my toys are everywhere!"

"That's okay Juan. We can always clean that up. The most important thing is that God protected and helped us," said Ricky.

"Ricky, do you think Mom and Dad are alright at work?"

"We need to have courage, Juan, and trust in God. I'm sure God protected them from getting hurt," Ricky comforted Juan.

"You are right, Ricky. God is almighty. He won't let the people He loves get hurt," Juan said.

"You know what? Let's kneel down to pray and thank God for His protection. We can also pray that Mom and Dad are safe," Ricky said.

"Good idea!" Juan said.

They both thanked God from their hearts for His protection.

Questions to Think About

1. **What happened when Ricky and Juan were reading?** (There was an earthquake.)
2. **Were they hurt?** (No.)
3. **What did Ricky do to help his brother Juan?** (He held him tight and said words to comfort him.)
4. **What did they do to thank God for protecting them?** (They knelt down and prayed to God.)
5. **What do you think Ricky and Juan's parents are thinking at work?** (Allow students to answer.)
6. **Have there been times when God has protected you from harm?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

The Israelites March Around Jericho

How many times did they march around on the seventh day? (7 times.) Color in the picture if time permits.



Activity 2

How Did the Israelites Win?

Find out how the Israelites won at the city of Jericho by writing down every seventh letter (obey God) in order (starting from the top left). Write the letters down on the blanks.



Activity 3

Have Courage

The Israelites also won the battle because they had the courage to obey God. When we fall off a bike, we can ask God to give us the _____ (courage) to try again.



Activity 4

The Walls of Jericho

Materials:

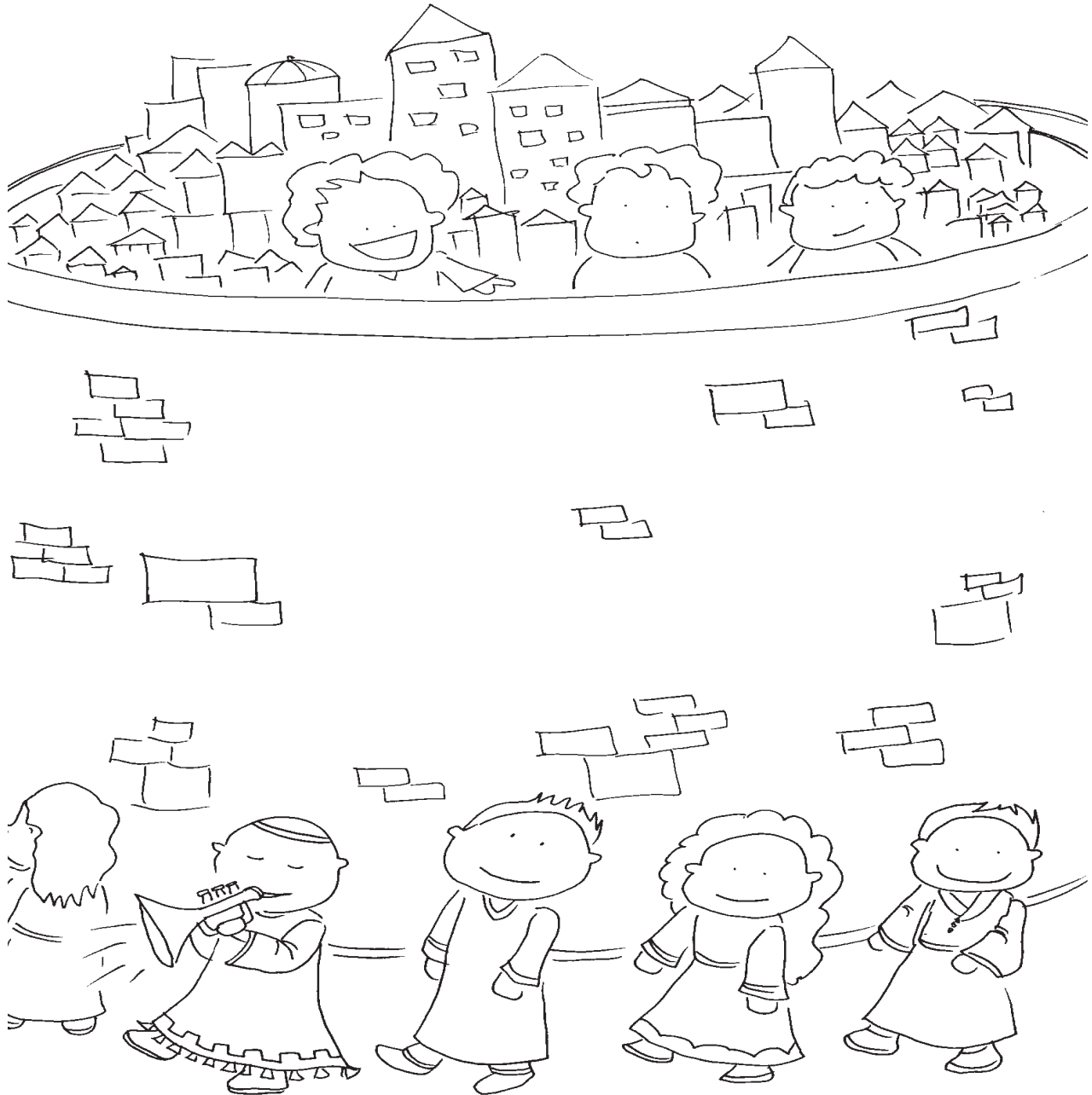
1. small round rice cakes (store bought)
2. cream cheese or frosting
3. plastic spoons or knives
4. graham crackers
5. paper plates
6. gummy bears
7. old newspapers

Directions:

1. Cover the tables with old newspapers.
2. Give each student a paper plate and place one rice cake in the middle of the plate.
3. Provide each student with a plastic spoon or knife and have them spread frosting or cream cheese over and around the rice cake.

4. Demonstrate how to place the graham crackers upright around the rice cake (into the frosting so the "walls" will stay) to create the effect of the walls of Jericho.
5. Provide each student with several gummy bears.
6. Encourage the students to use their imagination and retell the story of how the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho by using the gummy bears as people. Take the time to review the details of today's lesson. Here are some questions you could ask:
 - *How do you think the Israelites felt when God asked them to march around the city so many times?
 - *How do you think they felt when the walls came crashing down?
 - *God can do miraculous things for us when we trust and believe in Him. What kinds of great and wonderful things has He done for you or for your family?

The Israelites March Around Jericho



How many times did the Israelites march around Jericho on the seventh day?

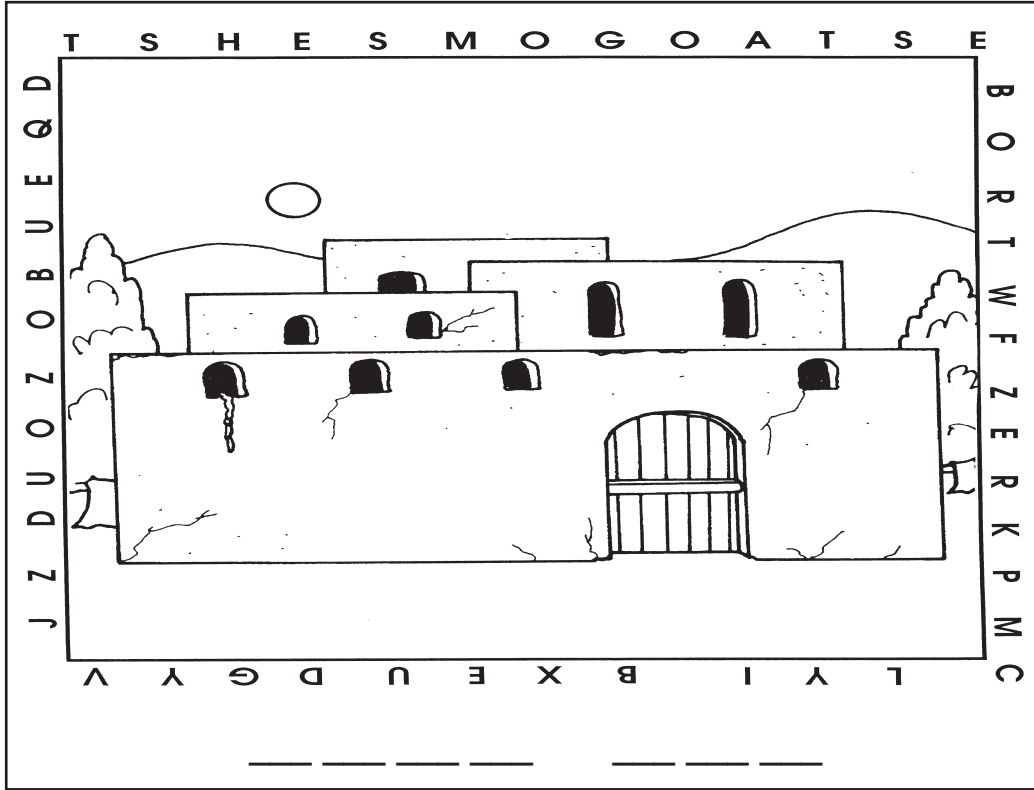
_____ TIMES

How Did the Israelites Win?

Activity 5:2

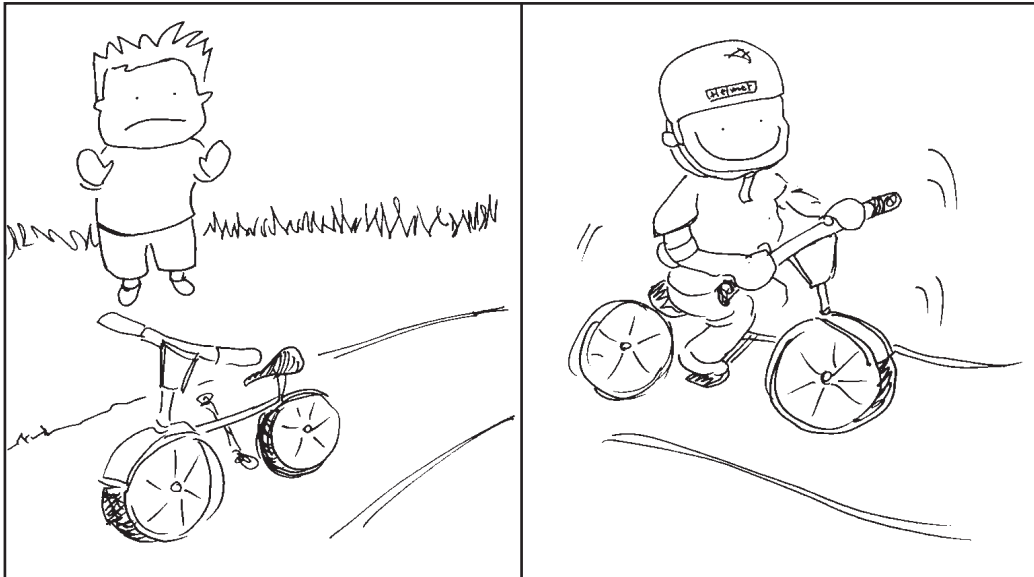
Find out how the Israelites won at the city of Jericho by writing down every seventh letter in order (starting from the top left).

Write the letters down on the blanks.



Activity 5:3

Have Courage



The Israelites also won the battle because they had the courage to obey God. When we fall off a bike, we can ask God to give us the _____ to try again.

Achan Steals and Lies to God



Overview

Materials You'll Need

- construction paper
- markers
- glue
- hole punch
- yarn
- cotton balls or pompoms



Scriptures

Josh 7

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God becomes angry when we sin against Him, but He also forgives when we repent

Behavioral Objective(s)

To tell the truth, even when it is hard to

Memory Verse

"You shall not steal ... nor lie to one another." (Lev 19:11)



Bible Knowledge

Obedience Versus Disobedience

Compare what happened when Achan sinned and when the Israelites eliminated the sin in their community. It is evident that God always blessed the Israelites when they got rid of their sin.

A. Achan's Sin

1. Many people died (Josh 7:5)
2. Israel's army was paralyzed with fear (7:5)
3. God said He might withdraw His presence from the people (7:12)
4. Achan and his family had to be destroyed (7:24-26).

B. The People Got Rid of Their Sin

1. Encouragement from God (Josh 8:1)
2. God's presence in battle (8:1)
3. God's guidance and promise of victory (8:2)

Ai

Ai was located two miles from Bethel. It was a small city west of Jericho. Like the previous city,

Joshua sent out spies to look at the land. But instead of waiting for God's instructions or asking for His guidance, Joshua went ahead and sent out a small army of 3000 men to attack Ai. He thought that because "the people of Ai are few," he could use his military prowess to win this battle. To his dismay, the Israelites lost thirty-six lives as they were chased away, likely towards Jericho.

The Bible records that the hearts of the people melted when they learned of the defeat at Ai. As a matter of fact, these were the same words Rahab used when describing how the people of Jericho felt when they realized the Israelites were near (Josh 2:11).

Achan

Achan and his entire family were stoned to death once his sin was found out. Why was the punishment so severe? In Joshua 7:11, God says that "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them ... they have both deceived and stolen." These words highlight the seriousness of Achan's sin. In order to keep Israel a holy nation, God had to get rid of all sin completely.



Understanding Your Students

It is important to explain to your students why it is wrong to steal. If someone took something that belonged to them without asking them first, would they like that? What if someone took their favorite toy and never gave it back? How would they feel? They would probably feel sad, and maybe a little hurt or angry. Also remind the students that the eighth commandment prohibits stealing, and we must always obey the Ten Commandments.

Sometimes people steal because they want something so badly that they will do anything to get it. Things such as toys, laptop computers, and money can be so important to some people that they feel like they absolutely must have them. This is how Achan

probably felt about the things that he took from Jericho. When we want something we don't have, it can turn into greed. When we become greedy, it can lead us to steal. People who steal show that they don't love others very much, and they demonstrate that they don't trust God enough to allow Him the chance to provide for their needs.

This lesson also provides a good opportunity to teach the importance of confessing our mistakes. It is often hard for children to admit their mistakes because their confession is almost always coupled with punishment. While sometimes it hurts to confess our mistakes, it will be worse if we don't. For instance, we often have to tell more lies to cover up previous ones. If we confess at the beginning, we would only make one mistake, but if we lie, then we could make two or more mistakes. Then, the situation is far worse than it was at the beginning.



Vocabulary

Repent

to ask for forgiveness

Wicked

something evil and horrible

Sacrifice

to give up something that is important to you

Canaanites

all the different people who lived in the land of Canaan



Before You Teach

Why did Achan's entire family pay for his sin? The biblical record does not tell us if they were accomplices to his crime, but in the ancient world, the family was treated as a whole. Achan had disobeyed God's command to destroy everything in Jericho; thus everything that belonged to Achan would be destroyed. This example reminds us that sin has drastic consequences, so we should take equally drastic measures to avoid it. How can we keep sin away? Prayer and the fullness of the Holy Spirit can give us the strength we need to overcome sin. But sometimes, it is also necessary to avoid or literally run away from situations that may cause us to be tempted.

We also learn that the faith of a community of believers is the sum of the faith of the individuals. This story reminds us that our own personal spiritu-

al cultivation has an impact on the spiritual well-being of the entire group. Thirty-six Israelites died because of Achan's secret sin. The Israelites lost courage because of Achan's greed. Although it was one bad apple, it ended up corrupting the entire nation of Israelites.

What does this mean for us? The story of Achan serves as a stern warning to us, as members of our local church. We need to watch ourselves with all caution, because our actions, even if they are in private, may very well impact God's treatment of our entire church community. God is omniscient. We cannot hide anything from Him or try to run away from Him. Furthermore, we have a greater responsibility when our actions can affect other believers. What can we do when we have sinned? We should confess our sin or mistake and pray for forgiveness. The Bible records that God is righteous and will judge each person accordingly. He is also slow to anger. God is merciful and will restore those who come before Him with a repentant heart.



Bible Story

People and Things in Jericho Are Destroyed

In the last lesson, we learned that Joshua and the Israelites went to attack Jericho. Because they listened to God, the walls came falling down and the people entered Jericho easily. But before the soldiers went inside the city, Joshua gave them specific orders. He told them, "Destroy everything except the silver and gold, and the brass and iron things. Those things may be kept for the Lord's work. Destroy everything else." So, could the Israelites keep clothes they liked for themselves? (No.) Could they keep pretty jewelry for their friends? (No.) God told them that they had to destroy EVERYTHING. They were only allowed to take silver, gold, brass, and iron things for God's temple. Gold is a yellow colored metal. Silver is a gray and shiny colored metal. Can you think of some things made out of gold or silver? (Jewelry.) Brass is a metal that is very shiny, and used to make horns and instruments. A long time ago, they even used brass to make mirrors because it was so shiny. Iron is a very heavy and hard metal. Think of a hammer; it's very heavy, right? The top, heavy part is made out of iron. Joshua told them things that were made out of gold, silver, brass and iron were supposed to be given to God for His temple. They weren't allowed to keep those things for themselves.

Once the soldiers went into the city, all the people in Jericho were killed, according to God's commandment. Only Rahab and the people at her house were saved. Why did God allow the people in Jericho to die? God doesn't want people to die. He wants them to repent and live righteously. But the people in Jericho didn't want to do that. They didn't want to listen to God. God gave the land to the Israelites. The Israelites were not allowed to act like the people who lived there before. More importantly, they were not to worship idols. Canaanites did horrible things in their worship. They would sometimes kill their own children and offer them as sacrifices to idols. That is why God told the Israelites to destroy almost everything.

The Israelites Are Defeated at Ai

After the Israelites won the battle of Jericho, Joshua turned toward the town of Ai. Just like

Jericho, Joshua sent spies to Ai to see what the town was like. But this time, Joshua did not ask God first. After the spies returned, they said, "You won't need more than two or three thousand men to capture this little town." It seemed like it would be so easy, they didn't need God's help. They didn't pray to God to ask Him for help. They forgot the reason they won at Jericho was because of God's help.

Joshua sent a small army to take the town. They didn't send the big army because the spies said Ai was very small. Who do you think won this battle? The Israelites thought they would win, but do you know what happened? They lost the battle! They lost very badly, and 36 of their soldiers died. The people of Ai even chased the Israelite soldiers back to their camp. How could this be? Ai was supposed to be an easy battle compared to Jericho, but they lost. When they won at Jericho, who helped them? (God) This time, they didn't ask for God's help. Without God, even something easy proved to be hard.

