

Parent Ideas

for WingRunner Biographies

INTRODUCTION

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

When you sit down with your child to read, open your Bible to the listed Scripture passages. Although you won't be reading directly from God's Word (since the Bible biographies are paraphrases, geared towards children), this shows that what you are about to read is based on God's Word.

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.

Pray before you read to highlight the special and spiritual nature of your task.

Although the biographies are read aloud on the CD, **we encourage you to 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.

Before you read together, 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 at-home activities for that biography. You will find **Read-together activities**, which provide creative, interactive ideas to enhance your reading time. You will find **Discussion activities**, which offer questions and activities to help your child grasp the key learning points of the biography. You will also find **Application activities**, which offer ways to help your child apply Bible truths to everyday life. Finally, you will find two **Review activities**, which help your child to remember and celebrate what she has learned.

You may also want to allow your first- or second-grade Sparkie to practice his budding reading skills. Encourage him to read parts or all of the biography to you, or to repeat sentences after you read them. You can also ask him to point to each word with his finger while he listens to you read. (But 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 or while driving together, and your child can listen to any of the Bible biographies from the *WingRunner*® handbook. What a great way to instill God's truths into your child's life all throughout the day!



Deborah

A Mother in Israel

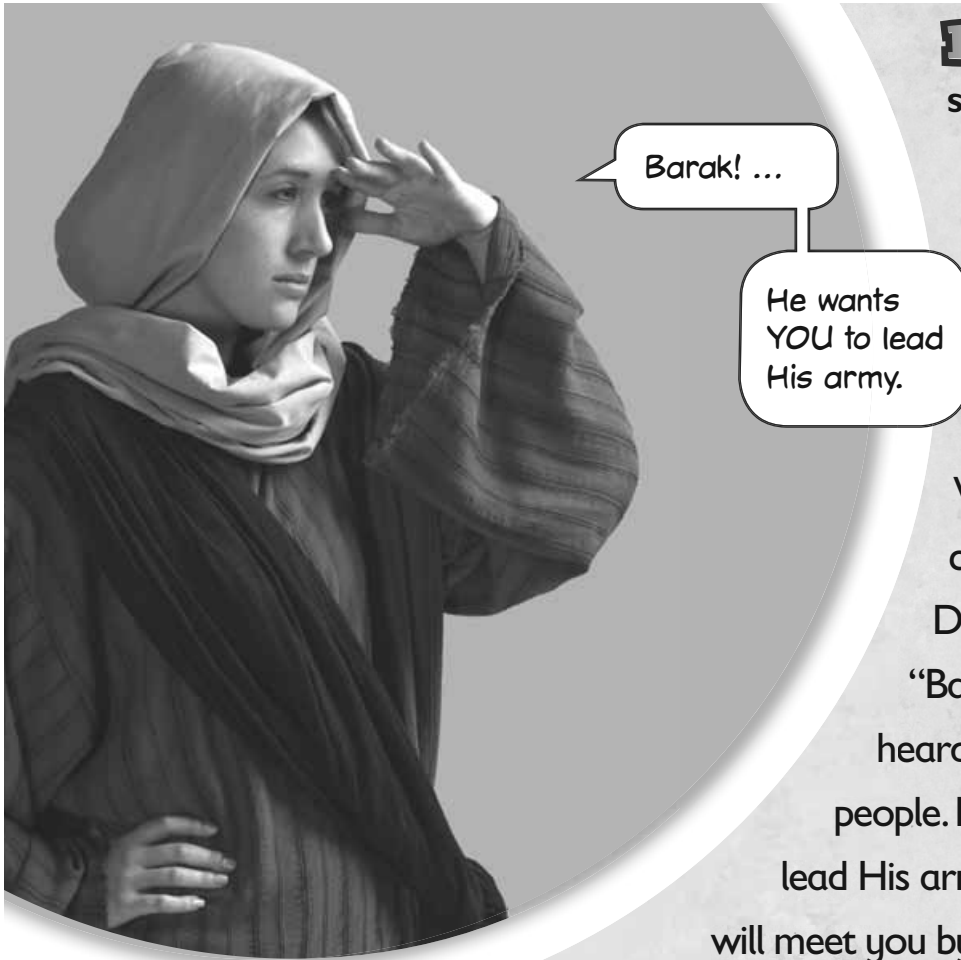


Track 17

Deborah sat under the shady palm tree. A long line of Israelites waited to talk to her. Every day, they told her their problems. And Deborah would *always* help solve them. She reminded them of what's right, just like moms do.

But today, Deborah must talk to *one* man about *one* big problem. "Get Barak!" she called to her helpers. She had a message for him from God.





Barak! ...

He wants
YOU to lead
His army.

When she saw Barak coming to meet her, Deborah shouted, “Barak! The Lord has heard the prayers of His people. He wants YOU to lead His army. Our enemy, Sisera, will meet you by the river Kishon with his soldiers and 900 iron chariots. And the Lord will help you win the battle.”

Barak took a step. Then he stopped. He stared at Deborah.

“Don’t you believe me?” asked Deborah. “Don’t you think it’s time we started doing what God asks?”

Oh, those stubborn children of Israel! Deborah thought. None of them remembered to obey God. They sinned so much that God had let Sisera’s cruel army rule over them for 20 long years.

Barak finally moved. He ran to Deborah. “I will only go if you go too,” he cried. He clung to her sleeve.

Deborah sighed. "I will go with you. But because you are so slow to obey God, God will make a woman famous for defeating Sisera, not you."

Then Deborah and Barak and the Israelite army climbed to the top of Mount Tabor. They saw Sisera's army camped below by the river Kishon. They waited to attack.

All of a sudden, lightning flashed. Thunder cracked. Clouds burst with rain. The river's high waves began to sweep Sisera's 900 chariots away.¹

Deborah looked at Barak. "Now!" she cried. "See how the Lord goes before you? He will fight for you!"



Barak rushed down the mountain with the army behind him. They chased Sisera's men with swords and caught every one. Every one except Sisera, that is! Sisera ran to a tent and was caught by a woman named Jael. Just like God said, a woman became famous for defeating Sisera, not Barak.

Deborah's heart filled with joy. Finally, the Israelites had listened to God. She sang, "Praise the Lord when the people do what the Lord asks. Let all Your enemies fall, O Lord. But let those who love You rise up strong like the sun."

¹ Judges 5:4 and 5:20-21 imply that God accompanied this battle with a storm and a flood.



**Learn from
Deborah's biography:**

- God goes with His children and helps them to be strong.
- Love the Lord and be ready to do what He asks.

Parent Ideas

Deborah, a Mother in Israel

Scripture: Judges 4 and 5

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God goes with His children and helps them to be strong.
- Love the Lord and be ready to do what He asks.

1. Read-together activity –

Act out the biography as you read it. You can play the roles of the narrator and Deborah, while your child plays the role of Barak. If your child does not read yet, read Barak's lines and have your child repeat them after you. Have fun "climbing" up Mount Tabor together. If another family member is around, ask him to think of creative ways to make sounds of a storm in the background.

2. Discussion activity – Ask your child to retell the biography to you in her own words. Then write the name *Barak* on a sheet of paper, and together say and write (or ask your child to write) words or phrases that describe Barak around his name (man, Israelite, afraid, slow to obey, climbed up the mountain, etc.). Do the same activity with the name *Deborah*. Then ask your child to identify

ways Barak and Deborah are similar and different. Focus on the fact that Barak was slow to trust and obey God, while Deborah was strong and quick to obey God. Recite Deuteronomy 6:5 together (from Red Jewel 1:2 of your child's handbook) and explain that we show our love to God best when we are ready to do what He asks in His Word, even if what He asks seems hard or if we feel afraid.

3. Application activity – Help your child draw and color a sword on a piece of paper. Beneath the sword, write a Bible verse that your child finds hard to obey. (These verses from the *WingRunner* handbook are good choices: Mark 16:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18;

Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:14.) Explain that Barak had an actual sword, but our "sword" today is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). God's Word makes us strong to obey. Put the sword picture in a visible place and pray for and encourage your child to obey the verse during the week. (Lead by example: Consider drawing a sword and writing a verse for yourself too!)

4. Application activity – Put Psalm 96:2 (from the handbook) into practice. Put a verse (or verses) from Deborah's song to music and sing it together. Judges 5:2-3 or 5:31 are good verses to sing. You can make up your own tune or use a tune from a familiar song.

Samson

The Strong Judge



ROOOAAAAARRR!

The lion charged
at Samson.

Samson thought fast. He
had no sword. He had no
stick. What should he do?
That lion wanted to eat
him for lunch!

1-2-3. *Swoosh!* Samson jumped on the lion. The Lord made Samson so strong that he killed the lion with his own bare hands.

Samson knew he was special. Before he was born, an angel told his parents that Samson would begin to save Israel from the Philistines. The angel also said he must promise to do what God wants. If he did, God would make him strong.

Samson left the lion and went with his parents down to the village of Timnah. They were on their way to get Samson a Philistine wife. But his parents weren't happy about it.

"Why don't you marry an Israelite girl?" his parents said. "God's holy people should not marry the sinful Philistines. Plus, they're our enemies."

"This is the girl I want to marry," said Samson. "I'll do what I want."

So Samson married the Philistine girl. But trouble started at the wedding. First, the Philistines tricked Samson. Then Samson got angry. Then later the Philistines killed Samson's wife.



"This means war!" yelled Samson. God made Samson stronger than ALL the Philistines put together. Samson began to save Israel, just as the angel had said.

After a while, Samson met another Philistine woman named Delilah. "I love you, Delilah," said Samson. He knew God said to stay away from sinful women. But Samson did what he wanted.

Delilah begged Samson to tell her why he was so strong. She begged and begged and begged. "If you really love me, you'll tell me," she said.

