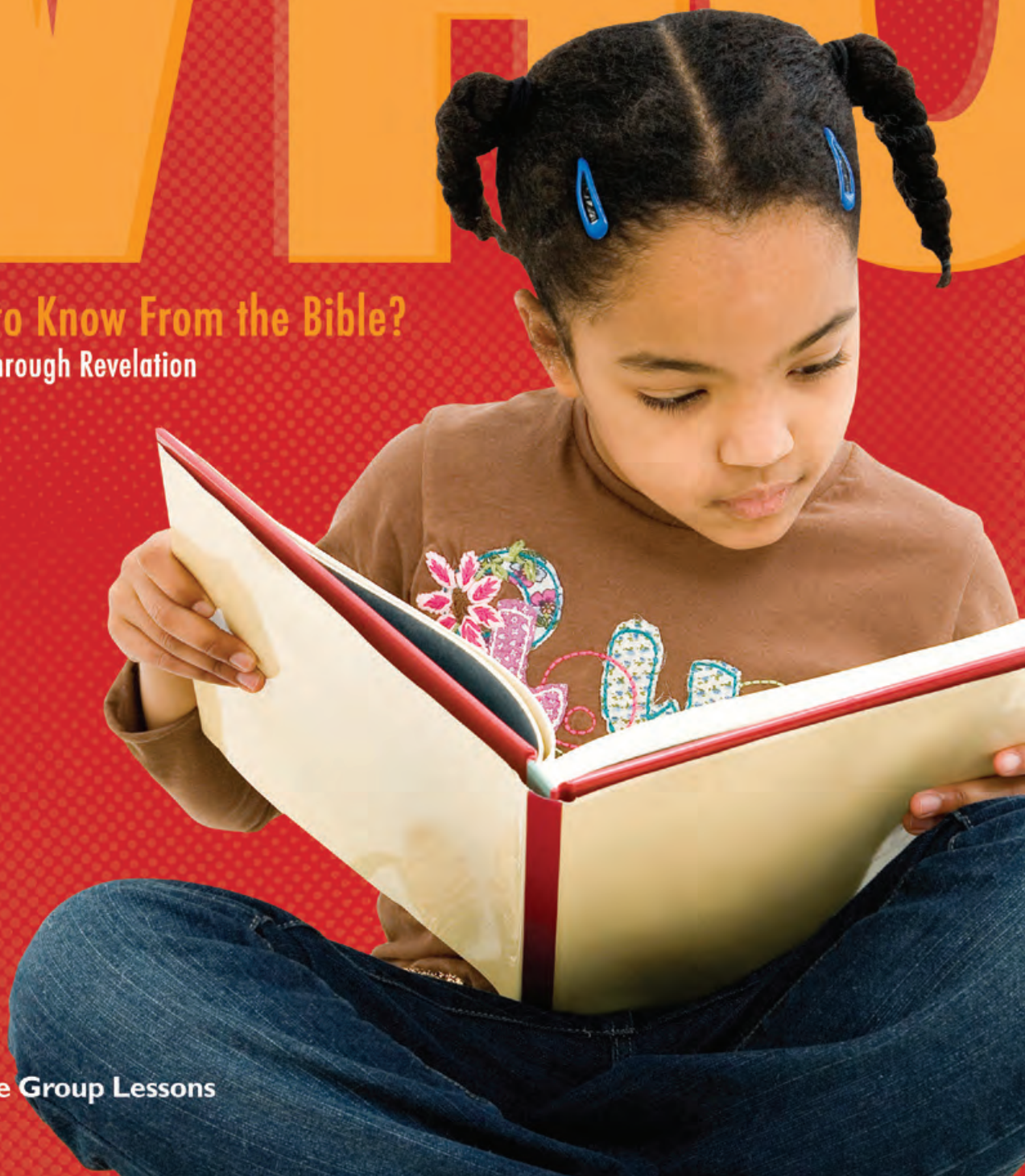


WHO

Do I Need to Know From the Bible?
Birth of Christ Through Revelation



Book 3 | Large Group Lessons

WHO

Do I Need to Know From the Bible?
Birth of Christ Through Revelation



1 East Bode Road
Streamwood, IL 60107-6658 U.S.A.
awana.org
(630) 213-2000

© 2010 Awana® Clubs International

5 6 7 8 22 21 20 19

Digital Download 2019

WHO

Do I Need to Know From the Bible?

Birth of Christ Through Revelation

What Are the Whys of the <i>WHO</i> Book?	2	We're Just People	98
Good News!	6	The Second Journey	104
Respect	12	Tent Talk	110
The Disciples	18	Being Bold	116
Nicodemus	26	Obedying Our Parents	122
The Paralytic Man	32	Joy	128
Jesus Calms the Storm	38	Wisdom Walking	134
Feeding the Multitude	44	A Letter to My Young Friend Timothy	140
The Good Samaritan	50	The Soldier, the Athlete and the Farmer	146
Palm Sunday	56	A Forever Home	152
The Cross	62	Missions	158
The Resurrection	68	Mary Slessor	164
Stephen	74	The Gift Connor Didn't Get	170
The Road to Damascus	80	A Puzzling Heart (Valentine's Day)	178
Saul Escapes	86	Moving on Up	184
The Journey of Paul and Barnabas	92		

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 third *WHO* book corresponds with the *SkyStormer*® handbook. We also have a *WHO* book corresponding to the *HangGlider*® handbook and the *WingRunner*® handbook.