After the battle, many of the Israelites became afraid. If they lost against such a small town, how would they win against other big cities? If their enemies heard about how they lost, then their enemies would gang up on them like bullies! No wonder the Israelites became scared. Joshua was afraid, too. He tore his clothes and threw himself down on the ground to pray before the ark of the covenant. He was sad that God did not help them win the battle.

Joshua Inquires of the Lord

"Lord, why did you let us enter Canaan? We won at Jericho, but now that we lost at Ai, our enemies will surround and kill every one of us. We will surely all die!"

The Lord said to Joshua, "Stand up! You should not be surprised that you lost against the people of Ai. The reason you lost against Ai is because someone has taken some things in Jericho they were not supposed to take. They have stolen and they have lied. Because of this person, Israel will not be able to win against their enemies. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy that person who has stolen things from Jericho." Do you remember what the Israelites weren't supposed to take from Jericho? Could they take clothes? (No.) What were they supposed to do with the gold, sil-

ver, bronze, and brass things? (Give them to God's temple.) God told Joshua that someone had taken something they weren't supposed to take.

After Joshua heard this, he told the Israelites, "God told me that we lost against Ai because someone disobeyed the command and stole things when we defeated Jericho. Until we destroy the things that have been stolen, we cannot win against our enemies. Prepare yourselves tonight, because tomorrow we will find out who took things that belong to God." Most of the Israelites did not steal anything from Jericho. They probably wondered who stole something and why they broke God's command.

Achan Confesses

Early the next morning, Joshua had all the people come forward in family groups, starting with the biggest family groups. After a long time, they found a man named Achan. Joshua said to him, "Tell me what you have done."

Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against God. This is what I have done: when I saw a beautiful coat, five pounds of silver and one pound of gold, I stole them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent." Ah! So Achan was the one who took things that he wasn't supposed to. The night before, when Joshua told the Israelites that someone stole things from Jericho, did Achan tell the truth? (No.) When Achan realized that God

did not help the Israelites win at Ai, did he say that he did something wrong? (No.) Achan even hid the things he stole, and waited until the last moment before he said that he did something wrong. Because Achan did something wrong and lied, 36 Israelites died in battle, and they lost against the people of Ai.

So Joshua sent messengers and they took the things from the tent and showed them to him. The people stoned Achan and his family and burned up all his things, even the things that Achan stole.

Then God stopped being angry at the Israelites and wanted to help them. Later, the Israelites went back and attacked Ai, and this time, God helped them win the battle. God helped them because no one disobeyed God's commands.

God Helps Us When We Listen and Trust Him

In today's lesson, we learned that we have to always listen to and depend on God. When Joshua got ready to fight Ai, he didn't ask for God's help. Then he found out that someone had stolen and lied about taking things at Jericho. So they lost the battle. But when the Israelites listened to God and followed His words, He helped them again.



Check For Understanding

1. **What was the name of the city the Israelites attacked after Jericho? (Ai.)**
2. **Did Joshua ask God what he should do before attacking Ai? (No, he decided that 3000 men would be enough.)**
3. **Did the Israelites win at Ai? (No.)**
4. **Why didn't the Israelites win? (Someone had disobeyed God and stolen things from Jericho.)**
5. **What was the name of the person who stole and kept the gold, silver and beautiful coat? (Achan.)**

6. **What happened to Achan after his sin was discovered? (He and his whole family were stoned to death. All his belongings, including the things he took, were burned.)**
7. **Why did God give such a hard punishment? (God wanted His people to stay holy and pure. He didn't want them to act like the Canaanites.)**
8. **What happened when the Israelites went to attack Ai the second time? (God helped them win.)**
9. **What does God teach us about stealing and lying? (Allow students to answer.)**



Life Application Story

God Knows Everything

One Saturday, Mrs. Laurie taught a lesson about stealing and lying to God and to man.

"Class, remember that God had given the Israelites the Ten Commandments to obey?" Mrs. Laurie asked the class.

"Yes, we remember, Mrs. Laurie!" the class said.

"Which commandment tells us that we should not steal?" Mrs. Laurie asked the class.

Many boys and girls raised their hands wanting to answer her question.

"Okay, Jean, please tell us," Mrs. Laurie said.

"The eighth commandment tells us not to steal," Jean said.

"Good, Jean," Mrs. Laurie said. "Now who can tell the class what commandment tells us not to lie?"

Again, many boys and girls raised their hands.

"Tommy, please tell the class," Mrs. Laurie said.

"The ninth commandment tells us not to lie," Tommy said.

"That's right, Tommy," Mrs. Laurie agreed. "I want to share a true story with you about a boy who stole and lied to his mother. There was once a little boy who stole one dollar from his mother's purse when she wasn't looking. He wanted to buy some candy and he knew his mother wouldn't buy him any because she said that candy was bad for his teeth. At first, it was not a big deal, but ever day after school, his friends would stop at the grocery store and buy junk food to eat. He wished he could do the same thing, so he decided to take the money one day when his mother wasn't in the room. He opened her purse and grabbed a dollar. His heart was pounding the entire time but he was relieved he wasn't caught. The next day, after stealing the money, he went with his friends to the store and bought some candy. He ate some of it on the way home. Then he saved the rest of it in a secret place in his room.

"That same night after he bought the candy, the little boy's mother noticed that the only dollar bill she had in her purse was missing. She thought maybe she had put it somewhere in the house so she asked the little boy if he had seen the one dollar bill. The little boy lied and said, 'No, Mom. I haven't seen your money.' Then he went to sleep. Afterwards, the boy's

mother went to clean up the playroom and found some candy wrappers in the trash. She wondered where they came from.

"The little boy's mother went up to his room right away and asked, 'Honey, did you eat candy today? I found wrappers in the playroom.' The boy became afraid and said, 'No, Mom, I didn't. Maybe those wrappers are from long ago.' The mother didn't know what to think, but since it was late, she said good night and left the room. She would talk about it more the next day. Later on that night, the little boy couldn't go to sleep because he felt bad about lying to his mother. Finally, after tossing and turning for a long time, the boy decided to tell his mother that he had taken her money and that he bought candy and ate it.

"At first, the mother was angry at him for lying and stealing but she was relieved that her little boy had later told her the truth. The little boy promised his mother that he would not steal and lie again because it made him feel bad. The mother also told him that stealing and lying are things God does not like. She hugged him and said that she was glad he felt sorry and told her the truth in the end," Mrs. Laurie finished.

Tommy raised his hand and Mrs. Laurie called on him.

"God's not happy when we steal and lie because it breaks His commandments," said Tommy.

"That's right, Tommy," Mrs. Laurie replied. "God likes it when we tell the truth. Even if we did something wrong, we should be honest about it, because if we lie about it, like the little boy, he had to tell more than one lie to cover it up. We should always be honest about what we do. God is happy when we tell the truth."

Questions to Think About

1. **Why did the boy steal the money?** (He wanted to buy some candy to eat, like his friends.)
2. **How many times did the boy lie?** (Twice, once about the money, and once about the candy.)
3. **When we do something wrong, should we lie so we don't get into trouble or should we tell the truth?** (We should tell the truth, even if we are punished. God is pleased when we are honest and He will forgive us.)



Activity 1

Achan Sins Against God

What kinds of things did Achan take? Circle the right words below. (gold, silver, clothing)

God does not want us to _____ (steal) or _____ (lie).



Activity 2

Should We Lie?

Look at each set of pictures. Which people obeyed God by telling the truth? Which ones did not? Put an "X" over the people who did not.



Activity 3

Memory Verse Hanging

Materials:

1. construction paper
2. markers
3. cotton balls or pompoms
4. glue
5. hole punch
6. yarn

Directions:

1. Provide each student with a piece of construction paper.
2. Help them write today's memory verse on the paper.
3. Have each student glue the cotton balls or pompoms to create a border around the memory verse.
4. The students can decorate their paper.
5. Punch holes on the top corners of the paper and string a piece of yarn through the holes to create a wall hanging.
6. Encourage the students to hang their memory verse in their room to remind them that God doesn't like people who steal or lie. We should be honest and obey God's commandments.

Achan Sins Against God



What kinds of things did Achan take? Circle the right words below.

GOLD

FOOD

SILVER

CLOTHING

God does not want us to

_____ or _____.

Activity 6:2

Should We Lie?

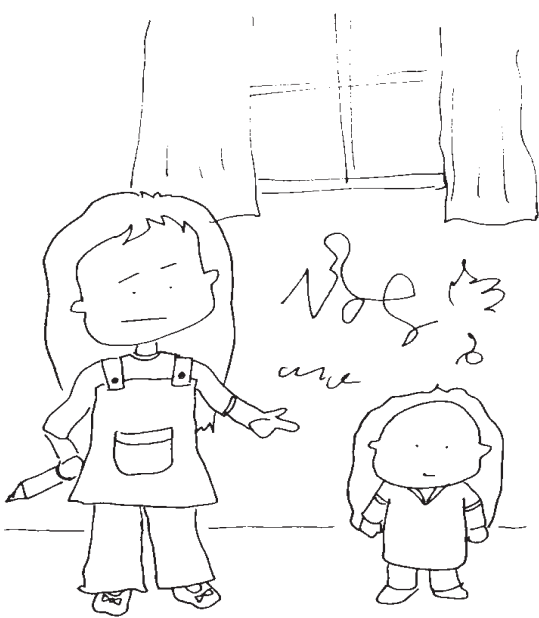
Look at each set of pictures. Which people obeyed God by telling the truth? Which ones did not? Put an "X" over the people who did not.



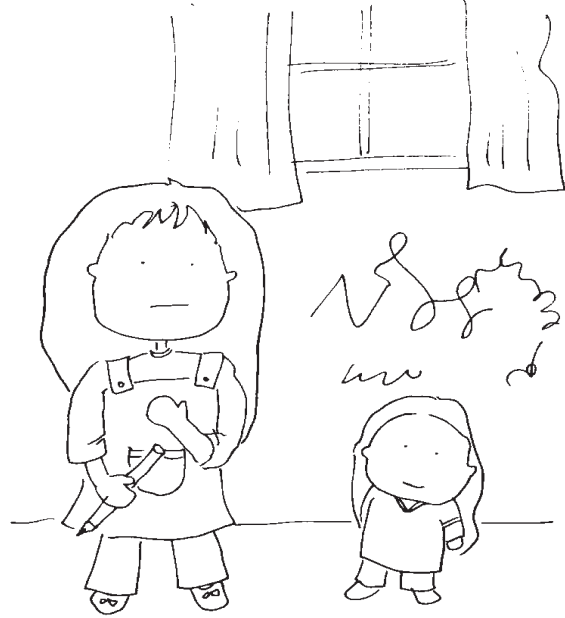
"It was the dog who did it."



"I broke it. I am sorry."



"My sister drew all over the wall, not me!"



"I drew on the wall. I am sorry!"

The Sun Stands Still

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- yellow construction paper
- scissors
- glue
- markers, stickers, other scraps



Scriptures

Josh 9:1-10:14

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God controls the sun and all the things in this world; God uses special ways to help and protect us

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify ways God helps things grow; to give thanks to God for the things He provides for us

Memory Verse

"So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped." (Josh 10:13)



Bible Knowledge

The Treaty with the Gibeonites

God had specifically instructed Israel to make no treaties with the inhabitants of Canaan (Ex 23:32; 34:12; Num 33:55; Deut 7:2; 20:17, 18), although treaties with far away countries were permissible (Deut 20:11). That is why the Gibeonites went to great lengths to disguise themselves. Gibeon was in fact very close to Ai and only about five miles northwest of Jerusalem.

Joshua knew it was important to talk to God before leading his troops into battle. But the peace treaty with the Gibeonites seemed innocent enough, so Joshua and the leaders made this decision on their own. By failing to seek God's guidance and rushing ahead with their own plans, they had to deal with angry people and an awkward alliance when it was discovered that the people who claimed to be from a far away place were actually their neighbors.

The Israelites, who were supposed to have destroyed the Gibeonites, were now allied with

them. Even though this was a big mistake, God remained faithful to His promise and helped Israel defeat the coalition of nations now on the attack.

Although Joshua had been deceived by the Gibeonites, he did not hesitate in rescuing them when they were under attack. Joshua's response shows his integrity, even though he had been tricked.

The Sun Stands Still

Two explanations have been given for how this event occurred:

1. A slowing of the earth's normal rotation gave Joshua more time, as the original Hebrew language seems to indicate.
2. Some unusual refraction of the sun's rays gave additional hours of light.

Regardless of God's chosen method, the Bible is clear that this day was prolonged by a miracle, and that God's intervention turned the tide of battle for His people.



Understanding Your Students

It says in Hebrew 11:3 that "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Children at this age will wonder a lot about God's creation. Especially in this lesson, we need to once again stress that God is the Creator of all things. He has the divine power to control the sun and the moon, and everything else. Take opportunities to impart some of the wonders of God's creation to your students so that they can know, not just believe, that God is the Creator.

While your students usually accept the fact that God made everything, they may not know what the

word "create" means. Throughout the lesson, it is important the students understand that only God can make something from nothing.

Take time to decorate your classroom and include the phrase "God is great." As the children come in for today's class, greet them by saying, "We are happy that you are here today. God is great. God gave us our wonderful world." Filling the room with God's creation and wonders can only help them come to know God more.

Children are naturally curious; therefore, be prepared to answer the question regarding from whom God was created. Understand that this is a common question among children, and the answer need not be elaborate. It can be a simple answer to the effect of, "God has always been here, before there was anything else, and He will always be here."



Vocabulary

Canaan

the promised land God gave the Israelites

Gibeonites

the neighbors of the Israelites

Enemy

someone who is not your friend; sometimes, that person may want to hurt you

Hail

when rain freezes to ice cubes



Before You Teach

When Joshua and the Israelites made a treaty with the Gibeonites, it seemed innocent enough. After all, the Israelites were trying to make peace, instead of war. But because they failed to talk to God, they ended up in a situation that they didn't want to be in. What can we learn from this story?

1. It is never wise to rush into a decision. It did not take long for the Israelites to decide it would be okay to make a covenant with people they had only met hours ago. The Bible records that at the end of three days, they discovered their neighbors' trickery. Had they waited it out, they might not have been in such an awkward situation. God's plan often takes time and patience. If it is His will, it will still happen accordingly.
2. It is important to constantly pray to God for guidance. Because the Israelites did not ask for

God's advice, they actually did not follow God's instruction to completely destroy the people of the land.

3. We should not make promises that we can't keep. Because the Israelites made an oath that was unbreakable, they had no choice but to follow through. In the end, they probably made many compromises with the Gibeonites in order to live with them peacefully. Today for us, making promises we can't keep can also lead us into disastrous situations. God has said that we should let our "yes," be "yes," and our "no," be "no."
4. When we find ourselves confident in our own ability and trust in ourselves more than we rely on God, that is the time we need to take a step back and evaluate our relationship with God. The Israelites thought they could decide this one thing on their own because they had the ability and strength to do so. But God always wants us to put our reliance in Him.



Bible Story

The Gibeonites Are Afraid

Dear children, do you still remember how God helped the Israelites defeat the cities of Jericho and Ai? Jericho was the city with a very big, tall wall around it, and God helped the Israelites break down the wall when they followed His instructions to march around it for seven days. After seven days, the wall fell down with a big BANG! When the other enemies in Canaan heard about this, they were afraid of the Israelites because God always helped them. After the Israelites defeated Jericho, which city did they fight next? They fought against a small city called Ai. At first, the Israelites didn't win the battle over Ai because an Israelite named Achan stole things from Jericho and lied to God. After they got rid of Achan, God helped the Israelites and they took over Ai. Now, the Israelites had taken over two cities: Jericho and Ai. By now, all the people in Canaan were really afraid, because God always helped the Israelites defeat their enemies. One group of people called the Gibeonites lived near the Israelites, and they thought, "We're next! The Israelites are going to attack us next, and they will win and we will be destroyed!" They were so afraid, they tried to think of a way to trick the Israelites so that they would not be destroyed like Jericho and Ai.

The Gibeonites Think of a Plan

The Gibeonites knew that God told the Israelites to get rid of all the people who lived near them. They thought, "Hmm, if we tell the Israelites that we live really far away, maybe they won't fight with us." How could they show the Israelites that they lived far away? Imagine that you lived a long time ago, before there were cars. Before there were cars, people traveled by walking, and had donkeys to carry their heavy things. If you walked for a very long time, then your shoes would become old and broken, right? And if you walked in the middle of a desert, then you would not have time to make new clothes or buy new things. So the Gibeonites were going to pretend they walked a long time, from a far away place by wearing old, broken shoes, and carrying old things on their donkeys. The Gibeonites thought, "If the Israelites see our old, broken shoes, and our old cups

and plates, and clothes, they will think that we came from a place far far away. Then maybe they will promise not to fight with us." So they went with loaded donkeys with worn-out sacks and old clothes. The men put old and broken sandals on their feet and wore old clothes too. They carried bread and food that were dry and molded. They practiced acting like they were very tired from walking from a far away place. When they were ready, they went to Joshua

They said to him, "We have come from a far away place. We have heard about how your God helps you. Please make a promise to us that you won't attack us and fight with us."

The Israelites looked at their sandals. They did look really old and broken! And they looked at their smelly old food, and torn up clothes. It really looked like the Gibeonites had walked for a very long time, and were from a very far away place. Joshua remembered that God said they had to fight the people who lived near them, but God did not say to get rid of the people from far away places. Since the Gibeonites acted like they didn't live close to them, Joshua made a promise to never ever attack and kill them without asking God first. Do you think this was a good idea? No! The best idea is to always ask for God's permission before doing anything. Joshua should have asked God if it was okay to make a promise to the Gibeonites, but he did not.

The Israelites Are Tricked

Three days after the Israelites made a promise to the Gibeonites to never attack or kill them, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. They were tricked! The Gibeonites said they lived far away, but they really lived next door to them!

Joshua called the Gibeonites back and said, "Why did you trick us by saying, 'We live a long way from you,' while actually you live near us? As a punishment for lying, your people will always have to carry water for us, and cut wood for us to use. You also have to carry water for the temple, and cut wood for the temple."

The Gibeonites said, "Okay! As long as you don't attack and kill us, we will always carry water and cut wood for you."

The Sun Stands Still

Other people in Canaan heard that the Israelites had the Gibeonites serving them, and they were very unhappy. The Canaanites were unhappy because the Gibeonites lived in a very big city, and had a very good army. Now, all the fighting men were on Israel's side, not on the Canaanites' side. If Israel fought with other Canaanites, then they would win because God is helping them, and the Gibeonites have a good army.

