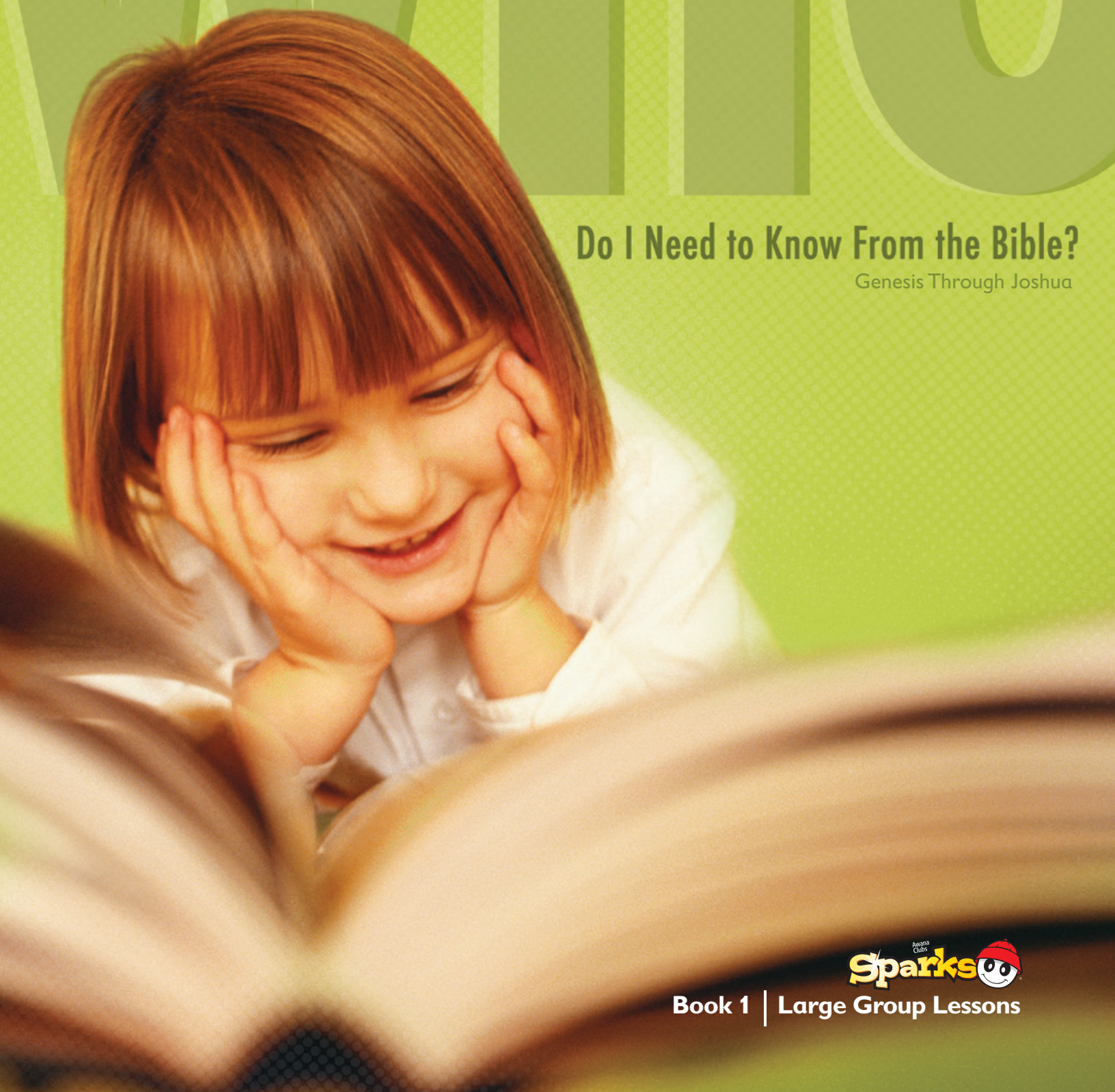


# WHO

**Do I Need to Know From the Bible?**

Genesis Through Joshua



**Book 1 | Large Group Lessons**

# WHO

## Do I Need to Know From the Bible?

Genesis Through Joshua



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# WHO Do I Need to Know From the Bible?

Genesis Through Joshua

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# WHAT ARE THE WHYS OF THE WHO BOOK?

## **How do I use the *WHO* book?**

This *WHO Book* is a resource for your Sparks® Large Group Time. This first *WHO book* corresponds with the *HangGlider®* handbook. We also have *WHO books* corresponding to the other Sparks handbooks.

## **What do you mean that it corresponds with the specific books?**

For instance, the *HangGlider* handbook talks about events that happened from Adam and Eve until Joshua. The first *WHO book* includes Bible biographies from that same time period.

## **So I have to teach these lessons in order?**

No, not necessarily. At any given time, you will have Sparkies in different parts of all three books, so it would be impossible to teach a lesson that would correspond with the exact sections that ALL Sparkies are on. The lessons are stand alone – although we do have several lessons about Bible people such as Abraham and Joseph that build on one another. But you can use them any way you want.

## **What if I don't have all that much time for Large Group lessons?**

Don't feel as if you have to teach the entire lesson in a week. Feel free to spend two or three weeks on a lesson to make sure you get the point across. No one is rushing you.

## **Are all the lessons in the *WHO book* Bible biographies?**

No, not all of them. We include lessons on missionaries and also a few holiday specials.

## **What are the different segments in the *WHO book*?**

To help YOU, the leader, understand the lesson, we've divided each one into segments as shown on the next page.



## Reading

Where you'll find the lesson in the Bible

## Thinking

Some thoughts for you, the leader. These include background information on the biography and also some considerations as you teach it to the Sparkies.

## Looking It Up

This is a verse(s) for the children to find in their Bibles. (Have Sparkies turn to the passage before you begin teaching since many children will need help.) Asking the children to find the verse encourages them to bring their Bibles and to learn how to use their Bibles. Often we suggest you have either a leader or Sparkie read the verse during the lesson. Although many Sparkies can't read, they still enjoy having their Bibles open to the verse.

## Getting It Ready

A list of what you need to prepare the lesson

## Showing

An object lesson or skit will catch the children's attention and also help explain the lesson theme.

## Telling

The actual lesson or biography

## Challenging

The application to life. A few of our lessons have more than one challenge. You can use all the challenges or you can use the one that best meets the needs of your group.

There are some lessons that will necessitate extra prep time. Consider looking ahead a week or two to see if you need to bring extra materials or seek out the assistance of another leader or clubber.

## Family Follow Up

This section gives suggestions of activities, discussion starters or other ideas for parents and children to do together in the home.

## Teaching Ideas

These are additional ideas for you to use as you present your lesson.

## Sparks Activity

A puzzle or other activity that the Sparkies can do in relationship to the lesson.

We pray that you will use this book as a tool to teach young children about the men and women whom God included in His Word, the Bible.

## LESSON TIME 101

Have you thought about the Large Group Time for Sparks ... beyond, “Oh, no, what will I talk about this week?” That is, have you ever really contemplated the awesome opportunity of presenting a Bible lesson to children?

Think about it like this:

### PRAYER + PREPARATION + OPPORTUNITY

**Prayer** seems like a no-brainer, but many fail to include this vital component. Whether it's praying for the children who will hear, or asking God to give you peace and wisdom as you prepare and share, Philippians 4:6-7 is an instruction and a comfort: *Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

**Preparation** also seems like an obvious point, but all too often we don't set aside enough time to prepare for the lesson. Think about it: How thoroughly would you prepare if you were asked to speak before a large gathering of adults in church or elsewhere? The opportunity to share Christ with children is equally valuable in God's eyes (see Mark 10:13-16).

#### Here are a few thoughts on preparation:

Remember, it is God's Word and the Holy Spirit that change lives. Always put more emphasis on the Scripture than on the illustration – both in your preparation and in your lesson.

It is difficult to prepare an effective Bible lesson the night before, or worse, after work on club night. Read your lesson well ahead of time, making notes about what preparations are needed. Of course, you can use the written lesson, but always be prepared enough so that you don't read the lesson to the children.

Some of the lesson concepts are difficult. Be open to splitting a lesson into two or even three parts so you get the point across. It is better to take a couple of weeks to teach a lesson than to hurry it up for the sake of getting through it in one night.

**Opportunity** can be summed up with one thrilling/sobering thought – this may be the first time some of your visitors have ever heard the gospel. How exciting! What a privilege to share Christ with them! Yet the entire concept of sitting and listening to a Bible lesson is something that may be new to them. We need to be serious about teaching the children in our clubs.

#### 1. Environment

If your group is small enough or your room big enough, arrange the chairs in a circle. Not only does this formation put EVERYONE in the front row, but it also gives more of a “sitting-around-the-fire” feel rather than a structured “school” feel. (We understand, of course, that many of you present the lesson in an area where Sparkies sit in stationary pews or chairs and you can't change the formation.)

Ask the Sparkies to sit so that they're facing a blank or uncluttered wall. If they face an open door or window (with people walking by) or have a variety of pictures to look at, you'll be competing for their attention.

Ask your leaders to sit among the Sparkies (especially if your leaders often gather in the back of the room and exchange small talk or drink coffee during the lesson). Tell them this is especially important because you want them available to help Sparkies find verses in their Bible. Also, be sure your leaders are prepared to meet with Sparkies who indicate they want to trust Christ as Savior.

## 2. Introduction

Start your lesson by SIMPLY STARTING. Often leaders waste valuable time by telling the Sparkies to “settle down” or “listen up.” If you want to introduce the lesson before you actually start teaching, do so in a positive, rather than a negative, way.

### Negative lesson starters:

OK, you’ve had your fun in Game Time, now you need to sit still and listen. **(In other words – this WON’T be fun, so be prepared to be bored.)**

If you don’t sit still and listen, we won’t have time for games (or snacks or awards). **(In other words – the lesson is something to suffer through so we can get to the good stuff.)**

### Positive lesson starters:

I am SO excited to tell you about \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_. The more I learn about \_\_\_\_\_, the more I’ve wanted to tell you about him/her/it. **(In other words, you’re excited! Wow! Sparkies watch adults closely; they notice our excitement. Shouldn’t they see us excited about God’s Word? However, beware of stretching the facts in an attempt to be funny or entertaining. Remember, your visitors may know nothing about the Bible ... they are learning from what you say.)**

How many of you have ever \_\_\_\_\_?  
\_\_\_\_\_? That was hard/exciting/scary/fun, wasn’t it? Tonight we’ll talk about \_\_\_\_\_ and how God worked in his/her/their life through a situation that was a lot like that. **(In other words, you’re interested in the Sparkies as people and can relate their real life experiences to Bible**

**accounts. When asking a question to open a lesson, however, limit the responses and move on with the lesson in order to create some momentum and establish yourself – not the Sparkies – as the main speaker of the lesson.)**

## 3. Conclusion

Make sure you close your lesson as clearly and decisively as you opened it. While it’s tempting to go on and on in an effort to make sure you’ve covered everything, a clear and energetic closing – restating your lesson’s main point and inviting Sparkies to ask leaders any questions – is more memorable and effective. Of course, presenting the gospel to children in any setting requires us to be clear in our approach and terminology. The *Awana Ministry Catalog* offers resources to help you. Of all the things you want to get right in your lesson, the gospel must be at top of the list.

## ALLERGY WARNING

Peanut allergies and lactose intolerance are on the rise and schools are going gluten free. Please be very careful when you incorporate food of any kind into your Theme Night, Game Time or Large Group Time. At the start of the club year, ask parents/guardians to fill out a form listing any allergies/medical conditions that their Sparkie has. Do not allow any Sparkie to participate in a food-related game or event (even candy – diabetic children could have a reaction) until you know for certain that the child can handle it. A good rule of thumb is better safe than sorry.

## Reading

Genesis 25-50 (that's a lot of reading, but it is Jacob's complete story);  
Joel 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:11

## Thinking

The characters in the Sparks books are fictional. The Sparkies know that (or should be told that, if they don't know). Yet we've made them "act" like real kids with some of the same emotions, problems, joys, likes and dislikes real kids have.

We want Sparkies to relate not only to the fictional characters, but more importantly, to the Bible people they will meet in the biographies.

Children this age want information. They are at an age when they memorize quickly, retain facts and desire details.

Use this story at the beginning of the year for a fun introduction to club. Emphasize the REAL people talked about and explain that they will be hearing the biographies of a lot of Bible people during the year.



## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- A box with blankets, filled with stuffed animals (kittens)

## Showing

Ask your Sparkies why their parents named them what they did. Sometimes parents simply like the name. Sometimes parents give their children a name with meaning, but the Sparkies don't know what that meaning is. But often Sparkies do know what their name means or why their parents chose the name.



# Telling

*(Choose leaders to “play” each of the Sparks characters. Make sure the Sparkies know that the Sparks character parts are fictional.)*

**CHLOE:** I have something really cool to show you.

**JOEL:** Did you get a new computer game?

**CHLOE:** No, cooler and cuter than that!

**JACOB:** Yuk! I don’t like cute!

**CHLOE:** You’ll like this cute.

**JOEL (exasperated):** Well, show us then!

**CHLOE (walking toward the box with boys following):** Remember I told you my cat, Tempo, was gonna have kittens? Well, she had them. Look! *(She points in the box.)*

**JACOB (bending down):** Cool! They’re so tiny.

**JOEL (also bending down):** Can I have one?

**CHLOE:** I think you’d better ask your parents. My dad says not everyone likes cats all that much. But if your parents say it’s OK, you can have one. Dad says we have to give all but one of them away.

**JACOB:** What are their names?

**CHLOE:** You guys can help me figure that out. I don’t have names picked out yet, but I was thinking of naming them after foods. Like this brown one could be Chocolate and this black one could be Licorice.

**JOEL:** If I get one, I’ll name him some big strong name like “Gorilla.”

**CHLOE AND JACOB (laughing):** A cat named Gorilla?

**JOEL:** Why not? Maybe he’ll be a big, strong cat!

**CHLOE (shrugging):** Some cats ARE strong. When my mom was a kid, they named their cat after a baseball player.

**JACOB (laughing):** Could he bat a ball?

**CHLOE:** No, but this is what’s funny. He would play fetch, just like a dog does! They would throw a foil ball into the air and the cat would jump so high he would flip over, catch the ball and bring it back to them.

**JOEL:** He did what his name said he would do – he became a baseball player.

**JACOB:** My name is in the Bible.

**JOEL:** We KNOW that. We learned about Jacob at Sparks.

**CHLOE:** Right. He tricked his father and his brother Esau.

**JOEL:** And then later, Laban tricked him. *(Leaders, three lessons detailing Jacob’s biography are found later in this book. Most children won’t know much about Jacob. Tell the children they will learn more about him in later weeks.)*

**CHLOE:** And he married Rachel and became the dad of Joseph.

**JOEL:** My name is in the Bible, too, you know.

**JACOB:** What did Joel do in the BIBLE?

**JOEL:** Well, he was a prophet of God. Dad said that prophets tell other people about God. But the Bible doesn’t tell us much more about him.

**CHLOE:** But he did write a book of the Bible – the book of Joel.

**JOEL:** I know there’s a Joel in the Bible and I know there’s a Jacob in the Bible, but I don’t think there’s a Chloe in the Bible.

## Telling continued

**CHLOE:** Oh, yes there is! There's only one verse about her, but she's there.

**JOEL AND JACOB** (*showing surprise*): The name Chloe is in the Bible? Really?

**CHLOE:** Mom said we only know she was a Christian and she knew Paul.

**JACOB:** Cool! All our names are from the Bible.

**JOEL:** But there are a lot of Bible people I'm glad my parents DIDN'T name me after: like Jehoshaphat, Bakkarak or Mishmannah. (*Leaders, of course, if you have Sparkies in your club with these names, you would skip this sentence.*)

**CHLOE:** And even if you aren't named after someone in the Bible, your name is still special.

**JOEL:** Remember our Sparks leader told us that when we trust Christ as Savior, our name is written in the Book of Life. That means we are going to heaven someday. Yippee!

**JACOB:** That's cool, to think about our name being written in a big book in heaven. (*Leaders, see Revelation 21:27.*)

**CHLOE** (*picking up one of the stuffed kittens*): Meanwhile ... what should we name this kitten?

**JOEL:** Hmm ... Let me think.



## Challenging

God knows us each by name. He created us and He cares for us. He loves us. If we trust Christ as Savior, our name is in the Book of Life. That means someday we will live in heaven for all eternity. And don't worry. God won't get confused if there are a lot of people with the same name. He's in control and He knows exactly who you are.

Maybe your name isn't in the Book of Life because you haven't trusted Christ as Savior. Why not do that tonight?

You see – we were all born sinners and we all sin (think, say and do things that are different from what God wants us to think, say and do).

God is perfect, but our sin makes us NOT perfect. That keeps us apart from God.

God sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for us on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. He did this because He loves us.

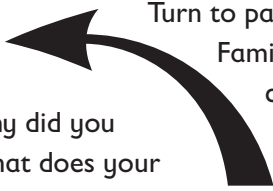
Three days later, He once again came alive. The Lord Jesus is now in heaven making a place for us to live with Him forever.

We need to trust the Lord Jesus as Savior. Then our name will be in the Book of Life and someday we will live with Him in heaven.

## Family FollowUp

Talk together as a family about your names. Why did you choose the names you did for your children? What does your last name mean? What language is it?

Then talk about God's love. He knows each one of us by name. He never forgets our names or gets us mixed up with other people. As Christians, our names are written in the Book of Life.



Turn to page 193 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!

# TeachingIdeas

## Theme Ideas

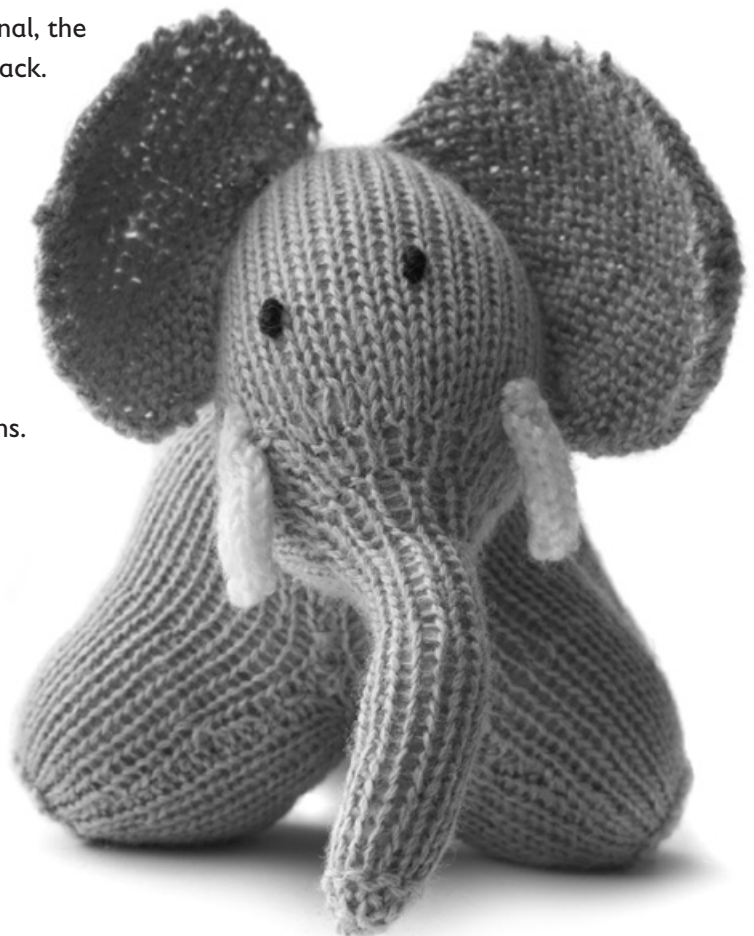
- **Stuffed Animal Night** – Have everyone bring their favorite stuffed animal and take it with them wherever they go. Serve animal crackers, hang pictures of animals around your Large Group Time room and see how many of each kind of animal Sparkies bring. Whichever animal is most represented is the winner and the Sparkies who brought that animal get an extra treat.
- **What Does My Name Mean Night** – The week before this night, ask Sparkies to come the next week knowing what their names mean. Ask them to have it written on a piece of paper. Hang construction paper around the room with Sparkie's names and meanings on them!

## Game Ideas

- **Who Am I?** – Have your leaders write the meaning of their names on a piece of paper. Put all the papers in a container. As you pull each piece of paper out, have Sparkies guess which meaning goes with which leader's name. Assign points to teams when they answer correctly.
- **Don't Drop the Animals Relay** – Have each team member hold her stuffed animal. At your signal, the first Sparkie runs to a designated spot and back. She hands her stuffed animal to the second player who runs to the same spot and back carrying the previous player's animal and his own. Each succeeding player repeats the action, carrying his stuffed animal and all the previous stuffed animals. The final player carries all the stuffed animals to the spot and back, then stands on the team line still holding them. The first team to finish wins.

## Teaching Option

- When talking through the gospel at the end of the lesson, consider having the *Security CheckPoint* booklet on hand. It's written for Sparks-age children and answers important spiritual questions. It's a great way to walk through the plan of salvation with a Sparkie.





# SparksActivity

Leaders, provide sequins, glitter, etc., for the kids to decorate their papers.  
Have them fill in the blank with their name.

# God Loves

---

## Reading

2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105; Acts 16:1-5

## Thinking

Sparkies are just beginning to read, and sometimes we find it difficult to explain to them that the Bible is God's message to them. Most of them hear the message of the Bible from adults rather than understanding it themselves. Our challenge is to show Sparkies that the Bible talks about real life – their real life.

We can tell children that God loves them so much He has a commandment JUST for them – they are to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1).

Children also need to know that the Bible is the complete Word of God. Many people in our society (including preachers) add or subtract from what God says in His Word. We know the Bible is the complete Word of God, but sometimes, we as leaders neglect to teach this priority truth.

Review over and over with your Sparkies –  
How does God talk to us? (Through the Bible.)  
How do we talk to God? (Through prayer.)

Make sure they understand it.

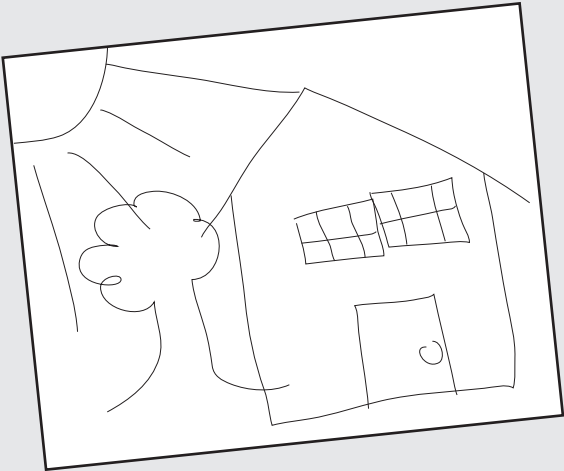
## Looking It Up

Psalm 119:105 *(Before you begin the lesson, ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group. You will also need someone to look up 2 Timothy 3:16. Choose an older child who will then stay up front with you and help you with the knife illustration.)*

## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- Paper for each child
- Pencil for each child
- Flashlight
- Knife (not sharp – you don't want anyone to get hurt)
- Poster board or PowerPoint® with 2 Timothy 3:16 written large enough for Sparkies to read
- A child to help you during the lesson. You need an older Sparkie who follows instructions well. Explain exactly what you want him or her to do.



## Showing

Ask the children to sit on the floor and give each a piece of paper and a pencil. Then, turn off the lights and cover the windows of your room with shades or curtains so it is difficult for children to clearly see. Tell the children to draw a house on their paper. Tell them to draw the sun in the sky and a tree in the yard. You can continue with some more instructions, depending on how the children react. If they're having fun, continue. If you have a few Sparkies more concerned about the darkness than the drawing, you can quit after one or two instructions.

## Telling

**(Turn on the lights.)** Let's look at your pictures. **(Allow some time for children to look at each others' pictures. If you have a small group, you might want to hang them on the wall or bulletin board.)** Was it hard to follow my instructions and draw the pictures? Why? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** Right, there was no light and you couldn't see what you were drawing. Light helps you see.

God tells us in the Bible that we live in darkness. That doesn't mean we live in darkness like a dark, dark night, but it means that we can't see what is right or wrong unless we look at what God tells us. I asked **(child's name)** to read a verse for us. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Psalm 119:105.)** That verse tells us that God's Word is a light. Just like a flashlight can lead us along a dark path, God's Word leads us through life.

Timothy lived a long, long time ago – back in Bible times. When he was a little boy, his mother and grandmother taught him verses from the Old Testament. Who can tell me some of the books of the Old Testament? **(Do this to remind them that the Old Testament is part of the Bible.)** Timothy's mom and grandma wanted him to know about God and he listened to what they said. He did the things he learned about from the verses he memorized.

One day when Timothy was a young man, the apostle Paul visited the town of Lystra where Timothy lived. Many people told Paul that Timothy was a fine young man. Paul decided that Timothy would be a good person to take along as a helper as he went from town to town teaching people about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul often told Timothy not to forget the good things his mother and grandmother had taught him about God.

Paul wrote Timothy two letters, and we can read those letters today. Where do you think we might find them? What are the letters called? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** The letters are the books of 1 and 2 Timothy – right here in our Bible! That's kind of special, isn't it? But here is something else you need to know. The letters weren't just for Timothy, they are for US too!

One of the things Paul wrote in his letter was the four reasons God gave us the Bible.

**(Child's name)**, please read 2 Timothy 3:16 for us.

**(Call on the child who will help you with the illustration.)**

## **1. First of all, God's Word is for doctrine or teaching.**

Let's say the word *doctrine* together. **(Point to doctrine.)** Sometimes people think doctrine is a GREAT BIG word that only preachers or teachers can understand. But that's not true. *Doctrine* means "teaching." Anything we read in the Bible is doctrine. God is teaching us.

I put a knife on that chair over there. Now I will tell you the doctrine (or teaching) of the knife. Knives can be used for good things like cutting food. Knives can also be dangerous. You can get cut by touching a knife. So do not touch the knife.

**(Child goes over to the chair and touches the knife, as if he or she is being sneaky.)**

1. The Bible teaches us.

## **2. Second, God's Word teaches us right from wrong.**

Now, let's look at the second word of our verse. **(Point to reproof.)** *Reproof* or *rebuke* means "to tell you what you are doing is wrong."

Touching the knife was wrong.

**(Child's name)**, stop touching the knife.

**(Child's name)**, I am your Awana® leader and your dad or mom put you under my care. I told you NOT to touch the knife, but you went ahead and did it anyhow. The Bible says that you are to listen to those who are your teachers (those in authority). What you did was wrong.

And that's exactly what the Bible tells us. God wants us to know when we've done wrong, so He talks to us through the Bible and tells us when we are wrong.

He tells us:

- Not to disobey our parents (Ephesians 6:1).
- Not to whine, grumble and complain (Philippians 2:14).
- Not to lie (Colossians 3:9).

**(You can include other commandments, if you would like.)**

1. The Bible teaches us.
2. The Bible tells us when we are doing something wrong.





### 3. *Let's read the next word: correction.*

**(Point to correction.)** Not only does the Bible tell me what I'm doing wrong, the Bible tells me the right way to do something.

**(Child's name),** you should have stayed away from the knife and NOT touched it. I told you that if you touched it, you might get hurt. A knife can be dangerous. Stay away from the knife.

The Bible tells us not to disobey, but to obey (Psalm 119:4).

The Bible tells us we are to rejoice (Philippians 4:4).

The Bible tells us we are to be honest (Proverbs 16:11).

1. The Bible teaches us.
2. The Bible tells us when we are doing something wrong.
3. The Bible tells us when we are doing something right.



### 4. *The next truth the Bible teaches us is: training or instruction in righteousness.*

**(Point to righteousness.)** Righteousness is goodness. The Bible not only tells us what is right, the Bible tells us how to keep on doing right.

**(Child's name),** next time, you should walk around the chair so you aren't even tempted to touch the knife. Stay away from the chair altogether and you won't be able to touch the knife. You won't even be tempted to touch the knife.

The Bible tells us to think about things that are good (Philippians 4:8).

The Bible tells us to stay away from things that make us think about doing wrong (2 Timothy 2:22).

1. The Bible teaches us.
2. The Bible tells us when we are doing something wrong.
3. The Bible tells us when we are doing something right.
4. The Bible tells us to keep on doing right.

## Challenging

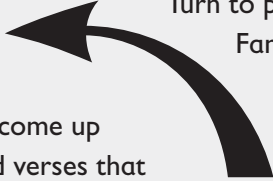
For unsaved Sparkies – the most important truth we learn in the Bible is that God loves us so much, He sent His Son to die for us on the cross. He gave us the gift of His Son so we no longer need to be separated from Him because of our sin – and we are all sinners. We need to understand that we are sinners and that we need a Savior. Then we need to trust Christ to be that Savior. (He is the ONLY Savior.) We do that by believing that He died on the cross and rose again on the third day.

For saved Sparkies – the Bible clearly tells us how to live our lives. God tells us what is right and what is wrong. If there is something you want to do and you aren't sure whether it's right or wrong, ask your parent or leader to help you find where God talks about it in the Bible. The Bible doesn't say the exact words about some of the things in your life, but God still tells us what to do. For instance, you will not find a verse that says: Do not mess with your brother's computer games. But Ephesians 6:1 tells us to obey our parents, so if Mom told you not to touch your brother's computer games, then you shouldn't do it. Ephesians 4:32 says to be kind to each other. If your brother told you not to touch his computer games, then you shouldn't touch them – that's kindness.

## Family Follow Up

What are some of the right or wrong issues that have come up in your family recently? Work with your children to find verses that address those subjects. Perhaps your children could help you write out the verses on poster board and then decorate them – so you can hang them up in your house as reminders as to what the Bible tells us to do.

Turn to page 193 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Ideas

- **Silent Night** – At the start of Large Group Time, give each Sparkie five shares. Through Large Group Time, any vocal noise they make results in the forfeit of one share. Each Sparkie who manages to keep all five shares earns another five at the end of the evening.
- **Blackout Night** – The week before, ask Sparkies to bring flashlights to club. Be sure to have extra flashlights on hand for Sparkies who forget to bring one. Find a black light and use it at various times during club.

### Game Ideas

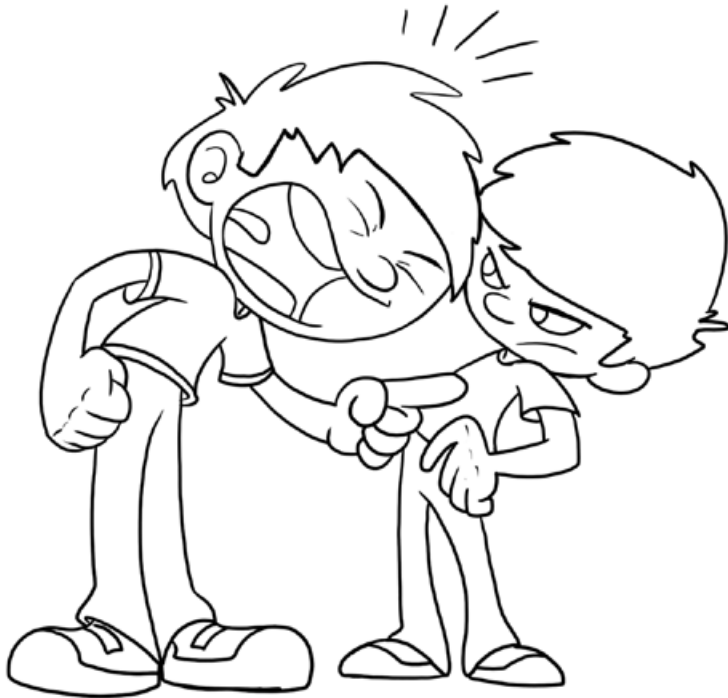
- **Play typical Awana games using only flashlights or a black light.**
- **Beanbag Baseball** – Each team has a beanbag for each player. A bucket is set some distance away from the team (as appropriate for Sparks-aged children). At the signal, the Sparkies each try to toss their beanbag into the bucket. If Sparkies miss, they can retrieve their beanbag for another try. The first team to get all their beanbags in the bucket wins.

### Teaching Options

- After Sparkies have finished looking at each other's pictures, teach the rest of Large Group Time with the only light being leaders' flashlights to follow with the blackout theme.
- You know your Sparkies best – if you think they will react negatively to having all the lights turned off, ask them to close their eyes while drawing their pictures, or have blindfolds available.

# SparksActivity

Color the pictures. Then draw a circle around the kids who are acting the way God wants them to.



## Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

## Thinking

Sparkies are learning to pray on their own. Adults have the responsibility to teach kids the privilege of talking to their heavenly Father at any moment of any day.

Unfortunately, many adults do a disservice to children by teaching that prayer is similar to making out a Christmas wish list. Sometimes adults even set kids up. The child wants a puppy and the parent knows the child will be getting a puppy for his birthday. So the parent tells the child to pray for the puppy. When the puppy shows up on birthday morning, the parent tells the child “Isn’t it wonderful that God answered your prayer?”

Or the child wants to visit Grandma and the parents are planning to go to Grandma’s for a week’s vacation. So Dad and Mom encourage their child to pray about it and then they announce they are going to Grandma’s – because God answered their child’s prayer (even though the trip was already planned).

The problem comes when we associate God’s hearing us with getting tangible things. Because there comes a time in a child’s life (and in an adult’s life) when we don’t get that thing we want. You’ve heard kids say, “I prayed I would make the team, but God didn’t answer my prayer.” Or, “God stopped listening to me. I prayed Aunt Karen would get well, but she didn’t.”

Adults aren’t immune to such thinking. “I don’t know why I didn’t get the job. I prayed about it and I felt sure that God would answer my prayer.” Or “We bought the new house, but couldn’t sell our old house. We prayed about it, but I guess, God wasn’t listening.”



Too often we hear people say things like this.

Is this a correct approach? Does God stop listening?

No. God hears us when we pray. He promises that. He tells us He cares about the sparrows and flowers – and that He cares about us even more.

He wants us to talk to Him all day long. He wants us to have a continual conversation with Him. What are we supposed to talk about? Anything. How are we to pray? With thanksgiving and asking everything to be done according to His will.

God answers prayer – we need to accept those answers and not be more focused on what we “think” the answer should be rather than what God desires the answer to be.

## Looking It Up

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verses and be ready to read them to the group.*)

## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- Whiteboard or blackboard
- Markers or chalk
- Write 1 Thessalonians 5:17 in large letters on top of the board.
- Write the alphabet under the verse, one letter on a line.



## Showing

Start the class by telling the children you will be working together to write a “thanks” psalm. (You could explain that *psalm* is the Hebrew word for “song.”) Then together list something you’re thankful for under each letter of the alphabet.

Additional option: Ask a leader to write the completed psalm on paper. Make a computer copy of it, adding a decorative border and putting the name of your group and the date written. (Written by the Sparkies at Village Community Church on November 12, 20\_\_). Make a copy for each child.



# Telling

*(Leaders, tell this story in your own words.)*

“Hey, Chloe, Jacob! Look! Mr. Anderson is walking Muffie. Let’s go see him.” Joel ran down the street to the Anderson’s house and Chloe and Jacob followed.

“Muffie is so white and fluffy.” Chloe hugged the tiny dog. Muffie wagged her tail and barked at Chloe.

“She sure likes you.” Mr. Anderson patted his dog on the head. “Of course, she likes all people as long as they aren’t mean to her. She likes to be around people more than she likes to be around other dogs.”

Chloe sighed. “I wish we could get a dog. Dad and Mom said we can’t because of my brother’s allergies.”

“Your parents are right, Jacob. You need to feed them and let them out and take them to the vet. Not only are they a lot of work, but they can be expensive.” Mr. Anderson looked at Muffie. “Right, Muff? You cost lots of money.”

Muffie kept wagging her tail as if to say, “But I’m worth it.”

“I’m getting a dog,” Joel announced.

Chloe and Jacob looked at their friend. “Joel, you NEVER told us you’re getting a dog.”

“What kind are you getting?” Mr. Anderson asked.

“Don’t know yet. But my birthday is coming up and I decided that’s what I wanted.”

Mr. Anderson laughed. “You DECIDED that’s what you wanted so you know that’s what you’re getting?”

“Well, yeah. I’m praying about it and Mom always says God answers prayers.”

“Do your parents know you’re praying for a dog?” Mr. Anderson sat down on his front steps.

“Yes. They said they didn’t want to get a dog right now, but I figure if I pray hard enough, I can get one anyway, right?”

“Allergies can be a problem,” Mr. Anderson agreed.

“Well, MY parents say we can’t get a dog until I’m older because they’re a lot of work.” Jacob stomped his foot.

“That’s NOT the way God works.” Chloe shook her head at her friend. “Mom says we’re to pray that God does what’s best for us in all things.”





“Chloe’s right, Joel. God isn’t in the business of wish granting. He wants what’s best for us and He wants us to be happy in any situation.” Mr. Anderson paused. “Remember when that missionary family visited church a few weeks ago?”

“I do,” said Jacob. “They came to our house for lunch. I liked them. At lunch they told us even more missionary adventures.”

“Remember they told us about the village they visited? The people weren’t even allowed to have a Bible. Someone snuck one in and they tore the pages from the binding so all the Christians could have at least a few pages of God’s Word.”

“And they sang praises to God because they had at least ONE complete Bible – even though the pages were shared by all the families,” Joel said.

“Right, the Bible was the most valued thing they owned. They’re poor and live in shacks, yet the Bible is more important to them than anything else.”

“Hmm ... if I can’t pray for a dog, what CAN I pray for?” Joel asked.

“No one said you shouldn’t pray for a puppy,” Mr. Anderson slapped his leg and Muffie jumped into his arms. “You can thank God for puppies, but also tell Him you know that your dad and mom don’t want you to have one right now and that you’re OK with that.”

“And,” said Jacob, “you can thank God that the Andersons live on our street and they let us play with Muffie.”

Muffie barked as if to say, “Good idea.”



## Challenging

What ARE we to pray about? *(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18. Talk about the verses for a few minutes.)*

Let's look up some verses and see what God has to say.

*(You could divide into small groups for this and have one leader work with a small group of kids on each verse, explaining what the verse means. You could hand out the verses the week before you do this lesson, so the leader has time to think about the meaning of the verse. If you do this all together, assign leaders to look up the*

*verses before club starts so you don't have a lot of "empty air," giving kids time to start talking to each other. You want your readers to be ready.)*

Here are five important things we can pray about any time. *(If you have a younger group of Sparkies or Sparkies who don't know that much about the Bible – only talk about one or two points.)*

We are to pray about:

1. Staying away from sin (2 Corinthians 13:7)
2. Living the way God wants me to live (Colossians 1:10)
3. Telling others about Christ (Philemon 1:6)
4. Being courageous to live for the Lord (Ephesians 6:10)
5. Praying for each other, leaders, parents, etc. (Ephesians 6:18)

For unsaved Sparkies – Maybe you have never talked to God, because you don't know Him as your Savior. The most important truth we learn in the Bible is that God loves us so much, He sent His Son to die for us on the cross. He gave us the gift of His Son so we no longer need to be separated from Him because of our sin – and we are all sinners. We need to understand that we are sinners and that we need a Savior. Then we need to trust Christ to be that Savior. (He is the ONLY Savior.) We do that by believing that He died on the cross and rose again on the third day.

For saved Sparkies – Remember, we can pray anywhere, anytime and about any thing. We should always pray that we want what God wants for us. We call that "asking for His will." God does hear us. God cares about us. He knows what is best; we should trust in Him. Remember, too, that we are to be thankful.



## Family FollowUp

In club, we've been talking about the importance of being thankful to God, our heavenly Father, in EVERY situation. Each night at the supper table, list, with your children, five "thanks" that your family has for that day. At first, children will probably choose the obvious: my parents, my house, my pet, etc. As you continue to do this, encourage them to develop a thankful attitude for the not-so-obvious; "I'm sorry Aunt Karen is sick, but I am thankful we were able to make cards for her today;" "I'm sorry I didn't get to go to Trevor's birthday party, but I'm thankful I got to play a game with Dad here at home."

Turn to page 193 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!

# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Idea

- **Mission Night** – Does your church support Adopt-a-Club®? In which country? Discuss aspects of the culture of that country. Draw a big chalk outline of the country on the parking lot (or chalkboard if going to the parking lot doesn't work) and have Sparkies chalk in mountains, rivers and cities. Draw and explain the flag. Eat food from the country. Pray for the people in that country.

## Game Ideas

- **Telephone** – Play Telephone within the teams. One leader starts by whispering a message in the first Sparkie's ear. One by one the Sparkies whisper the message into the next Sparkie's ear. Then the last Sparkie tells the first leader the message. If the message at the end is the same as when it started, award points.
- **Rat Race** – This works particularly well on those nights you're having trouble settling Sparkies down. Yell "Rat Race" in a loud voice. At that call, all Sparkies and leaders on every team must run around the game circle once. The first team to have all its members (including leaders) standing at attention and quiet on its own team line earns points.

## Teaching Options

- If you play Telephone, use it as a teaching option. We may not hear everything perfectly because we're human, but God always hears EXACTLY what we say when we pray.
- Tell Sparkies that next week, anyone who can tell you three things they prayed about and what days they prayed will get a surprise.







Color the poster and hang it in your room so you  
remember to thank God in every situation.



# Reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

# Thinking

Explaining to kids how much God truly loves us is difficult because in one sense, we ourselves can't comprehend the magnitude of God's care for us. We've done nothing to deserve God's love, but He desires to give it to us – He has done so much to show us how much He cares.

That God became flesh, dwelt among humanity, was crucified and then resurrected are huge concepts that have boggled theological minds for years.

Coming to grips with why God bothered to do all this is equally baffling. This lesson stresses our sinful condition and how great it is that God still loves us. Why does He insist on loving us?



# Looking It Up

1 John 4:19 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up this verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

# Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- A piece of paper
- Someone who knows how to make paper airplanes, preferably a Sparkie
- Something with water in it, big enough to dunk the paper airplane a few times

# Showing

*(Call on your volunteer who can make paper airplanes. [Preferably a Sparkie, but it can be a leader.] If it's a Sparkie, let him know his plane will be ruined so he's not surprised. Place the container of water in front of you.)*

I've asked (**Sparkie's name**) to help me in this lesson by making a paper airplane. (**You and the Sparkies watch as the airplane is made.**) Looks like she's done. Let's see how well her plane flies. (**Have Sparkie throw her airplane.**) Not bad at all. Thank you. (**Take the airplane and have Sparkie sit down.**)

# Telling

Here we have a paper airplane that **(Sparkie's name)** made for us. She makes a good airplane but let's pretend that she's even better at airplane making. Let's pretend that she was able to not only make this airplane but also give it a brain. Our airplane can now think and even fly by itself! Our airplane can decide to fly left or right or up or down, wherever it wants.

In order for our plane to be able to fly around it has to know some things to keep it safe. Airplanes with brains start out pretty silly, so you have to tell them things. What are some rules we might want **(Sparkie's name)** to tell her airplane to keep it safe? **(Let Sparkies give rules.)**

Those are all very good rules and I have one more. You may have noticed this tub of water up here. Is it good for paper airplanes to fly into water? **(Sparkies may have already brought this one up; if so, bring it back up or stop when they mention the water.)** No, paper doesn't last too long when it gets wet. **(Sparkie's name)** should tell her airplane that wherever it goes, it should avoid water.

But let's say that our paper airplane has an attitude! It doesn't think water will hurt it at all. **(Use a paper airplane voice! No, WE don't know what an airplane voice sounds like, either. Just make it up.)** "I'm not scared of water. It won't hurt me. Oh sure, **(Sparkie's name)** told me to

stay out of water, but she's always telling me what to do. I'm my own plane, and I can go where I want." **(Hold the paper airplane and have it "fly" into the container of water.)** "Look at that! I'm fine, water won't hurt me!" **(Throw the airplane again after it is wet. The airplane will probably fly better after it is wet at first, or it may flop on the ground, depending on your paper.)** "I fly just fine. I knew she was trying to keep me from having fun. In fact, I can probably go back into the water again."

**(At this point, continue to have the airplane go into the water and then throw it against the wall or hit the floor. The plane will get floppy. Eventually be a little rough with it so it balls up or falls apart. Then still use "airplane voice.")** "I don't have to listen to any rules. I can get wet. I can fly into walls and even hit the floor over and over and I don't care . . . Oh no! I'm falling apart! My nose is all bent. I can't fly well anymore. What happened?"

Well, getting wet didn't help our paper airplane did it? That's probably why **(Sparkie's name)** told it to stay out of the water. **(Sparkie's name)** is the person who made the airplane, but do you think she wants the airplane back now? **(Show kids the soaking wet ball of paper that used to be the airplane.)** What good is a wet ball of paper? It can't fly like an airplane anymore; you can't even tell that it was an airplane.

