

# Parent Ideas

## for SkyStormer Biographies

### INTRODUCTION

Parents, you are the most important spiritual influence in your child's life! We encourage you to take time to read or listen to each Bible biography and discuss it with your child. Together, you can apply the truth of God's Word to everyday life.

Before you start reading, open your Bible to the passage(s) listed with each biography. (You may want to read both the biography and the Bible passages with your child.) Pray before you read to highlight the special and spiritual nature of your task.

We use the word *biographies* instead of *stories* to emphasize the real people and real events of the Bible. **These biographies are not meant to replace the Bible text.** Instead, we recommend reading the Bible text with your child before or after reading the Bible biography or listening to it on the CD.

These biographies are dramatic and creative retellings that make the historical characters and settings come alive for Sparkies. In some places, we have added detail beyond what Scripture gives us. These details are based on our research and best guesses about what might have happened. However, we have been very careful not to include anything that changes the facts or truth of the Bible! We hope you enjoy these biographies as imaginative, Bible-based teaching tools for you and your child.

Although you can listen to the biographies on the CD, **we suggest you read them first with your child one-on-one.** Nothing replaces the personal interaction and example of a loving parent in a child's life.

To prepare, download and print the appropriate biography PDF from the CD. Print a copy for your child too so she can read along. Then review the Parent Ideas for that biography.

Choose **one or more** activities to do with your child.

- You will find **Read-together activities** to make your reading times more creative and interactive.
- You will find **Discussion activities** to help your child grasp the key learning points of the biography.
- You will also find **Application activities**, which challenge you and your child to apply Bible truths to everyday life.
- Finally, you will find a few **Review activities** that lead your child to remember and celebrate what she has learned.

You may also want to give your second-grade Sparkie a chance to practice his budding reading skills! Encourage him to read parts or all of the biography to you, or to read sentences again after you read them first. You can also ask him to point to each word with his finger while he listens to the CD or to you as you read. (Just be sure your child is not so distracted by his reading that he fails to grasp the meaning and action in the biography.)

The CD is an excellent review tool. Just pop in the CD before bedtime, during playtimes, while driving together or at any other time of the day. Your child can listen to any of the Bible biographies from the SkyStormer® handbook. What a great way to instill God's truths into your child's heart all day long!

# Wise Men



## Worship Their King

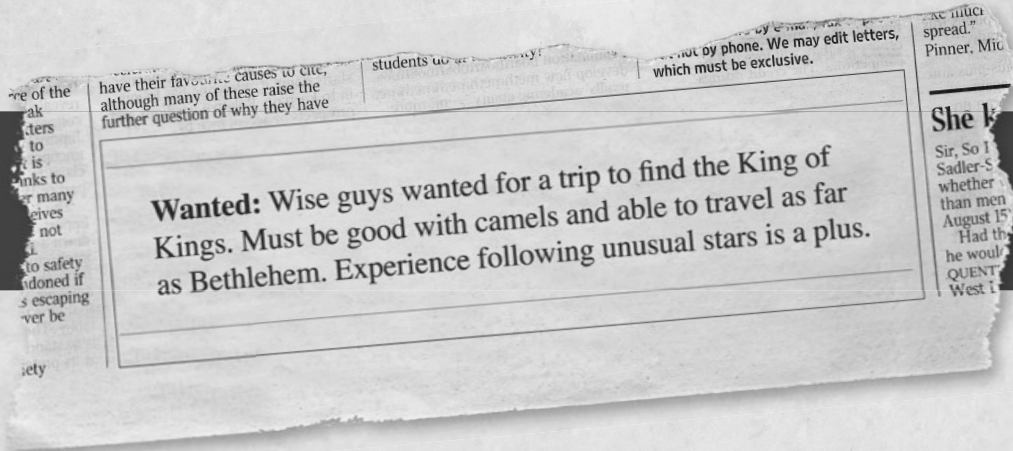
The wise men bumped along on their camels. “Are we there yet?” they groaned.

“LOOK! There’s the temple,” one of them shouted.

“At last!” said another. “We’ve finally reached Jerusalem.”

“Say, do you think we’ll meet the King today?” they asked each other.

The wise men clicked at their camels. “Hurry up!” they said. They couldn’t WAIT to see the King.



In the city, the wise men asked everyone they met, “Where is the child, the King of the Jews?”

**Jews** – another name for the Israelites

“What child?” said the people. “We don’t know who you’re talking about.”

The people of Jerusalem worried. “Where are you from? You’re not Jews! Why are you looking for our King?”

“We are from a far country in the east,” answered the wise men. “We saw the child’s star when it rose,


and we have come to worship Him.”

Soon a palace servant whispered in their ears. “King Herod wants to see you,” he said.

The wise men followed the servant. *Would Herod tell them where to find the Christ, the King of the Jews?*

At the palace, Herod told the wise men, “The Scriptures say that the Christ will be born in Bethlehem. Go look for the child there.”

“But once you find Him, come back to tell me,” said Herod. “I want to go and worship Him too.”



The wise men set off to Bethlehem. They bounced along on their camels, happy to be on their way. But soon they began to wonder.

“There are so many houses. So many little boys,” they said. “How will we know which child is the King?”

Suddenly, a bright light appeared in the sky. They knew **THIS** light. It was the same special star they had seen before.

“Hooray!” they shouted. They sang and clapped and laughed with joy. God had sent the star to show the way.

Quickly, they followed the star until it stopped over a small house in Bethlehem.

“This must be the place,” they whispered.

Inside the house, they saw the child’s mother, Mary. Her toddler son, Jesus, was with her.

The wise men fell to their knees before Jesus. They bowed their heads to the ground and worshiped the young King.

Then they opened their treasure chests. They set before Him the finest gifts of their country: gold and two precious spices, called frankincense and myrrh.





At last, the wise men had found the King! They knew He was not just the King of the Jews. He was their King too.

But not everyone would worship this King. In a dream, God

warned the wise men not to go back to King Herod. Herod didn't really want to worship Jesus – he wanted to kill Him! So the wise men traveled home by a different way.

## Learn from the wise men's biography:

- Jesus is the King of Kings, the Savior of all people everywhere.
- Worship Jesus, your Savior. Love, obey and serve Him forever.



# Parent Ideas

## Wise Men Worship Their King

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus is the King of Kings, the Savior of all people everywhere.
- Worship Jesus, your Savior. Love, obey and serve Him forever.

### 1. Read-together activity

The wise men express various emotions throughout the biography: weariness from travel, excitement, discouragement, joy. As you read together, pause at various points and make faces or body movements to show how the wise men might have felt. For example, make sad, worried faces when you read about the potential difficulty in finding Jesus. Clap your hands and cheer when the wise men see the star.

### 2. Discussion activity

Ask your child to name her favorite part of the biography. Also ask her if anything surprised her in the biography. She may have been surprised that Mary and Jesus were in a house, not a stable, and that Jesus was a toddler, not an infant. Explain that the wise men saw Jesus' star when He was born, but it took them a while to travel to Bethlehem. By the time they arrived, Mary and Joseph lived in a house, and Jesus was probably 1 or 2 years old (Matthew 2:7, 2:16).

Ask your child if she has any questions about the biography. Here are two questions she might ask:

- Why did King Herod want to kill Jesus?
- What are frankincense and myrrh?

If your child asks the first question, explain that Herod felt jealous and afraid of Jesus because he thought Jesus would take over his job as king.

If your child asks the second question, explain that frankincense and myrrh are both sweet-smelling substances (gums), taken from trees.

In Bible times, they were expensive and used for very special purposes. Priests mixed frankincense with other spices to make the incense they burned in God's temple (Exodus 30:34-36). Incense reminds us of God's great name and our prayers to Him (Malachi 1:11; Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8). Myrrh was used to make perfumes. Before Jesus was laid in the tomb, men wrapped his body with cloths and a mixture of myrrh and aloes (John 19:39).

Close your discussion by talking about the kingship of Jesus. Ask questions such as these:

- Why is Jesus the true King of Kings? (See Revelation 19:15-16.)
- How did the wise men treat King Jesus?
- How should people, like you and me, honor Jesus? (*Worship, love, obey, respect, serve Him, etc.*)

### 3. Application activity

The wise men gave Jesus their best. They traveled many miles to see Him. They offered Him the most valuable gifts they had. Most importantly, they gave Him their worship.

Ask your child to pretend he was traveling with the wise men to see Jesus. Give him a sheet of paper, folded in half. On one half, tell him to draw a picture of a valuable gift he would have given Jesus. On the other half, encourage him to write a note expressing his love and admiration for Jesus.

Bow together in prayer, thanking and praising Jesus for His character. Use your child's handbook verse, Isaiah 9:6, to guide your prayers.



# The Thankful Leper



“Oh, why doesn’t anyone like us?” wailed a leper to his friends. “Can’t they see we are people too?”

The 10 friends huddled outside the village walls. They weren’t allowed to live inside the village like everyone else.

“Well, look at us!” answered one of the friends. “We have these

horrible sores and bumps all over our skin. People get scared when they see us!”

The first leper sighed. “I just wish someone would smile and say hello every once in a while. Instead, people just run away.”

**Leper** – a person who has a horrible skin disease

“Look! Who’s that?” shouted a leper, pointing down the road. “I see a man, and he’s coming right towards the village.”

“That’s Jesus of Nazareth!” shouted another leper. This leper was a Samaritan. The rest of the lepers were Jews. (Usually Jews hated Samaritans, but the other nine lepers didn’t mind him.)

“I’ve heard about this man, Jesus,” said the Samaritan. “He cares about all kinds of people. They say He’s healed people who can’t see, people who can’t hear and people who can’t talk or walk. He’s even healed lepers, like us.”

“Well, let’s see if He’ll heal us too,” said the friends to each other.

As Jesus came down the road, they stood far away. They couldn’t get too close to anyone – that was the rule.

Then they all cried out in their saddest voices, “Jesus, Master, feel sorry for us! Be kind to us and heal us,” they begged.

Jesus stopped. He looked right at the men. “Go to the priests and let them see you,” He said.

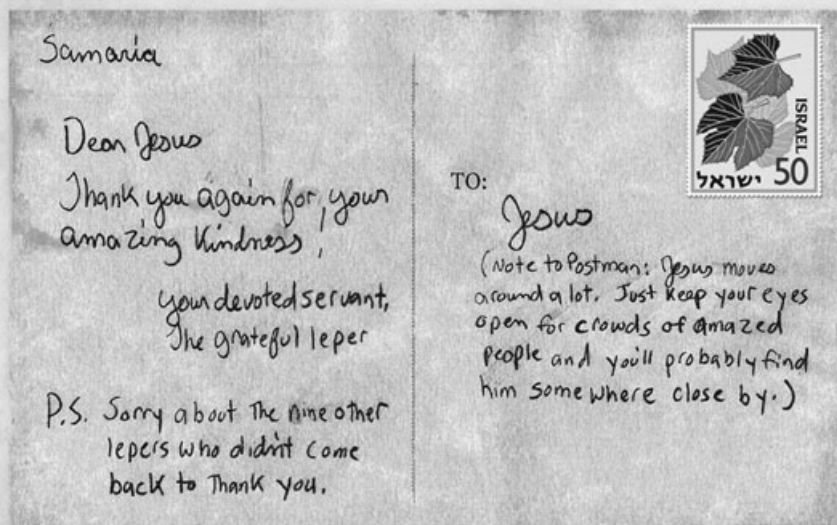
*Go to the priests?* The priests checked lepers’ bodies to see if they were still sick.<sup>1</sup>

Wait a minute! *Did this mean Jesus would heal them?* They hurried to obey.

And as they went, an amazing thing happened! Their sores and bumps completely disappeared. Their skin turned brand new, like a baby’s skin.







He fell flat on the ground before Jesus and thanked Him over and over again.

Jesus turned to His disciples, “Didn’t I heal 10 men?” He asked. “Where are the other nine?

“Oh, happy day!” shouted the friends. They rubbed their smooth arms and wiggled their fingers and toes. Now they could live in the village like everyone else!

They jumped and skipped along on their way.

But when the Samaritan saw that he was healed, he rushed back to Jesus. “Praise God! Glory to Him!” he shouted.

Not one came back to thank God except *this* man! And he’s a Samaritan – not a Jew.”

“Get up. Go on your way,” Jesus said to the man. “You believe in Me. And your faith has made you well.”

The Samaritan man jumped up. For the first time, he felt loved and forgiven. He would be thankful forever that Jesus cared about someone like him.

<sup>1</sup>See Leviticus 14:3.

### Learn from the thankful leper’s biography:

- Jesus cares for all kinds of people, no matter who they are.
- Trust in Jesus. And don’t forget to thank Him for what He has done for you!

# Parent Ideas

## The Thankful Leper

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus cares for all kinds of people, no matter who they are.
- Trust in Jesus. And don't forget to thank Him for what He has done for you!

#### 1. Read-together activity

To prepare, underline or highlight the dialogue of the Samaritan leper. Your child can read the Samaritan's lines as you read the biography aloud together. Recruit other family members to read the dialogue of other characters, such as Jesus or the other nine lepers. Most of the dialogue of the lepers is fictional, but it helps your child to better understand and relate to lepers in Bible times.

If your child is not a skilled reader yet, read the Samaritan's lines first and prompt your child to read them after you.

#### 2. Discussion activity

Ask your child these questions to help her personally engage with the biography:

- At the beginning of the biography, how did the lepers feel? (*left out, ugly, unwanted, disliked, etc.*)
- When have you felt this way? What did you do?
- How does Jesus treat people? How did He treat the 10 lepers? How does He treat you when you feel hurt or left out?
- Why do you think the nine lepers forgot to thank Jesus for healing them? What did they care most about?
- Why was the Samaritan so thankful to Jesus? Why was he more thankful than the others?

If your child is interested and able to handle the topic, you could tell her more about lepers in Bible times. (Be aware that the Bible word translated as leper or leprosy is a general term for various skin diseases. See Leviticus 13.) Lepers were religious and social outcasts in the truest sense of the word. They could not enter the temple or live inside the city. They had to wear ripped clothes, like mourners, and cry, "Unclean, unclean" so people would stay away (Leviticus 13:45). With their scaly and diseased skin – often missing fingers and toes! – lepers symbolized death. People also believed God was punishing them strongly.