So, some other cities in Canaan decided to gang up on against the Israelites by attacking the city where the Gibeonites lived. The Gibeonites told the Israelites, "Help us! We are being attacked by your enemies! Five kings and their big armies with many soldiers are fighting against us! We need your help!"

This time, Joshua thought before he said anything. He remembered that last time when they didn't ask God first, they lost the fight against the little city of Ai. Now, they would be fighting the armies from five big cities! They definitely needed God's help, so Joshua prayed to God before he fought against the armies from five big cities. Then God said, "Don't be afraid to fight them. I will help you win over them, and no matter how many they are, you will win." After Joshua heard this, he went to Gibeon to fight against the enemies' armies.

God helped the Israelites fight against the five enemies' armies in two ways. The first way God

helped Joshua was by sending down big balls of ice from the sky to hit the heads of the enemies. These big balls of ice are called "hail." The miraculous thing was that the hail only hit the enemies' heads, and not the Israelites' heads. Only the enemies were hurt by the hail, not the Israelites. Isn't that amazing? God can control the weather to help the Israelites because God is the one who created the sky.

The second way God helped the Israelites was by telling the sun to stay in the sky longer, so that it didn't get dark. God knew that it would be hard to fight in the dark because then you can't see. So, to help the Israelites, God made the sun stay in the sky for about a whole day so that there was more light and more time for the Israelites to fight against the five enemies' armies. Only God can do this because He created the sun. No one can control the sun except for God. Now, the Israelites could see clearly to fight their enemies! Never has the sun stayed in the sky as long as it did on the day God helped Joshua and the Israelites defeat the five enemies' armies.

God helped them so much that the Israelites won the battle against the five enemies' armies. They also saved the Gibeonites, even though they had tricked them! God really showed everyone His power over the sky by sending down big balls of ice to kill the enemies, and by telling the sun to stay in the sky longer. God can do anything, and with His help, the Israelites won a very big fight!



Check For Understanding

1. **Who told the Israelites that they wanted to make peace with them?** (The Gibeonites.)
2. **The Gibeonites said they had traveled from a far-away country. What might make you believe them?** (Their clothes and sandals were torn; they were carrying packs on their backs; they had molded food.)
3. **What did the Gibeonites want from the**

Israelites? (They wanted Joshua to promise that they wouldn't ever attack the Gibeonites.)

4. **Did Joshua ask God first before agreeing to never attack Gibeon?** (No.)
5. **Why did the Gibeonites play this trick?** (They were afraid and they didn't want to be killed by the Israelites.)
6. **What did God want the Israelites to do to the Canaanites?** (The Israelites were to destroy all the people in the land, so that these people would not turn the Israelites to practicing their wicked ways.)
7. **How did God help in the battle against**

the five enemies' armies? (God helped them by making the sun stand still and dropping hail from the sky.)

- 8. How long did the sun stop for?** (The sun stopped for about a whole day.)
- 9. Have you ever tried to ask the sun to keep from setting? Or have you ever asked the**

wind to stop blowing in your face? You see, these things are not possible for us to do. Do you know why they will only listen to God? It is because God created them. Joshua had such strong faith by believing that God could stop the sun from going down.



Life Application Story

God's Great Gift

Benjamin dashed through the front door after coming home from school one day.

"What's up?" asked his sister Lisa, as he whizzed by her in the kitchen. He went straight to the fridge and grabbed himself a glass of milk.

As he gulped down his drink, he replied, "We learned about the stars today. Did you know that the sun is actually a very hot star? And this hot star has been burning for a long time!"

"Yes, I did know that. God gave us the sun during the creation so it has definitely been around for a long time," said Lisa.

"There are so many things about the sun that I didn't know before. I always thought of the sun as something different. I mean, the stars we see at night just don't look anything like the sun," said Benjamin, as he rinsed out his cup in the sink.

"Well, the sun is a very big, hot star that can do a lot of things. It gives us warmth and daylight. If there was no sun, there would be no day because sun gives light during the day time."

Benjamin jumped in just as Lisa stopped speaking. "I also know that the sun allows plants, trees, flowers, and animals to grow! Without light and heat, not many plants and animals can survive."

"Well, I will bet there is something else you might not know. The sunlight is also good for us because our bones need sunlight to be hard and strong. The sun is good for our bodies because it keeps us warm, too."

Just then, Mrs. Lim walked into the kitchen.

"You're right, Lisa. But too much sunshine can be bad for our skin. The light of the sun can hurt our skin if we stand under the sun too long. This is why

we have sunburns," Mrs. Lim chimed in.

"And that's why we put on sunscreen before we go out on a sunny day," added Benjamin.

"Hey, this reminds me of the story I heard a few weeks ago in RE class. The sun was supposed to set when Joshua and the Israelites were fighting their enemies. But God told the sun to stand still and it did! This means that there was no night that day! God did this so the Israelites could see who they were fighting against. In the end, they won," said Lisa proudly.

Mrs. Lim smiled at her children. "Well, it seems like you two know a lot about the sun and God's creation. We should thank God for giving us such a wonderful gift."

"Do you want to know something else I just thought of?" asked Mrs. Lim.

"What are you thinking, mom?" asked Lisa.

"I think that God also wants us to be like the sun and bring light to other people. When we make others happy, like the way the sun makes us happy, then we make God happy too."

Mrs. Lim said, "Now, what about the two of you helping me to get dinner ready by washing the vegetables that God has helped to grow?"

Questions to Think About

- 1. What kinds of things can the sun do for us?** (Allow students to answer.)
- 2. Who made the sun?** (God.)
- 3. How can we thank God for the sun?** (Allow students to answer.)
- 4. How can we be like the sun and shine for God?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

The Sun Stands Still

Look at the picture. Who made the sun stand still?
(God.) Color in the picture.



Activity 2

God Helps Things Grow

Look at the pictures. Write down what God can help grow. In the box, draw in one more thing that God can help grow.

1. God can help _____ (flowers) grow.
2. God can help _____ (carrots or vegetables) grow.
3. God can help _____ (people, me) grow.
4. God can help _____ grow.



Activity 3

"A Thankful Sun"

Materials:

1. yellow construction paper
2. scissors
3. glue
4. markers or crayons
5. stickers or other scrap paper

Directions:

1. Give each student a piece of construction paper.
2. Help them draw a large circle and have them cut out the circle.
3. Help students brainstorm things they can thank God for. Write the ideas on the board in simple sentences.
4. Ask each student to copy down at least one of the things on the board onto their yellow sun circle.
5. Have students decorate the remaining space with drawings, stickers or other scrap paper.
6. Tell the students that the sun can help them remember to be thankful to God for all the things that they have. Conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving.

The Sun Stands Still



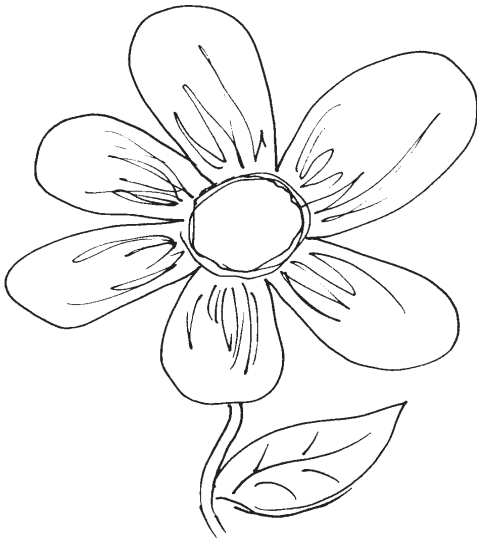
Who made the sun stand still?

Activity 7:2

God Makes Things Grow

Look at the following pictures. Write down what God can grow. In the box, draw one more thing that God can help grow.

1. God makes the _____ grow.



2. God makes the _____ grow.



3. God makes _____ grow.

God can make
_____ grow.

A Sword of the Lord and of Gideon

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- empty paper towel tubes
- markers and stickers
- red, yellow or orange tissue paper
- yarn
- scissors



Scriptures

Judges 6-7

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God gives us courage when we trust in Him

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify ways we can be brave; to do one brave thing this week to serve God

Memory Verse

"Surely I will be with you." (Jdg 6:16)



Bible Knowledge

The Midianites

The Midianites were a desert people descended from Abraham's second wife, Keturah (Gen 25:1, 2). Because of the Israelites' disobedience, God allowed them to oppress His people. During the time of Gideon, the Midianites would rob the Israelites of their crops and livestock. Forced to hide in dens and caves, the Israelites experienced a truly impoverished existence.

Gideon

Gideon was the fifth judge who ruled Israel during a span of several centuries. He was also called Jerubbaal and was the son of Joash of the tribe of Manasseh.

When the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree, Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress. Threshing the wheat was the process of separating the grains of wheat from the useless outer shell, called chaff. Threshing was normally done in a large area, often on a hill, where the wind could blow away the lighter chaff

when the farmer tossed the beaten wheat into the air. But Gideon was forced to thresh his wheat in a winepress, a pit that was probably hidden from view, so that the Midianites would not suspect a farmer's crops there.

After God called Gideon to be Israel's deliverer, He immediately asked him to tear down the altar of Baal, an act that would test Gideon's faith and commitment. Although Gideon did as God asked, he did so in the night, reflecting his fear. His lack of faith and trust in God is further revealed when he asked God to do what seemed to be impossible with the fleece. Yet, God met his conditions to demonstrate that God's will is always done.

Although Gideon judged Israel for forty years (6:11-8:35) and was considered a hero of faith (Heb 11:32), his life ended with some unfortunate events. He punished Succoth and Penuel for not aiding in the war against the Midianite kings (Jdg 8:1-17). His aggression here is a sharp contrast to his fearfulness when he was first called by God. Although he declined the call to be king over Israel, he did ask for gold from the people and made an ephod which "became a snare to Gideon and to his house" (Jdg 8:24-27). After his death, the people of Israel once again forgot about God (Jdg 8:33).



Understanding Your Students

Many of your students want to please God by doing what is right, but sometimes they may be confused between right and wrong. To help your students distinguish right from wrong, explain that we can know what is right by knowing God.

God is perfect and always right, so everything that is good matches what God is like. Whenever we do loving and kind things, we know that these actions are good, because God is full of love and kindness. When we do things that hurt ourselves or others, we will know that these things are wrong by comparing them to what Jesus Christ would or wouldn't do.

Let your students know that the best way for them to learn right from wrong is by reading God's words, the Bible. Tell them that this is the rule book for how Christians should live their lives. It's important that your students really understand the Ten Commandments and know what they actually mean. Also, when sharing stories about the Bible, discuss the wrong actions as well as the right actions of the characters in the Bible. Take the time to explore alternatives that certain characters who made wrong decisions could have taken instead. By involving your students in decision-making situations early on, they can begin to learn how to tell right from wrong. Presenting them with real-life dilemmas can help them know what to do in different situations.



Vocabulary

Baal

a false idol some people worshiped, usually made into a statue

Sacrifice

to give up something that is important to you

False

not real, not true

Sign

something special that happens to show a person what he should do



Before You Teach

With only three hundred men ready to fight, it was understandable why Gideon was afraid to fight. The Bible records that "the Midianites and the Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts, and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude" (Jdg 7:12). This verse indicates the strength of their enemies and how small a force the Israelite army was in comparison. But it is through this that God demonstrates His great power and love. God had already given Gideon several signs

before. But because He knew Gideon was still afraid, God arranged for him to overhear the conversation between two enemy soldiers so that he would be strengthened. After Gideon heard the words of the men, he "worshiped." God showed great patience and love for Gideon as his faith wavered. Then with just trumpets, jars and torches, the three hundred men of the Israelite army were able to defeat the enemy. Even though their numbers were small, God provided all that was needed to win the battle.

It is indeed hard to understand the things of God with our human perspective. In fact, God doesn't really ask us to understand or explain it all. He only asks that we trust Him in all that we do.



Bible Story

Last week, we learned about a great miracle that God performed when Israel was fighting against five kings. Does anyone remember what that great miracle was? Yes, God gave Joshua and

the Israelites more time to fight by making the sun stand still! This week, we are going to learn about more miracles God performed for Israel.

The Midianites are Cruel to Israel

Many years after Joshua, Israel was still living in Canaan, but there was also a group of people called the Midianites who lived near them. These

people were very mean to the Israelites and tried to take everything they had. If the Israelites had sheep or cows, they would take them. And whenever the Israelites made food, they would also try to take it. Just think: how would you feel if someone kept taking away everything you had? Yes, you'd feel awful! So, as you can imagine, it was a very, very sad time for the Israelites. Many of them were so scared of the Midianites that they decided to hide in caves instead of living in tents or houses!

We know that the Israelites are God's people. But why would God let something so terrible harm His people? Does anyone have some ideas? Well, it was because the Israelites had disobeyed God. Do you know how they disobeyed God? They had decided to worship an idol. An idol is a false god and a statue that people worship. Actually, the Israelites worshiped an idol named Baal, which did not make God happy at all.

But as upset as God was, He also loved the Israelites and wanted to help them. God did not like to see the Midianites treat the Israelites so badly. At the same time, He also wanted the Israelites to believe and trust in Him again like they used to when Joshua was their leader. And you know what? God had a plan to do both of those things: to free His people from the Midianites and to help the Israelites remember Him and love Him. But in order for this plan to work, He had to pick someone who would help Him. God picked a man named Gideon.

Gideon is Called By God

Gideon was an Israelite, and he lived with his family like all the other Israelites. But he did not know that God wanted his help, so God had to find a way to tell him. One day, an Angel of the Lord came to Gideon while he was trying to make some food without letting the Midianites find out. The Angel said to Gideon, "The Lord is with you."

When Gideon heard this, he was sad and asked, "But if the Lord is really with us, why are His people so sad now? Other people keep taking our things away from us. What happened to all those miracles I heard about from a long time ago?"

The Angel responded, "Go, and you will save Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you now."

But Gideon had a hard time believing what the angel said. He looked around and thought, "Me? God wants me to save Israel? But I'm not strong at

all! In fact, I am from the smallest family in my tribe. And out of my small family, I am actually the weakest! I'm not strong. There must be some mistake!"

But God doesn't make mistakes. The Angel told Gideon again that God wanted him to save Israel and that God would help him do it. Gideon still couldn't understand just how he would save the Israelites, but he decided to trust God.

Afterwards, Gideon asked the Angel to wait while he prepared an offering, which is a gift to God. Once Gideon laid out his gift (some meat and bread), on a rock, the Angel touched the offering with the end of his staff and fire came out of the rock. The meat and the bread then disappeared! That's how Gideon really began to know that God had called him for a very special job.

Gideon Tears Down Baal

That same night, God asked Gideon to do something very brave but very dangerous. Many people around Gideon worshiped the idol Baal. They had a statue of him and bowed down to him as if he were a god. Since God does not like to see people worshipping something false, God told Gideon to go and tear Baal down. That means to take away the idol. God also asked Gideon to build an altar to the real God in that same place. Does anyone know what an altar is? Yes, an altar is made up of rocks and is used to offer sacrifices.

Gideon wanted to obey God, so he took ten of his servants and during the night, he did as the Lord said. The next day, the people of the town demanded that Gideon be put to death. They wanted him to be killed because he had destroyed the false god they worshiped. But Gideon's father gave a very wise and good answer. His father said, "If Baal is a real god, he can take care of himself when someone knocks him down. If he is a god, he will come back up by himself. He doesn't need your help." After the people heard that, they left Gideon alone.

Gideon Asks for Two Signs

After this, Gideon knew God wanted him to help the Israelites. But Gideon was still afraid. He needed to be extra sure that God was with him, so he asked for a special sign.

He said to God, "If you are really going to use me to save the Israelites, let the fleece (the white and fluffy fur from sheep) I put on the ground be

covered with dew, but let the ground around it be dry." The next day, everything was just as Gideon had asked. The ground was absolutely dry, but the fleece was so wet that when Gideon twisted it, he collected a whole bowl of water.

Still, Gideon wanted another sign. He wanted to be sure he was really the person to save the Israelites. This time, he asked that the fleece be dry and the ground be wet. It was kind of the opposite of what he asked before. But nothing is too hard for God. God did just what Gideon asked. The next morning, the ground was wet but the fleece was as dry as could be! So Gideon knew that God truly did want him to save the Israelites.

God Wants Only 300 Men

Many people wanted to join the army when they knew God had chosen Gideon to lead them. There were 32,000 people. That's a lot, right? Usually, we want a lot of strong people in the army to help fight the battles. But this time, God didn't want a lot of people in the army.

He said to Gideon, "The army is too large. If you use so many men, the Israelites may not think I helped deliver them from the Midianites. They will think that they did it without My help. If some of the people want to leave, let them."

Gideon did just as the Lord asked. He said to the 32,000 people, "If you are scared to be here, you can leave!" Do you want to guess how many people left? 22,000 of them decided to go home, so there were only 10,000 people in the army.

However, God said, "There are still too many. Take the people who are left to the brook to drink water and I will tell you what to do."

God told Gideon to only keep those who cupped up the water in their hands at the brook and lapped the water like a dog. Anyone who put his head down to the water and drank would be sent home.

It sounds like a strange test but this test actually shows how wise God is. In an army, you have to be very careful and watchful—even when you are drinking water, in case the enemy was around. Those who cupped the water in their hands would be able to see if an enemy was coming. But those who put their heads down would not be able to see the enemy at all! God only wanted the most careful and watchful people in His army. Can you guess how many people were left to fight the

Midianites after that? Just 300! The Midianite army probably had so many that you could not even count them!

A Trumpet, a Jar, and a Torch

God knew Gideon was afraid to attack with only 300 men, so God wanted to make Gideon feel better. During the night, God sent Gideon and his servant to the edge of the Midianites' camp to hear what they were saying. As Gideon and his servant quietly crept by some of the soldiers' tents, Gideon heard a man who just had a dream. This man was talking about his dream.

The man said to his friend, "I just had the strangest dream. I dreamed that a loaf of bread made of barley knocked over and destroyed our tent."

His friend said, "This must mean that God is going to destroy us, the Midianites, through Gideon!" When Gideon heard the men say these things, he knew that God was with him.

Immediately, Gideon went back to the Israelites' camp and told his army to get ready, even though it was night time. He gave each man a trumpet and a jar with a torch under it. Then he divided the men into three groups and they surrounded the Midianite camp. At Gideon's signal, they all blew their trumpets, broke their jars, held up their torches and shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"

When the trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the Midianites to run around and to fight each other with their swords! With Gideon and just 300 men, God saved Israel from the Midianites.