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

The *SkyStormer* handbook talks about events that happened from the birth of Christ through Revelation. This third *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 currently working on. The lessons are stand-alone. You can use them any way you want.

What if I don't have all that much time for Large Group Time 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* books Bible biographies?

No, not all of them. We include a few other types of lessons.

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?” Have you ever really contemplated the awesome opportunity you have 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 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’s 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’s difficult to prepare an effective Bible lesson the night before club or 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-campfire” 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 tend to gather in the back of the room to drink coffee or chat during the lesson). Tell them this is especially important because you want them available to help Sparkies find verses in their Bibles. 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 the top of the list.

The times, they are changing ... a 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 tolerate the food. A good rule of thumb is better safe than sorry.

Reading

Romans 6:23; 1 John 4:14; John 3:16

Thinking

Many Sparkies aren't aware that they're sinners. They think their brother or sister, their friend at school or their neighbors are sinners, but they aren't. For them to understand their need to be saved from their sins, they first need to understand they're sinners.

This lesson will help them understand that everyone, including each one of them, is a sinner, why Jesus needed to die for their sins and how they can trust Him as Savior. It's a very important lesson. Make sure you allow time after the lesson for Sparkies to talk to their leaders if they wish.

Spend some earnest time in prayer before this lesson. This may very well be a turning point for some of your precious Sparkies.

LookingItUp

Romans 6:23; 1 John 4:14; John 3:16 *(Have Sparkies open their Bibles to these passages before you begin teaching.)*

GettingItReady

You will need:

- Mixing bowl
- A few of the ingredients you would use to make chocolate chip cookies



Showing

How many of you like chocolate chip cookies? Aren't they good? I love eating them with a nice, tall glass of milk so I can dunk them.

Now let's say I'm going to bake some chocolate chip cookies. I have all my ingredients here. Let's see, I have the flour, the eggs, the chocolate chips and ... uh-oh. I don't have any sugar. I just have salt. I picked up the wrong bag! Well, I'll just use the salt. It looks just like sugar. It's OK to use salt, right? **(NO!)** No? Why won't salt work? **(It'll make the cookies taste gross, etc.)** Hmm, I think you're right. I'll wait until I get home so I can make them with sugar.

Telling

So, using salt to make chocolate chip cookies won't work. It's not right. The cookies will NEVER be good when you use salt instead of sugar. They'll taste yucky every single time.

It's kind of the same with our sin. We try to do good. We try to be perfect, but we're not. We can try to get to heaven by being good and perfect, but it's the same result every time. We're not perfect. We're not good enough.

You're all probably fairly good kids. You listen to your mom and dad — most of the time. You obey your teacher — most of the time. You try not to tell lies and you try to be nice to your brother or sister. But even if you're a really good kid, you make wrong choices and sin and that means that you're not perfect. This means that you have a really BIG problem. You need someone to save you from your sins. Sin is anything we think, say or do that goes against what God says in the Bible.

The truth is that we've all sinned — everyone. That's what Romans 3:23 tells us. This verse says that everyone has sinned. We are all born sinners. No one had to teach us how to sin.

Heaven is where God lives. It's a perfect place, and God can't allow sin there because then heaven wouldn't be perfect anymore. Let's open our Bible and look at Romans 6:23. **(Give them a moment to find it in their Bibles.)** Romans 6:23 says that the punishment for sin is death. But Jesus Christ died for our sins and came alive again. If we believe that He took the punishment for us, our sins will be forgiven and we can live with God forever. Another way of saying that we will live with God forever is to say we have eternal life.

Jesus died on the cross because it was the only way we could be saved from our sins. Jesus is perfect. He was the only perfect person on the earth — EVER. Because He is perfect, He could take the punishment for our sins. First John 4:14 tells us that God sent His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world. Let's find 1 John 4:14 in our Bibles. **(If you know a Sparkie who can read well, ask him or her to read the verse aloud. Give him or her a piece of paper to hold the place while waiting for the cue to read it.)**

Do you want to know another reason Jesus Christ died for our sins? Because He loves us! He loves you! He loves you so much that He chose to die on the cross so that you can live with Him forever. Romans 5:8 says that God showed His love for us when He sent Jesus Christ to die for us — even though we were sinners. Remember, God can't allow sin in heaven because heaven is a perfect place and God is perfect. So, when Jesus died on the cross and came alive again, He took away all our sins so we CAN go to heaven IF we trust Jesus as our Savior.



Challenging

So now that we know that we are sinners and that we all need to be saved from our sin, how do we trust Jesus Christ as Savior?

Trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior is the MOST important decision you will ever make. You trust Jesus Christ as your Savior when you believe that He died on the cross and came alive again to save you from your sins.