But **(Sparkie's name)** really loves her airplane because she made it and she feels sorry for it. Maybe she could take it home and unroll it, flatten it out, let it dry, and start all over again. That might work! **(Sparkie's name)** is the airplane's owner; she is the one who made it. She wants to see her airplane fly again and enjoy being the great airplane she made it to be in the first place.

God is our Creator. He made you and me, and He made us with brains! He knew that we would get ourselves into trouble, so He wrote out some rules for us so we could know what to do. But, like **(Sparkie's name's)** airplane, we can do silly and wrong things. Even though God tells us not to lie, sometimes we do. Even though God tells us not to take stuff from other people, sometimes we do. We're just like this airplane – we fly right into what God told us to stay away from.

Do you think God wants to throw away what He created? No, if He loved us enough to make us to begin with, I'm sure He loves us even when we sin and hurt ourselves. God sent Jesus Christ to die for our sins. He did this so He could forgive us, and the Bible even says that He makes us a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). **(Make sure your Sparkies understand this – you don't want them to be afraid that they'll become an entirely different human person. Yet, they can understand that they'll become a new creation in Christ.)**

## Telling continued

He wants to help us stay out of the punishment that sin brings. He wants to clean us up, straighten us out and get us flying again! God shows that He loves us by wanting to do all these things for us.

**(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read 1 John 4:19.)** God showed His love to you long before you were even born. Because God loves us so much, we can love Him back. How great it is to know that our Creator loves us, the people He made, so much that He wants to make us brand-new again! He even gave us a list of rules (in the Bible) so we can live our lives the best way possible. He wants to take away our sin, and one day have us all be in heaven with Him, where we will stay new forever!



## Challenging

For unsaved Sparkies – God is our Creator and He loves us very much. We know He loves us because He died for us. He tells us in the Bible what to do and what not to do to be safe. He wants us to stay away from things that can hurt us. But sometimes we do those things anyway. We all sin; we sometimes do what God tells us not to do. Sometimes we can sin so much that we end up really hurting ourselves and others, but God still loves us. Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again so He can take care of our sin problem and make us new. How do you get that forgiveness and become a new creation in Christ? By trusting Christ as Savior.

For saved Sparkies – Once you are saved, do you think you should keep doing things you know are wrong? If God loved us so much that He would die for us, we can know that what He tells us in the Bible is for our own good. Because we know that He loves us so much, we can trust what He tells us and willingly obey His words. When we love God, we want to know what the Bible says and we can go do it. If we do mess up, we know that God still loves us and nothing can separate us from God's love. We're His and He will keep us forever!

## Family FollowUp

Turn to page 193 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!

Parents were here before kids! Parents love their kids, so they make rules and tell kids how to do things to help them out. Parents make rules to help kids just like God makes rules to help us. What are some family rules that your parents made to help protect you? How do these rules show that your parents love you?

Parents, is there a rule your child has a difficult time understanding? Discuss why you made the rule and how the rule helps your child.



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Ideas

- **BARF Night** – Be a Real Friend and then Bring a Real Friend. Kids will love the name and when they love a theme, they'll want to bring their friends! Hand out snacks like dog food (Chex® mix) and worm stew (gummy worms and crumpled Oreos®). This is a good night to bring friends as we talk about the gospel message and God's love for us!
- **Love Night** – God loves us even though we sin. Use hearts and other Valentine's Day decorations to enhance the love theme.

## Game Ideas

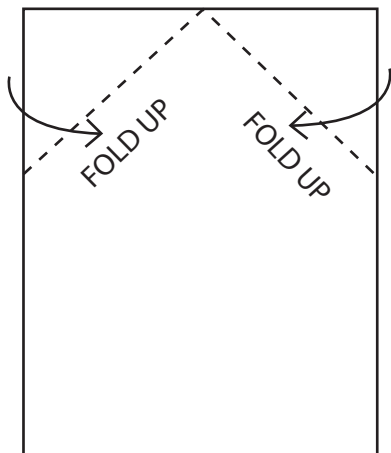
- **Airplane-Making Contest** – Give Sparkies paper to make airplanes. See whose airplane flies the farthest. Or make it a team challenge. Whichever team's airplane goes the farthest wins team points.
- **Whatever You Do, Don't Smile** – Have Sparkies sit in a circle. One person starts as "it" in the middle. He walks up to a Sparkie and says, "Whatever you do, don't smile!" in his funniest, goofiest voice and with a funny face. If the Sparkie he is talking to smiles, she is it. If not, he goes on to try to make another Sparkie smile.

## Teaching Options

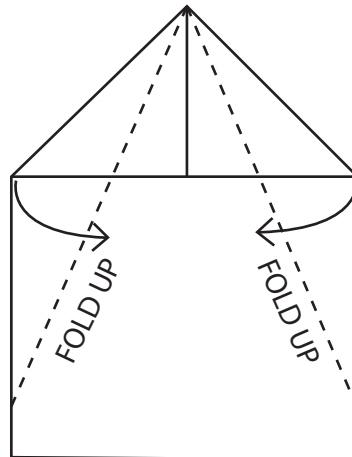
- Dress up as a pilot for the lesson.
- Have leaders serve snacks dressed as flight attendants or acting like flight attendants.



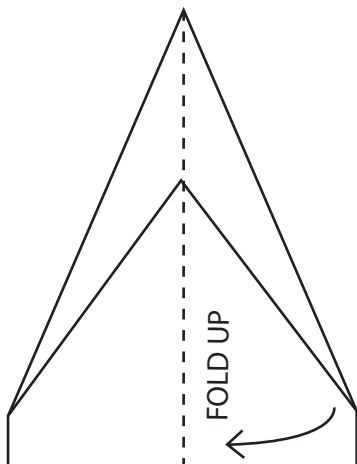
# SparksActivity



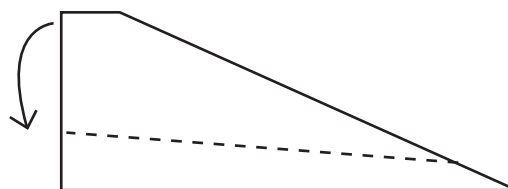
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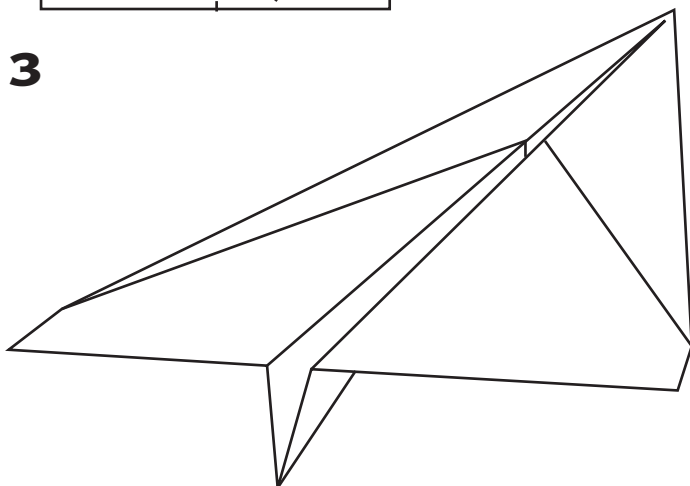


**3**



FOLD SIDES DOWN  
(IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS)

**4**



Follow the directions to make a paper airplane, then write or draw rules that God gives us in His Word on the airplane – such as obeying our parents, not lying, not whining, being kind, etc.



# Reading

Genesis 4



## Thinking

Children can be stubborn sometimes, can't they? Even though they're caught doing something wrong, they'll deny what they've done. They know the right thing to do but are too prideful (yes, even the young ones) to do what is right. After a while (and with some stern directives) they usually fess up or do what they know they ought to do – albeit with a frustrated temper.

Isn't it good to know that kids have been stubborn since the time of Adam and Eve? I didn't say it's comforting, but at least we know it's nothing new. Though they were older than your Sparkies at the time of this account, chances are Cain and Abel were typical siblings. Typical siblings fight, bicker, apologize at the encouragement of their parents, etc. However, I think that the end of the account of these two brothers differs greatly from anything your Sparkies have experienced.

Cain was a farmer. Abel worked with the animals. Cain offered the fruits of the land to acknowledge God as Creator. Abel offered the firstborn of his flocks – he brought a sacrifice for the shedding of blood to acknowledge his need for God. God looked on Abel with favor. He looked

on Cain with sadness. In Genesis 4:6-7, God speaks with Cain and tells him that if he does what he knows is right, he will be accepted. Cain is angry because God did not accept his offering. But Cain did not bring his best to God. Evidently Cain knew what he should have done and chose not to do it.

Despite their stubbornness, young children, like your Sparkies, are still very concerned with pleasing their parents and the other adults in their lives. This is the time to instill within them the desire to do what God instructs us to do in His Word. In this lesson, we will impress on these young ones how doing what is right the first time is always the best decision. We show our love to God through our obedience to His Word and in turn, God's love is reflected to those around us.

# Looking It Up

Genesis 4:3-7 (*Ask a Sparkie to look the verses up and be ready to read them to the group.*)

## Showing

*(Ask another leader to dress up and be the Sparkie in the conversation. "Sam" can be either a boy or a girl. We'll use a boy here.)*

**Say – Tell me if this conversation sounds familiar to you:)**

**YOU:** Sam, I need for you to pick up your cars and trucks in the family room and then help me set the table for dinner.

**SAM (stomping foot):** Awww, mom, do I have to?

**YOU:** Yes. I need your help. Dad's Bible study is meeting here tonight. I need you to do that for me.

**SAM (looking dejected):** All right. I'll clean up my mess.

**YOU (looking back to Sparkies):** BUT instead of picking up his toys, Sam sits down and turns on the TV – just to see what's on. But he keeps watching and keeps watching and ... OK, back to the action.

**YOU (pretending to walk into the family room):** Did you clean up your ... Sam! Why are you watching TV? Your trucks are still all over the floor.

**SAM (looking very guilty):** Oops. I'm sorry, Mom. I haven't seen this TV show before and I kind of forgot about what I was doing.

**YOU:** Well, Sam, I'm sorry but you knew what you were supposed to do and you chose not to do it. No television for two days.

**SAM (in shock and anger):** WHAT? My favorite TV show is on!

**YOU:** I'm sorry, Sam, but you did not do as I asked.

Do you think it's unfair that Sam can't watch TV for two days just because he didn't pick up his mess? (*Allow Sparkies to answer.*)



# Telling

Many of you know what happened to Cain and Abel, but even if you already know about them, listen carefully to their biography. You may learn something you don't know.

Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve. They each had a job to do for the family. Abel took care of the sheep and Cain took care of the crops – so Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer.

To show thanks to God, Cain and Abel made sacrifices (offerings) to Him. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Genesis 4:3-7.)** OK, let's stop there for a second – do you know what a sacrifice is? When you sacrifice something, you are giving up something that is very valuable or important. Cain brought a sacrifice of the food that he grew and Abel brought a sacrifice from his flock of lambs. Cain's sacrifice was not offered with the same attitude as Abel's. **(The emphasis here should be on the attitude of Cain and Abel, not the sacrifices themselves.)**

God looked at Abel's sacrifice and was happy with it. He looked at Cain's sacrifice and was not happy. God spoke to Cain and asked him why he didn't do what he knew he should have done.

Oh no! Cain knew the right thing to do, but he did the wrong thing instead. Now he was angry. Instead of telling God he was sorry for what he had done, Cain stayed angry. And THEN he got angry at his brother Abel because God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice. Cain got SO angry, that he actually killed Abel.

Let's think about this story in a different way. Do you have brothers or sisters? If you don't have brothers or sisters, do you have cousins or friends at school? Do you sometimes get jealous because you think that they got something you wanted or think you should have gotten?

Sometimes life isn't fair . . . that's life. BUT sometimes life is VERY fair, but we don't do what we're supposed to do and THEN we get angry at what happens.

At the beginning of the lesson, Sam's mom told him to clean up his mess. Instead he watched television – then he got angry because his mom said he couldn't watch TV for two days! Was that unfair? No. Sam knew what his mother had told him to do, he just refused to do it!

Mom knew Sam needed to be taught a lesson.

Cain chose to disobey. He knew what kind of offering was pleasing to the Lord, but he chose to bring less than he should have. Bringing our best to God, to our family, to our school work and to our church is pleasing to God. Choosing to do what is right the first time – even though it may not be something we want to do – will show others that we love God.

Do you have a favorite teacher at school or at church? Or another adult whom you love to talk to and will do anything to please him or her? That's how we need to think about God. We should want to please and to honor Him no matter what it takes – even if we don't want to do what we need to do.

# Challenging

Spend time reading and memorizing God's Word, the Bible. As you read and memorize, you will come to know how God wants you to live.

Just because you're young does not mean that you can't talk to God and pay attention to what He says to you in His Word, the Bible. One thing He tells us is to obey our parents.

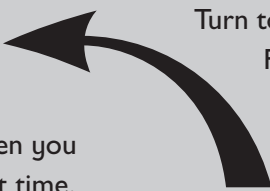
Cain and Abel were children of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were the first sinners and everyone born after them was, is and will be sinners. Yes, even though we don't know about Abel's sin, he was a sinner too. But we know that He loved God and wanted to do what was right. Cain decided to give in to his sin and do what he knew was wrong.

You have that same choice many times during the day. Will you do what you know is right or what you know is wrong?



## Family Follow Up

Parents – share with your child a time in your life when you wish you would have done as you were asked the first time. It can be an example from when you were young, or a more recent one. It's important for children to see and know that their parents, though they're still the authority in the house, are not perfect and sometimes need to be reminded of the same things that they (the children) are learning.



Turn to page 194 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Idea

- **Sibling Night** – The week before, ask Sparkies to bring in pictures of their siblings and their parents with their siblings the next week. Encourage Sparkies to ask their parents to tell them stories about their childhood growing up with siblings. Tell Sparkies to ask their parents to describe a time they didn't get along with their siblings but wish they had. Allow Sparkies to tell some of those stories. Talk about other siblings in the Bible like Jacob and Esau, Miriam and Moses, etc.

### Game Ideas

- **Topsy-Turvy Awana Games** – Life without our siblings would feel topsy-turvy. Play regular Awana games, but have the Sparkies run backwards and/or run around the circle clockwise instead of counter-clockwise.
- **New Game Night** – Many Sparkies have had or will have babies in the family. Play a new game that you've never done before at Awana and put the emphasis on the newness. Tell the Sparkies that it's going to be great, just like having a new baby sister or brother is great. Check out *The Official Sparks Game Book*. It has lots of new ideas and games.

### Teaching Options

- Consider having a second Sparkie help you in the conversation. Choose a different situation that your Sparkies can relate to.
- During the Challenging section, give Sparkies the opportunity to choose the best option. They have choices to make every day. Ask them which is the best option: pestering their sister or helping her clean her room; ignoring their brother or playing a game with him, etc.

## Reading

Genesis 12:1-9; 2 Timothy 4:7

## Thinking

No one enjoys uncertainty. Even kids like to know what's coming next. They are famous for asking, "What are we going to do now?" "When are we gonna be there?" "Is it supper yet?" We all want to know what's coming up so we can get prepared.

Faith is the opposite of us being in control! Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word of God, meaning we give up our plans and follow God's plans instead. God has had some rather unique plans for people over the years, making faith a real challenge. Paul calls the life of faith a race that must be run, and a fight that must be fought. It's not easy, nor was it intended to be.

Often we get the idea that faith in Christ is just something we say in a prayer to "get saved." We forget that the moment of salvation begins an entire life of faith. This lesson gets kids to look at what a life of faith is all about.

In this portion of the biography in the Bible Abraham is Abram and Sarah is Sarai. You may choose to use their names or the names God gave them later. Choose what you feel would be most understandable for your Sparkies.

## Looking It Up

2 Timothy 4:7

## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- A chalkboard or whiteboard or a large sheet of paper
- Pictures of the following items, or if you're really ambitious, bring the actual items to club.  
(If you can't find pictures, do simple drawings of the various objects.)
 

• Sleeping bag	• Winter coat	• Suitcase	• Flashlight
• Tent	• Matches	• Camera	• Gloves
• Hat	• Suntan lotion	• Binoculars	• Other objects that you might want to include
• Baseball glove	• Bug spray	• Wool socks	
• Pen	• Fishing rod	• Winter hat	
• Notebook	• Sunglasses	• Rope	
• Boots	• Money	• Map	



## Showing

I have a list of things (or the actual objects) someone might need while going on a trip. You see more than 20 things listed here on the board (or placed on the table). I want you to choose five things that you would take with you on a trip. **(Do not tell the Sparkies where they are going on their trip; just let them pick their top five items. This may take some time to allow the Sparkies to get a consensus opinion; help them along to get five items. I will pick five and use them for this illustration. Adapt your lesson according to your group's choices.)**

## Telling

All right, we have our list (or things). You chose a suitcase, money, a camera, a map and matches. Sounds like a good list. You can throw your money, camera, map and matches into your suitcase and off you go on your trip. Happy travels!

But wait! You don't know where you are going. I do, though, and you are not at ALL prepared, I can tell you that. I don't think your map will help you at all. The place where you are going is not on that map! Money might help a little bit, but I'm not sure there's a whole lot of stuff to buy there. Matches might help, but I doubt you'll have anything to burn. I don't know, I think you should pick another list of five things because you'd be in trouble with this list.

**(Allow Sparkies to choose five additional items.)**

OK, you have a new list of suntan lotion, sunglasses, sleeping bag, tent and flashlight. This list is a little bit better. You will definitely need some of these things, but still, once you get there you will see you should have picked some better items. Oh well, have a nice trip.

But wait, you still don't know where you are going, do you? It's very hard to plan for a trip when you don't know where you're headed. That's OK, I want

everyone to stand up and pretend like you have these items, and then everyone face north and pretend you're walking to where I want you to go. **(Point them toward north.)**

Anyone want to know where we are going yet? Well, keep going north, I'll let you know when we get there. **(Continue to have Sparkies walk in place, facing north.)** Pretend we've just walked for days and days and days, going north the whole time. We will soon be at our destination. Up north it gets colder, doesn't it? Sure wish we had brought our winter coat and hat. Oh boy, look ahead. I think I see snow and ice! Boy, those boots would sure come in handy right now, wouldn't they?

OK, we're there! We have arrived at our destination, the North Pole! Isn't it lovely? I think we had better get out our sleeping bags, put up our tent and try to get warm.

Everyone sit down, settle in, and try to warm up here in the frozen north. It seems kind of silly to take a trip when you don't know where you are going, doesn't it? You can be a better packer when you know exactly what you need.



## Telling

continued

Abraham was a man who lived a long time ago. We read about him in the Bible. One day God told Abraham to get ready to leave on a trip. Abraham didn't know where he was going, so you know what he did? He brought everything he had! He brought all his family, all his animals and everything he owned. He even brought his nephew Lot. Then he got up and left. He had no idea where he was going, but he trusted that God would show him the way and let him know when he got there! That's amazing! Can you imagine picking up all your stuff and just leaving RIGHT NOW having no idea why or where you were going?

Can you imagine how hard it was for Abraham and his family to walk through the desert heat, making sure all the animals had water and food, making sure they were going the right direction, making sure they didn't lose any of the gold and silver they brought with them? (Abraham was rich and got richer on the way.)

Abraham made the journey as God told him. But you know, even Abraham had sin problems. One time he told his wife, Sarah to lie to the king – and that made a BIG MESS. He got back on the right path and kept walking though. Sure enough, God led Abraham to the place where God wanted him to be. Abraham showed that he believed in God because he was willing to pack up and leave on a trip even though he didn't know where he was going. God gave Abraham a nice piece of land for his family and they settled down to live there.

God is not going to show up tomorrow and tell you to pack up and leave town. But He does give us instructions (rules) on how to live in His Word, the Bible. We need to listen to what He says.



You are young, but you're growing fast. You will all have to make choices in the future – big, important choices. Some choices will be easy and some will be very hard. You will have happy days and you will have sad days. Remember, God is with you through all those days. He tells you in His Word how to make the right choices.

The right thing to do is trust God.

Abraham trusted that what God told him was the right thing to do.

We also need to trust that what God says is the right thing to do.

Think about this.

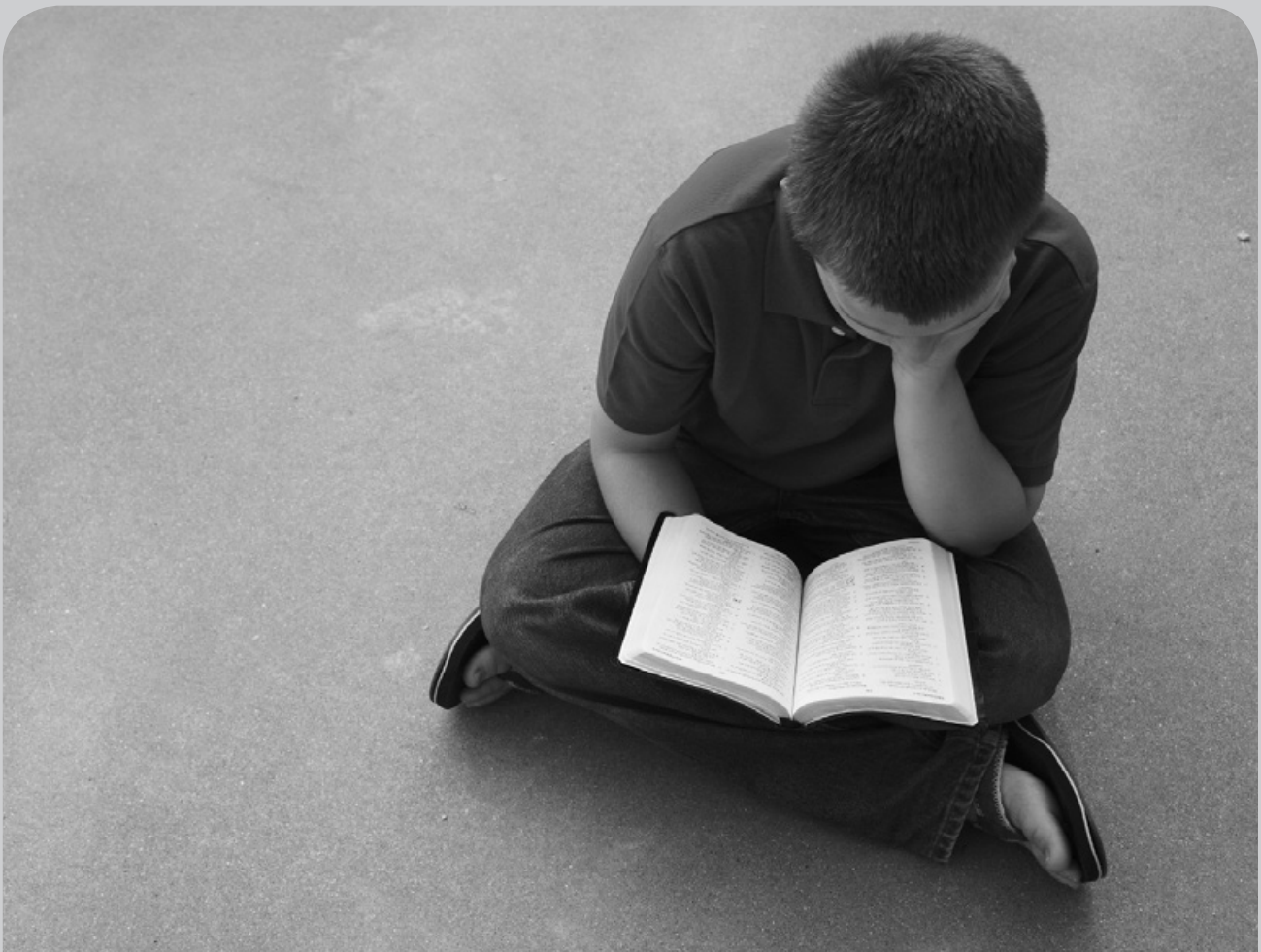
- God knows the future AND He has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us.
- God has given us His Word – clear instructions on how to live.
- God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us make good choices.

## Challenging

When we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and came alive again, our sins are forgiven and we receive the gift of eternal life. Even though our bodies may die, we will live with Jesus Christ forever and ever in heaven. Have you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?

Once you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, your life of faith begins. We can't know everything that will happen to us, but God is with us. God loves us and promises that if we continue to listen to His Word, we will make it to where He wants us to be.

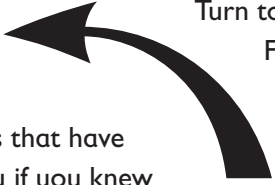
Life is exciting and life can be hard. We need help to get through it. God is there for us. He gives us the Bible so we know what to do. We can read what He wants us to do. We can always pray and ask Him for help too. We also have each other. We're all in this together, and we are supposed to love each other and help each other.





## Family Follow Up

Parents – share with your kids some of the surprising things that have happened in your life. What would you have done differently if you knew those things were going to happen? What can families do to help each other through life when we don't know what will happen next? What are some things your family can do right now to be prepared for whatever life may bring? Saving money and buying helmets may prevent some surprises, but life will always bring something new your way. The only thing that can truly keep you prepared is knowing God's Word and having faith and a relationship with Jesus Christ. Are your family's priorities reflecting that truth?



Turn to page 194 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!

# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Night

- **Travel Time** – The week before, encourage Sparkies to bring their favorite thing to take on trips. It might be a pillow, suitcase, game, jacket, etc. Decorate the room with pictures of places both cold and hot. Wear a host uniform – maybe something one would wear on safari or as a host on a cruise ship. Encourage Sparkies to dress up like they would for their favorite trip destination.

## Game Ideas

- **Blind Run** – Sparkies line up on their lines around the circle. Two Sparkies play at a time. One Sparkie is blindfolded and another is not. At the start of the game, the Sparkie without the blindfold faces the blindfolded Sparkie touching his shoulder. They then run around the circle with the Sparkie who is not blindfolded in front. When they get back to the line, the Sparkie with the blindfold removes it and goes into the center for the the pin or beanbag. Repeat the game however many times it takes for all Sparkies to have a turn.
- **Backpack Shuffle** – Collect four or five of the items listed in the Getting Ready section for each team and have a backpack for each team. Teams line up at one end of the game room. The items for each team are placed at the other end. When the game begins, one player runs to the end, packs all the items in the backpack and runs with it back to the line. The next player runs with the backpack back across the room, unpacks it and leaves it and the items there, and then runs back to the line. The next player runs to the other end and once again packs up all the items and runs with the backpack to the line. This repeats until all players have had a turn. If there are an uneven number of players between teams, some players might have to go twice.

## Teaching Options

- When talking about how God is with us through both the happy and sad days, give an example from your life or ask another leader to give an example. Ask a leader who has a life-changing story about how God was with him to share his experience with the Sparkies. They'll appreciate the concrete examples of how God helps us.
- The Challenging section talks about how life can be exciting and hard. Ask Sparkies for examples of how it can be exciting and hard, and what the Bible says about those exciting and hard times that can help us.

## SparksActivity

On a large sheet of paper (newsprint is always good), ask the Sparkies to work together to draw Abraham and his family walking across the desert.

## Reading

Genesis 19

## Thinking

Abraham and Lot are examples of two men with two different personalities.

First, Abraham is a great example of kindness. He allowed Lot to have the first choice in claiming household property. Lot saw the better land, so that's what he chose. Abraham could've chosen the best for himself and then told Lot he could have the leftover portion – but that's not what happened. Of course, Lot should have refused and let his Uncle Abraham go first, but his greed could not be stopped.

Second, Lot is an example of what happens to someone who is not only greedy, but who refuses to stay away from temptation. He moved onto good land, but next to a bad city. At first Lot and his family only lived CLOSE to Sodom, but the next thing you know, they were living inside the city. Not a good choice for Lot.

This lesson deals with two men who are opposites. Abraham showed kindness and godliness. Lot showed greed and an inability to say “no” to temptation. Kindness means thinking of other people. When we think of ourselves first, we usually make mistakes and end up getting hurt. By thinking of others, we can avoid these traps. Abraham's kindness kept him out of trouble!





# Looking It Up

Ephesians 4:32 (*Ask a leader or Sparkie to have this verse ready to read.*)

## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- A chair
- A table
- Two food choices: an appealing-looking dessert or warm slice of pizza and something unappealing such as a couple of dry, broken crackers. Supply enough of the appealing-looking food so two people could share it.

## Showing & Telling

*(This lesson requires two leader volunteers – an adult leader and a student leader would be great choices. You will need to coach them beforehand on what to do. The script could be something like the following.)*

**YOU:** The Bible tells us many times to be kind to people. One of the ways we can be kind is by being considerate. Can anyone tell me what *considerate* means?

**(Allow Sparkies time to respond.)** Right, considerate means to be caring, thoughtful or allowing the other person to be first. Considerate is being polite.

Tonight I would like to reward one of our leaders. **(Choose someone who has literally gone out of his or her way for club.)** She worked hard for our Sparks club this week. She spent a lot of time helping us ... **(Fill in what the leader has really done such as coach the Sparks-a-Rama™ team, plan a contest and make a colorful chart to record progress, etc. I wanted to honor her in a special way so I brought her favorite treat. Continue to praise her by adding something like: She is here all the time, and**

**we don't even pay her. She comes here for free! She listens to your verses, she sends you postcards when you are sick, etc.)**

Let's all give a hand for \_\_\_\_\_.  
**(Lead an enthusiastic round of applause.)**

Before \_\_\_\_\_ comes to get her treat, I would like to tell you about a great example of kindness in the Bible. At the beginning of the Bible in Genesis 13 (the very first book of the Bible) we read about Uncle Abraham and Nephew Lot. When Abraham moved to a place called Negev, Lot went with him. So they lived by each other and they took care of their animals together, but now they had a problem – they had TOO MANY animals for their land and the people who worked for them started arguing with each other ALL THE TIME! They needed to divide the land.





Abraham told Lot to pick a spot first. Now, this would've been a good time for Nephew Lot to return the kindness that Abraham had shown to him.

He could've said, "Uncle Abe, you are older than I am. You are the one who has shown great kindness to me. You have guided me. I think YOU should choose first."

Do you think Lot said that? No. He was excited about getting the best land. He didn't even think about being kind (or at least the Bible doesn't tell us he thought about it).

Do you think Lot let Abraham go first? No, he didn't. Lot went ahead and picked first. He wasn't nice at all.

"\_\_\_\_\_ (name of honored leader), could you come up here?" (*Leader comes up front.*)

We have a special treat here to honor you for being such a great Awana leader. Please take some.

**LEADER 1:** Well, before I do, I would like to also honor \_\_\_\_\_ (name of student leader or other leader). When I came in tonight, he held the door open for me and I appreciate that (*or some other, menial task that doesn't require any work or energy.*) I think he should have a special treat too. Come on up, \_\_\_\_\_ (other leader).

(*LEADER 2 comes up front.*)

**LEADER 1:** I really appreciated you holding the door open for me before. I want you to have first choice of the treats here.

**LEADER 2:** Well, I'll take this (*Takes the appealing treat and leaves the broken crackers. He sits back down, perhaps having trouble carrying the treat. Leader 1 takes the crackers and sits down.*)

**YOU:** Hmm... Well, anyway, back to Abraham and Lot. Lot decided he would pick the land he wanted and not let Abraham go first. Probably Lot went ahead and chose first because he could tell right away which land was the nicest.

One part of the land was green while the other part was dry. OF COURSE, he wanted the green land and NOT the dry land. Lot wasn't about to let Uncle Abraham get the best land!

But think about it. The reason Lot was there in the first place was because of his Uncle Abraham. He SHOULD'VE let Abraham choose first – but no, he wanted the best for himself.

That's just like \_\_\_\_\_ (**Leader 2**) chose the best treat and let \_\_\_\_\_ (**Leader 1**) have the broken crackers. Of course, we did that to show you how mean it is to take the best for yourself – not because \_\_\_\_\_ (**Leader 2**) is an unkind person.

So Lot took the best land, the land that looked just right for raising his animals.

But there was a BIG problem with the land that Lot didn't think about. The land was next to two cities that were VERY wicked. The cities were called Sodom and Gomorrah. The people in them did horrible things, and Lot did not have the courage to say "NO, I WILL NOT LET THE PEOPLE IN THOSE CITIES MAKE ME MAKE BAD CHOICES."

Lot didn't live on the new, good land very long before he moved his family RIGHT INTO the wicked cities. Later God allowed those cities to be destroyed because the people were so wicked. Lot just barely escaped.

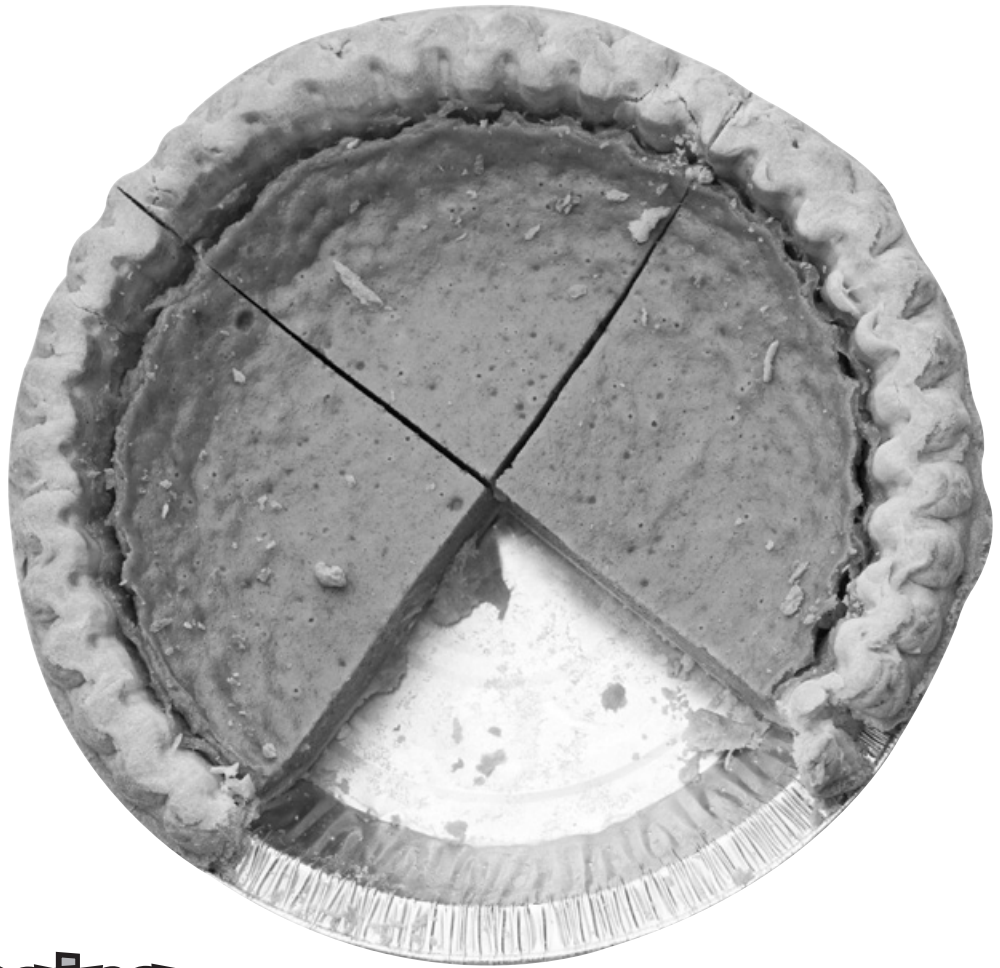
In fact, something VERY SAD happened to Lot. God sent two angels to the city to warn him to take his family and leave before the city was destroyed. Lot didn't want to listen to them, but the angels grabbed his hands and pulled Lot, his wife and two daughters away from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"Don't look back! Keep running until you get to the mountains!" the angels said.

When the family had gotten away from the cities, the cities began burning. Oh, this is so sad. Lot's wife turned to look back at the wicked cities. That was the WRONG thing to do, and she immediately turned into a pillar of salt!

Poor Lot. He just didn't get it.

First, he was greedy and unkind and chose the land that looked the best. Then he moved nearer and nearer to the bad cities and was almost destroyed because the cities were destroyed. Maybe if he had been kind to Abraham in the first place, all this wouldn't have happened!



## Challenging

Abraham and Lot teach us about being kind. Abraham was being VERY kind when he let Lot pick land first. Lot, on the other hand, was not kind at all. He should have refused to pick land until Abraham had already made his choice.

Abraham and Lot also teach us to be careful about staying away from things that get us in trouble. **(Leader 2)** taught us the same things. He should have been nice and allowed **(Leader 1)** to choose first. He could have at least split the good-looking dessert.

God wants us to be kind to people. Often, when we are not kind, we do more and more bad things. When we think only of ourselves and what we want, we can get VERY mean. Being kind can keep us out of trouble!

Besides, being kind is a rule that God gives us. **(Ask the pre-chosen leader or Sparkie to read Ephesians 4:32.)**

God tells us that kindness is the best way to live and we need to listen to Him.

Do you know who showed us the greatest kindness of all? God sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth to die for our sins. He tells us that this is the GREATEST love that anyone could ever give. Have you trusted Him as Your Savior? **(Talk to your Sparkies about what it means to trust Christ.)**

## Family Follow Up

Talk together about making good choices, choices that show kindness to other people. Also talk about staying away from things that tempt us to do wrong – for instance, playing with kids who consistently make bad choices.

Do a family project that shows kindness to someone else.

Turn to page 194 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Opposite Night** – Everything is opposite (during Game Time only). When leaders say “Get louder,” everyone quiets down. Run club in reverse order if possible. Instead of counting up to five to get Sparkies to quiet down, count down from five.
- **Fishers of Men** – Serve Goldfish® crackers as snacks. Set up a kiddie pool filled with little fish with magnets that can be caught with magnetic fishing poles. Each fish has a number written on it that associates with a prize. Or have a dry pool and paper fish that can be caught with a fishing pole that has masking tape at the end of it. We show kindness to others when we tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be fishers of men for Jesus.

## Game Ideas

- **Sparky Train** – You’ll need the four circle pins, center pin and a beanbag. Five players from each team line up behind each other at their starting line. Using both hands, each player grasps the waist of the player in front of him, forming a train. When the whistle blows, the train runs around the circle. When the first person crosses her team’s line, she runs into the center for the pin or beanbag. The point here is to get players to rely on each other and be considerate of how fast or not-so-fast the others can run.
- **Scrambled Shoes** – Sparkies remove their shoes and pile them in the center of the circle. Mix up the shoes so pairs aren’t together. Players line up on their team lines. When the whistle blows, everyone runs into the circle to find their shoes. When they find them, they put them on and return to their team line. Sparkies can help other team members find their shoes once they find their own shoes. The first team with all its members back on the team line with all their shoes on properly wins.

## Teaching Options

- Before club, ask leaders to be on the lookout for a Sparkie who displays an “others first” attitude that night. Acknowledge him or her and give a round of applause during Large Group Time.
- Come up with a project that the whole club can do to show kindness to others. Perhaps everyone signs a card for your pastor or the Sparkies bring in change that can be given to a family in need.

# SparksActivity

Make a card for a friend or family member.  
Cut along dotted line, then fold card into fourths.



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**Rejoice evermore.**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:16**

Have  
great  
joy!



## Reading

Genesis 17-18:15

## Thinking

Abraham was chosen by God to start a nation of people set apart to the Lord. Interestingly, God revealed this plan when Abraham and his wife were in their 90s, a bit late for thinking about being new parents – don't you think? But God asks His people to believe things that are humanly impossible.

Abraham and Sarah knew they were too old to have children, so instead of waiting for God to perform a miracle, they decided to do things their own way. Although we won't go into detail about this with Sparkies, we can still let them know that Abraham and Sarah had a hard time believing God. Sarah laughed when she heard God's promise.

Of course, God gave Abraham and Sarah a son – just as He had promised. They named their son Isaac (another word for laughter).

Do you ever wonder why God fulfills His promises even though people don't believe Him? Because God is a God of mercy and grace, He will always do what He promises.

## Looking It Up

Psalm 105:42 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up this verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

## Getting It Ready

- A leader to play the dad
- Two Sparkies (a girl and a boy) or two leaders to play Sparkies
- Four chairs – two rows of two to represent a car
- A juice or water bottle by the children
- A narrator

## Showing & Telling

*(Scene starts with the dad in the front seat and the two kids behind. The narrator will take the actors through the script, so no one will have to memorize any lines. The narrator may need to prompt the kids to get them to act out the scene.)*



**NARRATOR:** Early one morning a dad and his two children left on a trip to visit Grandma. This trip would take a VERY LONG time. Dad knew the children would get kind of squirmy (as kids often do), so he made a deal with them. He told them that a special surprise waited for them at the end – so there shouldn't be any fighting, whining or crying on the entire trip.

**DAD** *(saying something similar to what the narrator just said):* OK, kids. I don't want to have any fighting, whining or crying on this long trip – because there will be a special surprise at the end of the trip. *(In ad-libbing, make sure you don't make the behavior a condition for the surprise. Our focus here is the trip can be pleasant because there is a lot to anticipate.)*

**NARRATOR:** Both the kids were excited to see the special surprise, so they told their dad they would listen and not fight, whine or cry the whole way.

**KIDS** *(both say):* OK, Dad.

**NARRATOR:** Things went well for the first hour, but then it happened. Sister took a drink from their water bottle and wouldn't share with Brother. They soon began fighting over the water bottle.

**BROTHER:** Give me a drink.

**SISTER:** No, it's my drink.

**BROTHER:** But you're drinking the WHOLE thing!

**NARRATOR:** They were fighting more and more until Dad finally reminded them about the special surprise and how they needed to go the entire trip without fighting, whining or crying.

**DAD:** Remember guys, I have a special surprise for you.

**NARRATOR:** The kids settled down and Brother got a drink. A few more hours went by. Sister fell asleep. Brother thought it would be fun to pick on his sister while she



was sleeping. He started to poke her arm. She didn't wake up though. So then he poked her in the ear. She still didn't wake up, so he started poking her harder. **THAT DID IT!** Sister woke up and she was **NOT** happy at all. She cried and cried until Dad reminded them of the special surprise once again.

**DAD:** Remember, you promised there would be no fighting, whining or crying during the entire trip. I have a special surprise.

**NARRATOR:** The kids settled down again, but they still had a long way to go. A few hours later Brother couldn't take it anymore. He started whining. He wanted to know if they were there yet. How much farther did they have to go? Did it have to be so hot? Could they stop for some food? How come the cars were moving so slowly? Was there any way they could go play on the swing at the park? Why not? Please? Please can I go swing?

*(The brother whines his way through some of these complaints.)*

**NARRATOR:** Brother kept whining for a long time. He whined so much that Sister started whining (*both whine*). Again Dad reminded them about the surprise.

**DAD:** All right, guys, that's enough. You need to remember the special surprise.

**NARRATOR:** Finally, after many hours in the car, they all made it to Grandma's house. Everyone got out of the car and everyone was **VERY** happy. That's when Dad showed them the special surprise. Grandma's freezer was filled with their very **FAVORITE** kind of ice cream! They filled up bowls with the ice cream and ate and ate and ate. The special surprise was worth it!

*(The three actors can go back to their seats.)*

In our story, what did Dad tell the children at the beginning of the trip? (*Let Sparkies answer – make sure they list all three things: no fighting, whining or crying.*) What would happen at the end of the trip? (*Let Sparkies answer that they would receive a special surprise.*)

Did the kids fight? Did they cry? Did they whine? If they did all three things they weren't supposed to do, how come they still got the special surprise?

The reason why Dad still gave them the special surprise is because Dad knew the ice cream was waiting for them. He asked them not to fight, whine or cry, but he didn't say they wouldn't GET the surprise if they did those things. Dad knew how great the surprise would be – lots of their favorite ice cream. He decided he would overlook the bad stuff the kids did so they could still get the surprise. We call this grace. Grace means you forgive and are still nice to people even though they don't deserve it.

Abraham and Sarah were married and were very old. They were almost 100 years old! Do you know anyone that old? When they were in their 90's, God told them they would have a baby!

"That's impossible," they thought. Sarah laughed when she heard God tell her the news about the baby. God also promised that this one baby would start an entire nation. This nation would be so big, you wouldn't be able to count the people in it!

Abraham and Sarah didn't believe God all the time. In fact, they made some bad choices because they didn't believe God. Did God still give them a baby? Yes, He did, even though they didn't believe God. God could have said, "No, sorry, you messed up by laughing at My promise. I'll give that baby to someone else." But God didn't change His mind. He did what He said He would do. God showed them grace.

**(Ask the Sparkie to read Psalm 105:42.)** God kept His promise to Abraham.

Abraham and Sarah named their baby Isaac, which means laughter, because they laughed when God gave them the promise.