God Can Make Anything Happen

Even though Gideon was scared when God first called him to help the Israelites, God showed him many signs to make him understand that God would take care of everything. And with just 300 men and God's power, the Israelite army was able to make the Midianites fight each other and run off. Now the Israelites wouldn't have to be worried about their food being taken away. They could live in peace, all because God helped them.



Check For Understanding

1. **Why did the angel appear to Gideon?** (The Lord wanted him to save the Israelites.)
2. **What was the first thing God wanted Gideon to do?** (God wanted Gideon to tear down the altar of Baal.)
3. **What were the two signs that Gideon asked of God?** (Gideon wanted God to make the fleece he put on the ground wet with dew, but keep the ground dry. The other sign was the opposite: that the fleece be dry and the ground wet. God did

just as Gideon asked.)

4. **How many people did God choose to fight the Midianites?** (Three hundred men.)
5. **Why did God want such a small army to go and fight?** (He wanted the Israelites to know that God was the one who helped them win.)
6. **What did Gideon give his army to fight?** (A trumpet, and a jar with a torch under it.)
7. **What did they say when they blew their trumpets?** ("A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!")



Life Application Story

A Tough Decision

Susie couldn't wait for playtime at school today. She and her friends had finally gotten enough people to join their big freeze tag game, and now every recess would be filled with laughter, screaming and lots and lots of fun! Susie knew that nothing, absolutely nothing, would get in the way of them having a good time.

When the bell rang, Susie dashed out as fast as she could. The other kids followed, and soon enough, almost everyone was busy playing freeze tag. Susie and her best friend Lizzy decided to hide behind a tree so that Jason, the boy who was "it," wouldn't find them. But just as they ran to the large tree, Susie saw a girl sitting on its roots.

Susie knew right away who it was. Her name was Alia, and for some reason, no one in her class liked her. Susie thought that Alia always looked nice, but since no one else ever talked to her, Susie didn't either. Usually, Alia just stayed in the back of the room or in the corners of the yard, so Susie never even thought about her.

But now, Susie couldn't ignore Alia because she was sitting right there in front of her. And Alia was crying! She had her head on her knees and her long blonde braided ponytails were hanging over her

shoulders. Susie felt bad for Alia and was about to ask her what was wrong when Lizzy quickly tugged her hand.

"Come on, Susie. Let's go to that tree instead."

"But Lizzy, she's crying. Maybe she's hurt," Susie whispered back.

"No, she's not hurt. You're not hurt are you, Alia?"

Alia was still crying and pretended she didn't hear.

"See, Susie? She's not hurt or she'd say so. Come on, we need to run or else Jason's going to catch us. I don't want to be it!"

"Lizzy, she's crying!" Susie took a few steps towards Alia, but Lizzy tugged her back.

"Susie, I don't want to stay here with her. She's dirty, and that's why no one will play with her. And I don't want you to play with her either! You're MY friend and MY friends don't play with her."

Susie knew Alia heard every word because Alia began to cry so hard that her shoulders were shaking. Susie looked at her best friend who was staring at her angrily, and then she looked at Alia who was still crying with only a tree to keep her company. Susie knew what she should do. She knew what God would want her to do: to play and talk with Alia when no one else would.

But Susie also knew that she was afraid to do the right thing. Would she lose her best friend Lizzy? Would she lose all her friends? Would she never be allowed to play in the big games of freeze tag again?

"Well?" demanded Lizzy. "Aren't you coming with me?"

At that moment, Susie made her decision. She was still afraid of what would happen, but she knew she had to trust that God would take care of her.

"No, Lizzy, you go ahead. I'm going to stay here with Alia."

"Fine!" And with that, Lizzy stormed off.

Alia looked up at Susie and said, "You didn't have to do that, you know. I should be used to being alone, but sometimes it just gets too sad that I can't help but cry. Just because I fell in some mud on the first day of school, everyone thinks I'm dirty. And now, no one will play with me."

Susie sat down next to Lizzy. "It's okay. I don't think you're dirty, and I wanted to stay with you. Lizzy's nice but sometimes she doesn't understand."

"Understand?" Alia asked. "Understand what?"

"Understand that everyone deserves a friend."

"I don't even have a single one."

"Sure you do. You have at least one now. And more will come, I know. You'll see, Alia. It'll be okay."

Then Susie helped Alia get up and walked her to the playground. Some of Susie's friends stared at her but some went up to her and began to talk to Alia too. Susie's heart was pounding the whole time because she didn't know what her friends would do or say. But she did feel good because she knew she did what God wanted her to do.

Questions to Think About

1. **Susie could not wait to do what at school?** (Play freeze tag.)
2. **Who did Susie see behind a tree?** (Alia.)
3. **Why was Alia crying?** (She was sad that no one wanted to play with her.)
4. **What did Susie do and why?** (Susie stayed behind even though her best friend Lizzy didn't want her to. It was a hard decision but she knew God would want her to be a good friend to everyone.)
5. **Do you think what Susie did was hard? Why?** (Allow students to answer.)
6. **What should we do when someone new comes to our class?** (Allow students to answer.)
7. **What else can we do to show we are brave and do what God wants us to?** (Help students brainstorm ideas and pick something they can do this week; e.g. say grace in front of non-church friends, play with a new friend, etc.)



Activity 1

The Barley Bread

In today's story, the man in the Midianite camp had a dream about a loaf of barley bread and how it destroyed a tent. Look at the picture. See how many barley loaves you can find. Color them in.



Activity 2

Gideon's Mobile

God helped Gideon and the Israelites defeat the Midianites. Look at the pictures. These are things Gideon used to fight. Color the pictures and then cut them out. Punch a hole on top of each picture and hang them on a hanger to create a mobile.



Activity 3

Winning Torches

Materials:

1. empty paper towel tubes (one per student)
2. red, yellow or orange tissue paper
3. markers or stickers

Directions:

1. Provide each student with an empty paper towel tube.
2. Help the students decorate their "torches" by drawing designs or putting stickers around the paper towel tubes.
3. Stuff one opening of the tube with the colored tissue papers to create the effect of a flame.
4. Use the torch to review the story of how God helped Gideon and the Israelites win the battle.

Activity 8:1

The Barley Bread

In today's story, the man in the Midianite camp had a dream about a loaf of barley bread and how it destroyed a tent. Look at the picture.

See how many barley loaves you can find. Color them in.



Matthew Jordan
Matthew Jordan



Activity 8:2

Gideon's Mobile

God helped Gideon and the Israelites defeat the Midianites. Look at the pictures. These are things Gideon used to fight. Color the pictures and then cut them out. Punch a hole on top of each picture and hang them on a hanger to create a mobile.



The Man Who Was Very Strong

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- large lollipops
- frosting
- black licorice
- raisins
- plastic spoons or knives
- cellophane or plastic wrap
- elastic or rubber bands



Scriptures

Judges 13-15

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God wants us to listen to and obey His commandments

Behavioral Objective(s)

To obey God by following His commandments; to obey our parents by following their instructions

Memory Verse

"The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him." (Jdg 14:6)



Bible Knowledge

The Philistines

The Philistines lived on the west side of Canaan, along the Mediterranean seacoast. From Samson's day until the time of David, they were the major enemy force in the land and a constant threat to Israel. The Philistines were fierce warriors; they had several advantages over Israel: they were greater in number, they had more tactical expertise, and they knew the secret of making weapons out of iron (1 Sam 13:19-22). But none of that mattered when God was fighting for Israel.

Samson

Samson was the last of the judges. He was set apart to be a Nazirite, a person who took a vow to serve God, even before he was born (13:3-5). A Nazirite vow was voluntary (Num 6:2) and had limited duration (Num 6:5, 8, 13, 20), but in Samson's case, it was for life. As a Nazirite, Samson could not cut his hair, touch a dead body, or drink anything containing alcohol (Num 6:3-8).

Even though Samson had been set apart for

special service, he made many careless mistakes, both big and small, throughout his life. He seemed to have little regard for following God. Samson impulsively used the special strength God gave him for selfish purposes. He was proud and boasted only of his own strength. Over time, he ignored his vow of devotion and depended more and more on his own power. Eventually, he broke all three Nazirite provisions. His hair was cut off (Jdg 16:17, 19), he had contact with the dead (Jdg 14:6-9) and he drank at his wedding feast (Jdg 14:0-20). It is important to note that Samson's true strength did not come from his long hair, but rather from the "Spirit of the Lord" (Jdg 14:6).

Samson's parents objected to his marrying the Philistine woman for several reasons:

- 1) It was against God's law (Ex 34:15-17; Deut 7:1-4).
- 2) The Philistines were Israel's greatest enemies. Marriage to a hated Philistine would be a disgrace to Samson's family.

Samson's own words, "Get her for me for she pleases me well," pointed to his selfish attitude.



Understanding Your Students

Your students will likely understand that they must listen to and obey their parents. But it is important to explain what obedience means. The Bible tells us to honor our parents. This means being polite, having a good attitude, and showing respect, even when we disagree with them. It's okay for the children to say how they feel about something as long as it's done in a nice and respectful way, and it's not done out of habit. Many times, children resort to whining, complaining, crying, or saying mean things to their parents when they disagree on something. This is very much against what God wants His children to do.

Take this opportunity to remind your students how much their parents do for them. Read to them Ephesians 6:1-2, which says, "Children, obey your par-

ents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise." The promise is that we will have a long life, full of blessings. Teach your students that when they honor their parents, they are following the commandments of God.

Your students may also wonder if Samson was actually a good or bad person. Explain to them that Samson served God and wanted to please Him. However, he wasn't perfect. Samson did some great things, but he did some foolish things too. Like all of us, Samson had to make many decisions about right and wrong. Some of his decisions were right, and God was pleased with him. But some of his choices were poor ones, and they upset God greatly. Point out the fact that we can learn a lot from a person's good deeds as well as his bad ones. The most important lesson we can learn is what we can do to please God.



Vocabulary

Judge

to help another tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong

Philistines

the neighbors and enemy of the Israelites

Dedicate

to give something specifically to another person

Nazirite

a person who has been set apart to work for God; he has to follow special rules

Revenge

to get even, to hurt someone who has hurt you



Before You Teach

If we review the life of Samson, it seems that each major event in his life climaxed with some form of destruction of the Philistines. First, he killed thirty Philistines to obtain the thirty sets of clothing as a result of the riddle. Then he killed more of them when his wife and father-in-law were slaughtered in retaliation for the burnt fields. After he was bound and delivered to the Philistines, he broke free and killed another thousand. His most famous and final act of vengeance was when he pushed the pillars down and died along with many of the Philistines.

If we look at Samson's life, he certainly did kill many Philistines, and the Bible records that God had chosen him to deliver the Israelites out of the hands of the Philistines. But was God only interested in hurt-

ing and killing people? Not likely. Though Samson did end up getting rid of some of the enemy, he did so without any regard to his chosen status. He engaged in many careless adventures and ultimately broke many of the commandments. He did not seem to care at all that he had a special mission. Therefore, his life ended in great tragedy.

Though we may not have been set apart before birth as Samson was, we are God's chosen people. Today we also have a special mission to spread the gospel to every corner of the earth. Do we take our status seriously? When we make decisions in our life, do we first look to God and pray to understand His will? Do we take the time to seek His guidance? Samson is famous for his strength because he did not cut his hair. But his long hair was not the real source of his strength. God is the one who gives the real power. Let us remember to trust God in all that we do so that we can be filled with His Spirit.



Bible Story

The Judges Help God's People

In the last lesson, we learned about a man called Gideon. God called him to help the Israelites fight off the Midianites, who kept taking their food and other belongings. God gave him many signs to show him that He would help him win the battle. Do you remember if the Israelites won or not? Of course they won. Gideon took only three hundred men with him and they scared away their enemy because God was with them.

Do you also remember that Gideon was living at a time when the Israelites didn't really have a leader, like they used to? A long, long time ago, there were people like Moses and Joshua who would help the Israelites. But now that they were dead, God used other special people called judges. Gideon was one of those judges. Today, we are going to learn about another judge God chose to help His people.

The Birth of Samson

A long time ago, the Israelites had neighbors called the Philistines. Even though they were their neighbors, they were not nice to God's people. They were always fighting with them. The Philistines were a big enemy of God's people. God wanted to help the Israelites so He chose another judge to become the next helper. This is how he was born.

There was a man called Manoah. Manoah and his wife did not have any children. But one day, an angel of the Lord appeared before Manoah's wife and told her, "Right now, you do not have any children. But later you will have a son and this son is going to be special." The angel continued to tell her that her son was going to be set apart for God from his birth because God had great work for him to do. God wanted him to save the Israelites from the Philistines. This person was going to become a Nazirite. A Nazirite was a person who was dedicated to God. A Nazirite had to follow special rules: he could not drink wine, he could not touch any dead bodies, and he could not cut his hair.

Samson's Special Gift

After some time, what the angel told Manoah and his wife came true. The woman had a son and

named him Samson. As Samson grew up, the Lord blessed him. That means God was with him. The Bible says that God's spirit was with him. God also gave Samson a very special gift, or talent. Samson became the strongest man that ever lived. He grew to be so powerful that no one was stronger than him. He was even stronger than a lion. One time when Samson was walking to town, a young lion came roaring towards him. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson in great power and Samson tore the lion apart with his bare hands. Can you imagine how strong Samson was? He used only his bare hands to kill a lion and he wasn't even hurt. But in order to stay strong, Samson could not cut his hair.

Samson Wants to Find a Wife

Samson had a strong body, but he was also selfish. That means that he always wanted things for himself. He didn't care what other people thought, even his own mother or father. That meant that he cared more about himself than anyone else. When Samson grew up and was old enough to be married, he fell in love with a Philistine woman and wanted to marry her right away. He told his father and mother, "Get her for me as my wife." What do you think his parents said?

His father and mother answered, "Can't you find a wife among your own people? Why take one from our enemies?" Remember that the Philistines were always fighting the Israelites. Samson's parents didn't want him to marry someone from the enemy. But Samson would not listen.

"She is the right one for me," Samson insisted. So he married this Philistine woman and it led to a lot of trouble.

Samson's Wedding Feast

During the wedding feast, Samson was very happy because he had found a wife. When we are happy, sometimes we have happy thoughts. We might think about things that make us happy. Well, as Samson was eating, drinking and having a great time, he remembered the day he had passed by the lion and killed it with his bare hands. He smiled when he thought about it because he was proud that he was so strong. He also remembered that after some time when he passed that way again, he saw the lion's dead body. Inside the dead lion's body was a swarm of bees and some honey. He had scooped out

some honey and ate it. The honey was very sweet. As he was thinking about all this during the wedding feast, it gave him an idea for a little bit of fun for his guests. Among the guests were thirty young Philistine men, and Samson told them, "Let me tell you a riddle. If you can solve the riddle by the seventh day, I will give you each new sets of clothes. But if you cannot solve the riddle, you will give me thirty new sets of clothes. Okay?"

The thirty men thought about it for a moment and they agreed. "Okay! Tell us your riddle," the thirty guests replied.

So Samson told them the riddle. "Out of the eater, came something to eat; and out of the strong came something sweet." Do you know the answer to Samson's riddle? It has to do with when he killed the lion.

Samson's Wife Wants to Know the Answer

For three days the guests could not figure out the riddle. They didn't want to give Samson any clothes so they went to Samson's wife and asked her to find out the answer from Samson. She agreed to help since they were her own people. She went to Samson and she cried to him.

She said, "You hate me! You don't really love me, because you haven't told me the answer to the riddle."

"I haven't even told my parents the answer," replied Samson. "Why should I tell you?"

But Samson's wife cried and asked Samson for the answer every day. Finally, on that seventh day Samson told his wife the answer. She went quickly and told her people, "I have the answer to Samson's riddle!" The people went to Samson right away. "We have the answer to your riddle," they said. "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?" Samson was surprised that they had guessed the answer. But then he found out that his new wife had told them the answer. Samson was very angry. But because they had told him the right answer, he had to keep his promise and give them thirty new sets of clothes. With his power, he went into town and killed thirty Philistines. Samson took their belongings and gave their clothes to the thirty men who had explained the riddle. Was this a good way to get the clothes? No, but Samson was so angry, he wanted to hurt the Philistines. Later, Samson went to his father's house to calm down. After a while, when he felt better, he went back to his wife. But he found out that

she had married someone else! His wife's father thought that Samson hated her and wanted nothing to do with her, so he gave her to someone else.

Samson's Revenge

Samson became very angry again and really wanted to hurt the Philistines to get revenge. To get even with the Philistines, Samson caught three hundred foxes and he tied the foxes together, two by two, by their tails. He also tied a torch to every pair of tails. Then he lit the torches and let the foxes run loose in the fields of the Philistines. Those foxes had their tails on fire so they ran this way and that way. And everywhere they ran, they put everything on fire. Everything was destroyed.

When the Philistines saw their black fields burnt by the fire, they asked, "Who did this?" When they found out Samson did this, they wanted to get even. Do you know what they did? The Philistines killed Samson's wife and father-in-law. Now when Samson heard this news, he wanted revenge again. This time, he attacked the Philistines and killed many of them because he was so strong. After that, Samson went and stayed in a cave. The Philistines found Samson and surrounded the area. The Israelites asked the Philistines why so many of them were there.

"We have come to take Samson prisoner," the Philistines replied. "He has killed many of our people and now we need to kill him."

The Israelites did not want trouble with the Philistines, so they went to Samson and told him, "We have come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines."

Samson allowed the men to tie him up with two new ropes. The men took him to the Philistines. When the Philistines saw Samson, they came toward him shouting. They were angry at him and wanted Samson dead. But then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson in great power. Even though Samson was tied up, he easily broke the ropes. Right away, he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey and used it to kill a thousand Philistine men.

In today's story, we learned about Samson and his great power. We also learned that he did some horrible things when he was angry. Even though God chose Samson to help the Israelites fight the Philistines, Samson used his strength for selfish reasons some of the time. We will find out in the next lesson if Samson listens to God or not.



Check For Understanding

1. **What was so special about Samson, even before he was born?** (God had chosen him to be a Nazirite.)
2. **What special rules did a Nazirite have to follow?** (He could not cut his hair, drink wine or touch dead bodies.)
3. **How do we know Samson was strong?** (He killed a lion with his bare hands; he killed many Philistines with just a donkey's jawbone.)
4. **Why were Samson's parents sad when he wanted to get married?** (Samson wanted to marry a Philistine woman.)
5. **What did Samson want to do for fun at his own wedding feast?** (He wanted to tell a riddle.)