Finally, Samson told her the truth, "From my birth, I promised to do what God wants. As part of that promise, I must never cut my hair. If I do, I won't be strong anymore."

Samson went to sleep. Then he awoke with a start! The Philistines were all around him. Samson stood up to fight, but something felt different. He touched his head. His long braids were all cut off!

That wicked Delilah had tricked Samson. She didn't really love him.

The Philistines grabbed Samson and made his eyes blind. Then they brought him to prison and locked him in chains.

"Now I am weak," cried Samson. "I have broken my promise to God. I have sinned and done just what I wanted."



Little by little, Samson's hair began to grow again.

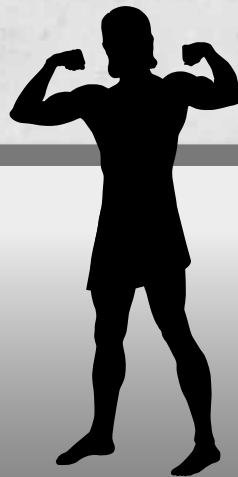
One day, the Philistines brought Samson to a big party for their fake god, Dagon. Samson prayed for another chance: "O Lord God, please remember me. Make me strong one last time."

Samson pushed the pillars of the house with all his might. The house tumbled down on Samson and all the people in it.

Strong Samson was strong in the Lord once again! Even though Samson died, he killed more Philistines on *that* day than he had ever killed in his whole life.

**Learn from
Samson's biography:**

- God is the one who makes His people strong.
- Obey, God! Do what He wants you to do.



Parent Ideas

Samson, the Strong Judge

Scripture: Judges 13-16

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God is the one who makes His people strong.
- Obey, God! Do what He wants you to do.

1. Read-together activity –

Before you read the biography make two signs. One sign should have a picture of Samson on it, along with the phrase “What Samson wanted.” Another sign should have a picture of a Bible on it, along with the phrase “What God wanted.” As you read the biography to your child, ask him to stand and hold up the Samson sign whenever Samson did what he wanted instead of what God wanted. Your child should hold up the God sign whenever Samson did what God wanted. For example, Samson did what he wanted when he disobeyed his parents and married a Philistine girl. Samson did what God wanted when he prayed for strength at the end of the biography.

2. Discussion activity – Ask your child to retell the biography in her own words. Guide her by asking her to tell you what happened at the beginning, middle and end. Then discuss the character of Samson. Ask the following questions:

- Would you like to be like Samson? Why or why not?
- What did Samson do wrong? What did he do right?
- How can you tell God still loved and forgave Samson, even after he did wrong?

Parents, children are often attracted to Samson’s strength, and they tend to blame his downfall on Delilah’s trickery. But through your discussion, help your child to see that Samson’s troubles came about because he was focused on doing what he wanted instead of on what God wanted. He shouldn’t have been hanging around a sinful woman like Delilah in the first place – especially since he was a Nazarite, called to be holy and separated to the service of God (Numbers 6:2, 8).

3. Application activity

– Ask your child to draw two pictures. In one picture, he should draw a time when he did what he wanted, instead of what God wanted him to do (e.g., fighting with his sister, complaining to mom, etc.). In the other picture, he should draw a situation when he did what God wanted him to do. Consider drawing pictures about your own life, to share with your child as an example.

Then discuss the pictures. Remind your child of God’s forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. Invite him to trust Jesus Christ as Savior if he has not yet done so. (Talk to your child’s Sparks leader if you have questions about trusting Christ as Savior.)



Samuel

The Listening Prophet

Track 23



Inside the temple, you couldn't hear a sound – not even a squeak or a shuffle or a whisper.

The boy Samuel lay fast asleep on his mat. Only the lights from the lamp of God flashed and flickered in the night.

Suddenly, a voice called out, "Samuel!"

Samuel awoke, startled. *That must be Eli*, he thought. Samuel helped the old priest, Eli, each day in the temple. Now Eli could barely see, and Samuel had to help him even more than ever.



Samuel ran to Eli's room. "Here I am," he said.

Eli didn't answer. Samuel moved close to Eli and shook his arm gently. Eli grunted in his sleep. Then he opened his eyes.

"Here I am," Samuel repeated. "You called me."

"I did not call you," Eli answered.

"Go lie down." The old man rolled onto his side and closed his eyes again.

Samuel returned to his mat. *Maybe it was just a dream*, he thought. Soon he fell asleep.

"Samuel!" a voice called.

Samuel sat up. This wasn't a dream. He raced back to Eli. "Here I am. You called me," he said.

"I did not call, my boy," mumbled Eli, half asleep. "Now go lie down, and let me get some rest."

Samuel lay awake on his mat. WHO was calling him? Then he heard his name for the third time. It *had* to be Eli. He was sure of it.

Samuel got up and went to Eli.
“Here I am. You called me,” he said.

This time Eli sat up. “The Lord must be calling you,” he said. “If you hear Him say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant listens.’”

The Lord? Samuel thought. In those days, hardly anyone heard from the Lord. Even if God did say something, the sinful Israelites probably wouldn’t listen.

Samuel’s heart beat fast. What would God tell him? He hurried back to his mat and waited for the voice.

“Samuel! Samuel!” God called.

“Speak, for your servant listens,” answered Samuel.

The Lord told Samuel that He was about to punish Eli and his family. Eli’s two sons were wicked priests in God’s house, and Eli never stopped them from doing wrong.



Samuel lay awake until morning. What hard news! What would he say to Eli? He watched the lights flutter on the wall.

At sunrise, Samuel opened the doors of the temple as he always did. But today, Eli was waiting. “What did God tell you?” asked Eli. “Don’t hide it.”

Samuel knew he must tell the truth. He told Eli everything God said. Then the white-haired priest bowed his head and said, “Let the Lord do what seems good to Him.”

From this day on, God kept talking to Samuel. Samuel listened to God’s Word and told others what He said. All of Israel knew him as a prophet of the Lord. Every one of the words God spoke to Samuel came true.



**Learn from
Samuel’s biography:**

- God’s Word always comes true.
- Today God speaks to you in His Word, the Bible. Listen and obey what He says.

Parent Ideas

Samuel, the Listening Prophet

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God's Word always comes true.
- Today God speaks to you in His Word, the Bible. Listen and obey what He says.

1. Read-together activity – To enter into the setting, read the biography together by candlelight. This is also an easy biography to dramatize. While you read, ask your child to play the role of Samuel and another family member to play the role of Eli. They can pantomime the story action (act without speaking, using only gestures and expression).

2. Discussion activity – Ask your child simple questions like these to make sure she understands what happened in the biography:

- Why did Samuel run to Eli's room?
- How many times did God call?
- What did Samuel say and do when God called the fourth time?

Then ask questions to help your child engage more personally with the biography:

- What would you do if you heard a voice call you in the night?

- Who would you think was calling?
- What would you do if you found out God was calling you? Would you be like Samuel? Why or why not?

Parents, explain that God DOES talk to us today, in the Bible. Stress the importance of being ready to listen carefully and obey what God says in Scripture.

3. Application activity – Explain that Samuel was a prophet, which means he listened to God's Word and told God's Word to others. Discuss with your child the importance of knowing the Bible, God's Word, and sharing it with others. For example, it's important because God's Word always comes true, and we need to know the truth. It's important because it helps us know God and how He wants us to live.

Then play a simple whispering game to reinforce the lesson of listening to and then telling others about God's Word. Gather your family and maybe a few friends

around the table. Find a relatively short verse in the Bible (or in your child's Sparks handbook). Ask the first person to whisper this verse into the ear of the person on his left. The second person should listen carefully and then whisper the verse to the person on his left. Continue whispering around the table until it reaches the last person. The last person should stand up and recite the verse as he heard it. The first and last person should compare whether the verse recited is the correct version of the verse. You'd be surprised how much it can change during transmission!

4. Application activity – Make a commitment to read the Bible with your child each day this week. Then think of someone you know who needs to hear God's Word. Call or visit that person, and ask your child to recite to the person a few verses she has learned from Sparks or from your daily Bible reading.



David



The Shepherd King

The shepherd boy David let out a whistle that only his sheep knew. Quickly they came and began to follow him.

They followed him to a shady, grassy place. It was near a spring of cool, still water. For sheep, it was just the right place. They could take long drinks. They could eat and lie down in the soft, green grass.

“David!” called a voice behind him. David turned to look. It was one of his father’s servants.

“You must come to the house right away!” he said.
“The prophet Samuel wants to see you.”



Samuel? David trembled.¹ Samuel spoke the words of God. He could ask the Lord to make thunder and rain come down from heaven.² Why did he want to see David?

David asked another shepherd to take care of his sheep. He hoped they would be safe! Then he went with the servant.



When he entered the house, he saw his father and his seven brothers all standing together. He saw Samuel holding a horn full of oil.

What could this mean?
he wondered.

The prophet Samuel turned to David. He looked at David's handsome face and beautiful eyes. "This is the one," said Samuel.

"Are you sure he's the one?" asked David's father, Jesse. "David is the youngest of all the brothers. He's just a shepherd."

"Yes, the Lord told me to anoint him. He's the one," answered Samuel. David was the one God wanted to be the next king of Israel.

David knelt before Samuel. Samuel tipped the horn and poured the oil over David's head. David could hardly believe that a shepherd boy like him would become the shepherd of God's people, the Israelites!



Member Name: David

Hometown: Bethlehem

Current Profession: Shepherd

Future Kings' Club

When David became king, many years later, he never forgot being a shepherd. But now he wrote songs about the one who was *his* shepherd. This shepherd had taken care of David his whole life. He helped David make right choices. He protected him from all his enemies. And whenever David felt scared or sad, his shepherd gave him comfort.

“The Lord is my shepherd,” David sang. He knew that the LORD, the God of Israel, was the greatest shepherd of all.