## Challenging

God gives us many promises in His Word, the Bible. Sometimes we believe Him and sometimes we don't.

God promises the best way to live our life is by listening to Him – but we don't always do that, do we? Do you always obey your parents? Are you always kind to others? Do you always tell the truth? Or like Abraham and Sarah, do you make bad choices and do what you want to do, even though you know it's wrong.

God shows grace to us too. Even though we don't always listen to Him, He tells us all we need to do is trust Him as Savior and understand that He died and came alive again so we could have our sins forgiven and live forever with Him.

That's grace. Just like the two kids in our pretend story. Just like Abraham and Sarah who laughed at God's promise and made wrong choices – God shows us grace too.

Even after people trust Christ, they sometimes wonder if God will do all the things He said He would do. God loves us and shows us grace and mercy. He will keep the promises He has made and He forgives us even when we make bad choices and do things our own way.

Even though Abraham and Sarah didn't always believe God, they still received God's promises. This kind of thing happened a lot in the Bible. Moses didn't think he could deliver Israel from Egypt. Jonah didn't think he could be a missionary. Peter denied he ever knew Christ. Thomas doubted Jesus rose from the dead. But all these people received the things God promised they would receive.

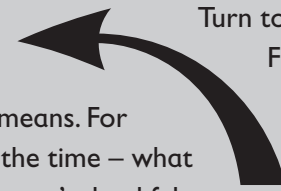
God shows us grace. He died so we could be forgiven. Heaven is there for all who believe on Him. Even when we sin or doubt, God still keeps His promises to us.

## Family Follow Up

Talk about grace with your children. Make sure they know what it means. For instance, parents give their kids what their kids need – and a lot of the time – what their kids want. Yet kids don't work for those things and sometimes aren't thankful or appreciative – and parents continue to give. This is because of love and grace.

Discuss how all good things come from God. Parents don't always listen to God, yet God continues to provide. God's grace is the source of all we have.

With your children, think of specific examples of how you as a family (or an individual child) can show grace to someone else.



Turn to page 194 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Nights

- **Rainbow Night** – God keeps all His promises. He promised Noah that He would never again flood the earth. He used a rainbow as a reminder of this promise. Decorate the room with rainbows. The week before, encourage Sparkies to dress using as many colors as possible for this theme night. Leaders need to get in on the fun too. Award prizes for the most colorful outfits.
- **Ice Cream Extravaganza** – The kids in the skit got to eat ice cream, so why not all your Sparkies? On a table, have small bowls of ice cream and various toppings available. Have leaders help Sparkies' put toppings on their ice cream.

### Game Idea

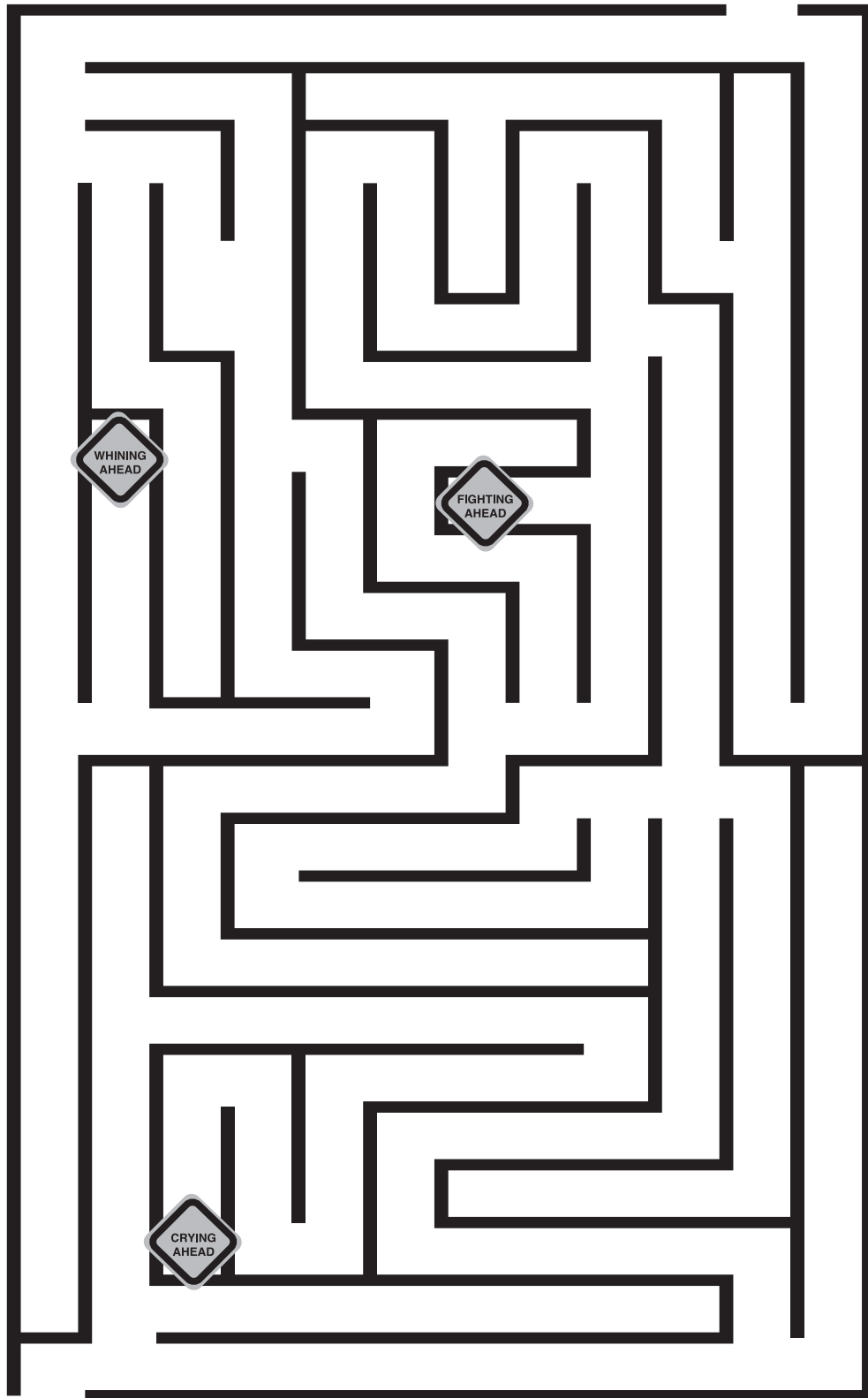
- **It's a Wrap** – You'll need a stopwatch, four pairs of gloves and five boxes in succeeding sizes for each team (20 in all). Put candy or small toys in the smallest box, enough for all team members. Wrap the box tightly, taping all sides and seams of the paper. Place the smallest wrapped box in the second smallest and wrap the same way. Wrap all five boxes this way.  
  
Put the wrapped box (containing all the other wrapped boxes) in each team's quadrant. One player from each team stands ready at her line holding the pair of gloves. When the whistle blows, the first player runs to her teams' box, puts on the gloves and attempts to open as much of the present as she can in 30 seconds. After 30 seconds have passed, the game director blows the whistle and the players run back to their lines. The next player does the same as the first. Play continues until a team opens the last box and finds the prize.

### Teaching Options

- Explain grace a bit more in depth. God showed us grace when He sent Jesus to die for our sins. We didn't deserve it, but God did it. Grace is given to us freely by God.
- Share a couple of other promises that God made in His Word that He kept. The prophet Isaiah foretold of Jesus' birth and it came true, God showed Noah a rainbow when He promised never to flood the earth again, etc.



Pretend you are in the car and follow the maze to the ice cream cone.



## END



## Reading Genesis 25:19-27:45

### Thinking

Sibling rivalry is a part of childhood. The question is not if siblings will fight, but when, where and for how long. Take, for instance, Jacob and Esau. These two twin brothers were ruthless. They did everything they could to get their own way. Jacob tricked his brother not once, but twice! Their spats went on for years.

The first time Jacob tricked Esau was after Esau came home from hunting. He was so hungry that he agreed to Jacob's demand. Jacob would gladly give Esau the food he had prepared if Esau would give Jacob the birthright. The birthright was given to the eldest son and included inheriting a double portion of what the father had to leave when he died. The birthright also gave the recipient charge over the entire household. Esau was hungry enough (or so he thought) to give all that up to Jacob in order to soothe his growling stomach. Evidently he had other priorities on his mind and things to accomplish – like becoming a source of grief to his parents as it says in Genesis 26:35.

It's interesting to note that Esau was much more grieved and desperate when he found out that Isaac had accidentally given the blessing to Jacob. Jacob and Rebekah tricked Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing which was meant for Esau. One thing about the blessing from the father – it couldn't be undone. Once it was said, it was said, and the father couldn't take it back. The blessing was important because it placed the recipient in a close and favored relationship with God. No wonder Esau was so distraught over losing the blessing! (See Genesis 27:38.)

So Jacob got the birthright AND the blessing. Did that make his life happier and easier? Not necessarily. It's a little hard to enjoy life when your brother is so mad at you that he wants to kill you. Esau was so enraged with Jacob that he vowed to kill him as soon as Isaac died. Rebekah overheard Esau and she told Jacob to get out of the area before Esau could get to him. So Jacob had everything he could have ever wanted, but no home and no immediate family to share the joy.

Kids (and adults for that matter) can be like Jacob sometimes. We coerce and manipulate a situation to get something we want only to find that it's not as great as we thought it would be. We make sacrifices to get what we want and risk getting caught, and hurting others or ourselves for something that just isn't worth it. Nathan may steal some candy out of his sister's stash so that he has more. Sara might promise to stay in the yard, but takes off to see the neighbor's new puppy as soon as Mom gets busy talking on the phone.

Kids (and adults) will do things to get what they want. We're all still human and sinful. Use this lesson to help your Sparkies understand the value of honesty and the disadvantages of being deceitful.



# Looking It Up

Genesis 25:33 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up this verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

## Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Two spoons
- Two eggs

## Showing

*(Start the lesson by having two leaders play a game. Tell them to stand on one side of the room with a spoon and an egg. Their goal is to get across the room with the egg on the spoon. They can't touch the egg to keep it from falling off the spoon. Explain the rules so the Sparkies will know that one of the leaders is deliberately cheating.)*

**YOU:** OK, you two. Your goal is to run across the room with the egg on your spoon without letting the egg fall. BUT you can't touch the egg. You must balance it on the spoon. Ready . . . set . . . go!

The two players begin running, but one of them looks around to see if anyone is watching and uses his hands to hold the egg on the spoon. The kids should notice this and start calling out that the one leader is cheating. The cheating leader wins and runs over to you to get a prize.

**YOU:** I'm sorry, but you cheated.

**LEADER:** But I won! See? (*Holding up spoon and egg.*)

**YOU:** But you cheated.

**LEADER:** So no one will celebrate with me?

**YOU:** Why would we want to celebrate your win when you cheated to win?

**LEADER (*looks to other leader who lost*):** Are you happy for me and excited that I won?

**OTHER LEADER:** You cheated. It's not fun to play with cheaters.

**LEADER (*walks away, dejected*):** No one wants to play with me or celebrate with me.

**YOU:** It's too bad he cheated. If he had won fairly, we could have celebrated with him. What fun is it to win if there's no one to celebrate with you?

## Telling

No one likes to play with someone who cheats or is deceitful, do they? Do you know what *deceitful* means? To be deceitful is to tell a lie – or to trick someone. Who wants to be with someone you can't trust?

There's a man in the Bible who was deceitful – and not just to anyone, but to his dad and his brother! And worse yet, his mom helped him to deceive his dad and brother! Jacob was the younger of the two brothers. His older brother was Esau. Jacob and Esau's parents were Isaac and Rebekah.

Esau liked to hunt and be in the fields, but Jacob liked to stay near the tents where the family lived. One day when Esau came in from hunting, he saw that Jacob had been cooking some stew. Esau was SO hungry that he begged Jacob for some food.

Jacob said that he would only give Esau food if Esau gave Jacob his birthright. A birthright was what the oldest son received when his father died. That meant he would get the most money and be in charge of the family.

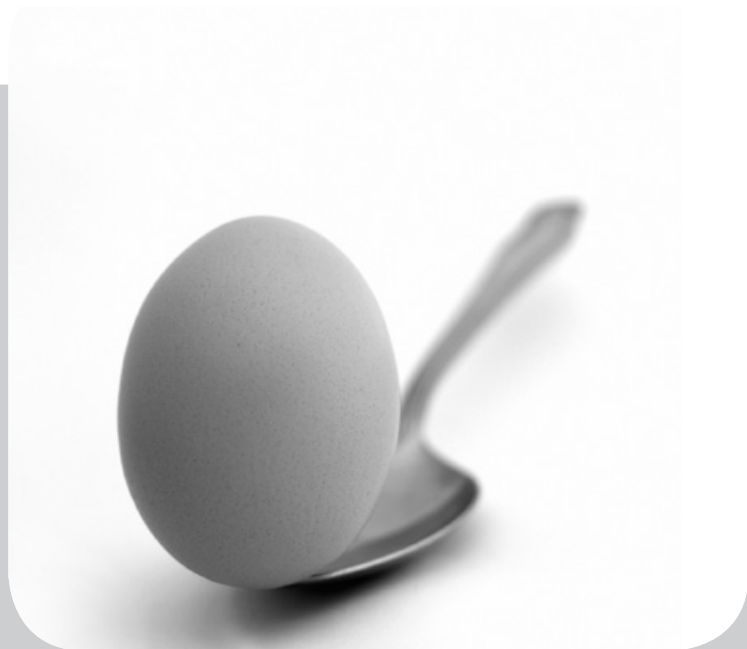
Esau was so hungry that he gave Jacob his birthright JUST for some stew. (**Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Genesis 25:33.**) While Jacob didn't lie to get Esau's birthright, he was still deceitful because he knew that Esau would come home from hunting and be really hungry. And giving up your birthright is a BIG price for a bowl of stew!

Some time later, Jacob and his mom tricked Isaac (Jacob and Esau's dad) into giving Jacob the blessing that Esau was supposed to receive. Isaac was very old and he knew that he probably wouldn't live much longer.

So he asked Esau (remember, Esau was the oldest son so he was the one who should have received the blessing from Isaac) to go hunt and make a meal for him. Well, Rebekah (Jacob and Esau's mom) heard this and told Jacob to dress up like Esau and trick Isaac into giving him the blessing. (The son Isaac blessed would get even more good things when Isaac died.)

Esau was very hairy, but Jacob wasn't. So Rebekah took some goat skin and put it on Jacob's arms and then put some of Esau's clothes on him. Because Isaac was blind he was fooled and thought that Jacob was Esau. Jacob stole the blessing from Esau!

Esau was so mad that he said that he would kill Jacob. Rebekah told Jacob to GET OUT OF TOWN and stay with his uncle until Esau calmed down. You know what, though? It would be years and years and years before Jacob would be able to go back home. So Jacob got the birthright and the blessing from his dad, but he didn't get to be with his family to enjoy it – all because he cheated and was deceitful.





## Challenging

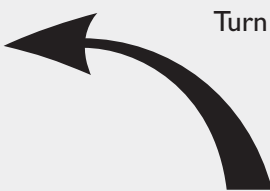
Have you ever cheated to get something you wanted?

When you got it, were you as happy as you thought you would be?

Being deceitful may help you get what you want, but it's never the right thing to do.

## Family Follow Up

Read Genesis 27 as a family. Point out to your child the fact that Jacob got what he wanted in the end, but he had to leave his family. He couldn't be with them while his brother was so angry with him. He alienated himself because of his selfishness. The next time your child thinks about lying or doing something to ensure that she gets what she wants, encourage her to think again and remember the story of Jacob and the price he paid for what he did. Is what they want worth the risk of hurting a friend or family member?



Turn to page 195 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!

# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Guess Who Night** – As Sparkies arrive at club, have them write something about themselves on a piece of paper – something that no one else would know. Have a leader available to help them if they aren't able to write on their own yet. They can tell the leader what to write. Have leaders do the same. During Large Group Time (while you're talking about how Jacob tricked Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing by pretending to be Esau) take a few minutes to read some of the entries aloud. Read some of the leader's entries as well and see if Sparkies can guess who wrote what.
- **Blackout Night** – Help Sparkies see what it might have felt like to be blind like Isaac. Bring in some lamps that have black light bulbs. The week prior, tell Sparkies to wear light colors, white if possible. First turn off all the lights in the room to show how dark it can be. Then turn on the lamps that have the black lights and let Sparkies ooh and ahh over the result.

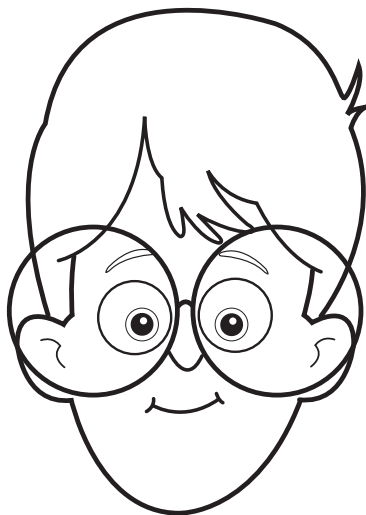
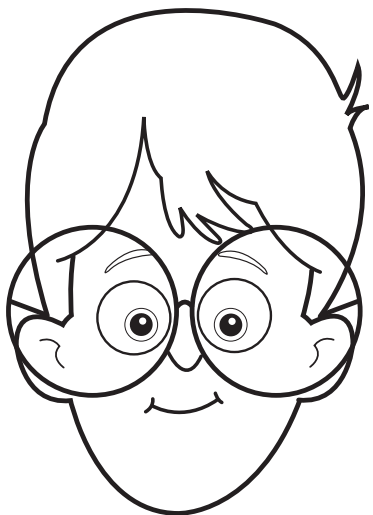
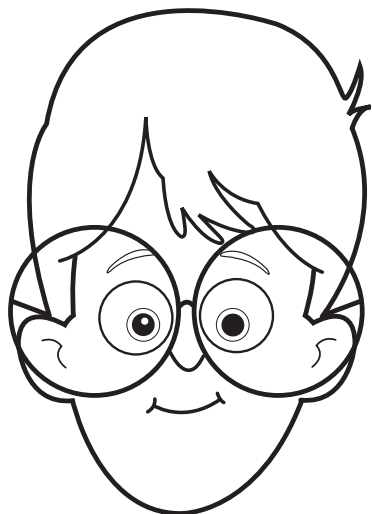
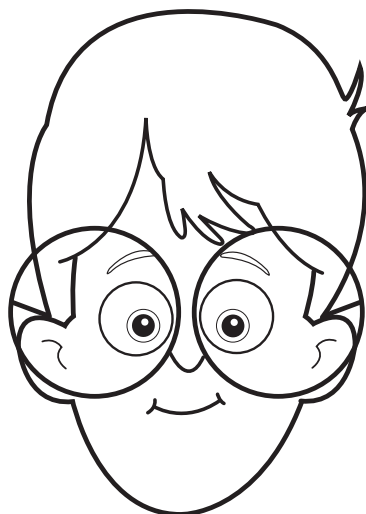
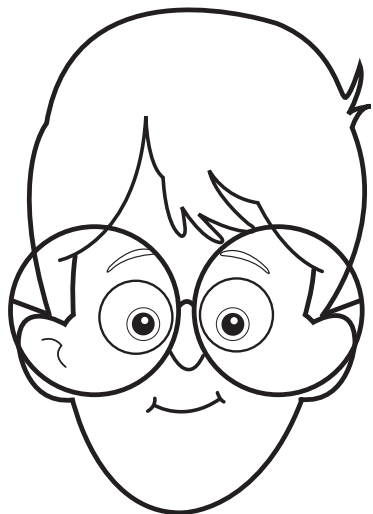
## Game Ideas

- **Gift Hunt** – You'll need blindfolds and inexpensive trinkets and candy. Spread the trinkets and candy on the floor inside each team's quadrant. The first player begins at the starting line in a crawling position wearing a blindfold. When the whistle blows, the player crawls inside the circle and feels for the items. When one item is found, the player takes off his blindfold and returns to the team line. He gives the blindfold to the next player who puts it on and repeats the action. Game play continues until all players have a turn. Sparkies get to keep the item they found.
- **Tag** – Jacob was on the run for many years. Play a game of tag. Mix things up – have leaders chase Sparkies, Sparkies chase leaders, play freeze tag, allow one team to play at a time in the game circle, etc.

## Teaching Options

- Provide Sparkies with a tangible reminder of the lesson. After Large Group Time, give each Sparkie a plastic egg so that they'll remember that we are to be honest, not deceitful.
- See if you can find something to wear on your arm that can represent how hairy Esau's arm would have been and what Jacob would have looked like or done to make his arm as hairy as Esau's in order to trick Isaac.

Circle the two  
faces that match.





## Reading

Genesis 28:6-29:1

## Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A blindfold



## Thinking

The passage for this lesson has four main parts to it: 1) Jacob dreams that angels are going up and down a ladder/stairway while God watches from the top of the ladder. 2) God promises Jacob protection on his journey and a safe return to his home. 3) Jacob makes an altar to the Lord as a result of the impression this dream had on him. 4) Jacob makes a vow to God that if what God has promised is true, Jacob will give God a tenth of everything he has or will have.

After all that Jacob did – deceiving Isaac and Esau – God still chose to bless him, use him and protect him. Jacob “stole” Esau’s birthright and his blessing. Esau was so enraged that he wanted to kill Jacob. In the end, Jacob had to flee his home and country.

Jacob is overwhelmed by the dream (and probably relieved!). He promises right there to make the land he is on a place of worship and to give back to God one-tenth of everything God gives him. That’s some dream. As we read through Genesis, we discover that God kept His promises. God promised Jacob protection and safety and He promised to send Jacob back home. He did all that He promised (Genesis 29-33).

Twenty years after Jacob left his home, he returned. He brought with him his large family of wives and children, along with all his livestock and servants. Instead of meeting him in anger (as Jacob feared), Esau saw Jacob and hugged him and wept for joy. And while he was away serving his uncle Laban, God

protected Jacob. Laban was rather shrewd and pulled many a stunt on Jacob. But God protected him and no harm came to Jacob.

Kids today make promises lightly. They promise Mom they'll clean their room and forget. They promise a friend that they won't tell a secret and they tell others anyway. Saying "I promise" has lost its value and meaning. It's important for kids to know that God can be trusted. He keeps His promises even when their friends, parents, teachers, or they, themselves, don't.

Also, point out that Jacob didn't have the Bible as we do, so God spoke to him through dreams. We have the Bible today so we can read what God wants us to know.

## Looking It Up

Genesis 28:15 (*Ask a leader or Sparkie to look up this verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

## Showing

You and another leader (or two other leaders) will play a trusting game. One leader is blindfolded and led around the room, except the person leading the blindfolded leader will allow him to trip over things and run into the wall. (Of course, the blindfolded leader needs to know this beforehand and be aware so no one gets hurt. You could also exaggerate his tripping.)

Your goal is to allow the Sparkies to see that the "leader" isn't trustworthy.

**YOU:** OK, I want to show you something. I need Leader Rick (*insert name of leader in your club in place of Rick*) to come help me. I'll be blindfolded while Leader Rick leads me around the room.

OK, Rick, you won't allow me to run into anything, will you?

**LEADER RICK:** I promise!

**YOU:** OK, lead me around the room. Ouch, was that a chair?

**LEADER RICK:** Yes, sorry about that.

**YOU:** OOOOWWWWWW!! Did you just run me into a wall?

**LEADER RICK:** Yes.

*(Leader Rick lets go of your hand.)*

**YOU:** Wait . . . Leader Rick, where'd you go?

*(He doesn't answer. At this point, kids will probably be laughing and telling you where he is. Take off the blindfold at this point.)*

**YOU (rubbing shins, nose, etc.):** Leader Rick, you promised you would lead me around the room without getting me hurt.

**LEADER RICK:** I'm sorry. I guess I wasn't paying attention.

**YOU:** OK, well thanks for helping me . . . I think.

# Telling

OK, as you can see, Leader Rick wasn't trustworthy. He promised that he wouldn't run me into anything, but he didn't pay attention, and I got hurt. (**Rub your head or nose for emphasis.**)

We all make promises that we don't keep. Maybe you promised your mom that you would clean your room right after school, but you went outside to play instead. Or maybe your best friend told you a secret and made you promise not to tell anyone, but you told someone anyway. Maybe your teacher or even an adult you like a lot made a promise and broke it. We all break promises. Sometimes, it's our own fault, sometimes something happens and we can't help but break it – the point is we all break promises.

Tonight we're going to hear about a promise that God made to a man and how God kept His promise. God **has never** and **will never** break a promise He makes. Why? Because He's God. He can't break a promise and He wouldn't WANT to break a promise.

The man we'll learn about is Jacob. We've talked about Jacob before; he tricked his brother, Esau, and his dad, Isaac. He got everything he wanted by tricking them, but Esau was so mad that Jacob had to leave his home. That's where our Bible biography begins tonight, Jacob just left his home and is traveling by himself, to go live with an uncle he doesn't know.

So Jacob is alone and traveling on the road in the dark. First of all, he was probably walking. They didn't have planes, trains or cars. Some of the richer people had camels, but most people walked. And instead of stopping for the night in a hotel, Jacob slept outside, by the side of the road. That meant he had to use

a rock as a pillow! A rock! Can you imagine what your neck would feel like when you woke up the next morning? He probably had a sore neck! So Jacob settled down on the side of the road with his rock pillow and went to sleep. (**It would be a great**



**visual to have a rock on hand and lay your head on it. Ask a couple of kids to come up and lay their heads on it to see how uncomfortable it is. If more kids want to try, offer to let them try it after club.)**

While he was sleeping, Jacob had a dream. In his dream he saw a big ladder that went from earth ALL the way up to heaven. There were angels going up and down the ladder, and God stood at the top of it. Then, in this dream, God spoke to Jacob and told him that He (God) would protect Jacob as he traveled and bring him back home. **(Ask the pre-chosen volunteer to read Genesis 28:15.)** When Jacob woke up, he was so encouraged and excited about this dream that he took the rock he had used for his pillow and stood it up and poured oil on it to show God that he believed what God said. Jacob knew God would keep His promise.



Now let's fast-forward to later in Jacob's life – Jacob leaves the place where he had the dream and travels to his Uncle Laban's home. While he lives there, he works in the fields and with the animals. After 20 years – yes, 20 years – Jacob is able to go back home. God kept His promise to Jacob! God never told Jacob how long it would take or when it would happen, but He promised it would happen. God kept His promise.

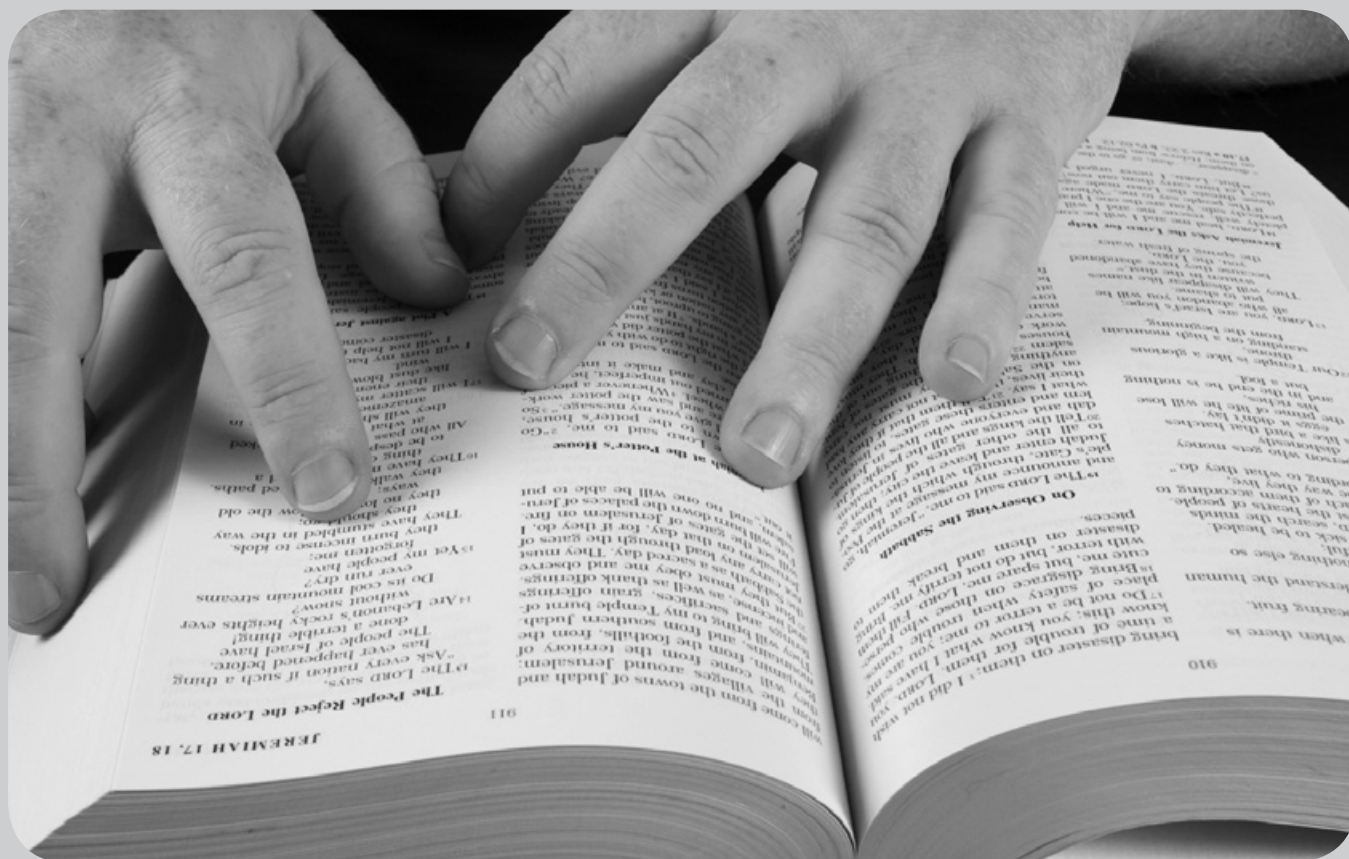
God keeps all His promises. He has promised us in Hebrews 13 that He'll never leave us. That means He'll always be with us – we can pray to Him when we're scared and when we're lonely. But we can also pray when we're excited and happy. He'll always be there to listen. He also promised that when we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior, we'll live forever with Him in heaven.

## Challenging

We're human and we all do wrong things. We make promises that we don't keep. But God is perfect and every promise He has ever made is true. Have you trusted Christ as your Savior so that you can know that you'll live with Him in heaven?

**(Encourage the Sparkies to place their trust in Christ if they have not – point out leaders who can talk with them and show them God's promises in the Bible.)**





## Family Follow Up

Look a little deeper into the story of Jacob's dream and the promise that God made and kept. Read Genesis 28:10-22 and Genesis 33. The latter chapter tells of when Jacob and Esau meet for the first time in 20 years. Jacob is now in his homeland and he is safe. Emphasize how God kept His promise to Jacob. Talk about one or more instances in your life where God's promises in Scripture have encouraged you.

Turn to page 195 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

# TeachingIdeas

## Theme Nights

- **Promise for a Penny Night** – Do a penny drive for Adopt-a-Club or a missionary family in your church. Tell the Sparkies about it a couple of weeks before and make a promise that if a certain amount comes in from the Sparkies, you or another leader will do something BIG. You determine what big is: throwing a pie in leader's face, shaving off a beard, dyeing hair, etc. Make it something the Sparkies will want to see happen. Also make the goal attainable so that you can actually do what you promise you'll do. Then keep your promise!
- **Pajama Jam Night** – The Large Group Time lesson focuses on Jacob's dream so why not have a pajama party? The week prior, encourage Sparkies to wear their pajamas to club the next week. (Encourage girls to wear leggings or jeans under night gowns.) Play lullabies in the background.

## Game Idea

- **Bedtime Pillow Toss** – You'll need four small pillows. Have one of the four teams (beds) stand inside the circle. They should scatter around. The other three teams position themselves evenly around the circle. When the whistle blows, the teams toss the pillows at the beds. If a bed gets hit, he leaves the circle and returns to his team line. After 30 seconds, action stops and the beds still remaining in the circle are counted. Play is repeated until all four teams have a turn. The team with the most beds remaining at the end of its heat wins.

## Teaching Options

- Bring in a ladder as a visual for the lesson. Sparkies do well when they have something tangible to look at.
- When Jacob returned home, he had his whole family with him. That was a lot of people, including his wives, children and servants. He also had all his livestock. Emphasize how this wasn't just like Jacob driving home in his little car. This was like a caravan of buses!

## SparksActivity

The Lord promises to never leave us. Draw two pictures of places where you often go. Is the Lord with you in those places? Yes, He is. That's what He promised. **(Leaders, give your Sparkies some suggestions: school, church, home, doctor, park, grandma's, etc.)**



## Reading

Genesis 29:1-29

## Thinking

Obviously this isn't the kind of biography you want to tell in full detail to your Sparkies. The specifics are too much for them to handle – the details are probably too much for some adults to handle! Jacob arrives in Haran and is directed to Rachel, his uncle's daughter (his cousin). There are several perspectives on Jacob's reaction to first meeting Rachel. Was he so overcome with her beauty that he kissed her and wept? Was he weary after his travels and happy to see someone who was family? It's not certain. After greeting her, Laban is contacted and Jacob meets him.



Jacob spends a month at Laban's home as a guest, but doesn't sit around idly. He works for his uncle. At the end of the month, Laban tells Jacob he doesn't want Jacob to work for him for free. Laban wants to have the upper hand in the situation and hire Jacob as a servant instead of viewing him as his nephew. Laban wants Jacob to define his wages – nice to be asked how much you want in return for your work, huh? Apparently, Jacob is in love with Rachel and tells Laban he will work seven years in order to marry Rachel. Laban agrees. Jacob works faithfully for seven years. When the day arrives and Jacob is to collect his "wages" Laban deceives him (sounds familiar, since Jacob had done his share of deceiving). Instead of presenting Jacob with Rachel, he slips Leah into Jacob's tent while it's dark. Jacob doesn't realize what has happened until morning. These are some of the details that little ears don't need to know about just yet!

In the end, Laban says he made a mistake and that the youngest daughter must not be married before the older. This rule is not necessarily found to be true among Laban's people, so it appears that Laban has, once again, deceived Jacob. Laban promises to make good, though, and tells Jacob to wait a week until Leah's marriage week is complete. Then Laban gives Rachel to Jacob as his wife.

Jacob has been deceived by Laban. But, in keeping with God's promise to Jacob in his dream, Jacob is not harmed and is physically safe. As you tell this biography, be sure to emphasize that although Laban was a tricky man and wasn't being honest with Jacob, Jacob was safe. We'll refer back to Jacob's dream and remind Sparkies that God makes good on His promises – even when life is unfair.

## Looking It Up

Genesis 29:25 (*Ask a leader to look up this verse and be prepared to read it during the lesson.*)



## Telling

Today we'll learn more about Jacob. Do you remember where we left off with his biography? Last time we talked about Jacob we learned that Jacob had a dream. After this dream, he went to his Uncle Laban's home and stayed with him for many years, working in his fields and with his animals. Then he made his way back home and saw his brother, Esau. When Jacob left home, Esau was **REALLY** angry at him. But when Jacob went back home after being gone for 20 years, Esau wasn't angry anymore and was happy to see him. But what happened while Jacob stayed with his Uncle Laban? What did he do? Whom did he spend his time with? That's what we'll learn about tonight!

Jacob was **ANGRY**. Jacob was **REALLY ANGRY**. Jacob had every right to be **ANGRY** at his Uncle Laban. Laban deceived him. Do you know what *deceived* means? When someone is deceived it means that they have been lied to, fooled or tricked. Laban deceived Jacob. That means that Laban lied to Jacob and tricked him.

You see, when Jacob first got to Laban's home, he met a girl named Rachel. Jacob liked Rachel a lot! Laban told Jacob that if he stayed to work for him, Laban would pay him. Laban said Jacob could name whatever he wanted as payment for his work. Jacob wanted to marry Rachel.

Back in those days, men often worked (sometimes for many years), to marry the girl they loved. Jacob loved Rachel and to make sure that he got to marry her, he told Laban that he would work for him for seven years! Seven years is a long time! Is anyone here seven years old? OK, so that he could marry Rachel, Jacob worked for as long as you've been alive! **WOW!** That's a really long time, isn't it?



## Telling continued

You know what, though? Jacob loved Rachel sooooo much that it didn't seem like seven years. The Bible tells us that it felt like just a few days to Jacob.

So at the end of the seven years, Jacob told Laban that it was time to have a wedding! Jacob had kept his promise and worked seven years. Now it was time for Laban to keep his promise and let Jacob marry Rachel. So Laban prepared a huge party – a feast that lasted many days. At the end of the feast, Jacob got married – but Laban tricked Jacob. Without telling Jacob, Laban had him marry Leah, Rachel's older sister! Women usually wore lots of veils and were completely covered when they got married, so it was easy for Laban to trick Jacob. Jacob couldn't see the face of the woman he was marrying!

**(Ask the leader to read Genesis 29:25.)**

Do you think Jacob was ANGRY? He told Laban that he worked hard and kept his promise to work for seven years. Laban should have kept his promise too. I wonder if Jacob learned a lesson. Many years before, he had tricked his brother Esau and his father into giving him the family blessing and birthright. Jacob deceived them. And now he had been deceived. Remind me – what does deceived mean? That's right – it means to be lied to or tricked.

Jacob had hurt people in his family. Now someone in his family hurt him. The Bible doesn't specifically say that Jacob learned his lesson after Laban deceived him, but it does tell us that Jacob continued to work for Laban for many more years. One day Jacob went to Laban and said that he wanted to take his family back to his homeland. Laban said they could go, but then he came after them and intended to stop them. Esau was also coming to meet him with many men.

Remember Jacob's dream? The one with the ladder going up to heaven and the angels everywhere? In this dream, God promised that Jacob would return home. He also promised Jacob that he would not be harmed and would be physically safe. So even though Jacob was deceived by Laban, and had deceived Esau, he was not harmed. He was safe just as God promised.

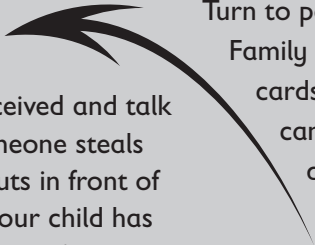
## Challenging

Have you ever been deceived? Has someone lied to you or tricked you? Maybe someone at school said she would invite you to her birthday party, but then she laughed and said she was only teasing. Maybe your brother told you that he would teach you to throw a football if you gave him some of your candy – but after he ate the candy, he changed his mind. It hurts to be deceived, doesn't it? We can't always stop people from deceiving us, but we can control how we react to them. Jacob didn't hit Laban or yell at him. He kept working for him. Instead of calling the girl a name or sticking your tongue out at her, pray for her. Instead of hitting your brother and yelling at him about how he cheated you, ask someone else to teach you to throw a football and don't try to get even with him. Getting back at people doesn't make things better.

**(Close in prayer.)**

## Family Follow Up

Give your child some examples of situations where they are deceived and talk through what their response should be. Some situations are: someone steals a toy out of her Awana bag while she's at club or a classmate cuts in front of him in line at school. Think of some other situations you know your child has experienced – "Remember the time that so-and-so did such-and-such? How did you react? How should you react?" Obviously there will be circumstances that demand involvement on the part of a parent or teacher. Instilling the knowledge of when to go to an adult is important.



Turn to page 195 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Nights

- **Surprise Night** – Jacob didn't have a good surprise when Laban tricked him, but your Sparkies can have a fun surprise at the end of the night! Fill a bag with candy and small trinkets. At the end of the night, pick a team at random. All Sparkies on that team who have passed a section that night get to choose one item from the bag.

### Game Ideas

- **Obstacle Course** – Design an obstacle course. Two players from each team are selected to go through it. The top two best times are awarded points.
- **Beanbag Relay** – A typical beanbag relay (one team member tossing the beanbag back and forth to each of the other team members) becomes more challenging when you throw in a stopwatch. Instead of just seeing which team completes the relay first, determine a time that the teams need to beat. Make it a few seconds shorter than the typical time that Sparkies are able to complete the relay to make it doable. To make things extra exciting, run the game twice to see if teams can beat their own times.

### Teaching Option

- If you're using the theme idea of Surprise Night, use that as an example. At the beginning of the lesson, tell everyone about the surprise bag. Then at the end of the lesson, say that if you were being deceitful, you would say that you changed your mind and aren't going to use the surprise bag. Use it as a teaching moment of how it feels to be deceived.

## SparksActivity

Jacob was a good worker.  
Are you a good worker?  
Draw a picture of yourself helping someone else.

## Reading

Genesis 37:1-36

## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- A comfortable chair
- Cookies (one for each Sparkie)
- Lemonade
- A special hat

## Thinking

Many kids can relate to the story of Joseph and his jealous brothers. Although most siblings don't sell their brothers into slavery, jealousy among siblings can be fierce. When reading the story of Joseph, it is easy to picture Joseph as somewhat of an arrogant person, rubbing his favored position in the faces of his brothers. However, that's not the Bible's portrayal of Joseph.

Scripture shows that Jacob loved Joseph more than he loved his other sons. This wasn't Joseph's fault; this was his dad's fault! Jacob should not have shown such outward favoritism if he didn't want bad things to happen to Joseph.

The coat that Jacob gave Joseph has significance. Although we often picture it as a short tunic with stripes of a variety of colors, that's not at all what it was like. The Hebrew word for *coat* in this passage signifies a garment that covered the extremities. That meant the sleeves covered the wrists and the hem covered down to the ankles. This was a type of coat worn by the rich and the royal and was most likely white linen with a colorful embroidered band around the sleeves. In contrast, Joseph's brothers wore short tunics which made it easy for them to walk around fields to care for the flocks.

Joseph's dreams about his brothers bowing before him were legitimate dreams that God gave him. Later they were perfectly fulfilled. Perhaps Joseph knew his brothers wouldn't want to hear about the dreams. Yet, they were good, God-given dreams. How could he not share them with his family?

Many Bible scholars see Joseph as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son. Christ was given a special position then He was rejected by His own people. Later, He saves those who rejected Him. Jesus Christ told people who He was and that was enough for people to get angry. The same is true for Joseph. Because Joseph was favored, his brothers had a problem with him. This was not a fault of Joseph's, but a fault of his brothers.



## Looking It Up

Genesis 37:4 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)



# Showing

In order to show Sparkies what jealousy is all about, the best thing to do is show them how easy it is to feel jealous. This lesson requires you to arbitrarily choose one Sparkie for special treatment. Be ready to give her lots of compliments. **(Do this in such an over-the-top way that the other Sparkies understand you're getting a point across and that you don't really favor the Sparkie.)** It would be helpful to know the Sparkie well enough to bring things she enjoys. However, make sure this Sparkie is not related to you or specially known by you already. The Sparkie is supposed to be randomly chosen – though you could choose a Sparkie who doesn't often get recognized. For this lesson the Sparkie will be named Emma.

# Telling

I want you all to know that I like every one of you, but there is one Sparkie here who is extra special. I would like to reward her tonight by giving her some treats to show how much I appreciate her and that I think she's special.

Emma, come on up here. Take a seat here in this very nice special chair. Would you like a pillow or anything? I'll have Emma sit right up here next to me so you can all see her and she can see you.

Now Emma, are you comfortable? How about another chair so you can rest your feet? I think you could use that. Hey you, **(pick a Sparkie and take away his chair to use as a footrest)** get out of this chair. Emma needs it for her feet. There, how's that, Emma?

Emma's probably a bit thirsty after her hard day, so I brought her some lemonade to enjoy. Here you go, Emma. Don't be embarrassed to drink in front of the rest of us. If they were as special as you, they could get lemonade too, but they aren't. Oh, and I also brought you some cookies to go with your lemonade.

There's one more thing I have for Emma. It's a special hat. I only let very special people wear this hat. This hat has been on many special heads and tonight it will go on Emma's special head. **(Place hat on Sparkie.)** Very nice. Don't we all just love Emma? Thank you, Emma, for coming to our Awana club and putting up with the rest of us.



