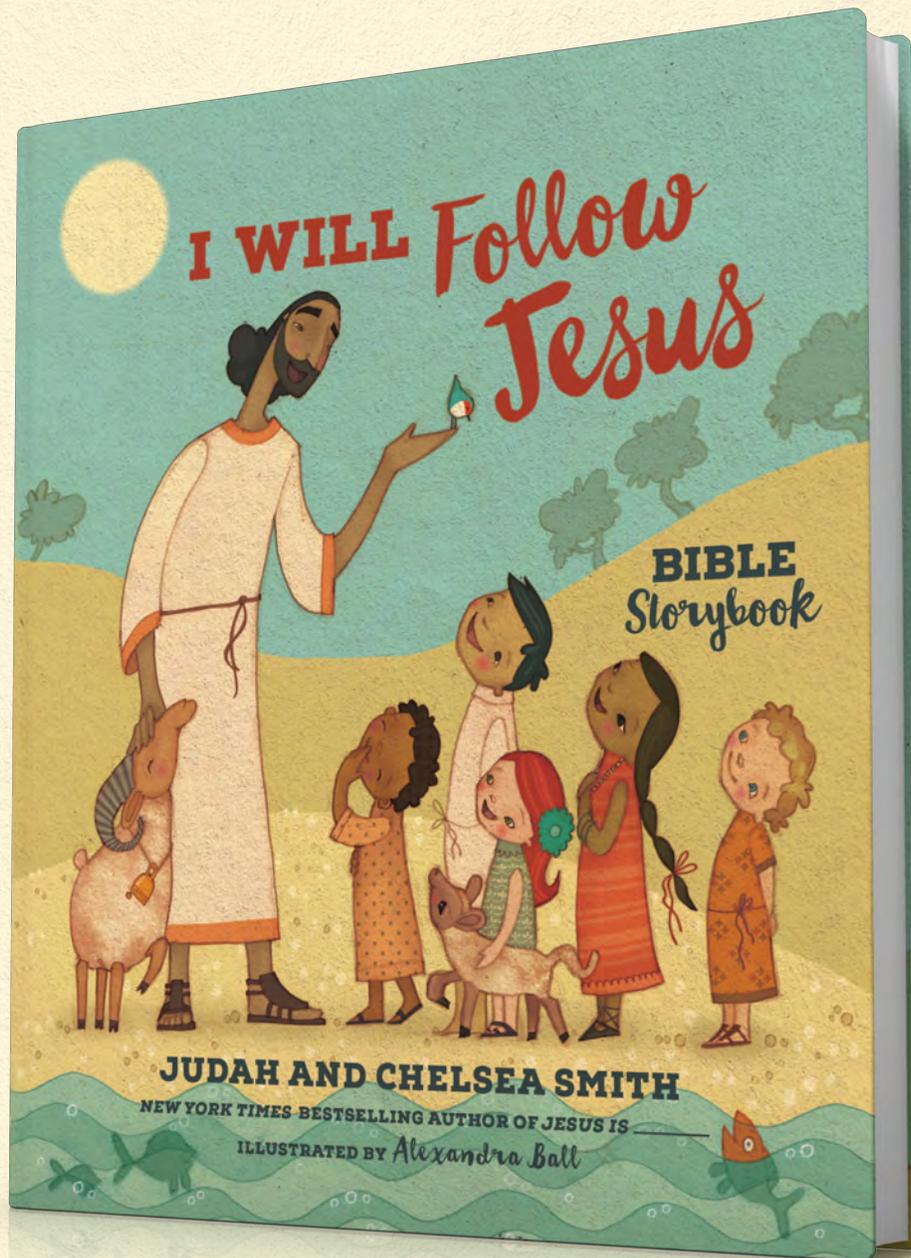


I Will Follow Jesus Bible Storybook Curriculum



Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions

CHAPTER 1: GOD MAKES EVERYTHING

One of the worst feelings in the world is when someone says something mean to you, like, "You are ugly!" That feels terrible. One of the best feelings in the world is when someone says something nice to you, like, "You're an amazing soccer player!" That feels great! So which words are true? Do we believe the mean things or the kind things?

The Bible says in the very beginning of time, God answered that question! It says that God made everything in the world: oceans, hedgehogs, tulips, and people. Because God is perfect, everything He makes is perfect! So if God made you and me, then that means we are very good! Wow!

Now when someone says something mean to you or me, we can know it isn't true! Why? Because God loves us and made us perfect.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the best thing someone has said to you?
2. Who is someone you can compliment this week?
3. What will you say to them?
4. How does it make you feel knowing that God made you?

CHAPTER 2: GOD IS OUR FRIEND

Best friends are . . . well . . . the best! Whether you're on the phone, at school, or at practice, laughing and talking with your best friend is so much fun. It's like you know what your best friend is thinking. You know each other's favorite movie, favorite color, and favorite food.

But have you ever stopped to think WHY you became best friends? Here is a guess: You became best friends because you found out that they thought you were great. Then you spent time hanging out with them. You talked and listened, and before you knew it, BAM! You were best friends.

Do you know that Jesus wants to be best friends with you? That's right! The God of the universe thinks you're great. He wants to talk with you, and he wants you to talk with Him. He listens to everything you have to say, and He loves it when you think about Him!

There are a lot of amazing friends in the world, but Jesus is the most incredible best friend you and I will ever have!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is your best friend in the world?

2. What is your favorite thing to do with your best friend?
3. How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus wants you to be His best friend?
4. What is one thing you can do today to spend time with Jesus, your best friend?

CHAPTER 3: A BAD DECISION

Isn't it interesting how quickly siblings can get on our nerves? It's almost like they've known us our whole lives. They know all our secret buttons to push, and they can make us SO ANGRY in a matter of seconds! Remember getting into a fight with a sibling? Of course you do—you're human! Arguments come in all shapes and sizes. We have all been in baby-sized arguments and huge screaming arguments. In the middle of those huge arguments, we all have said something we didn't mean or know we shouldn't have said! Then our parents heard about the argument and our mistakes, and we got in trouble!

Adam and Eve made a big mistake a long time ago in the middle of a beautiful garden called Eden! They ate fruit from a tree they weren't supposed to eat from, because a little talking snake got their attention. This was a BIG mistake with BIG consequences. When they ate this fruit, a bad thing called sin entered into their hearts and everyone else who would be born after them. Sin separated the best-friend relationship humans had with God. But because God loved humanity so much, He couldn't help but fix this broken relationship. Years later, God would send his only Son, Jesus, to fix the sin problem once and for all! We've all made bad decisions, but Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice so He could deal with ALL our bad decisions!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been mad at somebody and said something you regretted?
2. Did you know that Jesus loves us even when we mess up? How does that make you feel?

CHAPTER 4: THE FLOATING ZOO

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite T-shirt or jersey?
2. Do you care if you get stains on it?
3. Why do you think Jesus needed to die on the cross to wash away the stain of sin?

CHAPTER 5: A PROMISE IN THE SKY

Making someone a promise is cool, but keeping your promise is even better! People make promises all the time that they don't keep. But God isn't like us. God keeps every promise He makes. In the book of Genesis, God made a promise to keep a man named Noah and his family safe. He kept them safe from the flood of water He sent to wash away the hatred and pain of the world.