¹ See 1 Samuel 16:4. Based on the Israelites' response to Samuel, we can assume David would have been somewhat apprehensive.

² See 1 Samuel 12:18.



**Learn from
David's biography:**

- The Lord was King David's shepherd.
- When you trust Jesus Christ as Savior, He will be your shepherd too.

Parent Ideas

David, the Shepherd King

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- The Lord was King David's shepherd.
- When you trust Jesus Christ as Savior, He will be your shepherd too.

1. Read-together activity –

Before you read the biography together, make simple puppets for David, two sheep, the servant, the prophet Samuel, Jesse, the animal horn and King David's harp. You can make these puppets by cutting out pictures from your old Bible story coloring books (or simply search for "Bible coloring pages" online and download free pages). You can draw your own characters as well. Tape or glue each character to a craft stick, drinking straw or bath tissue roll.

Divide up the puppets between you and your child, and then act out the biography with the puppets as you read. Maybe you can even put on a puppet show for someone else in your family!

2. Discussion activity – Help your child to first understand the metaphor of sheep and shepherd, so she will be able to understand how the Lord acts as her shepherd (Psalm 23). Ask questions like these:

- What does a shepherd do to care for his sheep?

- Would you have liked to be one of David's sheep? Would you have trusted him? Why or why not?
- How did the Lord, David's shepherd, take care of him?

Parents, help your child to see the many responsibilities of a shepherd: leading his sheep to food and water, providing them with rest and refreshment, keeping them from wandering or getting lost, protecting them from sharp rocks and wild animals, carrying them when they were hurt or tired, etc. Each sheep is valuable to the shepherd; he knows each one by name (John 10:3). The sheep also know the shepherd's voice (John 10:4) and respond to his distinctive whistle or call. Talk with your child about the ways the Lord cares for His children, just like a good shepherd cares for his sheep.

3. Application activity – Help the metaphor of sheep and shepherd to come alive for your child! Borrow books or videos about shepherds and sheep

from the library. Search online or at a Christian bookstore for a children's picture book about Psalm 23. You may even want to see live sheep at a local petting zoo or talk to a local sheep-owner about raising sheep.

4. Application activity – If your child has trusted Christ as Savior, he can be sure Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, takes care of him. Write an acrostic or simple poem together about the ways the Good Shepherd takes care of him and your family each day. For your acrostic, use the word *shepherd*. For each letter, name a way Christ shows His care (e.g., "**S** is for the way Jesus **Soothes** my fears. **H** is for the way Jesus **Helps** me to make right choices."). Be sure to focus on His spiritual as well as physical care for us in your acrostic or poem. Encourage your child to depend on Christ more and more, just like a little lamb has to depend on its shepherd.



Solomon

The Wise King

The young King Solomon stood up before all the important grown-ups in Israel. He started to talk, but they stopped him with their questions:

"When will you start building God's temple?"

"How will you keep peace in the land of Israel?"

"Will you be a good king, just like your father, David, was?"



Solomon looked at all the faces before him. There were more faces than he could ever count! Suddenly, he felt very small. He didn't know the answers to any of their questions. He didn't know how to be a king.

Oh, if only his father, King David, were still alive to tell him what to do!

Then Solomon had an idea. He said to the people, "Let's go to Gibeon and worship the Lord at His special tent, the tabernacle."

At the tabernacle, Solomon and all the people prayed to the Lord. Solomon gave a thousand of his best animals to the Lord as an offering.



That night, while Solomon slept, God came to him in a dream. God said He would give Solomon whatever he asked for.

Right away, Solomon knew what he wanted. He said, “Lord, you have loved my father, David. You have chosen me to take his job as king. But I don’t know how to rule over Your great people. Give me wisdom and understanding so I will rule well.”

The Lord was pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom. Most kings would ask for riches and fame instead. So God gave Solomon wisdom – but that’s not all. God also gave him the things he didn’t ask for too! No king anywhere would be as wise and rich and famous as Solomon.



The next morning, Solomon went back to his throne in Jerusalem. Now, whenever he talked to the grown-ups, he gave them wise answers, called proverbs.

He said things like:

"A kind and calm answer keeps anger away. But a cruel word makes everyone mad."¹

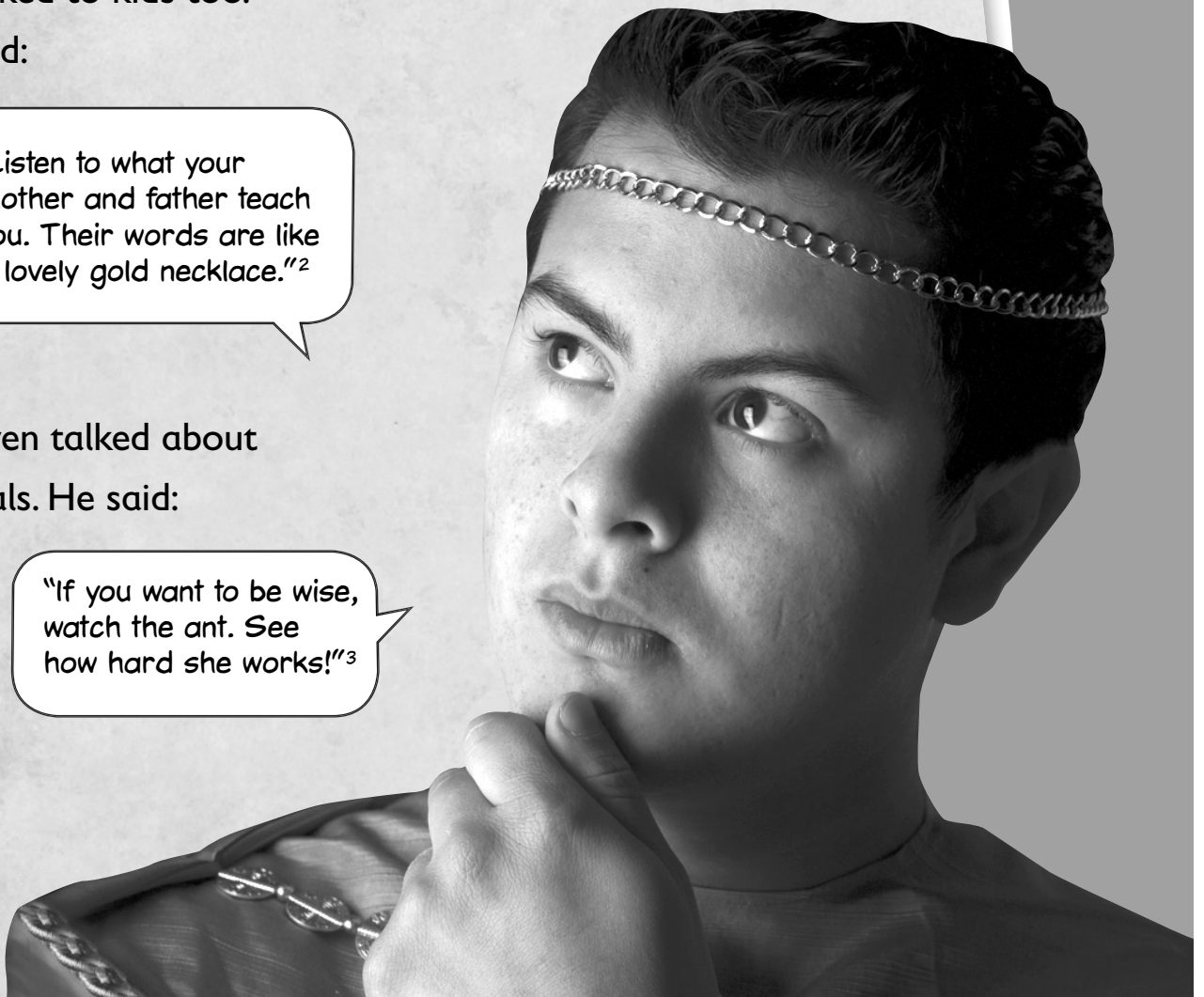
He talked to kids too.

He said:

"Listen to what your mother and father teach you. Their words are like a lovely gold necklace."²

He even talked about animals. He said:

"If you want to be wise, watch the ant. See how hard she works!"³



The people felt happy and safe with such a wise king.
He helped them solve hard problems. He built a grand,
beautiful temple for the Lord.

Even kings and queens from faraway lands came to listen
to Solomon. All of them were amazed at what he knew.
They said, “Blessed be the God of Israel who has loved
His people and given them such a wise and good king!”⁴

¹ See Proverbs 15:1. ² See Proverbs 1:8-9. ³ See Proverbs 6:6-8. ⁴ See 1 Kings 4:29-34 and 1 Kings 10:6-9.



**Learn from
King Solomon's biography:**

- God was the one who made Solomon wise. True wisdom starts with knowing God.
- God wants you to ask Him for wisdom to serve Him too.

Parent Ideas

Solomon, the Wise King

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 1:1-13; 1 Kings 3:7-15

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God was the one who made Solomon wise. True wisdom starts with knowing God.
- God wants you to ask Him for wisdom to serve Him too.

1. Read-together activity –

Before you read the biography, gather these visual aids:

- A pile of money (or something your child finds personally valuable, like a favorite toy, pet, food, candy or game)
- A picture of your child's favorite movie or cartoon star
- A book with your own homemade cover taped on it, which says "Book of Wisdom: Knowing and Doing What's Right"

Show your child the visuals. Then ask him which item he would most like to have if he became king (or president) and why. Would he like to have all the money (or candy) in the world? Would he like to be more famous than his favorite character? Would he like to be able to always know and do the right thing? Accept your child's answer without evaluating it at this time. Then introduce the biography by saying something like, "In the Bible, King Solomon got a chance to ask God for whatever he wanted. Let's see what he chose!"