How many of you would like lemonade and cookies? How many would like to be complimented in front of the group? Why do you think I treated Emma in a special way? Do you think I really like her better than I like you? **(Allow Sparkies to answer. Make sure they understand your point.)** I did all of this to show you what it is like to be jealous. Who can tell me what it means to be jealous? **(Sparkies answer.)** To be jealous means to want what someone else has so much that you actually want to be him or her! Do you wish you could be Emma with her lemonade and cookies, her comfy chair and footrest? That's called jealousy. **(At this point, explain that you like all the Sparkies and distribute lemonade and cookies to everyone. Allow Emma to go back to her regular seat.)**

Have you ever heard of Joseph in the Bible? Not Joseph, the husband of Mary. **(This could be an important distinction for this age Sparkie.)** This Joseph was alive during Old Testament times. Joseph was the favorite son of his father, Jacob. Joseph's dad even gave him a special coat that let his brothers know he was liked best. We know from the Bible that the coat was the kind worn by very important people such as kings' sons or rich





## Telling continued

people who didn't have to work. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Genesis 37:4.)**

Joseph's brothers hated him even more after Joseph told them about the dreams God had given him. According to the dreams, one day all Joseph's brothers would bow down to him! Do you think his brothers liked hearing about that? No way! They already hated Joseph. They didn't want to hear that one day Joseph would save them and they would bow down to him.

One day, Jacob sent Joseph out to the fields to see how his brothers were doing. (His brothers were taking care of their father's animals.) When the brothers saw him coming, they thought about killing him. The oldest brother stopped that from happening. So, instead, the brothers threw Joseph into a pit. When a caravan came by, they sold him as a slave. Do you know what a slave is? **(Allow Sparkies to respond.)** Joseph found himself on his way to Egypt.

But how could they explain this to their father? They killed an animal, put the animal's blood on Joseph's coat and showed it to their father. Their

father thought his favorite son was dead. That's horrible.

Maybe some of us were upset that Emma got special treatment, but you didn't do anything mean to her. Joseph's brothers really, truly hated him.

Jealousy is not a good thing. When you are jealous of someone or of what they have, it often leads to anger and hatred. The Lord Jesus plainly tells us that hating someone is sin. Instead of being mad at Joseph, the brothers should have showed kindness. After all, their brother had walked a long way to make sure they were OK. They should have been happy that God gave Joseph a dream.

Sometimes it's hard to look at other people and their stuff and not get jealous. But jealousy can lead you to do lots of bad things. Instead of being jealous of what Emma has, would it be so hard to tell her, "Congratulations! Hope you enjoy your lemonade!" It is hard, but it's also the right thing to do. The Bible tells us to be happy for those who are happy. (Romans 12:15.) It isn't easy, but it keeps you out of lots of trouble and helps you be friendly to others.

## Challenging

When you believe the gospel, that Jesus Christ died for your sins and came alive again, you become one of God's children. Romans 8:17 says we become God's children, just like the Lord Jesus! He was God's only begotten Son; He was in a position of favor and God loved Him. Have you trusted Christ as your Savior?

Even though we're saved, we still struggle with sin and we still do bad things. It's very easy to get angry at people and jealous of what they have. The Bible tells us to humble ourselves. That means that we need to treat people well and not think we're better than they are. We can all show God's love to others by treating them nicely.

## Family Follow Up

The story of Joseph is a good example for families. Families should be encouraged to discuss the lesson and talk about getting along with each other. Families need to take time to tell each other they are loved. Go on a family outing to a park or quiet place. List the good things about your family. Make some family goals: memorizing a chapter of Scripture, saving for a dream vacation, doing something special for your neighbors.

Turn to page 195 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Drive-in Movie Night** – Make every Sparkie feel special! Each Sparkie makes a car from a cardboard box and “drives” it to the gym (or large group meeting area). The leaders are carhops and deliver popcorn and beverages to the Sparkies. Watch a Big Idea’s VeggieTales® video on a big screen. During Game Time, let Sparkies race their cars. Give prizes for the best designs.
- **Joseph’s Coat Night** – Encourage Sparkies to dress up in their best version of Joseph’s coat. Award prizes for most original, most beautiful, etc.

## Game Ideas

- **Puzzling** – Find four pictures of things like coats, pits, anything that could illustrate the Large Group Time lesson for the week. Cut each into the same number of puzzle pieces and put each puzzle into its own bag. Each team gets a bag. When the whistle blows, players dump the pieces out on the table or floor and put their puzzle together. The first team done wins. Then the teams put their pieces back in their bag and pass the puzzle to the team that is to their left. Continue until each team has the puzzle it had in the first round. The team that won the most heats wins.

## Teaching Option

- See if you can find a coat that might resemble Joseph’s coat based on the description in the Thinking part of the lesson. Wear it during the lesson or have another leader come in to show it off just for a section of the lesson.



# SparksActivity

## Joseph Word Search

Find the following words:

JOSEPH

BROTHERS

SLAVERY

BOW

JEALOUS

DREAMS

COAT

FAVORITE

J	O	S	E	P	H	I	Z	S	U	I	M	C
E	N	Q	J	D	B	O	W	L	B	C	D	O
A	M	T	J	L	R	Q	B	A	G	D	T	A
L	Q	Y	V	R	O	V	A	V	M	C	Z	T
O	Z	I	R	D	T	D	R	E	A	M	S	X
U	U	O	Z	A	H	C	J	R	W	O	G	R
S	P	T	Z	L	E	B	K	Y	T	X	F	P
V	F	A	V	O	R	I	T	E	X	B	P	O
E	V	T	J	V	S	O	X	S	G	W	T	G

## Reading

Genesis 37:36-40:23

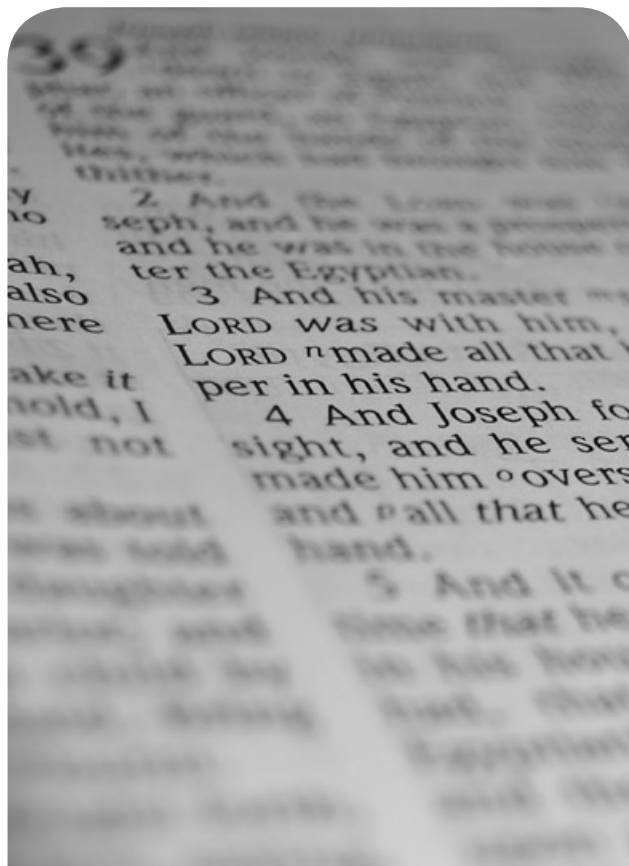
## Thinking

After being sold by his brothers, Joseph ended up as a slave to Potiphar, the man who was captain of Pharaoh's palace guards. Even though his brothers rejected Joseph, the Lord was still with him. In fact, in Genesis Chapter 39 alone, we are told four times that the Lord was with Joseph. Even though Joseph was a slave, the Lord had a plan and would not forsake him. Joseph ended up with control of Potiphar's house and belongings.

Sometimes, it seems like something bad happens to biblical people as soon as things start going well for them! Potiphar's wife tried to entice Joseph to sleep with her – day after day. Not only did he not give in to her temptation, but he avoided being where she was. Yet, one day when no one was around, she trapped him. He fled, but left his coat behind. That was all the “ammunition” she needed to accuse him.

This is obviously a tough subject for Sparkies! Don't give details; simply explain that Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to do wrong. Emphasize that during the good times and the bad times, the Lord was with Joseph.

While in jail, Joseph interpreted dreams for two other prisoners. Afterwards, Joseph finds himself rejected again. Yet God is still with him, and that's enough. Interpreting dreams is another subject that will probably cause some confusion for Sparkies. Let them know that this was a special miracle that God did for Joseph. Sparkies have dreams – sometimes scary dreams. Emphasize that before people had the Bible, God sometimes spoke through dreams. Now, God speaks through His Word.



## Looking It Up

Before you begin the lesson, challenge Sparkies to find Genesis 39:4 in their Bibles. Tell them to keep their Bibles open to that page or give them a small piece of paper to bookmark the verse.

## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- Two piles of an equal number of blocks

# Showing

Place the two piles of blocks where all the boys and girls can see them. Choose a leader to build one pile of blocks! **(Give him instructions beforehand to quickly become frustrated and quit building.)** Choose a Sparkie to be on the other team. Allow one minute for the task.

Talk it up like there is no way the Sparkie can build the blocks in one minute. Start the time.



# Telling

Let's have a race. \_\_\_\_\_ **(name of leader)** will be on one team. \_\_\_\_\_ **(name of Sparkie)** will be on the other team. We will see who can build the highest tower in one minute's time.

**You (address Sparkie):** Wow! That's a lot of blocks. Are you sure you can do this? You need to get it done before that leader over there. How about if I help you? I'm a great builder. I think together we can do it – and do it faster than that other team. This should be easy now!

Everyone ready? Let's go!

**Leader (after 30 seconds):** Oh, I'm having trouble. I'm out of practice for block-building.

**You:** He's giving up. Keep going, \_\_\_\_\_ **(Sparkie's name)!**

**Leader ("accidentally" knocking over the tower):** This is so frustrating! I keep knocking the tower over.

**You:** Wow, I think we'll win for sure now! It's just you and me. We can do this. Oh, our time is up. We won! We won! **(Give the Sparkie a high five.)**

**(Stop here and thank the other leader for helping so the children know that he or she didn't really give up.)**

Having someone on your side makes life a lot easier. Trying to do things alone can be hard. It's nice to have help. Joseph was the youngest

son of his family. His brothers didn't like him at all. They hated him so much they sold him into slavery! Even though Joseph's brothers weren't exactly kind, Joseph still had Someone with him, Someone who would make sure Joseph was taken care of and doing well. Do you know who that Someone was? **(Allow Sparkies to respond.)**

Right. The Lord was with Joseph. Genesis 39 talks about Joseph being a slave, and it says **FOUR TIMES** that the Lord God was with Joseph. Joseph remembered that, even though sometimes remembering was difficult – like when his own brothers were mean to him.

Now something else bad happens to Joseph – even though at first it seemed like something good. Because Joseph was a great worker, he was made boss of Potiphar's house. (Potiphar was a man who worked for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.) **(Ask your Sparkies to follow along as you read Genesis 39:4 out loud.)**

One day while Joseph was working, Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to do something Joseph knew was wrong. Joseph knew that listening to Potiphar's wife wouldn't please the Lord OR Potiphar. Potiphar's wife kept bothering Joseph, though, so Joseph took off running! It's a good idea to do that sometimes. When people are trying to get you to do something wrong, instead of talking or arguing, just leave!



## Telling continued

When Joseph ran away, Potiphar's wife got VERY angry at him. How dare the slave run away and not do what she said! She told Potiphar that Joseph was not a good servant. Potiphar listened to her and Joseph was thrown in jail! Oh no, this is horrible! It was bad enough that Joseph was a slave, but now he's in jail. But even in jail, do you think the Lord was still with Joseph? Yes, the Lord was still with him.

Joseph met two other prisoners. These men used to work at the palace. One was the baker and one was the cupbearer. (A cupbearer is the man who tasted the king's drinks to make sure they weren't poisoned.) One night the two prisoners had dreams and Joseph was able to interpret them. (That means he could explain to them what the dreams meant.) The baker's dream was bad, but the cupbearer's dream was good. Joseph told the cupbearer that he would

again work in the palace – and sure enough, that's exactly what happened!

"I have been kind to you and told you the meaning of your dream," Joseph said to the cupbearer. "Please remember me when you get back to the palace and talk to the king. I haven't done anything to deserve to be in prison."

But guess what? The cupbearer DIDN'T remember. He went back to his happy life at the palace and forgot all about Joseph. Joseph was still stuck in prison – for a few more YEARS!

Even though Joseph did what was right, everything now was going wrong in his life. The biography of Joseph gets even more exciting. We'll have to see what happens!

But was the Lord still with Joseph? Yes, the Lord stayed with Joseph even when everyone else had left him.



## Challenging

Life is easier when you have help. The Lord loves us and wants to help us. He wrote the Bible to help us understand life. He gives us the Holy Spirit to help us understand the Bible. He will never leave us. Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior? Have you told the Lord that you know you are a sinner? Have you told Him that you know He died for your sins and that He came alive again? When you tell Him that, He promises to save you and always be with you. Even when things go very wrong in life (like they did for Joseph), the Lord is still with us and He still cares about us. He doesn't say that everything will always go right, but He promises to help us when things go wrong.

For those of you who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, remember that He is always with you. Nothing can separate you from God's love. He is there, and you can talk to Him through prayer at any time. He tells us that all things work together for good. Believe what He has said and tell Him how much you are thankful for Him being there for you.

## Family Follow Up

God loves us and is always with us. God wants us to be like Him. Are there people you know who are lonely? Talk as a family about whom you could befriend. Maybe there is an elderly neighbor you could help. Maybe you could go to a hospital and visit patients. Take an opportunity to show God's love to people around you.

Turn to page 196 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Can-Can Night** – Life is easier when you have help. Help others by having a contest to see how many aluminum cans the Sparkies can bring to club. Cans can be redeemed and the money can be used to support an Adopt-a-Club. Highlight a country that Adopt-a-Club supports at the beginning of Large Group Time. Give facts about the country and the children who live there – what is life like for them? Award points to the team that brings in the most cans.
- **Pastor Appreciation Night** – Have a night dedicated to honoring your pastor. Invite your pastor to club for a night. The pastor will feel appreciated and encouraged when Sparkies make cards for him. Hang signs around the room that say “thank you.” Have a cake made especially for him. Invite him to come watch your club night but don’t have him do anything. Have it be a night where he gets to just sit back and watch.

## Game Idea

- **Hill Dill** – Mark or designate two parallel lines at opposite ends of the play area and one in the center. Players stand behind one of the end lines. One player, chosen to be the caller, stands on the center line. The caller calls out, “Hill Dill, come over my hill.” Sparkies attempt to run from one line to the other without being tagged by the caller. All tagged players join the caller on the center line. The caller repeats the call, and the remaining players try to return to the original line without being tagged. The game continues until only one Sparkie is left. This player can be the caller for the next game.

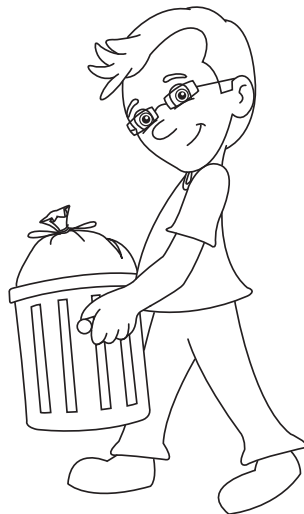
## Teaching Options

- Other tasks the Sparkie and leader can do at the beginning of the lesson: color in a picture, read a short children’s book, unroll a roll of paper towels or eat a piece of fruit.
- Give examples of situations from which Sparkies should leave or run. Examples: when someone is stealing something, someone is making fun of someone or when someone is cheating on a test.



# SparksActivity

Draw a picture of you helping in each job.



## Reading

Genesis 41

## Thinking

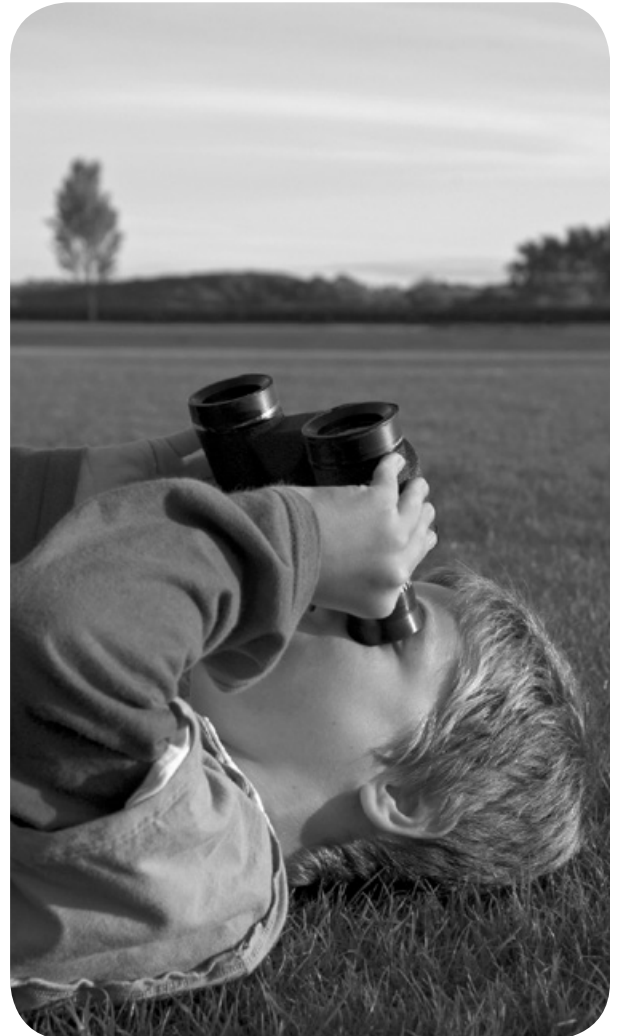
We break into Joseph's story right after he interpreted the dream of Pharaoh's cupbearer. Although the cupbearer promised to remember Joseph, he quickly forgot him after getting back out into the "real world."

A few years later, Pharaoh had a dream and no one could tell him what it meant. The cupbearer suddenly remembered the dream interpreter he had met in prison and mentioned him to Pharaoh. Because Pharaoh was impressed with Joseph's interpretation (a time of plenty and a time of famine) and his solution to the famine problem, he put Joseph in charge of all the land of Egypt.

At this point, Sparkies may think that "God being with you" means that everything will go well in the end. It may seem that God will bless you by giving you lots of money or make you famous. No, this doesn't always happen. Joseph was in a unique situation. Many people who follow the Lord suffer for years and years with no happy ending – until they reach heaven. Emphasize that our real blessing is an eternity in heaven. Whether life is good or bad, we have heaven as a reward!

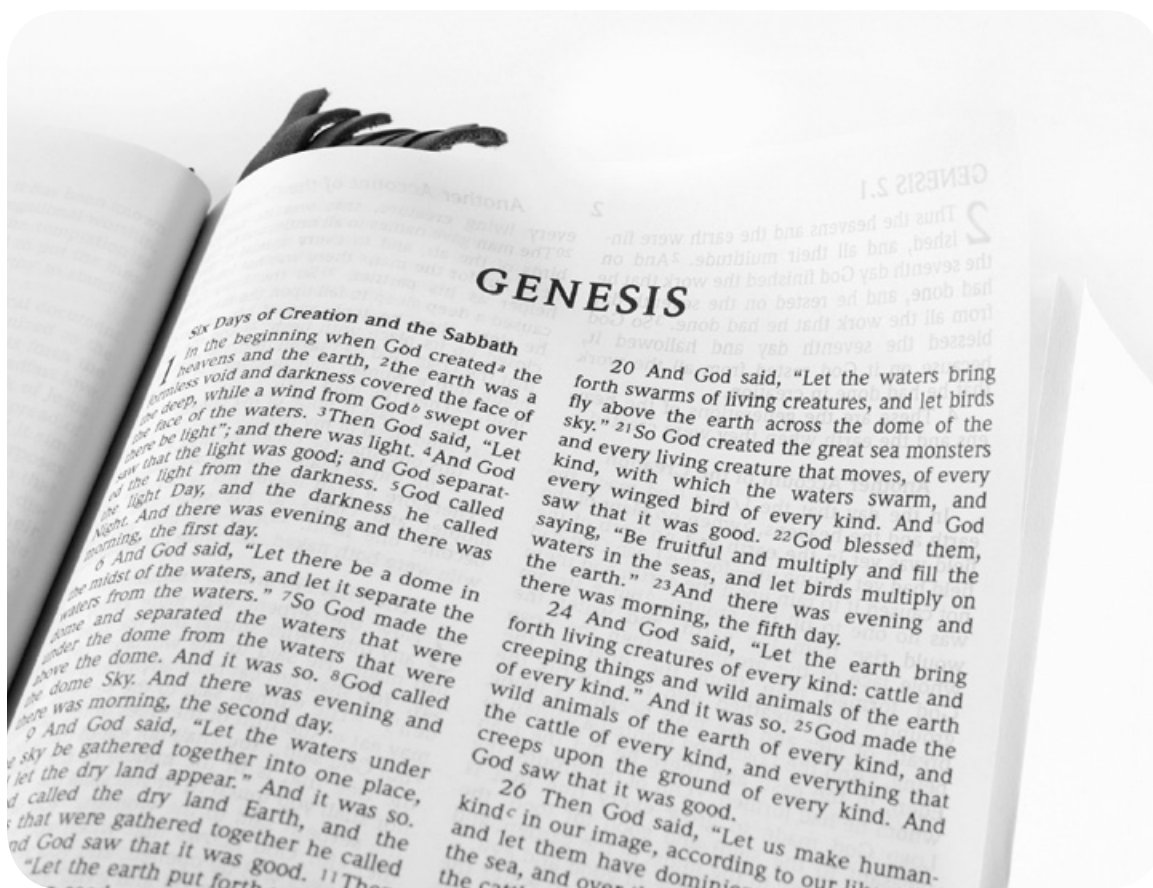
Pointing Sparkies' minds to heaven is an important task. Getting kids to think about life and the problems that arise can be hard when it might not seem that bad for them right now. Whether life is good or bad, heaven is better. The guarantee we have that Christ is always with us is true for eternity!

***(If you have time after telling this segment of Joseph's biography, allow the Sparkies to role-play the event.)***



## Looking It Up

Genesis 41:41 (Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.)



## Getting It Ready

You will need some handbook awards.

This lesson uses the Awana book finisher awards as an illustration. If your church has some on hand, bring the awards with you. If not, at least bring pictures of the awards. (This lesson will assume you can use the actual awards. Adapt it if you are using pictures.) If possible, gather books from the older clubs as examples of the work they need to do to earn these awards.



## Telling

*(Showing Sparkies the awards they can earn in the older clubs can be a motivator for them to continue to learn God's Word.)*

One of the cool parts about Awana is finishing a handbook. The books have a lot of verses in them for you to say, don't they? That takes a lot of work and sometimes you might get tired of learning your verses and want to give up. But Dad or Mom or the leaders encourage you to keep going because learning verses are important.

When you are done with your first book, you receive this.  
**(Hold up the Sparks First Book Award.)**

When you are done with your second book, you receive this.  
**(Hold up the Sparks Second Book Award.)**

When you finish all three books, you get this. **(Hold up the Sparky Award.)**

When you get to T&T™, you can earn the Excellence Award for finishing two books. **(Show one if you can.)** The Timothy Award is given for four completed books. **(Show one.)** And if you attend Trek® and finish six books, you'll earn the Meritorious Award. **(Show one.)** Wow! Six books! That's a lot of work.

But there's one more award, a big one! It's an award that is given only to people who finish 10 books! If you do all the books from T&T on, you can earn the Citation Award! **(Show a Citation Award. If you have earned any of these major awards yourself, share how you felt when you received them.)** That is a fantastic award. It takes lots of work to get the Citation Award.

Why do you think we give out awards to Sparkies who do their books? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** The reason we give awards to Sparkies who finish their books is to congratulate them for a job well-done. Awards help us to keep going even when we get tired of working. And, finishing books is hard work! Is memorizing verses easy? I know memorizing is easier for some of you than others, but as you go along, the verses get longer and it takes more time to memorize them all.



## Telling continued

If there is a reward for doing something hard, it makes the hard job seem easier. When sports teams play all year, they work and work to do their best. The best team, the one who did the best work, gets a trophy. Adults get paid for doing their job at work. Money is given to them as a reward.

God knows that life can be tough. Life can be hard work. We get sick or hurt. Sometimes people do bad things. Our stuff breaks and falls apart. God knows that life is hard and following Him can be hard too. But when we follow God's instructions, we are rewarded.

Joseph's brothers were very mean to him and sold him as a slave. Joseph ended up in Egypt, but even as a slave he did a good job. Then his master's wife lied about him and he ended up in jail! While Joseph was in jail, God gave him the ability to explain people's dreams to them.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had two dreams, but no one could tell him what they meant. One of the men who had been in jail with Joseph remembered that Joseph could explain dreams. He told Pharaoh about Joseph and Pharaoh got Joseph out of prison and asked for his help.

**(Be dramatic when describing the dreams.)** In Pharaoh's dream, he saw seven cows come out of the Nile River. The cows were fat and healthy. He saw seven more cows come out of the Nile River, but these cows were ugly and sickly looking. The ugly cows ate the healthy cows! Then Pharaoh woke up.

But Pharaoh went to sleep again and had ANOTHER dream. This time he saw seven healthy pieces of grain growing on one stalk. Then he saw seven more pieces of grain on one stalk, but these were thin and dry. Yet, the thin, dry pieces of grain ate the healthy pieces of grain.

Strange dreams, right?

Do you think Joseph could tell Pharaoh the meaning of these dreams without God's help? **(Allow Sparkies to respond.)** Of course not! But God did give Joseph the wisdom to tell Pharaoh the meaning.

This is what Joseph said: "Pharaoh, for seven years the land of Egypt will have good weather. God will send much rain and your crops will grow. But then you will have seven years of bad weather and there will be no food. What you need to do is gather the crops now and store them (keep them in a safe place) – so you will have plenty of food for the years when there isn't any rain."

Pharaoh listened to Joseph and believed what Joseph said. He thought saving the crops was a good idea, so he put Joseph in charge of the plan. Now Joseph had power over ALL of Egypt! **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Genesis 41:41.)**

This happened because God was with Joseph. God had a special plan for Joseph and no matter who was mean to Joseph, God would work out His plan. Listening to God and doing what He tells us to do brings rewards.

# Challenging

How many ways are there to get to heaven? Only one. You need to believe that Christ died and three days later came alive again. You need to understand that you are a sinner and have done things that go against what God says in His Word, the Bible. You need to trust Christ as your Savior. If you trust Christ as Savior, you will KNOW that He is with you all the time and that someday you can spend forever in heaven with Him.

For those of you who are Christians, you can be sure that you will live in heaven someday. Right now, the Lord Jesus is in heaven preparing a place for us. Thank Him for doing that.

God is always with us. Since God is with us, does that mean that everything in our life will be fun and happy? No, we will all have times when we are sad. Even Joseph had to sit in prison for years. Does it mean someday you'll be rich and famous? No, money doesn't always mean you are doing the right thing. Money does not make people happy all the time. Does it mean you will live with a king or president? No, only a few people get to do things like that. But God has an even better reward than all these things – heaven!

Heaven is an extra-special place. You will have everything you need to be happy ALL the time. Heaven doesn't have tears or pain or sickness. You won't be lonely in heaven. You will live forever with the King of Kings!

Right now we live on earth. We can talk to God at anytime. We can read His Word to us in the Bible. When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit lives inside of us to help us make good choices. But here

on earth we still get sick and lonely and hurt. We still cry and get mosquito bites and bee stings. We still get frustrated because we can't do a math problem or remember our spelling words.

But someday we'll live with God in heaven – that is our reward. Romans 8:18 says that the happiness of heaven is so great that the problems and pain of this life are nothing compared to that. God promises us that He will never leave us and that He will take us to heaven some day. This should make us want to listen to God and make good choices.



# Family Follow Up

Although we don't know what heaven will be like, we do understand that heaven is a wonderful place. But we don't have to wait until we reach heaven to enjoy God's goodness.

As a family, discuss the good things God has done for you. Do you know someone who is going through a difficult time? Do something for that person and their family. Maybe you'll also get an opportunity to share God's love with them.

Turn to page 196 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Night

- **Birthday Jamboree** – Help Sparkies to think more about heaven and how wonderful it will be. Celebrate their spiritual birthdays (the day they trusted Christ as Savior). Have cake and decorate the room with streamers, balloons and banners.
- Sing:  
Happy birthday to you,  
Only one will not do.  
Receive Christ as your Savior,  
And then you'll have two!

## Game Ideas

- **Pin the Wings on Sparky** – Draw a picture of Sparky on a large piece of paper. Draw some wings and cut them out of cardboard or thick construction paper. Play as you would Pin the Tail on the Donkey.
- **Piñata** – What's a birthday party without a piñata? Find a festive piñata and fill it with candy and Awana trinkets. Put some Awana Shares in there too!

## Teaching Options

- When talking about Pharaoh's dream, find some stuffed animal cows to help illustrate the dream. Also find something that looks like grain to illustrate the second part of the dream.
- Emphasize that we don't know exactly what heaven will look like. We get glimpses of heaven in passages such as Mark 16:19 where it says that Jesus was taken up into heaven and sits by God. John 14:2-4 tells us that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and that in His Father's house there will be room for many people to dwell with God.

## SparksActivity

*(The purpose of this activity is to help Sparkies understand what it is to have a famine. Encourage children to draw dried-up corn stalks, etc. You could even bring in dried grass for the Sparkies to glue on their picture.)*

Draw two pictures. Draw one picture of what you think Egypt looked like during the good time when there was lots of rain to water the crops. Draw one picture of what you think Egypt looked like during the famine.

## Reading

Genesis 42

## Thinking

The lessons on Joseph include a lot of review as we move through his biography. Sparkies need review, but as you continue through Joseph's life, ask questions about the past weeks. Allow them to contribute to your discussion.

Joseph was rejected by his brothers, sold into slavery, experienced time in jail and rose to the height of power in Egypt. Egypt experienced seven years of plenty, followed by severe famine (just as Joseph told Pharaoh when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream). Because of Joseph's guidance, Egypt was the only region with food.

Back in Canaan, Joseph's family also ran out of food and Jacob told his sons to go down to Egypt to see if they could purchase some. They did as their father said and ended up before Joseph. Of course, they bowed down to Joseph (just as God showed Joseph in Joseph's dream).

The emphasis is not on Joseph's dream coming true, but the fact that God directed Joseph's life and thus, God's plan was fulfilled.

Kids hear phrases such as "make all your dreams come true" or "wish upon a star." This is not what happened with Joseph! Joseph was told by God that his brothers would bow down to him and there they were! The glory goes to God, not Joseph or his dream!

***(We also need to teach children that God speaks to us through the Bible – not through dreams or visions.)***



## Looking It Up

Genesis 42:6 ***(Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.)***

# Getting It Ready

## You will need:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Three Sparkies who know how to write well. If you don't have enough Sparkies, enlist leaders to help.

## Telling

Who wrote the Bible? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** God wrote the Bible. Did God sit down with a pencil and paper and write it? No, God used many different people over 1,500 years to write down what He wanted us to know.



The Bible writers wrote about some events that hadn't happened yet. Now some of those things have already happened – and some of them will still happen in the future. When someone tells us what will happen in the future, we call that *prophecy*. That's a big word. Can everyone say *prophecy* with me? **(Say the word together.)** God wanted people to be ready for the future. That doesn't mean that God let the people know what would happen every minute of every day (although God knows that), but He did tell people some of what would happen.

Did things always happen the way God said they would? Yes, God was right every single time.

God sometimes used people to tell others the news about the future. A person who God used to tell others about the future is called a *prophet*. Can we all say *prophet*? A prophet is someone who prophesies – or tells the future. A prophet is someone who tells what God says about the future.

Are any of you prophets? Can you predict what will happen in the future? Let's see if any of you can. I need three Sparkies to come up front. **(Choose the three you talked to before club.)** I want all three of you to write down what you think I will do when you are done writing. Maybe I will tie my shoe, or read a book, or talk on a phone. It could be anything. What will I do next? **(Let the three Sparkies write down what they think you will do next.)**

All three of the Sparkies are done writing. Fold your pieces of paper and give them to me and I will not look at them. I'll just put them down here on the table. OK, here is what I planned to do next. **(At this point, do something really crazy! Jump on one foot and pat your head and make weird noises, eat a carrot or anything that no Sparkie would ever guess!)**

Now let's see if we have any prophets with us tonight. **(Read off what each Sparkie said on his or her piece of paper.)** That is really strange. Not one of you were right, you weren't even close! Why didn't you know what I was going to do? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)**



## Telling continued

The reason you didn't know what I was going to do is because you didn't know what I was going to do! That sounds silly, doesn't it? But it's true. The only way you can know the future is if you know the future! The only way you can know the future is if God tells you because He is the only one who knows what will happen after club tonight, what will happen tomorrow, and what will happen one hundred years from now.

Back in the Old Testament, God sometimes gave messages to people through dreams. Now, God tells us about the future in the Bible. **(Emphasize this point.)**

Let's review what we have learned about Joseph. **(Ask the Sparkies the following questions.)**

1. How did God talk to Joseph when Joseph was young? **(Through a dream.)**
2. What did Joseph learn from his dream? **(That someday his brothers would bow down to him.)**
3. What did Joseph's brothers do to him? **(Threw him in a pit – and then sold him as a slave.)**
4. Why did Joseph end up in prison? **(Because he wouldn't listen to Potiphar's wife and do what was wrong.)**
5. Whom did Joseph meet while he was in prison? **(The baker and the cupbearer.)**
6. What did he do for them? **(Interpreted their dreams.)**
7. Then what happened? **(Two years later, Pharaoh needed a dream interpreted and the cupbearer remembered Joseph.)**
8. What did the dream mean? **(Egypt would have seven good-crop years and then seven bad-crop years. If they stored the crops from the good-crop years, they would have enough food for the bad-crop years.)**

Wow! Good answers! You Sparkies were listening well!

Now Joseph was in charge of all the crops in all of Egypt. And as always, he did a good job – he kept lots of food for the bad-crop years.

Do you think a famine came? Yes, it did because God is always right! The people in Egypt had plenty of food, but the people in the countries around Egypt didn't have any food. People got very, very hungry. Sometimes we get hungry because we don't have food for a couple of hours – these people didn't have much food for days and days and days.

Joseph's brothers ran out of food too. Their dad, Jacob, heard that there was food in Egypt, so he sent his sons to get some. They NEVER dreamed they would be talking to Joseph – the brother they had been unkind to years before. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Genesis 42:6.)** They thought Joseph was dead. They never imagined that Joseph would be in charge of Egypt.

Guess what they did when they saw Joseph?

Right. They bowed down to him JUST LIKE GOD SAID THEY WOULD! Let's say together: God is always right.

Joseph is just one example from the Bible when God told people what would happen in the future. There are many other examples. All of these examples are to teach us that God knows everything and He is in control! It is nice to know that we have a smart God who knows everything. Let's say together: God is always right.



## Challenging

God is so smart – He knows everything there is to know. Let's say together: God is always right.

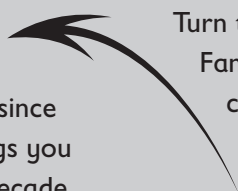
God even knows the future. He knows everything you will do in your life. He knows whether or not you will trust the Lord Jesus Christ. Believing that you are a sinner and that Jesus Christ died for you and came alive again is how you become a Christian. God wants you to trust Him.

Some of us have already trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and we've been forgiven of our sins. God says that whoever believes on Him will go to heaven! Heaven is a great place and we will be there forever. Forever is such a long time, we can't even imagine what it's like. But if God says we get to be with Him forever, do you think we will be? Yes, because God is always right!

## Family Follow Up

What things have changed in your family in the past eight years (or since your child was born)? Talk with your child about where you live, things you do, etc. Enjoy thinking about the technology you didn't have even a decade ago. Imagine what you will have 10 years from now.

Remind your children that God knows everything, and nothing – not even new technology – is a surprise to Him. He gave us the brains to make it in the first place. When your child was born, God knew he or she would someday be a Sparkie! God is in control and has a plan. Make sure we all remember that no matter how out of control things may look, God knows it all and has a purpose for each of us. His purpose for believers includes heaven, a place where the only news will be good news!



Turn to page 196 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Nights

- **When I Grow Up Night** – When Joseph was young, He probably never thought that he would be such a powerful man in Egypt! What do your Sparkies want to be when they grow up? Have them dress up as someone in a profession they are interested in even if it's a lofty goal. You never know, those Sparkies might just surprise you one day! Decorate the room with items from various careers such as footballs, stethoscopes, rulers, etc.

### Game Idea

- **Guess the Food** – There was a famine in the land when Joseph's brothers came to him. But there's not food shortage at Sparks! Put various kinds of food in paper bags – each food in its own bag. Use different fruit, a bag of bread, candy bar, etc.; things that are easily identifiable to a Sparkie. When they touch the food, they guess what it is, then pull it out to see if they're right. Continue until each person has a turn.

### Teaching Options

- Give an example of a prophet, such as Isaiah. He prophesied about Jesus' birth in Isaiah 7:14 and it came true.



## SparksActivity

Draw a picture of what you want to be when you're an adult. We can think about the future, but we don't know what will actually happen in the future.

## Reading

Genesis 43:1-45:24

## Looking It Up

Genesis 45: 4-5 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verses and be ready to read them to the group.*)

## Thinking

Your Sparkies are learning about Joseph, a boy who loved God who grew into a man who loved God. Isn't that what we want for the children we teach?

Again, there is a lot of review in this lesson because we want the children to remember the details and to know that God had a plan for Joseph's life.

Joseph's brothers sold Joseph into slavery, but he ended up leading the nation of Egypt! In order to obtain food during the famine, his brothers went down to Egypt and ended up bowing before Joseph and begging for food. This was the fulfillment of the dream (prophecy) God gave Joseph.

Joseph was in a position to control his brothers – and he did make their lives miserable for a time! But after delaying for a bit, Joseph forgave his brothers, telling them that the whole situation was part of God's plan of deliverance.

You may have difficulty explaining this passage to the Sparkies. Many of the kids you are talking to have brothers and sisters. Siblings tend to fight and argue! Your Sparkies may think Joseph was being mean to his brothers. He wasn't. He was in a unique situation. His brothers HAD sold him into slavery. Or Sparkies may interpret the application as: "It's OK to pick on your brothers for a while as long as you forgive them!"

But Joseph was not being petty. He gave his brothers the opportunity to realize who he was. He was testing them to see if they would recognize him or admit what they had done. He also wanted to know their attitude toward his younger brother, Benjamin. This is similar to God waiting for us, even though the world is getting further from Him. God's delay can frustrate us, but actually it is a picture of grace. Joseph could have made his brothers be his slaves. He could have killed them. He could have let them starve.

Instead, Joseph responds to them with forgiveness and love and wants to provide all their needs. This is a beautiful picture of God's love for us!



# Getting It Ready

## You will need:

- A can of lemonade (and lemonade for the entire group)
- A chair piled with books and papers which have to be moved (or some obvious other task)
- A leader to help you with the lesson. Explain what you need him or her to do.

## Telling

How many of you have brothers or sisters? How many of you have ever had your brother or sister do something mean to you? How many of you have done something mean to your brother or sister? **(Allow time for Sparkies to raise their hands in response to your questions.)** Sometimes brothers and sisters hit each other or mess with each other's stuff or blame each other for starting an argument. Being mean to your brothers and sisters isn't a good thing to do. But we all disobey God and make wrong choices.

**(You could use this opening introduction as a review. Ask: Why didn't Joseph's brothers like him? What did Joseph's father do for him? What did the brothers do to Joseph? Where did Joseph end up?)**

Joseph had a bunch of older brothers who were mean to him. Joseph was his dad's favorite son. His brothers hated him, and because they hated him, they sold him to some travelers as a slave.

Even though Joseph's brothers treated him meanly, the Lord was with Joseph. Joseph had an interesting life and ended up doing a good thing for Pharaoh (the king) and Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the land in Egypt.

Joseph was the boss of Egypt's food. For seven years Egypt had a lot of rain and good crops.



Joseph wisely stored the food because he knew bad times were coming. Sure enough, for seven years, Egypt had a famine (a time of no rain and bad crops), but because Joseph had wisely stored the food, the Egyptians had enough to eat. God helped Joseph do what was right.

Joseph's brothers ran out of food and their dad sent them to Egypt to get some food. Joseph's brothers bowed down to Joseph, begging for something to eat. Joseph recognized his brothers, but his brothers had no idea that Joseph was alive, much less in charge of Egypt's food.

Joseph wanted to see if they remembered him or if they were sorry for what they had done. He didn't tell them who he was right away. He sent them back home with some food. He put some money and valuable things in one of their bags of food and made it look like they stole from





## Telling continued

him! He wasn't doing this to be mean. He was doing it to give them time to admit what they had done to their younger brother and show that they were sorry. The oldest brother admitted to Joseph that they had lost one brother, Joseph, and they didn't want to lose another one. (They had left their younger brother, Benjamin, at home. See Genesis 44:27-29.)

That was good enough for Joseph! (**Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Genesis 45:4-5.**) Joseph told them he was their brother, the one they had sold into slavery. How do you think they felt when they found out they were talking to their long-lost brother? (**Allow Sparkies to respond.**) They were afraid! What would he do to them? Would he be mean to them because they threw him in the pit and then sold him into slavery? They didn't know what to do! Would Joseph be as mean to them as they were to him?

Some people would have GOTTEN BACK at their brothers. Joseph could have made his brothers his slaves. He could have had them killed or let them starve. He could have made them do some hard work for him BEFORE he gave them food. When people GET BACK at someone who did something mean to them, we call that *revenge*. You have a choice. When someone does something mean to you, you can get revenge or you can forgive that person.

Let's talk about revenge and about forgiveness.

John, (**insert name of the leader you chose beforehand**), please come up here and help me move these papers from this chair. Oh, my can of lemonade is there too. I kept the lemonade in the refrigerator in the church kitchen, so it's cold. This is my favorite brand of lemonade. I get so excited about teaching you Sparkies the good things from God's Word that sometimes after talking for a long time, my throat gets dry. So I brought my lemonade to club to quench my thirst when I'm done talking.

**(Continue chatting with the children as you help John with the task. Turn your back as you move some of the paper, so he has the opportunity to take the lemonade and sit back down and start drinking. Be prepared for the Sparkies to laugh and tell you what is happening.)**

“John! You took my lemonade. I just told you I need it because my throat gets dry.” **(Sound a little angry.)**

**(Address all the Sparkies once again.)**

Now, I have a choice, I can get revenge on John or forgive him for taking my lemonade. If I wanted to get revenge, I could catch him, take my lemonade back and angrily pour it over his head! Would that be a smart thing to do? Why or why not? **(Allow Sparkies to answer. Make sure someone comes up with the answer that if you wasted the lemonade, not only would it be wrong, but you wouldn't have anything to drink.)**

To show forgiveness, I could say, “I’m disappointed you took my lemonade, but I can get another one or wait until later to get a drink.”

Maybe you think dumping lemonade on John’s head would be funny, but that’s not forgiveness, is it? That’s revenge. The Bible tells us to forgive people. Jesus said that if someone hits you on the cheek, instead of hitting them back we should turn our head and let them hit the other cheek if they want to!

Let me ask a question. Was John wrong in what he did?

**(Give Sparkies the opportunity to respond and agree that he was wrong because he stole something that belonged to you.)**

By the way, Sparkies, John was my helper. I asked him to take the lemonade so I could explain revenge and forgiveness to you. He was doing what I asked him to do. He didn’t really steal my lemonade. **(At this point, you could give some lemonade to everyone.)**

Usually, we’d rather get revenge than forgive. Revenge is easy. Forgiveness isn’t easy.

Joseph could have refused to give his brothers food. After all, they weren’t very kind to him. But instead, he chose to show forgiveness.

We’ve all done mean things to other people. We’ve all made mistakes. We’ve all sinned. Aren’t you glad that God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth to die on the cross to forgive us of our sins? He could’ve chosen to get revenge on us instead. But because He loves us, He forgives us. All we need to do is understand that we’ve done wrong and that we need a Savior.

God shows forgiveness to us and so we should show it to others. When we forgive others, we show them God’s love.

## Challenging

We are all sinners. God is holy. He does not sin. He cannot sin. Whenever we try to get revenge on someone, we are sinning. God doesn’t like sin. Sin separates us (keeps us apart) from God. But God loves us and doesn’t want us to be separated from Him. That’s why He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to earth. The Lord Jesus died for our sins. Then three days later, He came alive again and He is now in heaven, preparing a place for those who have trusted Christ as Savior.

**(Give Sparkies the opportunity to talk with a leader about trusting Christ.)**

Maybe some of you have already trusted Christ as your Savior. Your sins ARE forgiven. That’s great. Now it’s up to you to show other people just how much God loves them too. A good way to do that is to forgive people when they do mean things to us.



## Family Follow Up

Make some popcorn or provide another fun treat and call a family meeting. Talk about how your family could get along better. Forgive each other for mistakes you've made. Have each family member tell one thing they like and appreciate about each other family member.