On another note, if your child asks why Jews hated the Samaritans, you can explain that Samaritans and Jews disagreed over how and where to worship God. But Jesus wanted His disciples to accept Samaritans and teach them about the Savior. Jesus wanted His disciples to know that a Samaritan leper could have faith in God too.

#### 3. Application activity

Think of people in your church, community or child's school who might need a friend (e.g., senior citizens at care facilities, persons with disabilities, immigrants, new students or neighbors, etc.). Involve your child in calling or visiting these people, inviting them over to dinner or hand-delivering a card or gift package to make them feel welcome.

**Sparkies!** This girl is not in the Bible, but she is probably like many children who came to see Jesus.



# AChild

of the King



Track 23

“When will it be MY turn?” the excited girl asked her mother.

“Soon,” answered her mother, softly. “Just be patient.”

The girl looked at the crowd of cheery faces. Mothers carried tiny babies. Fathers held the hands of

wiggly, young sons. Brothers and sisters whispered and giggled. She even saw a few 8-year-olds, just like her!

“Jesus! Jesus!” the parents called. “Will you please pray for our children?” One by one, the families brought their children to Him.

But Jesus' disciples scowled at them. "Go away!" they yelled at the parents. "Can't you see the Teacher is busy with more important things?"

Slowly, the families turned away. Some of the children started to cry.

*Oh no! The girl felt like crying too. Would she miss her turn to see Jesus?*

Just then, a man raised His voice. It was Jesus! And He sounded angry.

"How DARE you send these children away!" He scolded His disciples.

"Allow the children to come to Me, and don't try to stop them," He said. "The kingdom of God is for those with faith like these children."

The hopeful girl tugged at her mother's hand. "Does this mean I'll get to see Jesus now?" she asked.

"Yes, child, let's go."





**CHILDREN ONLY!**

You're invited to hang out with Jesus!

Who: *ALL children*

When: *Anytime*

Where: *Anywhere*

Why: *Because you are important to Jesus!*

The girl and her mother moved closer to Jesus. They watched as He placed His hands on each child that came.

Finally, He smiled at the waiting girl. "Come," He said.

The girl didn't waste a minute. She rushed towards Him, and He caught her in His arms.

He lifted her up with a laugh and set her on His lap.

"Can I stay here forever?" the girl asked. She rested her head on His chest and snuggled close.

Jesus stretched out His hand and placed it gently on her head. He

gazed up to heaven and said a prayer just for her.

Then Jesus turned to His disciples. "See how easily this child trusts in Me? I tell you the truth, if you want to enter God's kingdom, you must welcome Me like she does."

The girl smiled up at Jesus. She was glad to know she belonged to the kingdom of heaven. And most of all, she was happy to be a child of the King.

**Learn from the child's biography:**

- Jesus loves and cares for children. Children are important to Him.
- The kingdom of heaven is for those who trust Jesus like a child.
- Trust Jesus as your Savior, and you will become a child of God.



# Parent Ideas

## A Child of the King

Scripture: Mark 10:13-16

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus loves and cares for children. Children are important to Him.
- The kingdom of heaven is for those who trust Jesus like a child.
- Trust Jesus as your Savior, and you will become a child of God.

#### 1. Read-together activity

The girl in this biography is a fictional character, but she represents the way a child might have responded to Jesus. Help your child to imagine meeting Jesus for the first time. Before you read, cross out all the words *girl* and *she* or *her* in the biography and insert either your child's name and correct gender pronouns or the words *you* and *your*. Then ask your child to sit quietly, close his eyes and picture himself in the biography as you read it. (Remove any distracting background noises.) Stop occasionally and ask your child to describe what he sees, feels, hears or smells. After the reading, invite your child to draw a picture of what he would have done if he met Jesus that day.

#### 2. Read-together activity

Gather pictures of children from around your house. These could be pictures from magazines, books, photo albums or the Internet. Include children of different ages and ethnicities. Divide the pictures into two stacks, one for you and one for your child. As you read the biography aloud, take turns holding up pictures of children whenever you hear the word *child* or *children*.

#### 3. Discussion activity

To add some fun to your discussion, pretend to be a local news reporter interviewing your child, who will act as an eyewitness to the biography events. Use a real microphone or an imaginary microphone made out of a hairbrush or a banana. Ask your child questions like these:

- Why were so many parents bringing their children to Jesus today?
- We heard about some trouble over there. Why did the families start turning away?
- What made the families come back?
- Does Jesus really love children? How could you tell?
- Jesus' disciples and many other people in our village don't make time for children. Why are children so important and special to Jesus?

Jesus commends children for welcoming Him with eager hearts. Children usually express simple, unquestioning trust in Jesus. Jesus wants all of us to trust Him in the same way. Children are examples of faith to grown-ups!

# Parent Ideas

## A Child of the King

Scripture: Mark 10:13-16

### 4. Application activity

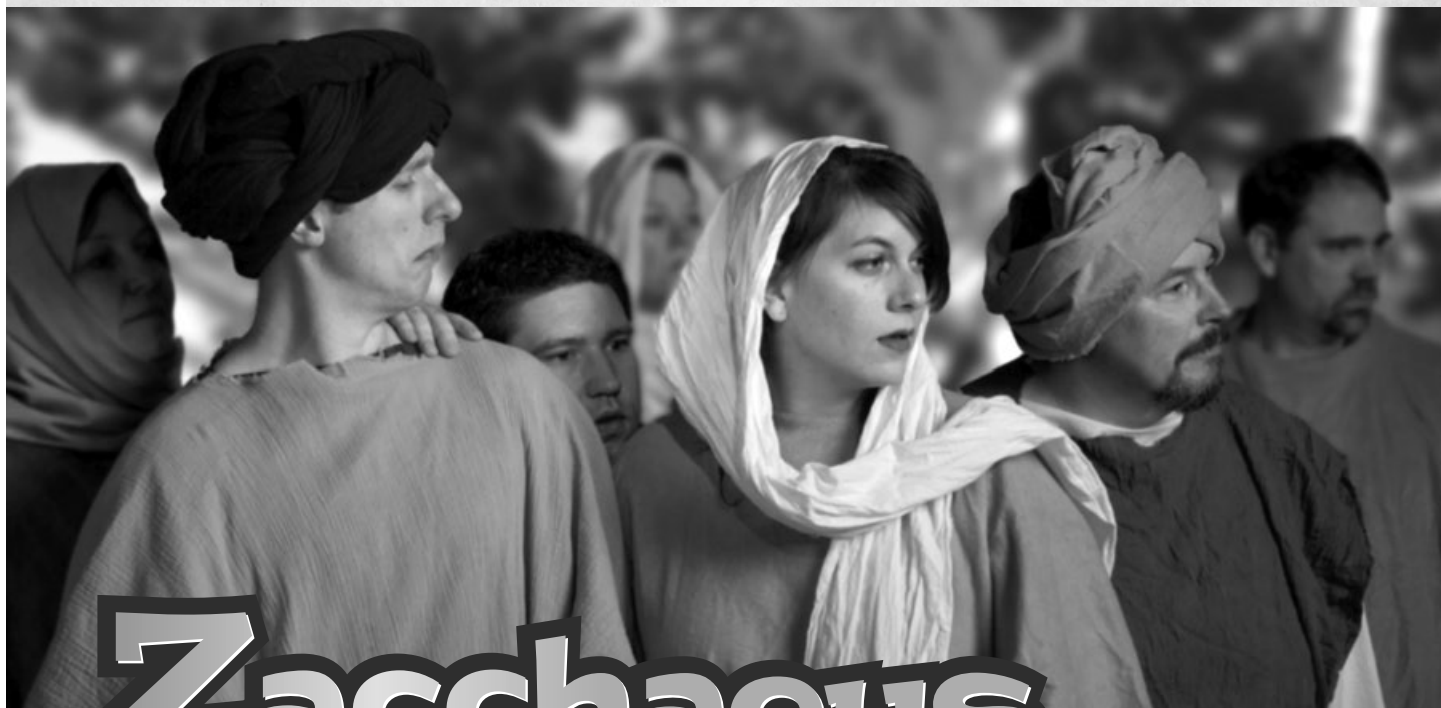
Ask your child to tell you how a person (of any age) becomes a child of God. Read John 1:12 together and explain that a person must believe (trust) in Jesus Christ as Savior to become God's child. If your child has not yet trusted Christ, explain the gospel clearly, using key gospel verses from Sparks® handbooks (e.g, Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 16:31). If you need help explaining the gospel, talk to your child's Sparks leader.

If your child has already trusted Christ, rejoice together. Ask her to name three reasons why she is glad to be a child of God. Then pray that other children in your family, church, community or in other countries will trust Christ too.

*Optional craft idea:* Cut out some of the pictures you gathered from the second Read-together activity. Make a collage by gluing them onto a 9"x12" (23 x 30 cm) poster board. After the glue dries, make a place mat by pressing a sheet of clear self-adhesive paper on the front of the poster board and another sheet on the back. Whenever you sit together for meals, the place mat will remind you to pray for children.

### 5. Application activity

The parents in the biography desperately wanted their children to meet Jesus. How desperately do you want your child to know Jesus? Do you bring him to church often? Do you read the Bible with him? Do you talk about Jesus during everyday family activities?



# Zacchaeus

Seeks the Savior



Zacchaeus stood on his tiptoes and stretched his neck up as far as he could. “Oh, I just wish I could get one good look!” he said to himself.

But the mob of people before him seemed like giants. Zacchaeus was so short that even some of the children were taller than he was!

*Maybe I can try to squeeze through them,* thought Zacchaeus. So he inched and squished and pushed

his way forward. But he still couldn’t see a thing.

“I give up!” said Zacchaeus. He wriggled out of the crowd. “I’ve GOT to find another way to see Jesus.”

Then he had an idea. It was a funny idea. And he would look very funny doing it, but he had no choice.

Zacchaeus lifted up his robe, tucked it into his belt and started to run. In those days, men usually didn’t run.

Especially not rich men like Zacchaeus, who had important jobs with the government.



But Zacchaeus didn't care! He sprinted ahead of the crowd and all the way up the road.

Then he did something even more shocking. He climbed a tree! Usually only children climbed trees, and Zacchaeus was a grown man.

But Zacchaeus would do almost *anything* to see Jesus. So he steadied himself on a sturdy branch of a sycamore tree and waited for the Lord Jesus to pass by. From up in the tree, he had a better view than anybody.

In no time, Jesus arrived at the tree with a large crowd behind Him. He stopped and looked up.

"Zacchaeus!" He called.

Zacchaeus almost fell right out of the tree. *How did Jesus know his name? Why was He talking to him?*

"Quick! Come down," said Jesus. "For I must stay at your house today."

*Stay at MY house?* thought Zacchaeus.

Before he knew it, he was sliding down the tree. He had never met Jesus before, but now He wanted to know Him. He trusted Jesus as his Savior.

With a huge smile and a happy song in his heart, Zacchaeus led Jesus all the way to his house.

But behind them, the crowd started to grumble.

"I can't believe Jesus is staying at that man's house. He's one of the biggest sinners in town!" someone said.

“Yes, Zacchaeus is the boss of all the tax collectors!” said another. “He and his friends charge us more money than they should and keep the extra money for themselves. Zacchaeus is a greedy, lying thief!”

Zacchaeus turned around. He stood as tall as he could and said, “Lord, I know I have done wrong. But I am a new man now. I’ll give half of everything I own to the poor. And I’ll pay back all the money I stole – and four times as much as that!”

Then Jesus said to Zacchaeus and everyone else, “This man trusts in Me, and he has been saved today! For I have come to seek and to save sinners, just like him.”

Zacchaeus’ eyes opened wide! He thought *he* was the one looking for Jesus. But Jesus had been looking for him first. Jesus wanted to forgive him for his sin.

Zacchaeus hurried to get things ready for his guest. Yes, Jesus would only stay one night. But one day Zacchaeus would stay in Jesus’ house in heaven forever!

**Learn from Zacchaeus’ biography:**

- Jesus came to earth to seek and save sinners.
- Like Zacchaeus, we are all sinners. Trust Jesus to save you and make you into a new person.



# Parent Ideas

## Zacchaeus Seeks the Savior

Scripture: Luke 19:1-10

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus came to earth to seek and save sinners.
- Like Zacchaeus, we are all sinners. Trust Jesus to save you and make you into a new person.

#### 1. Read-together activity

Read this biography outdoors under a large, shady tree with many low branches. If you feel especially brave, climb the tree together and sit or lean on a branch while you read.

#### 2. Read-together activity

Ask your son or daughter to pantomime the part of Zacchaeus. (*Pantomime* means “to act without speaking, using exaggerated gestures and body movements only.”) After you are done reading, switch places! Your child (or another family member) can read while you pantomime Zacchaeus. You could also play the biography on the CD and pantomime together. Enjoy the laughs that will inevitably follow.

#### 3. Discussion activity

To prepare, draw a circle on a sheet of paper. Draw lines to divide the circle into six equal pie sections. Make a “biography clock” by writing six key biography events in the sections, in chronological order. The first event should be written in the top right section. Add events in a clockwise direction. Then cut out the sections, mix them up, and ask your child to arrange them in the correct order. (Help your child to read sections if necessary.) Here are six biography events:

- Zacchaeus can't see Jesus because of the crowd.
- Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree.
- Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house.

- The crowd grumbles.
- Zacchaeus promises to pay back more money than he owes.
- Jesus says He was seeking sinners, like Zacchaeus.

Follow this activity by asking a few questions related to the key learning points.

- What was Zacchaeus like before he met Jesus?
- How did Zacchaeus respond to Jesus' invitation? (*He welcomed Him with joy, trusted Him as Savior, etc.*)
- By the end of the biography, how had Zacchaeus changed?
- Why might Zacchaeus have been surprised by Jesus' words at the end?

Help your child to understand that Jesus knows us long before we know Him. He comes to sinners like us and invites us to trust Him as Savior.