Once you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save you from your sins, you'll want to talk to God and thank Him. Jesus Christ IS God – He came to earth as a human to save us from our sins. You can talk to God anytime, anywhere. Talking to God is called prayer. But remember, it isn't prayer that saves you. You are saved when you trust Jesus as your Savior.

Let's read John 3:16 in the Bible. **(Read the verse.)** Based on what the verse says, WHO will have eternal life? **(Anyone who believes in Him.)**

This is the most important decision you will ever make! Talk to me or one of the other leaders, and we'll show you how you can trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.

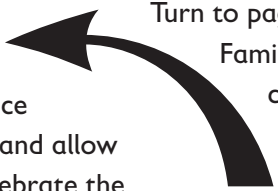
Remember how using salt to make chocolate chip cookies always makes the cookies taste yucky? Well, when you trust Jesus Christ as Savior, it's like using sugar to make the cookies. Using sugar always makes the cookies taste good. Trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior means you will for sure go to heaven.

Family Follow Up

Has your child trusted Christ as Savior? If so, rejoice together with a family fun night party. Have cake and allow other special treats such as staying up later to celebrate the fact that your child knows Jesus Christ as Savior.

If your child has not trusted Christ as Savior, walk through the gospel with him and see if he has any lingering questions or worries. Don't put a lot of pressure on him, but emphasize that this decision is very important. As a family, pray for each other and for your little one's decision.

Turn to page 190 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!



Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- **Chocolate Chip Cookie Bonanza** – Have a cookie jar with a bunch of cookies in it. (Or you could fill the jar with chocolate chips.) Have Sparkies guess how many they think are in the cookie jar and award a prize for whoever guesses the number closest to the accurate count. Yes, that means you need to know how many you put in there!

Game Idea

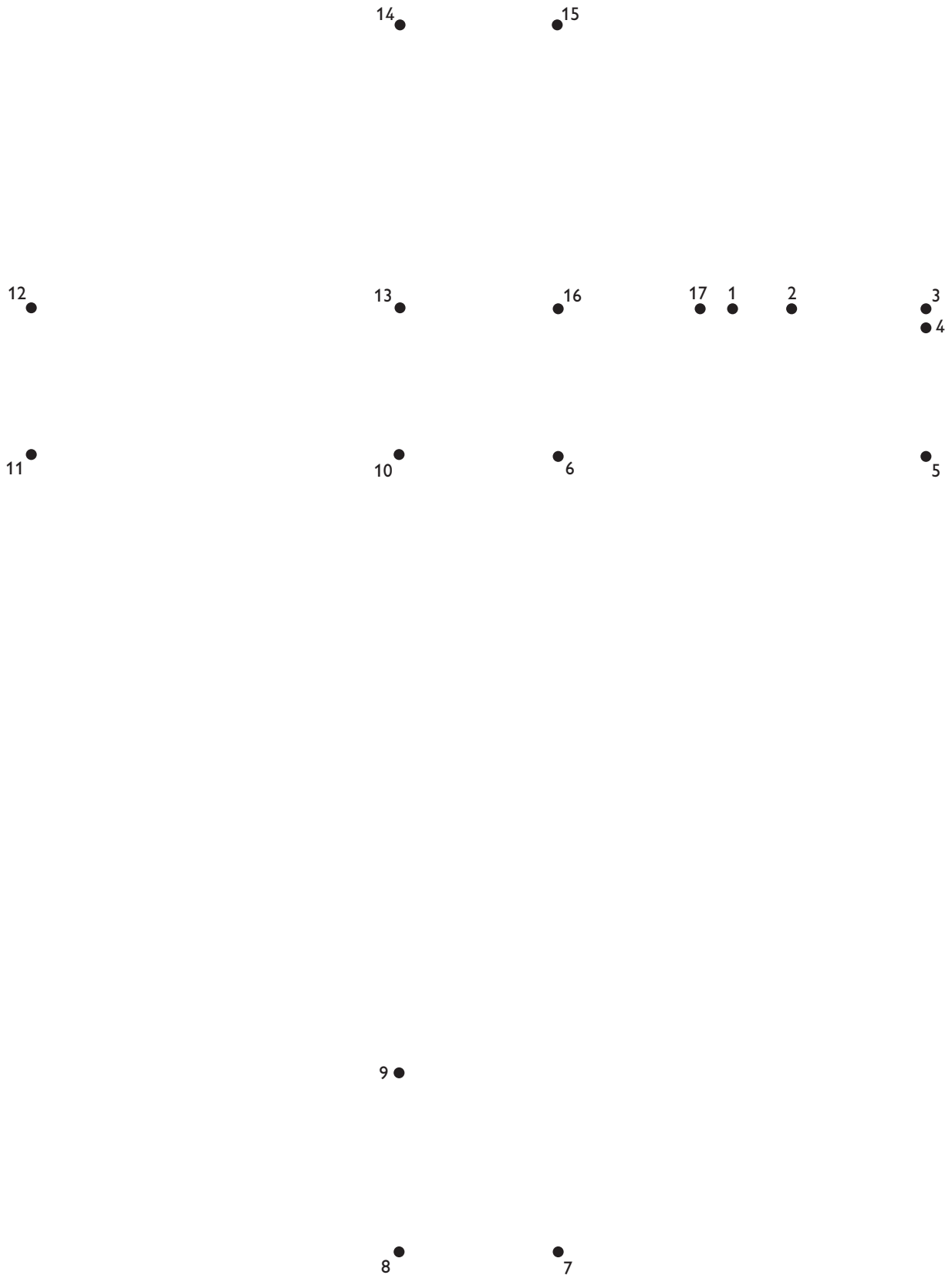
- Play games as you normally would, except Sparkies have to run around the circle with a cookie on their head. If it falls off, they must stop completely to put it back on and then keep running.