Who can explain what it means to make a promise?

Has someone ever made a big promise to you . . . and kept it?

That is the best feeling ever!

(Ask the kids about a time someone kept a great promise, and then tell them a story about your own life.)

When someone makes and keeps a promise, you find out that you can trust them.

Thousands of years ago, God made a promise to never again destroy the world with a flood. God always keeps His promises. But what makes this story even more amazing is that God's promise to Noah points to a greater promise to save the world—not from water, but from sin.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a promise you've made to someone?
2. How do you feel when someone keeps a promise they made to you?
3. Now that you know God keeps all of His promises, how do you feel hearing that He promises to take care of you?

CHAPTER 6: GOD'S REALLY BIG PROMISES

Ever heard someone say something crazy on the playground? Of course you have! We all have!

Maybe someone told you a tall tale like, "I'll trade you eight million dollars for your candy bar." You couldn't help but laugh at them. You didn't believe them, because you knew they couldn't do what they say they could!

But we've all had that friend who made promises they kept! Maybe they told you they would pay you back for giving them lunch money, and then they actually did it! Or they told you they'd save you a seat in class, and then they really did!

Abraham had a similar situation when God promised him more kids than he could count! That's a crazy promise to believe. And on top of that, Abraham and his wife Sarah were both super old!

They weren't supposed to be able to have kids anymore! But Abraham chose to believe God, and we know that God keeps his promises! Abraham and Sarah went on to have a son named Isaac! Abraham chose to trust in God even when it seemed crazy, because he knew that God always keeps his promises!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the craziest story or tall tale you've heard from a friend?
2. How can we trust God's promises to us today?

CHAPTER 7: A HAPPY MIRACLE

Do you remember being in your favorite store and walking down your favorite aisle toward your favorite toy? You wanted that toy so bad, and you would have given up anything to have it! But it was too expensive, and you knew that you couldn't afford it!

The best thing ever was when your parents came and bought your favorite toy for you! They knew it would be impossible for you to pay for the toy, so they paid for it for you!

In our story, Abraham and Sarah were wealthy and they owned lots of land and animals. They had almost everything they wanted—except a baby! They were too old to have a baby, and they even laughed at the idea that it could happen! But God spoke to them and promised them lots and lots of kids! Abraham believed God, even though it didn't make sense.

Right after Abraham turned 100, Sarah had their first boy! God took care of something that was impossible for Abraham and Sarah to do themselves! It's the same for us today: We can trust God to do the impossible! Even when it doesn't make sense!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever wanted something you couldn't afford?
2. How does it make you feel knowing you can trust what God says, even when it seems impossible?

CHAPTER 8: THE HARDEST TEST

We have all given away things that don't mean much to us. Sometimes it doesn't even bother us! Maybe you cleaned out your closet full of toys, and you donated the toys you didn't play with to people who would use them!

Have you ever been asked to share your favorite toy? Or even farther, have you ever been asked to give away your favorite toy? That's so hard—it seems impossible! Why would we ever give away something so important to us?

That's exactly what God asked Abraham to do. God told Abraham to sacrifice his most precious possession ever: his son, Isaac! Abraham was confused, but he chose to trust God! He knew that if God gave him Isaac, he could do anything! So Abraham took his son to the top of a mountain. Right before Abraham sacrificed his son, God called out and said, "Don't do it! Now I know you trust me no matter what."

We get to live every day trusting what God says to us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever given away a favorite toy?
2. How do you feel knowing you can trust in God no matter what?

CHAPTER 9: JOSEPH'S NEW COAT

We all remember being stuck somewhere: at the top of a tree we climbed, or inside a sleeping bag our brother or sister jumped on! Being stuck is no fun at all! All you want to do is get unstuck and move on. Sometimes you can't get unstuck without the help of a friend or a parent. It's the best when someone gets you unstuck! It makes you feel so important!

In our story, we learned about a guy named Joseph. He got stuck a few times too! His dad made him a really special coat. It fit Joseph super well, it had really cool colors, and Joseph loved it! One day, Joseph's brothers became so jealous of his coat that they wanted to kill him! They threw him into a huge pit in the ground and then sold him into slavery! Joseph was then thrown in jail for something he didn't do! Joseph spent years being "stuck," but one day he was able to save his whole family (even though they threw him in a pit). God used Joseph to help his family, the Israelites!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When have you been stuck, like in a sleeping bag or in a hole?
2. God is with you, even when you are stuck in something you can't get out of. How does that make you feel?

CHAPTER 10: JOSEPH SAVES EVERYONE

We have all had moments where we thought something was going to be bad, but ended up going so great! Like that crazy morning before school when you forgot your lunch and your dog ate your homework. Everything seemed to be going badly, and then suddenly your day turned around!

Some of our favorite movies are the ones where we think we know what will happen, but then there is a plot twist we never suspected! It makes life fun when we think things will be boring, no fun, or hard, and they end up being super fun and exciting!

Our friend, Joseph, had a similar encounter when it seemed like life was headed in a bad direction. His brothers sold him into slavery, he started working for a guy named Potiphar, and then he got thrown in jail for something he didn't do. He was in jail for four years! Everything seemed to be going badly. Then everything turned around, and Joseph was made the vice-president of Egypt! He was put in power and was able to save his family from starving in a famine! God takes everything, even the hard things, and uses them for good!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever thought some kind of food was going to taste bad, but ended up loving it?
2. How does it make you feel knowing God works all things, even the hard things, into an incredible story?

CHAPTER 11: A BABY IN A BASKET

Do you remember your first swim lessons? They were a mix between exciting and scary! Maybe you let go from the wall and swam with all your strength, trying to keep your head above the water. You had to really trust your swim coach when you first got into the deep end and started swimming. Your heart was racing. You pushed off into the water and immediately started sinking. It felt like there was nothing you could do to save yourself. You were helpless. Then your coach grabbed you and pulled you out of the water! Even though you couldn't help yourself, your coach saved you!

Did you know that God loved you before you were able to talk, walk, run, or read? He is crazy about you! In fact, the Bible tells us that God had a plan and purpose for each one of us before we were born! That means that even when we feel like we're helpless, trying to stay afloat in the craziness of life, we can count on Jesus! He is there to help you every step of the way, just like he helped Moses and used him to do incredible things!

CHAPTER 12: A TALKING BUSH

Have you ever been scared of the dark? We all have! Everything seems so much scarier in the dark.

Sometimes we have to do things when it is dark, even if we don't want to. Maybe you had to take the trash out to the street. It was so dark and so scary! You opened the garage, sprinted down the driveway, chased off the raccoons, and threw the trash in the garbage cans. Then you ran for your life back to your house! Everything is just scary when it is dark!

Have you noticed how much easier it is to take the trash out when someone comes with you? When mom or dad walks with you, everything seems so much better and you don't feel scared anymore! When God asked Moses to go back to Egypt and rescue His people from slavery, Moses was scared and didn't want to do it. He begged God to send someone else. Then God said to Moses, "I will be with you." That changed everything! Just like God was with Moses, He is with you today. Whenever you're scared, you can ask God for help!