6. **How did the Philistines find out the answer?** (They asked Samson's wife to find out. After that, Samson went and killed thirty men.)
7. **When Samson found out his wife had been given to another man, what did he do?** (He burned the fields that belonged to the Philistines.)
8. **When the Israelites tied Samson up and gave him to the Philistines, what happened?** (Samson was filled with the Spirit of God. He broke the ropes that tied him up. Then he killed a thousand Philistines with just a donkey's jawbone.)
9. **Do you think that Samson obeyed God?** (Allow students to answer. Explain that God had given Samson special strength to help the Israelites fight the Philistines. Sometimes he did help but a lot of the times, he didn't follow God's rules and instead did what he wanted to.)



Life Application Story

Obeying Our Parents

Ricky Lopez invited Benjamin Lim to play basketball at his house one afternoon. They did not live that far away from each other. Ricky had asked his dad to put up a basketball hoop on top of the garage door.

Benjamin came running up the driveway. "Hi, Ricky, I'm here!"

"Oh good. You made it. I was going to call you at home to see if you had left or not," Ricky said.

"Well, I'm here. Let's play!" Ben exclaimed excitedly.

The boys played one on one. Ricky made a lot of shots, and so did Ben. They were having so much fun that they forgot how long they had played. The boys did not even feel tired. Just then Ricky's dad called out to them from inside the house.

"Ben and Ricky, you two have been out there for a long time. Please take a break and come in for some juice or water!" Mr. Lopez said loudly.

"No, thanks, Dad. We're not thirsty!" Ricky said. Ben didn't want to sound rude so he said, "We will be right in in a few minutes, Mr. Lopez!"

The boys played for another fifteen minutes. Then Mr. Lopez got a phone call from Mrs. Lim. She wanted Ben to go home because he had some homework he had to finish. After Mr. Lopez hung up the phone, he went out to the driveway and he told Ben what his mom wanted him to do. Ben thanked Mr. Lopez and said bye to Ricky.

"Awww ... do you really have to go?" whined Ricky.

"Yes, he really needs to go home," said Mr. Lopez. "You also need to come in, wash up and do your homework too."

Ben waved good-bye and began to walk home. Ricky didn't want to go inside yet.

"Just a couple more minutes, okay, Dad?" pleaded Ricky.

"I think you've had enough fun already. Please come in right now. It's getting dark and you need to do your homework. Also, you are tired and I don't want you to get hurt."

Ricky pretended that he didn't hear what Mr. Lopez had said and kept on playing. When Ricky jumped to throw the ball into the basket one last time, he lost his balance and twisted his ankle as he landed.

"Ouch! Dad, please come help me. I think I twisted my ankle!" Ricky yelled out in pain.

Mr. Lopez ran to Ricky and helped him get up.

"You are more tired than you think and that's probably why you landed funny," Mr. Lopez said. "Are you alright?"

"I think I am okay. I can still walk a little bit. I'm sorry Dad, I should have listened to you," Ricky apologized.

"That's okay. I am just glad you aren't hurt too badly. Come on, let's go in and put some ice on it."

Questions to Think About

1. **Why did Mr. Lopez want Ricky to come in the house?** (It was getting dark; Ricky had homework

he needed to do; he might get hurt when he is too tired.)

2. **What happened when Ricky ignored Mr. Lopez's warning?** (He twisted his ankle.)
3. **Have you ever played with your friends and had so much fun that you didn't want to stop?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **Why do you think your parents want you to stop during something that is fun?** (We have other important things we need to do besides having fun. If we played all day long, it would not be fun after a while. We would get tired of it.)
5. **What does it mean to obey our parents?** (Allow students to answer.)
6. **How can obeying our parents help us learn to obey God?** (It is one of God's commandments. When we obey our parents, we are obeying God.)



Activity 1

Samson's Strength

Look at the pictures. How strong was Samson? He killed a ____ (lion) with his bare hands. How strong was Samson? He caught ____ (300) foxes and tied them up. Color in the pictures.



Activity 2

Who is Being Polite?

Look at each set of pictures. Who is obeying their mother or father by being polite? Circle the right picture. Can you practice these polite words? ("Please," "Thank you," "May I?")



Activity 3

Lollipop Samson

Materials:

1. large lollipops (one per student)
2. black licorice
3. frosting

4. raisins
5. plastic spoons or knives
6. cellophane or other plastic wrap

Directions:

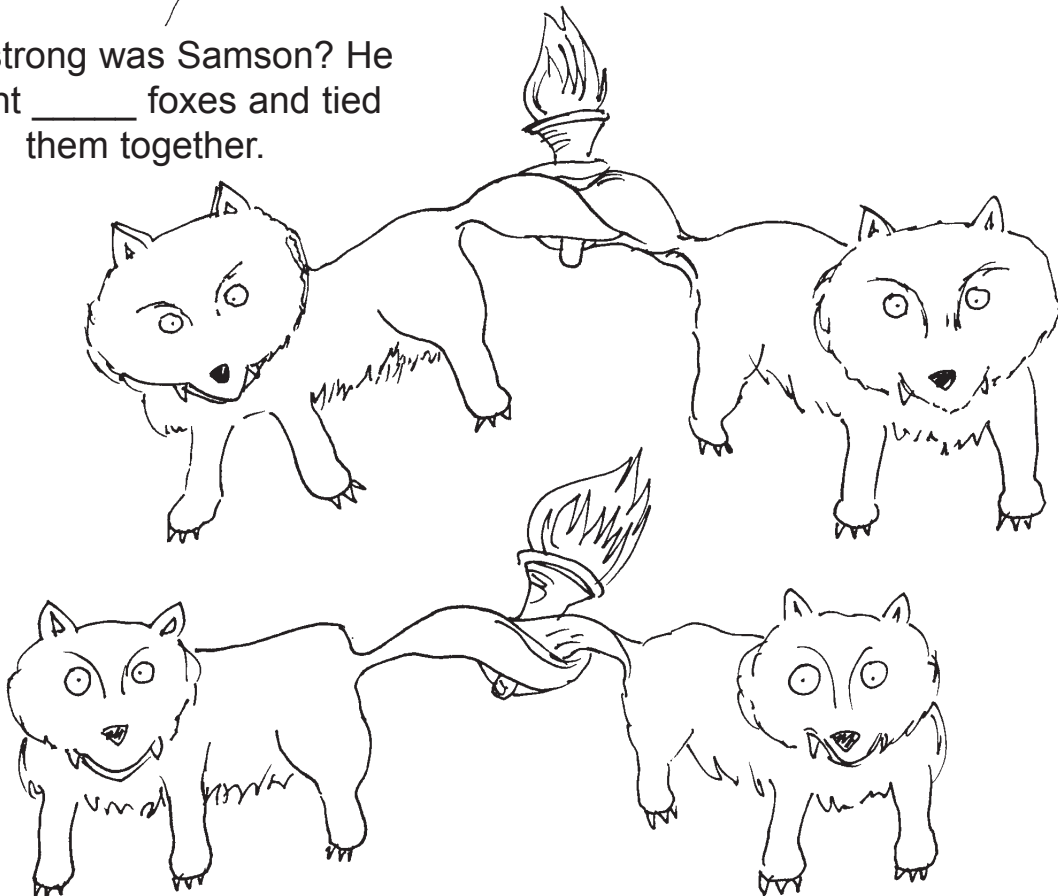
1. Give each student a large lollipop.
2. Have each student cover one side of the lollipop with frosting.
3. Break apart the black licorice so that the students can place them on the frosting as Samson's hair.
4. Use the raisins as eyes, a nose and mouth.
5. As the children are making "Samson's head," talk about why Samson was so strong. Even though he was strong because he did not cut his hair, God is still the one who gives the great power.
6. To discourage the students from eating the lollipop, cover the final product with cellophane and tie off at the bottom. Then the students can preserve it and show it to their parents.

Samson's Strength

How strong was Samson?
He killed a _____ with his
bare hands.



How strong was Samson? He
caught _____ foxes and tied
them together.



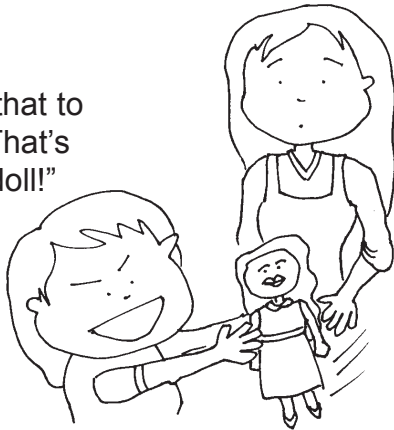
Activity 9:2

Who is Being Polite?

Look at each set of pictures. Who is obeying their parents by being polite?
Circle the right picture. Can you practice these polite words?

1.

"Give that to me. That's my doll!"



"Thank you for finding my doll."

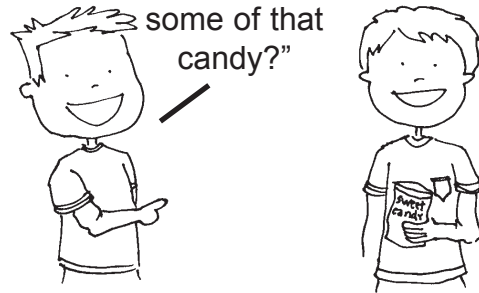


2.

"Hey, that's my candy!"



"May I share some of that candy?"



3.

"Can I please have a turn at the game?"



"You've had it for a long time. It's my turn."



The Man Who Didn't Cut His Hair

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- pens
- potato chips



Scriptures

Judges 16

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God is the source of all power

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify things we can pray to God about and ask for His help

Memory Verse

"O Lord God, remember me, I pray."
(Jdg 16:28)



Bible Knowledge

The Philistines

The Philistines were organized into a federation under five lords, or rulers, of the five big cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. Dagon, sometimes known as Dagan, was the chief god of the Philistines, the god of grain and harvest. Many temples were built to honor Dagon, and the worship there included human sacrifice. These temples were also the local entertainment centers. Just as people today crowd into movie theaters, they would flock to the temples, to be entertained.

Delilah

Delilah was the third Philistine woman Samson was involved with. The first was his dead wife (Jdg 15:6), and the second was a prostitute he met at Gaza (Jdg 16:1). Delilah was a cunning woman with honey on her lips and poison in her heart. Cold and calculating, she toyed with Samson, pretending to love him while looking for personal gain. Each of the five Philistine lords promised her eleven hun-

dred pieces of silver. The total would have weighed more than one hundred pounds. Delilah had to try four times before Samson revealed the true source of his strength. He allowed himself to be deceived by flattery and gave in to temptation and wrong beliefs.

Samson's Relationship With God

Samson's relationship with God had deteriorated so much that he didn't even realize God had left him. By the time he met Delilah, he had already broken two of the three Nazirite rules: he drank wine at his wedding and touched the carcass of the lion he had killed. When he finally told Delilah about his uncut hair, God departed from him. For his whole life, Samson took his strength, as well as God's presence, for granted. Later, the Philistines humiliated him by gouging out his eyes and making him grind grain.

In spite of Samson's past, God still answered Samson's prayer and destroyed the temple and the worshippers of Dagon. God was willing to hear his prayer of confession and used him one final time. The Bible records that Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.



Understanding Your Students

Negative peer pressure is something all children experience. Most of the time, your students will face peer pressures at school or among their friends. Remind your students that they must always do what God wants of them. They should never allow themselves to be talked into doing things they know are wrong.

Use Samson's example to illustrate the importance of overcoming pressure. Both times the women in his life nagged him and he gave in. With his wife, he told her the answer to the riddle after seven days of badgering. He later allowed Delilah to constantly nag and prod him. When he gave into the pressure, he had to pay a heavy price: he lost the strength God had given him and

God left him. He really disappointed God in the way he dealt with his situations.

Tell your students that when they feel like they are being asked to do something they think might be against God's teachings, they should think about what Jesus Christ would do. (Take the time to brainstorm what some of those situations might be; e.g. taking something that doesn't belong to them, lying, etc.) They could also go to their parents or even RE teachers for advice on what to do. Another option they have is to pray to God for His guidance. Because peer pressure can be the downfall of many Christians, it's important to lay down a foundation of understanding very early on. Your students must know that it is important to resist negative peer pressure, and always obey God's commands.



Vocabulary

Victory

to win something

Selfish

to always wants things for yourself and not care about other people or their feelings

Weak

not strong

Prisoner

someone who is taken by the enemy

Pillars

large columns that hold up the roof of a building or house



Before You Teach

When Samson finally revealed the source of his great strength to Delilah and she had his locks cut off, the Bible says that "his strength left him." When she woke him to test him, he thought that he could just get up as usual and use his power to overcome any situation. Samson's biggest mistake was trusting in himself. He was so confident his strength could get him out of any mess that he didn't care he told Delilah the truth, knowing that the Philistines would likely find out. Moreover, he was completely insensitive to the fact that God had departed from him. What does this tell us about Samson's faith?

Samson was dedicated to be a Nazirite even before his birth. This means that Samson would have known about his special status from the time he was old enough to understand what having faith was all about. And he obviously did not forget that he was a Nazirite (Jdg 16:17), even as he was

about to be captured by the enemy. His actions and attitude demonstrate the little regard he had for God and the gift he had been given. Instead of allowing God's presence to strengthen him both physically and spiritually each day, his faith actually became weaker with every decision he made. But even so, God did not leave him right away. In fact, God gave him many chances to turn back because His Spirit did not depart from Samson until his hair-cutting.

We know that our life of faith is like a journey. It takes time and a lot of effort to make it to the final stop, the heavenly kingdom. From Samson's life, we can learn not to take our faith for granted. Even though we are the chosen ones, we still have a role to play. We don't want to wake up one morning and realize that God is no longer a part of our lives. While we may not engage in the kind of drastic events as Samson did, we want to be sure we are moving closer to God's kingdom, and not away from it, as we live out each day.



Bible Story

Samson's Great Strength

Do you remember Samson from the last lesson? He was one of the strongest men ever, and he was set apart for God from birth. He had special rules he had to follow. Do you remember what they were? He could not drink wine, he could not touch any dead bodies, and he could not cut his hair. Because he did not cut his hair, God gave him great strength so that he could help the Israelites fight the Philistines.

Samson had several great victories over the Philistines and killed hundreds of their people. But sometimes, he also used his power for his own selfish reasons. When he was mad at the Philistines for answering his riddle, he went and killed thirty men for their clothes. He didn't always use his strength in the right way. But because he was so strong, the Philistines were beginning to be afraid of him. They wanted to know where Samson's great strength came from so that they could find a way to kill him. They didn't know it was because he didn't cut his long hair.

Samson and Delilah

Now, sometime later, Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. But Delilah didn't really love Samson. When the leaders of the Philistines knew that Samson really liked Delilah, they thought of a plan to get Samson to tell them the secret behind his strength. They would pay Delilah a lot of money and she would try to find out for them. They thought that because Samson loved Delilah so much, he would tell her anything she wanted to know. Delilah agreed to this plan because all she wanted was the money. She didn't really care about Samson. So she went to Samson to see what she could find out.

It wasn't easy to find out Samson's secret. At first, Delilah just asked Samson, "How come you are so strong? Tell me the secret of your great strength. How can you be made weak?"

Samson was not going to tell his secret so he lied and said, "If I am tied up with bowstrings, then I will become weak." When Delilah heard this, she went and told the Philistine rulers. Then the Philistine rulers gave Delilah bowstrings and she

used the bowstrings to tie up Samson while he was asleep. With the Philistines hiding in the room, she called out, "Samson, the Philistines are coming to get you!" When Samson woke up, he snapped the bowstrings easily. Therefore Delilah and the hiding Philistines knew he was not telling them the truth.

After this, Delilah said to Samson, "You lied to me. Come now, tell me your secret. You can tell me what really makes you so strong and how you can be made weak."

Samson knew he should not tell his secret so he lied again and said, "If I am tightly tied up with new ropes that have never been used before, then I will become weak." So Delilah took new ropes and tied Samson with them. With the Philistines hiding in the room again, she called out, "Samson, the Philistines are coming to get you!" But Samson easily broke the ropes off his arms this second time.

Once more Delilah told Samson, "You keep lying to me. Tell me your secret." Samson knew Delilah wanted to know because the Philistines asked her to help them. He wanted to play a trick on the Philistines, so he lied again and said, "If you weave the seven braids of my hair into the cloth on the loom, then I will become weak." (Note to teacher: It may be helpful to have a picture of a loom so that the students will have an idea of what this test involved. Basically, Samson had his hair weaved into the cloth.) So while he was sleeping, Delilah took Samson's seven braids of hair and wove them into the fabric. Once again, Delilah called out, "Samson, the Philistines are coming!" But Samson woke up and he was still as strong as ever and easily broke away.

Delilah Continues Asking Samson

For the third time, Delilah knew Samson had not told her the real reason he was so strong. But she kept asking, day and night, to get Samson to tell her the truth. She told Samson, "How can you say 'I love you' when you won't tell me your secret?" She kept nagging Samson day after day. In the beginning, it was fun to trick the Philistines. But now, Samson was tired of Delilah asking him all the time. Finally, one day, to get her to stop bothering him, he told her the secret—that he was set apart for God since he was born, and if all his hair was cut off, he would become as weak as any other man.

When Delilah heard this, she knew it was the truth. She told the Philistines to come back one last time. That night, Delilah asked Samson to put his head on her lap and he fell asleep on her. Then Delilah called a man to cut off all of Samson's hair. Samson's seven braids were shaved off! Then God left Samson and his strength was gone. When Delilah shouted, "Samson, the Philistines are coming to get you!", he woke up but he could not free himself this time. He was tied up and captured by the Philistines because he had lost all his strength.

Samson's One Last Request

The Philistines made Samson a prisoner. They took out his eyes, put him in chains and made him work very hard. The Philistines did this to him because they really hated him. Now that Samson had no more power, they could do whatever they wanted with him and he could not fight back. Do you know why? God had given him special rules to follow but Samson did not listen to God. He told Delilah the secret to his strength and now God was not with him anymore.