Teaching Option

- Visuals are really helpful when teaching – especially when you're teaching young children who have short attention spans. Consider wearing an apron, chef's hat and having a spatula when you begin the lesson and talk about making cookies. Be expressive as you talk through your ingredients and the cookie-making process.

SparksActivity

Complete the dot-to-dot. Color the picture. Pray and thank Jesus Christ for dying on the cross and coming alive again to save you from your sins.



Reading

Luke 2:40-52

Thinking

If you're a parent, you can understand the fear Mary and Joseph felt when they realized Jesus wasn't with them on the road home from Jerusalem. They searched for Jesus for three days. Three days! That's an eternity for parents. So how could they not know He wasn't with them? Well, this wasn't a small caravan of people. This was a great multitude of people that included a lot of family and friends who had attended the Feast of the Passover.

But beyond the fear factor, there's a lesson about respect and wisdom to learn here. When Mary and Joseph found Jesus, He was in the temple with the rabbis. He was listening to them and asking them questions. But He was doing so in a respectful way. He was God incarnate but He still knew His place as a young student and He was respectful as He talked with the rabbis.

Respect for others is something many children lack these days. Jesus was God and yet He showed respect for the rabbis. We all need to show respect for others — not just those in authority over us, but for everyone.

Looking It Up

Luke 2:46-47, 52 (*You could have Sparkies look up these verses before you begin the lesson, so you don't have to stop in the middle of what you are saying.*)

Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Piece of fruit
- Some kind of vegetable
- Piece of bread
- Your Bible — you'll be looking up Bible verses.

Showing

Welcome everyone! I'm so glad you're here tonight! Tonight we'll learn about a time when Mary and Joseph couldn't find Jesus. They were traveling home from Jerusalem when they realized that He wasn't with them. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for Him. But before we get too far, let's talk about a word I will use a lot — *respect*. Can someone tell me what respect means? **(Allow for some answers.)** Respect means "to be thoughtful of others." To be respectful means to do what is right. I show respect for my boss at work when I come to work on time and work as hard as I can. You show respect for your parents when you clean your room as soon as they ask you. We show respect for each other when we treat each other with kindness. That's what respect means. What do you think it means to be disrespectful? That's the opposite of respectful. **(See if Sparkies can provide answers.)** To be disrespectful is to be rude or unkind. Let's say I'm up here talking with you about this lesson and someone comes in the door and starts talking really loudly. That's being disrespectful. Or while I'm teaching the lesson, if you're whispering or poking your friends, that's being disrespectful.

A black and white photograph showing a hand holding a piece of chalk, writing the word "respect" in a cursive script on a dark chalkboard. The word is written in a fluid, connected style. The hand is visible on the right side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger holding the chalk. The chalkboard is dark and the word is light-colored, creating a high contrast.

Telling

So now that you understand what respect means, we can continue talking about Mary and Joseph and their search for Jesus. When Mary and Joseph got back to Jerusalem, they looked for Jesus for three days — that's three sleeps! Three nights came and went before they found Jesus. Does anyone know where they found Jesus? (**Allow for some answers.**) They found Him in the temple! Let's read what the Bible says about this. Open your Bibles to Luke 2:46 and 47. I'll read the verses for us.

Wow — all the rabbis at the temple were amazed at Jesus' answers. Do you know how old Jesus was? The Bible tells us Jesus was 12. He was only 12 years old! Here's something to think about — if Jesus had been rude or unkind or disrespectful, do you think the rabbis would have listened to Him and would have talked with Him? No! If Jesus had been disrespectful, the rabbis wouldn't have listened to Him and they wouldn't have answered His questions. Jesus was the Son of God. He knew more than these rabbis did but He still showed respect for them because they were older than He was.



The rest of this Bible passage tells us that after they found Jesus, Mary and Joseph took Him home to Nazareth. Let's look at Luke 2:52. Someone find this verse and read it for us.

(Allow a Sparkie to read the verse.) See what it says? It says that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature. *Stature* means He grew up to be a young man. He got taller and bigger and stronger. To grow in wisdom means to learn more and more.