#### 4. Application activity

Explain to your child that we are all born sinners (Romans 3:23; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12). However, when we trust Christ as Savior, God says we are born again by His Spirit (John 3:3-8). This doesn't mean we become babies again; instead, it means we start making new choices to love and obey God. We will still sin and be tempted to sin, but God's Spirit gives us the power to say no.

# Parent Ideas

## **Zacchaeus Seeks the Savior**


**Scripture: Luke 19:1-10**

Play a game to illustrate this point. Find an old, smelly shoe and a clean, new shoe. Tell your child that the old shoe stands for sin (the bad choices we used to make) and the new shoe stands for holiness (the right choices God helps us to make). Gather a few family members or friends to sit in a circle. Pass the shoes around the circle for less than a minute. (People will probably want to pass the old shoe quickly!) Then stop and present an everyday scenario to the group (e.g., your little brother breaks your favorite toy).

The person holding the old shoe will give an example of a sinful response to the scenario (e.g., fighting, yelling, etc.). The person holding the new shoe will say a “born again” response to the scenario (e.g., forgiveness, gentle words, etc.). Repeat the game several times with different scenarios.

End with prayer, thanking Christ for saving us and making us into new people who can say no to sin.

Scripture: Mark 15:16-39;  
Matthew 27:51-54; Luke 23:32-38



**Centurion** – a Roman army officer who was usually in charge of 100 soldiers. He would also be in charge of the smaller group of soldiers at the cross.

# A Centurion

Believes



The Roman centurion laughed out loud.

Before him stood a man who had called Himself the king of the Jews.

“HA!” the centurion laughed.

“That’s the silliest joke I’ve heard – because He doesn’t look like a king at all!”



The gang of soldiers shouted, “Let’s dress this man, Jesus, like a king!”

They took off Jesus’ clothes and wrapped a purple robe around His shoulders. They twisted together some thorny branches to make His crown.

“Hail, king of the Jews!” the bullies teased. They knelt before Jesus, laughing and spitting on Him.

“Put His own clothes back on now,” commanded the centurion.

“We must follow our orders,” he said.

The centurion and his soldiers marched out of the palace fort. They led Jesus through the city and outside the gates to a place called Golgotha.

“Crucify Him!” yelled the crowd.

The soldiers grabbed Jesus and stripped off His clothes. They nailed His hands and feet to a large, wooden cross.



Then – BANG! They hammered a sign to the top of the cross. It said, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

The centurion and his soldiers hooted and howled with laughter. What a funny-looking king!

Suddenly, Jesus opened His mouth, “Father, forgive them. They don’t understand what they are doing.”

The centurion stopped laughing. *Did Jesus just say “forgive”? Shouldn’t Jesus be angry at them instead?*

The soldiers kept joking and playing games. “Let’s roll dice to see which one of us gets His clothes!” they said with a chuckle.

But the centurion decided to watch Jesus closely. He watched the people passing by make fun of Jesus.

“You’re not our king!” they sneered. “Why don’t you climb down from that cross? Then we will believe you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Jesus only looked at the people. He didn’t say a word.

Soon, the sky darkened. The teasing voices hushed.

“What’s happening?” the centurion cried. “It’s only the middle of the day, but it looks like nighttime!”



For three long hours,  
the centurion and  
his soldiers sat in the  
dark. Silently, they  
kept guard. Then they  
heard a loud wail.



The centurion ran to  
the cross. He stood in front of Jesus  
and watched.

Jesus took a deep breath.  
“IT ... IS ... FINISHED!” He cried.  
Then He bowed His head and died.

At once, the ground rumbled and  
shook. The huge rocks split in two.

The centurion looked at his  
soldiers with big, round eyes. He  
had never seen *anyone* die like this!

With a shaky voice, he started to  
speak, “At first I thought this man  
was a joke. But now I know He  
was telling the truth. Clearly, this  
man, Jesus, was the Son of God.”

The soldiers nodded. No one  
laughed now. Instead, the  
centurion stood at the cross,  
praising God for the amazing things  
he had seen and heard that day.

**Learn from the centurion’s biography:**

- Jesus really is who He says He is. He is God’s Son, the Savior and King of all people.
- Praise Jesus for His powerful work on the cross to save us from sin.

# Parent Ideas

## A Centurion Believes

Scripture: Mark 15:16-39;

Matthew 27:51-54;

Luke 23:32-38

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus really is who He says He is. He is God's Son, the Savior and King of all people.
- Praise Jesus for His powerful work on the cross to save us from sin.

#### 1. Read-together activity

Make laughing sounds whenever you read about the centurion and soldiers laughing (or hooting, howling or chuckling). End by shouting words of awe and praise to God, like the centurion did at the cross.

As you read aloud, you and your child could also make sound effects for other parts of the biography. For example, add sounds of spitting, marching, nailing, rolling dice, a deep breath, the ground rumbling, etc. For a unique and dramatic experience, read the biography again – except don't say any words. Make your sound effects only! Emphasize the long silence while the soldiers waited in the dark. For dialogue, you can make vocal sounds, but do not say any distinct words. Consider creating an audio recording of your sounds and listening to it together.

#### 2. Discussion activity

To prepare, gather several objects to represent items in the biography, such as a purple cloth, a crown, nails, a cross, a "King of the Jews" sign, dice, rocks, etc. To make a crown, twist and tie together branches from a bush or purchase a grapevine wreath from a craft store. To make a cross, attach two sticks or pieces of wood together tightly with rope. (Make the cross an appropriate size for the first application activity.) Or, instead of a wooden cross, cut a cross shape out of cardboard and paint it brown.

To start your discussion, put the objects in a bag or box. Pull out each object and ask your child to tell you when that object was mentioned in the biography. Who used or wore the object? What happened? In this way, your child will retell the action of the biography.

# Parent Ideas

## **A Centurion Believes**

**Scripture: Mark 15:16-39;**

**Matthew 27:51-54;**

**Luke 23:32-38**

### **3. Discussion activity**

Ask your child questions like these:

- Why do you think the centurion changed his beliefs about Jesus? What surprising things did he see and hear at the cross?
- Who do you believe Jesus is?
- How do you know Jesus really is God's Son? (He rose again, He did many miracles, the Bible says so, etc.)
- What did Jesus mean when He cried, "It is finished?"

Help your child to understand that Jesus' work of paying for our sins was finished on the cross. Jesus could have easily stopped people from killing Him, but He **CHOSE** to die so we could be saved.

### **4. Application activity**

Gather your family and give a note card to each person. On the cards, family members should each write one way they have sinned. Define sin as disobeying God by the things we think, say or do. For more privacy, people can simply write a letter or picture to represent their sin.

Nail or tack the cards to the cross you made in the first discussion activity. Explain that Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers, and He forgives us too. Jesus died so **ALL** our sin could be forgiven. Thank Jesus together. Then leave the cards on the cross until you study the next biography.

### **5. Application activity**

Place a red candle in the center of the crown or grapevine wreath from the first discussion activity. Each evening for a week (a Sunday to a Friday), light the candle with your family and read what happened on each day of Passion week, ending with the crucifixion. Read passages like these: Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:15-17; Matthew 26:6-13; Matthew 26:14-16; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 15:16-39.



# Mary Magdalene



Track 31

Sees Her Lord

“Shh, follow me!” Mary Magdalene whispered to the women behind her.

They picked up their jars of spices and walked softly down the path to Jesus’ tomb. It was early on Sunday morning. Hardly anyone else was awake.

“Wait!” whispered the women.

“How will we get inside the tomb? Who will roll the heavy stone away?”

“I don’t know,” Mary answered. “But let’s keep going. We must pour our spices on Jesus’ body and show how much we loved Him.”

Mary wiped away a tear. Jesus had died on the cross on Friday – and she missed Him already.

As they walked, the rising sun peeked through the trees in the garden.

Suddenly, one of the women pointed. “LOOK, there’s the tomb!” she gasped. “And the stone has been rolled away!”

The women raced to the tomb. Mary Magdalene arrived first and peered inside.

“Jesus is gone!” she cried. “Someone has taken His body away.”

At once, Mary took off running. “I must tell His disciples the terrible news!” she hollered to her friends.

Mary’s feet pounded on the path. Her heart pounded too. *Where was Jesus?*

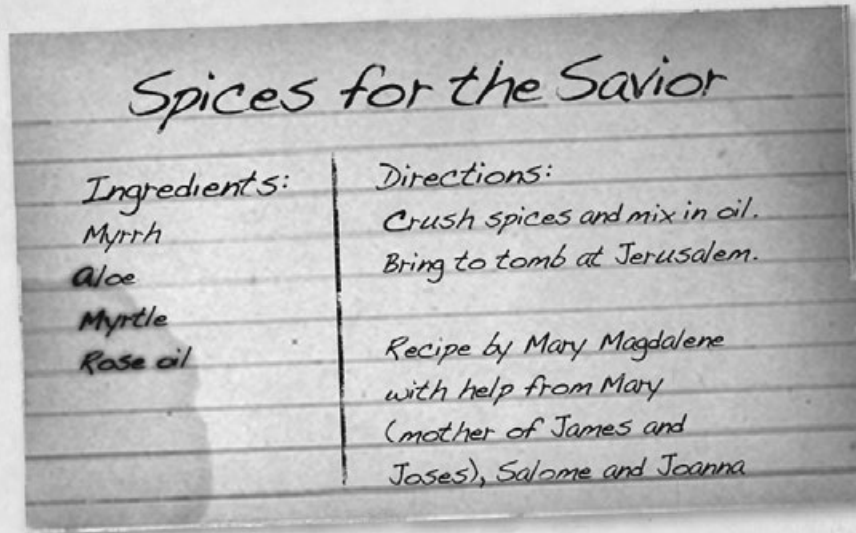


Soon she saw Peter and John. Mary was breathing so hard, she could barely talk.

“They took the Lord out of the tomb,” she gasped. “We don’t know where He is!”

Peter and John rushed with Mary to the tomb. When they got there, Mary’s friends had already left.





Peter and John ducked inside the tomb and looked around.

Mary just stood outside crying. All she could think of was Jesus. *Would she ever see Him again? Would she get one more chance to say goodbye?*

After a little while, Peter and John went home. But Mary stayed behind.

With tears in her eyes, she leaned over and looked in the tomb one last time.

This time, two angels sat there.

“Woman, why are you crying?” they asked.

“They took my Lord away,” Mary sobbed. “And I don’t know where they have laid Him.”

Mary stood up and turned around. Then – OOPS! She almost bumped into someone.

“Whom are you searching for?” asked the man standing before her.

Mary blinked in surprise. *He must be the gardener*, she thought.

“Sir,” she said, sniffing. “Just tell me where you put Him, and I will go get Him.”

“Mary!” said the man.

Mary stopped crying. She knew **THAT** voice. Once, the man with that voice had healed her. He had forgiven her of all her sin.<sup>1</sup>

“Jesus! My Teacher! My Master!” she cried.

Mary fell at Jesus’ feet and reached out to touch Him. She never wanted to let go.

“You can’t hold Me yet,” said Jesus gently. “I must return to My Father in heaven. But go tell My disciples I’m alive.”

<sup>1</sup>See Mark 16:9.

Mary took off running again. But this time, she had good news – the best news in the world. “I have seen the Lord!” she shouted to the disciples.

Now Mary cried tears of joy. Her Lord had risen from the dead! And one day she would join Him in heaven to live with Him always.



### **Learn from Mary Magdalene’s biography:**

- Jesus is alive! He has risen from the dead.
- Share the good news that Jesus is still alive today.

# Parent Ideas

## Mary Magdalene Sees Her Lord

Scripture: Mark 16:1-4; John 20:1-18

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus is alive! He has risen from the dead.
- Share the good news that Jesus is still alive today.

#### 1. Read-together activity

Note: When comparing Scriptures, it is difficult to determine the timing of the women at the tomb. Mark's Gospel reports that Mary Magdalene and the other women came together. John's Gospel suggests that many came alone. This biography tries to harmonize the different, yet equally true accounts.

You and your child can make biography characters out of clothespins. Purchase a pack of old-fashioned wooden clothespins (the kind with the slot, not the spring). Draw facial expressions on the pin heads with a fine-point felt pen. Twist a chenille wire (pipe cleaner) around the neck of each clothespin to form arms. Glue yarn on the head for hair and wrap and glue felt or fabric pieces around the body for clothing.

Make a tomb out of modeling clay. First, make a large ball. Then punch your fist into the side of the ball and shape the clay around your hand to make an opening. The tomb should end up hollow inside, like a cave. Shape a stone to roll over the opening.

As you read, your child can use the characters and the tomb to act out the events. You may want to save your figures and bring them out each Easter. To keep your tomb and stone, bake them on an ungreased cookie sheet for about one hour at 250° F (130° C).

#### 2. Read-together activity

Divide the biography into five or six scenes. Ask your child to draw a picture of each scene. Then take turns reading the biography

to each other. While one person reads, the other person holds up the pictures. (Keep these pictures for potential use in the second application activity.)

#### 3. Discussion activity

Ask your child these questions to help him reflect on the biography:

- How can you tell Mary Magdalene loved Jesus?
- Have you ever had to say goodbye to someone you loved? What did you do to show that person you cared? *(Parents, you may want to share your own experiences here.)*
- How did Mary feel when she couldn't find Jesus' body? What did she think had happened?
- What did she do when she realized she was talking to Jesus? What would you have said or done?
- Jesus rose from the dead! Why is that such good news?

Remind your child of his handbook verse for this section: 1 John 5:12. If we know Jesus as Savior, we will live forever, just like He does. We don't have to be sad or afraid of death.

#### 4. Discussion activity

Make "Jesus Is Risen" cookies with your child. Follow the recipe and related discussion topics on the following page. Each of the ingredients symbolizes a different aspect of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. If you search for "resurrection cookies," you will find many variations of this recipe online.

# Parent Ideas

## Mary Magdalene Sees Her Lord

Scripture: Mark 16:1-4; John 20:1-18

### Jesus Is Risen Cookies

Bake these cookies the Saturday night before Easter or any other night – whenever you desire to focus on Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

Before you start, read the full recipe and collect all the ingredients and other needed materials. Familiarize yourself with the Bible passages so you can read and explain them to your child.