CHAPTER 13: PLAGUES AND PASSOVER

Have you ever been picked on by a bully? We probably all have at one point or another. Have you ever been saved from a bully by someone else? Maybe an older sibling or a good friend came in and got between you and a bully so they couldn't hurt you. Isn't that the best feeling? It makes you feel like a million dollars, like you're on top of the world! You can't help but smile knowing that someone who is bigger and stronger than your bully is on your side and taking care of you!

In our story this week, Moses chose to help save God's people from their Egyptian slave owners. He begged Pharaoh to let God's people go. When Pharaoh said no, God sent ten warnings, called "plagues." Each warning came and went, but Pharaoh still refused to let God's people go! Finally, after the last warning, Pharaoh had enough and told God's people to leave Egypt. God's people left the slavery they had known for years and headed toward the Promised Land! God rescued the Israelites from their bully! Even when someone is bullying you, or you feel bullied by something in life, know that God is standing between you and your bully and will help you!

CHAPTER 14: A ROAD THROUGH THE SEA

Have you ever been stuck somewhere? Maybe it was in an airplane bathroom or inside your sleeping bag. Being trapped is the worst feeling ever—you can't go anywhere! We have all been in a situation where we felt like there was no way out! Sometimes it's scary, like being stuck in a sleeping bag. Other times it can be funny, like being in a store with your mom that you hate!

Either way, there is no better feeling than finally getting unstuck. Freedom feels so good!

In our story, God's people found themselves in a similar situation. They were stuck with the Egyptian army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them! They were scared and didn't know where to go. But even during that scary situation, God was with them! God told Moses to put his staff in the shore of the Red Sea, and God parted the waters before them. They walked through unharmed! Even in their craziest times, when they felt trapped, God set them free!

CHAPTER 15: RULES ON A MOUNTAIN

Have you ever had to do something you thought was impossible? No matter how hard you tried, or how long you worked, you couldn't finish something. Maybe it was a subject in school or a chore around the house. Maybe being nice to your siblings or parents sometimes feels impossible! We have all experienced something we couldn't do by ourselves!

In our story, God gives Moses something that would prove to be completely impossible—and that was the point. God gave Moses a tablet with ten rules or commandments written on them. Each rule, if followed, would help God's people live the best life. However, as most of you know, nobody is perfect! These rules demanded perfection, because the God who made them was perfect! God knew the rules were impossible to follow. He gave them to His people to show that they needed a perfect Savior to help them with their sin! That is why God sent Jesus to take care of sin once and for all! Jesus obeyed God's rules for us!

CHAPTER 16: RAHAB SAVES THE SPIES

Have you ever studied a subject that didn't come naturally to you and thought, "I wish this was easier?" Of course you have. We all have! Sometimes certain subjects in school seem nearly impossible to understand. It can be the same with sports and other hobbies. What is so cool about Jesus is that there is no problem too small or big for his attention! If it matters to you, it matters to Him! He loves you so much and wants to help you with everything!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Is there a subject that is difficult for you in school? Which one?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that God cares about everything in your life from the big to the small?

CHAPTER 17: SHOUTING DOWN WALLS

Have you ever had to clean up your room before? Sometimes it feels like every time you turn around, your mom is telling you to clean it again! Our rooms just magically get dirty, don't they? It can seem impossible to keep them clean. Now imagine that one day, a brother or sister told you, "Don't worry about cleaning your room. I got it. Just spend time with me while I do it." Wouldn't that be incredible?

In our story, Joshua had a huge task set before him—defeating the city of Jericho. In the end,

God conquered Jericho for His people. He just asked them to trust Him. How cool is that? God doesn't want you to carry all of life's weight on your shoulders. He wants you to trust Him with it!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever been asked to do something that seemed crazy, but the person said, "Trust me"? What was it?
2. What are some things, big or small, that you want to trust God with?

CHAPTER 18: LET ME GO WITH YOU

Isn't family so funny? Sometimes your family is a group of your favorite people on earth, and other times you want to pretend you don't know who they are! In our story, Ruth asks to be in Naomi's family because her family had died. Naomi told Ruth it was a bad idea, because she didn't know anybody in Israel and would be all alone! Ruth decided to go, and God helped her every step of the way. Jesus showed us how important family is to Him. He left heaven and came to earth to die on a cross, just so you and I could be in a family with Him forever!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the funniest disagreement you've had with a family member? Was it about who buckled their seatbelt first, or who could hold their breath the longest?
2. How does it make you feel to know that even when you feel let down by your earthly family, you can always turn to God for help?

CHAPTER 19: AN UNEXPECTED HARVEST

Some of the hardest decisions we will ever make in life are inside of candy stores and doughnut shops. Somehow, you're supposed to pick one thing—two if you're lucky. It's so difficult because everything looks so good!

In our story, Boaz chooses Ruth to join his family. In the same way, Jesus chose us to be in His family! He sacrificed everything by dying on the cross for you and me, just so we could be in His family forever! If you ever feel discouraged about life, remind yourself that Jesus chose you!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When was the last time you saw something you absolutely had to have?
2. What do you think about how Jesus chose you, and how you are now best friends? Doesn't it make everything seem like it's going to be okay?

CHAPTER 20: GOD MAKES MY HEART HAPPY

Remember the last time you hurt yourself? Isn't it crazy how easy it is to hurt yourself? Waking up, falling down the stairs, stubbing your toe, smacking your funny bone (which is the opposite of funny)—all of it is so easy to do! When we get hurt, we immediately want our mom or dad to hold us!

In our story, Hannah was hurt on the inside and asked God for help. He immediately responded, and Hannah could feel God's love! Just like when your parents pick you up and tell you everything will be okay, God can pick us up and make everything okay in our lives!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When was the last time you hurt yourself? What were you doing? Riding a bike? Walking around your house?
2. What is a way we can respond to things that upset us, hurt us, or make us mad?

CHAPTER 21: WHO IS CALLING ME?

Remember the last time you were in a really busy place? Maybe you were in the mall or at the fair, or maybe you were running through a busy airport trying to catch a flight with your family! There are a million people, and they're all talking over each other or to someone on their phone. Then cutting through that noisy crowd comes a voice that catches your attention: your parents! You immediately wheel your head around like a doll trying to find their face, and then you lock eyes and run to them because they know the way to go!

The same is true in life. There are times when life seems crowded and confusing, and you don't know where to go. You feel lost. But remember how your parents know your name and can get your attention in an instant? That's how God speaks to you! The Bible tells us that before time began, God knew your name and wanted to be best friends with you! His voice can cut out all the confusing noise that life throws at us. He reminds us who we are and that we're safe because He is there! Remember that God knows you and cares for you, even when life seems confusing and crazy!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When is the last time you remember being lost in a big crowd? Where was it? Were you scared?
2. How does it make you feel to know that God knows your name and loves you? Pretty important?

CHAPTER 22: AN UNLIKELY KING

Have you ever been the last to be picked for the dodgeball team in PE? Or the slowest runner in a team relay? Maybe you can never quite answer the questions in that tough subject as quick as your classmates can. Whatever it may be, we have all at one time or another felt like we weren't good enough. Most people think that their importance comes from what they look like, what they can do, or what they have. Did you know that's not how it works? The Bible tells us that we are important not because of what we have or do, but because Jesus chose us and loves us!