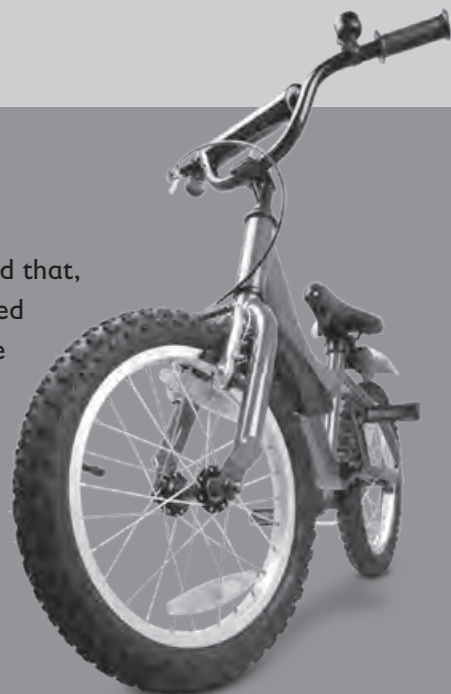
Let's talk about how we can be more like Jesus. Jesus was respectful and He grew in wisdom and stature. So how can we grow in stature? **(Allow for answers.)** Right! We can exercise like when we play games here at Sparks. We can also eat healthy foods like the ones I have here. **(Hold up some type of fruit, bread and a vegetable.)** Yeah, I know veggies aren't always the yummiest, but they're soooooooo good for us!

OK, so we know how we can grow in stature like Jesus, but how can we grow in wisdom? **(Again, allow for answers.)** We can read our Bibles to grow in wisdom. **(Hold up your Bible.)** We can memorize the verses in our Sparks handbooks because they come from the Bible and can help us know how to live our lives. What else can we do ... oh! We can pray and go to church! There are lots of things we can do to grow in wisdom.

Now what about being respectful? How can we show respect to others? I know! We can be kind to others even when they're not kind to us. We can share our toys. We can be friends with everyone around us. We show respect to our parents when we don't argue with them about our bedtime. There are so many things we can do that show that we respect others!


Challenging

We just learned that Jesus was respectful to others and that, as He grew up, He grew taller and stronger and learned more and more. So what can all of us do with what we learned from the Bible tonight? Here's what I want you to do. This week, do one thing that will help you learn more about God (like reading your Bible or praying) and do one thing that will help you grow taller and stronger (like riding your bike or eating healthy foods). Next week, we'll share what we did in our handbook groups.



Family Follow Up

Help your Sparkie become physically and spiritually stronger this week by spending time together doing a fun activity like riding bikes or taking a hike. Also spend time together as a family in prayer or reading the Bible. Encourage your children when you see them being respectful — acknowledge it and affirm them.



Turn to page 190 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- Make it a healthy snack night! Provide fruits and vegetables for snacks. Or, have a contest to see which handbook group (or team during Game Time) can list the most ways that we can show respect for others. The team with the most ways listed earns a small prize — or maybe just some applause. Provide second, third and fourth place prizes too.

Game Idea

- Since we want to grow in stature like Jesus and become physically stronger, play some games that focus on strength such as Tug-of-War and Hill Dill. (See *The Official Sparks Game Book*.)