#### You will need:

1 cup whole pecans (121 g.)	sealable plastic bag
or almonds (170 g.)	wooden spoon
1 teaspoon (5 ml) apple cider vinegar or white vinegar	electric mixer and bowl
3 egg whites (room tem- perature for best results)	wax paper
pinch of salt	cookie sheets
1 cup (192 g.) sugar	tape
	Bible

#### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 300° F (180° C). (This is IMPORTANT. Do this before doing anything else.)
2. Place the nuts in the plastic bag. Let your child beat the nuts with the wooden spoon to break them into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, the soldiers beat him. **Read John 19:1-3.**
3. Let your child smell and taste the vinegar. Add one teaspoon (5 ml) of vinegar to a mixing bowl. Explain that people gave Jesus vinegar to drink while He hung on the cross. **Read John 19:28-30.**
4. Add egg whites to the vinegar. Tell your child that eggs represent life. Jesus gave His life so we could have life. **Read John 10:10-11.**
5. Sprinkle a pinch of salt into your child's hand. Let her taste a tiny bit and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that Mary Magdalene and Jesus' other followers cried salty tears when Jesus died. **Read Jesus' words to His disciples in John 16:20.**
6. So far the ingredients are not very appealing. Sprinkle a little sugar into your child's hand for her to taste. Say that Christ's death is sweet to us because He loves us and saves us from our sin. **Read John 3:16.** (Your child should know this verse by heart. It's the Sparks key verse!)
7. Gradually add one cup (192 g.) of sugar to the bowl as you beat the ingredients on high with a mixer. Beat eggs for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks form. Eggs should look glossy white. Discuss how white stands for purity. Jesus forgives all our sin and makes us pure in God's eyes. **Read Isaiah 1:18.**
8. Fold in broken nuts. Drop the mixture by teaspoon onto a cookie sheet covered with wax paper. Explain that the mounds remind us of the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. **Read Matthew 27:57-60.**
9. Place the cookie sheet in the oven. Close the door and turn OFF the oven immediately. Give your child a piece of tape to seal the oven door. Tell your child that Jesus' tomb was also sealed. **Read Matthew 27:65-66.**
10. Go to bed! Leave the cookies in the oven overnight. Your child may be sad that she can't eat the cookies tonight. Explain that Jesus' friends were sad to leave Jesus in the tomb, but Jesus had promised they wouldn't be sad for long. **Read John 16:22.** Tell your child to look forward to the morning.
11. The next morning, open the oven and take out the cookies. Point out the cracked surface and invite your child to take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On Sunday morning, the third day, Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. **Read Matthew 28:1-9.**

# Parent Ideas

## Mary Magdalene Sees Her Lord

Scripture: Mark 16:1-4; John 20:1-18

### 5. Application activity

Gather the family and bring out the cross you made during Biography 5 activities. Remove the sin cards that you attached to the cross. Decorate the cross with flowers and bright colors. Ask people to share reasons why they are personally glad that Jesus is alive. Pray and thank God for forgiveness and new life in Christ.

### 6. Application activity

Collect the pictures your child drew in the second Read-together activity. Ask your child to add a picture of a cross to represent Christ's crucifixion. Then make these into a book. Glue each picture onto a sheet of card stock (leave back sides of card stock blank and save two sheets for the covers). Hole punch the left sides of the card stock sheets and attach them together with yarn or paper fasteners. On the back sides of the card stock, help your child write a few sentences to describe the facing picture. Encourage your child to read this book to a family member or friend who needs to hear the gospel.





# Philip

**Shares the  
Good News**

**“Philip!**

**It’s time to go,”  
said the angel.**

Philip got ready at once.  
He listened for the angel’s  
directions.

“Travel south to the desert  
road that goes from  
Jerusalem to Gaza,” said  
the angel.

Philip set off to obey. He  
had never heard *these*  
directions before. *What*  
*would God do?* he wondered.

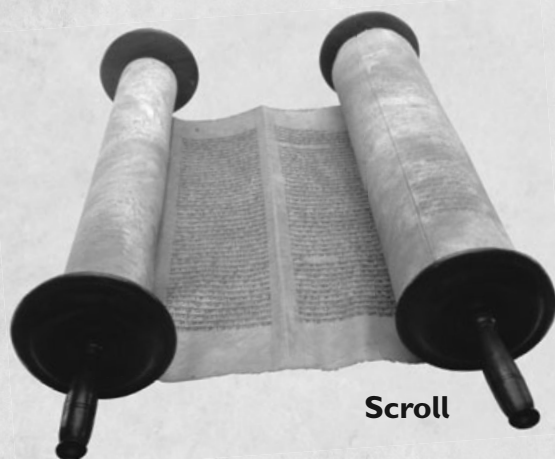
Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, an  
Ethiopian officer climbed  
into his royal chariot. He  
was the top boss over all  
of Queen Candace’s gold,  
silver and jewels.



“It’s time to go!” he called to his driver.

The officer had come to Jerusalem to worship God. Now he was returning home to the country of Ethiopia in Africa.

“Let’s take the quiet desert road,” said the officer. “I want to read my scroll.”



CRACK went the whip. The horses neighed, and the chariot started off down the road.

Philip walked along that very same road. But Philip didn’t see the chariot. In fact, he didn’t see anybody!

*What will I do HERE?* Philip wondered.

Philip loved telling others the good news about Jesus Christ. But the only “others” he saw along that lonely road were a couple of lizards and a porcupine!

Just then, Philip heard wheels creaking behind him. He jumped out of the way – and a chariot rolled past him, stirring up dust in the road.

God’s Spirit said to Philip, “Go and catch up with that chariot!”

Philip sprinted to the chariot and ran alongside it. He saw the tall, dark-skinned officer sitting inside.

Philip leaned in close to listen.

“He was led to the slaughter, just like a sheep,” the Ethiopian read aloud from his scroll.

“And just as lambs are quiet when they are sheared, He was quiet too. He did not open His mouth.”



Philip smiled. He knew those words! They were written in the Old Testament book of Isaiah.

“Do you understand what you are reading?” asked Philip.

“No, I don’t,” said the Ethiopian, sadly. “Will you sit with me and teach me?”

Philip climbed into the chariot. As they rode along, Philip explained, “The prophet Isaiah tells us about Jesus Christ.”

“Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God. People led Him to the cross to be killed, and He didn’t say a word to stop them. Then, on the third day,

God raised Him from the dead. All persons who believe in Jesus will be forgiven for their sin.”

The officer listened carefully. Then his face lit up with excitement.

“NOW I understand!” he cried. “I believe Jesus is the Son of God. I trust Him as my Savior.”

They traveled along and came to some water. “Stop the chariot!” ordered the officer. “I want to be baptized.”

Philip and the officer stepped down from the chariot and waded into the water. Then Philip baptized the officer.





As they came up out of the water, the Ethiopian felt like splashing and jumping for joy. *Finally*, he understood the good news about Jesus! He couldn't wait to share it with everyone back home in Ethiopia.

"Thank you," he said as he turned to Philip. But WAIT –

Philip was gone!

God's Spirit had snatched him away to a town called Azotus. And Philip traveled around doing the thing he loved best – sharing the good news of Jesus with everyone he met.



**Learn from Philip's biography:** \_\_\_\_\_

- God wants men, women and children from all countries to trust Jesus as Savior.
- God wants US to help people near and far to understand the good news about Jesus.

# Parent Ideas

## Philip Shares the Good News

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God wants men, women and children from all countries to trust Jesus as Savior.
- God wants US to help people near and far to understand the good news about Jesus.

#### 1. Read-together activity

Read the first line of the biography aloud and ask your child to read the next line. Continue alternating lines/paragraphs for the whole reading. Or ask your child to read the dialogue of the Ethiopian officer while you (or other family members) read the dialogue of Philip and the narrator lines.

#### 2. Discussion activity

Draw a Venn Diagram (two side-by-side, overlapping circles) on a sheet of paper. Ask your child to tell you all the ways Philip and the officer were alike (e.g., they both traveled on the same road, they both read God's Word, they both wanted to share the good news at the end, etc.). Write these details in the space where the circles overlap. Then ask your child to tell you some of the ways the two men were different (e.g., Philip understood the good news, but the officer needed someone to teach him; the officer lived in Ethiopia, but Philip moved to many cities in the areas near Jerusalem.) Write these details in the outer circles. Label each circle with the appropriate character's name.

Explain that God wanted the Ethiopian officer to know Jesus, so he sent Philip to teach him. God wants men, women and children from all over the world to hear about Jesus and trust Him as Savior.

#### 3. Discussion activity

Locate a map of Palestine in New Testament times. Find a map on the Internet or in a study

Bible or Bible reference book. Show your child the map and point to the cities of Jerusalem and Gaza. Philip and the officer traveled on a road between these two cities. When the men parted ways, Philip went to share the good news in Azotus and the other towns along the coast (e.g., Lydda, Joppa, etc.) until he settled at Caesarea (Acts 8:40, 21:8). The officer continued southwest on his way home to Ethiopia. Ethiopia was directly south of Egypt at that time, possessing different borders than the present-day country.

Point out the regions of Judea and Samaria, to help your child visualize his handbook section verse, Acts 1:8.

Emphasize that before Jesus returned to His Father in heaven, He told His disciples to share the good news with everyone, everywhere. We must share the good news too! We share with people who live near our homes, and sometimes, like Philip, God sends us to new places to share the good news.

#### 4. Application activity

If you have a globe at home, take it out and ask your child to spin it. After a few seconds, ask her to place her finger somewhere on the globe to stop it from spinning. Identify the part of the world where her finger points and pray for people in that area to hear and understand the good news of Jesus. Repeat this activity several times. Enrich your time by studying the history or culture of some of the people you pray for.



# Parent Ideas

## Philip Shares the Good News

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

### 5. Application activity

Help your child with the missionary activities in his *SkyStormer* handbook (Green Jewel 2:1 and 2:2). Your Sparks director or Sparks leaders can give you information about your Awana missionary.

### 6. Review activity

Cut out the seven biography cards on the next page. On a large sheet of paper (at least 11" x 17" [27.9 x 43.2 cm]), make a timeline that includes these chronological events:

- Jesus lives on earth.
- Jesus dies on the cross.
- Jesus rises to life and returns to heaven.
- The church tells the good news about Jesus.
- Jesus will someday return.

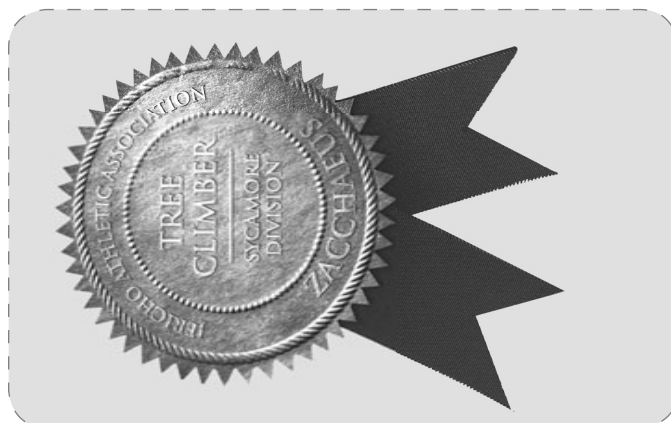
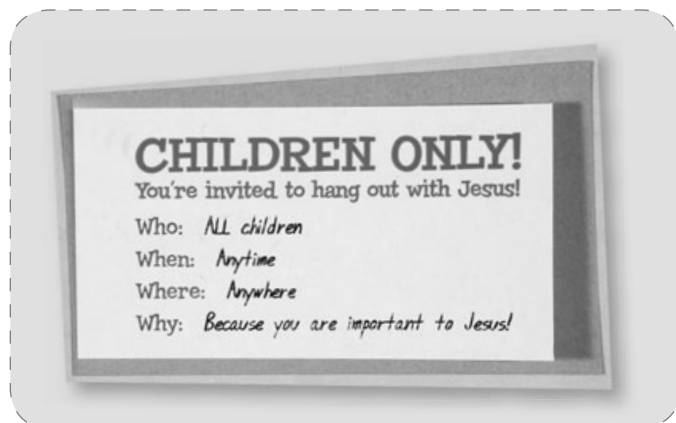
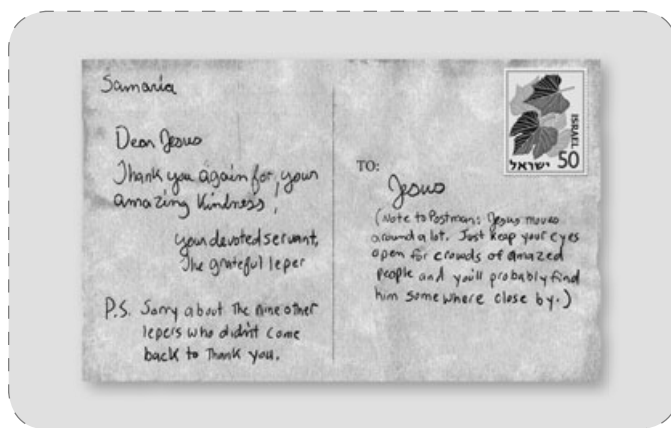
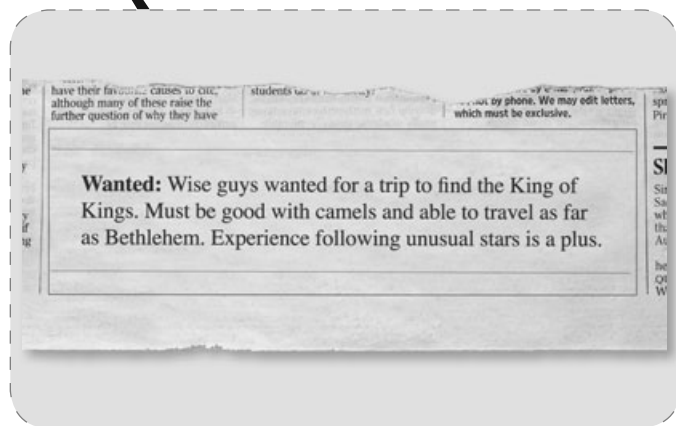
Ask your child to place each of the seven biography cards in the right place on the timeline. (For reference, see the timeline included with each biography in the handbook.)