Turn to page 196 for Family Follow -Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Night

- **Backward Party Night** – Sometimes others will think we do things backwards for having a forgiving spirit instead of getting revenge. Have a backwards night! Sparkies dress backwards. Play Silent Chairs and Pin the Donkey on the Tail. Serve dessert first, followed by inside-out sandwiches and upside down cans of pop (with a hole punched in the bottom for the straw). Run your club schedule in reverse.

### Game Ideas

- **Web of Love** – Sit all Sparkies in a circle (or break them up into their teams) and hand one person a ball of yarn. Have her say something kind about another Sparkie, and then roll the ball of yarn to that Sparkie while holding onto the end. The second Sparkie then says something kind about another Sparkie and rolls the ball of yarn to him, holding onto the yarn. Sparkies continue until the yarn is unrolled.
- **Food Toss** – Using construction paper, cut a large target that looks like a basket of food or a specific type of food for each team. Use a marker to make a large X in the center. Also have a beanbag for each team. Place the basket on the floor in the middle of the game circle and a strip of tape at a distance where you feel your Sparkies will be challenged a bit but won't get totally frustrated (6–8 feet [1.8–2.4 meters] will do well). The teams stand on their team line and take turns standing with their toes on the tape, tossing the beanbag and attempting to hit the X. The team that hits the X the most times in a given time period wins.

### Teaching Options

- Serve lemonade to everyone.
- Review what has been learned so far about Joseph. You can never review too many times. The more Sparkies hear and recall the facts, the better they'll remember, and the more the truths of God's Word will resound in their hearts.

# SparksActivity

Break the code. Look at the bottom of the page to find the picture for each letter of the alphabet.



## Reading

Genesis 45:25-50:26

## Thinking

Joseph had a long ordeal with his family. His brothers rejected him and sold him into slavery. Joseph then found himself controlling the lives of those very brothers. With a word, Joseph could save his brothers or have them put to death. He chose to save them.

Joseph's life is a beautiful picture of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus was rejected by His people, yet, through His rejection, He was put in a place to save His people. His death led to life everlasting!

Rejection is something kids know about. Most kids will experience rejection at one point or another in their lives. And many kids think about being in a place where they have control – and can get revenge! Most stories about superheroes or fairy tale princesses revolve around the rejection-and-saving story line.

People gravitate towards Joseph's biography because there is something in us drawing us to the redemption of Christ. Funny how that is! Just like Joseph, Jesus guarantees a great life with Him by accepting His provision.

As you explain to the Sparkies how Joseph's life parallels the life of Christ, emphasize salvation. This is a great lesson to talk about forgiveness and redemption.

## Showing

Have the Sparkies give ideas of how this junk could be used instead of throwing it away. This object lesson allows you and your Sparkies to be very creative. There are all kinds of options to use in this lesson. Feel free to use other examples besides the ones used here.

**(OPTION – You could bring the same collection of junk for each team: an empty orange juice carton, old newspaper, some small pieces of wood, an egg carton, etc. During Game Time, see which team can build the most interesting invention from their collection of junk. Use the resulting creations as examples before your lesson.)**

## Getting It Ready

### You will need:

- A variety of used objects, such as a paper towel roll, empty cottage cheese container, and an empty jar
- Several pieces of garbage or used things that would normally be thrown away





# Looking It Up

Genesis 47:11 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

## Telling

*(Again, there is a lot of review – we want children to know the biography of Joseph. This is the last lesson on Joseph, so use a portion of your time quizzing the kids on how much they remember. You might want to bring candy, or give team points or other small prizes to keep interest in answering the questions.)*

1. Why didn't Joseph's brothers like him? **(Because his father gave him a special coat.)**
2. What is special about the coat? **(The coat is like one worn by royalty or a rich man's son.)**
3. What was Joseph doing when his brothers decided to throw him into the pit? **(Making sure they were OK.)**
4. How did Joseph get out of the pit? **(His brothers sold him to some travelers as a slave.)**
5. Whose house did Joseph work in when he got to Egypt? **(Potiphar's.)**
6. How do we know he was a good worker? **(Potiphar put him in charge of the entire household.)**
7. Whom did Potiphar believe when his wife accused Joseph of doing something wrong and what happened? **(He believed his wife and threw Joseph into prison.)**
8. What did Joseph do for the baker and the cupbearer? **(Interpreted their dreams.)**
9. How did being known as a "dream interpreter" help him later? **(He was called out of prison to interpret Pharaoh's dream.)**

10. What did Pharaoh's dreams mean? **(Seven years of good crops and seven years of bad crops for Egypt.)**

11. What did Joseph's job then become? **(Storing the good crops so there would be enough to eat during the time of the bad crops.)**

12. What brother was missing when Joseph's brothers came to get the food? **(Benjamin.)**

13. Why? **(Because Benjamin was Joseph's younger brother – another favored son, and Jacob already had lost Joseph.)**

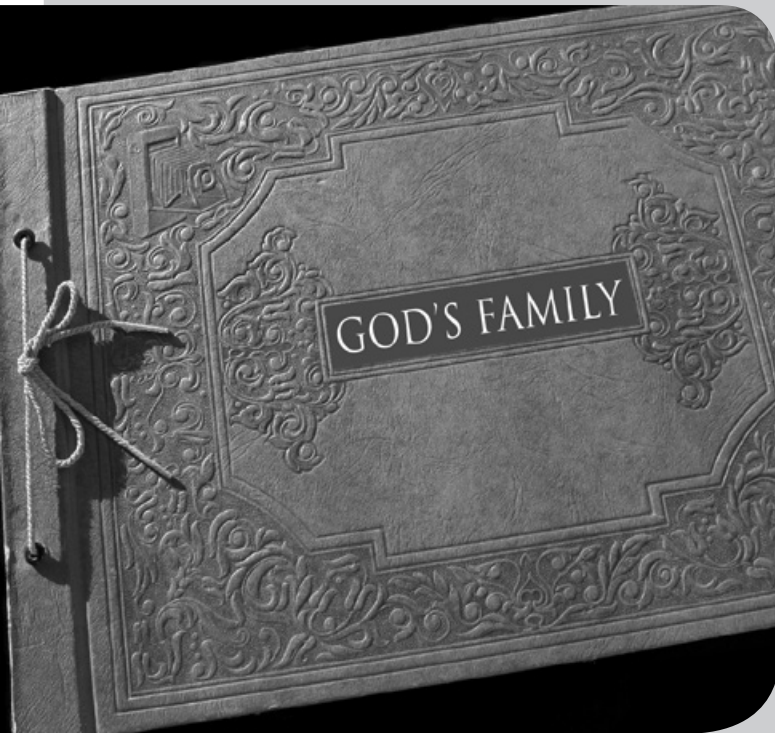
14. Why did Joseph send them back home? **(He wanted to check out their attitude – had it changed from when they were unkind to him?)**

15. Why didn't Joseph get revenge? **(He loved his father and his brothers.)**

Joseph could have been mean to his brothers and sent them away with no food. He could have let them starve. Instead, Joseph forgave them for what they did. Then he took those brothers who sold him into slavery and gave them fantastic houses on the best land in Egypt! Joseph not only saved his brothers, he also made sure all their needs were taken care of for the rest of their lives. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Genesis 47:11.)**

Joseph saved the brothers who turned against (rejected) him. This is exactly what Jesus did for us. He came to earth to save people. Instead, people turned against Him and ended up killing Him. But God was in control and Jesus came alive again. He now offers to save all people who believe.





God does not like sin. (Sin is anything we think, say or do that goes against what God tells us in the Bible.) Whenever we sin, we reject God. Before we believe in Jesus Christ, our sins are not forgiven. We reject Christ by not believing. God still loves us, though! Even while we were sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

Once we believe the gospel (the good news that Christ died and came alive again to take the consequences for our sin), our sins are forgiven and we can be sure that someday we will live in heaven. In heaven, all our needs will be met! Jesus will do for us what Joseph did for his brothers.

***(If you have done this as a game during Game Time, you will need to adjust what you say.)***

I brought some junk from my garbage to club tonight. I did this because I thought we could find some other things to do with this stuff besides throw it away. I brought an old paper towel tube. What are some things we could do with this? ***(Allow Sparkies to come up with some ideas.)*** We could make an instrument out of it. ***(Buzz your lips on***

***the edge of it.)*** We could use it as a megaphone and speak through it. Listen: “Sparkies, be quiet and listen to me!” Sounds pretty neat! You could tape it to cardboard, cut the top off and store pencils in it!

Next I have an old plastic pickle jar. What could we do with this? ***(Allow Sparkies to share ideas.)*** We could put candy in it! Maybe we could keep more pens and pencils in it. You could poke holes in the lid, put some grass in there and keep a caterpillar in it until the caterpillar turns into a butterfly!

I also brought an old cottage cheese container. Seems like we could do lots of things with this. What are some of your ideas? ***(Allow Sparkies to give ideas.)*** You could fill it with sand and use it as a sandcastle mold. Of course, you could always keep food in it and store it in the refrigerator. Some people fill it with dirt and keep worms in it to go fishing!

This old paper towel tube, plastic jar and cottage cheese container are worthless (have no value) if we throw them away, and that’s what most people would do. ***(This can be a difficult concept for Sparkies, but it is an important concept for them to understand. Our value comes from our Creator.)*** But if we find something useful to do with them, we take what is rejected and make it worth something (have value)! We take what is worthless (has no value) and make it worthy (having value). Something that is worthy is valuable and can be used for something good.

People rejected Jesus and killed Him on the cross. They tried to “throw Him away.” But God had a plan, because the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy. When the Lord Jesus Christ died, God was able to raise Him from the dead. He took what was rejected and turned Him into the Savior of the world!

God also desires for us to be people of value. Before we trust Christ, we have no value. But when we trust Christ as Savior, our sins are forgiven and we have new life! We are now part of God’s family!

## Challenging

God knows us each by name. He created us and He cares for us. He loves us. If we trust Christ as Savior, our name is in the Book of Life. That means someday we will live in heaven for all eternity. And don't worry. God won't get confused if there are a lot of people with the same name. He's in control and He knows exactly who you are.

Maybe your name isn't in the Book of Life because you haven't trusted Christ as Savior. Why not do that tonight?

You see –

We were all born sinners and we all sin (think, say and do things that are different from what God wants us to think, say and do).

God is perfect, but our sin makes us NOT perfect. That keeps us apart from God.

God sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for us on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. He did this because He loves us.


Three days later, He once again came alive. The Lord Jesus is now in heaven making a place for us to live with Him forever.

We need to trust the Lord Jesus as Savior. Then our name will be in the Book of Life and someday we will live with Him in heaven.



## Family Follow Up

Most families have rules about being careful with certain things in their house. Talk about the different rooms or furniture in your house. Which ones are worthy – ones you take good care of? Which ones are becoming worthless – close to be taken out to the trash? Talk about how we (as Christians) are all part of the family of God (Ephesians 2:19). Do we live the way God would want us to live?



Turn to page 197 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Donate a Used Toy Night** – Most Sparkies have lots of toys. Research and find a place where you can donate used toys. The week prior, send home fliers telling parents that Sparks is going to do a used toy drive the following week. Have Sparkies bring in a toy they don't play with anymore. It needs to be in good condition. What's old can be used again! Have a special place in your Large Group Time room where Sparkies can put their used toys. Take pictures of you and whoever else goes to donate the toys and show them to the Sparkies at a later time.
- **Missions Night** – Sparkies in your church aren't the only ones who need to hear about salvation and how God can make us new again. Invite a missionary to give the Large Group Time lesson about Joseph. Then he or she can share about the country he or she lives in: what it's like, interesting facts, etc. He or she can also talk about the children in that country – how there might be differences in skin color or what language is spoken, but they're a lot like your Sparkies. And they also need to hear about Jesus and that's why missionaries go to live in their country.

## Game Ideas

- **Pillows** – Use old pillows instead of beanbags for Game Time.
- **Hunt** – Hide several things that aren't normally something we want to find, such as a bag of dirty socks or an empty gallon of milk. Tell Sparkies what the items are and how many of them are hidden. The Sparkies who bring you the items win points for their team as well as individual prizes.

## Teaching Options

- At the end of the Challenging section, give Sparkies an opportunity to talk with a leader about trusting the Lord Jesus as Savior. You may choose to lead them in a prayer or you can close in prayer and then have Sparkies who want to talk with someone come up to you.
- Find pictures that represent each of the 15 questions to help Sparkies remember and provide a visual aid.

## SparksActivity

Be a valuable person. Draw a picture of what you can do to help another person.

## Reading

Exodus 4-39; Numbers 12-20

## Thinking

Aaron, the brother of Moses, used his gifts from God in many wonderful ways. He was a peacemaker and a spokesman. Aaron was a leader who helped the Hebrew people escape from captivity in Egypt. He was also the founder of the priesthood. Aaron served God in many ways, but perhaps surpassed them all in his willingness to serve in the shadow of his well-known brother Moses.

When Moses objected to his ability to lead the people, God told him to rely on his brother, Aaron. There is nothing in Exodus that says God and Moses ever sat down to discuss this idea with Aaron, yet he willingly complied. Aaron may well have wondered why God didn't come to him in the first place. It couldn't have been easy to have been number two – especially to a younger brother!

In today's world, we are often pointed out as a failure if we are not number one. It may be one of the leading causes of unhappiness. God, on the other hand, doesn't want us to worry about measuring up to everyone else. God merely wants us to do the best we can.

It isn't until later, when Aaron has the chance to be in charge while Moses is receiving the Ten Commandments, that he realizes his weakness as a leader. Aaron folds under the pressure of the people and creates a golden image for them to worship.

Aaron served God the best way he could. Like all of us, he was imperfect and fallible, which makes him an excellent example for children to learn from. Aaron could have become bitter, angry and resentful. He could have chosen to turn away from God instead of living in the shadow of his famous brother. Instead, Aaron rose to the occasion and used his talents to do the best he could.

## Looking It Up

Deuteronomy 10:12 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)





## Showing

You will need two storytellers for this responsive reading. Give each storyteller a script to practice well before they perform in front of the group.

Create a large sign with these words on it. Before the reading begins, teach Sparkies this responsive rhyme:

**I'll stand out from all the rest!**

**That's because I'll do my best!**

**One, two, three, four!**

**God can count on me for sure!** (Pronounced "shore" – to rhyme with "four")

Designate someone to hold up the sign at each of the appropriate times in the reading.

Ask the kids to brainstorm a quick list of things that may not be easy for them. Here are some examples: It's not easy coming in second; losing a game; getting bad grades; not understanding directions; not having a talent or ability to do something; not being healthy; and so on.

Invite a guest to come and speak to Sparkies about the realities of having to live with something that isn't easy – but knowing how to rise above it! Make sure you choose a guest that knows how to talk to the Sparkies in an age-appropriate way. Ask your speaker to keep it short. Point out her limitation; then showcase how that person has lived in peace and joy despite that limitation.



# Telling

**LEADER 1:** A long time ago ...

**LEADER 2:** That's for sure ...

**LEADER 1:** God spoke to Moses in the form of a burning bush.

**LEADER 2:** What kind of bush? Lilac? Evergreen?

**LEADER 1:** Does it matter? Anyway ... God told Moses he was to lead the Hebrew people out of slavery from Egypt. But Moses didn't think he could do it. Moses wasn't a very good speaker, so he didn't think anyone would listen to him. But God told Moses his brother, Aaron, would help him.

**SIGN:** (*Sparkies recite together.*)

**LEADER 1:** Moses went to Egypt, got Aaron, and they went to tell Pharaoh that God wanted his people to be set free.

**LEADER 2:** I bet that went over real big.

**LEADER 1:** Not exactly. Pharaoh wouldn't listen. That's when Aaron tossed down his walking stick and it turned into a serpent.

**LEADER 2:** Cool trick! I wish I could do that.

**LEADER 1:** Aaron did it to show Pharaoh God's power.

**LEADER 2:** It's still a cool trick.

**LEADER 1:** That's what Pharaoh probably thought. So his magicians did the same thing. Except Aaron's serpent swallowed up Pharaoh's serpents!

**LEADER 2:** And the winner is ... Aaron! Way to go Aaron, way to go!

**LEADER 1:** The winner was God. Aaron didn't do it to show he could beat Pharaoh at a trick. He did it out of obedience to God – to help Moses convince Pharaoh of God's amazing power.



**SIGN:** (*Sparkies recite.*)

**LEADER 1:** Pharaoh got angry and still wouldn't listen. So God allowed Moses and Aaron to cause 10 plagues. Aaron began the first three plagues by using his rod once again to show Pharaoh God's amazing powers.

**SIGN:** (*Sparkies recite.*)

**LEADER 2:** Aaron was one awesome dude!

**LEADER 1:** Pharaoh finally gave in and released the slaves.

**LEADER 2:** Way to go Aaron, way to go!

**LEADER 1:** Way to go God! The slaves marched out of Egypt, led by Moses and Aaron.

**LEADER 2:** They're awesome leaders!

**LEADER 1:** Actually, God was their real leader. When they got in the desert, Moses went back up the mountain to talk to God and receive the Ten Commandments. While he was away, Moses put Aaron in charge of the people.

**SIGN:** (*Sparkies recite.*)

**LEADER 2:** Good call! It's about time Aaron got to be the number-one man! Why didn't God just ask Aaron to be in charge in the first place? After all, he was the one who was the great speaker!

**LEADER 1:** I'm glad you asked. Things didn't go so well when Aaron was in charge. Moses stayed on the mountain for a long time, and the people got tired of waiting for him. So they went to Aaron and told him to build an idol to worship so they could celebrate. Aaron was a peacemaker. Maybe that's why he agreed to do it. He told the people to bring their gold jewelry, and he made a golden calf for them to worship.

**LEADER 2:** How cool is that?

**LEADER 1:** No, not very cool at all. God needed Aaron to stand strong against the people and remind them that He is their one and only God.

**LEADER 2:** So God knew what he was doing all along when he told Moses to be in charge, instead of Aaron, right from the start.

**LEADER 1:** Yep, that's God's specialty – knowing the right thing to do.

**LEADER 2:** Well, I sure hope Aaron learned his lesson!

**SIGN:** (*Sparkies recite.*)

**LEADER 2:** So the guy only made one

mistake. That's not too bad!

**LEADER 1:** Just like you and me, Aaron wasn't perfect. The Bible doesn't tell us about all the good stuff Aaron did, nor does it tell us about all of his mistakes. There was another time when Miriam was feeling a little jealous about Moses getting all the attention. She and Aaron got to talking ...

**LEADER 2:** Don't tell me ... Aaron messed up again.

**LEADER 1:** He sure did. That's the problem when you start wanting what someone else has. You start paying attention to the wrong stuff. God doesn't care who is the best speaker, or the fastest runner, or the smartest student. God only cares about you – and how you do your best for Him.

**SIGN:** (*Sparkies recite.*)

**LEADER 2:** Yeah, but sometimes it feels crummy being second best.

**LEADER 1:** Nobody is "second best" when it comes to God. He made everyone special, important, and unique in his and her own way. Just like God created Moses and Aaron to do their own special things – God created you to do your special things too. Just don't ever forget to rely on Him for help.

**LEADER 2:** What do you mean?

**LEADER 1:** You can do some things well. God gave you the talent and ability to do those things. But now He wants you to use those talents and abilities for Him. He doesn't want you using those things in a wrong way.

**LEADER 2:** Like Aaron did with the golden calf.

**LEADER 1:** Exactly. Never be afraid to lean on God for everything you need. And just remember to always do your best for Him.

**SIGN:** (*Sparkies recite.*)

# Challenging

*(Ask the Sparkie who looked up Deuteronomy 10:12 to read it to the other Sparkies at this time. Make sure the Sparkies know what the verse means and how it fits into the lesson. You could emphasize that Moses himself wrote the book of Deuteronomy.)*

Tell kids to find a friend. *(Be aware of any kids who aren't hooking up with someone else so you can help them be matched. Ask the following questions and have them tell each other the answers.)*

1. If you were watching a ballgame on TV and your little brother asked you to play ball with him in the backyard, how would you feel? How could you still give your best to God?

2. If you wanted a puppy for Christmas more than anything else in the world and instead you got a new pair of boots, how would you feel? How could you still give your best to God in that situation?

3. If your family had been planning a trip to the water park and then your dad lost his job, so you couldn't go, how would you feel? How could you still give your best to God in that situation?






## Family Follow Up

Encourage the entire family to practice doing their best! Start out by planning a family fun night! Ask each family member to come up with his or her best activity for the rest of the family to participate in. The challenge: to encourage and help one another to succeed, rather than trying to compete with each other. Possible activities might be playing games, putting together a puzzle, building with blocks, cooking, making a craft or telling a story.

When the fun is over, talk about how God has blessed each family member with special abilities. Pray about how you can each use those abilities to do your best for Him. Then plan at least one way to follow through in using your special abilities in ministry this month.



Turn to page 197 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!

# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Favorites Night** – Plan a night where Sparkies pick their favorite games, sing their favorite songs, recite their favorite Bible verse, etc. Work in the theme of the Large Group Time Lesson by encouraging Sparkies to sing their loudest and play their best even if the games and songs picked aren't their favorites. We should always do our best. Find out what the favorite songs and games are the week prior during Handbook Time. Ask leaders to write down what Sparkies say in reply to:  
My favorite game  
My favorite Awana song  
Bible verse I like the best
- **Show Your Talent Night** – Encourage Sparkies to do their best when they take part in a talent night! They can sing, recite a poem or Bible verse, tell jokes, etc. Have them tell you a week prior what they plan to do. Have some leaders participate as well – it'll encourage the Sparkies to participate.

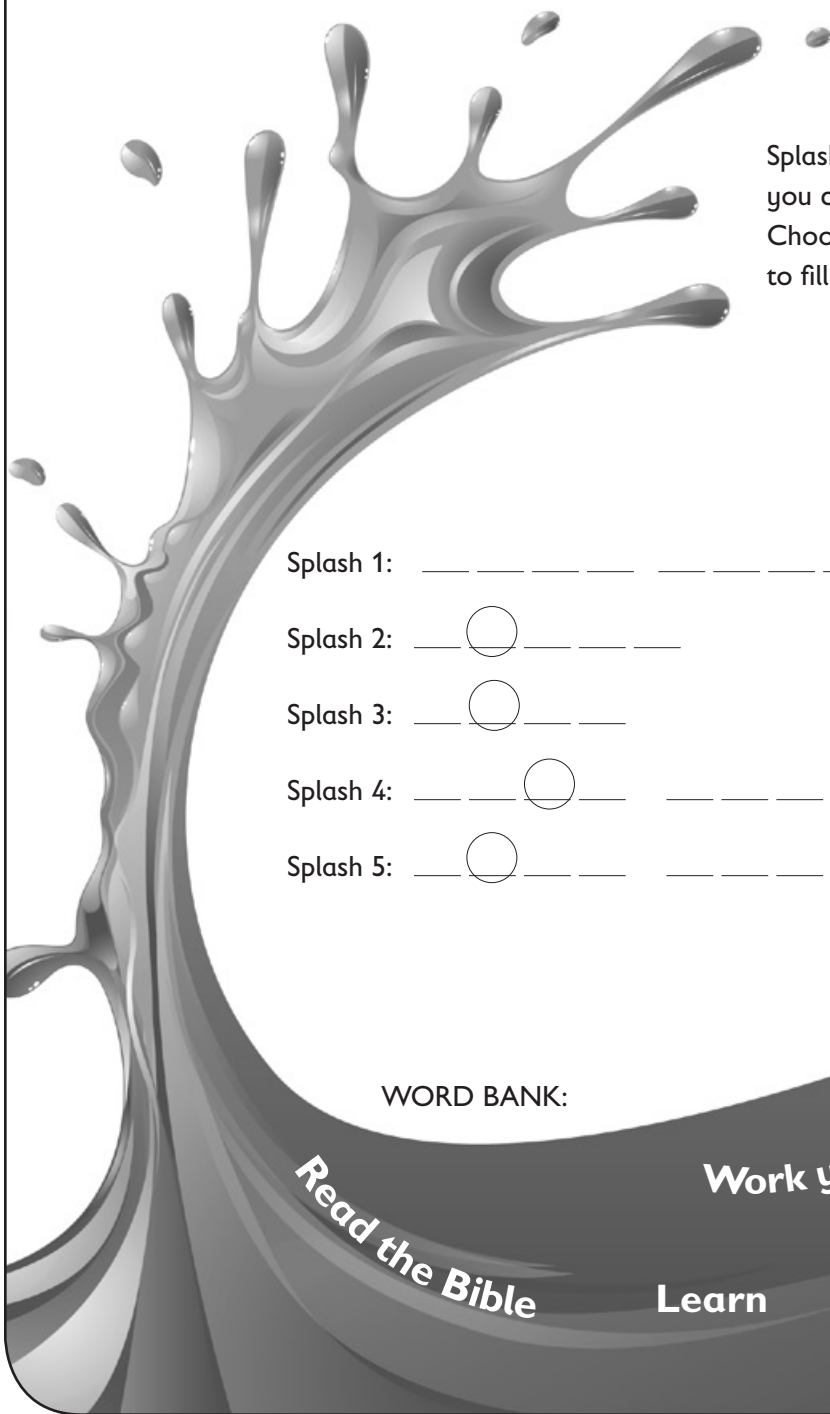
## Game Ideas

- **Tails** – Players insert strips of cloth into the backs of their belts/pants. When the whistle blows, players run around the inside of the game circle and try to grab other players' tails. When a player loses her own tail, she is out. After a given period of time, the player with the most tails wins (or the last person left with his tail).
- **Box the Ball** – Sparkies will have to do their best in order to win this game! You'll need four balls and a box or bucket. The entire team gets to play. If there are unequal numbers of players, allow some players to go twice to even out the number of throws. Place the bucket in the center of the circle. Players stand single file along their team diagonals behind the innermost hash mark. The first player holds a ball. When the whistle blows, the first player on each team attempts to throw the ball into the bucket, then returns to the end of his team's line. His leader retrieves the ball and gives it to the second player who tries to throw the ball into the bucket. Play continues until all players have participated. Teams are awarded one point for each ball that lands in the bucket.

## Teaching Options

- When thinking about whom you can invite to speak to your Sparkies, consider an older T&T clubber or middle school or high school student. Sparkies tend to really look up to kids who are older than them and might take to heart what they say even more than what an adult would say.
- Print out the responsive rhyme on 3" by 5" (7.6x12.7 cm) cards so that Sparkies can keep it with them and refer to it at home or at school.

# SparksActivity



Splash into action by showing God what you can do to offer Him your best! Choose one answer from the word bank to fill in each of these spaces:

Splash 1: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

Splash 2: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Splash 3: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Splash 4: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Splash 5: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

WORD BANK:

Read the Bible

Work your hardest

Love others

Learn

Pray

Finish this pool of thought by using the circled letter from each of the above word splashes to complete this sentence:

\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your might.



## Reading

Exodus 2:1-10; 13:17-15:21; Numbers 12:1-16; Micah 6:4

## Thinking

Miriam is the first woman prophetess recorded in the Bible (Exodus 15:20). She showed courage, devotion, support and family love when called upon by God and others.

It's important for children to realize that God calls upon us every day to be His servants. That means more than just serving a meal or helping Mom and Dad by picking up toys. Being a servant is a tough job. It requires bravery and dedication, along with a caring and joyful heart. Just like Miriam, God counts on us to be daily champions on His behalf.

Miriam was much more than just a girl who watched her baby brother floating in the Nile River. She took great risks in saving Moses. Then she grew up to be a strong woman of faith and a dependable servant among God's people.

Still, Miriam was not without fault. This little-known part of her story is important for Sparkies to know, because it makes Miriam human. Miriam is just like you and me. She became jealous and doubtful. Although God punished her for her actions, He was not without mercy.

Miriam left an amazing legacy. She set an excellent example for children to follow. God does not just call upon us for temporary action. God counts on us for a lifetime commitment in serving Him.

## Looking It Up

Micah 6:4 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

## Showing

**Option 1:** Place several metal items, such as a paper clip and a screw, onto a piece of cardstock. Obtain a magnet that's strong enough to maneuver these items from underneath the cardstock. Invite several children to come forward and take turns moving the magnet under the paper to see what happens to the items on top of it.

**Ask Sparkies:** What happened when you moved the magnet around the paper? (**Allow Sparkies to respond.**) Right! They followed the magnet wherever it moved. But how did this happen when the magnet was invisible to the objects? (**Allow Sparkies to respond.**) Even though you couldn't see the magnet, the "things" followed it.

**Option 2:** Display several items that we rely on in our daily life, such as a flashlight (for vision); an alarm clock (for getting to places on time); a calculator (for doing math); measuring spoons (for measuring ingredients); a newspaper (for providing news); a pen (for writing); a Bible (for discovering God's Word). Hold each item up, one at a time. Ask how many have used it, for what, and the service that it provides. Explain that we depend upon things like this to help us with important "services" every day, just like God depends on us to be His servants.



# Telling

*(Ask for 10 volunteers to help you tell this “Freeze Frame” story. Line up each volunteer in front of the group. You will probably want to choose adults – Sparkies will be “falling out” of position and making everyone laugh. If you don’t have enough adults, include less freeze points. Point to each one when he or she should act out the part of the story you are telling. As you move onto the next part, that person should freeze in place until the story is over.)*

**SCENE 1:** The king of Egypt was angry! Many new Israelite babies were being born. Why did this make the king so angry? Because he had thousands of Israelite slaves! The king was scared that too many baby boys would grow up and take over Egypt. So the king ordered that all the baby boys should be killed. *(Ask volunteer one to act out the king’s anger, then FREEZE FRAME this while you move on.)*

**SCENE 2:** A baby boy was born to Amram and Jochebed during this time. They were frightened and wanted to save him from harm. The baby had a sister, Miriam, who was about 10 or 12 years old. Miriam and her mother made a little basket from reeds. Then they placed the baby in the basket and put him in the Nile River, because it was their only hope of keeping him safe. *(Ask volunteer two to act this out then FREEZE FRAME this while you move on.)*

**SCENE 3:** Even though it was dangerous, Miriam showed great courage and love for her family. She watched over her little brother as he floated down the river. The little basket floated to a place where the king’s daughter was bathing. The little baby was so beautiful that the princess decided to raise the baby as her own. *(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)*

**SCENE 4:** Miriam had to think fast! As the princess took the baby out of the water, she named him Moses. But she needed help to care for him while he was so young. So Miriam ran toward the princess and volunteered to find a nurse to care for the baby. The princess agreed. So Miriam ran home and got Jochebed to care for her own son! *(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)*

**SCENE 5:** Moses grew up to be a strong leader. God called on him to help lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. *(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)*

**SCENE 6:** Miriam continued to serve God by helping Moses when he was grown up. Miriam showed her trust and loyalty to God every day. God knew that He could depend on Miriam to help Him and Moses with what they had to do! *(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)*

**SCENE 7:** God showed the people that He was all powerful! God helped Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. *(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Micah 6:4.)* When the Israelites became trapped in front of the Red Sea with the Egyptian soldiers coming after them, God caused the waters to part so that the Israelites could cross the river before the Egyptians could catch them! *(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)*

**SCENE 8:** When the people arrived safely on the other side of the river, Miriam celebrated by worshiping God with song and dance! She took a tambourine and played music and all the women followed her as she sang: ... *Sing ye to the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea (Exodus 15:21).* The Bible tells us that Miriam was a good follower of God. She was a musician and a devoted servant. *(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)*



**SCENE 9:** Miriam was an everyday, all-the-time servant for God. Miriam was in her nineties when the people crossed the Red Sea! That means she spent many years as a faithful servant. But Miriam was not perfect. When the people crossed the sea into the desert, life was hard. The people complained. Miriam became jealous of her brother Moses. She felt that he was being treated as more important. So Miriam spoke against her brother Moses. But God heard her. That's because God hears everything – even our innermost thoughts. **(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)**

**SCENE 10:** God was not pleased with Miriam. So God punished her. He allowed Miriam to get leprosy. This was an awful skin disease which meant Miriam was an outcast. Moses pleaded for God to heal her and give her another chance. God showed mercy, but first Miriam would have to suffer with the disease for seven days and live outside of the camp. **(Act out, then FREEZE FRAME.)**

**SCENE 11:** Even though Miriam had failed, she is remembered as a very strong, dependable servant of God. She was helpful, caring and faithful! Let's look at our FREEZE FRAMES and see if you can help me as we review the story!

# Challenging

God wants you to be an every day, all-the-time servant He can depend on, just like Miriam. That's not easy to do! Sometimes we do one nice thing and think we're done for a while. Being an every day, all-the-time servant is much more than that. Let's test it out! I'm going to read a sentence, and if you agree, stand up! Ready?

1. If my brother or sister wants me to share a toy, I'm happy to do that.
2. If my mom and dad ask me to put my toys away, I'm happy to do that.
3. I know I need to pray and learn what God says to me in His Word, the Bible, so I often take time to do that.
4. If kids are picking on my friend, I will help him out.
5. If my dad doesn't feel good, I will help take care of him.
6. If my mom has extra chores for me to do, I won't complain about it.
7. If I meet a new friend who doesn't know about God, I will invite her to go to church with me.
8. If I make some money selling lemonade, I will give some of it to God.

Worship God with joyful hearts, just like Miriam did when the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea! (Develop a fun rhythm based on the age and ability of your Sparkies.)

*Stomp! Clap – clap – clap! Stomp! Clap – clap – clap!*

Thank you God! We love you!

*Stomp! Clap – clap – clap! Stomp! Clap – clap – clap!*

Thank you God! For all you do!

*Stomp! Clap – clap – clap! Stomp! Clap – clap – clap!*

Thank you God! You are so great!


*Stomp! Clap – clap – clap! Stomp! Clap – clap – clap!*

Thank you God! You are first-rate!

## Family Follow Up

How can you encourage your entire family to become every day, all-the-time servants for God? Create a garden of service and watch it grow! Once a week, ask each family member to create paper handprints. Trace hands onto colorful construction paper, tissue paper, wrapping paper or even newspaper – whatever you have available! Cut them out. When you spy a family member being a good servant during the week, award that member a handprint.

At the end of the week, share all the ways you spied great servanthood around your home and celebrate it! Gather the handprints together to create flowers. The more handprints awarded, the prettier the flowers will be! Glue, staple or tape them together and attach them to your refrigerator or a designated door in the house. See how long it takes for you to create an entire garden of servanthood in your home!



Turn to page  
197 for Family  
Follow-Up cards  
that you can copy  
and distribute!





# TeachingIdeas

## Theme Nights

- **Snowman Night** – Encourage Sparkies to do their best. Every two sections completed by a handbook group earns a roll of toilet paper for the group. At the end of the night, allow Sparkies to wrap one of their team leaders in toilet paper. Other leaders will probably need to help. Have the leader being wrapped sit in a chair to make it easier for Sparkies to reach.
- **Making Music** – It's the night to celebrate music! Make tambourines for everyone (you'll need help from other leaders before this night!) by taking a paper plate, pouring some unpopped popcorn on the plate and then taping or stapling another paper plate on top of it. Instant tambourine! As Sparkies enter Game Time or Large Group Time, hand them each their own tambourine and play fun, kid-friendly praise music for them to shake to.



## Game Ideas

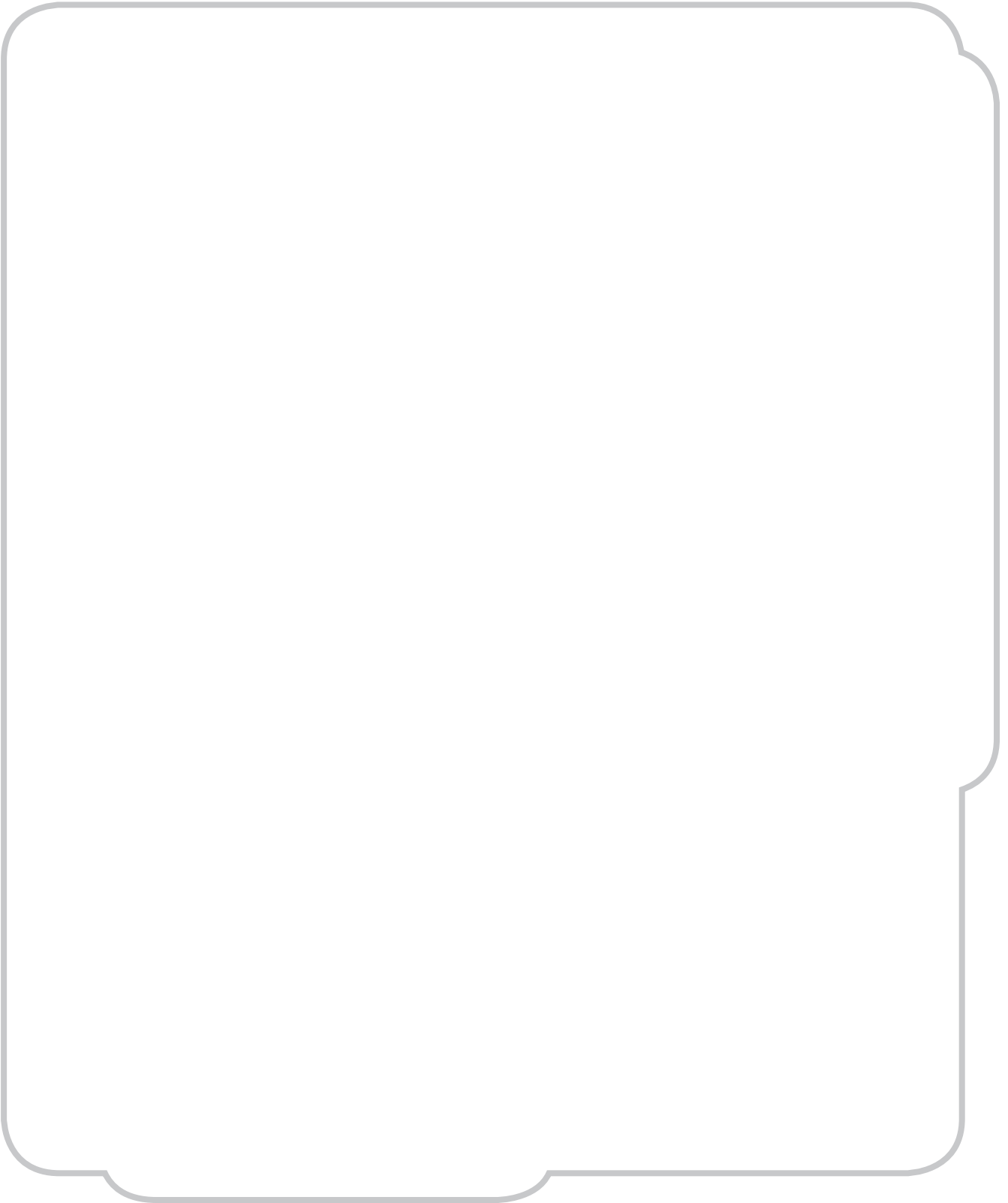
- **Musical Chairs** – Play an old favorite using very upbeat music.
- **Musical Feet** – Try this variation of Musical Chairs. Play Musical Chairs but without the chairs. Play music and have Sparkies dance or walk around the room or game circle with their popcorn tambourines. When the music stops, they all need to stop. No one is ever out and everyone gets a snack in the end.

## Teaching Option

- Sing more songs than usual tonight. Miriam rejoiced and sang when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. Sing a lot of upbeat and joyful songs.

# SparksActivity

Draw a picture of you serving the Lord.



## Reading

Numbers 22



## Thinking

Balaam was asked by Balak to curse God's people, Israel. Balaam refused to do it, and he even asked God to make sure he was right in that decision. But Balak asked Balaam again, this time promising Balaam a handsome reward. After already being told no, Balaam decided to ask God again. God said, "Go ahead, but only do what I tell you to do." As Balaam went out to meet with Balak, God intervened. The Bible says that God was upset with Balaam. We don't know why. Presumably, it is because Balaam had to ask God again if he should go. How many times does God have to say no?

God used Balaam's donkey to get Balaam's attention and show him how disobedient he was. If a donkey knows how to listen to God, shouldn't people be able to?

## Getting It Ready

**You will need:**

- Pictures of animals
- You could use a child's book of animals.

Be ready to show pictures of animals to the Sparkies and have them make the sounds of those animals. If you have a small group, you may want to allow them to also "act" like the animals. Or you could have them do this during Game Time. Make sure the last picture you show them is of a donkey.

## Looking It Up

Numbers 22:28 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

# Telling

God created our world and all the animals that are in our world. Think of all the different kinds of animals. **(You could have Sparkies name their favorite animal.)** Animals come in all shapes and colors. Not only do animals look different, they also sound different. I have some pictures of animals and when I show you a picture of an animal, I want you to make the sound it makes.

Here is a cow. Everyone tell me what a cow sounds like. **(Sparkies respond with mooing.)**

Next we have a pig. **(Sparkies respond with oinking.)**

What does a duck sound like? **(Sparkies respond with quacking.)**

Oh, here's a mouse. What do mice sound like? **(Sparkies respond with squeaking.)**

You all do some great animal sounds. Here's a tough one for you. What sound does an alligator make? I don't really know what sound an alligator makes. I think sometimes they hiss when they are mad but other than that, I don't think they make much noise! Maybe we should all be alligators for the rest of the night!

Last we have a donkey. What sound do donkeys make? **(Let Sparkies respond with hee-hawing.)** Hee-haw? You're sort of right, most donkeys say, "Hee-haw." But this donkey said "What have I done that you have hit me three times?" You don't think donkeys say that? Sure they do; the Bible even says so!

That verse is found in Numbers, the fourth book of the Bible. We read about a man named Balaam. Balaam was asked by some enemies (men who didn't like God or His people) to come over and curse God's people, Israel. *Curse* means "to make bad things happen." Balaam asked God if he should go with these men and God told him not to. But the men came back and begged

Balaam and even promised him all kinds of money. Balaam said he wanted to do what God said, but he really, deep inside, wanted to go with the men. This time God said Balaam could go.

Balaam got on his donkey to go meet the enemies of Israel. On the way there, he had some donkey troubles (that's kind of like car trouble, but worse!). All of a sudden, Balaam's donkey ran off the road and into a field!

Balaam was angry! He hit the donkey to get her back on the road. But a little while later when the donkey was carrying Balaam between two walls, the donkey slammed Balaam's foot into one of the walls!

OK, now Balaam was super upset! He hit his donkey again.

The donkey kept walking until they were in a very narrow part of the road with nowhere to turn on either side. Do you know what the donkey did this time? **(Allow Sparkies to respond.)** Balaam's donkey simply lay down! Balaam would never get to where he was going!

Balaam was over-the-top angry this time. He hit his donkey again! But there was a reason the donkey was having trouble. The Bible says that the donkey saw an angel of God standing there with a sword! The donkey was afraid and was trying to get away from the angel. That explains why the donkey ran into a field and that's why it slammed Balaam's foot into the wall and that's why it lay down in the road!

Oh, this is sort of funny (although it isn't funny that Balaam disobeyed). God opened the mouth of the donkey and the donkey talked to Balaam! Wow, how weird is that? How many of you have ever heard a donkey talk? This was a miracle, something ONLY God could do. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Numbers 22:28.)**



## Telling continued

The donkey asked Balaam why he kept hitting her. Balaam was so upset, he didn't even think it was funny that his donkey was talking to him.

The donkey reminded Balaam that she had always been a good donkey in the past. Balaam agreed – the donkey **HAD** been a **GOOD** donkey! What do you think a donkey has to do to behave?

Right then, God allowed Balaam to suddenly see the angel standing in the path. Oh, **THAT** was why the donkey was acting strangely. Balaam was supposed to listen to God when He told Balaam **NOT** to go visit the enemy men. Through the miracle of a talking donkey, God showed Balaam that his donkey listened better than he did!

God wrote us a book; we call it the Bible. We are to listen to the things that God tells us in the Bible. But sometimes we don't. Not listening to God is called sin. Do we sin sometimes? Yes, we do. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, God has been trying to get people to listen to Him. The Pharaoh didn't listen and all of Egypt had to go through some nasty plagues because of it. Even then Pharaoh didn't listen to God and, because he didn't listen, his army was drowned in the Red Sea.

In the past, God has caused many unusual things to happen to get people to listen to Him. Does that mean your dog might talk to you or that you'll find thousands of frogs hopping around your house – in your bed and into the pot of soup your mom is cooking?

No. The difference is – the people who lived during Old Testament times didn't have the Bible.

Now we have the Bible so we can read what God did to get people to listen to Him in the past. We can read God's instructions. God wants to help us. That's why He wrote the Bible for us. Listening to God is called faith. *Faith* means "to hear God's Word, to listen to it and do it" (Romans 10:17). Balaam wasn't listening. God told him not to go visit the enemy men, but Balaam kept asking until God had to show him how foolish he was.

God's not going to send any talking donkeys your way. This is the only time that ever happened. But we can see that God thinks it is very important for us to listen to Him. I say we should start now!