2. Discussion activity – Ask your child to explain what wisdom is. A simple definition of wisdom is "knowing what's right, based

on what God's Word says, and doing it!" Explain that we start to be wise by knowing God, which includes respecting and obeying Him (Proverbs 9:10). Then ask your child these questions:

- Why would it be better for a king to ask for wisdom than for money or fame?
- Why is it best for us to ask God for wisdom?

Help your child to see that wisdom pleases God and helps us to know Him better. It also helps us to make right choices, teaches us to use what we have wisely and makes us feel happy and safe.

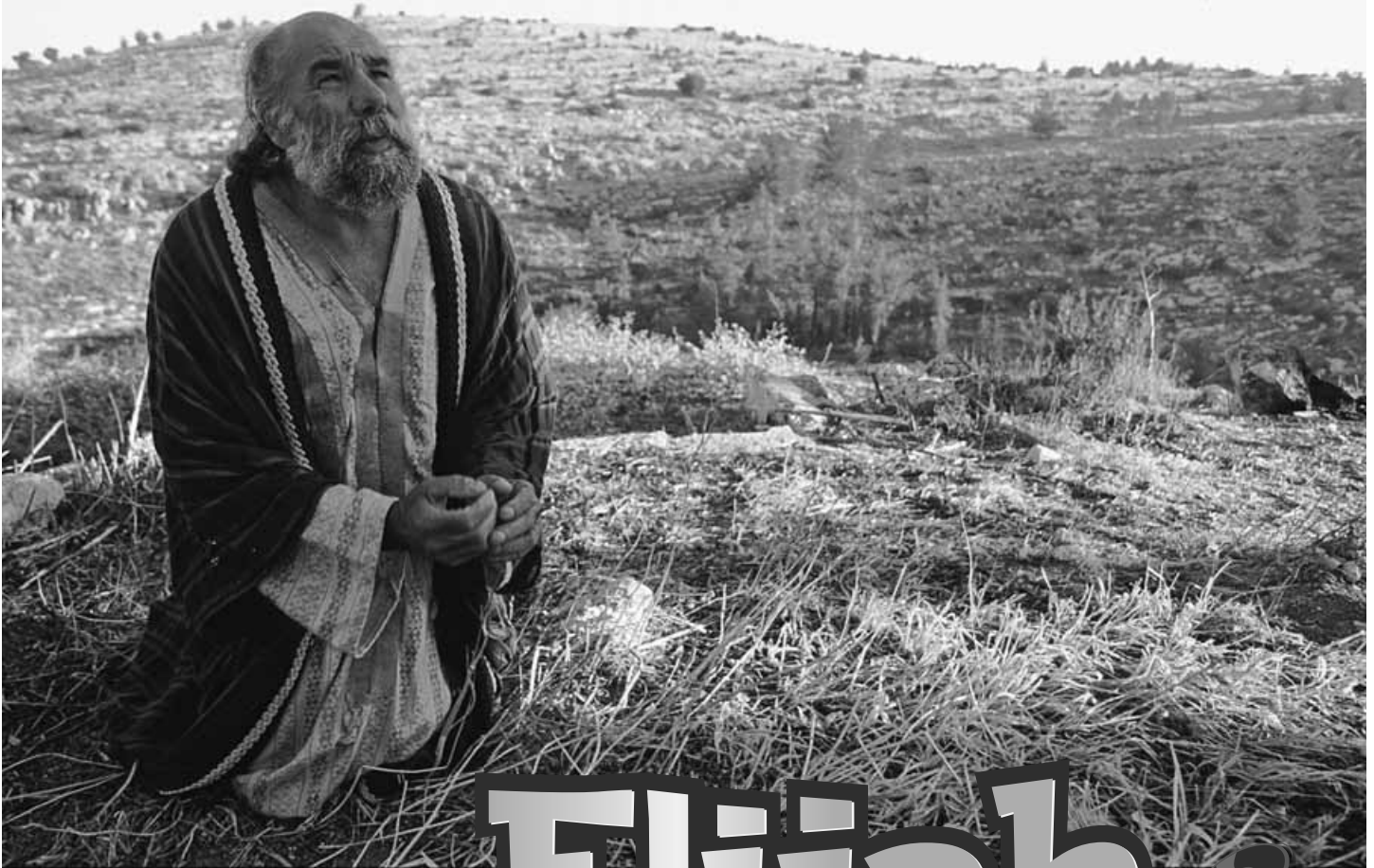
Parents, if you'd like to learn more about the Bible's concept of wisdom, read Proverbs 2:1-6, 4:5-11, 8:1-21, 9:10-12 and James 1:5, 3:13-17.

3. Application activity – To help your child relate with Solomon, put her in charge of your household for an afternoon or evening. (Of course, she won't REALLY be in charge; you'll just let her think she is!) For extra fun, make a paper crown to put on her head. When she's in charge, make sure to ask her lots of questions that she probably won't know the answer to, like "How do I start the washing

machine?" or "Can you show me how to make spaghetti?" or "Will you please make your siblings stop fighting?" If she asks for help, say, "You're in charge."

When the activity is over, talk with your child about how she felt while she was in charge. Did she ever feel worried, alone or not ready for the job? If so, that might be how King Solomon felt when he first became king. As you talk, help your child to understand her own need for wisdom. Although practical life skills (like laundry) will come as she gets older, only God knows all the answers and right things to do in every situation. Pray together, asking God for the wisdom to make daily choices that please Him.

4. Application activity – God has given us a book of wisdom – it's the Bible! Flip through the book of Proverbs with your child and choose a few of your favorite proverbs. Some proverbs especially relevant to kids (and included in the Solomon biography) are Proverbs 15:1, 1:8-9, 6:6-8. Put these proverbs into practice during the week, and keep a daily journal describing how you practiced them. If possible, let your child be the main journal writer, while you offer assistance as needed.



Elijah

Track 31

The Running Prophet

Elijah heard a message from the evil Queen Jezebel. *Oh no!* She loved the fake god Baal. And she wanted to kill Elijah, the prophet of the one true God.

The mighty prophet became mighty afraid. He turned around, tucked his

robe up into his belt and started to run – fast! He ran as far away from Jezebel as he could go. He and his servant kept on running until they reached Beersheba, a city way down south in the land of Judah.



Then Elijah went out alone into the desert. He plopped down under a shady tree and prayed, “Oh Lord, I give up. Please take my life. I am a good-for-nothing prophet.”

Elijah let out a long, tired sigh. Then he lay back onto the ground and fell asleep under the tree.

Suddenly, Elijah woke up. Someone was touching him. It was an angel!

“Get up and eat,” the angel said. Elijah saw some baked bread and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down to sleep again.

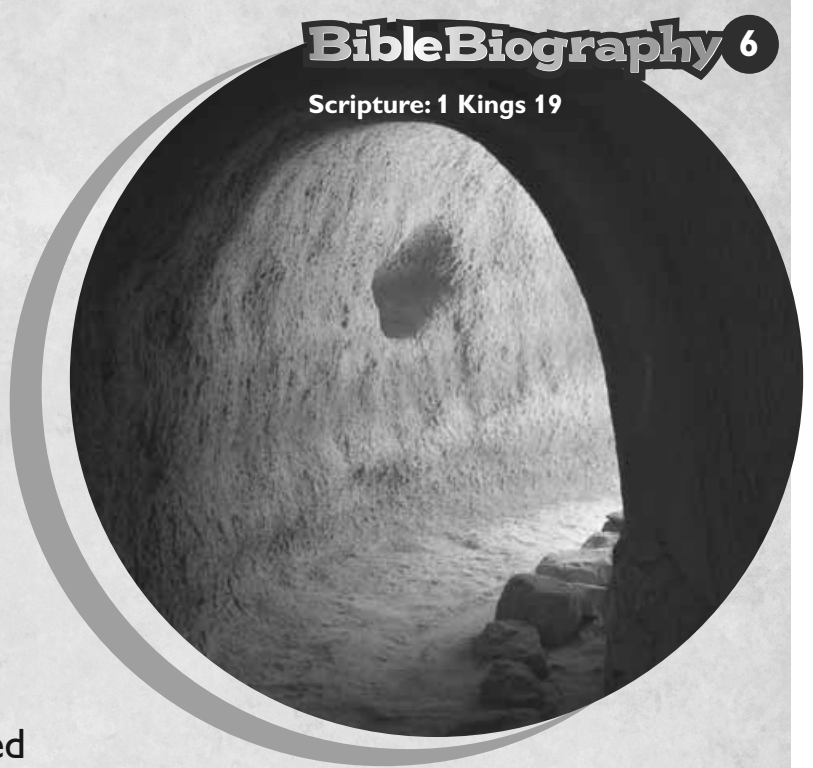
A second time, the angel came to him. Elijah ate and drank. Then he got up and hiked for 40 long days to Horeb, the mountain of God.



Elijah stayed in a cave on the mountain. Then God called to Elijah, “What are you doing here?”

Elijah held back his tears. “I have been trying with all my might to turn the Israelites back to You, the one true God. But they have worshiped fake gods and killed Your prophets. I am the only prophet left – and they want to kill me too.”

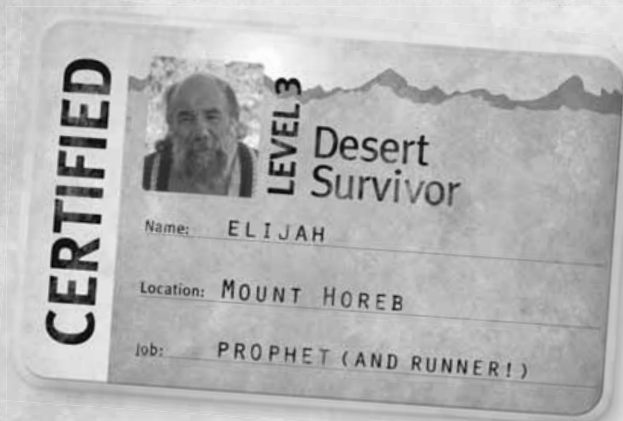
The Lord told Elijah to come out and stand before Him. When the Lord passed by, a great wind ripped into the mountains. It broke the rocks into pieces. But the Lord did not meet Elijah in the wind.