Save the timeline and cards to use in a future review activity.

### 7. Review activity

Play a review game together. Gather about 20 sheets of scrap paper. Give 10 sheets to your child, and keep the other half for yourself. On the back of each paper, you should each write a question about one of the biographies you have studied. You will probably need to help your child write questions – but this is part of the review process too. Try to include factual questions and more reflective questions, like the ones included in the discussion activities.

With the papers, you can play a stepping stone game. Play in a large, open room. Stand near one wall and pretend the floor is a stream. To start, ask your child a question from one of your sheets. If he answers it correctly or insightfully, give him the sheet. He will lay it on the floor and step on it. Pretend the paper is a stepping stone to help him cross the stream. (He will lay future papers in front of it.) Next, your child asks you a question and you try to earn your own stepping stone. Continue in this pattern. Whoever gathers enough “stones” to step across the “brook” to the other wall first is the winner.



**Sparkies!** The young widow and her children are not in the Bible, but they are probably like many families that Tabitha served.



# Tabitha

Lives to Serve

“Mom, I’m hungry!” the widow’s son cried.

The widow peeked out her doorway. *Where is Tabitha?* she wondered.

“Mommy, I’m cold!” Her small daughter shivered.

The young widow began to worry. Her husband had died, and now she barely had any money to care for her family. Kind Tabitha had promised to bring food and a new robe for her daughter.

But Tabitha was not usually late!

**Bible Biography 8**

Scripture: Acts 9:36-43



**Widow** – a woman whose husband has died



“Come with me, children. Let’s visit our friend, Dorcas,” said the widow. (Dorcas was another name for Tabitha.)

When the family arrived at Tabitha’s house, they peered inside. They saw Tabitha’s tall wooden loom and the stool where she always sat to weave the clothes.

Suddenly, they heard a woman coughing. “Tabitha?” they called.

The widow and her children rushed in to Tabitha’s room. They

saw their friend lying in bed and looking terribly pale.

“Oh, Tabitha, please don’t die!” the widow begged. “We need you!”

The anxious widow picked up her children and hurried outside to the streets.

“Tabitha is sick!” she shouted to all the poor widows from the church.

“Tabitha is sick!” she cried to the other church people standing nearby.

At once, the followers of Jesus came running from everywhere



in the village of Joppa. They all wanted to take care of the lovely lady, Tabitha, who had always taken care of them.

But – how sad! – nobody could do anything to help. In just a short time, dear Tabitha was dead.

“How will we live without her?” wailed all the poor widows.

The women washed her and dressed her in burial clothes. Then they laid her in a room upstairs.

“There must be something we can do!” said the people of the church. “Why don’t we ask the apostle Peter to come help us?

He’s visiting a town nearby.”

Meanwhile, all the widows, young and old, stayed in the room with Tabitha. They didn’t want to leave their friend.

When Peter entered the room, the widows crowded around him, crying.

“Tabitha loved Jesus, and she showed His love to us,” said one of the widows. “See this beautiful robe she made me!”

Then another widow spoke up. “Tabitha was always helping those in need. Look at the bright colors she wove into my coat. I feel like a queen.”

“The name Tabitha means gazelle,” said a woman softly. “Tabitha’s eyes were just like a gazelle – dark and gentle. Oh, if only those kind eyes would open once more.”

## TABITHA’S TAILORING

Fine quality, handmade tunics and coats  
for poor widows and their families

• JOPPA •



Peter pointed to the door.  
“Everyone must leave!” he ordered.

As the widows turned to go, they saw Peter kneeling to pray. “I wonder what God will do,” they whispered to each other.

After a few moments, Peter called the widows and the other church people to the room.

Beside him stood Tabitha – **ALIVE!**

“What a miracle!” the people shouted. The widows rushed in to hug their friend.

(Now in those days, before the whole Bible was written, God gave the apostles power to do miracles so people would believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And that’s just

what happened! When the people of Joppa heard about this miracle, many of them believed.)

The church was glad to have Tabitha back. But Tabitha had work to do! She looked at the young widow who had visited her house that day.

“I know a little girl who needs a robe!” said Tabitha, smiling.

**Learn from Tabitha’s biography:**

- God has the power to do anything – even raise the dead!
- Spend your time serving those in need, like Tabitha did.

# Parent Ideas

**Tabitha Lives to Serve**

**Scripture: Acts 9:36-43**

## KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God has the power to do anything – even raise the dead!
- Spend your time serving those in need, like Tabitha did.

### 1. Read-together activity

This activity will work if your child has not read the biography yet. First, ask your child if she has ever heard of Tabitha (Dorcas) from the New Testament. Show her yarn or a spool of thread as a hint. See what she already knows about Tabitha – don't tell her any further information. Then ask her to write three things she would like to find out about Tabitha. Tell your child to listen for these items as you read the biography. When you are done reading, discuss what she learned. Does she have any more questions? Were there any surprises?

### 2. Read-together activity

Note: Be sure to explain to your child that the young widow and her children are not in the Bible; however, they are probably like many of the families Tabitha served. These characters give a good perspective on widows in Bible times and why they loved Tabitha so much.

You or your spouse (or a female relative) could dress up as the fictional young widow in the biography. Change the wording in the biography in order to read it dramatically from a first-person perspective. For your costume, simply wear a bathrobe and a head covering made of a towel and secured with a headband. Bring a broom, pottery or beautifully-colored clothing as props. Or instead, make up your own character and costume and read the biography in that character's voice.

### 3. Discussion activity

Ask your child questions like these:

- Why did the widows love Tabitha so much? (What was Tabitha like? What did she do for them?)
- Do you know a person living today who's like Tabitha? Describe this person. *(Parents, you may need to remind your child of a kind, helpful person you both know.)*
- Pretend you were one of the poor widows in the biography. If Tabitha had stayed dead, what might have happened to you? What would you do?
- How did God show His power in the biography?
- What happened when the people in Joppa heard of the miracle?

### 4. Application activity

Ask your child, "Have you ever been a 'Tabitha' to someone else? What did you do?"

To encourage more "Tabitha-like" behavior, choose a category of basic needs (food, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, school supplies, etc.). Toss a Frisbee® back and forth. Each time you or your child catches or picks up the Frisbee, name a way your family could care for a person with a need in that category. For example, if your category is clothing, your child will catch the Frisbee and say, "We could buy two pairs of socks and give one away." Keep tossing, brainstorming and changing categories. Pick your favorite idea and DO IT!

# Parent Ideas

**Tabitha Lives to Serve**

**Scripture: Acts 9:36-43**

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Provide a box of school supplies to a needy child (through a local school or children's shelter). Your child can help you shop for items.
- Does your church serve a local food pantry or homeless shelter? Participate in that ministry together. Prepare your child for what she may experience.
- Do any local ministries build homes for low-income families? Contact the ministry to see how your family can be involved.
- Donate used clothes to a local shelter. Or, in the spirit of Tabitha, make an article of clothing with your own hands (e.g., knit scarves or hats, sew simple skirts, etc.).
- Enable children around the world to participate in Awana® clubs through Adopt-a-Club®. Visit [www.awana.org](http://www.awana.org) for more details.
- Sponsor a needy child through a Christian organization. To spark connections and cultural learning, choose a child from another country with the same gender and birthdate as your own child.

## 5. Application activity

For Tabitha, service was a way of life – not a one-time event! Pray for servants' hearts. Pray that God will bring service opportunities into your daily life this month so your child forms a habit of service. Pray especially for opportunities to serve the people of God (1 John 3:17).



Track 41

# The Church

## Prays for Peter

One night, in Jerusalem, a group of friends stayed up way past their bedtimes.

They didn't stay awake to talk or play games or tell funny stories. Instead, they stayed up late – to PRAY!

“Oh Lord,” they prayed.

“Please rescue our friend, Peter, out of jail.”

Peter had been thrown into jail for sharing the good news about Jesus. Tomorrow the king would bring him out to be killed.

“LORD!” they cried. “Show your great power and set Peter free!”

For many days, these people of the church had been praying for Peter. Now they



## SECRET MEETING

Carefully pass this note  
To ALL the Church members

When: ALL NIGHT TONIGHT

WHERE: SECRET ROOM in JERUSALEM

WHY: To pray for PETER'S RESCUE

house and up  
the stairs to  
tell her friends.  
She forgot all  
about opening  
the door.

"You'll never  
believe this,"  
said Rhoda, out

prayed harder than ever. All night  
long, they kept calling out to God.

Suddenly, they heard a knock at  
the gate to the house.

*Who could that be?* they wondered.  
*Were the king's soldiers coming to  
put them in jail too?*

Rhoda, a young maid, hurried to  
the gate door. With a shaky voice,  
she called out, "Who's there?"

"It's ME!" whispered a man's voice.

Rhoda jumped back with surprise.  
She knew *that* voice. She was so  
excited that she ran back into the

of breath. "Peter, Peter is standing  
at the gate!"

"WHAT?" Her friends stared at  
her. "Are you crazy? Peter is in  
prison! He can't be *here*."

"But he IS here!" Rhoda replied. "I  
heard him."

"Whoever it is, it's not Peter," said  
her friends. "It must be his angel."

"No," said Rhoda, stomping her  
foot. "I promise you. It's Peter!"

*Knock, knock.*

Whoops! They were so busy  
arguing that they had left poor



Peter standing out in the street.  
The soldiers could have captured him again by now!

Rhoda rushed to the gate and everyone followed behind her. When they opened the door – of course – there stood Peter!

The people's mouths dropped open wide. They were all about to start chattering at once, but Peter lowered his hand. This was the signal to be quiet. Then Peter told them what happened.

"Tonight I was sleeping in the jail between two soldiers," said Peter. "My right hand was chained to one soldier. My left hand was chained to the other soldier. Then I felt someone touching my side. I woke up and saw an angel! The chains fell off my wrists. I stood

up, and the angel led me past the guards and right out of the jail. Can you believe it?"

The people just gazed at him, stunned. No one said a word.

"The Lord has done this!" said Peter. "Tell the rest of the church how the Lord has answered your prayers and rescued me out of jail."

Peter said goodbye and went somewhere else to hide from the king. Meanwhile, what do you think the church friends did? We don't know for sure, but maybe they started to pray something like this: "Thank you, God, for answering our prayers. And next time, Lord –"

"Help us not to take so long to believe Your answer!"

### **Learn from the church's biography:**

- God hears our prayers and answers them in the way He decides is best.
- Keep praying to God. Watch for God's answers and thank Him.



# Parent Ideas

## The Church Prays for Peter

Scripture: Acts 12:1-17

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God hears our prayers and answers them in the way He decides is best.
- Keep praying to God. Watch for God's answers and thank Him.

#### 1. Read-together activity

This activity will work if your child has not read the biography yet. Ask your child to imagine you allowed him to stay awake past his bedtime. What would he do? Would he read, play games, watch a video, etc.? Explain that a group of New Testament people stayed up late one night. Ask your child to guess what they were doing. Then start reading the biography to find out.

#### 2. Read-together activity

Highlight all forms of the word pray (e.g., praying, prayed, prayers) on your copy and your child's copy of the biography. Read the biography to your child, pausing at the appropriate places to allow your child to read each one of the highlighted words. This activity will strengthen your child's ability to follow along while another person reads.

#### 3. Discussion activity

Divide the biography into eight scenes. Take two sheets of paper and draw lines on each sheet to divide it into eight equally-sized squares. Read each scene aloud. You and your child can both draw stick-figure comic strips to go along with the scenes. Include bubbles for dialogue. Ask your child to retell the biography to you, using her comic strip. Share your comic strip with your child as well.

#### 4. Discussion activity

Write discussion questions on slips of paper and put them into a hat or small box. Ask your child to add questions too. Take turns pulling the slips out of the hat and asking each other the questions written on the slips.

Include questions like these:

- Why did the church people stay up late?
- What would *you* have done if you heard Peter's voice at the door?
- Why didn't the people believe Rhoda?
- How would you have felt if you were waiting at the door, like Peter?
- What did the Lord do to rescue Peter?
- How do you think the people felt at the end of the biography? What do you think they did?
- If you were one of the people praying, would you have acted the same? Why or why not?

Remind your child that God always hears the prayers of His children. Sometimes He answers them differently than we expect, but He always answers. He answers them in the way He decides is best. We should always watch for God's answers and thank Him (Colossians 4:2).