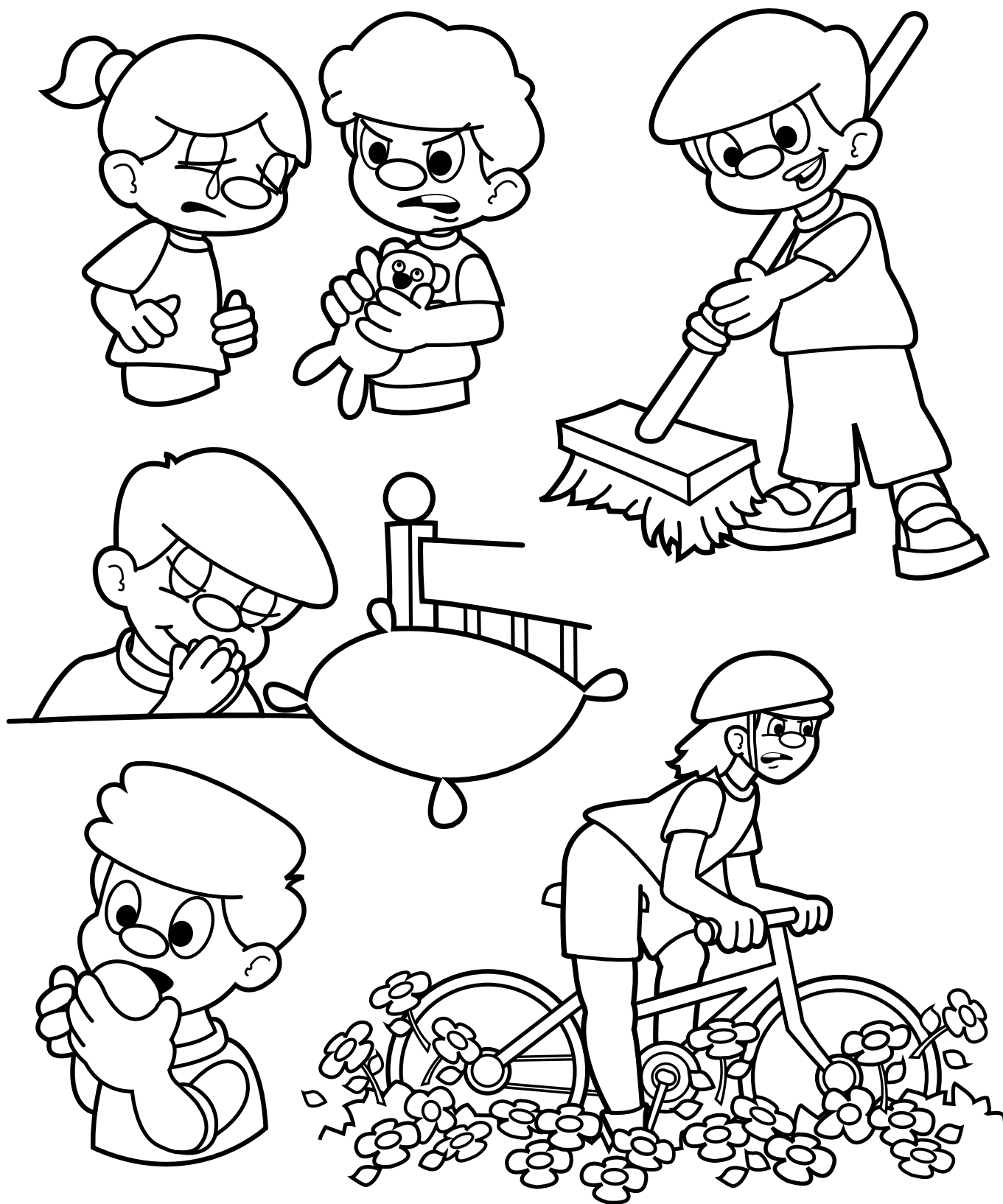
Teaching Option

- In the Showing section, instead of just *talking* about someone coming in and interrupting Large Group Time, have someone do that. Talk about the fact that someone interrupting the group would be disrespectful and then have someone come into class speaking loudly.

SparksActivity

Take a look at these pictures.

Which picture shows the child NOT being respectful or not growing in wisdom and stature?



Reading

John 1:35-51

Thinking

What do you think of when you hear the word *disciple*? Is a disciple someone who does what Jesus says he should do? Is it someone who would risk his life for Him? Is it someone who so eagerly desires to please the Lord that he will do anything to make that happen? If those are your definitions of a disciple, then none of the 12 disciples mentioned in the Bible fit the description.

Think about the 12 disciples. Peter ran away as fast as he could when someone asked him if he knew Jesus. Judas followed Jesus around, stole from Him and turned Him over to His accusers. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, fought over which one of them Jesus loved more. This group often looked more like an immature bunch of boys than men who cared about Jesus or things of the kingdom.

You'll see from the text (and from what is known about human nature) that a disciple is not someone who is always obedient. A disciple is a person who trusts in someone and believes what He says. In John 1:35-51 we see that Jesus called an unlikely group of people to be His followers. The unifying characteristic among them was the fact that they all trusted that Jesus is who He said He is.

Before you teach this lesson to your Sparkies, make sure you have examined your heart and remember that you are not a disciple of Jesus because of anything you have done or because of anything you will do. You are a disciple because Jesus called you to Himself and your faith and trust is in His finished work on the cross. Spend some time in prayer, thanking God for His grace to you.

Getting It Ready

Use masking tape to divide the room in half. Ask four leaders (or teenagers) to help you with the skit part of the lesson.