After the wind came a mighty earthquake. It rumbled in the valleys. It shook the ground below Elijah’s feet. But the Lord did not meet Elijah in the earthquake.

After the earthquake came a fire. It crackled and smoked. It lit up the hills with blazes of red and orange. But the Lord did not meet Elijah in the fire.

Then Elijah heard the sound of a soft, still whisper. It was the Lord! He covered his face with his cloak and went to stand at the cave’s opening.



God asked Elijah again, “What are you doing here?”

Elijah repeated his sad story. He told God just how bad things were.

“Go back,” said the Lord. The Lord still had work for him to do. Elijah must not give up! God would also give him a helper named Elisha.

Then the Lord said something surprising. There were 7,000 people in Israel (that’s a lot!) who never worshiped Baal.

Elijah couldn’t believe it. Things were not as bad as he thought. God was still working in Israel. And soon God would punish those who did wrong, like evil Queen Jezebel.

Elijah started running again. But this time he ran for joy! He ran back, ready to keep serving his God and never, ever, give up.

**Learn from
Elijah’s biography:**

- God cared for Elijah when he felt scared and ready to give up.
- Even when things look bad, God is still at work.
- Don’t give up! Keep serving the Lord.



Parent Ideas

Elijah, the Running Prophet

Scripture: 1 Kings 19

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God cared for Elijah when he felt scared and ready to give up.
- Even when things look bad, God is still at work.
- Don't give up! Keep serving the Lord.

1. Read-together activity –

Read the biography aloud. Then read through it again, but this time, you and your child should add your own sound effects to each scene. For example, stomp your feet quickly as if you were running, let out a loud sigh, snore as if you were Elijah sleeping under the tree, make sounds of chewing and drinking, etc. (You may want to list the sound effects you make. This will direct your next reading.) Finally, read the biography a third time, without saying any words at all – make your sound effects only! For dialogue, you can make vocal sounds, but do not say any distinct words.

2. Discussion activity – Gather 10 index cards (3 x 5-inch [7.6 x 12.7-cm] size). Write each of these words or phrases on a different card: scared, tired, sad, joyful, brave, silly, frustrated and ready to give up, surprised, excited and hopeful, and lonely. Draw a simple picture of a face that captures each emotion on the card, or cut out pictures from magazines.

Then display the cards to your child. Ask your child to pick the cards that describe the way Elijah probably felt at the beginning of the biography. When your child picks a card, talk about why Elijah felt that way. (For example, "Elijah felt scared because Jezebel wanted to kill him," or "Elijah felt frustrated and ready to quit because no one listened to his message.") Then after you have discussed those cards, talk about how God cared for Elijah during this hard time. (For example, "God let him rest and gave him a meal," or "God gave him a helper and the hope to keep going.") Finally, ask your child to pick the cards that describe how Elijah might have felt at the end of the biography. (Note: Most of the cards, except "silly," will probably be used in this activity.)

3. Application activity – Use the cards you made above to play a fishing game. Attach a paper clip to each card. Then make a fishing rod by tying one end of a string to a magnet and the other end to a

ruler or spoon. Scatter the cards on the floor and let your child use the magnetic rod to attract the cards and "catch" them. As each card is caught, talk about the emotion pictured on it. Ask your child to name times when he has felt that emotion. Focus especially on the times when he felt sad or tired and ready to give up. Ask him:

- What did you do in those times?
- How did God care for you? (Remember all the ways he cared for Elijah!)
- When you feel like that again, what will you do?

Parents, encourage your child to pray and trust in God's constant care for him (1 Peter 5:7). Even when things look bad, God is still working out His good plans. God will give us strength to keep doing the things He wants us to do.

4. Application activity – Look for times during the week when your child seems to be discouraged

and ready to quit an activity. Especially look for activities that have spiritual significance, such as completing her Sparks handbook, attending church or asking friends to Sparks. Remind your child of what you learned from Elijah's biography. Then pray for her and encourage her to keep on serving the Lord.

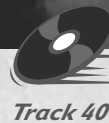
5. Review activity – Since you have read half of the biographies, now is an excellent time for review. On a sheet of paper or board, create a large tic-tac-toe grid. Put a small letter inside each space on the grid. Then, with your child, play several games of tic-tac-toe. However, before a person can draw an “X” or “O” in a space, he must name a person, place or thing from a biography that begins with

that letter (e.g., S for Samson, M for Mount Tabor, T for temple, etc.) No items can be used twice.

To refresh your memories, it may be helpful to listen to all six biographies on the CD first. In your game, try to bring up all six biographies at least once. When each biography is mentioned, ask a few questions that relate to the key learning points for that biography.



Josiah



Track 40

Lover of God's Word

King Josiah looked up. He saw a wooden face with a wooden smile and two big wooden eyes staring back at him. It was Asherah! She wasn't real – she was a fake god carved out of a pole.



“Tear down the Asherah pole!” yelled Josiah to his men.
“Israel must get rid of idols and worship the one true God.”

The men cut down the pole and burned it. Then Josiah and his men charged through the lands of Israel and Judah.

Whack, whack! Smash!

They shattered the statues of fake gods and crushed them into powder.

Chop, chop! Crash! They broke all the altars of the fake god Baal into pieces.

King Josiah was glad to clean up the land for his God. But back in Jerusalem there was still more work to do.

“Now let’s fix up God’s temple,” ordered Josiah. He loved God, and he wanted the Israelites to love Him again too.

Tap, tap! Bang! The men started working on the temple.

Brush, brush! Sweep! The priest cleaned up the temple rooms.

Suddenly the sweeping stopped. The king’s servant, Shaphan, rushed to the palace.

“King Josiah!” called Shaphan. “The priest just found something in the temple. Look!”



Idol Smashers Inc.



Name: _____
Josiah

Location: _____
Jerusalem

Job: _____
King of Judah

Shaphan lifted up an old, dusty scroll.

Josiah gasped. This was the Word of God! It had been lost for many years. The people had forgotten what it said.

Shaphan unrolled the scroll and started to read.

As Josiah listened, his eyes opened wide. Then he let out a loud cry and ripped his clothes in two (which was what people in the Bible times did to show they were very upset).

“We have not loved God like this book says!” Josiah started to weep. “God is angry with us because of our sin.”

Then King Josiah sent a message to everyone in the land.

“All people – young and old, great and small – come to the temple and hear the Word of the Lord.”

At the temple, Josiah stood up before the people. He opened the scroll and read every single one of God’s words to them. Then Josiah promised to love the Lord and obey His Word always. He told the people to make the same promise, and they did.

As long as King Josiah lived, the Israelites obeyed the Lord. Josiah hoped they would *always* love God's Word – just as much as he did!

But they wouldn't. Soon they would sin again and worship idols.

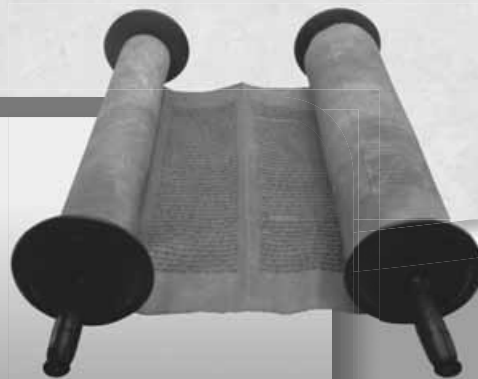
The punishments God warned about in His Word would come true. Their city, Jerusalem, would be destroyed. The Israelites would have to leave their homes because of their sin.

Once again, they would become slaves – and this time it would be in a far-off land called Babylon.

In spite of their sin, God would not forget them. God would keep on loving them. And one day, He would send a Savior to rescue them from sin forever.

Learn from King Josiah's biography:

- God's Word lasts forever – even when we forget about it.
- We sin and don't always love God's Word like we should. That's why God sent the Savior, Jesus Christ.



Parent Ideas

Josiah, Lover of God's Word

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 34; 2 Kings 22-23:28

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God's Word lasts forever – even when we forget about it.
- We sin and don't always love God's Word like we should. That's why God sent the Savior, Jesus Christ.

1. Read-together activity –

Gather visual aids to enhance your reading. First, make a simple idol from a thick stick or block of wood. Tape or glue a paper face to the top of the stick or block, and attach arms sticking out at the sides. (If it's easier, you can also make an idol from modeling clay.) When you read about Josiah destroying the idols, knock your idol down or break it in half and rip off the paper pieces.

Also, hide a Bible or a scroll (see scroll craft in Application activity) somewhere in the room. In your biography reading, before you reveal what the priest, Hilkiah, found, ask your child to search around the room for the hidden treasure (the Bible).

2. Discussion activity – Ask the following questions:

- Why was it wrong for the people to worship idols like Asherah?
- Why was Josiah so sad and upset after the scroll was read to him?
- What promise did Josiah and the people make?
- Did the people keep their promise? What did they do wrong?

Parents, help your child to understand that worshiping idols is wrong because God says not to do it – and because God is the one true God. Josiah was upset because he and the people had not

obeyed God's Word. Josiah and the people promised to obey the Lord, but the people did not keep their promise. They sinned and started worshiping idols again.

3. Application activity – Talk about why God's Word is such a treasure to us. You may want to begin by telling your child why *you* treasure God's Word. Point out that our Bibles may rip apart and get dusty, but the words inside, God's words, last forever (1 Peter 1:25). They will always be true.