# Parent Ideas

## The Church Prays for Peter

Scripture: Acts 12:1-17

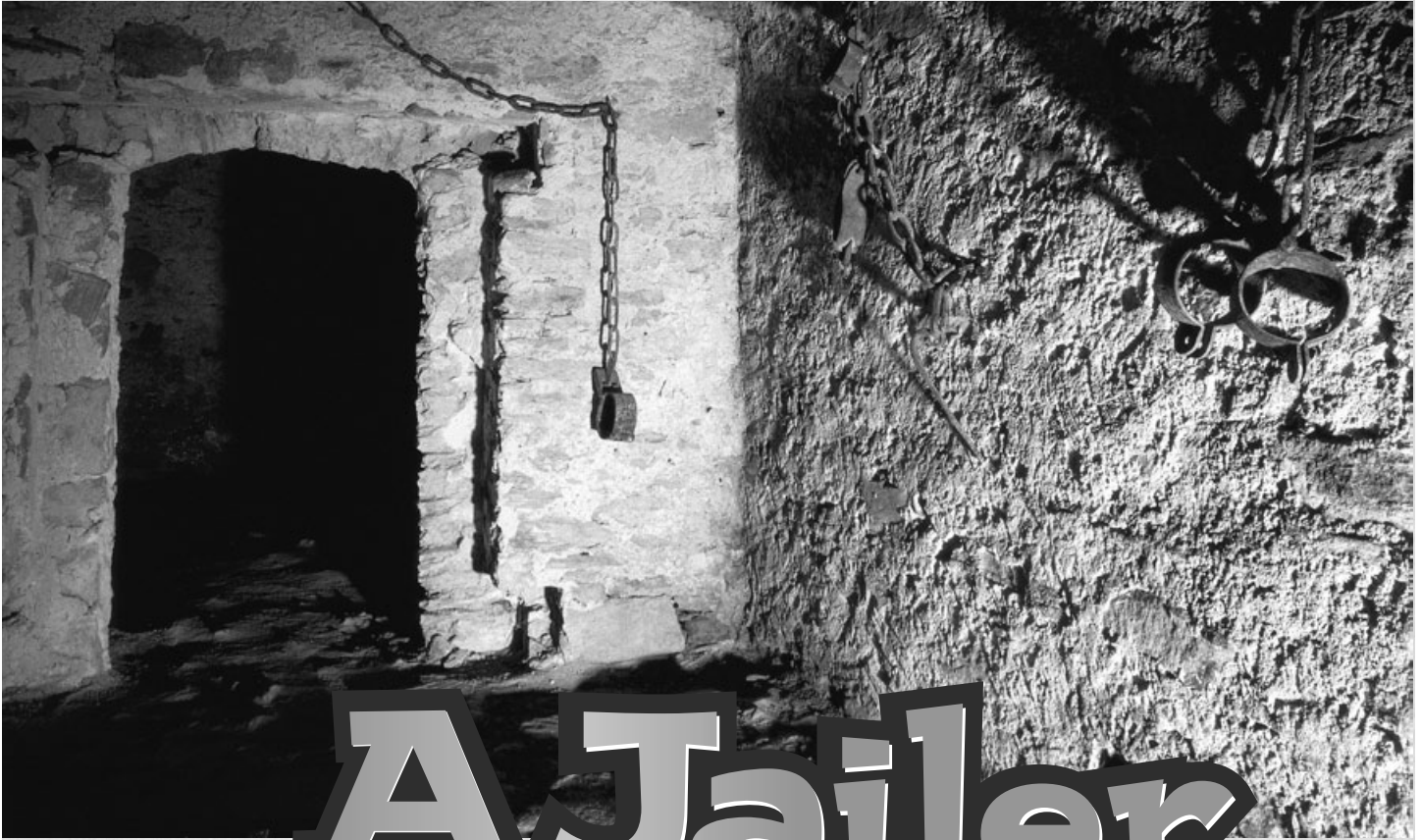
### 5. Application activity

With your child, keep a prayer journal for at least a month. In one column, record your requests and the date you pray. In another column, record God's answers and the date you receive them. Explain to your child that we should always desire and pray for God's will. In other words, our focus should be on what He wants, not what we want! (And sometimes God's answer is related to our motives or obedience – James 4:3.)

This activity will encourage both of you to watch for God's answers. As you see God's work, your faith will be strengthened and you will want to pray more.

### 6. Application activity

Tell your child about the many Christians today who are imprisoned for their faith. Pray that these worldwide prisoners would have strength to be strong witnesses for the Lord. Pray the Spirit would remind them of God's Word. Pray for their protection. Pray for their rescue, if that is God's will. Contact a ministry that serves the persecuted Church to find specific prayer requests or ways you can comfort and help prisoners.



# A Jailer

**Finds Joy**

The jailer jingled his keys and started to whistle.

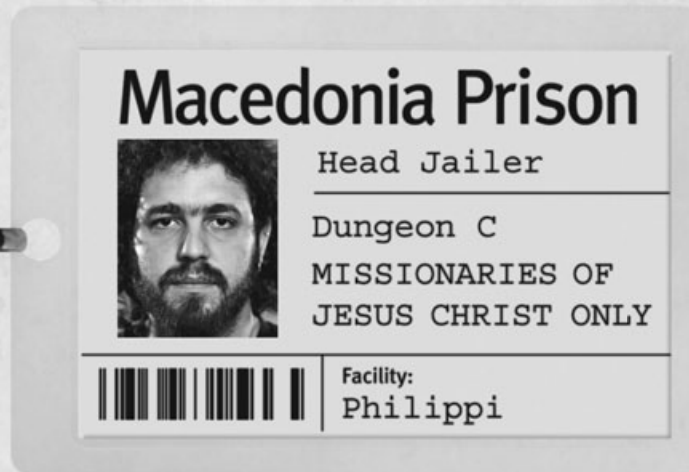
*What a good day!* He smiled to himself.

His prisoners were all locked up safely. The prison floor was swept. Now he could just sit in his chair and relax.

*Uh-oh! Who's coming?*

A group of Roman officers arrived at the jail. They dragged two new prisoners with them.

"Meet Paul and Silas," said the officers. "They're in trouble for preaching a strange, new religion about salvation through Jesus Christ. We beat them with sticks, and now you must lock them up."



Watch them carefully so they don't escape."

"Yes, sirs," said the jailer. "I know just the place for these men. We call it the dungeon."

The jailer and his helpers<sup>1</sup> grabbed Paul and Silas and pulled them far inside the prison to the darkest, coldest, smelliest room of all.

"They won't escape from here!" said the jailer.

Then the jailer and his men pushed Paul and Silas onto the ground – right on their sore, bloody backs.

OW! That must have hurt!

"Lock them up tight!" ordered the jailer.

They stretched Paul and Silas' legs far apart and chained their feet to wooden blocks, called stocks.

"Sleep tight, Paul and Silas!" called the jailer as he shut the door and turned the key.

The jailer returned to his chair. Finally, he could relax! After a while, he fell asleep.

About midnight, the jailer dreamed he heard sweet, happy singing in the prison. He didn't know it, but this wasn't a dream at all!

His two new prisoners, Paul and Silas were praying and singing





praises to God. They sang so loud that all the other prisoners heard them too.

“How can they sing in the dungeon?” asked the other prisoners, surprised. “Aren’t they in pain? Why are they thanking their God?”

Suddenly, a mighty earthquake shook the walls and the floors of the prison. The locked doors swung open! The chains of every prisoner came loose!

The jailer awoke and jumped to his feet. “What’s happening?” he screamed.

But when he saw the open doors, he knew his worst nightmare had come true. His prisoners had escaped. And what would a jailer’s punishment be? **DEATH!**

He pulled out his sword and raised it high.

“Wait!” shouted Paul. “Don’t hurt yourself. We’re all here.”

The jailer dropped his sword and called to his helpers, “Bring me torches so I can see!”

Then the jailer dashed into the prison and looked around. Sure enough – all his prisoners were there, safe and sound.

Shaking with fear, the jailer fell down before Paul and Silas. *What an awesome, powerful God they served!*

The jailer brought Paul and Silas out of the prison. He had one question to ask them – a BIG question. “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” he asked.

Paul and Silas looked at him kindly. “Believe in the Lord Jesus,” they said. “You and your family will be saved if each one of you believes in Him.”

“I believe!” shouted the jailer.

He invited Paul and Silas to his house. He washed up their sores and fed them a meal. Then, in the morning, the town leaders set Paul and Silas free.

“Goodbye, friends!” called the jailer from the doorway of the jail. But today, his keys jingled more joyfully than ever. Finally, he and his family had met the Savior – the Lord Jesus Christ!

<sup>1</sup>We assume the jailer had helpers since he called to others for lights.



### **Learn from the the jailer's biography:**

- Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved.
- Believers in Jesus can be joyful even during hard times, like Paul and Silas were.

# Parent Ideas

## A Jailer Finds Joy

Scripture: Acts 16:16-40

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved.
- Believers in Jesus can be joyful even during hard times, like Paul and Silas were.

#### 1. Read-together activity

Gather the whole family and some friends or neighbors to act out this biography while you read it. You'll need people to play the parts of the jailer, Paul, Silas and one or two Roman officers (who could also play the jailer's helpers). When you read each character's dialogue, prompt that character to repeat it after you with dramatic flair. Add props, such as keys, a broom, a chair, a sword (or stick), candles (for torches), and bread (for the meal).

If you have extra people, assign them the parts of the other prisoners, the stocks (two to four people) and the dungeon door (two people). When the jailer and his helpers stretch Paul and Silas' legs apart, the people acting as stocks each grab one or two ankles and hold them tight. They release their grip during the earthquake. When the jailer locks the door to the dungeon, the people playing the door will stand side by side, holding hands. They will let go of each other's hands and move apart during the earthquake.

#### 2. Read-together activity

If you usually read the biographies with your child, ask your spouse or another adult relative to read this biography. Your child will benefit from different relationships and interaction. Since this biography focuses on salvation, consider asking a relative who has not yet trusted Christ.

#### 3. Discussion activity

Change the setting of your discussions. For example, if you normally sit on a couch while you talk, walk outside, drive in a car or talk at the dinner table instead. Ask questions like these:

- Describe the jailer at the beginning of the biography. How did he treat Paul and Silas?
- What would you do if you were sore and chained in a dungeon?
- Why were Paul and Silas able to be so joyful?
- What awesome things did God do in the jail?
- What big question did the jailer ask Paul and Silas? What was their answer?
- How did the jailer change once he trusted Christ?

#### 4. Application activity

Help your child to understand that trusting in Jesus Christ is the *only* requirement for salvation. God does not save us because of our good behavior, our appearance, or our talents and skills.

If your child has already trusted Christ, encourage her to write a cinquain poem expressing her joy. A cinquain is a five-line poem that does not rhyme. Tell your child to write the word *Savior* on the first line. On the second line, she should write two adjectives that describe the Savior. On the third line, she should write three interesting action words

# Parent Ideas

## A Jailer Finds Joy

Scripture: Acts 16:16-40

that end with “ing.” These words should describe what the Savior did or does for her (e.g., sacrificing, seeking, surprising). The fourth line includes a four-word phrase or sentence that expresses her feelings for the Savior (e.g., “He makes me sing.”). The final line contains a one-word synonym for Savior (e.g., Friend).

If your child has not yet discovered the joy of salvation, share about the joy the Savior gives you. (Talk to your child’s Sparks leader if you have questions about salvation.)

### 5. Application activity

Talk about hard times your child or family has faced. Were you able to rejoice in the Lord then? Why or why not? No matter what happens to us, we can always rejoice in God’s character and our eternal salvation.

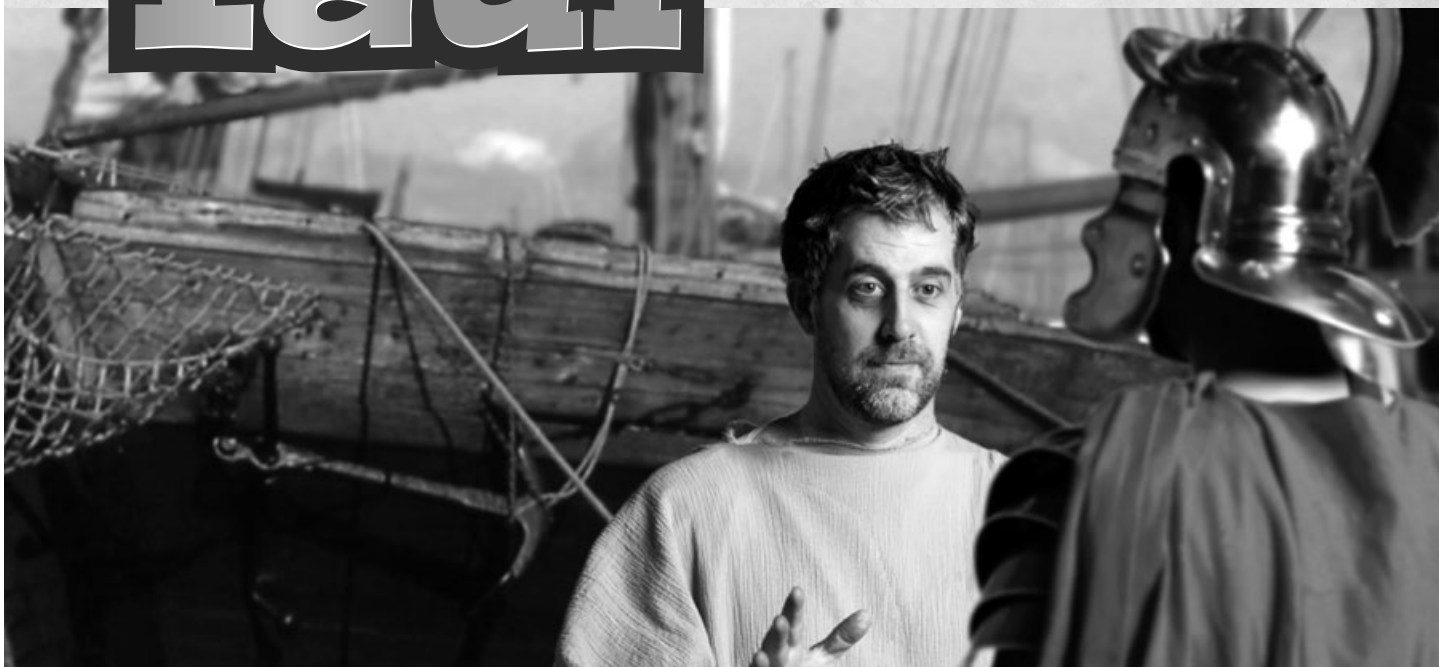
Do you know a song for Philippians 4:4? If not, create a melody to go along with the words and sing it whenever you experience a hard time. To remind you of the joyful jailer’s biography, sing it now and jingle your keys to the beat.

# Paul



Track 45

## Stays Strong at Sea



“All aboard!” called the captain.

Paul and the other prisoners climbed onto the ship. Once more, Paul was a prisoner for preaching about Jesus. Now he must go to Rome and stand before Caesar, the emperor.

But Paul sensed danger ahead. “Sirs,” he said to the men in charge. “Winter weather is

coming. If we travel now, we will lose our ship and even our lives!”

“I like you Paul,” said Julius, the kind Roman officer. “But both the captain and the ship’s owner think we can make it. I’ll listen to them.”

The captain shouted to his crew. “Pull up the anchors, men! Let’s set sail.”





At first, the ship glided along, close to the shore. But then, a wind like a hurricane snatched the ship and whirled it out to sea!

“Prepare the ship!” yelled the captain. “We’re riding into the worst storm of our lives!”

The sailors scurried across the deck. They wrapped strong ropes around the bottom of the ship to keep the wood from breaking apart. They lowered the sails to slow the ship down.