One day, the Philistines gathered together at the temple for a great feast. They were in such a good mood that they shouted, "Bring out Samson!" They brought out Samson so that they could laugh and make fun of him. Samson was taken out of prison and he stood between the pillars that supported the temple. Even though Samson couldn't see, he knew this would be his one last chance to do something to the Philistines. So Samson prayed to God, "O Lord, remember me. Please make me strong again so I can die with the Philistines." When Samson was in prison, his hair began to grow back. He hoped God would hear him and help him one more time. Then Samson placed his right hand on one pillar and his left hand on the other pillar. He pushed with all his might. The pillars cracked and suddenly the temple roof came crashing down. All the Philistine rulers and people in the temple were crushed to death, including Samson. Three thousand Philistines were killed that day.

Even though Samson didn't spend his life doing the things God wanted him to do, in the end, he asked God to help him one last time.



Check For Understanding

- 1. Who did Samson fall in love with?** (He fell in love with Delilah, a Philistine woman.)
- 2. What did the Philistine rulers ask Delilah to do?** (They wanted her to find out how to make Samson weak so they could capture him.)
- 3. What did Samson tell Delilah the first time she asked him? The second time she asked him? The third time she asked him?** (He told her to tie him up with bow-strings. He told her to tie him with fresh ropes. He told her to weave his hair into the cloth on the loom.)
- 4. What did Delilah do after Samson finally told her the truth?** (She asked the Philistines to come and cut his hair while

he was sleeping so that they could capture him.)

- 5. What happened to Samson when his hair was cut off?** (He lost his power and God left him.)
- 6. What did the Philistines do to Samson?** (They took out his eyes, put him in chains and made him work hard.)
- 7. What did Samson ask God when he was brought out to the temple?** (He asked God to help him. He wanted to have strength to push the pillars down so all the Philistines there would die with him.)
- 8. Do you think Samson obeyed God?** (Allow students to answer.)
- 9. What can we learn from Samson?** (Allow students to answer. We should always follow God's teachings and obey His commands. We should not do things selfishly or use God's gifts for our own gain.)



Life Application Story

What Would You Do?

After the Sabbath the Marsh family was driving home from church. In the car, Mrs. Marsh asked Michelle, "What did you learn in class today, Michelle?"

"We learned about the death of a very strong man named Samson!" Michelle answered.

"Tell us about it!" said John excitedly.

"Well, there was a very brave strong man called Samson. He was a Nazirite. This means that he was set apart to serve God," began Michelle proudly.

"That is a hard word. What did you say? A Nazirite?" asked John.

"A Nazirite," Mrs. Marsh jumped in. "A Nazirite had to follow three important rules. One was to never cut his hair. The second was to never drink wine. The last was never to touch any dead bodies."

"That doesn't sound too hard to do, except your hair would be super long if you never cut it!" said John.

"Yes, that's true. Why don't we let Michelle finish telling the story," answered Mrs. Marsh.

"Thanks, Mom. God told Samson's parents never to cut his hair because Samson's strength would come from his hair. God gave him great strength to help the Israelites fight the Philistines, who were their enemy. But Samson did not listen to God. He used his power for his own desires. Then one day he met a woman who tried to trick him into telling her the secret of his strength."

"Did he tell her?" asked John impatiently.

"At first, he didn't. But after many days of asking, Samson didn't want her to bother him anymore. So he told her. Then she went and told the Philistines. They waited until he was asleep and came to cut his hair off. And do you know what happened next?"

"He really lost his strength?" asked John.

"Yes. Once the hair came off, God's power left him and the Philistines tied him up and put him in prison. They also did something really gross. They took his eyes out so he couldn't see," explained Michelle.

"Ouch, that must have hurt a lot!" said John, as he squirmed in his seat.

"But after a while, his hair started to grow back.

One day, the Philistines brought Samson out to make fun of him during a big feast they were having. There were thousands of people there. Samson prayed to God and asked Him to give him strength one more time. Then he pushed really hard on the pillars and the whole building came crashing down."

"So, everyone died?" asked John.

"Everyone died, including Samson," said Michelle.

"That's kind of a sad story," John said.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Marsh.

"Because Samson was so powerful but he still had to die like that, and God left him too," John explained.

"Wait, John, what would you have done if you were Samson?" Mr. Marsh asked.

"I would have listened to God and never tell anyone the secret," John said.

"What do you think, Michelle?" Mrs. Marsh asked.

"I agree with John. I would thank God for giving me the strength. Also, I would obey God and serve Him with the power He gave me," Michelle answered.

"Both of you answered well," Mrs. Marsh said.

"Always remember to put God first in your lives. Also, obey God no matter what you do. If you know that what you do might make God unhappy, then do not do it."

"We know, Mom," answered the kids.

"You were a good story-teller today, Michelle," said John.

"Thanks," said Michelle, as she smiled all the way home.

Questions to Think About

1. **What story was Michelle telling everyone in the car?** (The story of Samson.)
2. **Was Samson's strength really from his long hair?** (The power didn't come from the long hair. It came from God.)
3. **How can we not be like Samson?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **God gave Samson the special gift of strength. Share one gift or talent that God has given you or to one of your family members.** (Allow students to share. Even when they think they have no talents, as long as they trust and obey God, He will give us the special gift when He thinks we are ready for it.)



Activity 1

The Story of Samson

Do you remember the story of Samson? Put the pictures in the correct order by writing the numbers from 1 to 4. Which one happened first?



Activity 2

Prayer Booklet

Samson did not pray or ask God for help when he should have. We can always pray to God and ask Him for help. Below are some things we can pray to God about. In the blank page, write and draw one more thing you can pray to God about. (Note to teacher: Cut out the page and fold it to create a booklet.)

1. I can pray and ask God to help me decide what to do when I am not sure.
2. I can pray and ask God for the Holy Spirit.
3. I can pray and ask God to forgive me for something I did.
4. I can pray and ask God for...



Activity 3

Role-Play

Materials:

1. nice-looking pens
2. potato chips

Directions:

1. Have two volunteers come up to the front of the room and take turns saying the simple dialogue.
2. After the mini-performance, ask the rest of the class a different way to approach the same situation that would be according to God's will.
3. Discuss after each scenario that it is important to not give into pressure or temptation, like Samson did. It almost always has consequences.
4. If it is too difficult for the students to act it out, ask for one volunteer while the teacher plays the other role. Or another teacher helper can

take on the role so that the students can just observe. This type of role-playing makes the situations more real to the students and can help them understand what they should or shouldn't do.

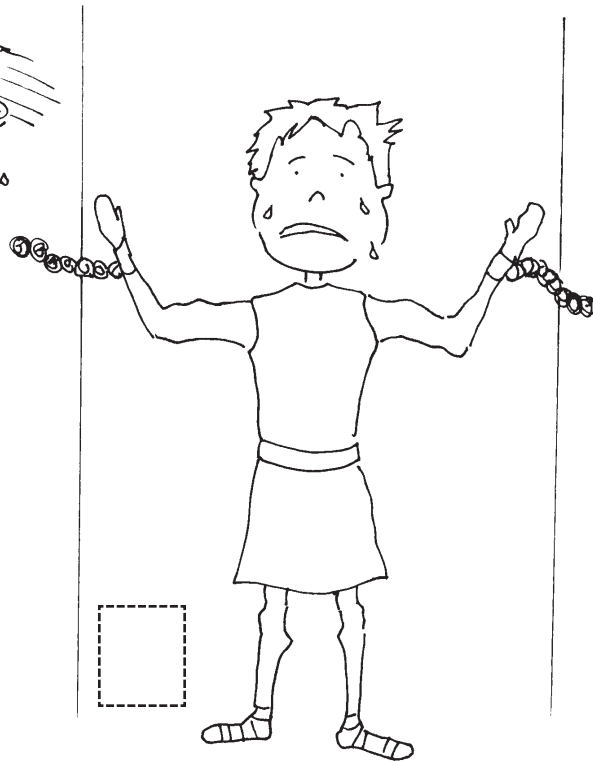
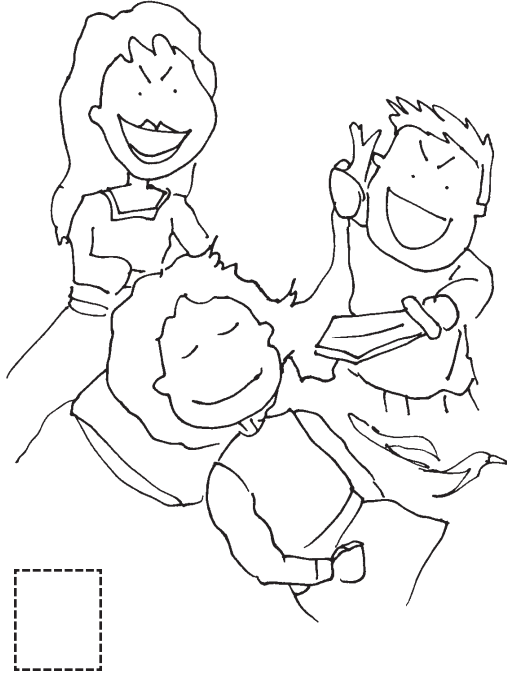
Possible scenarios:

1. A person sees two beautiful pens. He grabs one and puts it in his pocket. The friend says, "Hey, that's not yours." The first person says, "No one saw me, it's okay. You can take the other one. It's really pretty. Maybe no one wants it." The friend grabs the pen and they walk away. What should they have done?
2. A child eats some chips without asking. His mom or dad sees some crumbs on his shirt. The parent asks, "Did you eat chips? I asked you not to eat them before dinner." The child says, "No, I didn't," and walks away because he doesn't want to get into trouble. What should the child have done?
3. Teacher can come up with other possibilities.

Activity 10:1

The Story of Samson

Do you remember the story of Samson? Put the pictures in the correct order by writing the numbers from 1 to 4. Which one happened first?



Activity 10:2

Prayer Booklet

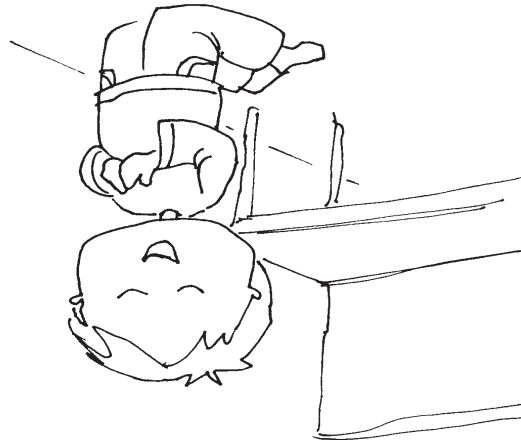
Samson did not pray or ask God for help when he should have. We can always pray to God and ask Him for help. Below are some things we can pray to God about. In the blank page, write and draw one more thing you can pray to God about. (Note to teacher: Cut out the page and fold it to create a booklet.)

cut along thick line

cut along thick line



I can pray and ask God to forgive me for something I did.



I can pray to God and ask for the Holy Spirit.

fold

I can pray and ask God to

fold



I can pray and ask God to help me decide what to do when I am not sure.

Naomi and Ruth

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- small paper plates
- stapler
- hole punch
- yarn
- markers and stickers
- bird seed
- scissors



Scriptures

Ruth 1-2

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God takes care of all our needs

Behavioral Objective(s)

To show love to others through our actions

Memory Verse

"For wherever you go, I will go." (Ruth 1:16)



Bible Knowledge

Moab

Moab was the land east of the Dead Sea. In Genesis 19:30-38, it records that the Moabites were descendants of Lot and his incestuous relationship with his daughter. Therefore, the Israelites and Moabites were considered close relatives. The relationship between Israel and Moab is one that had its ups and downs. During the time of the judges, it was one of the nations that opposed Israel (Jdg 3:12). But today's lesson shows a more civil and peaceful coexistence between the two nations.

Life During the Time of Ruth

The story of Ruth takes place sometime during the period of the judges. These were dark days for Israel, when "all the people did what was right in their own eyes" (Jdg 17:6; 21:25). But Naomi and Ruth were a beautiful example of loyalty, friendship, and commitment, to God and to each other. Even though they were widows, that did not stop them from making the most of their lives. Ruth was hard-working and did what she could to provide

for herself and her mother-in-law.

When the wheat and barley were ready to be harvested, reapers were hired to cut down the stalks and tie them into bundles. Israelite law demanded that the corners of the field not be harvested. In addition, any grain that was dropped was to be left for the poor who picked it up and used it for their own good (Lev 19:9, 23: 22, Deut 24:19). The purpose of this law was to feed the poor and prevent the owners from hoarding. This law served as a type of welfare program, because widows had no means of providing for themselves.

There was almost nothing worse than being a widow in the ancient world. Widows were taken advantage of or ignored. They were almost always poverty-stricken. In addition to picking the left-over grains, God's law also provided that the nearest relative of the dead husband should care for the widow. In this case, Boaz had to ask one person who was a closer relative if he wanted to "redeem" Ruth. When the man declined, he removed his sandal, as a sign of a legal transaction in ancient Israel, and handed it over to Boaz. This indicated that he was giving up his right to Ruth. Then Boaz would be free to take Ruth as his wife (Ruth 4:5-10).



Understanding Your Students

Love can be a very abstract feeling to describe. Some have said it can make you feel fuzzy and warm inside. Others say that love can break your heart. Luckily, children at four and five years old don't think about love in such complicated ways. They tend to show their affection for others through very visible signs. They hug, kiss, hold hands, or snuggle close to those they care about. Reinforce to your students that these are wonderful ways for them to show love. There are many ways they can show love to others. As a class, brainstorm things your students can try to do to show love to their parents, for example. These suggestions can include things like house chores (e.g. cleaning,

helping a brother or a sister, feeding the pet, etc.) or other more specific behaviors (e.g. respecting one another, telling the truth, sacrificing their time or energy, etc.).

In today's story, Ruth demonstrated her love for her mother-in-law, Naomi, through many of her actions. She gave up her future to remarry and go home; she was submissive and followed Naomi back to her hometown; she went out to pick the leftover grains so they would have food to eat; she listened to the advice of Naomi and did as she asked. These are all ways Ruth showed how much she cared for her mother-in-law. Also, encourage the students that when they love someone, the things they do for one another don't seem like chores. They will want to do them with a glad and happy heart.



Vocabulary

Famine

a time when there is very little or no food or water in the land

Harvest

to collect the produce or food (i.e. grains, vegetables) of the land

Grain

wheat



Before You Teach

Ruth was a Moabite, but that didn't stop her from worshiping the true God, nor did it stop God from accepting her worship and blessing her greatly. She became the great-grandmother of King David and a direct ancestor of Jesus Christ.

What allowed Ruth to accept such a faith, since she was only a gentile? And what made God accept her? It likely had to do with the kind of person she was. Ruth's life exhibited admirable qualities: she was hardworking, loving, kind, faithful and brave. She was also meek, humble and submissive. These qualities made her heart open to God's quiet calling through Naomi. In today's society, many would say that people like Ruth just aren't smart enough to make it to the top. People like Ruth would be taken advantage of or be trampled upon as others seek to climb up the ladder of success. People who work

hard don't get rewarded. People are taught to be aggressive, not submissive. Yet, her qualities gained her a good reputation. God could see the kind of person she really was. God was at work behind the scenes, setting up the "chance meeting" with Boaz.

Today, success in life is equal to having a lot of material wealth. But we can see from the life of Ruth that she didn't have any physical luxuries until she met Boaz. Yet, she kept plugging away, doing what she had to; sometimes, even forgetting her status as a widow. Widows were supposed to be despised and ignored. Ruth paid no attention to anyone or anything and went about her life. While others may not see this as anything important, God sees and He blesses those who bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Even though Ruth was a Moabitess, God did not see her as anything less than worthy to be a part of the ancestry of our Lord and Savior. Let us learn from Ruth's character and life so that we may also be richly blessed.



Bible Story

Elimelech Moves to Moab

Do you remember the stories about Gideon and Samson? God had chosen them to help the Israelites fight off their enemies. Both Gideon and Samson were judges. These judges would also help the people in the land when they had problems. The Israelites knew they could come to the judges when they needed help.

During the time when these judges were ruling Israel, there was a famine in the country. That means there was very little food and people were very hungry. Now there was a man named Elimelech. He and his family were also very hungry. They lived in a place called Bethlehem, and there wasn't any more food for them there. So, Elimelech decided to move. He took his wife Naomi and their two sons and moved away from Bethlehem, into the country of Moab. Moab was a neighboring country to Israel. While they were living in Moab, Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons. It was a hard life for her. But soon, her sons grew up, and they married women from Moab. Naomi was happy that her sons had their own families. But ten years later, something horrible happened. Naomi's two sons also died. That means Naomi didn't have her husband or her two sons anymore. How do you think she must have felt? Probably very, very sad. Now Naomi only had her two daughters-in-law staying with her.

Naomi Moves Back to Bethlehem

Do you remember why Naomi and her family moved to Moab in the first place? There was no food in Bethlehem. Now, many years later, back home in Bethlehem, God was helping His people and giving them good harvests. When Naomi heard that there was food back home in Bethlehem, she decided to go back. Naomi left Moab with her two daughters-in-law and set out on the road back to Bethlehem. As they were walking on the road, Naomi spoke to her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

"You should go back to your own mothers. I am old and I will be alright when I get back to my homeland. May the Lord be as good to you as you have been to my sons and to me. May the Lord give each of you another husband." Naomi said all these things because she knew Orpah and Ruth were still young. If

they went back to their own homes, they could probably marry again. So Naomi kissed her two daughters-in-law good-bye.

But the two daughters-in-law cried aloud and said to Naomi, "We will go with you and live in your country and with your people."

But Naomi pleaded, "Go home to your mothers. I have nothing for you. I have no more sons to be your husbands. I am an old woman. But you still have a chance at a better life. Go back to your homes."

Ruth Stays With Naomi

When the two daughters-in-law heard this, they cried again. But Orpah decided that it would be better to go home. So Orpah kissed Naomi good-bye and returned home to her own mother. But Ruth didn't want to leave Naomi. Naomi tried to talk to her again.

She said, "Orpah is going back to her people. Go back with her."

However, Ruth had decided to stay with Naomi. Ruth told Naomi, "Don't tell me to leave you. I will go where you go. I will live where you live. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. I will die where you die, and I will be buried next to you. May the Lord punish me if I ever leave you."

When Naomi heard all this, she realized that Ruth had made up her mind to go with her, so she stopped pushing her away. The two of them traveled on the road that took them back to Bethlehem.

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was talking about them.

"Can this be the Naomi that left many years ago? Is she now returning home?"