Together, make a scroll with God's Word inside. You can make it in one of two ways.



For a *smaller scroll*, use clear tape to attach two plastic drinking straws, one at the top and one at the bottom of a sheet of paper. The ends of the straws should stick out past the edges of the paper in equal lengths. For a decorative look, place a bead on each straw end. (Be sure the hole in the bead is small enough so the straw end fits snugly inside the bead, and the bead does not move around. You could put dots of glue on the beads to keep them in place.) To close the scroll, roll both ends in towards the middle of the paper, so equal lengths of paper are on both rolls. Tie the rolls together with a ribbon.

For a *larger scroll*, use clear tape or glue to attach two empty paper towel rolls, or two wooden dowels, along the short ends of a large sheet of sturdy paper (11 x 17 inches [28 x 43 cm] or longer). If you use towel rolls, fill them with crumpled newspaper to keep them firm. Roll both ends in towards the middle and secure with a ribbon.

When the scroll is made (and any glue has dried), your child can write inside the scroll. Help her to write a summary of the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:6-21) and (or) Deuteronomy 6:5, which is the greatest commandment.

Note: It is very probable that the book of Deuteronomy, or at least parts of it, was contained in the scroll that Josiah read (see Deuteronomy 31:24-26). The curses for disobedience, in Deuteronomy 28-30, were likely the cause of Josiah's deep distress.

4. Application activity – Each evening after dinner, stand up (like Josiah did) and read one of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5 either from your homemade scroll or the Bible. Be sure to rephrase commandments in terms your child can understand. For example, explain committing adultery (Deuteronomy 5:18) as breaking a promise one made to love only one's spouse.

Discuss a few of the commandments that seem especially relevant to your child and family members. Talk about ways each of you have obeyed or disobeyed those commandments. (You may want to look at Jesus' explanation of the commandments in Matthew 5.) Then thank God for the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. We could never obey God's law perfectly! Pray that God's Spirit will help you to grow to love God, others and His Word more (Deuteronomy 6:5, Mark 12:30-31).



Daniel

**The Praying Prophet***Track 42*

Daniel went upstairs to his room and opened the window. He looked out towards Jerusalem, the city where he used to live. But he couldn't see the city. It was too far away!

Sometimes Daniel still missed his old home. Now he worked for a king in a strange, far-off land called Babylon. Lots of other Israelites lived there too. God had made the Israelites leave their homes in the Promised Land because of their sin.



Daniel knelt to pray. Even when he felt sad, he still gave thanks to God.

Down on the street, some of the king's men were whispering. "Look at that Daniel! He's praying again. I wish he would do something bad. Then we could get him into trouble."

"Yes," said one man. "Daniel is the king's favorite officer. If we don't do something quick, the king will put him in charge of everyone in the land – including *us*!"

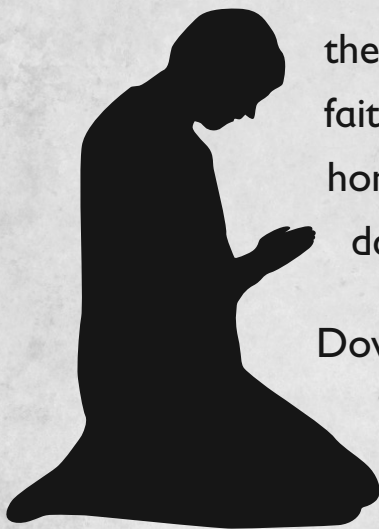
"I have an idea," said another man. "Let's get Daniel in trouble for praying to his God! We'll tell King Darius to make a new law that whoever prays to anyone, *except* to the king, will be thrown into the den of lions."

All the king's officers stopped whispering and grinned with glee. "What a perfect plan!" they said. They went off to trick the king into making the law.

Up in his room, Daniel kept praying. Not one – not two – but three times each day, he would go to his room, get down on his knees and pray.



At the palace one day, Daniel heard about the king's new law. But Daniel knew he must still be faithful to God – no matter what! He went right home, fell on his knees and prayed. Three times a day, he kept thanking God and asking Him for help.



Down on the street, the officers were watching. "Now we caught him!" they said with a smirk. They went off to tattle to the king.

When King Darius heard their words, he was very upset. He tried all day to save Daniel, but it was too late! He could not change his law.

The king's men seized Daniel and brought him to the den. Daniel could hear the hungry growls of the lions below.

As they threw him in, the king called to Daniel, “May the God whom you serve so faithfully save you!”

Inside the den, Daniel didn’t move a muscle. He closed his eyes tightly.

But where were the growls?
The den was quiet.

Daniel sat up and looked around.

There was God’s angel, shutting the mouths of the lions! Not one lion even scratched Daniel the whole night long.

The next morning, King Darius rushed to see Daniel. “Are you safe?” he cried.

When Daniel said yes, the king lifted him out of the den. He threw in the evil officers instead. Then he made a brand new law: “Everyone in my kingdom must worship and pray to Daniel’s God.”

Once again, Daniel prayed and gave thanks. Daniel knew he had been faithful. And he thanked his faithful God for being so faithful to him.

**Learn from
Daniel’s biography:**

- God is faithful to be with His children – even in a lion’s den.
- You can be faithful to God too. Keep praying and giving thanks to Him – no matter what!



Parent Ideas

Daniel, the Praying Prophet

Scripture: Daniel 6

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God is faithful to be with His children – even in a lion’s den.
- You can be faithful to God too. Keep praying and giving thanks to Him – no matter what!

1. Read-together activity

– Before you read, tell your child to listen for all forms of the word *pray* (prays, praying, prayed, etc.). Each time he hears one of the forms read aloud in the biography, he should drop to his knees and fold his hands as though he was praying. Since this biography is full of action and dialogue, be sure to show dramatic expression and variety in your voice, especially as you read the different character parts.

2. Discussion activity – Talk about faithfulness. A simple definition of faithfulness is “to keep doing what’s right – no matter what.” Why are we faithful? Because we love God, and we want to show Him our love at all times.

To add some fun to your discussion, pull out a real or imaginary microphone and pretend to be news reporters. Interview each other with various factual questions about the biography, including these:

- How did Daniel show his faithfulness to God?
- How did God show His faithfulness to Daniel?

Parents, explain that David showed faithfulness to God by praying and giving thanks, even during a hard situation. God did not leave Daniel when things were hard – He was faithful to be with him and to protect him.

3. Application activity – On the top left-hand corner of a piece of paper write “Wake up,” and on the bottom right-hand corner, write “Bedtime.” Use a line to draw a winding “trail” between the two points. Then help your child to name all the activities or places included in a typical day between waking up and bedtime (e.g., eating breakfast, riding the bus, school, playground, Sparks club, etc.). Along your trail, draw a box for each thing she names. Label each box. Your child can draw a picture of the activity or place inside each box.

Then ask your child to point to the boxes when she prayed today (or yesterday). Mark those boxes with a symbol, such as praying hands. Then ask her to circle any boxes when it’s hard to pray and thank God. Ask her why it’s hard. Maybe she forgets or doesn’t feel like praying then; or maybe something bad or sad happened there today. Remind her of 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18. God wants us to keep on praying and thanking Him – whether we are happy or sad, and in good times or bad times.

4. Application activity – When difficult or sad things come up this week, ask your child to join you in praying and giving thanks to God. No matter what happens, God is faithful to love His children and to be with them in those times. We can always thank Him for His Word, His character and our eternal salvation through Jesus Christ.

Nehemiah

God's Workman*Track 44*

Nehemiah carried a drink to the king. He was an important servant in the palace of the great king of Persia.

But today, the king noticed something different. “Young man,” he said. “Why is your face so sad? You are not sick, are you? No, I think you have a broken heart.”

Nehemiah set down the cup. His hand started to tremble. Should he tell the king why he felt sad? Would the king be angry with him?



“O king,” Nehemiah answered. “I am sad because Jerusalem, the city of my people, is a terrible mess. The city wall is broken down, and the people are in danger.”

“What do you ask for?” said the king.

Nehemiah prayed silently to the Lord. “Please let the king be kind,” he prayed.

“If it pleases you, my king,” said Nehemiah. “I would like to go to Jerusalem to help the Israelites rebuild the walls.”

Nehemiah waited. What would the king say?

“Yes, you may go,” said the king.

Hooray! Nehemiah couldn’t help but smile. He knew God had answered his prayer.





Nehemiah set off for Jerusalem at once. When he got to the city, he looked around closely. He saw all the work that needed to be done.

Then he called the Israelites together. “Let’s rebuild the walls so we will be safe and strong again. God has sent me here to help you do this good work. He will be with us,” said Nehemiah.

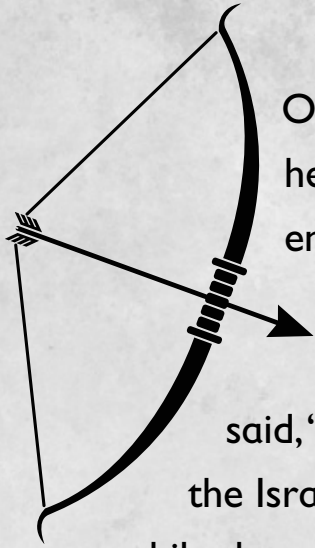
“Let’s start building!” cried the people.

Nehemiah gave the families different jobs to do. Some people cleaned up the rubble; others carried heavy loads. Some laid stones on the wall; others built high gates out of logs. Side by side, the people worked as hard as they could for the Lord.

But soon, some enemies started to make fun of them. “Ha, Ha!” laughed Sanballat. “Do you really think you can build that wall?”

“Hee, Hee!” laughed Tobiah. “Your wall is so weak that it would fall down even if a fox tiptoed on it!”