Showing

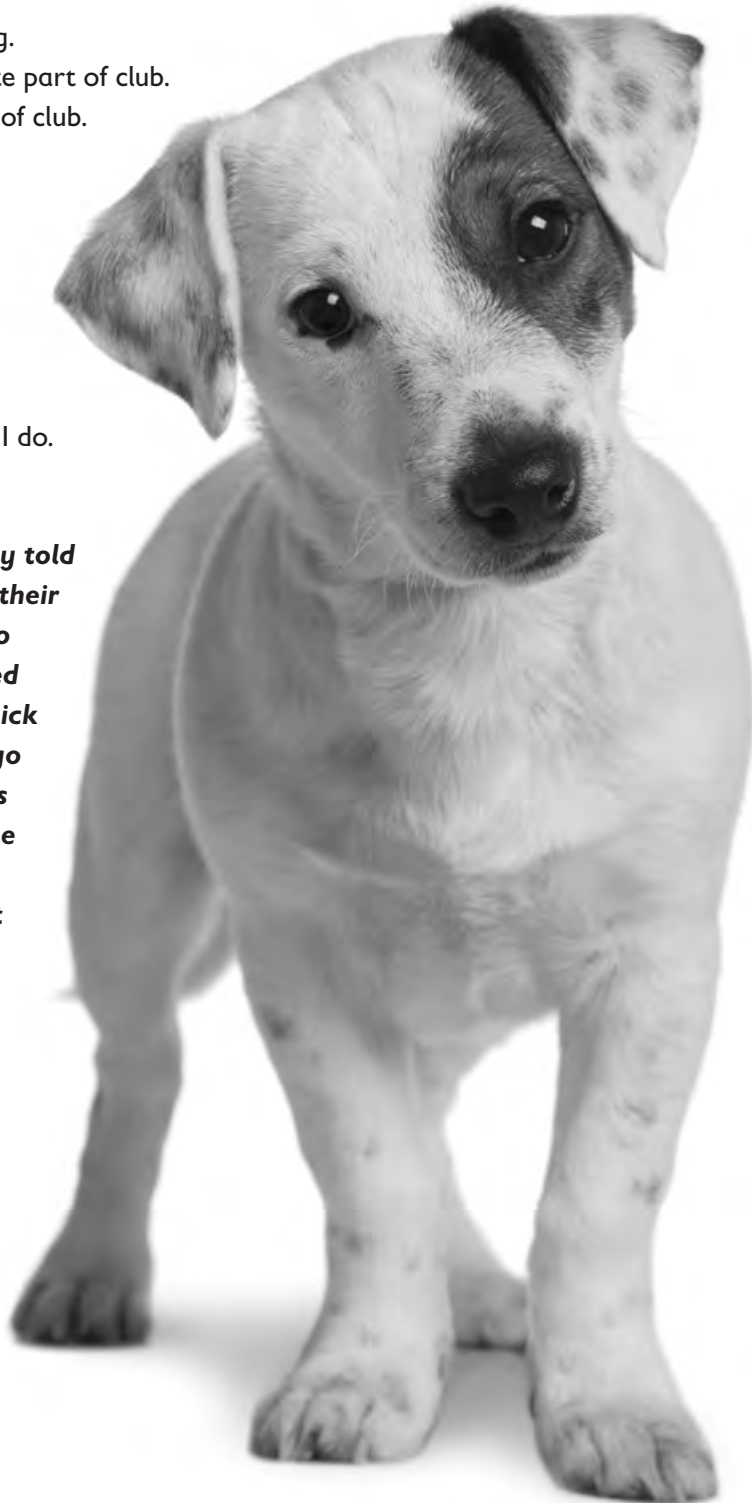
I will say some things that are true and some that are not true. If you think what I say is true, move to the right by leader _____. If you think what I say is not true, move to the left by leader _____. Let's get started. **(After each statement, tell the Sparkies whether what you said was true or not.)**

I brushed my teeth this morning.
Large Group Time is my favorite part of club.
Game Time is my favorite part of club.
I had a sandwich for lunch.
I like the color red the best.
I am at Awana® right now.
I am in first grade.
I have a dog.
I am a boy.
I have a blue house.
God loves me because of what I do.

(Many Sparkies are frequently told to behave correctly and that their good behavior pleases God, so they will probably be confused about this issue. Others will pick which side of the room they go to based on what their friends are doing. You won't get a true understanding of what they think from this exercise, but it can start them on the path to understanding.)

(Define sin ahead of time.)

Sin is anything we think, say or do that is against what God says in His Word.



Telling

After Jesus lived on earth for about 30 years, He was ready to start telling people who He was. One of the first things He did was to pick 12 men, called the disciples, to follow Him. Tonight we are going to get the chance to meet some of these men and hear about what Jesus did for them.

(Enter the leaders or teenagers playing Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip and Nathanael.)

Simon Peter: You know, my brother Andrew, also a fisherman, heard John the Baptist talk about this man, Jesus, who was coming. It was hard for me to believe it. God's people had been waiting for thousands of years for God's promised Savior. I kept thinking, *Really? It's happening?!* Not only that, but I might get to meet the Savior! And here's the most amazing thing: even before I said anything, Jesus the Savior asked me to come and follow Him! I never thought that Jesus would pick me, a plain, unknown fisherman. I mean, shouldn't Jesus be calling important people like kings and rulers?

Andrew: Simon Peter is my brother and like him, I was a little shocked when Jesus not only said hello to me but even more so when He asked me to follow Him. I felt my fishing nets fall from my hands. When we were growing up, we learned that if a rabbi (or a teacher) asked you to come with him, you left everything and did what he said. And we heard, through our friend and teacher John the Baptist, that Jesus was more than just another rabbi, He was God's promised Savior.

Philip: One day, I was walking down the street in Galilee. All of a sudden, Jesus came up to me and didn't say much. In fact, I think all He said was, "Follow Me." As Andrew said, if a rabbi told you to come



with him, you were supposed to go right away. I was a little confused but I dropped what I was doing. Soon I began to get the idea that Jesus was the Savior so many of us were waiting for. So I went and told Nathanael that the Savior we were waiting for finally was here and came from Nazareth.

Nathanael: When Philip told me that Jesus, the one God sent to save us, was from Nazareth, I almost laughed. Nazareth? Does anything good come from that city? **(Nathanael chuckles to himself.)** Sorry, old habit. I went with Philip and as I got closer to Jesus, He saw me from far away and called me by name and said something to me about me. I asked, “How did You know that? How do You know me?” Then Jesus told me He saw me sitting under a tree and He knew He was also going to call me and tell me to follow Him. I was shocked!