## Challenging

One of the main things God says to us is that we are to trust the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior. Have you told God that you know you are a sinner and that you believe that Jesus died for your sins and then came alive again? It is very important that we listen to Christ and believe the gospel.

For those of you who have already trusted Christ as Savior, God gives us other instructions in His Word. The Bible is God's book that He wrote to help us through life. By following what He says, you will do what is right. Love the Lord and love your neighbor are two good things God tells us. Learn as much as you can about your Bible and listen to what God tells you.



## Family Follow Up

Listening to God means “hearing” what He has written in the Bible (Romans 10:17). After attending church, talk about the sermon you heard. Look at the verses in the Bible that were used and ask questions about them. Use some Bible resources (dictionaries, commentaries, etc.) to learn more about what God says to us. Then apply what you have learned to your family.

Turn to page 197 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



# TeachingIdeas

## Theme Night

- **Goldfish Night** – Sparkies receive Goldfish crackers for saying sections. Goldfish crackers are given for snacks and team awards. Award live goldfish to the winning teams, or to Sparkies who pass a section. Decorate the room like the inside of a fish bowl with water bubbles on the walls.

## Game Ideas

- **Fishing for Sparky** – Duplicate and cut out pictures of Sparky and secure a small magnet to the back of them. Using a child's size fishing pole, tie or adhere the opposite side of the magnet to the fishing line. Put several of the cutouts of Sparky in a bucket and let Sparkies take turns fishing for Sparky.
- **Squirrel in a Tree** – Divide the group in half. One half of the Sparkies get in pairs — they are the “trees.” If there is an odd number, the extra person should join the other half of the Sparkies. The other players are “squirrels.” Each set of trees should spread out around the room and hold hands, leaving enough room between them for another person. When the whistle blows, all the squirrels run around the play area until the whistle blows again. Once they hear the whistle, each squirrel runs to a tree and “climbs it” by getting between the players. The one or two players who don't find a tree are out. Eliminate a tree or two and then blow the whistle again. Play until only one squirrel is left.

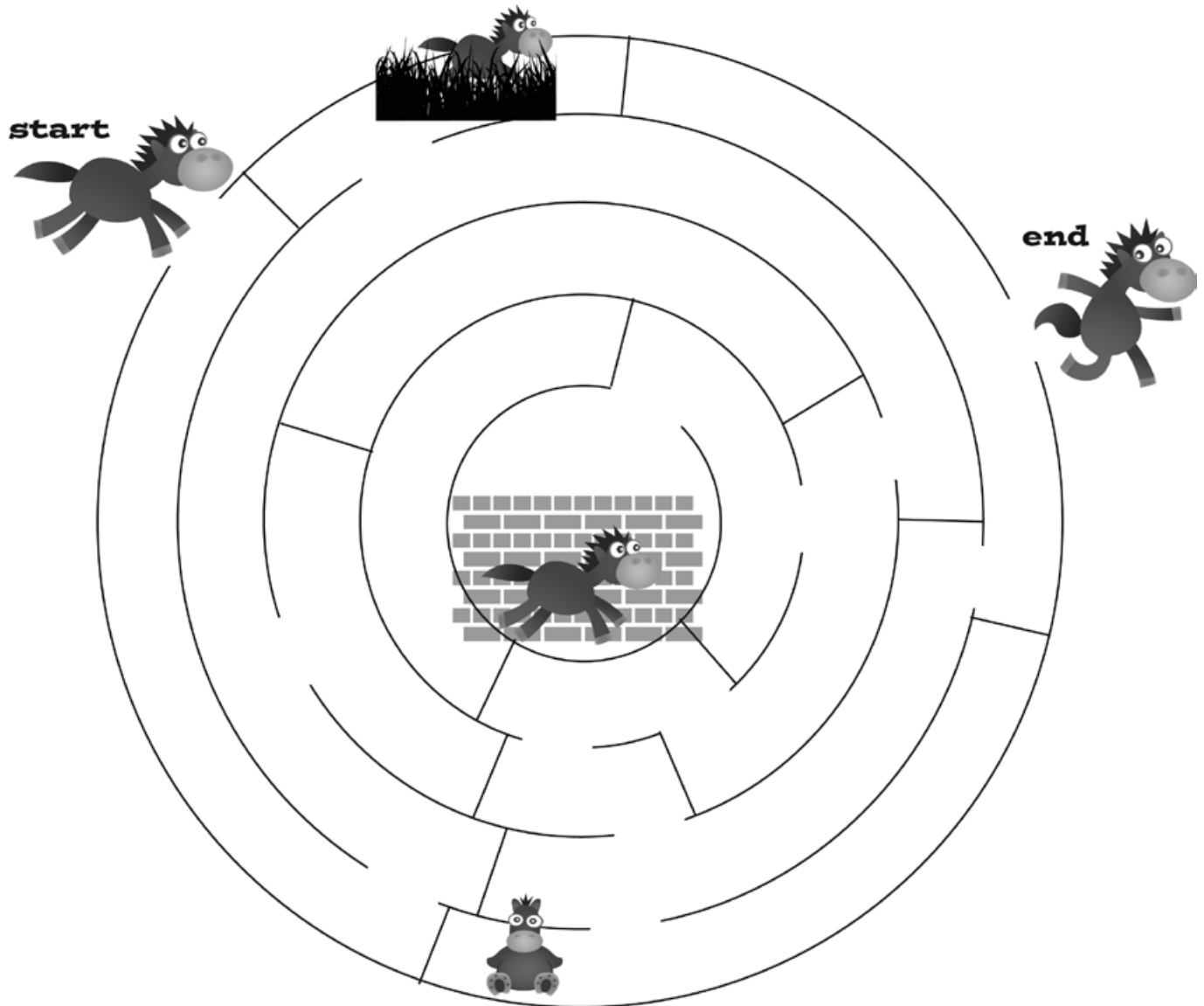
## Teaching Options

- During the beginning of the lesson, throw in a picture of a lesser-known animal; one that Sparkies won't recognize. Find a picture of a leafy sea dragon or a tapir. Have the Sparkies help you make up a sound for the animal.
- Do any of your Sparkies not have a Bible of their own? If you know of a Sparky who doesn't have a Bible, consider purchasing one for him or her – one that has large print.



# SparksActivity

Help Balaam's donkey get through the maze.



## Reading

Exodus 25-27

## Looking It Up

Exodus 25:8; Hebrews 13:5 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verses and be ready to read them to the group.*)

## Thinking

So, why a lesson about the tabernacle? Why not? Even the young minds of your Sparkies can comprehend the facts about the tabernacle. In this lesson, we won't get into too many details or metaphors explaining that the tabernacle represents God's relationship with His people. But we will help your Sparkies understand the basic layout of the tabernacle and how it was a comfort to the Israelites – it showed them that God was with them. That's something your little Sparkies need to know – God is ALWAYS with them.

Because Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai, the Israelites grew nervous and anxious and built a golden calf so they could have something tangible to worship. This disobedience demonstrated their need to worship a God who was visible to them. Instead of condemning and turning His back on their childishness, God provided the specs

for the tabernacle. The tabernacle provided not only a visual image of the living God (the cloud and fire) but it was the place Moses, their leader, could meet with God instead of traveling up a mountain and leaving the Israelites alone. You'd think a nation could fend for itself and make do until its leader came back, but evidently the Israelites could not. God knew this nation's weaknesses and because of His deep love for them, He accommodated them. This brought much peace and comfort to the Israelites.

The Bible is very specific in its description of what God wanted the tabernacle to look like. Check out [the-tabernacle-place.com](http://the-tabernacle-place.com)\* to learn more about the tabernacle and for some great illustrations of the tabernacle. Your Sparkies will learn better if they can see what the tabernacle looked like, so utilize the drawings available on this site.

\*References to websites and resources not created by Awana are for your information and are not necessarily an endorsement of content.

## Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Unassembled toy with instructions
- Table



## Showing

*(Bring a toy – something that has instructions – for this lesson. It doesn't have to be big. It just needs to have a picture (either on the box or in the instructions) of what it's supposed to look like. You'll need a table to open the box and spread out the pieces.)*

Hey everybody look what I have tonight! I found this at the store and wanted to bring it in so I could show it to you.

*(Open up the box and pull out all the pieces. Leave the instructions in the box.)*

Wow, there are a lot of pieces here. *(Start sorting through the pieces and try to put a few together unsuccessfully.)*

You know, there are just too many pieces here for me to figure this out. I think I need some help. But what can I do? How do I figure out how to put this together? *(If no one has yelled it already, someone will yell out to find the instructions.)*

Oh, that's right – the instructions! *(Pull out the instructions and look at them for a minute.)* NOW I get it! But I'll work on this later. Right now there are some interesting things I'd like to teach you.

Have you ever received a really cool present, something that had to be put together before you could play with it? *(Allow a few Sparkies to answer.)* Maybe it was a play set or a bicycle. Your mom or dad had to read the instructions to make sure they put it together right. The instructions clearly told them what to do. *(Hold up instructions.)* That way your mom or dad could get all the pieces put where they belong. Then, after they were done, your present looked just like the picture on the box it came in!

Did you know that God gives clear instructions on how to build something too? He told the Israelites how to build a tabernacle!

# Telling

Before I go on, let me tell you about the tabernacle and why the Israelites built it. A very, very, very long time ago, Moses and the Israelites were traveling to the Promised Land. This was after Moses parted the Red Sea and led the Israelites out of Egypt. While they were traveling, God called Moses to go to the top of a mountain to talk with Him. While Moses was away, the Israelites became scared. Moses was gone for a very long time and the Israelites started to worry about him and were scared that he might not come back. So instead of praying and trusting God, they took all their gold and melted it and made it into a golden calf. That sounds kind of weird, doesn't it? They made a golden calf and they worshiped the calf instead of worshiping God.

When Moses came down from the mountain and saw what they had done he was very angry and very sad. God was also very angry with the Israelites. But, instead of just being angry with the Israelites and punishing them, God gave the Israelites instructions to build a tabernacle. This way, when Moses needed to talk with God, he could go to the tabernacle so he didn't have to leave the people and go up to the mountain.

Let's look at Exodus 25:8. ***(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read the verse.)*** Here is where God told Moses to have the Israelites build Him a tabernacle. God gave Moses very specific instructions of how to build the tabernacle. So Moses went back to the Israelites and gave them the instructions of how the tabernacle was to be built. ***(Here's a good time to show an illustration of what the tabernacle looked like as you verbally describe it. If you've enlarged a picture, allow a Sparkie or two to come up and hold the paper while you describe the tabernacle.)*** First a fence needed to be made to surround the tabernacle. The fence needed to be made of cloth and it had only one opening. Inside the fence was the



tabernacle. The tabernacle's walls were made of wood and the roof was made of four rugs laid on top of each other to keep out the rain and sun. Inside the tabernacle were two rooms – the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies which means the MOST holy place. The Holy of Holies is where God dwelt. The Holy of Holies was so special that the only person who could go in it was the high priest – a very special priest. And he could only go in it once a year after he put on special clothes.

So after Moses and the Israelites built the tabernacle just like God told them to, God lived in the tabernacle. God showed His presence in the tabernacle in a special way. During the day, the Israelites saw a cloud and at night they saw a pillar of fire. The cloud and fire were God! Because God showed Himself in this way, all the people knew He was with them and they were comforted.

It makes you feel good to know God is there all the time, doesn't it? When you trust Jesus as your Savior, God is with you all the time – He's even with you right now. We may not be able to see Him like the Israelites did with a cloud and a pillar of fire, but we can still know He is with us. We know He's with us because His Word, the Bible, says so. Let's look at Hebrews 13:5. ***(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read the verse.)*** Here we read that God has said He will never leave us. Even though you can't see Him, you can know God is with you ALWAYS! He's with you when you're scared at night, when you're at a birthday party, when you're at school, when you're doing something you know is wrong, and when you're doing something that is right. He's always with you. Isn't that comforting to know?

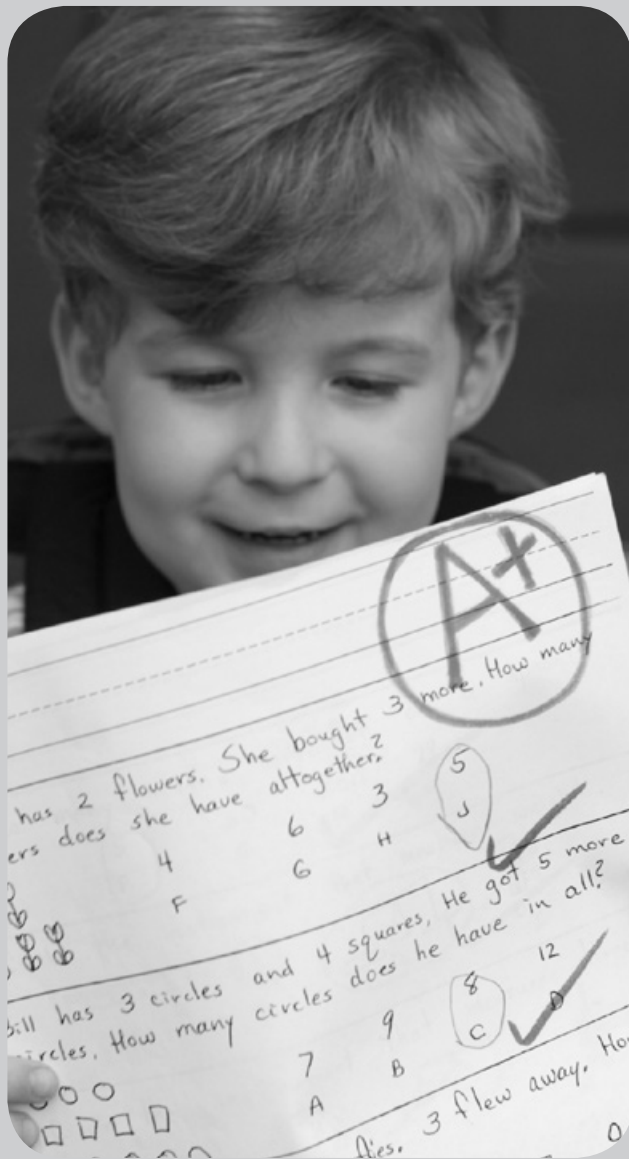
## Challenging

Hey, remember this \_\_\_\_\_ (name of toy) that I showed you at the beginning of this lesson? What was it that I needed to put it together correctly? **(Instructions!)** That's right – the instructions! And the Bible gives us instructions. God gave the Israelites instructions on how to build a tabernacle. The Bible also gives us instructions on how we are to treat others. We are to be kind, loving and patient. The Bible tells us how we can be kind, loving and patient. The Bible is our instruction book for how God wants us to live our lives!

The Bible also tells us about the Israelites and how they knew God was with them. We can know for sure that God is with us, too, when we trust Jesus as our Savior. If you haven't trusted Jesus as your Savior, please talk with me or another leader. We'd love to share with you how you can trust Jesus as your Savior.

## Family Follow Up

Think of a time when your family was going through something sad – when someone in your family was sick or maybe when a pet died. Encourage your children that God was with your family then. Now think of a time when your family was happy – like when a baby was born or when your child did well on an assignment at school. Let them know that God was with your family then too. Children understand concepts better when they can relate it to something tangible and concrete.



Turn to page 198 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Night

- **Topsy-Turvy Night** – The Israelites must have felt topsy-turvy when Moses wasn't there to lead them. Plan this theme night at least two to three months into the club year when Sparkies understand the regular flow of club. This way Sparkies will enjoy the night instead of being confused. Hang all the pictures and posters in your room upside down or sideways. Provide name tags for Sparkies with their names written backwards or jumbled.

## Game Ideas

- **Build It Fast** – Bring in Legos® with enough for each team to have its own stash. Beforehand, figure out how to build something that looks like Sparky. Write instructions for building Sparky with Legos and provide a picture of the finished piece. Sparkies sit down around their pile of Legos and when the whistle blows, they begin to build. They'll probably need some direction from their leaders. The first team to make Sparky wins.
- **Block Stack** – Use cardboard boxes and have Sparkies build towers. The tallest tower wins!

## Teaching Options

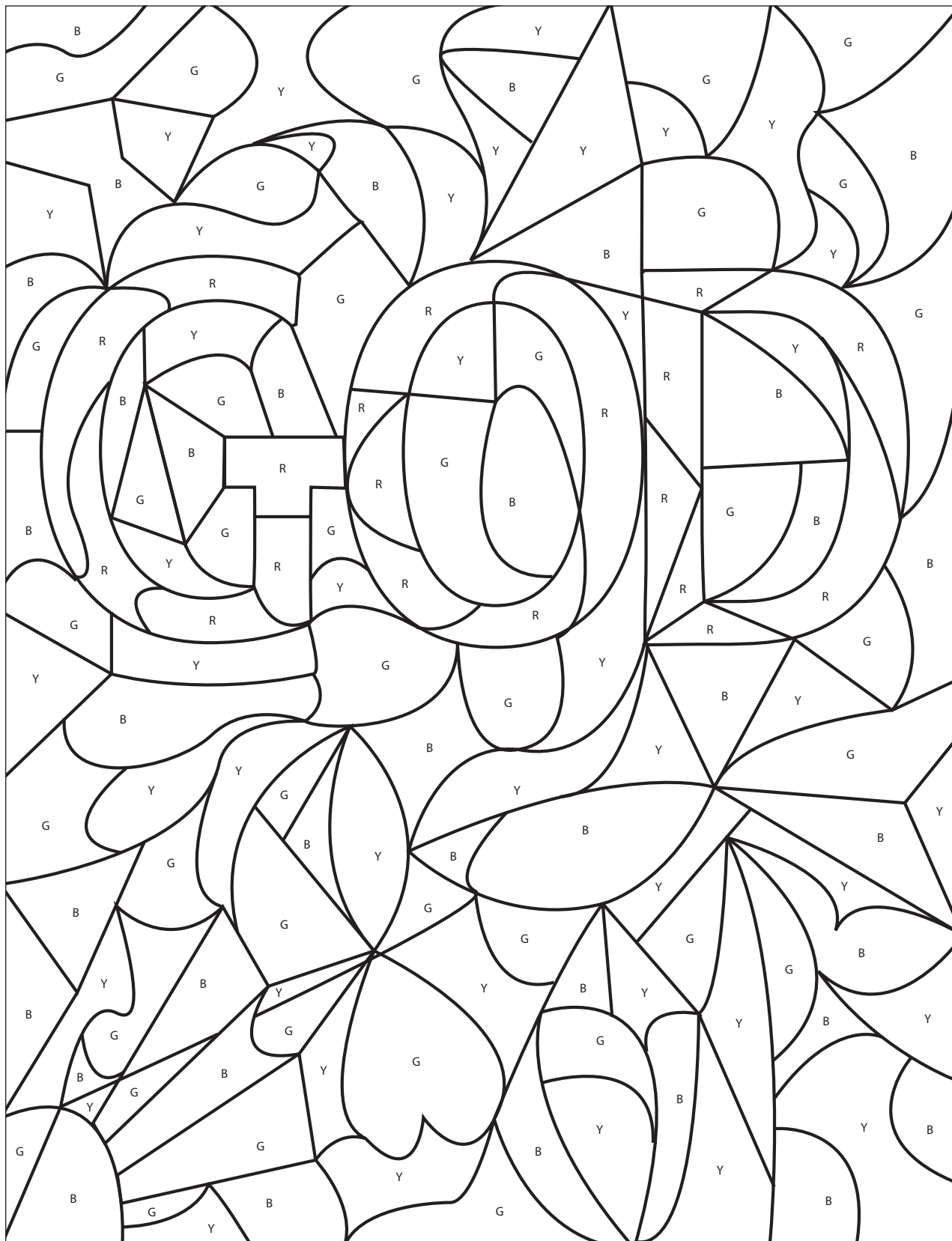
- Print off a large picture of the tabernacle. The lesson suggests a website, or you can look in your church or local public library for a book that has pictures of it. Sparkies will learn better when they have a tangible representation of the tabernacle.
- The Challenging section closes with an encouragement to Sparkies that God is always with us. Share an example from your life, or have another leader share about a time when it was clear that God was present.



# SparksActivity

Color in the picture to see what word appears! Use this key to color the picture:

R = Red    G = Green    Y = Yellow    B = Blue



## Reading

Joshua 10-12

## Looking It Up

Joshua 10:12-13 (*Ask a leader to look up the verses and be ready to read them to the group.*)

## Thinking

Joshua was told by God to enter the Promised Land and get rid of the enemies of Israel. He was involved in many battles, most of which went well. In order for the Israelites to win these battles, they needed to stay faithful to the Lord, follow His directions, and rely on Him for the victory.

Joshua 10 reveals a battle in which Israel is promised victory (v. 8). The Lord helped Joshua and his army by allowing large hailstones to be hurled down from the sky, killing many of the enemies (v. 11). Joshua then commanded the sun to stand still so he and his army could catch the enemy as they were fleeing (v. 12). God chose to show His power and make the sun stand still for a day – helping Joshua and the Israelites.

This is a fascinating event. Joshua 10:14 says there was no other day like this. Joshua knew that God wanted him to get rid of the enemy. He also knew that he needed more daylight hours in order to accomplish this task.

Joshua wanted to do what was right and follow God's instructions. God showed His power in a very unique way by making the sun stand still.

## Showing

This lesson involves playing a version of Simon Says. Instead of saying "Simon Says" before each instruction, the Sparkies are only to do something if you ASK them to – if you TELL them to do something, they shouldn't do it. Adapt the examples to fit your club and available space.



# Telling

Does everyone here know how to play Simon Says? In Simon Says, I tell you to do things, but you are only supposed to do it if I first say “Simon Says.” Tonight we’ll play a game kind of like Simon Says. You are only to do the things I ASK you to do. If I TELL you to do something, don’t do it! You’ll lose! Everybody ready?

OK, everyone stand up. Uh-oh! Some of you stood up. I didn’t ASK you to stand up, I TOLD you to stand up. Would you all stand please? Thank you. I asked you to stand and you did. Now, would you please pat the top of your head? Good job. Now pat the head of the person next to you. Oops, I didn’t ASK you, I TOLD you! Would you please stop patting your head? Thank you. Can everyone jump up and down please? Can everyone please jump on one foot? Great! Now stop jumping. You guys are getting good! I told you to stop jumping instead of asking you to stop jumping. OK, can we please all sit down and stop playing this game? Great job everyone!

In this game, you were only supposed to do the things I ASKED you to do, not the things I TOLD you to do. Do you understand the difference? **(Ask a few Sparkies to explain the difference to make sure everyone understands.)**

What would your mom or dad say if you only did what they asked you to do and you never did what they told you to do? You would probably get into trouble! When your mom and dad tell you to do something, you should obey them.

Do you ever ask your mom or dad to do things for you, or do you tell them what to do? What if you told your mom, “Hey, Mom, make me dinner.” Would she listen to you? What if you said, “Mom would you please make me dinner”? She would probably listen to your request more than if you commanded her to make you dinner.

Your parents are older than you and they are in charge of you. They are your authority. They get to tell you what to do just like their parents told them what to do when they were your age. You don’t get to tell them what to do. The same is true of your Awana leaders or your school teachers. We need to respect those who are our authorities. **(Make sure the children understand that you are talking about people whom their parents know and trust. They have put their children in that person’s care. Just because someone is older does not mean they have authority over a child – for instance, a stranger on the street, etc.)**





## Telling continued

Respect means that you listen to the person and do what he or she tells you to do. Telling your leaders or teachers what to do is not respectful. If you want leaders to do something for you, you ask them.

How do we talk to God? We talk to God through prayer. Are we supposed to respect God? YES, we are! When we pray, should we say, “Hey, God, give me a bike”? No way! The Bible says we should ASK God things, not tell Him what we want and what He should do.

Our Bible passage this week tells us about Joshua and how he fought the enemies of Israel. He and his army needed more daylight to catch the enemies as they ran away. Now as we read it, there’s a part of the biography of Joshua that might be a little confusing for us. Let’s look at Joshua 10:12-13. (**Ask the leader to read the verses.**) These verses say that Joshua prayed and told God that he wanted the sun to stand still so he could win the battle. Hmm, let’s look at this a little closer. Because we know it’s wrong to tell God what to do, there must be something in these verses that we need to understand better.

Wait! Look here! I see it! The way the Bible says it, Joshua didn’t tell God what to do! Joshua spoke to the sun and God heard him and decided to show Joshua His power. Joshua knew that God wanted him to defeat his enemies. Joshua also knew that the only way to do that was to have more daylight so he and his army could see the enemies as they ran away. Joshua wasn’t trying to boss God around. He knew that was wrong and not respectful. Joshua spoke to the sun and told the sun to stay right where it was. Because God wanted to show His power to Joshua and his army and all the enemies, He made the sun stay where it was.

## Challenging

So God showed His power that day when He made the sun stay up so that Joshua could defeat the enemies. God hasn't shown His power in this exact same way since then, but He does show us His power in many other ways. One of those ways is when He allowed His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. God didn't have to let Jesus die. It hurt God very much to see His Son in pain. But God showed His power by letting Jesus die, because then God raised Jesus from the dead! And He did all of this so that you and I can have eternal life in heaven when we trust Jesus as our Savior.

God tells us that we are all sinners and that we all need to be saved. God knows everything, so He's right! He also tells us that the only way to be saved is to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior? Please talk to your leader if you haven't. We would be happy to share with you how you can know that you have eternal life!





# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Fun in the Sun Night** – Sparkies come wearing their favorite sunglasses. Decorate the room with pictures of the sun and summery scenes. Give prizes or points for the funniest looking, most colorful and biggest sunglasses.
- **Pretty Please Night** – When a Sparkie or leader asks someone else to do something, he or she ends the question with “pretty please.” For example, when starting Large Group Time and trying to get the Sparkies to quiet down, the leader will say, “OK, everyone in their seats, pretty please!” Sparkies who best follow the rule get a prize.

## Game Ideas

- **Apple Picking** – You’ll need four apples, four blindfolds, four circle pins and the center pin and beanbag. Place the center pin and beanbag in the middle of the circle. Place the circle pins at the starting lines. One player from each team kneels at the starting line, facing the center of the circle with a blindfold on. Place an apple at random inside each team’s quadrant after the player is blindfolded. When the whistle blows, the player crawls around her section to find the apple. When she finds it, she removes the blindfold, picks up the apple, runs around her circle pin and into the center for the pin or beanbag.
- **Flashlight Frenzy** – You’ll need six flashlights, one for each team and two to use instead of a center pin and beanbag. Everyone plays this game, four players at a time. Players start at their team starting line with a lit flashlight. Turn off most, but not all, the lights in your game room – many Sparkies are still young and might be afraid if it’s completely dark. When the whistle blows, the first runner runs around the circle once. When he finishes his run, he passes the flashlight (baton) to the next player who runs around the circle once. After the fourth player runs around the circle once, he runs into the center for one of the two flashlights. Play multiple heats so that all Sparkies have a turn.

## Teaching Options

- To help Sparkies understand how long the sun stayed up (the Bible says about a full day), tell them it’s like going to bed with the sun still up and when you wake up it’s still up and never went down while you were sleeping.
- Ask Sparkies how we can show respect to God.

## FamilyFollowUp

Parents and kids need to go over rules for their home often. Kids need to remember that their parents run the show! Talk about ways your kids can show you respect as well as ways your kids can show each other respect. For example: sharing the remote control with siblings, setting the table the FIRST time Mom asks, letting a sibling have the window seat in the car, asking for permission to get a cookie instead of just taking one.

Turn to page 198 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## SparksActivity

Talk about ways Sparkies can show respect to their parents. Discuss ways they can show respect at club: ask for a turn instead of saying, "It's my turn;" raise your hand to speak instead of just blurting out during Large Group Time.



## Reading

Joshua 5:13-6:27

## Looking It Up

Joshua 1:9 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group.*)

## Thinking

This lesson is ideally part 1 of a two-part series with “God’s Way – All the Way” (p.148) or the lesson can stand on its own.

The fascinating, true account of Joshua and the walls of Jericho is a well-known Bible event. Even so, many of your Sparkies may not be familiar with any Old Testament biographies, even the most recognized ones. They (and perhaps you too) may not know the history of God’s people, the people of Israel, which unfolds prior to the book of Joshua – and why all these people find themselves at Jericho anyway! As you take a look at the background, you’ll see that the biography of Joshua and Jericho is more than a tale of people walking around a city and of walls tumbling down.

For 40 years, the people of Israel wandered around the wilderness *waiting* to enter the land God promised them. They had not been following their leader, Moses (and ultimately, God). Finally, the new generation was ready to cross the Jordan River and take over the land. The book of Joshua records Joshua’s leadership of these people as they complete their journey – then enter and conquer the Promised Land.

Joshua is a book about winning and losing. In order to establish themselves in the Promised Land, the people of Israel had to win battles and even a war. As we read the book of Joshua, we learn how to develop the courage necessary to be completely obedient to God (Joshua 1:8).

Joshua’s leadership played an integral role in the military victory of the Promised Land. He was a remarkable soldier and general. But of greater importance, Joshua led the people spiritually. He was a man of God. Joshua knew and taught that we win when we obey God’s plan. You’ll see how this concept unfolds in the lesson! God is still looking for men and women, teens, and yes, even children, to stand up for Him! He wants us to realize that our trust in and obedience to Him leads to victory. Here’s where it begins: ... *Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you (Joshua 3:5).*

So as you take time preparing yourself to teach this lesson, back up a bit. Although the actual text for this lesson is Joshua 5:13-6:27, you will benefit from going back and reading Joshua 1 and on.

Remember, the point of teaching children this lesson is *not* to merely emphasize the conquest of Jericho and the destruction which followed. Rather, in this case our goal is to teach children biographies of people obeying God and doing things God’s way – however unusual or odd it may seem.

# Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A pair of walking shoes

## Showing

Play a simple two- to three-minute game of Follow the Leader with the children. Before starting, be sure they understand the game and are calm, quiet, and focused. Tell the Sparkies to line up behind you (or another leader). Say, “Please watch me, follow me, and do just what I do!” The children should then mimic your actions as you take them around the room. You can raise your arms, march, tip toe, clap hands, zig-zag around chairs, and so on. End the game with one last action of turning to face the children (so they see what you are doing) and pretending to blow a trumpet. (The blowing of trumpets becomes significant during the Bible lesson!) If your group is large, ask team leaders to play “Follow the Leader” with their individual teams for a few minutes.



## Telling

*(Prepare a simple poster picturing a big, square wall. The artwork will be effective even if it is very rough and simple; it does not need to be fancy. If you have some artistic ability, however, you might choose to prepare a more detailed visual. For ideas, consult:*

[answersingenesis.org/Home/Area/Magazines/images/212wall\\_sketch.jpg](http://answersingenesis.org/Home/Area/Magazines/images/212wall_sketch.jpg)\*

[christiananswers.net/q-abr/jericho-bryantwood.jpg](http://christiananswers.net/q-abr/jericho-bryantwood.jpg)\*

Did you do a good job of following the leader in our game? I know that some of you children were watching and doing exactly what I (or another leader) was doing. But sometimes when we play Follow the Leader, children do not WATCH the leader! They do not FOLLOW the leader!

A long time ago, God had just done a wonderful thing for His people. God had helped them cross a river to the special land He said He would give to them. After crossing the Jordan River on dry land, the people of Israel camped near a city called Jericho.

Jericho was a very old city. It was like a fort with huge stone walls around it. **(Show visual of wall.)** The walls were very thick and high. I imagine the walls were higher than this room!

\*References to websites and resources not created by Awana are for your information and are not necessarily an endorsement of content.

## Telling continued

Maybe in some places, soldiers guarded the wall, so no one could come in and hurt the people.

Can you picture this city with a big gate in the front that was tightly shut? No one could get in or out when the gate was closed.

The people INSIDE the city of Jericho were very wicked. They were bad. Can you believe they did not love and obey God? Sadly, they were not following God. So God told Joshua and His people He would help them destroy this bad city. **(Note to teacher: This is enough said about the actual destruction. We do not want the children to focus on the thought of destruction and be sidetracked from the purpose of the lesson, which is obedience.)**

God's people, the people of Israel, were OUTSIDE THE WALLS. God told Joshua, the leader of God's people, "Tell your people to listen to what I say. I will tell you what to do when you get to the city of Jericho. March around the city one time each day for six days. Then on the seventh day, march around the city seven times. The seventh time, tell everyone to shout very loudly. Then the city walls will fall down."

Joshua told the people just what God had said. Joshua wanted to obey God. He knew God would help them win the battle. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Joshua 1:9.)** They all got ready to obey God and march around the city.

Have you ever walked around a city?

Let's put on our walking shoes and walk with the people of Israel. **(Put on walking shoes and tie them while the children watch. They can pretend to put walking shoes on as well.)**

On Day One the people of Israel marched around the city of Jericho. The priests blew their trumpets, but the people were silent, just as God

instructed. **(Hold up one finger, then two, then three, and so on as you count the days. Keep your voice suspenseful as you go through the days which lead to day seven.)**

On Day Two the people of Israel marched around the city of Jericho. The priests blew their trumpets, but the people were silent, just as God instructed.

On Day Three the people of Israel marched around the city of Jericho. The priests blew their trumpets, but the people were silent, just as God instructed.

On Day Four the people of Israel marched around the city of Jericho. The priests blew their trumpets, but the people were silent, just as God instructed.

On Day Five the people of Israel marched around the city of Jericho. The priests blew their trumpets, but the people were silent, just as God instructed.

On Day Six the people of Israel marched around the city of Jericho. The priests blew their trumpets, but the people were silent, just as God instructed.

Then on Day Seven, the people got up early in the morning. THIS DAY WAS DIFFERENT! On Day Seven they marched around the city of Jericho SEVEN times (instead of just once), just as God told them. They obeyed God and did what He instructed. I imagine they were getting tired with all that walking! Maybe their feet felt sore. Do you think they stopped obeying God just because they were tired? No, the Bible tells us God's people kept obeying Him.

The seventh time around the city of Jericho everyone gave a huge shout. They yelled loudly, and the priests blew their horns.



Do you know how to yell loudly? When I raise my hands, I want to hear you yell. Then when I put my hands down, we will all be very quiet. ***(Only allow this “yelling moment” if you know your specific group of children can handle the instructions and become quiet again.)***

When the people of Israel yelled loudly, do you know what happened? The high walls of Jericho shook and crumbled to the ground. God knocked the walls down! Now God’s people could walk right into the city. Because they followed their leader, they won at Jericho.

Have you been following God? Are you doing what God says?



## Challenging

***(Speak sincerely, looking right into the eyes of the children. You may need to work hard in keeping their attention now that the biography has ended.)***

The secret to Joshua winning the battle of Jericho was that he OBEYED God! When God spoke, Joshua listened and obeyed. Joshua was a man who wanted to obey God. Do you want to obey Him? ***(Allow children to nod and say YES.)*** I do too. I want to obey God each and every day. One very important way of obeying God is listening to our parents. How many of you want to obey your parents? God is so pleased when children obey their moms and dads. Children need to obey their grandparents and teachers too.

Why did God give Joshua such odd instructions? Whoever heard of people blowing trumpets and shouting in order to win a battle? Well, boys and girls, I do not know for sure why God told His people to march around Jericho, but I do know one thing! God wanted the people to obey him, no matter what He said. And did they obey? Yes, they did. They did just what God told them to do.

The Bible tells us that we must follow God. If you have not trusted Jesus as your Savior, then that is what He wants of you. The first step to following Jesus is accepting just how much He loves you. He wants you to trust in Him as your Savior. ***(Briefly present the gospel message, using Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, and John 3:16 as time allows and as the Holy Spirit leads you.)***



# Family Follow Up

## Follow the Leader

Parents, you can play Follow the Leader with your children at home, just like the Sparkies did at club this week. Before starting, be sure the children understand what you are doing and that they are calm, quiet and focused on what you are doing. Tell them to watch, listen and obey quickly.

Tell the children to follow you around the house and/or yard. Zig-zag in and out of rooms, around furniture, and so on. Raise your arms, clap, march, tip toe, etc.

The children will enjoy this game! When you are done playing, you have an opportunity to teach them about obeying God. Say: "We also want to follow Jesus. We want to do just what He wants. We want to watch, listen and obey quickly."


Then ask the children how they can "follow" Jesus. Write their ideas here:

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*Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:9)*



Turn to page 198 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Nights

- **Boot Camp** – Walking around Jericho may have felt like boot camp for the Israelites. Give Sparkies special T-shirts and dog tags. Leaders wear sunglasses and act like drill instructors. Between club sections, Sparkies march and say in cadence, "I'm a soldier for the Lord! The Bible is my trusty sword. I read its pages every day and follow it without delay." In Handbook Time, Sparkies recite sections while at attention. Hand out certificates for completing Boot Camp.
- **Crazy Shoe Night** – Give prizes for the largest, ugliest, strangest and funniest shoes.

### Game Ideas

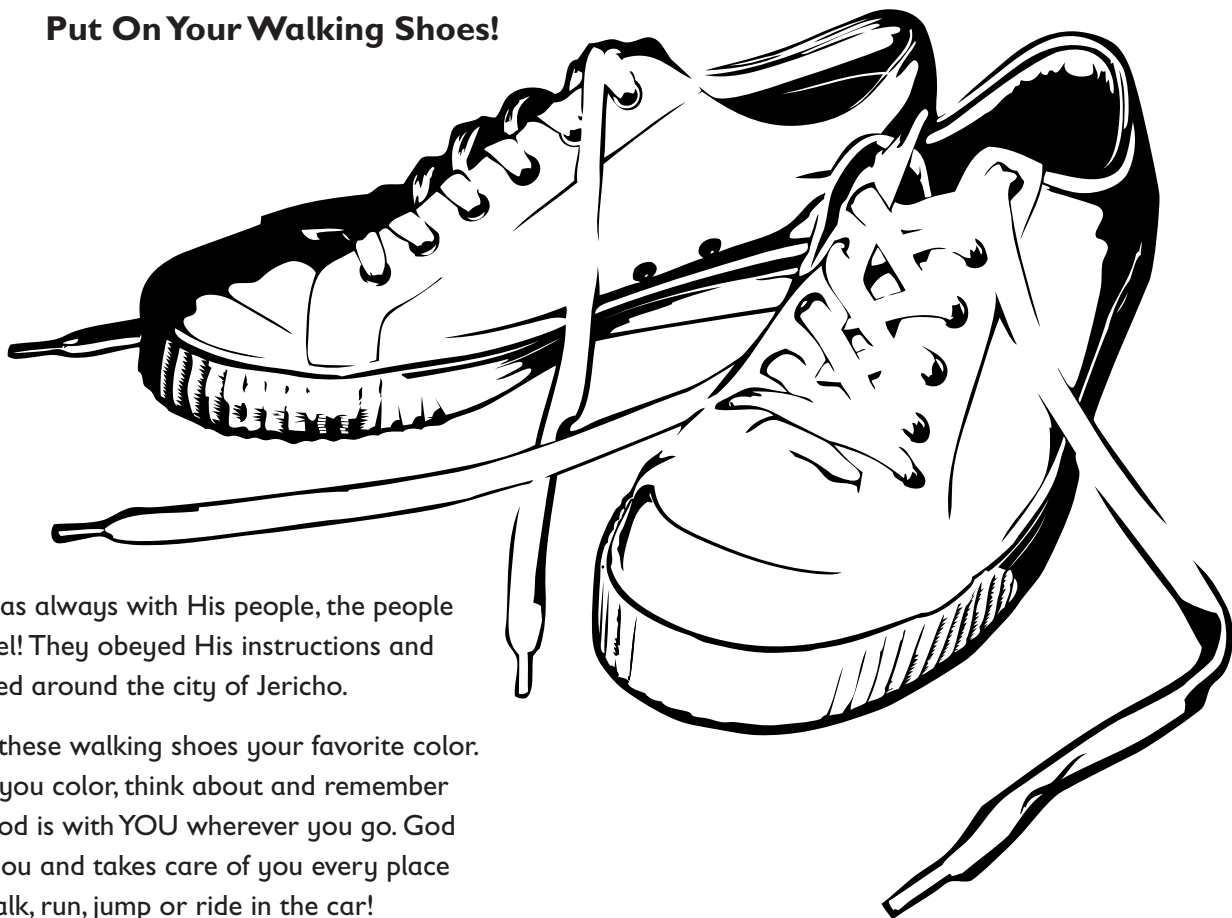
- **Follow the Leader** – An oldie but goodie! Play marching music as you lead. Let Sparkies take turns being the leader.
- **Bowling for Jericho** – Set up large blocks to represent the walls of Jericho. Sparkies take turns using a ball to knock over the wall.

### Teaching Option

- Instead of drawing a picture of a big, square wall as suggested, build a wall out of blocks or some other material. When you come to Day Seven in the lesson, break down the wall as you talk about how the wall fell after the Israelites gave a huge shout.

# SparksActivity

Put On Your Walking Shoes!



God was always with His people, the people of Israel! They obeyed His instructions and marched around the city of Jericho.

Color these walking shoes your favorite color. While you color, think about and remember that God is with YOU wherever you go. God loves you and takes care of you every place you walk, run, jump or ride in the car!

Find these seven places you might go during a week. Remember that God is with you wherever you go. (To help you, each word in the puzzle begins with one of the **BOLD** letters.)

SCHOOL

STORE

PARK

CAR

SPARKS

CHURCH

HOME

**S** C H O O L A B C X S

Q **C** A R J **S** T O R E P

L W M **P** A R K H I L T

Y K F **C** H U R C H G B

**S** P A R K S F **H** O M E

## Reading

Joshua 7 (You may also want to back up and read Joshua 5:13-6:27, the Bible text background for this lesson.)

## Thinking

This lesson is a natural continuation of “Put on Your Walking Shoes.” Or if you choose, the lesson can stand alone.

This lesson about a man named Achan starts where the previous lesson about Jericho ends. Whether you taught that lesson or are beginning with this lesson, it will be helpful for you to go back and review the material in “Put on Your Walking Shoes.”

The victory at Jericho must have been exhilarating for the people of Israel, including Achan. The people had obeyed God's unusual instructions of marching around the city, and Jericho was destroyed. But the orders were clear. No one was to keep for himself any of the material goods in Jericho. The only things to be taken were gold, silver, bronze and iron for the Lord's treasury.

But Achan responded to the desires of his flesh. He saw, wanted and took things for himself. He disobeyed God's instructions. Perhaps he thought he could get away with his secret sin of stealing clothing, gold and silver. Yet this was not the case. Because of his sins of greed and theft, the people of Israel suffered great loss in their next battle at Ai (Ā-eye). Joshua 7:1 tells us that the Lord was angry with His people.

This biography in Joshua 7 is a lesson about sin. It is a lesson about a man who disobeyed God's rules. It is also a lesson about living God's way – all the way. We want to teach the children that God desires our obedience always, not just when it is convenient or when we feel like it. He deeply longs for our faithfulness.

While telling the children the true biography of Achan, you will also be teaching what sin is (disobeying God), and then be able to explain that Jesus came to take the punishment for our sin. This sad and negative biography about Achan's sin turns into a lesson of hope and encouragement as we teach the boys and girls about Christ who alone can cleanse us from our sin.

## Looking It Up

Romans 6:23; John 3:16

*(Ask a leader to read these verses during the lesson.)*



## Showing

*(Hold up a large sign saying: PLEASE OBEY THE RULES. Read the sign to the children. If this lesson is a continuation of Put on Your Walking Shoes, you will begin with the following brief review. If this is not a continuation, simply alter the following paragraph by asking the boys and girls how many of them have ever played Follow the Leader and then go from there.)*

How many of you were here last week when we played Follow the Leader? I remember some of you were watching and doing exactly what I **(or another leader)** was doing. You were following the rules. Now, we will see how well \_\_\_\_\_ **(another leader)** can obey my instructions. *(Prepare another leader in*

*advance to only follow every other instruction you give. Here is an idea of how the little skit might go:)*

**YOU:** Please obey the rules. Please obey everything I tell you.

**LEADER:** OK! I will do just as you say!

**YOU:** Clap your hands.

*(Other leader claps hands.)*

**YOU:** Stomp your feet

*(Other leader shakes head and says, "NO!")*

**YOU (dramatically, acting frustrated):** Please wave at the children.

*(Other leader waves at the children.)*

**YOU (acting happier again):** Please turn around.

*(Other leader again shakes head and says, "NO!")*

*(Continue this scenario with a few more instructions. Each time the other leader does not obey the instructions, you should act frustrated and sad. When obedience occurs, smile and act pleased.)*



## Telling

Do you remember our lesson from last week? **(If this is not a continuation, just jump right into the lesson anyway.)** God only gave His people a few rules before they went to the wicked city of Jericho. He told them to destroy the city of Jericho completely. The people there were very bad. God said the Israelites should not take anything from the wicked city for themselves or trouble would come to them and to all of God's people. They could only take the gold, silver, bronze and iron for the Lord's treasury (a place where you keep things that are worth a lot) (Joshua 6:17-19).