Nehemiah and the people did not listen. They were too busy working for the Lord. And every day, their wall got taller.



One day, Nehemiah heard that their enemies were planning to attack. Their enemies said, "Let's sneak up on the Israelites and kill them while they work."

Nehemiah and the people prayed to the Lord for help. Then he said to the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Hold your swords, your spears and your bows while you work. No matter what, we will still keep working for the Lord."

When the enemies saw the Israelites were ready to fight, they knew they had lost. They tried a few more tricks, but nothing worked. Nehemiah and the people *would not stop* working for the Lord.

Finally, in just a short time, the wall was finished!

Hooray! Nehemiah smiled bigger than ever. Everyone, even their enemies, knew that this great work had been done with the help of the Lord.

**Learn from
Nehemiah's biography:**

- God helps His children to do His good work.
- Whatever you do, keep working hard at it. You're working for the Lord!



Parent Ideas

Nehemiah, God's Workman

Scripture: Nehemiah 1- 6

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God helps His children to do His good work.
- Whatever you do, keep working hard at it. You're working for the Lord!

1. Read-together activity –

Before you sit down to read, gather some blocks or dominoes. Put one pile near you, and another pile near your child. Also have a timer or stopwatch nearby. Then read the biography to your child, but stop whenever you read a sentence about the Israelites working for the Lord. Once you stop, set the timer for one minute while you and your child each race to build a tower by stacking blocks or dominoes. After the minute is up, return to reading the biography. At the end of the biography, see who has the biggest tower. If your child can handle playful teasing, send other family members into the room to make fun of your towers or distract each of you while you build.

2. Discussion activity – On sheets of paper, write simple sentences or draw pictures to represent the main action scenes in the biography. (Represent a different scene on each sheet of paper.) Mix up the papers, and then ask your child to describe what happened in each scene and put the scenes in the proper time order.

Then ask these questions:

- At the beginning of the biography, why was Nehemiah sad?
- What are the ways God helped Nehemiah and the Israelites? (At the beginning of the biography? During the middle? At the end?)
- Do you think God was pleased with the way the Israelites were working? Why?

Parents, help your child to see all the ways God helped Nehemiah and the Israelites: He caused the king to be kind to Nehemiah; He sent Nehemiah to lead and help the Israelites; He gave the people strength and focus to work; He protected them from their enemies; He helped the wall to be finished in a short time – in only 52 days! God was probably very pleased with the Israelites because they worked hard, focused on the job He asked them to do and trusted in Him.

3. Application activity – Brainstorm ways you and your child can each work for the Lord. To add fun and energy, bounce a ball between you. Each time a person catches the ball, he must name one way to work for the Lord. Remember, that *anything* we do (within God's will, of course!)

can be work for the Lord – as long as we have an attitude of serving God while we do it (Colossians 3:23). So don't just name things you do at church, say things like "cleaning my room," "doing my school work," "making dinner" or "working at the office." Put some of your ideas into practice in the upcoming week.

4. Application activity – Invite some Christian teenagers or adults to share with your child about the various ways they work for the Lord, whether they work in a Christian ministry context or secular context. There are several ways to arrange this. Here are two ideas:

- Invite the adults (or teenagers) over for dinner. Then have them each share briefly about their work. Ask them to bring as many visual aids as possible. (You may want to invite your pastor as part of this group to allow your child to get better acquainted with him.)
- Before or after a church service, meet up with various people you know. You and your child can interview them briefly about their work. Emphasize to your child the variety of ways people can work for the Lord.



The Priest

Who Didn't Believe

Track 54



What a special day! Today the priest Zechariah would enter into God's temple for an important job. He had waited so long to be chosen for this job. Finally, it was *his* turn.

Zechariah got ready. Soon, he would go all by himself into a room called the "Holy Place." He would burn sweet-smelling spices, called incense, for the Lord.

What an honor! Zechariah would say prayers for God's people, the Israelites.

Zechariah stepped into the room. It was time to begin his special job.

All of a sudden, Zechariah froze like a statue. Someone stood in the room with him. It was an angel!

Zechariah felt frightened. *Would the angel bring bad news? Had he done something wrong?*

"Do not be afraid, Zechariah," said the angel. "Your prayer has been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will have a son. And you shall name him John."

Zechariah stared at the angel. A SON? He and Elizabeth had always prayed for a baby. But now they were too old to be parents. This seemed impossible!

"God will be with your son," said the angel. "And he will become a mighty prophet like Elijah. He will tell God's people that the Savior is coming."



Zechariah, shook his head. This was too hard to believe.

“How can I know this will REALLY happen?” he asked.

“I am Gabriel,” the angel said. “God sent me to tell you this good news. But because you don’t believe me, you will be silent. You won’t be able to say a word until your son is born.”

Zechariah stepped out of the holy place. All the people were praying and waiting for him outside in the temple courts.

“What took you so long?” they worried. “Are you OK?”

Zechariah opened his mouth to answer, but no words came out. The only thing the people heard was –

Silence.



Then Zechariah pointed and waved and moved his hands in the air. But still nothing came out. The only thing that came out was –

Silence.

No matter what Zechariah did – he couldn't say a word. Because he had not believed, he would stay silent, just like the angel said.

But Zechariah would not always be silent.

One day God would suddenly open his mouth again.



“Blessed be the Lord!” Zechariah would shout. “For the Lord has kept His promise to send us a Savior.”

Then Zechariah would look down at his newborn son. “My child!” he would declare. “You will be the prophet of the Most High God. You will tell people about the coming Savior, the one who will save them from sin forever.”

But the day of baby John’s birth was several months away. For now, Zechariah had no choice. Today he would have to stay –

Silent.

Learn from Zechariah’s biography:

- What God says always comes true – even if it seems impossible!
- God wants you to believe what He says in the Bible right away. Don’t be like Zechariah.

FAITH

Parent Ideas

The Priest Who Didn't Believe

Scripture: Luke 1:5-25, 67-80

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- What God says always comes true – even if it seems impossible!
- God wants you to believe what He says in the Bible right away. Don't be like Zechariah.

1. Read-together activity – Ask your child to read the dialogue for Zechariah while you read the dialogue for the angel. Also, when you read the word *silent* or *silence* at key points in the biography, add a long, silent pause for dramatic effect.

Zechariah was chosen by lot to burn incense in the Holy Place and pray for the people. He probably had waited a long time for this job since, as a priest, many only got this privilege once in their lifetime – sometimes never.

2. Discussion activity – Ask your child to tell you what the biography is all about in a sentence or two. See if he mentions any of the key learning points above.

Then ask these questions:

- Why did Zechariah become silent?
- What did the angel say about Zechariah's son? (What would he be named? What prophet would he be like? What would he do?)
- When would Zechariah be able to speak again?
- Why is it best to always believe what God says?

Parents, emphasize the importance of believing what God says in His Word. God tells us to believe Him, and we can be sure that what He says is true.

3. Application activity – Present a puzzling experiment to your child. For example, fill a glass or pitcher with equal parts of white vinegar and water. Then hold up the mixture and ask your child what she thinks it is. (She will probably say water.) Then ask her if she believes you can make it fizz up. After her curiosity grows, hold the glass or pitcher over a large bowl (to catch overflow) and pour in some baking soda. Watch the fizzing together.

Then say something like the following: "When the angel told Zechariah he would have a son, Zechariah thought it was impossible – just like you thought the fizzing would be impossible. But God made what the angel said happen! God can do anything."

Then review a few verses from your child's *HangGlider* and *WingRunner* handbooks, and ask her if each verse is hard or easy for her to believe and why. Then ask: "Why should we believe it? Why is it an important verse?" (Good

verses to review are the verses in the beginning Rank sections, as well as 1 Peter 1:25, 1 Peter 5:7, John 17:17, John 14:6, Romans 3:23, 1 John 4:19, Genesis 1:1.)

4. Application activity – To remember Zechariah, play a game where you must act without speaking. On several slips of paper, write various verses from the *WingRunner* handbook. These should be verses that are generally easy to act out. Then put the slips into a container. Take turns pulling out a slip, acting out the verse and guessing which verse is being portrayed. To make it easier for your child, pull out two verses at a time and let the child look at the verses while you act out **one** of them. Your child can guess which one you are acting. Or instead of acting, you may choose to write on a board only the first letters of the words in a verse. Keep filling in letters until your child guesses the verse.

End your activity by talking about why it's easy or hard for you to believe one of the verses, and why it's an important verse to believe.



Mary

Handmaiden Who Believed

Mary had so many chores to do today. First, she had to go and get water from the well. Then she had to sweep the floor and help her mother bake the bread.

After that, she hoped to start her weaving. Soon, she would marry a wonderful man named Joseph – and Mary must make clothes for the wedding!

Mary hurried to begin her work.



“Greetings, chosen one!” said a voice.

“The Lord is with you.”

Mary looked up. There before her was an angel!

Mary felt scared. She had never heard a greeting like *this* before. *What could it mean?*

“Don’t be afraid, Mary,” said the angel. “God loves you and wants to be kind to you. He has chosen you to have a special baby. You shall name Him Jesus. He will save His people and be their King forever.”

What a surprise! How amazing! Mary believed, but she had just one question.



“How will this happen?” she wondered. She didn’t quite understand.

The angel, Gabriel, answered, “Your child will be born by God’s power. He won’t be like any other child. He will be the holy Son of God.”

Then Gabriel gave Mary another surprise, “Your relative Elizabeth, who is old, will have a son too,” he said. “See? Nothing is too hard for the Lord.”

Mary believed it all! “I am the Lord’s handmaiden, ready to obey,” she said.

Then the angel left.

Mary packed up her things and hurried all the way to Elizabeth and Zechariah’s house. She couldn’t wait to share the good news.

“Greetings, Elizabeth!” called Mary, as she entered the house.