In our story, we find the youngest sibling of seven, David. He was left taking care of sheep in a field while all of his older brothers lined up to be chosen by Samuel to be the king of Israel! To Jesse, the boys' father, it seemed that the older, muscular, smarter, and faster boys would be chosen to be king. But God spoke something else to Samuel. He told Samuel to choose the youngest son, David, to be king. Did you know that even when you feel like you're not fast

enough, smart enough, or strong enough, it doesn't matter? What matters is that God chose you. When you say yes to His friendship, it doesn't matter how fast or smart you are, because you are best friends with Jesus!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When is the last time you felt really slow at something? Was it a sport? A class at school?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that it doesn't matter how fast or smart you are?
3. Isn't it so cool that God chose you and knowing that's what makes you important? How does that make you feel?

CHAPTER 23: DAVID AND THE GIANT

Remember the last time you had to do something that scared you? Maybe you were learning to ride a bike with two wheels and yelling, "Don't let go! Don't let go!" as your parents ran beside you. Maybe you were in a difficult class at school with a test coming up. Or maybe there was a bully in your class. Whatever the situation, we all get scared when we face things that are bigger than we are!

In our story, David experienced the same feeling you have: fear! He had to fight a giant that was much bigger and stronger than he was. Everyone thought he was going to fail. But David had God with him, and that changed everything! David didn't have much—just a few stones and a sling. But because he had God with him, defeating the giant was simple! David chose to trust that God had a plan for him and would be with him, even when he was scared!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time something scared you? Where were you? Why did it scare you?
2. What can we learn from David's story about how God treats us when we're scared?

CHAPTER 24: BEST FRIENDS

When was the last time someone did something super nice for you? Do you remember what it was? How good did it make you feel? Like a million bucks! Did your mom or dad get you a gift just because? Maybe a friend shared his food with you at lunch or helped you with homework that didn't make sense! Whatever it was, isn't it funny how good you feel when someone does something nice for you? A lot of people think that important people make others do things for them. But God says that you're a great leader when you put others before yourself!

In our story, David and Jonathon were best friends. They were best friends even though Jonathon's dad was King Saul, who hated David! King Saul was worried because David was popular around town, and Saul felt threatened! He thought good leaders made themselves important by pushing others down and lifting themselves up! But God tells us that when we take care of others and put their needs before our own, we are actually acting like Jesus! Jesus put us first when He gave up everything to be our best friend! We get to be kind to others and treat them like we would want to be treated, because Jesus has already treated us so well!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time someone did something super nice for you? When was the last time you did something nice for someone else? What was it? How did it make you feel?
2. What can we learn from Jonathon's example of great friendship?

CHAPTER 25: FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

Remember the last time you disobeyed your parents? Was it five minutes ago? Maybe you didn't listen the first time or talked back. Or maybe you wanted that candy bar in the store so bad that you screamed about it. Whatever it was, we have all been there! Kids need parents to watch after them. Did you know when your parents discipline you, they are actually showing you the right way to live? They're helping you choose the best way to live life!

In our story, God's family—the people of Israel—had decided to disobey God. They decided that they knew how to live life better than God did, and they were up to no good doing their own thing. In fact, it got so bad that God sent them a prophet, Elijah. Elijah said that what they were doing was wrong, and he told them how to change it. Did you know that when the Israelites decided to say yes to God's love again, that their lives got so much better? That's how God's love works for us today! We can simply say yes to God's love and our lives will never be the same!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you disobeyed your parents and got in trouble? What were you doing?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that all you have to do is say yes to God's love, and then you are His best friend? Isn't that a cool way to live life?

CHAPTER 26: SWALLOWED BY A FISH

At one time or another, we have all done something we knew was wrong when we thought no one else was watching. Maybe we didn't want to throw away our trash in the bin after lunch, and so we threw it into the bushes. Or maybe we snuck another cookie from the kitchen after mom said no more. Whatever the "something" was, we all know that sinking feeling when we turn around and find out someone has watched us do the whole thing. We get scared and we usually know we're in big trouble from our parents or teachers!

Our story is all about a guy named Jonah. He was asked by God to go to a city he hated more than anything! This place scared him so bad, and he had heard nothing but bad things about it from so many people! Jonah decided he knew what was best and got on a boat headed in the opposite direction of this city. He thought God couldn't see him and wouldn't be able to find him if he ran far enough away! When the storm came, Jonah thought he was in big trouble with God! But God loved Jonah so much—and he loves you so much—that even when we disobey, His love keeps coming toward us and helping us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you did something and thought no one was looking? Did you get caught? What were you doing?
2. What does Jonah's story tell us about the love of God?

CHAPTER 27: SAVED FROM THE FIRE

Isn't it the coolest feeling when you are the first one to tell a friend about a new song, game, toy, or story? We all love that feeling when we know something no one else does. It's like having an awesome secret you get to share with everyone! In our story, three friends learned that knowing God is like knowing about that new toy. You get to be so excited to share it with your friends. And when they hear about it, they can't help but tell their friends too!

Those three friends from our story decided that no matter what, the love of God was so good and so awesome that they couldn't ever forget about it! God showed up in a big way, and because of their faith, many people were able to meet Jesus in a real awesome way! God wants you to know how much He loves and cares about you. When we get a look at his love, we can't help but have big faith, and we can't help but live big lives for Jesus!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you got to let your friends in on a secret? What was the secret?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that God loves you no matter what?

CHAPTER 28: NO LUNCH FOR LIONS

We have all felt the pressure from friends to do something we know we shouldn't do. It's hard, because we don't want to do what is wrong. But we also want our friends to like us and think we're cool. In our story, Daniel found himself in a similar situation. He was asked to pray to a king instead of God! He decided to not give in to the pressure, and he chose to trust God and pray to Him. Even when the king's men tried to kill Daniel, God came through and protected him! God wants to do the same for you. Even when you feel pressured to do something wrong, know that God will help you choose what is right!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been pressured to do something you knew was wrong? What was it?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that God is always with you, even when other people are not?

CHAPTER 29: A VERY BRAVE QUEEN

Have you ever stood up for someone that couldn't fend for themselves? Or maybe you've stood up to the bully on the playground who was hurting another classmate? Sometimes life demands a thing called courage. Courage means you're willing to do something dangerous or difficult simply because you know you should!

In our story, a girl named Esther had a similar experience. she had to stand up for her whole country. She asked for God's help, and He showed up in a big way and helped her every step of the way.

Whatever you're worried about, ask God for courage. He will always be there to help you with

everything!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was a time you had to be courageous? What happened?
2. What was your favorite part of Esther's story? Why?

CHAPTER 30: A STRANGE VISITOR

Have you ever met a famous person? Maybe it was a basketball player, an actress, or a singer. One time, when I was young, I met a famous Olympic swimmer while walking through the airport. I said, "Hi!" and he asked me, "Do you want to see my gold medal?" Boy, did I ever! He pulled out the gold medal and put it around my neck!

A lot of people dream of being famous because they think doing something special means everyone will love them and think they're special.

Did you know that God loves you and thinks you're special no matter what you do? Just like Mary in the Bible, Jesus chooses you to do amazing things for Him! God chose Mary to be Jesus' mom, and she trusted God so much that she said "yes"! We can trust Jesus and say yes to Him too because we know He loves us forever!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is your favorite famous person?
2. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus' love, not what you do, makes you special?
3. What is one thing you think God wants you to do?