God wanted His people to obey Him. He wanted them to obey Him all the time, not just some of the time like \_\_\_\_\_ **(name of leader)** did with me!

Do you understand God's rules for His people? Yes, I understand them too! The rules were simple.

1. Destroy the wicked city of Jericho.
2. Do not take anything from Jericho for yourselves.
3. Only take the gold, silver, bronze and iron.

I am sure the leader, Joshua, wanted his people to obey God. I am sure he wanted them to do exactly what God said. **(Review these rules again with the children.)**

1. Destroy the wicked city of Jericho.
2. Do not take anything from Jericho for yourselves.
3. Only take the gold, silver, bronze and iron.

Yes, when the people of Israel, God's people, went to Jericho, they won! The city of Jericho was destroyed. But there was one man who did not obey God. **(Speak slowly, deliberately, and sadly.)** A man named Achan did not follow the rules. **(Shake your head sadly.)** Achan did take some of the things for himself. And God was not happy. God was angry with Achan's sin.

But Achan's friends and family did not know what he had done. They did not know Achan had disobeyed God.

Now, Ai was the next bad city the people of Israel had to go and destroy. What an odd name for a city. Can you say Ai? You probably can even spell Ai!

Again, the people of Israel went off to battle. They were ready to destroy Ai and win again, but soon they came running back. They had been chased from Ai. They were not winners this time.

Joshua could not understand why God allowed them to lose the battle at Ai. He told God he was very upset. God explained to him, "You lost the battle at Ai because someone did not obey my rules back at Jericho. Someone stole some of the things from Jericho! You need to find this person so he can be punished. Then I will help you win again" **(See Joshua 7:11-12. Ask the children if THEY remember the rules. Let them nod or say YES. Review the three rules again. Then continue.)**

Joshua did not know that the man who disobeyed was Achan, but God knew.

So early the next morning, Joshua began the big job of finding the one person who

disobeyed God. He called the people to come in front of him. As each group of people came, God told Joshua, "No, no one here has done it." Then God showed Joshua exactly who broke the rules. God showed Joshua that Achan was the man who sinned. Now Achan could not hide his sin anymore.

Joshua said to Achan, "Tell us what you have done."

Achan admitted, "I have sinned." **(Speak very sadly, as Achan may have sounded.)** "Back in Jericho I saw many things I wanted. I saw a beautiful coat, some silver, and some gold. I wanted these things, so I took them. When I got back home, I hid those nice things in a hole underneath my tent."

Joshua sent some men to search for the stolen coat, silver and gold. And sure enough, these things were buried right where Achan said they would be. The men brought everything to their leader, Joshua.

Do you think God felt sad about Achan's sin? Yes, God was sad that Achan had disobeyed the rules and stole the clothes and silver and gold. God does not want us to steal. He does not want us to disobey His rules. God had a terrible punishment for Achan. This terrible punishment showed all God's people that He wants us to follow the rules.

When Achan's sin was punished, God helped the people of Israel win again. **(Speak joyfully!)** This time when the people of Israel went to battle at Ai, they were not chased away. God helped them WIN!

God wants us to do things His way – all the time and all the way.

**(Leader's note: The actual details of Achan's punishment found in Joshua 7 need not be part of the lesson for your Sparkies. It is enough for them to know that God was unhappy and punished Achan.)**





## Challenging

*(Speak sincerely, looking right into the eyes of the children. You may need to work hard in keeping their attention now that the biography has ended.)*

*(In advance, prepare a large heart, with one side black and one side white.)*

When we disobey God's rules, it is called sin. **(Hold up black side of heart.)** Achan sinned, and the Bible tells us that everyone has sinned, including you and me (Romans 3:23). Sin is the bad things we do. What are some of the things we do that are sin? **(Allow children to give a few answers.)** Yes, we can list many things that are sin. But God loves us so much, He died on the cross so our sins can be forgiven. **(Briefly present the gospel as time allows and as the Holy Spirit leads you. Ask the leader to read Romans 6:23 and then John 3:16.)** When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, He wipes our sins away. **(Show white side of heart.)** He makes us a new creation.

Many of you have already trusted in Jesus and love Him very much. If so, Jesus wants you to obey His rules. He wants you to be kind, tell the truth and do what is right each day! He made us so He knows best how we should live. Yes, we still live in a sinful world and we still choose to make wrong choices and sin. We need to talk to the Lord and tell Him that we know what we did was wrong and that we want to do what is right. Let's live God's way – all the way!

*And the people said unto Joshua, "The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." (Joshua 24:24)*

# Family Follow Up

## God's Way – All the Way

Parents, this week at Sparks the children learned about living God's way – all the way and all the time.

Help your child write a list of things he or she knows will please God. This list might be four to six items – or much longer if the child's interest and heart is stirred. Help your child think of specific ways to please God. For example, instead of just writing "Be nice," your child may write "Be nice to my sister when she wants to play with me today."

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Remind your child that God is so pleased when we love Him and do what is right. He wants us to obey Him all the time and all the way! When we do disobey His ways, He wants us to pray and tell Him we are sorry. Then He forgives us!

God's Way – All the Way

*And the people said ... "The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." (Joshua 24:24)*

Turn to page 199 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Night

- **Sparkie's Choice** — The week prior, allow Sparkies to give ideas and vote on what theme they'd like to have the following week.

## Game Ideas

- **Balloon Volley** – You need one balloon (and maybe one or two extra in case one pops). Two players from each team stand near the center of the circle. The game leader stands in the center holding a balloon. When the leader throws the balloon in the air, the players attempt to bat the balloon across their own team line. The winner is whichever team hits the balloon across its team line. Play several rounds to allow all Sparkies a chance to play.
- **Where's Sparky?** – Hide four pictures of Sparky around the game room. Each Sparky should have one team color on the back. When the whistle blows, players find the Sparky with their team color. The first team to have all players back at its line with a Sparky wins.

## Teaching Option

- Give some examples of things Sparkies can do that will please God. This will help them later if they complete the Family Follow-Up activity. And if they don't, it'll be a good way to give them specific ways to apply the lesson.



# SparksActivity

The Bible biography of Achan taught us something very important today at Sparks! Do you remember **HOW** God wants us to obey Him? Use the special code to find the answer to this question.

## SPECIAL CODE:

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. A | 6. L  |
| 2. D | 7. O  |
| 3. E | 8. S  |
| 4. G | 9. T  |
| 5. H | 10. W |
|      | 11. Y |

,

4	7	2	8	10	1	11	

1	6	6	9	5	3	10	1	11	

Let's obey God all the way, each and every day!

*And the people said . . . "The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." (Joshua 24:24)*

*(Even though Jonah is not one of the Bible biographies studied in the HangGlider handbook, we know fairness is important to this age Sparkie, so we included this lesson.)*

## Reading

The book of Jonah

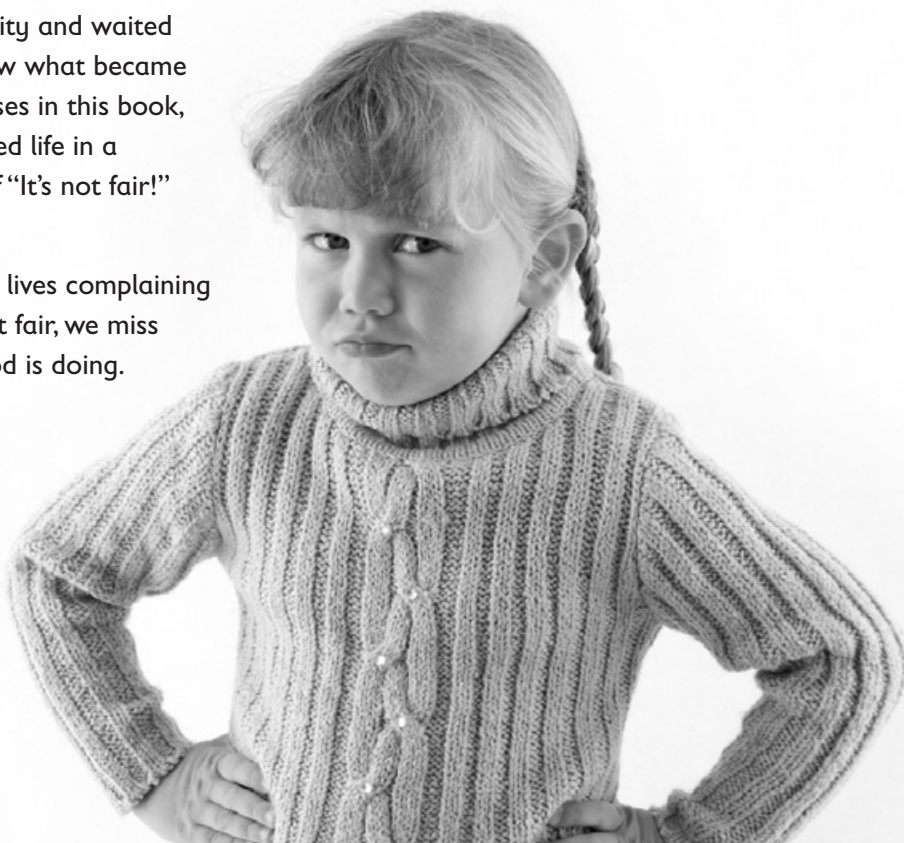
## Thinking

We've all heard it – as leaders or parents. “It’s not fair!” The other team won at Game Time. Someone else got to help hold the words of the song. Another Sparkie got to go first during Handbook Time. It goes on and on. Anything and everything is susceptible to being declared “not fair” at any given time.

You’ve probably wondered and hoped that this is a phase they’ll grow out of, right? Have you grown out of it? It’s funny that, although we’re adults now, we still have tendencies towards the “it’s not fair.” Someone else got the promotion. Someone else was recognized during the church service for their work instead of us. The other family has the house and vacations we long for. There’s always going to be something in our lives and the lives of our Sparkies that just doesn’t seem fair.

So how do we handle this issue with our Sparkies? How can we teach our Sparkies how to deal with the fairness or unfairness of life when we struggle with the same thing? We’re going to look at Jonah for this lesson. We can learn a lot from Jonah. He wasn’t exactly the most gracious guy around. Sure, he did what God asked him to – eventually – but he did it begrudgingly. And he seemed to think that the people of Nineveh didn’t deserve God’s grace. And he did? He wasn’t too happy that God had compassion on the Ninevites. Jonah actually set himself down outside the city and waited to watch its destruction! We don’t know what became of Jonah. But, if we look at the last verses in this book, it isn’t far-fetched to say that Jonah lived life in a state of anger and frustration. A life of “It’s not fair!” is no way to live.

Here’s the bottom line: If we spend our lives complaining about what we don’t have or what isn’t fair, we miss out on all that we DO have and all God is doing.



# Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A blindfold

## Looking It Up

Jonah 4:1-2 *(Ask a leader to find these verses and be ready to read them to the group.)*

## Showing

Hey everybody! I'm so glad you're here tonight!

What I need right now is someone to help me. Someone who is brave enough to be blindfolded. ***(Choose a volunteer. You'll choose one or two more before you're finished with this section.)***

OK, I'll blindfold you and then ask you to do a few things for me. Oh sure, I could ask you to do them without the blindfold. That would be easier, but I want you to wear it anyway.

***(Give instructions and exclamations that are fitting for the room you're in and for the objects you have around the room.)***

First I want you to walk across the room and pick up the handbook that's on the table. No, a little to the left. No, now go right. Look out for the wall! Good, you got it. Now, please go get the cup of water that's on the table in the

back of the room. Wait, you're going to run into a Sparkie! Now I need you to go sit in your chair. No, wait! You're going to sit on Sara!

OK, thanks \_\_\_\_\_ ***(Sparkie's name)*** for your help. ***(Do this at least one more time, if not two. The more you repeat it, the better Sparkies will comprehend the lesson behind the fun.)***

Wow! You guys sure had trouble getting around the room. Why couldn't you just do what I asked? Why did it take you so long? ***(Wait for answers: couldn't see, was blindfolded.)***

Right! You couldn't see! You sure did take a long time! Wearing the blindfold made it harder to do things. Did you think following my instructions was hard? You know who else had a hard time following instructions? Jonah. God told him what to do, but Jonah didn't obey Him.



# Telling

Jonah was angry because God told him to go tell the people of Nineveh that they needed to be sorry for their sins. Sometimes we use the word repent to explain this. *Repent* means “to understand you are doing something wrong, to be sorry for it and to change your ways.” Jonah thought that the people of Nineveh didn’t deserve God’s love. Let’s look at what the Bible says about Jonah.

**(Ask the leader to read these verses.)**

Jonah knew that God would forgive the Ninevites and that made him angry. Jonah thought it wasn’t fair. Now the Bible doesn’t tell us that Jonah said, “It’s not fair!” but from how Jonah talks to God, it sure sounds like that’s how he felt!

Have you ever felt like something wasn’t fair? Maybe you wanted to be first in line to Game Time, or your team lost during Game Time. Maybe your friend at school got to be in the Spelling Bee and you didn’t. Or maybe your big sister gets to stay up an hour later than you. Sometimes things just don’t seem fair, do they?

Maybe that’s how Jonah felt. Let’s think about it for a minute – Jonah worshiped God and tried hard to follow Him. The Ninevites worshiped idols, and the Bible tells us that they did wicked things. So here’s Jonah, trying to do what is right **(point to the left and then to the right for visual affect)** and here are the Ninevites doing whatever they want. And the Lord tells Jonah to go to the Ninevites and tell them that they need to turn from their evil ways and follow God. I can understand why Jonah would feel that God wasn’t being fair. Why should the Ninevites have the chance to be saved from their evil ways when Jonah was trying to follow God all along?

Sometimes we all feel like life isn’t fair. You know what – there are times when I feel like life isn’t fair! But, instead of getting mad, we need to trust God because He knows EVERYTHING and He knows what’s best for us! God loved the Ninevites as much as He loved Jonah.

Let’s think back to when \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ **(Sparkie’s names)** were walking around the room blindfolded. They were able to do what I asked them, but it took them a while and it was hard. When we say “It’s not fair!” it’s kind of like we’re putting a blindfold over our eyes. When we think that everything is unfair, we’re making it hard on ourselves. We can’t see all the good that there is to see. Maybe your team lost during Game Time – BUT you did get to play some really fun games with your friends. Maybe you didn’t make the Spelling Bee – BUT you did get a good grade on your math test. And maybe your older sister gets to stay up later than you – BUT in a few more years you’ll get to stay up later too! See, even when things can seem unfair, there are lots of other things that are really cool and great.

Maybe if Jonah hadn’t been so angry, he might have seen that God was using him to save thousands of people from death! God even saved Jonah from the belly of a big fish. But Jonah was so worried about God being nice to those mean people, he didn’t see all the great things God was doing.

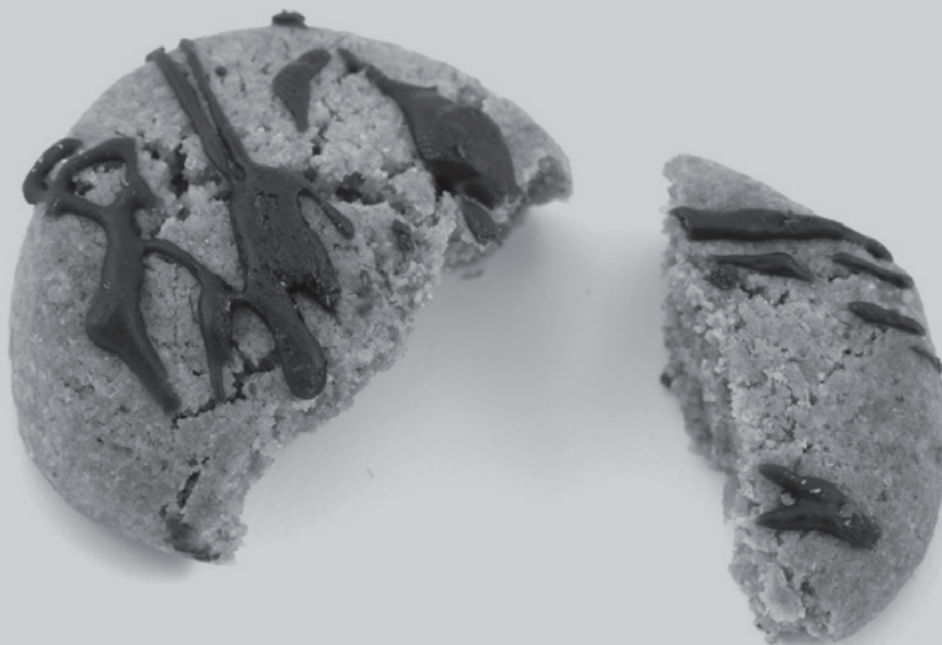
## Challenging

Next time you start to think “This isn’t fair,” stop yourself. Stop and think for a minute about what is good instead of what doesn’t seem fair. God is very, very fair. He doesn’t have favorites. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. God would have sent Jesus no matter how many people needed to be saved. If there happened to be millions and millions more people, Jesus would have died. But did you also know that even if you were the only person on the earth, Jesus STILL would have died for you so that you can live forever with Him in heaven? That’s pretty cool, isn’t it? Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior yet? All of the leaders here care about you very much and we want to talk with you about what it means to trust Jesus as your Savior if you haven’t done that already.

## Family FollowUp

Share with your child about a time or two when you felt something was unfair. Share one example from your youth and one that happened more recently. What was the situation? What seemed unfair? What did you do about it? Even if you didn’t handle it the way you wanted to, share it. Children need to know that their moms and dads aren’t perfect and need Jesus just as much as they do.

Turn to page 199 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

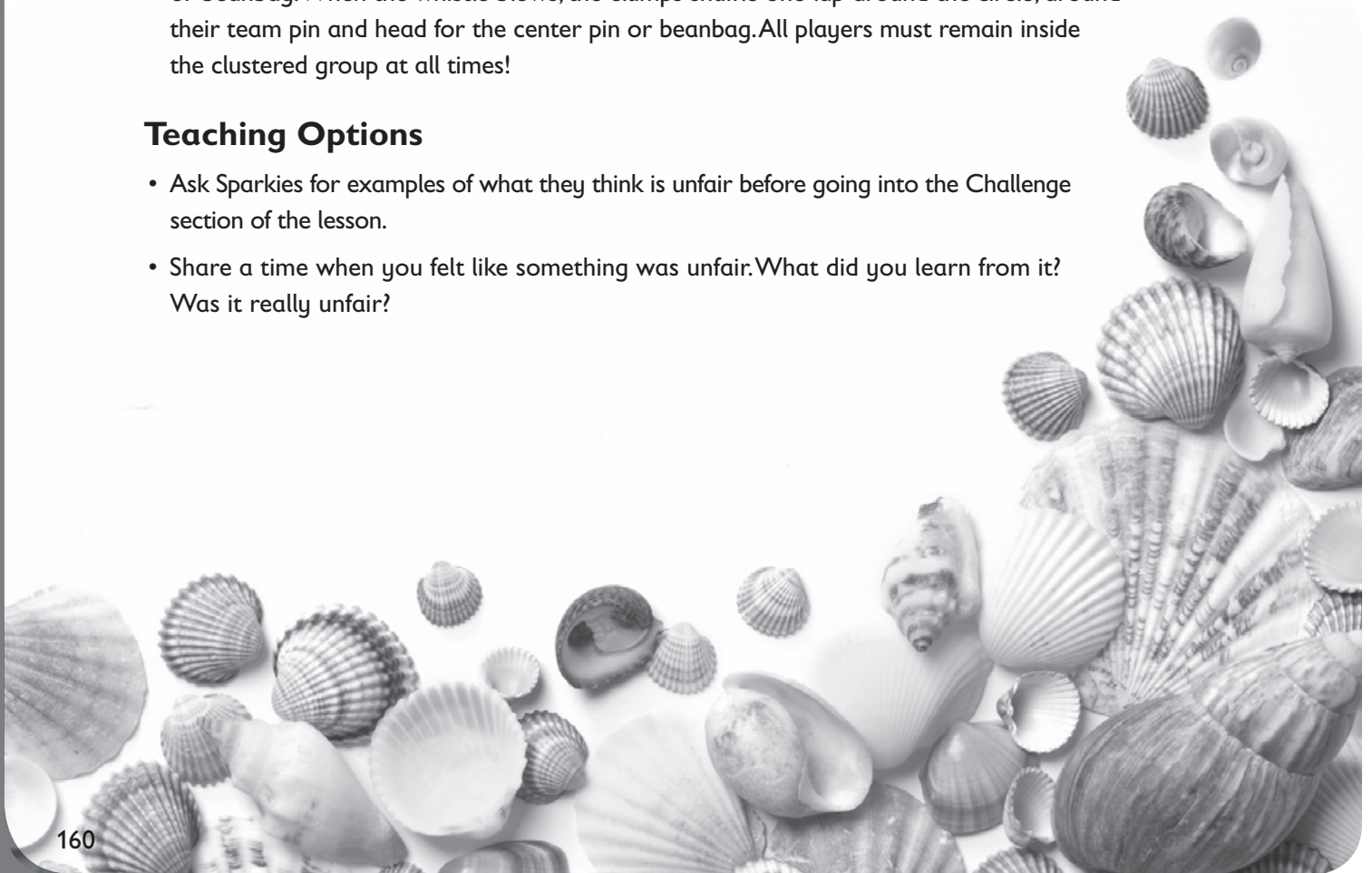
- **Fish Night** – Make the Large Group Time room look like the ocean. Hang seaweed made of construction paper or some slimy-looking material, put up pictures of fish or have leaders bring in their pet fish, etc. Have fish crackers as a snack.
- **Special Delivery Night** – Jonah was not kind toward the Ninevites, but we can and should be kind to others! Show kindness to your Sparkies. Have other leaders help you write a hand-written card for each Sparkie. Make extras for visitors that you can easily personalize after they register. Then have each Sparkie write a note to someone in the church or outside the church and make sure they're delivered.

## Game Ideas

- **Clump-o'-Sparkies** – Help Sparkies understand the importance of working together (unlike Jonah, who didn't want to work together with God and the Ninevites!). You need four long lengths of rope, four circle pins, a center pin and the center beanbag. Give each team a piece of rope. Place the center pin and beanbag in the middle of the circle. Place teams at starting lines. The team leaders tie their rope around the team so they're clustered in a group. One member is chosen to pick up the center pin or beanbag. When the whistle blows, the clumps shuffle one lap around the circle, around their team pin and head for the center pin or beanbag. All players must remain inside the clustered group at all times!

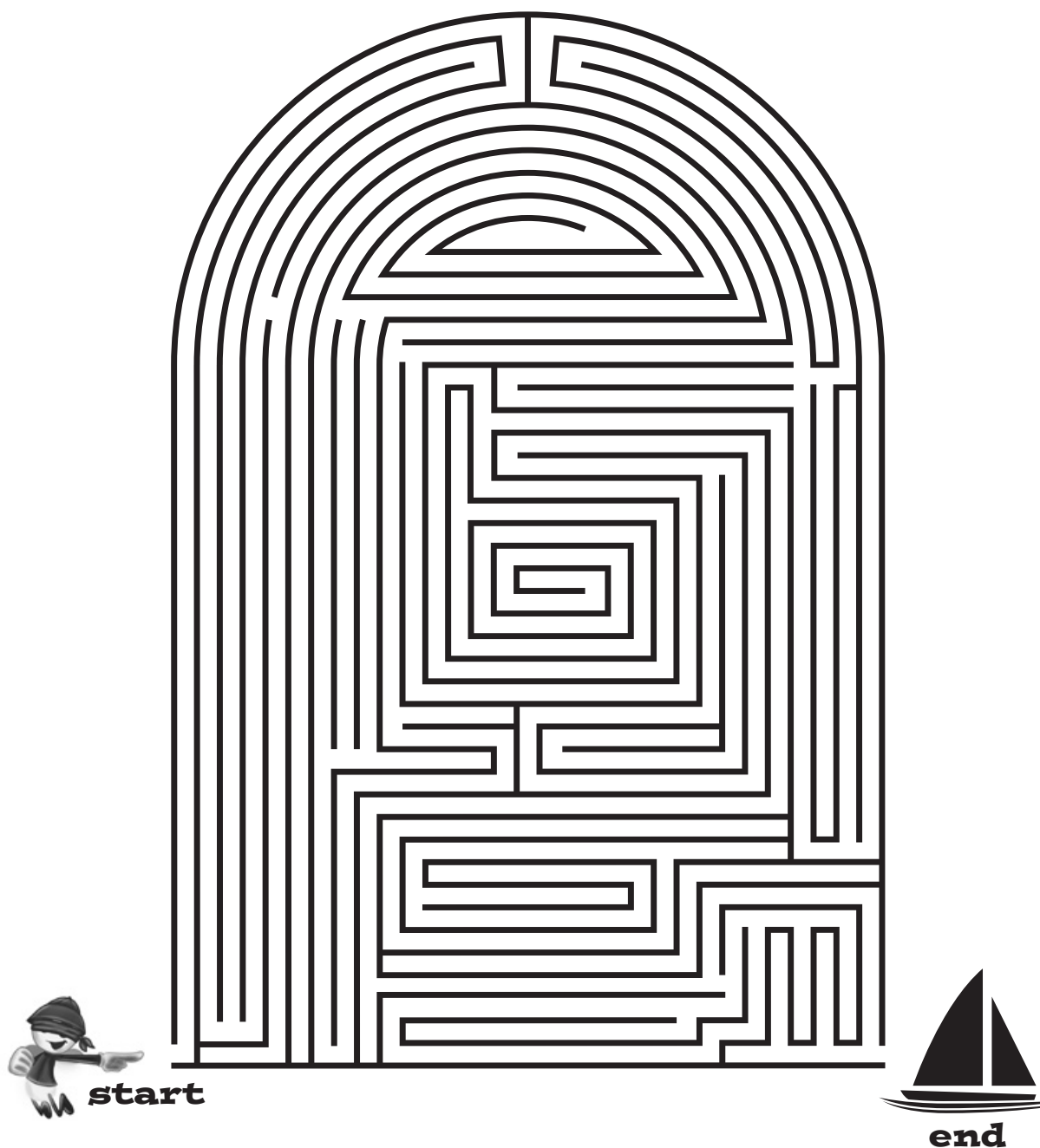
## Teaching Options

- Ask Sparkies for examples of what they think is unfair before going into the Challenge section of the lesson.
- Share a time when you felt like something was unfair. What did you learn from it? Was it really unfair?



# SparksActivity

**Help Sparky!** He's blindfolded and needs you to help him find his way through the maze to get to the boat.



## Reading

Luke 17:11-19 (lesson); Psalm 18:49, 30:4, 12, 35:18, 69:30, 75:1, 79:13, 97:12, 105:1, 106:1, 107:1, 119:62, 136:1, 140:13; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 3:15, 17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Hebrews 13:15

## Thinking

We live in a thankless world. Because of prosperous times and the industrialization of so many parts of the world, people can generally get whatever they want at little personal cost. Our stores are jam-packed with more trinkets than anyone could ever hope to use.

Romans 1 describes what happens when people turn their backs on God. Evidence of this godlessness abounds in our world. Romans 1:18-21 says that though everyone knows of God's existence, many choose to reject Him. *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (v. 21).* Notice the phrase *neither were thankful*. Those who recognize God's blessings – in particular, His gift of salvation – cannot help but agree with the psalmist. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High (Psalm 92:1).* The purpose of this lesson is to encourage a thankful heart in your Sparkies.

While a Large Group Time lesson about the 10 lepers is in another lesson book, we decided to take a look at it. Teaching kids the importance of having a thankful spirit is so important that we want to focus on it.



# Getting It Ready

## You will need for Option 1:

- Artificial Christmas tree
- Heart or leaf shapes – cut from construction paper – in various colors, shapes and sizes.
- Crayons
- Hole punch
- Ornament hooks or yarn

## Looking It Up

Hebrews 13:15

## Showing

Your Sparkies can experience parts of this lesson through their senses:

### OPTION 1:

- Bring in an artificial Christmas tree (use a miniature one if your club is small). Before the lesson, cut out leaf shapes or heart shapes from various colors of construction paper and punch a hole at the top of each. Give the children leaves or hearts and crayons. During the lesson, talk to the children about biblical thankfulness using the information in this lesson. Next, ask them to use the crayons to draw on each leaf something they are thankful for. Suggestions could be “Mom and Dad,” “a dog,” “a cat,” “a car,” or “a nice place to live.” After the children are finished drawing, use Christmas ornament hooks or pieces of yarn (knotted to form a loop) to hang their leaves or hearts on the “Thanksgiving Tree.” Spend time in prayer, thanking God for the many nice things He has provided.

### OPTION 2:

- Use this opportunity to ask: Have you ever gone through an earthquake, hurricane, or tornado? **(You may need to explain what these disastrous events are.)** Many people in our world have gone through very difficult times. Let’s pretend that we’re going through a terrible storm and that the electricity has gone out. **(Ask another leader to turn off the lights. It may take a moment to calm the Sparkies down.)** Imagine we don’t have any lights or food or water. Sometimes we don’t realize how many wonderful things we have until we don’t have them. Some children in the world have never had nice clothes to wear or a nice bed to sleep on. Let’s take turns naming one thing for which we are thankful. Then we will thank the Lord for all the good things He has given us.



# Telling

When was the last time somebody did something really nice for you? Maybe your mom made your favorite supper (**pause here for a poll of favorite foods**), or your dad fixed one of your toys that broke. Did you say “thank you” afterwards? What are you supposed to say after someone does something nice for you? Yes, you should say, “thanks” or “thank you.” This is not only a good thing to do but also the RIGHT thing to do, according to the Bible.

Have you ever been so sick that you had to stay away from other people? I had a really bad cold once, and I had to stay home from work. Otherwise, I might have given the cold to the people I work with. (**Share personal experience about being sick.**) Today, I’ll tell you about 10 men who were so sick that they had to stay away from everybody in their town. We read about these men in Luke 17:11-19. The Bible says these men had a terrible disease called leprosy. Today, we have medicine that can make leprosy go away; but in Bible times, leprosy was very serious and no one knew how to get rid of it. (**As preparation, search for information about leprosy at the library or on the Internet.**)

Well, one day – guess who these sick men saw? They saw Jesus. Remember, Jesus could do amazing things we call “miracles.” Because these men were so sick, they couldn’t get close to Jesus, so they had to shout. The Bible says: *And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”* (Luke 17:13).

What do you think Jesus did? (**Ask different children to share what they think.**) Jesus made the sick men all better! Isn’t that wonderful?

What do you think happened next? Do you remember what are we supposed to say when



someone does something really nice for us? That’s right, we’re supposed to say, “thank you.” Did these men say “thank you”? No, they didn’t – well, at least nine of them didn’t. Nine of them went to the temple, but they left one man behind. What do you think he did?

He was so thankful Jesus had healed him that he ... *turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His [Jesus’] feet, giving Him thanks ...* (Luke 17:15-16). The man said “thank you” to Jesus for healing him.

Have you ever wondered why we pray and thank God for food and drink *before* we eat? Sometimes in the Christian life we have rituals. Those are things we sometimes do without thinking about *why* we do them. God doesn't want us to live by rituals. He wants us to praise and obey Him from our hearts. These verses should help explain why we pray before we eat.

Matthew 15:36

Matthew 26:27

Mark 8:6

Mark 14:23

Luke 22:17, 19

John 6:11

Acts 27:35

1 Corinthians 11:24



## Challenging

What good things has Jesus done for you? He gave you nice clothes to wear, good food to eat, and a warm bed to sleep in. What else did He do? ***(Ask Sparkies to list other things they are grateful for. Leader, share a personal example of something wonderful God has done in your life. Use an illustration that focuses on a characteristic such as peace, courage or wisdom, rather than getting "things." Show how a relationship with Christ helps you in your everyday life. I remember when I was your age, my friends wanted me to steal some candy ... I knew it was wrong. I prayed that God would give me courage to do what was right ...)***

Remember, the most important thing we should be thankful for is that the Lord Jesus Christ came to earth to be our Savior. Because He was willing to do that, we can have our sins forgiven and the gift of eternal life.

If we are thankful, how can we SHOW our thankfulness? ***(Examples: By saying "thank you" to others. By giving a gift of appreciation.)*** Who are people we should say "thank you" to? ***(Examples: parents, teachers and pastor.)*** After you leave here tonight, I'd like you to find one person and say, "Thank you." Next week, I'll check to see who that person was.

## Family Follow Up

### Thankfulness Quiz

Whom did David appoint to minister before the ark of the covenant and to thank the Lord? (1 Chronicles 16:1-4)

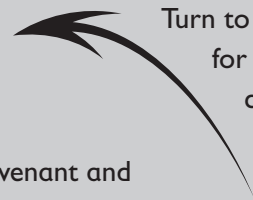
When were the Levites supposed to thank and praise the Lord? (1 Chronicles 23:30)

According to Psalm 147:7, how should we sing unto the Lord?

With what kind of voice did Jonah say he would sacrifice to God? (Jonah 2:9)

According to Luke 18:11, who thanked God that he was not like other men?

According to Philippians 4:6, how are we supposed to make our requests known to God in prayer?



Turn to page 199  
for Family Follow-Up  
cards that you can  
copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Night

- **Thanksgiving** – It might not be Thanksgiving, but have a Thanksgiving-themed night! Encourage Sparkies to bring canned food to donate to a local food pantry. Have a contest to see who brings in the most food.

### Game Ideas

- **Thankful Web** – All Sparkies sit around the circle by teams. One Sparkie has a ball of yarn or string (make sure it's a really big one so there's enough to get around the circle). The first Sparkie names something he is thankful for and rolls the ball of yarn or string to another Sparkie anywhere in the circle. Continue until all Sparkies have had a turn. Then marvel at the cool web that makes up all the things everyone is thankful for.
- **Mix It Up** – To go along with your Thanksgiving theme night, instead of using the typical center pin and beanbag, mix things up and use an ear of corn, a sweet potato or a pumpkin.

### Teaching Options

- Ask Sparkies to think about a time when they should have said “thank you” to someone but didn’t.
- Instead of using an artificial Christmas tree in the Showing section, consider buying a fake plant or tree that you can keep in your club room. Then leave the leaves and hearts on the tree all year long.



## **SparksActivity**

Bring supplies for the children to make a huge thank-you card for someone who helps at your Awana club: the maintenance crew, the musicians, the commander, the secretary, etc.



## Reading

Luke 2; John 3:16

## Thinking

Sparkies often associate Christmas with Santa Claus, presents, candy, cookies, toys, decorations, etc. Our desire is to remind them that the reason we celebrate Christmas is because God sent His only Son to earth to die for our sins so we could have forgiveness and eternal life.

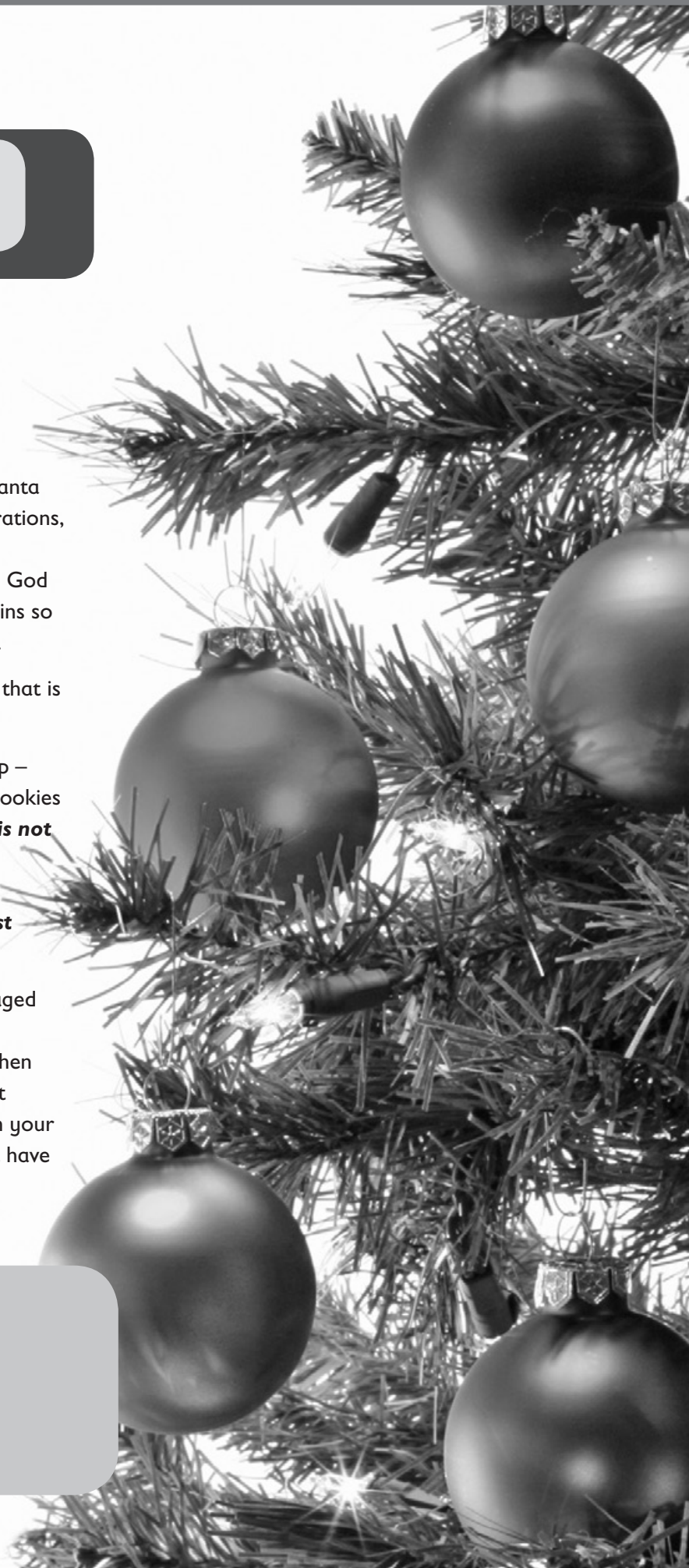
Remind the children that this is the lesson that is in their key verse – John 3:16.

This is a difficult concept for them to grasp – all the decorations, presents, parties and cookies can easily take priority. ***(Your point here is not to tell them that these other things are wrong – don't antagonize a parent by giving your opinion of Santa Claus – just focus on the truth.)***

Here is a fictional story about a Sparkie-aged boy and his Christmas experience. Tell the children that it is a made-up story – and then have fun with it as you teach an important lesson with a contemporary story. Tell it in your own words. Take out any details you don't have time to include.

## Looking It Up

John 3:16



# Telling

"Is our plane leaving yet?" Dylan stood up on his chair and rocked it back and forth.

"Stop, Dylan," said his mom. She was balancing a cup of coffee in one hand and holding on to her carry-on luggage with the other.

"Stop," said his dad. He was reading a newspaper and sighing a lot.

Dylan got up and walked over to the window. In the distance, another plane came in for landing.

Dylan sat down. He was so excited. It was Christmas Eve and he was going on his first plane ride – to Grandpa and Grandma's house in Colorado. Sure, he had spent Christmas in Colorado before – but the family had never FLOWN there.

"They just delayed the flight another half hour," his dad said. "I'll walk down to the café and get us some hamburgers. Dylan, come with me. Mom and Gracie will wait here."

Dylan grabbed his dad's hand and walked with him through the crowds of people. In the background he could hear the announcer lady say, "Please keep all luggage with you. If you leave it unattended, security will remove it."

"Why do they keep saying that, Dad?" What does un ... un ... at ... tenive mean?"

"Unattended? That means you need to be WITH your luggage. If you leave it lying around, they'll remove it."

"They keep saying it over and over and over again. I'm tired of hearing it."

His dad squeezed his hand and smiled at him. "You don't have luggage anyhow, Dylan. Don't worry about it."

Lots of people were in line at McDonald's® and while they were waiting, Dylan made funny faces at a little girl who was waiting with her mom. The girl made faces back at Dylan. Dylan

thought airports had to be the most exciting place in the entire world.

They bought hamburgers and drinks for the family and headed back through the crowds to Mom and Gracie.

"They delayed the time again," Dylan's mom said as she took the bag of hamburgers from Dylan. "This isn't looking good. I overheard the man at the desk say that it's snowing in Colorado and that it's moving this way."

"What time are we supposed to be out of here?"

"Now they're saying 7 o'clock."

"Seven o'clock?" Dylan whined. He wasn't sure exactly how long that was, but he WAS sure it was a long time. "Why can't we leave now? Why can't we just get on the plane? The plane is sitting right there. We could just go through that door and go to the plane and ..."

Dylan looked out the window again as he ate his hamburger. He wondered how those big jets stayed up in the air. He had asked his mom that yesterday and she said she didn't really understand either, but that they would get a book out of the library and figure it out.

Dylan's dad came and stood next to him, looking out the window. "Can't really tell how cloudy it is with the sky so dark."

"Look at the snowflakes, Dad." Dylan pointed to one of the lights. You could see snow floating down in front of it.

"And THAT'S the problem." Dad went over to the desk and asked the man if they were really going to leave that night. Dylan followed him. Maybe the man would say that the plane was ready to leave.

But the man said he wasn't sure.



## Telling continued

When they had arrived at the airport, Dylan was excited that they were getting to fly; now he was tired of waiting.

He sat down next to his mom. "How much longer? Can I get another drink? Can I have another hamburger? There's nothing to do."

He wandered back to the window. The girl he had seen in the McDonald's line (the one he had been making faces at) was there.

"Hi," said Dylan.

"Hi," said the girl. Then she ran back to her parents.

"The sign just moved up again," Dylan heard his dad tell his mom. Dylan looked. Now it said 8 o'clock.

Dylan sat down. A man on the overhead TV talked about bad weather.

"Do you want to practice your verses?" his mom asked. He had brought along his *HangGlider* handbook because he wanted to show his grandparents what he had learned.

"OK." He walked over to his mom and said John 3:16. **(At this point you could have the Sparkies say the verse with you.)**

"Merry Christmas," his dad said.

"What?" Dylan asked.

"That is a Christmas verse," his dad explained. "Think about it. Those words tell why the Lord Jesus came to earth."

"Cool." Dylan hadn't thought about John 3:16 being a Christmas verse.

"We don't need any of the decorations or presents or food to celebrate Christmas – all we need is to know the message of John 3:16."

Dylan continued saying his verses and then laid his head down on his mom's lap and went to sleep. **(Pause so Sparkies know time has passed.)**



Dylan opened his eyes and looked around. More people were crowded into the gate area than before. People were sleeping and reading and chatting and drinking coffee.

"What time is it?" Dylan asked.

"Six in the morning. There's a big delay because so many places got snow last night."

Dylan looked around at the sleeping, reading, talking, coffee-drinking people. "Doesn't look much like Christmas," he complained. He missed the pile of presents and Grandma's cinnamon rolls and the tree. All you had at an airport were sleepy people and a lady telling you not to leave your luggage un ... at ... tenive or whatever that word was.

“Well, there aren’t presents, and trees and cinnamon rolls, but we still have John 3:16.”

Dylan thought about that. What did Dad mean?

“John 3:16?”

“Remember what we talked about before you went to sleep last night? John 3:16 is what we really celebrate at Christmas. The greatest gift we could ever receive – is the gift of God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we don’t need presents and trees and cinnamon rolls to celebrate that. The Lord Jesus Christ is the best gift we could ever have.”

“But I miss the presents and the tree and the cinnamon rolls.”

“So do I. So do Mom and Gracie, but not having those things doesn’t mean we don’t have a reason to celebrate Christmas. We can still have the Lord Jesus Christ. We can still be thankful that He came to earth to die for our sins, that He came alive again three days later and that He loves US very much.”

“God loves the whole world,” Dylan said. “God loves all these people sitting right here.”

“That’s right,” his dad said. “They all need to know about God’s love.”

His dad walked over to talk to the man at the desk. Dylan saw the girl he had been making faces at in the café line. She was coloring some pictures in a coloring book.

Dylan walked over and watched her.

“Do you want to color?” she asked.

“Sure,” Dylan said. He took a blue crayon and started coloring a dinosaur.

“This isn’t a real Christmas, is it?” she asked.

Dylan thought about the verses he had learned

in Sparks. He thought about John 3:16.

“Do you know why we REALLY celebrate Christmas?” he asked.

“Because of presents and trees and stuff,” she said.

“No, because of the Lord Jesus,” and he started telling her about John 3:16.

***(Close in prayer to signify the end of the story – but then talk with your Sparkies about telling others about the real meaning of Christmas. Show them how John 3:16 is a Christmas verse.)***

## Challenging

***(Recognize that although most of your Sparkies do have big celebrations at Christmas – some may not have much of a celebration. Emphasize that the Lord Jesus Christ is the best gift of all.)***

Who can quote John 3:16? ***(Allow a Sparkie to do this.)***

John 3:16 tells us the real meaning of Christmas.