But before Mary could say another word, Elizabeth shouted with joy. God had already let Elizabeth know the good news.

“How happy are you!” cried Elizabeth. “You will be the mother of the Savior. And how happy are you for believing that everything the Lord told you would come true.”

Mary was so excited that she couldn’t keep quiet. “What a great

God! Holy is His name,” she praised. “For He has done great things for a poor handmaiden like me.”

“And best of all – ” she sang. “God has remembered the promise He made to Israel long ago. He has kept His promise to send us a Savior.”

Mary WAS happy. For she had believed everything the angel told her. And soon she would become the mother of the Savior – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Learn from Mary’s biography:

- God chose Mary to be the mother of the Savior, Jesus Christ.
- What God says always comes true.
- Be like Mary! Believe everything that God says in His Word.



Parent Ideas

Mary, Handmaiden Who Believed

Scripture: Luke 1:26-56

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- God chose Mary to be the mother of the Savior, Jesus Christ.
- What God says always comes true.
- Be like Mary! Believe everything that God says in His Word.

1. Read-together activity – If your child wants to practice her reading skills, let her participate at various points in your reading. To prepare, highlight different parts of the text with colored markers. In one color, highlight simple sentences, phrases or lines of dialogue your child should read aloud alone. In another color, highlight sentences you will read aloud first, and your child will read back to you. In a third color, highlight sentences you will read along with your child in unison. Read the remaining uncolored sections aloud by yourself.

2. Discussion activity – Ask your child to name his favorite part of the biography. Why was it his favorite?

Then ask the following discussion questions:

- What was so special about Mary's baby? What would He do?
- In what ways were Zechariah and Mary the same? In what ways were they different?
- Whom would you rather be like – Zechariah or Mary? Why?

Parents, to help your child compare and contrast Zechariah and Mary, draw two columns. In one column, write several phrases that describe Zechariah and the events that happened to him (e.g., he saw an angel, he was afraid, the angel said he would have a son, he did not believe, God punished him, etc.). In the other column, write several phrases that describe Mary (e.g., she saw an angel, she was afraid, she believed, she was happy, etc.). Draw a line to connect those items that are the same in both columns. Circle the items that are different.

3. Discussion activity – Explain to your child that a long, long time ago, when only Adam and Eve lived in the world, God promised to send a Savior (Genesis 3:15). Many years later, God kept His promise. Mary would give birth to the Savior, Jesus Christ. What God says always comes true! Talk about why you both are happy that God keeps His promises.

Note: Many prophets also predicted the coming of the Savior. A few examples of prophecies that Christ fulfilled are Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2.

4. Application activity – When Mary thought of all the great things God had done, she couldn't help but praise Him. Lead your child in a time of praise. Focus on the Savior Jesus Christ. You can do this in many ways. Here are a few ideas:

- Sing a praise song focused on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Take the verses from the WingRunner Rank and turn them into prayers of praise. (For example, for 1 Corinthians 15:3, say, "Thank you God that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.")
- Express your worship through a creative word poster or drawing. To make a word poster, write key words from WingRunner Rank verses, such as Savior, Father, Scriptures, good, believe, etc. Write the words on a poster board in decorative ways, using various colors, sizes, styles of lettering, etc.



Shepherds



Tell the Good News

The lights had already gone out in the town of Bethlehem. But in the fields nearby, some shepherds sat around a small campfire. They stayed up late, keeping watch over their sheep.

That night, only a few stars twinkled in the big, black sky. The sheep were quieter than usual – except for a soft “baa” from a lamb now and then. The shepherds were quiet too. A few of them started to feel sleepy.

Suddenly, the sky lit up as brightly as daytime!

The shepherds jolted awake. They looked at each other with fearful faces. What was happening?



There in front of them was an angel!

“Do not be afraid,” said the angel. “I bring you GOOD NEWS for all the people. Today, in David’s city, Bethlehem, the Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! Go look for a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger (the place where animals eat).”

Before the shepherds could even talk or move, the sky got even brighter. It filled up with more angels than they could ever count.

The heavenly army of angels praised God together saying, “Glory to God in the highest!”



Searching Shepherds Association

Local Chapter:
Bethlehem,
City of David

Tasks:
Shepherding and sharing
the GOOD NEWS

Then all the angels left and went back into heaven.
The night turned just as dark and quiet as before.

The shepherds looked at each other with stunned faces. Then they all began talking at once, "Let's go to Bethlehem to see this Child the Lord has told us about!"

Quickly they went off to look for the Savior. Soon they found Him! The baby Jesus lay in a manger, just as the angel had said. The baby's mother, Mary, and her husband¹, Joseph, rested nearby.

"The angels told us about this baby," said the shepherds. "He is our Savior – Christ, the Lord."

The shepherds thanked God for His GOOD NEWS.

But they knew this GOOD NEWS was too good to keep to themselves. So on the way back to their flocks, they told everyone they met: “The Savior has come! The Savior has come!”

That quiet night turned out to be not so quiet after all. The shepherds could not stop glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.

¹ See Matthew 1:24.

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

- Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, the City of David.
- Jesus Christ, the Savior, was born to save us from sin. That's GOOD NEWS!



Parent Ideas

Shepherds Tell the Good News

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, the City of David.
- Jesus Christ, the Savior, was born to save us from sin. That's GOOD NEWS!

1. Read-together activity –

Bring out some modeling dough and work with your child to shape characters, animals and other objects from the biography, such as shepherds, sheep, staffs, angels, manger or a baby. Then read the biography while your child uses the dough creations to act out the events.

2. Discussion activity – Ask the following questions to review the biography:

- Why were the shepherds afraid?
- What did the angel say to the shepherds?
- What did the shepherds do after the angels left?
- What did the shepherds do as they were going back to their flocks?
- Why is Jesus' birth such good news? (Why was He born?)

Parents, help your child to see that Jesus' birth is good news because He saves us from the punishment of our sin. Because of Jesus, we

can be forgiven. We can have a friendship with God. And we can live forever with God in heaven! No wonder the angels said the people would have great joy (Luke 2:10)!

If your child has not yet trusted Christ as Savior, take this opportunity to explain the gospel clearly. Good verses to use are Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 and Acts 16:31. (If you need help explaining the gospel, talk to your child's Sparks leader.)

3. Application activity – Take turns sharing the gospel with each other. Ask your church or Sparks club for tools and visuals – such as tracts or beaded bracelets – that aid you in sharing the message simply and clearly. This activity will provide great practice, and it will make both you and your child more aware and ready to share the gospel with someone if the opportunity arises. Finish your practice time by praying together for people whom you or your child know that need to hear the good news of the gospel.

4. Review activity – Celebrate all the wonderful truths you have learned together by playing a biography concentration game. To prepare, cut out all the I.D. cards on the next pages. For extra durability, laminate them or glue them to index cards. Turn the cards over so they are blank, mix them up, and play a matching game.

Here's how to play: Ask your child to pick one card. Then he should try to pick the other matching card. As cards are chosen in the game, he should try to memorize where they are to increase his chances of making a match. Each time your child picks two non-matching cards, ask him to compare and contrast the two biographies – how were the events and characters 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.

ARMY MOM 

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

ARMY MOM 

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

 **Extreme Fitness**

	Member Name:	Samson
	Address:	Timnah
	Alternate Address:	Gaza Prison
	Occupation:	Protector of Israel

 **Extreme Fitness**

	Member Name:	Samson
	Address:	Timnah
	Alternate Address:	Gaza Prison
	Occupation:	Protector of Israel

  Name: Samuel

Address: God's house at Shiloh

Job: Listening to God's Word

Official bearer of **Bad News**

  Name: Samuel

Address: God's house at Shiloh

Job: Listening to God's Word

Official bearer of **Bad News**

  Member Name: David

Hometown: Bethlehem

Current Profession: Shepherd

Future Kings' Club

  Member Name: David

Hometown: Bethlehem

Current Profession: Shepherd

Future Kings' Club

Nation of Israel



Name: Solomon

Address: Jerusalem

Occupation: Wise King



Tribe of Judah

Nation of Israel



Name: Solomon

Address: Jerusalem

Occupation: Wise King



Tribe of Judah

CERTIFIED



LEVEL 3

Desert
Survivor

Name: ELIJAH

Location: MOUNT HOREB

Job: PROPHET (AND RUNNER!)

CERTIFIED



LEVEL 3

Desert
Survivor

Name: ELIJAH

Location: MOUNT HOREB

Job: PROPHET (AND RUNNER!)

Idol Smashers Inc.



Name: Josiah

Location: Jerusalem

Job: King of Judah

Idol Smashers Inc.



Name: Josiah

Location: Jerusalem

Job: King of Judah

DEN SURVIVOR



Name: Daniel

Location: Babylon

Specialties: Praying and
trusting God

DEN SURVIVOR



Name: Daniel

Location: Babylon

Specialties: Praying and
trusting God



NAME: Nehemiah

AREA: Persia and Jerusalem

OCCUPATION: King's Servant

WALL·BUILDERS·UNION



NAME: Nehemiah

AREA: Persia and Jerusalem

OCCUPATION: King's Servant

WALL·BUILDERS·UNION

PRIEST



NAME: ZECHARIAH

LOCATION OF SERVICE: THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM

Temple Clearance Level: **1**

OFFICIAL MEMBER: **TRIBE OF LEVI**

PRIEST



NAME: ZECHARIAH

LOCATION OF SERVICE: THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM

Temple Clearance Level: **1**

OFFICIAL MEMBER: **TRIBE OF LEVI**

Society of Special Servants

Name: Mary

City: Nazareth



Job: Handmaiden (girl servant) of the Lord

Society of Special Servants

Name: Mary

City: Nazareth



Job: Handmaiden (girl servant) of the Lord



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