CHAPTER 31: A BABY IN A MANGER

Have you ever wanted something so bad you'd do crazy stuff to get it? We all have! Maybe it was an expensive toy you paid a lot of money to get. Maybe it was something you earned by doing chores for your parents. When you love something, you'll do anything to get it.

Do you realize that this is how important you are to Jesus? That's right! Jesus left the greatest, most beautiful place in creation to become a baby and be born in a filthy animal feeding bucket and die on a cross. Why? Because that is how important you are to Him. He did everything to help you know His love!

The next time you wonder if anyone loves you, remember: Jesus loves you so much that He did absolutely crazy things so you could experience that love. That is cool.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was something you did crazy stuff to get?
2. What is the grossest dare you have ever seen someone do?
3. What comes to your mind when you hear Jesus thinks you are amazing?

CHAPTER 32: A SKY FULL OF ANGELS

Have you ever had a super-awesome secret? Maybe you found out something exciting was happening in class, or that your parents were going to surprise you with something. You could barely contain your excitement, and you wanted to tell everyone you saw about this secret news! When Jesus came to earth, nobody knew just how awesome and incredible He was, but the angels did!

In our story, God sent an entire party of angels to fill up the night sky and tell people the great news: A Savior was born and His name was Jesus! God couldn't keep His awesome secret. He had to share it with everyone! Did you know that God still wants to let you in on a secret? He loves you so much that He sent his son Jesus to earth to save you from a problem called sin! What an incredible secret, and what a reason to celebrate Christmas!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever had an awesome secret you couldn't keep? What was it?
2. What was God's secret in our story today?

CHAPTER 33: FOLLOW THAT STAR

Do you remember your all-time favorite gift you've ever received? Maybe it was from a past Christmas, or maybe you've been asking your parents for your all-time favorite gift this year! Either way, there is something so special about receiving that special gift! You open it, and you can't help but scream with excitement while hugging and thanking your parents!

Did you know that when God sent His Son Jesus to Earth, He sent the greatest gift of all time? He sent the gift that would show people how much He loved them. His gift was Jesus! When we receive the gift of Jesus, we can't help but share Him with others. He's that good! This Christmas, think about the incredible gift we've received in Jesus!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your all-time favorite gift you've ever received? How long did you ask for it?
2. What do we get to do when we receive the gift of Jesus?

CHAPTER 34: THIS IS MY HOUSE

There is something so special about vacations, being away from home, and staying somewhere beautiful and fun—hopefully with friends or family! Have you noticed that after a while you start missing home? You miss your bed, your favorite toys, your favorite spot on the couch, or your pets.

Trips are so fun but there really is no place like home! In the Bible, there is a story about what it means to really come home.

In our story, Jesus was on vacation with his mom and stepdad. During their trip to a big city called Jerusalem, Jesus' parents lost Him! They searched frantically everywhere for three whole days, and finally went to church where they found Jesus teaching people. When they asked Jesus why

He was there, He told them that He was at home in God's house! Did you know that because God is our spiritual Father, wherever we go we can feel secure and safe and at home? For Jesus, going to church was a good way to learn more about God, just like it is for us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite place to go visit? When were you there last?
2. Does God only live in church buildings? Or is He with us everywhere we go?

CHAPTER 35: THIS IS MY SON

One of the best things you can hear from someone is, "I'm proud of you." There is nothing else like it. When a parent or a coach tells you how proud they are of you, it makes you feel like a million bucks! Did you know that Jesus had a similar situation? When he was baptized by a man named John, God spoke to Jesus and said, "I love You, and I am proud of You." God wants to say the same thing to you today. He loves you and is so proud of you, even when you mess up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who was the last person to tell you, "I'm proud of you?" When did they say it?
2. Have you ever been baptized? Do you want to be baptized?

CHAPTER 36: WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Have you ever been ignored by someone? Has someone ever been mean to you? Have you ever felt let down by someone? The answer is most definitely yes. People aren't perfect, so of course they will hurt us and let us down. Being kind to people is a big deal to Jesus, even when they don't deserve it. He knows how hard it is for people to be nice to one another. Especially when they're different from one another. So Jesus told an incredible story about being a friend to people that are different from you and even dislike you!

Jesus explained how a Jewish man went for a hike on a treacherous trail and was mugged by thugs who beat him up and took all of his money and belongings. Two men were walking the same trail, both of them worked at church and both of them passed by this injured traveler. Then a Samaritan walked by. Samaritans were hated by Jews, but he decided to take the man to a safe place and take care of him! Jesus took care of us when we were useless and he gave us a new life! Did you know Jesus wants you to be kind to people that don't look, act or talk like you do? He wants you to show His love to everyone the way He has shown His love to you!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it hard to be kind to people that look and act different than us? Why is it harder?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that God showed kindness to you even when you were far from Him?

CHAPTER 37: YOU ARE ALWAYS MY SON

Have you ever done something you knew was wrong? Have you ever thought your parents would

never love you again? It's a scary feeling, when you disappoint your parents. They feel let down and angry with you because they know that you were aware you were doing something wrong. Of course our parents still love us, but it still is so scary while everything is happening!

In the Bible there is a story much like this where a son runs away with all of his dad's money and wastes it. He lives a crazy life for a few years and finds himself poor and working in a pig sty! When he returns home, his father runs and hugs him and throws a party celebrating his return. Do you think that the son thought he would get in trouble coming back empty-handed? Of course, yet the father still took him back! That's the way God works, His love goes on and on and doesn't stop, in fact the Bible tells us that He so loved us, He came to earth to make sure we could be friends with Him again!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever done something wrong and gotten in big trouble? What was it?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that no matter what you do God loves you?

CHAPTER 38: THE BOY WHO SHARED HIS LUNCH

Have you ever seen someone older than you, maybe a sibling or a friend, who is so good at a sport or a game and it makes you feel small? Have you ever wondered to yourself if you'll ever be able to do something as well as they do? We all have, sometimes it's hard to see other people who are super cool doing awesome stuff that we can't. Did you know in the Bible there is a story with someone your age who experienced the same thing!

This young boy was on his way to hanging out with friends, his mom had packed him a super tasty lunch and he was excited to eat it after playing the morning away with his friends. When his friends were finding a spot to eat lunch they ran into a huge crowd. Jesus asked the young boy for his lunch and even though he was confused he gave his lunch to Him! Jesus took the lunch and performed an incredible miracle where he fed thousands of people! The young boy didn't have an awesome catering team or a dream of becoming a chef, but God took what he had, his simple lunch, and turned it into something incredible! Whenever you feel like you're not as cool as other kids at school or in your neighborhood remember that God has given you something so unique and special and He cannot wait to help you use it!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever felt sad because you feel like you're not cool enough? When was it?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that God loves you and has given you something unique and special?

CHAPTER 39: JESUS MAKES THE WAVES BEHAVE

Riding in boats is an amazing, but sometimes scary experience! At one point you are floating on a sea of beautiful glass, the sun and moon's reflection lighting your way. There is nothing like a perfect day on a boat, it's beautiful and relaxing. But a boat ride can easily become a nightmare. In the blink of an eye, that reflecting glass you're floating on can become waves of water! There is almost nothing scarier than being on a boat in a storm! In the Bible Jesus and his disciples ran

into a storm on a boat during the night!