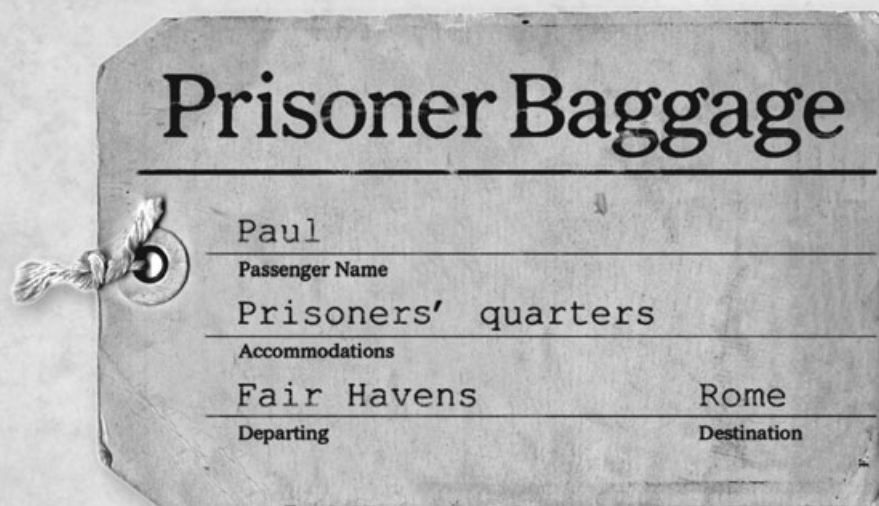
But day and night the boat rocked like a wild circus ride. Giant waves smashed over the deck.

“We’re sinking fast!” screamed the passengers.

“1-2-3-HEAVE!” The sailors picked up heavy boxes and tools and threw them into the sea.

But the angry winds kept blasting. The people looked up at the dark, cloudy sky. For many days they could not see the sun or even one single star at night.

“We’re going to DIE!” cried the sailors, the soldiers, the prisoners and the other passengers on board. There were 276 people in all!



They threw down four anchors to hold the ship in place until morning when they could see.

“I hope we don’t hit the rocks!” they worried.

Paul stood up before the crowd.

“Men, you should have listened when I told you not to set sail.”

“But cheer up!” said Paul. “None of us will die – we will only lose our ship. Last night, an angel of my God told me not to be afraid. God wants me to tell the good news of Jesus in Rome.<sup>1</sup> And He will keep all of you who are sailing with me safe too.”

On the 14<sup>th</sup> night of the storm, the sailors heard waves crashing on rocks.

“Land!” cried the sailors.

Just before sunrise, Paul spoke to the crew and the others on the ship. “Please eat. You haven’t had a good meal in days! And stop worrying – God will keep us safe, just as He said.”

Then Paul held up bread and gave thanks to God. Everyone felt better and sat down to eat with Paul.

At daylight, they sailed for the beach. But on the way, the boat got stuck on a sandbank and started to split apart.

“Jump ship!” shouted Julius, the Roman officer.



Soon everybody was splashing into the water. Some swam. Some floated on planks. But, in the end, each and every one of the 276 passengers reached the shore safely!

Paul flopped onto the sandy beach. Once more, God had made him strong during a hard and scary time. And once more, God had kept His word. Paul and all those sailing with him were safe, just as God promised.

<sup>1</sup>See Acts 23:11 and 28:30-31.

**Learn from Paul's biography:**

- God always keeps His word – no matter how bad things seem.
- Like Paul, you can be strong in the Lord during hard times.

# Parent Ideas

## Paul Stays Strong at Sea

Scripture: Acts 27

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God always keeps His word – no matter how bad things seem.
- Like Paul, you can be strong in the Lord during hard times.

#### 1. Read-together activity

Tell your child to use his imagination to build a ship somewhere in your house. He could make it out of pillows, blocks, couches or chairs. Sit in this ship together while you listen to the biography on the CD (Track 45). The sound effects added to this track are especially helpful in bringing the biography to life. Before you listen, ask your child to pay attention to the differences between how Paul acted and how the other people on the ship acted.

#### 2. Discussion activity

Draw a large “T” on a sheet of paper. In the space to the left of the T, write the heading “People on the Ship.” In the space to the right of the T, write the heading “Paul.” Ask your child to write words or phrases that describe the ship passengers (captain, sailors, soldiers, etc.) in the left column. She may list items like *didn’t listen to Paul, worried, wouldn’t eat, didn’t trust God*. Ask your child to write words or phrases in the right column that describe Paul (e.g., *calm, leader, listened to God, encouraged others*, etc.).

Ask your child the following questions:

- If you were on the ship, who would you have been most like – Paul or the other passengers? Why?
- What made Paul so strong? Why wasn’t he afraid? (*God helped Paul to be strong. Paul didn’t fear because he believed God would keep His Word.*)
- Why do you think Paul believed God’s Word?
- Why should you believe God’s Word?

#### 3. Application activity

Ask your child to tell you about the worst weather he has ever experienced. Where was he? What kind of weather was it? How did he feel?

Explain that sometimes we face other kinds of “storms.” These are not weather storms, but times when we feel afraid or sad or too tired or weak to keep going. Ask your child when he has felt like this. Give him a few examples if necessary (e.g., when we moved to a new place, when grandma died, when Dad lost his job, etc.).

# Parent Ideas

## Paul Stays Strong at Sea

Scripture: Acts 27

Then each of you will make “storm survival kits” out of shoe boxes or laundry detergent boxes. Cover the boxes with wrapping paper or colored paper and stickers. Inside the boxes put note cards of Scripture verses to remember in hard times (e.g., Sparks handbook verses, like Psalm 23; 1 Peter 5:7; Deuteronomy 31:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9, etc.). Include other items that will comfort you, such as a favorite non-perishable snack, photograph, praise CD, journal, card from a loved one, etc. When you or your child face a hard time, bring out the boxes and remember God’s Word.

#### 4. Application activity

Simulate a storm with two empty 2-liter soda bottles. First, remove caps and all labeling from the bottles. Fill one of the bottles about 2/3 full of water. Attach the openings of the bottles together with a tornado tube connector (available from toy stores or science stores). You could also tape the openings securely together with a flat washer between them. Use electrical tape and a washer with a 3/8” (9.5 mm) hole in the center.

Stand the two bottles on a table with the filled bottle on top. Twirl the bottles a few times. As the top bottle drains, you will see a “hurricane” forming in the bottles. For effect, add a few drops of food coloring, small shells and plastic confetti fish to the water in advance.

Use this visual to start a discussion about storms, as explained in the first application activity. In the storms of life, encourage your child to find comfort in God’s promises in Scripture.







## A Letter From

**John**

Dear churches:

Just wait until you hear what I saw!

I, John, your friend in the Lord, was living on the lonely island called Patmos. (You all know I was sent to prison there for preaching about Jesus.)

One Sunday, while I was praying to God, I heard a loud voice behind me. It blasted in my ear like a trumpet.

“Write down what you see and send it to the churches,” sounded the voice.

I turned around to see who was speaking. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet, like a dead man.

Whom did I see? Let me describe Him.

He had blizzard-white hair and eyes like flames. His face gleamed like a sky full of sunshine.



Jesus! I saw Jesus. But never before had I seen Him like this!

Jesus touched me with His hand. “Do not be frightened!” He said. “I am in charge of everything that happens, from beginning to end. I died on the cross, but now I am alive forever.”

Later I looked, and guess what? I saw an open door in heaven!

“Come up here,” called Jesus. “I’ll show you visions of what will happen someday.”

Suddenly, I could see God’s throne in heaven. Jesus stood there, but now He looked like a wounded lamb.

“Worthy is the Lamb who died!” cried millions of angel voices.

The angels and all creatures everywhere worshiped the Lamb, shouting, “Honor and glory and power to Him forever and ever!”

Then, later, I saw a white horse. And on that horse sat Jesus! Except this time He looked like a warrior and a king. He rode to earth and struck down His enemies with a sharp sword from His mouth.

Then, Satan, His greatest enemy of all, was hurled down to hell forever.

Hallelujah! Isn’t this amazing? Wait until you hear what’s next.

I watched, and a sparkling city dropped down from heaven. With walls of jewels, gates of pearls and a street of gold – no city ever looked more magnificent than this!

A voice thundered from the throne, “Now God lives with all those who have trusted Christ as

Savior. Sin and its terrible troubles  
will never enter here.

“In God’s holy city, no one will be  
hungry or thirsty or sick.

“There’s no fighting. No crying.  
No killing. No dying.

And not one person will feel sad  
ever again – because God will  
wipe all tears away.”

*But where is the sun? Where is the  
moon?* someone might wonder.

They aren’t needed anymore!  
God shines His light on each and  
every face. And God’s children  
from all countries will worship  
Him there forever.

Oh Lord Jesus! When will all  
these things happen? I wondered.

Jesus said, “I am coming back  
soon. I promise.”

Amen. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Dear churches, be happy. Be very  
excited about these things. And  
never, ever forget Jesus’ words.

With love,

The Apostle John

**Learn from John’s biography:**

- Jesus will come again soon.
- Jesus is our Savior and King. We will worship Him forever.
- Look forward to your perfect home with Jesus.

# Parent Ideas

## A Letter From John

Scripture: Revelation 1; 4-5; 19-22

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus will come again soon.
- Jesus is our Savior and King. We will worship Him forever.
- Look forward to your perfect home with Jesus.

#### 1. Read-together activity

Give your child a few sheets of paper and crayons or markers. As you read the biography aloud, tell her to close her eyes and imagine the scenes you read. Stop periodically and ask her to draw on paper the pictures she sees in her mind. When you read about God's perfect city, ask your child to open her handbook to Red Jewel 4:4 and draw her picture there.

#### 2. Discussion activity

Ask your child questions like these:

- Why was John so surprised when he saw Jesus?
- When Jesus touched John, what did He say?
- Why are you glad that Jesus is in charge of everything that happens?
- Why did John see Jesus as a wounded lamb? Does this remind you of any other biographies? (*Help your child to remember Biography 7, when Philip tells the Ethiopian about Jesus, the Lamb of God, who died on the cross for our sins.*)
- Why are you glad that Jesus will return soon?
- What are you looking forward to most about heaven?

The visions John saw may cause your child to wonder if Jesus changes His appearance. Explain that we don't really know what Jesus

will look like in heaven. God's Spirit gave John a vision in his mind. Jesus' attitude and behavior may have caused John to think of different things at different times.

You may want to give your child an example. Say something like this, "Pretend your friend just won a big soccer game. After the game, you talk to your friend and say, 'You look like a champion!'" Your friend has not changed his looks, but his victory on the field makes you think he looks like a champion.

#### 3. Application activity

Have a contest with your son or daughter to see who can make the most creative comparisons about heaven. Standing next to each other, each of you will complete this sentence, "In heaven, I will be happier than \_\_\_\_\_." One of you might complete the sentence by saying, "In heaven, I will be happier than when I had my 8<sup>th</sup> birthday party" or "In heaven, I will be happier than when I drove my first car." Each time someone completes the sentence, he takes a leap forward. Whoever can't complete the sentence within a set time must move back to the starting point. The person who reaches an end point first wins. Discuss the joys you will experience in heaven – no pain, no hunger, no sickness, no sin, etc.

Add variety by changing sentences. For example, "Forever is longer than \_\_\_\_\_." (e.g., "Forever is longer than it would take me to wash a world full of dishes.") Or "Heaven

# Parent Ideas

## A Letter from John

Scripture: Revelation 1; 4-5; 19-22

will be better than \_\_\_\_\_.” (e.g., “Heaven will be better than a giant ice cream cone!”)

### 4. Review activity

Celebrate all the wonderful truths you have learned together by playing a biography concentration game. To prepare, cut out all of the SkyStormer I.D. cards on the following pages. Turn the cards face-down, mix them up, and play a matching game.

Here's how to play: Ask your child to turn over one card and then try to pick the matching card. As cards are chosen in the game, she should try to memorize where they are to increase her chances of making a match. Each time your child picks two non-matching cards, ask her to describe how the events and (or) characters in the two biographies were similar or different. Each time a child picks a matching pair, discuss that biography and ask questions related to the key learning points for that biography.

### 5. Review activity

Cut out the rest of the biography cards on remaining pages (these are the biography cards for all biographies in all Sparks handbooks). Pull out the timeline you used in Biography 7 activities and make two more timelines on sheets of similar size. On one sheet, write these events (from *HangGlider*® handbook)

- God creates the world.
- Sin enters the world. (God promises to send a Savior – Genesis 3:15.)

- God tells Noah to build an ark.
- God saves the Israelites from slavery.
- The Israelites walk in the desert for 40 years.
- The Israelites live in Canaan, God's Promised Land.

On the other sheet, write these events (from *WingRunner*® handbook)

- God sends judges to save Israel.
- God allows kings to rule Israel.
- God makes the Israelites leave the Promised Land (exile).
- God brings the Israelites back home (return from exile).
- God sends the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Ask your child to place each of the 36 biography cards in the right place on the timeline. (For reference, see the timeline included with each biography in the handbooks.)