*For God so loved the world, (God loves us more than we know.)*

*That He gave His only begotten Son, (He sent His ONLY Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth. The Lord Jesus is God’s gift to us.)*

*That whosoever believeth in Him (We need to trust Him as our Savior.)*

*Should not perish, (We will not be separated from God.)*

*But have everlasting life. (He gives us the gift of forever life.)*

## Family Follow Up

Do a family service project this Christmas:

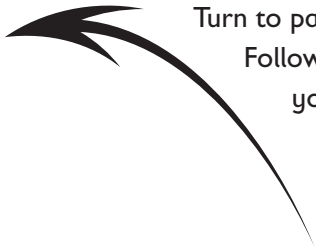
Donate food to a food bank or mission.

Take toys to a homeless shelter.

Invite someone who doesn't have family in the area to your home for dinner.

Make cards for a nursing home.

Offer for your family to help at church in a special way – folding programs for the Christmas concert, cleaning up after an extra holiday activity, etc.



Turn to page 200 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas

### Theme Nights

- **Christmas Ornament Fun** – Have different shapes or ornaments made of construction paper ready to be colored and decorated. Sparkies will be decorating ornaments for the elderly or for another group of people your church ministers to. Write their first names on the back of the ornaments so the people who receive them can associate a name with the ornament.
- **Christmas Tag Cover** – Sparkies get prizes or team points for having the most Christmas tags attached to themselves. Leaders can get in on the fun too.

### Game Ideas

- **Christmas Tags** – You'll need a large quantity of Christmas gift tags. Hide them all around the game room. Players stand on their team lines. When the whistle blows, players look for and collect the tags. After two minutes, blow the whistle to stop the action. Count tags for each team. The winning team is the one that found the most tags.
- **Pass the Gingerbread Man** – Make a gingerbread man from construction paper for each team. Sparkies sit in a circle near their team line. Sparkies pass the gingerbread man around their circle while Christmas music is playing. When the music stops, the Sparkie with the gingerbread man stands up and runs around the circle, around the team pin and goes in for the center pin or beanbag. Play until everyone has a turn to run around the circle.

### Teaching Option

- As you close the Challenge section, have leaders available to talk to Sparkies who want to trust Jesus as Savior. Make sure to provide an opportunity for them to respond to the truth of John 3:16.

# SparksActivity

Color the page and share it with a friend or relative.

**G**od so loved the world,  
that He gave His  
**O**nly begotten Son, that  
whosoever believeth in Him  
**S**hould not  
**P**erish, but have  
**E**verlasting  
**L**ife.

## Reading

Matthew 27:50-28:10; Luke 24:8-12; John 19:38-42

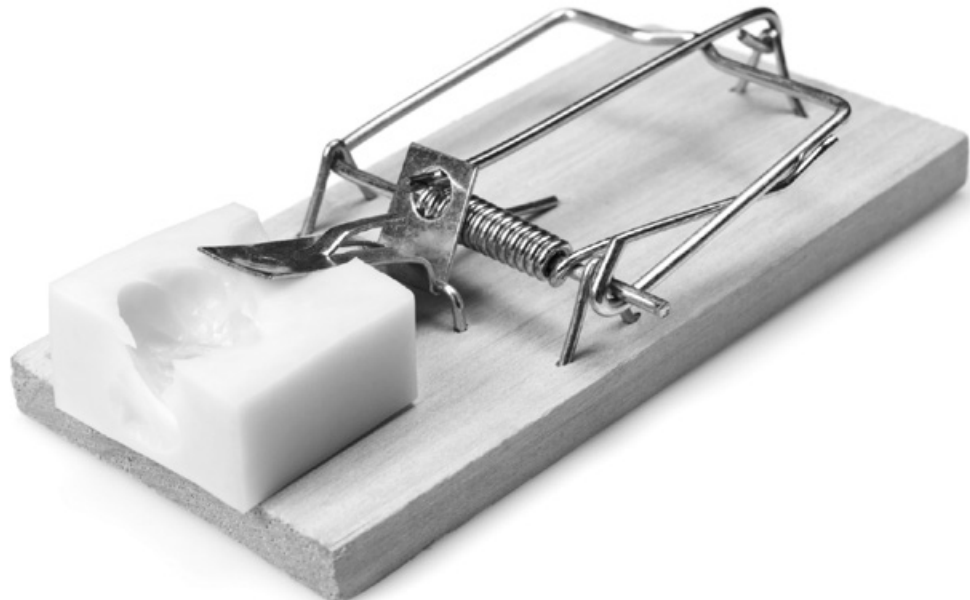
## Thinking

**Trap** – An ambush, scheme or trick intended to catch somebody unawares and put the person at a disadvantage or in somebody else's power. A situation from which it is difficult to escape.

Jesus berated the Pharisees and scribes for making traditions more important than the truth of God's Word (Mark 7:13). Have we done the same with Easter? Do we get so wrapped up in the trappings of the holiday that the truth becomes buried?

Satan must get pleasure out of seeing Christians give so much time to the misfocused traditions of Easter. As difficult as it may be, let's make a concentrated effort to break the familiar pattern of festivities and focus on Jesus' resurrection. It is our assurance of eternal life! Because He lives, we too shall live (John 14:19).

As you give this lesson, pray that your Sparkies will have a heart and hunger for God's truth.



## Looking It Up

Matthew 28:5b-7 (*Miss Mary will read these verses*)

## Getting It Ready

- Write “Real or Pretend” on a black- or whiteboard.
- Small cards with a question mark on one side and one of the questions from the *Challenging* section on the other. Number the cards on the corner and tape randomly on the board under the title.
- Put several commercial Easter items in a bag, like candy eggs and bunnies. Also put into the bag: a spice jar or can, long strips of cloth, a nail, cross, a card that reads “angel,” folded handkerchief and a sword.
- Bible and an Easter basket
- Leader dressed in Bible-time-style clothes.

## Showing

Write “Real or Pretend” on the board. Prepare six 3” x 5” (7.6 x 12.7 cm) cards. On one side of each card put a large, colorful question mark. On the other side, write one of the questions from the *Challenging* section. Number them discreetly in the top right corner. Tape the cards in a scattered manner under your title.

**LEADER:** We will play the Easter Real or Pretend Game. A lot of people celebrate the “pretend” part of Easter and forget the “real” part of Easter. **(Leader, your goal here is not to say that eating candy or hunting for eggs is wrong, but rather that they are not the real purpose of Easter. Fun things are OK, but we need to recognize the real truth about the day.)**

**(Choose children to pick something out of the bag. Have the group decide if it is an Easter “pretend” item or an Easter “real” item. If they think it is a “pretend” item, have them place the item in the Easter basket. If they think it is a “real” item, have them place it next to the Bible. Do not say if their choices are correct.)**

**LEADER:** Listen carefully to our lesson and see if the choices we made are correct.



# Telling

**LEADER:** I would like you to welcome Miss Mary, our Bible-time guest. *(A woman dressed in Bible-time-style clothes, carrying a Bible, walks into the room, really excited.)*

**LEADER:** The Bible gives us a lot of information about the days in which Jesus lived. It would be great to talk to some of the people who lived back then. But since we can't REALLY do that today we will have someone pretend that she is from Bible times – but her answers will be true.

Miss Mary, you sure look happy.

**MISS MARY:** I am! I am! Such a wonderful thing has happened I can hardly wait to tell you about it. I saw Jesus! He is alive! Jesus is ALIVE!

**LEADER:** Actually, we already know that. Although we can't see Jesus, the Bible tells us He is living in heaven and preparing a place for all those who believe in Him.

**MISS MARY:** Well, you know that NOW, but back when Jesus lived on earth, we didn't understand what He was here to do. You see, even though Jesus never did anything wrong, mean men put Him to death on a cross (*show cross*). They hammered nails (*show nails*) into His hands and feet. They pierced His side (*show sword*).

**LEADER:** Jesus died to take our punishment for all the wrong things we do. No matter how hard we try to be good we still do wrong. God calls those things sin. We deserve to be punished, but God loves us so much that He made a way for us to escape that punishment. When we believe that Jesus died for us and accept Him as our Savior, our sins are forgiven.

**MISS MARY:** But when Jesus died on the cross we were so sad. Another believer, Joseph of Arimathea, got permission to take Jesus' body down from the cross. He wrapped Jesus' body in a clean linen cloth (*show cloth strips*) as was the custom. Sweet spices (*show spices*) were put on His body. Then Joseph laid Jesus' body in a tomb which was a cave. When Joseph left, he rolled a huge stone in front of the tomb's door.

Later the guards came and placed a seal over the door, then stayed to watch over the tomb. The Pharisees and chief priests were concerned that someone would come and steal Jesus' body.



Just like many people today visit the graves of those they love, we went to the tomb. We were surprised to see the stone rolled away AND an angel (*show the card that says "angel"*). The light was so bright! (*Hold hand to eyes to shield the "light."*) We were really scared!

**LEADER:** A real angel? What did he look like?

**MISS MARY:** His face was like lightening. His clothes were white as snow; and he spoke. He said, (*read Matthew 28:5b-7 from the Bible*). We looked into the tomb. It was empty! The linen grave clothes (*show cloths*) used to cover His body were still there, but not Jesus! The cloth (*hold up the handkerchief*) wrapped around Jesus' head was neatly folded where His head once lay.

We ran to tell the other disciples. And just like the angel said, on our way, we saw Jesus alive! We fell down at His feet and worshiped Him. When we told the other disciples the good news they didn't believe us. Two of them went to the tomb to make sure what we said was true.

**LEADER:** That's exciting!

**MISS MARY:** Yes! Jesus is alive! Jesus is more powerful than death.

**LEADER:** Although there are people who worship other gods or prophets, like Buddha or Mohammed, those fake gods/prophets are all dead. Jesus Christ, the true God, came back alive from the grave.

**MISS MARY:** It wasn't just us who saw Jesus alive after His death. More than 500 others saw Him too!

## Challenging

**LEADER:** Easter is a time we celebrate Jesus' coming alive again. **(Pick up the Easter basket.)** But none of THESE things were mentioned in the Bible. They are just pretend.



Another name for this special day is Resurrection Day. **(Write on the board.)** Resurrected means "raised from the dead." That's what we REALLY to celebrate!

Let's see if you can answer some questions about our lesson.

**(In number order, pick a card on the board and ask the question.)**

1. Who was raised from the dead? **(Jesus.)**
2. Where is Jesus now? **(In heaven.)**
3. Why did Jesus have to die? **(To take the punishment for our sin.)**
4. What is sin? **(The bad things we think, say and do.)**
5. How can we get rid of our sin? **(Believe that Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin. Trust Him to be our Savior.)**

If your brother or sister does something bad and your mom is going to punish him or her, do you ever say, "Stop! I'll take the punishment." **(Give Sparkies opportunity to respond.)** That's what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross.

6. Why did Jesus die for us? **(He loves us.)**

Just like Miss Mary said, the exciting part is that Jesus did not stay dead. God is so powerful that He raised Jesus from the dead. Because Jesus came alive again, we know that we will be alive again after we die too. Those who believe in Jesus will get to live with Him in heaven forever. That's what Jesus meant when He said: ...*"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"* (John 11:25).

Those who have not trusted Jesus will spend forever separated from Him in a terrible place called the lake of fire.

Have YOU trusted Jesus to be your Savior? Are you celebrating pretend things **(hold up Easter basket)** or truth **(hold up the Bible)**?

**(Give an opportunity for follow-up to those children who have questions or are ready to trust Christ as Savior.)**

## Family Follow Up

Sparkies love to play-act. Help them connect to the biography of Jesus' resurrection. Using a table, sheets and/or blankets, help your Sparkie create the "tomb" where Jesus was laid. Put a folded handkerchief and some strips of cloth (grave clothes) inside.

Have your child act out the part where some of Jesus' disciples come to the tomb and find it empty.

You (or another child) can play the part of the angel. Have the angel sit at the door of the tomb and say, ... *He is risen ... Come, see the place where the Lord lay* (Matthew 28:6).

Have your Sparkie go into the tomb, see the grave clothes, and come out excited, saying, "Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive!"

For background and more information on the resurrection biography, read the following Bible passages: Matthew 26-28; Mark 14-16; Luke 22-24; John 18-20.

Turn to page 200 for  
Family Follow-Up  
cards that you  
can copy and  
distribute!



# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Night

- **God Loves Us** – God’s love for us is why He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Use a Valentine’s Day theme to convey the love God has for us. Send invitations to parents and encourage them to come to club for a night. Have cupcakes that do not have icing on them ready to be decorated (have icing, sprinkles and other sorts of toppings available). Encourage Sparkies and parents to have fun together as they decorate cupcakes with hearts or a cross.

## Game Ideas

While colored eggs, Easter baskets and bunny rabbits don’t have any spiritual significance, they can attract boys and girls to club.

- **Easter Egg Race** – Circle pins are replaced with Easter baskets. Five eggs are placed in each team’s triangle in the center of the circle. When the whistle blows, the first player on each team runs into the center, picks up one egg, brings it back, places it in the team’s basket and tags the next player. The first team with all five eggs in the basket wins. You might want to repeat so all players on each team get a chance to play.
- **Egg Rolling** – One Sparkie starts at his team pin with a hard-boiled egg on the floor and a wooden spoon in his or her hand. When the whistle blows, players use the spoon to roll their eggs into the center to get the Easter basket. The first player to succeed wins. Players may not touch the eggs with their hands at any time.

## Teaching Options

- Using rough wood, make a cross. Visuals like this help Sparkies understand that the cross is real. It’s something Jesus really died on and not just a story in the Bible.
- At the end, during the Challenging section, re-emphasize that Easter eggs and candy are not wrong. They aren’t the real purpose of Easter, but neither are they wrong to enjoy. Some of your Sparkies are from non-churched homes and this might be the first time they hear of the real meaning of Easter. While it’s important to convey the real purpose of Easter, it’s detrimental to say that all the other things we enjoy at Easter are wrong or sinful.



## Reading

Luke 8:4-15



## Thinking

Lance Latham's **MISSION** was to tell others about Jesus – to be a **Missionary**. God made that mission **POSSIBLE** through miraculous means. Lance spent his life planting the seeds of God's Word into the hearts and minds of young people. Lance Latham was one of the co-founders of Awana. God has multiplied Lance's efforts through thousands of leaders, like you, who continue to plant God's Word in the minds and hearts of boys and girls – the world's greatest mission field.

Lance's challenge is the same today as it was years ago: "Unless the time arrives in the life of the young person that he values the Word of God, that he lives the Word of God, and has a real desire to know that Word, we have not reached our goal as Bible teachers and youth workers.

"Filling the mind with Scripture is good, but only a means to a greater goal. It's when the heart responds to the Scripture, to the moving of the Holy Spirit, that boys and girls are born again and begin to love the Word of God." – From *Lance – A Testament of Grace* by Dave Breese

What a privilege you have to spend time with your Sparkies, helping them **KNOW** God's Word so they can **LOVE** and **SERVE** Him. Plant those spiritual seeds in prayer. Praise God as **HE** brings forth fruit.

## Looking It Up

Matthew 13:23 (*You could read this verse to your Sparkies before you begin the lesson.*)

## Showing

You will need three sizes of jars and nine ounces of unshelled sunflower seeds. Before the meeting, label the smallest jar “James,” the next size “Romans,” and the largest jar “John.” In the James jar put **108** seeds, the Romans jar **433** seeds, and the John jar **879** seeds. These counts are the number of verses in each book.

Write the name of each jar at the top of a marker board, or on poster board. Divide the children into three groups – James, Romans and John.

Hold up the James jar. Ask the James group, “How many seeds do you think are in this jar?” (**Write their guesses on the board under the jar’s name. Repeat for the Romans and John groups.**)

Each Bible verse you learn is like a seed planted in your life. You may not remember all of them right now, but they are there – just waiting to help you be strong in the Lord.

Today’s missionary story is about a little boy, about your age, who could say, at ONE time, as many Bible verses as there are seeds in all these jars.

Have the leaders help each group find their book of the Bible.





# Telling



As a young boy, Lance lived with his mom and dad and three sisters. Lance's parents woke him up very early every morning. Lance would quickly obey because in five minutes **(hold up five fingers)**, he had to be downstairs ready to recite the Bible verses he had worked on the night before. Then Lance would eat breakfast and work on two MORE Bible verses until it was time to go to school.

By the time Lance was 7 years old he could recite the whole book of James. Let's look at all those verses. **(Have the James group look through the book of James.)** That is 108 verses! To give you an idea of how many verses that is, there is one seed in this jar **(hold up James jar)** for each verse.

When he was 7, Lance could also recite all the verses in the book of Romans. **(Have the Romans group look through the book of Romans. Hold up the Romans jar.)** Romans has 433 verses!

**(Hold up the John jar.)** Lance could also recite all 879 verses in the book of John. **(Have the John group look through the book of John.)** Let's recite one verse you know. **(Recite John 3:16.)**

That's the verse you learned in *Flight 3:16*. You said that verse very well, but could you say the other 878 verses in John?

On Saturday morning, Lance did not sleep late, or watch cartoons, like some of us do. Lance got up at 6 a.m. and studied his verses until lunchtime.

How old was Lance when he could recite all those verses? **(Seven.)** That's right. I want everyone who is 7 years old to stand up. **(Ask each Sparkie standing how many Bible verses they said, or are planning to say, in Handbook Time. Using seeds from the Gospel of John jar, give each Sparkie one seed for each verse. Have the Sparkies sit down. Hold up the Gospel of John jar.)**

Although you Sparkies do a really good job saying your verses, we would have a long way to go to catch up with Lance!

I want everyone who is 5 years old to stand. Do any of you take piano lessons? **(Pause for response.)** When Lance was 5 he not only took piano lessons, he played the piano when the boys and girls sang at church. And he didn't even look at his music book because he had all the songs memorized. Lance played so well that when he became a teenager he went to a special music school.

Lance was an amazing musician and played in the best concerts. He decided to spend a lot of time practicing the piano so he could become a great musician. Soon the name Lance Latham would be known all over the world – but not exactly as Lance imagined.

One day an evangelist (someone who tells people about Jesus) came to Lance's hometown to hold special church meetings. When Lance played the piano the evangelist asked, "Who is that amazing pianist?" When he invited Lance to join his team as their pianist, Lance said, "Yes."

Night after night Lance heard the evangelist's message, "You must be born again." Lance knew all the Bible verses that were mentioned – all the ones that said that because we all do

wrong things, we cannot go to God's perfect heaven. Lance knew that everybody was a sinner, but Lance had never thought of himself as a sinner. So Lance had never believed in Jesus as his Savior. Even though he memorized all those Bible verses, Lance never opened the Bible because he wanted to. He just learned the verses because his father told him to.

Every night when Lance went to bed he thought over and over, "If you die, you will go to hell forever." Finally, after one of the meetings, Lance prayed, "Lord, I am the sinner who needs you." And at the age of 21, Jesus became Lance's Savior.

After that, Lance didn't read his Bible because he was SUPPOSED to, he read it because he WANTED to. He wanted to understand more about Jesus. And he wanted others to know how they could know Jesus as their Savior too.

You see, sometimes people think they can get to heaven by doing good things – like going to church, or giving lots of money, or being nice to people. But that's not true. No matter how hard we try, we would never be good enough for heaven. It's only because God loves us and sent His Son Jesus to die on a cross, taking the punishment for our sins. Then Jesus was buried. But because Jesus is God, He is more powerful than death and Jesus came alive again from the grave. Now Jesus is in heaven making a home for all those who believe in Him. We can't do anything for our salvation, because Jesus has already done everything.

How will God use Lance to tell others about Jesus? How will the name Lance B. Latham be known all over the world? You'll have to come back next week to find out!



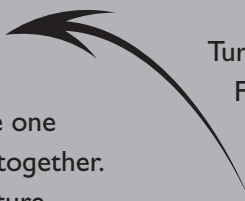
## Challenging

Do you know lots of Bible verses? Are you always ready to pass three or four sections when you come to Sparks? That is good. We want you to have God's Word hidden in your heart. But being able to recite lots of verses does not get us into heaven. Like Lance, we must believe that we are sinners. We must believe that Jesus died for our sins. If you would like to know more about believing in Jesus, be sure to talk to one of the Sparks leaders before you leave.

Option: Give each child a cup. Have them put in potting soil, then plant a flower seed and water it. Remind them that the Bible verses they learn are like seeds that will grow and help them live for Jesus.

## Family Follow Up

Challenge families to learn Bible verses. Designate one mealtime every day when you will say the verses together. When every family member has learned the Scripture verse, reward yourselves with a fun family activity.



Turn to page 200 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

# Teaching Ideas

## Theme Nights

- **Missionary Night** – The week prior, ask Sparkies to bring a special offering that will be given to a missionary that your church supports. Find a picture of the missionary and his or her family so Sparkies can see who they're supporting. Talk about the missionary and what he does and where he lives.
- **Dots Galore** – Give each leader sheets of small, colored dot stickers that match his team's color. When Sparkies pass a section during Handbook Time, they get to put a dot sticker on their leader's face. At the end of the night, the team with the most dots on their leader's face gets a box of dot candy. The winning team gets to choose a missionary family to whom they'd like to send a card. Sparkies sign the card and then have a leader mail it.

## Game Idea

- **Cookie Bake** – Have a large amount of cookies pre-baked. During Game Time, a few Sparkies at a time get to decorate a couple of cookies. Send the decorated cookies to some families in the church who are going through a difficult time.

## Teaching Option

- The story of young Lance can encourage Sparkies that even though they're young, they can memorize a lot of verses. The Challenging section focuses on helping Sparkies understand that knowing lots of verses doesn't mean they're saved. But it's also important to point out that when we are saved, we have LOTS of potential to memorize God's Word. If Lance could do it, your Sparkies can do it. Encourage them to work their hardest.



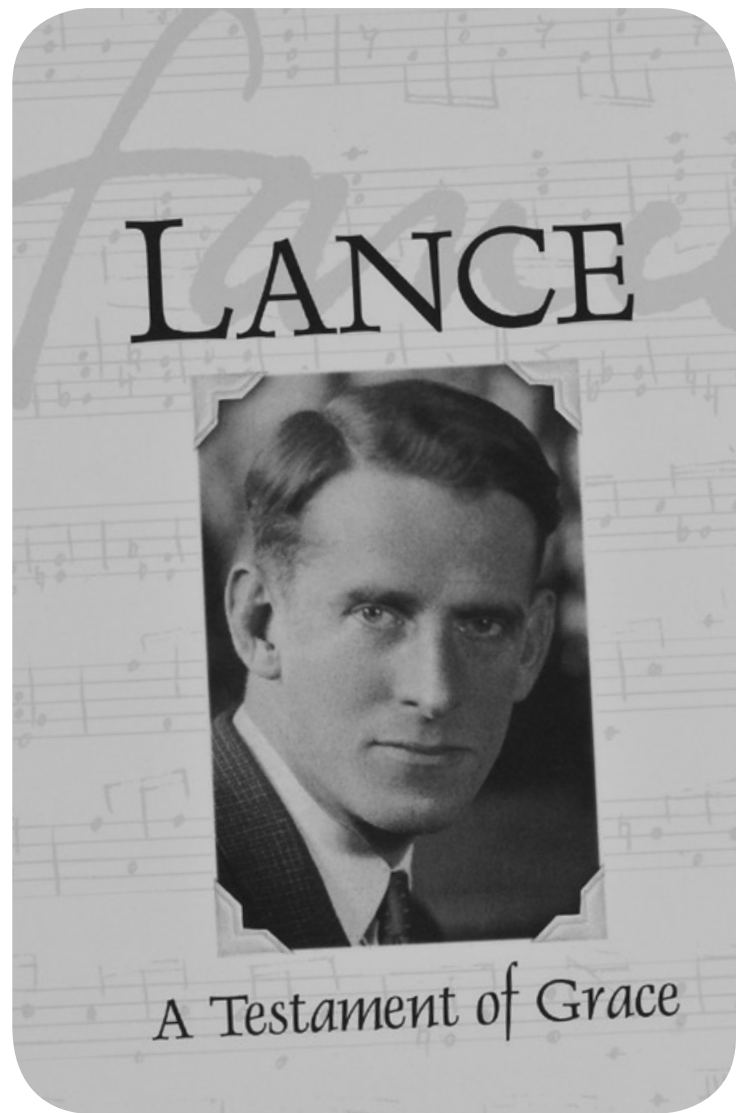
## Reading

Romans 3

## Thinking

Awana began as a ministry in one church for one community. God took that ministry and multiplied it to become a ministry for the world. To find out more about Lance Latham and the beginnings of Awana, read *Lance – A Testament of Grace* by Dave Breese and *Awana: God's Miracle* by Dr. Robert L. Moeller.

Lance was deeply concerned that people understand the gospel and be established in the faith. Read *The Two Gospels* by Lance B. Latham – written when he was 90.



## Looking It Up

2 Timothy 2:15 (*Before you begin the lesson, ask the Sparkies to find this verse in their Bibles.*)

## Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Suitcase
- M&M's®
- Bowl
- Chalkboard or whiteboard



# Showing

*(You will need a leader to help you with some of the script in this lesson. Ask the week before and provide them with a copy of this lesson.)*

*On a chalkboard or whiteboard or on a large piece of paper, write: "Mission: M-Possible."*

*Sneak into the room, looking around. Carry a suitcase in which you have your Bible, a bag of M&M's, and a bowl. Look around before opening your suitcase. Take out your Bible. Pretend to read it. Take out the bowl and pour the M&M's into it. Shut the suitcase.)*

**YOU:** Mission: M-Possible.

How many of you like M&M's? **(Eat one.)** Mmm. They are good. God's Word, the Bible, is good too. We should share God's Word with others. What does God's Word say about Jesus? **(He is God's Son. He died for us, etc. Hand one M&M to each child who answers and say, "Jesus loves you." Do NOT give everybody an M&M.)**

It took a while for me to share these M&M's one at a time and I didn't get to share with everybody. One person giving God's Word to one person at a time takes a LONG time. How can we reach more people faster?

**LEADER 2:** We could yell REALLY loud so more people could hear us.

**YOU:** Well, that's not exactly what I had in mind.

*(Divide the children into groups around each leader. Give each leader some M&M's. Have them give the M&M's to their group while saying, "Jesus loves you," to each child. Then have everyone sit down.)*

**LEADER 2:** Oh, I see. When we have something good to share with others it goes much faster if lots of people do the sharing.

**YOU:** We DO have something good to share with others – the gospel. The gospel is God's good news that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He came alive again the third day. Everyone who trusts that Jesus died for them will live in heaven someday. Those who do not choose to believe will spend forever separated from God's love (hell). It's important that we tell everyone that Jesus loves them and died for them.





# Telling

Last week we learned about Lance Latham. Who remembers something about Lance? **(At the age of 7 Lance could recite all the verses in the books of James, Romans and John. He knew the verses but did not accept Jesus as his Savior until he was older [21]. He only learned the verses because his father made him. He played the piano really well. Fill in the parts Sparkies don't remember.)**

**YOU:** When we tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ, we are being missionaries.

**LEADER 2:** That's right. You don't have to go to a faraway country. You don't even have to be a grown up. You can be 5, 6 or 7 and tell a friend or family member about Jesus.

**YOU:** That's what the title of this lesson is all about. Our **MISSION** or goal is to be a **Missionary** – Mission: M-Possible. It is possible to be a missionary no matter how old you are or where you live.

Let's see how Lance told others about the Lord Jesus Christ. By the time Lance was grown and married to Virginia, he was the pastor of a church called the North Side Gospel Center. Many young people helped Lance and Virginia at their church. A man named Art Rorheim was one of them.

Lance challenged Art to help him reach boys and girls with the gospel. So together they organized a club for boys. Virginia organized a club for girls. The boys and girls had so much fun at North Side Gospel Center that they came to club almost every night of the week!

During the day, boys and girls came straight from school to help paint, put up signs or print materials. They went into neighborhoods passing out fliers so that people would know about the meetings. Although the fun times encouraged

boys and girls to come to club, learning Bible verses and teaching them the gospel was the real reason for the club.

Other churches heard about all the fun the kids were having at the North Side Gospel Center. They wanted to know how to get clubs started for their own boys and girls. Together, Lance and Art wrote and printed materials and set up times so that people could come and learn about the club. And that, boys and girls, was the beginning of Awana.

**LEADER 2:** I wanna?

**YOU:** No. Awana. The word Awana comes from a Bible verse, 2 Timothy 2:15. **(Have the Sparkies follow along as you read it from your Bible.)** The letters in the name Awana stand for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed. Lance wanted boys and girls to study God's Word so they would know it and obey it.

**LEADER 2:** Did they wear red Sparky vests?

**YOU:** The first uniform was a little beanie hat. They were red, blue, green and yellow. Winnie Rorheim sewed an Awana emblem on each cap. The boys and girls were as proud of those caps as Sparkies are of their vests.

**LEADER 2:** Did they have *HangGlider* handbooks?

**YOU:** Not yet. The first handbook was the *Hunter* handbook. Each handbook helped boys and girls learn more about God, salvation, and how to live for Jesus – just like handbooks do today.

Then games around a circle became a part of club – races and relays and games with balloons and beanbags.

**LEADER 2:** Did they play the Sparky Crawl?

**YOU:** Not at first. As more clubs began, churches started playing the games against each other. That's how AwanaGames™ got started. At the beginning, they were called the Awana Olympics. But winning the games was not the goal. At every event, the gospel was shared with the moms and dads and family and friends who came to watch, just like they do today.

Lance reached more and more people with the gospel, just as he had hoped. But he didn't do it alone. Lance and Virginia had Art and Winnie and many others helping them. Today there are Awana clubs and events all over the world. Even Awana leaders are part of THE **(emphasize)** Mission: M-Possible.

Just like our leaders who shared the M&M's reached more boys and girls faster than one person could, God has used Awana to spread the gospel. Today Lance's name is known all over the world because he and Art began clubs to help boys and girls come to know, love and serve the Lord Jesus.



## Challenging

Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to help reach even MORE boys and girls for Jesus.

**LEADER 2:** I know one way. Invite your friends to Sparks club.

**YOU:** That's a good idea. And we can also learn our Bible verses really well, so we can use them to tell others what Jesus has done for us.

Options:

Explain the Gospel Wheel.

Share about Adopt-a-Club. For only \$30 a month clubs, churches, families or individuals can help 6-10 children in a foreign country attend an Awana club where they may hear the gospel of Christ for the first time. For more information go to [awanainternational.org](http://awanainternational.org). Or email: [adoptaclub@awana.org](mailto:adoptaclub@awana.org).



## Family Follow Up

Inspire your own heart as well as those of your children. Read missionary storybooks together as a family. Here are some suggestions: William Carey, Eric Liddell, Lottie Moon, Amy Carmichael and Adoniram Judson.

Turn to page 200 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

## Teaching Ideas



### Theme Night

- **Missionaries Around the World** – Hang pictures of various missionaries who have served around the world, such as Lottie Moon, Amy Carmichael and Adoniram Judson. Also hang pictures of your pastor and other church staff members as well as pictures of Sparks leaders and Sparkies. The point is that we're all missionaries — not just people who go to far away places.

### Game Ideas

- **Guessing Game** – In a medium-sized jar, place some candy or balls. Have each team make one guess as to how many are in the jar. The team closest to the right number wins team points.
- **Gospel Wheel** – Use the Gospel Wheel to play a game of memory. Using opaque pieces of paper, hide the words and verse references and see who can remember what each section says. Play several rounds to ensure that Sparkies remember well.

### Teaching Options

- Enlarge a picture of the Gospel Wheel that you can refer to during the Challenge section. It's a very helpful way of explaining the gospel. Go over the verses several times.
- Are there Sparkies in your club who trusted Jesus as Savior because a friend invited them to club? Maybe you know some T&T clubbers or Trek or Journey™ students too. Invite several clubbers to share about how they trusted Christ as a result of coming to club because a friend invited them.



## **Family Follow Up**

### **What Is Your Name?**

Talk together as a family about your names. Why did you choose the names you did for your children? What does your last name mean? What language is it?

Then talk about God's love. He knows each one of us by name. He never forgets our names or gets us mixed up with other people. As Christians, our names are written in the Book of Life.

## **Family Follow Up**

### **God Talks to Us Through the Bible**

What are some of the right or wrong issues that have come up in your family recently? Work with your children to find verses that address those subjects. Perhaps your children could help you write out the verses on poster board and then decorate them – so you can hang them up in your house as reminders as to what the Bible tells us to do.

## **Family Follow Up**

### **We Talk to God Through Prayer**

In club, we've been talking about the importance of being thankful to God, our heavenly Father, in EVERY situation. Each night at the supper table, list, with your children, five "thanks" that your family has for that day. At first, children will probably choose the obvious: my parents, my house, my pet, etc. As you continue to do this, encourage them to develop a thankful attitude for the not-so-obvious: "I'm sorry Aunt Karen is sick, but I am thankful we were able to make cards for her today;" "I'm sorry I didn't get to go to Trevor's birthday party, but I'm thankful I got to play a game with Dad here at home."

## **Family Follow Up**

### **God Still Loves Us**

Parents were here before kids! Parents love their kids, so they make rules and tell kids how to do things to help them out. Parents make rules to help kids just like God makes rules to help us. What are some family rules that your parents made to help protect you? How do these rules show that your parents love you?

Parents, is there a rule your child has a difficult time understanding? Discuss why you made the rule and how the rule helps your child.



## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Sibling Rivalry**

Parents – share with your child a time in your life when you wish you would have done as you were asked the first time. It can be an example from when you were young, or a more recent one. It's important for children to see and know that their parents, though they're still the authority in the house, are not perfect and sometimes need to be reminded of the same things that they (the children) are learning.

## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Get Up and Go, Abraham, Lesson 1**

Parents – share with your kids some of the surprising things that have happened in your life. What would you have done differently if you knew those things were going to happen? What can families do to help each other through life when we don't know what will happen next? What are some things your family can do right now to be prepared for whatever life may bring? Saving money and buying helmets may prevent some surprises, but life will always bring something new your way. The only thing that can truly keep you prepared is knowing God's Word and having faith and a relationship with Jesus Christ. Are your family's priorities reflecting that truth?

## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Wanting the Best, Abraham, Lesson 2**

Talk together about making good choices, choices that show kindness to other people. Also talk about staying away from things that tempt us to do wrong – for instance, playing with kids who consistently make bad choices.

Do a family project that shows kindness to someone else.

## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Keeping Promises, Abraham, Lesson 3**

Talk about grace with your children. Make sure they know what it means. For instance, parents give their kids what their kids need – and a lot of the time – what their kids want. Yet kids don't work for those things and sometimes aren't thankful or appreciative – and parents continue to give. This is because of love and grace.

Discuss how all good things come from God. Parents don't always listen to God, yet God continues to provide. God's grace is the source of all we have.

With your children, think of specific examples of how you as a family (or an individual child) can show grace to someone else.

## **Family Follow Up**

### **Jacob and Esau, Lesson 1**

Read Genesis 27 as a family. Point out to your child the fact that Jacob got what he wanted in the end, but he had to leave his family. He couldn't be with them while his brother was so angry with him. He alienated himself because of his selfishness. The next time your child thinks about lying or doing something to ensure that she gets what she wants, encourage her to think again and remember the story of Jacob and the price he paid for what he did. Is what they want worth the risk of hurting a friend or family member?

## **Family Follow Up**

### **Jacob's Dream, Lesson 2**

Look a little deeper into the story of Jacob's dream and the promise that God made and kept. Read Genesis 28:10-22 and Genesis 33. The latter chapter tells of when Jacob and Esau meet for the first time in 20 years. Jacob is now in his homeland and he is safe. Emphasize how God kept His promise to Jacob. Talk about one or more instances in your life where God's promises in Scripture have encouraged you.

## **Family Follow Up**

### **Jacob Is Tricked, Lesson 3**

Give your child some examples of situations where they are deceived and talk through what their response should be. Some situations are: someone steals a toy out of her Awana bag while she's at club or a classmate cuts in front of him in line at school. Think of some other situations you know your child has experienced – "Remember the time that so-and-so did such-and-such? How did you react? How should you react?" Obviously there will be circumstances that demand involvement on the part of a parent or teacher. Instilling the knowledge of when to go to an adult is important.

## **Family Follow Up**

### **Joseph's Background, Lesson 1**

The story of Joseph is a good example for families. Families should be encouraged to discuss the lesson and talk about getting along with each other. Families need to take time to tell each other they are loved. Go on a family outing to a park or quiet place. List the good things about your family. Make some family goals: memorizing a chapter of Scripture, saving for a dream vacation, doing something special for your neighbors.

## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Alone, but Not Lonely, Joseph, Lesson 2**

God loves us and is always with us. God wants us to be like Him. Are there people you know who are lonely? Talk as a family about whom you could befriend. Maybe there is an elderly neighbor you could help. Maybe you could visit a hospital and visit patients. Take an opportunity to show God's love to people around you.

## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Joseph's Rules, Lesson 3**

Although we don't know what heaven will be like, we do understand that heaven is a wonderful place. But we don't have to wait until we reach heaven to enjoy God's goodness.

As a family, discuss the good things God has done for you. Do you know someone who is going through a difficult time? Do something for that person and their family. Maybe you'll also get an opportunity to share God's love with them.

## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Dreams Come True, Joseph, Lesson 4**

What things have changed in your family in the past eight years (or since your child was born)? Talk with your child about where you live, things you do, etc. Enjoy thinking about the technology you didn't have even a decade ago. Imagine what you will have 10 years from now.

Remind your children that God knows everything, and nothing – not even new technology – is a surprise to Him. He gave us the brains to make it in the first place. When your child was born, God knew he or she would someday be a Sparkie! God is in control and has a plan. Make sure we all remember that no matter how out of control things may look, God knows it all and has a purpose for each of us. His purpose for believers includes heaven, a place where the only news will be good news!

## **FamilyFollowUp**

### **Forgiveness Is Sweet, Joseph, Lesson 5**

Make some popcorn or provide another fun treat and call a family meeting. Talk about how your family could get along better. Forgive each other for mistakes you've made. Have each family member tell one thing they like and appreciate about each other family member.



Copy and cut. Store the Family Follow Ups in envelopes until needed.

## **Family Follow Up**      **Joseph Helps His Family, Lesson 6**

Most families have rules about being careful with certain things in their house. Talk about the different rooms or furniture in your house. Which ones are worthy – ones you take good care of? Which ones are becoming worthless – close to be taken out to the trash? Talk about how we (as Christians) are all part of the family of God (Ephesians 2:19). Do we live the way God would want us to live?

## **Family Follow Up**      **Aaron – A Good Servant**

Encourage the entire family to practice doing their best! Start out by planning a family fun night! Ask each family member to come up with his or her best activity for the rest of the family to participate in. The challenge: to encourage and help one another to succeed, rather than trying to compete with each other. Possible activities might be playing games, putting together a puzzle, building with blocks, cooking, making a craft or telling a story.

When the fun is over, talk about how God has blessed each family member with special abilities. Pray about how you can each use those abilities to do your best for Him. Then plan at least one way to follow through in using your special abilities in ministry this month.

## **Family Follow Up**      **Miriam – Another Good Servant**

How can you encourage your entire family to become every day, all-the-time servants for God? Create a garden of service and watch it grow! Once a week, ask each family member to create paper handprints. Trace hands onto colorful construction paper, tissue paper, wrapping paper or even newspaper – whatever you have available! Cut them out. When you spy a family member being a good servant during the week, award that member a handprint.

At the end of the week, share all the ways you spied great servanthood around your home and celebrate it! Gather the handprints together to create flowers. The more handprints awarded, the prettier the flower will be! Glue, staple or tape them together and attach them to your refrigerator or a designated door in the house. See how long it takes for you to create an entire garden of servanthood in your home!

## **Family Follow Up**      **What Does a Donkey Say?**

Listening to God means “hearing” what He has written in the Bible (Romans 10:17). After attending church, talk about the sermon you heard. Look at the verses in the Bible that were used and ask questions about them. Use some Bible resources (dictionaries, commentaries, etc.) to learn more about what God says to us. Then apply what you have learned to your family.

## Family Follow Up

### The Tabernacle

Think of a time when your family was going through something sad – when someone in your family was sick or maybe when a pet died. Encourage your children that God was with your family then. Now think of a time when your family was happy – like when a baby was born or when your child did well on an assignment at school. Let them know that God was with your family then too. Children understand concepts better when they can relate it to something tangible and concrete.

## Family Follow Up

### The Day That Didn't End

Parents and kids need to go over rules for their home often. Kids need to remember that their parents run the show! Talk about ways your kids can show you respect as well as ways your kids can show each other respect. For example: sharing the remote control with siblings, setting the table the FIRST time Mom asks, letting a sibling have the window seat in the car, asking for permission to get a cookie instead of just taking one.

## Family Follow Up

### Put on Your Walking Shoes

#### Follow the Leader

Parents, you can play Follow the Leader with your children at home, just like the Sparkies did at club this week. Before starting, be sure the children understand what you are doing and that they are calm, quiet and focused on what you are doing. Tell them to watch, listen and obey quickly.

Tell the children to follow you around the house and/or yard. Zig-zag in and out of rooms, around furniture, and so on. Raise your arms, clap, march, tip toe, etc.

The children will enjoy this game! When you are done playing, you have an opportunity to teach them about obeying God. Say: "We also want to follow Jesus. We want to do just what He wants. We want to watch, listen and obey quickly."

Then ask the children how they can "follow" Jesus. Write their ideas here:

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*Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:9)*

## Family Follow Up

### God's Way – All the Way

Parents, this week at Sparks the children learned about living God's way – all the way and all the time.

Help your child write a list of things he or she knows will please God. This list might be four to six items – or much longer if the child's interest and heart is stirred. Help your child think of specific ways to please God. For example, instead of just writing "Be nice," your child may write "Be nice to my sister when she wants to play with me today."

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Remind your child that God is so pleased when we love Him and do what is right. He wants us to obey Him all the time and all the way! When we do disobey His ways, He wants us to pray and tell Him we are sorry. Then He forgives us!

God's Way – All the Way

*And the people said . . . "The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." (Joshua 24:24)*

## Family Follow Up

### Not Fair!

Share with your child about a time or two when you felt something was unfair. Share one example from your youth and one that happened more recently. What was the situation? What seemed unfair? What did you do about it? Even if you didn't handle it the way you wanted to, share it. Children need to know that their moms and dads aren't perfect and need Jesus just as much as they do.

## Family Follow Up

### Be the One Out of Ten

#### Thankfulness Quiz

Whom did David appoint to minister before the ark of the covenant and to thank the Lord? (1 Chronicles 16:1-4)

When were the Levites supposed to thank and praise the Lord? (1 Chronicles 23:30)

According to Psalm 147:7, how should we sing unto the Lord?

With what kind of voice did Jonah say he would sacrifice to God? (Jonah 2:9)

According to Luke 18:11, who thanked God that he was not like other men?

According to Philippians 4:6, how are we supposed to make our requests known to God in prayer?



## Family Follow Up

### A Different Kind of Christmas

Do a family service project this Christmas:

Donate food to a food bank or mission.

Take toys to a homeless shelter.

Invite someone who doesn't have family in the area to your home for dinner.

Make cards for a nursing home.

Offer for your family to help at church in a special way – folding programs for the Christmas concert, cleaning up after an extra holiday activity, etc.

## Family Follow Up

### Real or Pretend – Easter

Sparkies love to play-act. Help them connect to the biography of Jesus' resurrection. Using a table, sheets and/or blankets, help your Sparkie create the "tomb" where Jesus was laid. Put a folded handkerchief and some strips of cloth (grave clothes) inside.

Have your child act out the part where some of Jesus' disciples come to the tomb and find it empty.

You (or another child) can play the part of the angel. Have the angel sit at the door of the tomb and say, ... *He is risen ... Come, see the place where the LORD lay (Matthew 28:6).*

Have your Sparkie go into the tomb, see the grave clothes, and come out excited, saying, "Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive!"

For background and more information on the resurrection biography read the following Bible passages: Matthew 26-28; Mark 14-16; Luke 22-24; John 18-20.

## Family Follow Up

### Mission M-Possible, Lance Latham, Lesson 1

Challenge families to learn Bible verses. Designate one mealtime every day when you will say the verses together. When every family member has learned the Scripture verse, reward yourselves with a fun family activity.

## Family Follow Up

### Mission M-Possible, Lance Latham, Lesson 2

Inspire your own heart as well as those of your children. Read missionary storybooks together as a family. Here are some suggestions: William Carey, Eric Liddell, Lottie Moon, Amy Carmichael and Adoniram Judson.





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