They were headed off across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was asleep and the disciples were steering the boat when suddenly a storm rose out of nowhere! The disciples screamed, and they cried out to one another and held onto whatever part of the boat they could find! When they finally woke Jesus he spoke "be quiet." Suddenly, the wind and waves disappeared, the disciples sat in awe, soaking wet from the storm they had just experienced! In life sometimes there are storms, and in those moments when you take your eyes off the storm and remember that Jesus is with you it will change your life! J

Jesus is with you always and He wants to help you. Always know that you can ask him for help!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been on a boat? What was it like? Were there big waves or was it calm?
2. When can you ask for Jesus' help when life seems like a storm?

CHAPTER 40: SUPER WATER

Have you ever been outside on a hot summer day and been super thirsty? Maybe you were playing soccer or tag or maybe you were training to become an Olympic runner so you were sprinting around your neighborhood! You finally decide to go back inside your house, you're all sweaty and stinky and you wipe the sweat off your forehead and sit down for nice, ice-cold cup of salty popcorn or Salt & Vinegar Chips? No, when you're hot and sweaty what do you want? Water!

Did you know that just like our bodies need water to survive, our souls need Jesus to survive? Our souls are the invisible part of us, our hearts, our minds and our feelings. When Jesus met a woman at a well getting water for herself he was able to tell her about the "water" that He offered for her soul! He called it "living water" meaning she would never be thirsty again, how cool is that? Jesus gives us all we need, he gives us Himself and when we receive him our souls are set for eternity! Be reminded that Jesus wants to bring you water for your heart, your mind and your feelings!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been super thirsty? What did you want to drink?
2. What does the "soul" mean to you?
3. How does it make you feel knowing Jesus brings the water that makes your soul never thirst again?

CHAPTER 41: GET DOWN FROM THAT TREE

Have you ever been climbing up a tree higher and higher and realized you might never get down? We all hate that feeling. It's so easy to keep on climbing up higher and higher. The hard part is coming back down! In the Bible, there is a story about a fully grown man climbing up in a tree. Sounds weird, right? Usually adults don't climb trees. But this guy did—he wanted to see Jesus!

Jesus was a well-known figure at this time. He was really famous, and crowds of people would come to see Him. Our tree-climber's name was Zacchaeus. He was a super-short guy who had trouble seeing over the crowd that gathered to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was not a popular guy, in-fact people disliked him, he was a tax collector and cheated people out of money for a living! When Jesus saw Zacchaeus, He told him He wanted to have dinner at his house! This shocked people. Jesus loved Zacchaeus, because Jesus loves people even when they do bad things. If you feel like something you've done is so bad that God couldn't keep loving you, be encouraged by Zacchaeus' story! Nothing you can do can separate you from the love of God!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever climbed a tree before? How high did you get?
2. What do you like about Zacchaeus' story? Is there something that sticks out?

CHAPTER 42: A SOLDIER WHO BELIEVED JESUS

Have you ever gotten stuck and needed help getting out? Maybe you were stuck in a hole or a closet. It is one of the worst feelings when you're helpless. Have you ever noticed that you don't call on your 2-year-old little brother or your 105-year-old grandma for help when you're stuck. Why not? Because while we love them more than we can say, they don't have the power to help us.

In our story, we learned about a guy who was stuck and knew who to ask for help. A man had a sick servant. And not just any kind of sick—the "on your death bed" kind of sick. Instead of trying to figure out how to heal him himself, he asked for Jesus' help. He heard about Jesus and how He could perform miracles, and he believed in Jesus even from afar. So he told another servant to go to Jesus and ask for help. Jesus healed the servant from miles away after hearing about the man's faith! Whenever you feel stuck in life, know that you can call on God for help with anything and He will help!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been stuck somewhere? Where was it? How did you get out?
2. Can you ask Jesus to help you with anything? Even if you're super scared?

CHAPTER 43: THE LITTLE GIRL WHO LIVED

We have all been sick before; it is the absolute worst! You can't breathe, your head feels like it's going to explode, your ears are all clogged up, your stomach feels crazy, and your body shakes like you're in a freezer! There is almost nothing worse than going to the hospital, but sometimes if you get super sick you have to! Thank God we have smart doctors and nurses there to help us! They can give us antibiotics and pain relievers that help us feel better! We all hate being sick, and God doesn't like it when we are sick either!

In our story, a girl became sick. Her dad and mom were worried because there weren't hospitals and NyQuil hadn't been invented yet! Their daughter got even more sick, until suddenly they realized she might not make it another day! That's when the dad heard that Jesus was in town. He

ran to find Jesus, and when he did, he begged Jesus to heal his daughter! On the way back to the house, they all got news the girl had died. The father broke down in sadness. Then Jesus said, "Don't worry." The dad decided to trust Jesus, and when they got home . . . guess what? Jesus raised the young girl to life! Jesus came to heal sick people from their sickness and heal them from their problem called sin!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you remember being super sick? What did you have?
2. How does it make you feel knowing Jesus wants you to be healed?

CHAPTER 44: EVEN ROCKS CAN PRAISE GOD

Have you ever been so thankful for someone? Maybe a parent, grandparent, teacher, aunt, uncle, or friend? We are all thankful for people in our lives because of how much they mean to us! They take care of us, they laugh at our jokes, and they buy us Blizzards at Dairy Queen! We love people who take care of us! Did you know that God takes care of us? In fact, the Bible tells us not to worry about anything because God already has it covered!

In our story, we get to see Jesus at the top of his popularity! Everywhere Jesus has been, there have been crowds—and not like baby-sized crowds, more like Taylor Swift arena-filling crowds! When Jesus rolled into a big city in our story, everyone cheered and thanked Him for being incredible! This upset some people because they wanted to be the center of attention, so they yelled at Jesus. Jesus replied in true fashion and said, "If they don't make noise, the rocks will!" Did you know living a life of thankfulness is the best way to live? God loves it when we thank Him for all He has done for us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever seen a huge crowd? Maybe at a concert or the mall?
2. Who are you thankful for in your life? What do you love about them?

CHAPTER 45: YOU ARE MY BEST FRIENDS

There is almost nothing better in life than hanging out with friends. Friends are the best aren't they? You can hang out with friends, play games with friends, laugh, cry, tell stories . . . really, anything! God designed us for friendship. He created us to be in relationships with people and with Jesus! Having a best friend is one of the greatest experiences ever! Jesus' whole rescue mission to Earth was to create a way for all of us to be best friends with Jesus!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is your best friend? How long have you known them?
2. How does it make you feel knowing Jesus gave up everything to be best friends with you?

CHAPTER 46: JESUS GOES TO JAIL

At one time or another, we have all had to do something we didn't want to do. It might have been

chores, waking up early, or going to bed when you wanted to stay up late. Maybe you've had to do something big you didn't want to do, like move to a different city and make new friends. Doing things that we don't feel like doing are a part of life. In fact, Jesus had to do something he didn't want to do!