Naomi was happy to be in her own hometown. She was glad her friends still remembered her. But she was sad too. When she left Bethlehem a long time ago, she had her whole family with her. Now she was back by herself. Only Ruth stayed with her. So Naomi told her friends not to call her Naomi anymore but to call her Mara. Mara means bitter. Bitter can mean something that doesn't taste good. Bitter can also mean when you feel bad because terrible things have happened to you. Naomi's life had been bitter. Naomi had left with a husband and two sons, but they all had died and she returned home years later alone, with Ruth. She went away full, but came back home empty.

Ruth Goes to Gather Food

Now when Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, it was the beginning of barley harvest.

Ruth asked Naomi, "Let me go to the fields with the farmers. I will follow the people who cut the grain and pick up the leftover grain, so that we can have food to eat."

Naomi thought that this was a good idea, so she said yes. Ruth went to work in the field, picking up leftover grains. It was hard work but Ruth did not complain. As it turned out, Ruth was working in a field that belonged to Boaz. Boaz was the land owner and he was very well respected by all. That means he was a good owner who was fair with all his workers. That day when Ruth was in the field, Boaz came to check on his workers.

He greeted his workers, "The Lord be with you!"

His workers called back, "The Lord bless you!"

As Boaz walked around the field, he saw Ruth working hard, picking up the leftover grains. Boaz had never seen her before and so he asked one of his workers, "Who is that young woman?"

"She is the woman who came back from Moab with Naomi," replied the worker. The worker added, "She has worked hard since morning and took only a short rest."

Boaz had heard all about what Ruth had done for her mother-in-law and he wanted to help. He told Ruth to stay in his field to work.

"Don't go work in another field. Do not go away from here," Boaz told Ruth. "You can stay with my servant girls and when you are thirsty, go get a drink from the water jars that the men have filled."

Ruth was touched by Boaz's kindness. He spoke kindly to her even though she was not one of his people. She asked Boaz why was he being so kind to her, especially since she was from Moab. Boaz replied, "I have been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law. You have been very kind to her and you show her great love. May God be kind to you for what you have done."

When it was time to eat, Boaz told Ruth to come and have some bread. She sat down with the harvesters and ate until she was full. She even had some left over. After eating, Ruth went back to work picking up grain from the field. Boaz gave orders to his men to help Ruth. Since she didn't know much about a farmer's work, he told them to just let her go and pick anywhere, even if it was the wrong place. He also told them to pull out some stalks from the bundle and leave them for her to pick up to make sure she would have enough. After a full day's work, Ruth had a big basket of grain. She carried this big basket back to Naomi. Ruth also gave Naomi the bread that she had left over.

Naomi was surprised by how much food she had brought back. She asked Ruth where she had worked. Ruth told her that she worked in the field that belonged to Boaz.

Naomi was pleased and said, "God is good. God helped you find a good place to pick grain." So Ruth stayed and worked in Boaz's field every day until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. Even though she and Naomi had come to Bethlehem with nothing, God had taken care of them and given them enough food to eat.



Check For Understanding

1. **Why did Elimelech and his family move to Moab from Bethlehem?** (There was a famine in the land.)
2. **What happened to Elimelech and his sons after many years of living in Moab?** (Elimelech and his sons all died.)
3. **What did Naomi decide to do after her**

sons died? (She decided to go home to Bethlehem.)

4. **What did Naomi ask her daughters-in-law to do?** (She told them to go back to their own homes.)
5. **What did Orpah do? What about Ruth?** (Orpah went home, but Ruth stayed with Naomi.)
6. **What did Ruth do when she got to Bethlehem?** (She went to work in the fields to pick grain so there would be

food for her and Naomi to eat.)

7. **How was Boaz nice to Ruth?** (He gave her bread to eat and told his servants to leave extra grain for her.)

8. **Why was Boaz nice to Ruth?** (He heard what she had done for Naomi.)

9. **How was Ruth kind to Naomi? How did she love her?** (She followed her to her homeland even though she was from Moab; she picked grains to feed her and Naomi.)



Life Application Story

Showing Love To Mom and Dad and God

One afternoon, Mrs. Lewis was folding some clothes she had just taken out of the dryer. Tommy happened to walk by the family room and saw his mother.

"Mom, do you need some help folding the clothes?" Tommy asked.

"Well, it's very nice of you to offer," replied Mrs. Lewis with a smile.

Tommy sat down next to the laundry basket. Now that he sat so close to the clothes, he noticed that there sure were a lot of them to fold.

"Wow, Mom. This looks like a lot of work."

"Well, there are four of us in the family and we do have to change every day," said Mrs. Lewis.

Tommy grabbed a shirt out of the pile. He tried to match the sleeves but it didn't turn out quite as neat as his mother's.

"Hmmm, maybe I can give you a few tips," said Mrs. Lewis.

Tommy and his mother spent the next few minutes going through all the clothes in the pile. Soon, they were done.

"Whew, that really was a lot of clothes," said Tommy, as he lay down on the carpet. "But it wasn't that hard, once I got the hang of it."

"Thanks for your help, Tommy," Mrs. Lewis said. "I really appreciate your help."

"Well," said Tommy, "at church, Mrs. Laurie did ask us to do something this week that would show our love to our family. One of the things we talked about in class was doing some chores. Did I show you some love, Mom?"

"You sure did. And you know what, when you show love to your family, you are also showing love to God because you are obeying His commands," replied Mrs. Lewis.

As Tommy and his mother were talking, they suddenly heard Mr. Lewis yelling something from the kitchen.

"Can someone grab me the wrench, please?" Mr. Lewis said loudly.

Mr. Lewis was fixing the leaky pipe underneath the kitchen sink. Every time Mr. Lewis needed to use a different tool, he had to get up from under the sink to get it from the tool box and bend down again to fix the pipe. Julie was getting a snack from the fridge when she heard her father yell from under the sink.

"Hey, Dad. I didn't even know you were there," she said.

"I really need help. I don't want to get up because my left hand is holding onto the leaky part that I want to fix. Can you help me out here?"

"Sure, it looks like you need some help," Julie said.

"Great. I need someone to hand me the right tool when I need it and put it back when I'm not using it," said Mr. Lewis.

"Okay," Julie said.

"I need a wrench first, please. It is the one that is already on the top of the table," Mr. Lewis requested.

"Here you go, Dad," Julie said as she handed the wrench to Mr. Lewis.

Tommy and his mother walked into the kitchen just as Julie gave the wrench to Mr. Lewis.

"Well," Mrs. Lewis said. "It looks like both of you are great helpers today. Both of you are following the command of God to show love to your family."

Julie smiled. With everyone's help, Mr. Lewis quickly fixed the leaky pipe.

"We make a great team," Mr. Lewis said as he cleaned his hands. Both Julie and Tommy were happy that they could help their parents out. They were glad that they were able to obey God too.

Questions to Think About:

1. **How did Tommy show love to his mother and God?** (He helped his mom fold the clothes and listened to her words.)
2. **How did Julie help her father out?** (She handed him tools to fix the sink.)



Activity 1

Ruth Was Full of Love

Look at the picture of Ruth. What is she doing? Connect the dots to find out. Then color in the picture. Color in the letters in each word below that describe the kind of person Ruth was. How can we be like Ruth (loving and kind)?



Activity 2

How Can We Show Love?

Look at each picture. How is each person showing love? In the blank space, draw how you can show love to another person.

1. He is picking up the pencil so that no one will trip over it.
2. She is sharing her things.
3. She is helping someone who is hurt.
4. I can _____.



Activity 3

Bird Feeders

Materials:

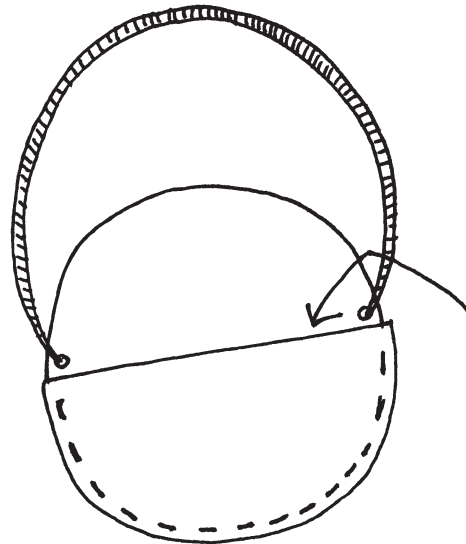
1. small paper plates
2. stapler
3. hole punch
4. scissors
5. yarn
6. markers and stickers
7. bird seed

Directions:

1. Give each student two paper plates.
2. Have each child cut one of the paper plates in half.

3. **How did they show they loved God?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **How can you show love to the people around you?** (Allow students to answer.)
5. **How can you show God you love Him?** (Allow students to answer.)

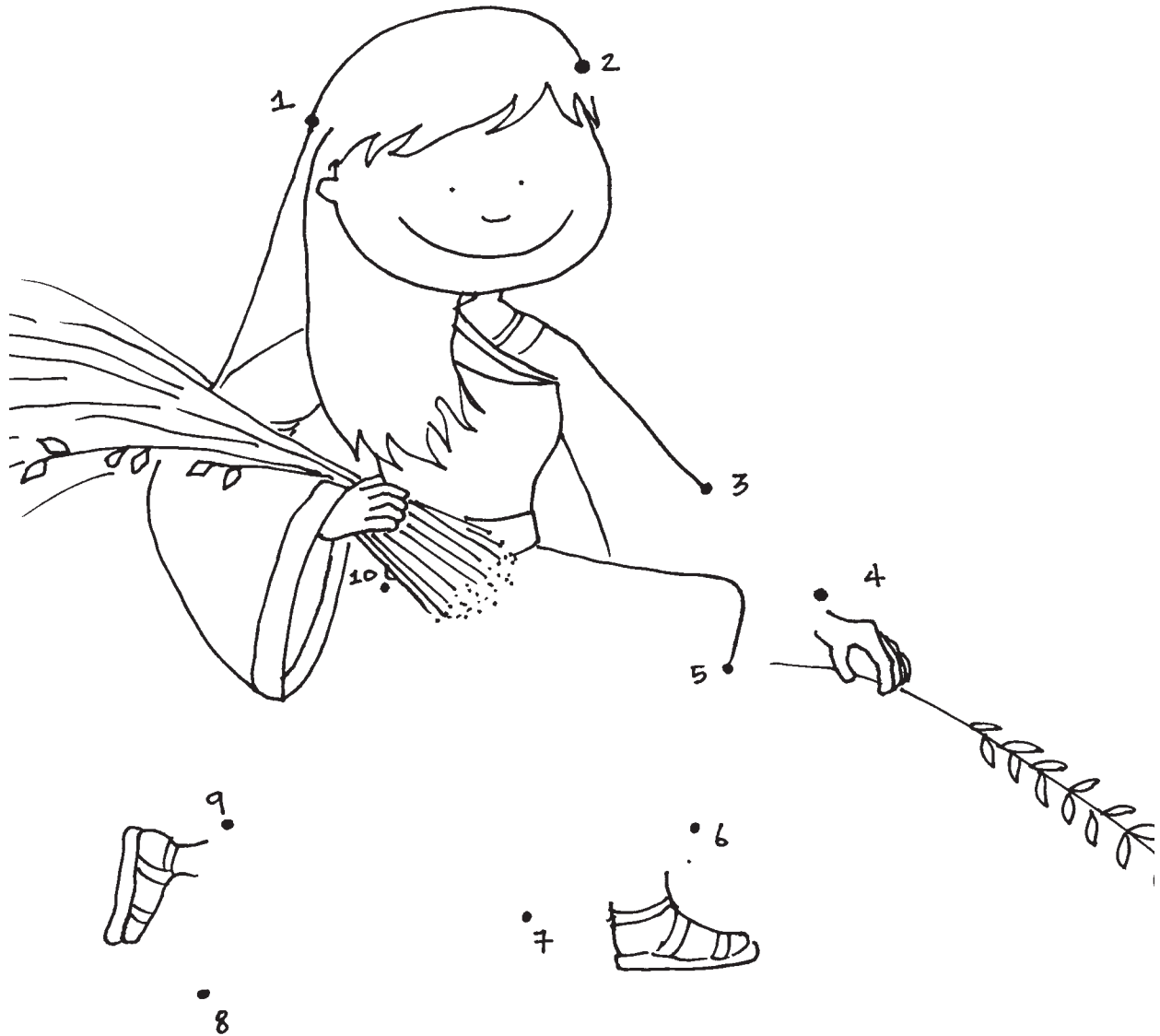
3. Line up the whole paper plate with the half paper plate and staple along the bottom edges to create a small pocket.
4. Punch two holes at the top of the whole paper plate and thread yarn through to create a loop for hanging.
5. Allow students to decorate their feeders with markers and stickers.
6. Once the feeders are complete, help the students put a bit of birdseed into the pocket so they can bring it home to hang.
7. As the students make their bird feeder, discuss how God took care of Ruth and Naomi. Talk about how God can take care of all of His creations. The bird feeders can remind the students of how much God loves everything He has created.



Activity 11:1

Ruth was Full of Love

Look at the picture of Ruth. What is she doing? Connect the dots to find out. Then color in the picture. Color in the letters in each word below that describe the kind of person Ruth was. How can we be like Ruth?

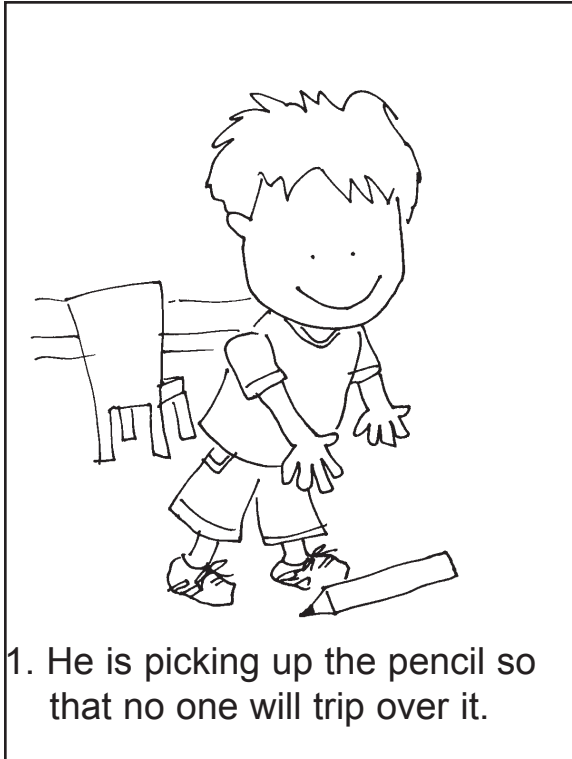


LOVING & KIND

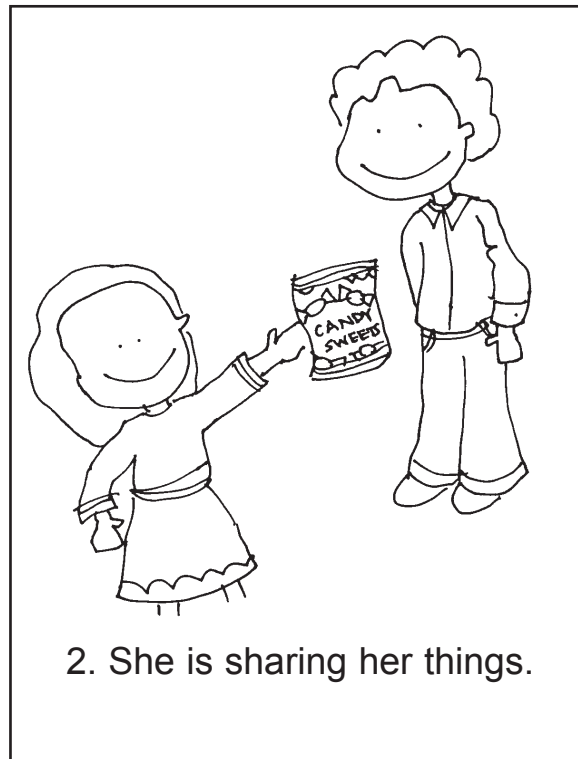
Activity 11:2

How Can We Show Love?

Look at each picture. How is each person showing love? In the blank space, draw how you can show love to another person.



1. He is picking up the pencil so that no one will trip over it.



2. She is sharing her things.



3. She is helping someone who is hurt.

4. I can _____
_____.

Boaz Marries Ruth

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- small clay pots (styro-foam cups will work too)
- green florist foam or soft clay
- stalks of wheat or artificial flowers
- scissors
- ribbon (optional)
- paints and paintbrushes (optional)



Scriptures

Ruth 3-4

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God gives each of us a family that can care for our needs

Behavioral Objective(s)

To thank God for our families through a drawing activity

Memory Verse

"Your people shall be my people, and Your God, my God." (Ruth 1:16)



Bible Knowledge

Kinsman-Redeemers

A kinsman-redeemer was a relative who volunteered to take responsibility for the extended family. He could be called upon to take on a number of duties: to buy back property that the family had sold; to marry a dead man's wife to produce an heir for the deceased; to buy back a family member who had been sold into slavery due to poverty; or to avenge a relative who had been murdered by killing the murderer.

When Ruth's husband died, the law provided that she could marry a brother of her dead husband (Deut 25:5-10). But Naomi had no more sons. In such a case, the nearest relative to the deceased husband could become a kinsman-redeemer and marry the widow. The nearest relative did not have to marry the widow, though. If he chose not to, the next nearest relative could take his place. If no one chose to help the widow, she would probably live in poverty for the rest of her life. In the case of Ruth, the closest relative was interested in buying the land that belonged to Elimelech (Ruth 4:3-4). But when he realized he was also expected to marry

Ruth, he declined. He probably did not want the responsibility of supporting both Ruth and Naomi. It was also likely that Ruth's future son would inherit the land back.

Boaz and Ruth

When Boaz slept on the threshing floor, Ruth came to lie at his feet at night, just as Naomi had instructed her to do (Ruth 3:3-4, 8). By coming secretly, she would save Boaz any embarrassment should he decide not to honor her request of marriage. Boaz had much to lose by honoring Ruth's request, especially since their first child would be Naomi's heir, not his. But Boaz focused on Ruth's virtuous qualities and was honored that she had come to him. After giving her an immediate response, he did not ask Ruth to leave right away. In fact, he asked Ruth to stay that night and leave early in the morning. By doing so, Boaz was doing his best to protect her: from harm by traveling at night and from unnecessary rumors.

God's plan for Ruth and Boaz included giving them a son who would become the grandfather of David, thus making Ruth an ancestor of Christ (compare Ruth 4:21-22 with Matthew 1:5-17).