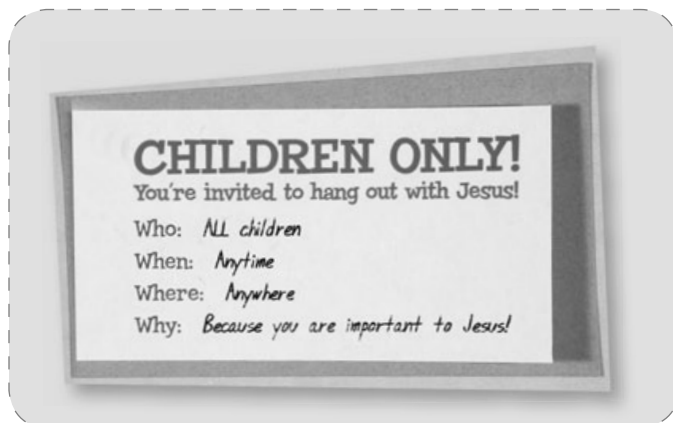
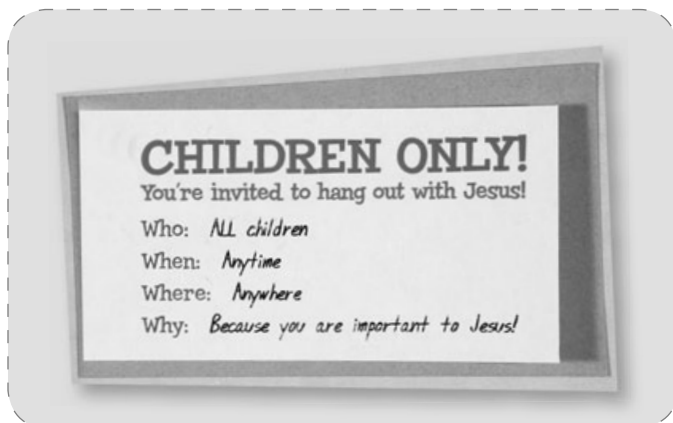
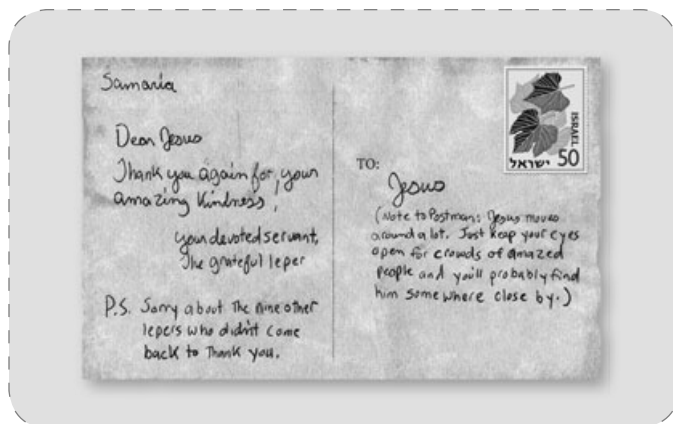
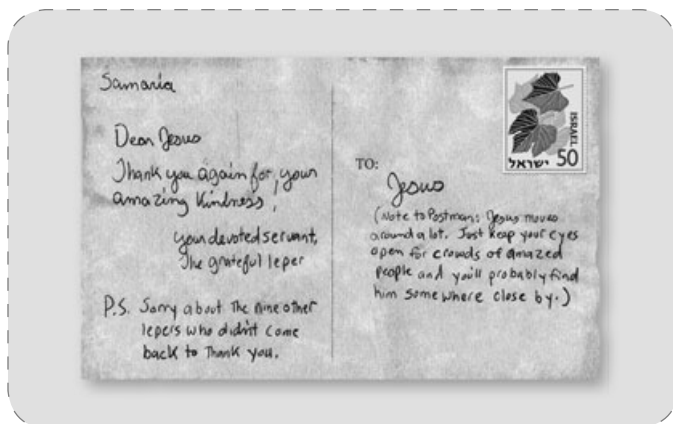
Use the timeline to help your child understand the big picture of the Bible: God's plan to save the world through Christ!

### 6. Review Activity

See how many games you can play with the biography cards. For example, use them to play the card game “Go Fish.” (You may want to print extra cards so you have four of each set.) Laminate the cards for lots of play. Try to make your games educational as well as fun.



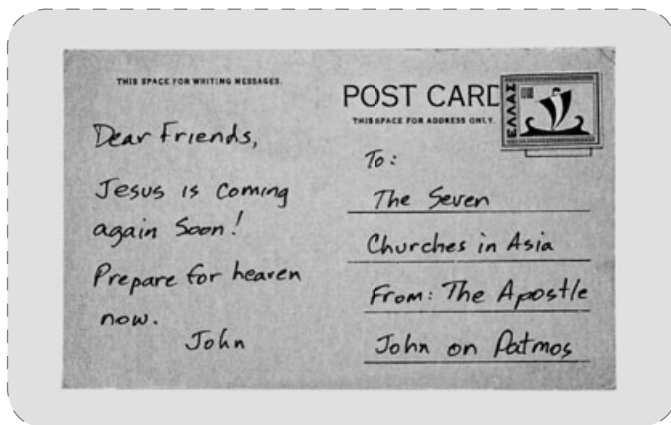
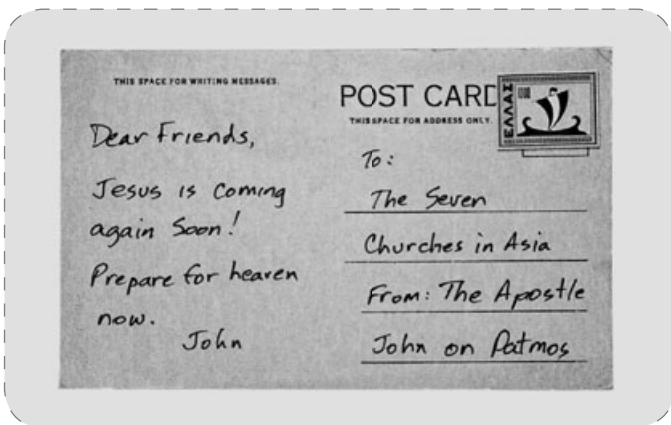
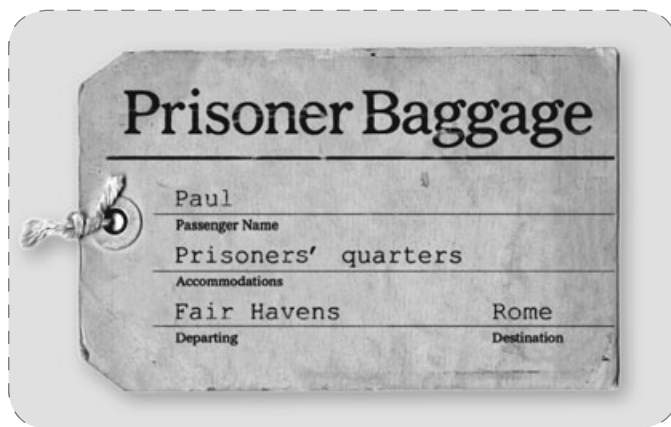
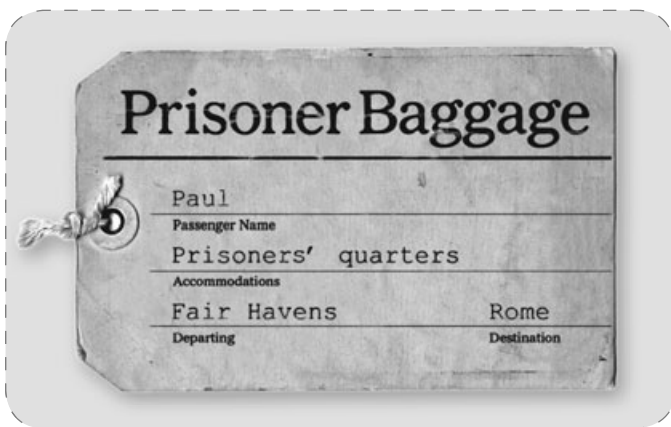
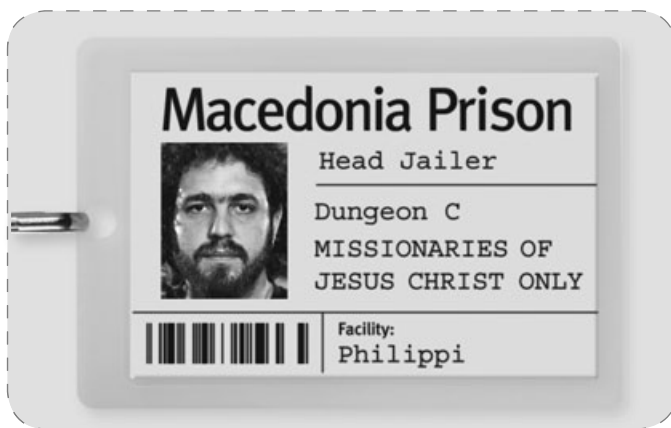
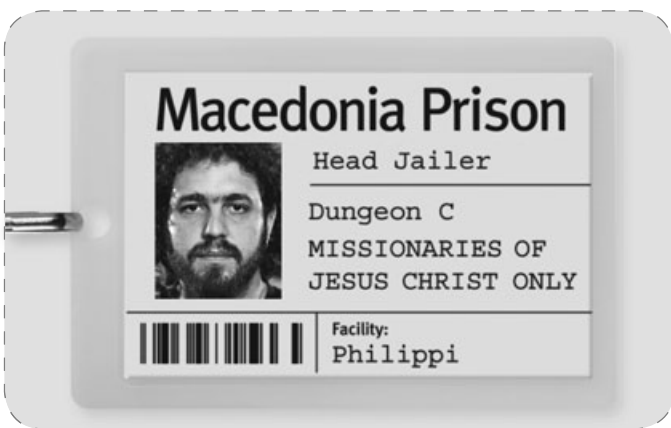
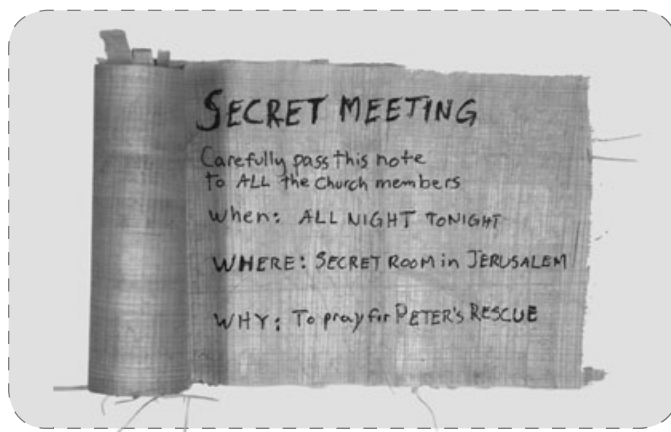
# SkyStormer Biography Cards





## SkyStormer Biography Cards (continued)



## SkyStormer Biography Cards (continued)




## WingRunner Biography Cards


ARMY MOM 	
	NAME: Deborah
	LOCATION: Mount Tabor
	SPECIALTY: Army Support; Problem solving

Nation of Israel	
	Name: Solomon
	Address: Jerusalem
	Occupation: Wise King
	 Tribe of Judah

 <b>Extreme Fitness</b>	
	Member Name: Samson
	Address: Timnah
	Alternate Address: Gaza Prison
	Occupation: Protector of Israel

CERTIFIED	 LEVEL 3 Desert Survivor	
	Name:	ELIJAH
	Location:	MOUNT HOREB
	Job:	PROPHET (AND RUNNER!)

 Name: Samuel	
	Address: God's house at Shiloh
	Job: Listening to God's Word
Official bearer of <b>Bad News</b>	


Idol Smashers Inc.	
	Name: Josiah
	Location: Jerusalem
	Job: King of Judah

 Member Name: David	
	Hometown: Bethlehem
	Current Profession: Shepherd
	<b>Future Kings' Club</b>

DEN SURVIVOR		
		Name: Daniel
		Location: Babylon
		Specialties: Praying and trusting God

## WingRunner Biography Cards (continued)

	NAME:	Nehemiah
	AREA:	Persia and Jerusalem
	OCCUPATION:	King's Servant
<b>WALL·BUILDERS·UNION</b>		

<b>PRIEST</b>		NAME:	ZACHARIAS
		LOCATION OF SERVICE:	THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM
		Temple Clearance Level:	<b>1</b>
		OFFICIAL MEMBER:	<b>TRIBE OF LEVI</b>


<b>Society of Special Servants</b>	Name:	Mary
	City:	Nazareth
	Job:	Handmaiden (girl servant) of the Lord
		


	<b>Searching Shepherds Association</b>	
	Local Chapter:	Tasks:
	Bethlehem, City of David	Shepherding and sharing the GOOD NEWS

## HangGlider Biography Cards

<b>HELLO</b>
My name is:
<b>GOD</b>
I CREATED THE WORLD.


<b>ALMOST ALL-ACCESS PASS GARDEN OF EDEN</b>		NAME:	Adam and Eve
		ADDRESS:	Garden of Eden
		JOB:	Taking care of the garden and naming the animals
		Pass #	00001

Passenger Name: Noah General Quarters Cabin:  Boarding time: When it starts raining	<b>Crazy Zoo Cruise Lines</b>	
	Passenger Name: Noah	
	Address: We don't know for sure! It was probably somewhere in the land of Mesopotamia. (Today, much of this land is in the country of Iraq.) Job: Building an ark	

	NAME:	Noah and his family
	ADDRESS:	The mountains of Ararat
	JOB:	Waiting for the waters to dry up



## HangGlider Biography Cards (continued)



**NAME:** The people of Babel

**ADDRESS:** Babel

**JOB:** Building a tall, tall tower

**LAND OF EGYPT**



**NAME:** Amram and Jochebed


**ADDRESS:** Egypt

**JOB:** Hiding their baby boy from Pharaoh

**SLAVE ID NUMBERS**  
823994712 / 794481389



**Desert Conservation Corp.** Midian




**NAME:** Moses

**ADDRESS:** Desert of Midian

**JOB:** Bringing God's people out of Egypt

**Special Allowances:**  
Burn Permit 00467921

**Grazing Permit**  
0001687726



**FastPASS** Toll Authority Red Sea **BC**

**Pass allowance:** Millions

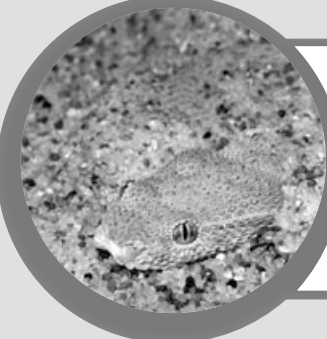
**Permit type:** Foot Traffic

**NAME:** Moses and the Israelites

**ADDRESS:** Camped near the Red Sea

**JOB:** Crossing the Red Sea


**Permit number:** 00000001

**NAME:** The Israelites

**ADDRESS:** The desert


**JOB:** Complaining to God and Moses



**NAME:** Joshua and Caleb

**ADDRESS:** The Promised Land (Land of Canaan)

**JOB:** Spying out and entering the land



**NAME:** Joshua and the Israelites

**ADDRESS:** Shechem (a town in the Promised Land)

**JOB:** Choosing to serve the Lord