When Jesus came to Earth, He didn't just come to hang out with people. He came to save everyone from their problem called sin! In order to take care of the sin problem once and for all, Jesus had to die! Talk about something you don't want to do! Not only did He have to die, but He had to be separate from God. This made it so difficult for Jesus that while He waited to be taken away to jail, He even asked God if He would change His plans and allow Him to not die. Even still, Jesus went to a cross and died, was separated from God, and then came back to life to bring victory over sin! This week, we can be thankful that Jesus did something He didn't want to do to help us have a best friendship with Him!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name something that you don't enjoy doing but have to. What is it? Why do you not like doing it?
2. Jesus did something he didn't want to do at all so He could be best friends with you. How does that make you feel? Does it make you feel important and valuable?

CHAPTER 47: PETER LEARNS TO BE BRAVE

Do you have a friend who loves to do crazy things? Maybe you are the crazy friend who does the crazy stuff! Being crazy is so much fun: jumping off the cliffs into the water, riding bikes off big jumps, and diving off the high dive! Did you know there are so many fun things we can do that aren't crazy? Being brave isn't just about how crazy something you do is. Being brave is about doing what is right, even when it is hard! In our story, we learn about a guy named Peter and how Jesus helped him be brave!

When Jesus was taken prisoner by Roman soldiers, Peter was very afraid. While the rest of the disciples scattered and ran, Peter needed to see what happened to Jesus, so he stuck around. He wore a disguise and went to where Jesus' trial was being held. While he was there, people recognized him and called him out! Immediately, he denied ever knowing Jesus. He was scared of what would happen if he admitted his friendship with Jesus! After Jesus was killed and rose again, He came back to see Peter. Peter felt terrible for what he had done, but Jesus told him that He loved him no matter what!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you have a friend who likes to do crazy things? Do you like to do crazy things?
2. Does Jesus love us no matter what? How does that make us live? In bravery or fear?

CHAPTER 48: A VERY SAD DAY

Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do? Maybe a sibling told your parents you didn't do your chores when you really did, or a referee called a foul you didn't commit! Our first reaction is to throw our hands up and yell, "I didn't do it!" If that doesn't work, and something we

didn't do wrong gets pinned on us, we immediately yell, "This is not fair!" Taking the punishment for something you didn't do wrong is hard and nobody likes it.

Did you know the main reason Jesus came to earth was to deal with the consequences of a problem He didn't create? Jesus came to earth to deal with sin—the worst problem of all! Jesus is God, and God is perfect. He is the opposite of sin. If He wasn't perfect, He wouldn't be God! The Bible tells us Jesus came to Earth with no sin to become sin, so that you and I could be best friends with Him forever! Jesus took the consequence of our sin, death, on a cross when He allowed Himself to be killed. Because Jesus took care of our sin, we too get to live without sin—not because of how good we are, but because of Jesus and His love for us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been blamed for something you didn't do? When did it happen? How did it make you feel?
2. What kind of friend does Jesus show us He is by taking the blame for our sin? The greatest friend ever?

CHAPTER 49: A VERY, VERY, VERY HAPPY DAY

Have you ever started a school project or a sport and realized it was going to take a lot more work than you expected? You had to spend more time on the project, or the sport took way more practice than you thought. That's no fun, and sometimes it seems like it would've been better to not have started at all! Now imagine starting a project and knowing that to finish it you would have to die! That's crazy, and you shouldn't do that project, but its exactly what Jesus did for us!

When Jesus created the universe with His words, He brought every human to life knowing that one day He would have to die for them. Even though He understood fully what He was getting Himself into by creating us, He still did it! Why? Because just the thought of you was so incredible that Jesus had to create you so He could be best friends with you! It didn't matter to Him what friendship with you cost Him, even if it meant death! Our sad day ended when Jesus died, three days passed, and then the happiest day of all came! Jesus rose from the dead and conquered our problem of sin once and for all.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever started something and didn't know how hard it would be? What was it?

CHAPTER 50: THE STRANGER ON THE ROAD

Emotions are so funny. They change all the time. Have you ever noticed that? Some mornings you come bouncing down the stairs to your kitchen and pet your puppy, hug your mom, and laugh with your siblings over breakfast. Then the very next morning, you barely get out of your room before yelling at your siblings and crying for no reason at all! Emotions are random and have so much power. They're how you feel! Sometimes it seems like emotions are bad, but God created us with emotions for a reason!

Did you know feeling sad isn't a bad thing? Its okay to feel sad, let down, or discouraged, but

Jesus came to turn our sadness into joy! After Jesus died, his friends were so sad. They cried a lot and missed Jesus so much! Jesus began to appear to his friends and remind them that even though His body wasn't on Earth, He still loved them dearly and would always be with them! Jesus wants you to know that today! Whenever you're sad, you can invite Jesus into your sadness and He will turn it to joy!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever felt super emotional? Was it like a rollercoaster?
2. Does Jesus come to bring us sadness or does he come to bring us joy?

CHAPTER 51: JESUS GOES TO HEAVEN

Have you ever been so excited about something you had to tell someone about it? Maybe you saw a movie, finished a book, or saw your favorite team win a big game! When we are excited about something, it's so easy to tell everyone around us how cool it is! In the same way, when you receive an incredible gift you can't help but show it to all your friends! There's something so fun about sharing awesome stuff with the people around you!

When Jesus left Earth and went back to Heaven, Jesus sent us an incredible gift called the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is with us at all times and reminds us of how good Jesus has been to us even when we forget. Just like when you can't help but tell your friends about that incredible movie you saw, when you realize how good Jesus is you can't help but share it with people around you!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been super excited to share something with your friends? What was it?
2. Who is a person you can share Jesus with in your life?

CHAPTER 52: THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES DOWN

Have you ever had to wait a long time for a gift? Being patient isn't fun—especially when the gift is awesome, like on your birthday or Christmas! The longer we wait for a gift, the cooler it is when we finally open it up! Sometimes before big days like Christmas or birthdays, we all will point out our favorite gifts in the mall or online. We let our parents know what we want, then sometimes if we're lucky, they smile and let us know that special gift is waiting for us!

When Jesus left Earth and went back to Heaven, He promised His disciples the greatest gift ever: the Holy Spirit! He told them that even though He was going back to Heaven, His spirit would live inside each and every one of Jesus's friends. That means that today, no matter where we go or what we do or how bad we think we are, we have the Holy Spirit with us if we're friends with Jesus! Whenever we have questions or feel concerned, we can ask for Jesus' help and the Holy Spirit is there to guide us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever waited a long time for a gift? What was the gift?
2. When can we ask for the Holy Spirit's help? Anytime?

CHAPTER 53: JESUS' FIRST FOLLOWERS

Sometimes it is really hard to share your things with other people! Even when they're close friends or siblings, it's still difficult to let other people use stuff that you love! Have you noticed that it feels super good when people share with you? Sharing stuff is one of the best ways to show someone you care about them. It means you love and trust them! Being generous means you share what you have with others people! Jesus loves it when we are generous, because it shows Him that we are thankful for all that He has done for us!