Understanding Your Students

Your students may not really understand why people marry. It really isn't necessary to talk about the birds and the bees. But do explain to them that God created marriage because we all need someone to be close to. We need to love and to be loved by another. God also created marriage so that we could all have families with a mother, father, and children. God knew that Adam was lonely in the Garden of Eden, so He made Eve for Adam. In the story of Ruth, God knew exactly whom she needed, so He provided Boaz for her. Even though the students are young and it will be many years before they start to think about this, explain that God knows what is best for them too. He has made plans for each

of them, and He has also created someone for them to meet when they are older. This person is given to us by God to keep us company, to make us happy, and also to help us stay close to God.

If there are students in the class who are from single parent homes, be sensitive to this topic. Explain that God's plan is for each of us to have a mother and father. But situations such as divorce and death can happen to some families. When we know of someone in that kind of situation, we should do our best to show them love. Although a home with a set of parents is ideal, love can also be found in other relationships. We can have good friends and cousins, as well as brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the perfect opportunity to encourage your students to show their love to one another.



Vocabulary

Relative

a person who is a part of your family

Blessings

the good things that God gives us



Before You Teach

The story of Ruth is very famous because of Ruth's loyalty and devotion to her mother-in-law. In spite of many unknowns, Ruth faithfully and obediently followed Naomi back to Bethlehem. What was most moving are the words she spoke when Naomi tried repeatedly to convince her to return home.

"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me" (Ruth 1:16-17).

In this touching speech, Ruth was declaring her loyalty to Naomi. There really was nothing she would not do for her. But more importantly, she was

also proclaiming her faith in the one true God.

By forsaking her former life, she was in essence embracing a new one, one with God as her God. This was in fact more difficult than following Naomi. At least there was another physical person she could see, touch, hear and talk to by following her mother-in-law. As difficult as their journey might have been, Ruth could count on another for support and help. However, God is invisible. Ruth's faith was not based on anything she could see. In fact, Ruth didn't know God all that well and up until now, her life had also been fairly bitter. She had no children and her husband was dead. These aren't situations a person would necessarily give thanks to God for. Yet, Ruth was determined. She did not base her faith on the seen, but on the unseen. That is exactly what the Book of Hebrews describes as true faith. And for her great faith, Ruth was blessed. She eventually married Boaz, continued to take care of Naomi, and had a child who would become the ancestor of King David. When we are faithful, God is indeed faithful.



Bible Story

Ruth Works in Boaz's Field

In the last lesson, we learned about two special women. One was called Naomi. She was from a place called Bethlehem. However, because there was no food in that land, Naomi and her family moved to another place called Moab. But some terrible things happened to Naomi's family after that. First Naomi's husband died. Then many years later, her two sons also died. Now Naomi only had her two daughters-in-law left. Their names were Orpah and Ruth. Orpah decided to go back to her own home. But Ruth chose to stay with Naomi, and returned with her to Bethlehem. This was a brave thing for Ruth to do because Bethlehem was very far from her own home. Once the two women arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth went to work picking up grain in a field so that she and Naomi would have food to eat. Do you remember the name of the man who owned the field where Ruth worked? His name was Boaz. He had heard about how kind Ruth was to Naomi, so he gave Ruth bread to eat and also gave her a lot of grain to pick. We can see that Boaz was a very nice person too.

Ruth Takes the Grain Home to Naomi

After working all day in the field, Ruth carried the large and heavy basket full of grain back to where she and Naomi were living. Ruth showed Naomi all the grain she had picked. There was plenty of grain to eat and to make bread with.

Naomi asked Ruth, "Where did you go today to pick all this grain?" Ruth told her that she worked in a field that belonged to Boaz.

"May the Lord bless him," Naomi said. "The Lord is still kind to us. Boaz is a close relative of ours. He is someone who can look after us."

Ruth continued to tell Naomi that Boaz was very kind to her and that he told her to stay in his field with his workers.

Naomi agreed, "It is good for you to stay in Boaz's field because he will look after you and make sure you are okay."

From then on, Ruth stayed close to the servant girls of Boaz to pick grains in his field. She stayed and picked the grains until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. All this time, Ruth lived with

her mother-in-law, Naomi, and took care of her.

Naomi also loved Ruth very much and wanted her to be happy and to have someone to take care of her. So one day Naomi said to Ruth, "It is time for you to remarry. I should find a home for you, where you will be well taken care of. You have been working in Boaz's field and he has taken care of you and looked after you. He will be a good husband for you."

Ruth Goes to See Boaz

Naomi told Ruth what she would need to do. First, she told Ruth to wash herself and put on her best clothes. Then Naomi told her to wait until that night. What was Ruth waiting for? Naomi told Ruth to wait for Boaz to finish eating his dinner. After a while, Boaz would get tired and then fall asleep. Naomi told Ruth to uncover his feet and lie down next to his feet. Although all this seemed very strange to Ruth, Ruth was obedient and agreed to do everything Naomi told her to do.

That night, when Boaz had finished eating and drinking, he lay down next to a pile of grain and soon fell asleep. Ruth walked quietly over to Boaz. She slowly and carefully uncovered his feet so that she would not wake him. Then she lay down next to his feet. In the middle of the night, Boaz woke up and saw a woman lying at his feet.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"It's me, your servant Ruth," she replied. "You are a close relative who can look after me and Naomi."

Even though Ruth did not say very much, Boaz understood what she meant. She was asking him if he wanted to marry her. Boaz saw what a good person Ruth was. She was kind and took care of Naomi. She was also kind to Boaz. Boaz agreed to take care of her. But since it was late at night, he told Ruth to stay the rest of the night and leave in the morning. Then she would not have to walk home in the dark. In the morning, he would let all the townspeople know that he wanted to marry Ruth.

In the morning, Boaz sent Ruth back home to Naomi with a lot of barley. He didn't want her to go home without any food. Then Boaz went to town and told everyone that he wanted to take Ruth as his wife.

Ruth and Boaz Get Married

After all the people in town heard what Boaz

wanted to do, they were happy for Ruth and Boaz. So Boaz took Ruth to be his wife. They loved each other and they took care of Naomi too. Naomi was happy that Ruth was married again.

Later, Boaz and Ruth had a baby boy. The women in town said to Naomi, "Praise be to the Lord, you have a grandson. He will make you happy and help you when you get old. You have a daughter-in-law who loves you very much." The women were right. Ruth was very nice to Naomi and took good care of her.

Ruth and Boaz named their baby boy Obed. When Obed grew up, he became the father of Jesse.



Check For Understanding

1. **In which field did Ruth pick grains?** (Boaz's field.)
2. **How do we know Boaz was kind to Ruth?** (He gave her bread to eat and extra grain to take home.)
3. **What did Naomi ask Ruth to do one night?** (Naomi asked Ruth to put on her nicest clothes and go lie at Boaz's feet once he fell asleep.)
4. **When Boaz woke up and found Ruth lying down at his feet, what did he do?** (He told her to wait until the morning to leave. In the morning, he would talk to the towns-



Life Application Story

All Kinds of Families

One Thursday, as usual, Mrs. Hayes went to school to pick up Cathy. She parked the car and walked to Cathy's class. As soon as Cathy saw her mother, she ran towards her and gave her a big hug.

"Hi, Mom," said Cathy excitedly.

"How was your day?" asked Mrs. Hayes as they walked hand-in-hand towards the car.

"Okay. Mom, there was a new student in the class today," announced Cathy.

When Jesse grew up, he became the father of David, who became King David. So Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David. God had given Ruth a special family.

We learned from this story that Naomi and Ruth had been sad in the beginning when they had no one left to look after them. But they took care of each other and helped each other. Soon, God blessed the two women and they were able to be part of a great family again with Boaz. God really looks after everyone who shows His great love and kindness.

people and see if he could marry her.)

5. **Why did the women in the town say that Naomi was blessed?** (They knew Naomi had a great daughter-in-law who looked after her and gave her a new family when she married Boaz.)
6. **How is Ruth's family with Boaz special?** (Ruth became the great-grandmother of King David.)
7. **How did God take care of Ruth and Naomi?** (God took care of them by preparing someone like Boaz to look after them.)
8. **How were Naomi, Ruth and Boaz the same?** (They were all kind and loving people. They did their best to help others.)

"Really?" asked Mrs. Hayes.

"Yes, it's a girl and she has long, black hair. I am not sure if she is Chinese or not but she seemed nice. Her name is Mabel," said Cathy.

"Well, did you get to know Mabel?" asked Mrs. Hayes.

"Kind of. We sat together at the same table for lunch. I found out that she lives with her mother and not her father," said Cathy.

"How did you find that out?" wondered Mrs. Hayes.

"Well, we were talking about the yummy cookies Terry was eating and she said that her dad made them for her. That's why Mabel said that Terry was lucky to have a dad who baked for her. Mabel said

that she only saw her dad once a month," explained Cathy.

"Well, not all families are exactly the same," said Mrs. Hayes.

"But I thought that all families have a mother, a father and kids," said Cathy.

"That is mostly true. God did make families so that there would be a mother, a father and children. But sometimes, bad things can happen to some of these families," Mrs. Hayes said, trying her best to explain.

"What kind of bad things?"

"Well, some mothers and fathers don't get along and decide to not stay together anymore. Other times, one of the parents die early and so there is only one parent left. No matter what happens, it is always sad for the children, who don't get to grow up with both a mommy and a daddy," said Mrs. Hayes slowly

"Well, I have a mommy, a daddy, and a brother," smiled Cathy.

"Yes, you do. And don't forget your grandma and grandpa. All of us love you very much," said Mrs. Hayes.

"Do you think Mabel is kind of sad that she can only see her father some of the time?" Cathy asked.

"Probably, but maybe she has other brothers or sisters or even grandparents she can spend time with," offered Mrs. Hayes, as she got her keys out of her pocket. "Or maybe her father does lots of fun things with Mabel when they are together so that she can remember those great times when she doesn't get to see him."

"Or she could have a lot of good friends who play with her so she doesn't feel lonely," Cathy suggested.



Activity 1

Ruth's Family

Look at the pictures. Who was a part of Ruth's family? Write down their names under the right picture (Ruth and Naomi; Ruth, Boaz and Obed).

Once Mrs. Hayes opened the door, Cathy got into her car seat and buckled up. Mrs. Hayes also got into the car and started the engine. They drove for a bit and there was silence in the car.

"Is everything alright?" asked Mrs. Hayes. "You are awfully quiet."

"I was just thinking that each family is a little bit different," said Cathy. "Our neighbors, Justin and Emily live with their grandparents. I don't see their parents. Eugene from my piano class says he has a big family and lives with ten people in his house."

"That is a big family. But no matter what each family is like, God has prepared people to look after us. We should always be thankful for that," Mrs. Hayes said.

"I am going to go home and draw a picture of my family and hang it up," said Cathy.

"That's a great idea," said Mrs. Hayes as they drove into the parking lot of a supermarket.

"Do we need to get something, Mom?"

"Yes, we are out of eggs and I guess we can see if they have any markers too. I think most of the ones we have at home are dried up," said Mrs. Hayes.

"Thanks, Mom," said Cathy as she unbuckled her seatbelt and got out of the car.

Questions to Think About

1. **What was different about Cathy's day at school?** (There was a new girl in the class.)
2. **What did Cathy say about this new girl?** (This new girl only lived with her mother.)
3. **How are families sometimes different?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **What can we thank God for about our families?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 2

My Family

Provide each student with a large piece of construction paper (regular white paper will work too). Ask them to think about their family. Who is a part of their family? If time permits, let each student share how his/her family will be different if one of the members had not been there. Have the students draw a picture of their family members. They can be

creative and include backgrounds such as a house or a park. Help them to label the people and post them up in the class once they are finished. Conclude this activity by leading your students with a prayer of thanksgiving for each of the family members God has given us.



Activity 3

Pots of Love

Materials:

1. small clay pots (can be purchased at craft stores); medium-sized styrofoam cups will work too
2. green florist foam or soft clay (or Play-doh)
3. stalks of wheat (or artificial flowers)
4. scissors
5. ribbon (optional)
6. paints and paintbrushes (optional)

Directions:

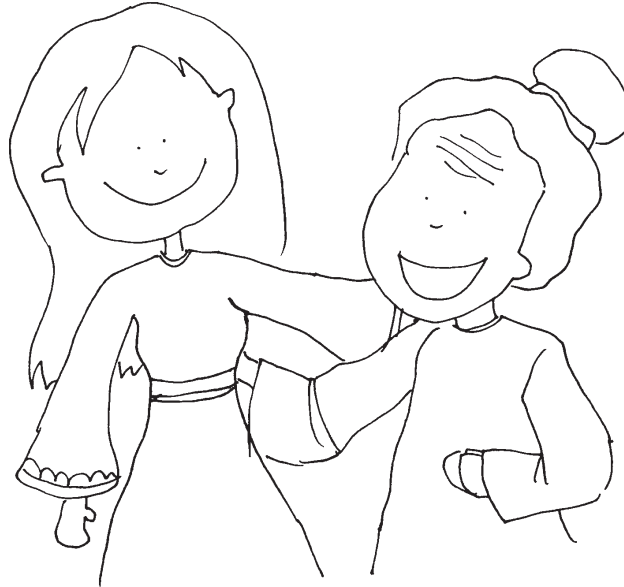
1. Give each student a clay pot.
2. Help them push in some foam or clay into the pot.
3. Provide each student with three or four stalks of wheat (or one or two artificial flowers). Cut them to size so they will fit nicely in the pots.
4. Help them push the wheat or flowers into the foam.
5. If time permits, the students can paint their pots. Allow time for paint to dry.
6. If there is not enough time, help the students tie a ribbon around the pots. They can present the pots to a family member to show their love.
7. As the students are engaged in this activity, talk about the following questions:
 - *What kinds of things make our families special?
 - *What can we thank each of our family members for?
 - *How can we thank God for giving us such a wonderful family?

Activity 12:1

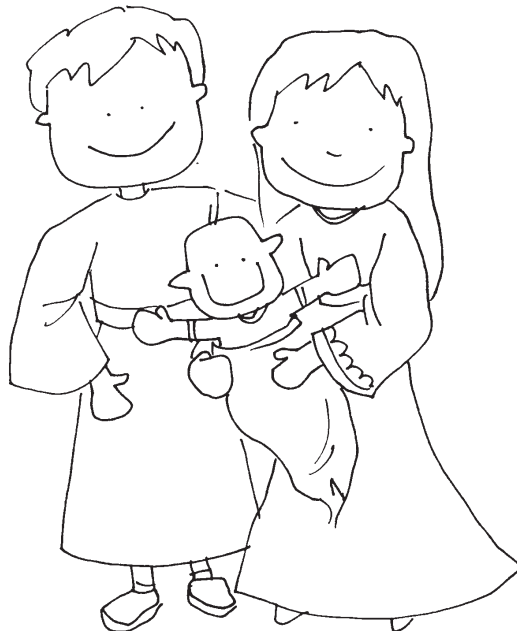
Ruth's Family

Look at the pictures. Who was a part of Ruth's family? Write their names down in the spaces below.

Ruth and _____



Ruth, _____ and _____







Write the names of the people on the board and read them aloud before beginning.

1. *I hit my donkey three times because it didn't listen to me. I didn't know God was trying to stop me from going somewhere. (Balaam.)*
2. *We were the only two spies who came back from Canaan with a good report. (Joshua and Caleb.)*
3. *We wandered in the wilderness for many, many years because we didn't trust God would help us enter Canaan. (The Israelites.)*
4. *I hid two spies on my roof so that they would not be caught. (Rahab.)*
5. *I took some clothing, gold and silver, and hid them under my tent. God was mad that I didn't listen to His command not to take anything from Jericho. (Achan.)*
6. *I fought the Midianites with only 300 men in our army. I was a judge. (Gideon.)*
7. *I got my strength from God because I didn't cut my hair. (Samson.)*
8. *My husband and both my sons died when we were living in Moab. (Naomi.)*
9. *I followed Naomi back to Bethlehem even though I had never been there before. I promised Naomi I would take care of her. (Ruth.)*
10. *I helped Ruth when she worked in my field and later, I married her. (Boaz.)*

Short Answers

1. *Why did God send an angel to block Balaam and his donkey? (God didn't want Balaam to help the enemies of the Israelites. God told Balaam to only say what God told him to say.)*
2. *What reasons did the ten spies give for*

not wanting to go into Canaan? (They said that the people of Canaan were like giants and the land was surrounded by great big walls.)

3. *What happened to Rahab when the Israelites came to attack Jericho? (She and her whole family were saved because she had helped the spies.)*
4. *What did God ask the Israelites to do when they got to Jericho? (God told them to march around the city walls once a day for six days. Then on the seventh day, they had to march around seven times and then blow their trumpets and shout. Then the walls of Jericho would fall down.)*
5. *What was the name of the city the Israelites lost at after winning at Jericho? (Ai.)*
6. *What did Gideon ask God to do to show him that God was going to help him? (Gideon asked God for some signs; please see lesson 8 for the details.)*
7. *What was a Nazirite? (A Nazirite was a person who worked for God. He could not cut his hair, drink wine or touch dead bodies.)*
8. *Why did Naomi ask Orpah and Ruth to go back to their own homes? (She wanted them to get married again.)*
9. *How did Ruth show love to Naomi? (She obeyed Naomi by following her back to Bethlehem and took care of her by picking grain so they would have food to eat.)*
10. *How did Boaz take care of Ruth when she worked at his field? (He gave her food to eat and also left extra grain for her to pick.)*

Charades

To review the past twelve lessons in a fun way, try playing a game of charades. The students may not be able to re-enact the scenes, but they can be given nouns or verbs related to each lesson to act out, without speaking. For example, the word "RIVER" can be written on

a card or a river can be drawn (so students can “read” it for themselves). Pick one student to come forward and act out the river. Make sure the other students do not see the card. Then once the class has successfully guessed the word, review a short lesson that is related to that word. River, for example, could relate to when the Israelites crossed the river on dry ground so that they could get to Jericho. Some suggested words are given below with related lessons. Feel free to come up with your own.

Possible words:

1. donkey (*Balaam*)
2. spy (*The 12 Spies or Rahab*)
3. sun (*The Sun Stands Still*)
4. hair/cutting hair (*Samson*)
5. picking grain (*Ruth*)
6. sword (*Gideon*)
7. water or river (*The Water Stops Flowing*)



Seek the Lord with all your heart!

“Seek the Lord while He may be
found, call upon Him while He is
near.”

(Isaiah 55:6-7)