God showed the biggest display of generosity ever when He sent Jesus to Earth as a little baby on a rescue mission. He came to save us from our problem called sin. When Jesus gave up everything for us and died on a cross for our sin, we received the greatest gift ever! When we receive that gift, the only thing we can do is respond and give of ourselves to others. That means that we can be generous with our words, our time, our actions, and our things!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it hard for you to share your things with others? Why or why not?
2. How did Jesus show us to live generously?

CHAPTER 54: JUMPING FOR JOY

Have you ever wanted to change something about yourself? Maybe you wished you could grow wings and fly or read people's minds! Maybe you wished that people would be kinder to you at school or that you would be able to pay more attention in class! Whatever it may be, we have all wanted to change things about ourselves. It's natural to see what others have and wish it was yours! This has been a problem for people since the beginning of time!

Our friend, Peter, was one of Jesus' twelve best friends while He was on earth. Peter spent most of three years eating, traveling, sharing stories, and watching Jesus live life! How cool is that? Well Peter wasn't perfect, as no one is! Peter had a bad temper and would get jealous. When Jesus was arrested, Peter even claimed that he didn't know Jesus! When Jesus came back to life, Peter's life was changed from the inside out by the Holy Spirit! One day, a man who hadn't been able to walk since the day he was born was laying in front of Peter, begging him for money. Peter told him, "I don't have any money, but what I do have I give you." He was talking about the power of Jesus! The man jumped up and started walking for the first time ever! Jesus has given you incredible power through the Holy Spirit, and you can ask for His help in any situation!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever wanted to change something about yourself? What was it?
2. How does Peter's story encourage you in your friendship with Jesus?

CHAPTER 55: GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE

Have you ever messed up really bad? Maybe you did something you were told specifically not to do because the consequences were big. Or maybe you went behind a friend's back and said something mean about them to someone else. The moment when you feel that knot in your stomach is the worst! You know you did something wrong, and it hurts because you feel the need

to be perfect.

Did you know that God knew we weren't perfect when He created us? He understood that we messed up and were born with sin! In the Bible, Peter thought that in order for God to love him, he needed to stay away from eating certain types of animals and from wearing certain clothes. The list went on with 300 other rules! One day, God showed up in a dream to Peter. He told Peter that he could eat the food he thought he couldn't, and he could hang out with people he thought he couldn't! When the dream ended, there were people at his door inviting him to a dinner with Cornelius. Cornelius was a powerful man that Peter never would have spent time with before this dream. But he went and saw God change the lives of Cornelius and his family! God wants you to know that He makes you clean, not your actions!

CHAPTER 56: PHILIP AND THE CHARIOT

Cheering on our favorite sports teams has to be one of the most exciting things to do ever! You scream, yell, laugh, and cry. There are wins and losses, big plays and mess ups. It doesn't matter if you're on the front row of the stadium or at home! You can't help but wear your jersey, paint your face, and scream for your team! Then during the week before a big game, you might wear a hat, a jersey, or even socks showing off your favorite team or player! When you are passionate about a team, you represent them and let everyone know you love them!

Did you know the Bible tells us that our relationship with Jesus is like being on an awesome, huge team? When we invite Jesus into our hearts, we join an incredible family of Jesus followers! In our story, Phillip didn't know why he was sent by an angel into the desert, but he knew that Jesus had called him there! Then when he met the man who had questions about the Bible and Jesus, he couldn't help but share his story! Our lives as Jesus followers are a lot like Peter's. We will go on journeys and meet people that we get to share Jesus with!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is your favorite sports team? Do you have a favorite player?
2. Can you think of someone you want to share Jesus with at school or in your neighborhood?

CHAPTER 57: THE VOICE FROM THE SKY

Admitting you're wrong is one of the worst feelings, isn't it? It's hard in a small group, but especially difficult in front of a lot of people. Even more than that, who wants to be friends with someone who always has to be right? Nobody! All of us will be wrong about lots of things, and one of the best ways to deal with that is to be humble and apologize for your confusion! There is nothing worse than someone who is wrong and stubborn about it!

In the Bible, there was a man named Saul who was incredibly wrong and very stubborn! He hated Jesus followers, and his job was to put them all in prison or kill them! He would travel from city to city with his band of gangsters, hurting Christians everywhere! One day while on his way to a city called Damascus, Saul was knocked off his donkey by God, and God told Saul how wrong he was! That one interaction with God turned Saul, the crazy Christian hater, into Paul, the incredible pastor! Just like Paul, we all have things we need Jesus' help with!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been super wrong about something in front of a lot of people? What happened?
2. What is an area you would like to ask Jesus' help with?

CHAPTER 58: A CRAZY BOAT RIDE

Have you ever woken up and knew you were having a bad day? Maybe you were super tired, or maybe you didn't want to go to school, or maybe it seemed like everything was going wrong! You banged your head on your bunk bed, spilt orange juice on your favorite tee shirt, and then couldn't find your backpack—and you were already late! Sometimes it seems like everything is going wrong, and there is nothing you can do to turn the day around!

We all have bad days—they're a part of life! Even incredible people from the Bible, like Paul, had bad days! One of Paul's days was especially terrible. He got on a ship and set out to sea. A huge storm threw them into a coral reef and destroyed their ship. Paul and his friends washed up on an island! If that wasn't bad enough, once they got situated on the island and started a fire, a nasty snake bit Paul! Even though it was hard and confusing, Paul knew that God was in control every step of the way! When you have your next bad day, simply trust that God is in control and has you on His mind!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When is the last time you had a really bad day? What happened?
2. What does Paul's story tell us about bad days? How can we respond to them?

CHAPTER 59: AN EARTHQUAKE IN JAIL

Have you ever wanted to be more "ER" than you are? Here's what I mean. Have you ever wished you were:

- SmartER
- FastER
- PrettiER
- FunniER

Why do we wish these things? Because we think if we were smarter, funnier, prettier, or faster, people will like us more. The truth is we already have a Friend who loves us 100% for who we are, not what we can do or what we look like. This friend's name is Jesus!

In our story this week, Paul and Silas showed the jailer that Jesus doesn't love us for how good we are or how many rules we can obey. He loves us because He made us! Remember as you go through your week that you are best friends with Jesus because He chose you, and He loves you just the way you are!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are three words you would use to describe the dungeon Paul and Silas found themselves

in?

Now that you know Jesus doesn't love us because we obey His rules, why do you think He gives us rules and guidelines to follow in the Bible?

True or false: Paul had a good singing voice. (p.s., No one knows the answer to this!)

CHAPTER 60: HEAVEN IS AWESOME

Close your eyes for a second. Now imagine in your mind you're standing in the most beautiful, fun, breathtaking, happy place ever. Everything you love most is there. The people you love most are there. It's impossible to get hurt. Nothing makes you sad because there is nothing bad there. No tears. No scary stuff. It's perfection.

Do you know this is what Heaven is like? In fact, the Bible says that Heaven is even better than what you just pictured in your mind! Heaven is a real place Jesus created for everyone who says yes to His love for them. The best part about Heaven is that when you and I go there after we die, we get to stay there with Jesus forever!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did the "perfect place" you imagined look like? What was there? What cool things could you do?
2. How does it make you feel that Jesus wants everyone to be with Him in Heaven?
3. Do you think we get to go to Heaven by obeying God's rules?
4. How does it make you feel knowing we can spend forever in Heaven simply by saying yes to Jesus' love for us?