Simon Peter: It’s kind of funny. After Jesus called me, I never really missed what I did before. Fishing was the only thing I had ever done, and I was good at it. But I knew following the Savior was better. I missed my family (later my wife joined me), but I knew I was a part of something big! Now I would not be going into the sea and dropping my net into the water hoping to get some fish to sell. I now wanted to go out into the streets and tell people about Jesus. Jesus told us we would want to look for people, not fish.

Andrew: As we got to know Jesus, it was so weird being accepted and loved by the Savior of the world. But Jesus really did love us. We messed up constantly. We also didn’t understand everything He said to us. But He loved us anyway. **(Looks away, a little choked up.)** Because Jesus loved me, I could love Him. He was so good to us.

Philip: I remember this one time Jesus was telling us that He had to go to heaven. None of us really knew exactly what He was talking about. I remember Him saying that He would leave to get a place ready for us. And for a little while we couldn’t go with Him, but soon we would. He told us that He was the way to God. I even asked Him to show us God the Father and then we would be fine. But Jesus told us that He was God. I didn’t understand it totally, but I found out more as time went on.

Simon Peter: When we were having our last meal with Jesus before He was hung on the cross, Jesus looked at me and told me that I would deny that I knew Him three times in the coming hours. I couldn’t believe it. But you know what? He was right. When they came looking for Jesus, some guards remembered my face. They came up to me and said, “We saw you with Jesus, what do you know about Him?” I told them, “Jesus? No, you must have the wrong guy. I don’t know Jesus.” They left, and different people asked me the same thing two more times. I lied both times. Looking back, I wish I had said that I knew Jesus. They might have killed me, but Jesus willingly let Himself be killed for me and my sins. **(Said reverently.)** He loved us so much.

(Enter leader.)

Thank you Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip and Nathanael for coming and telling us how Jesus called you to be His disciples. We are so glad to hear that Jesus doesn’t ask people to be His disciples or followers because they do good things or because they’re well-liked. It’s cool to hear how Jesus changed each of your lives.

Can you all help me thank these disciples for sharing with us? **(Clap.)**

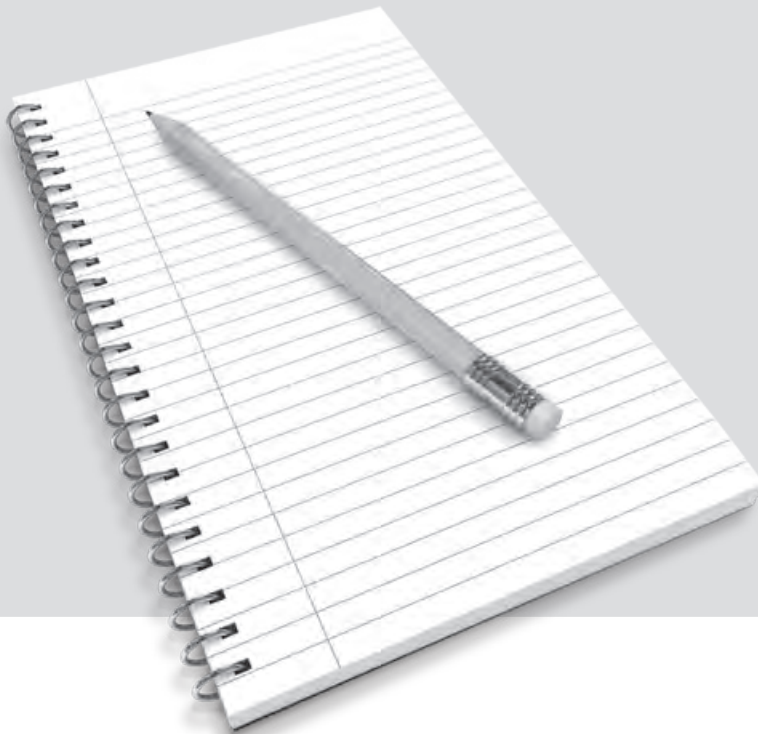
Challenging

Did you know that the only thing Jesus asked the disciples to do was to follow Him? They didn't have to write down why they wanted to follow Jesus or answer questions. They didn't have to do a bunch of stuff before Jesus let them follow Him. We don't know why Jesus called these men to follow him. But we do know that when Jesus called them, they left everything. They trusted Jesus to be the Savior they needed.

Do you think God loves you because of the things you do? Do you think He loves you more when you do good, or do you think He loves you less when you sin? Remember that God doesn't love you because of anything you do and He doesn't love you less when you mess up. He loves you no matter what you do. Do you want to know more about Jesus? Leader _____ will be sitting in a chair over there. If you have any questions or want to know more, go talk with her.

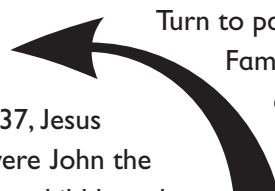
You can pray something like this:

Dear God, we thank You so much for telling us about the first few people You picked to follow You and be Your disciples. Thank You for loving us even when we don't do things right. Thank you for loving everyone the same. If there are Sparkies here who need to know Jesus, please help them talk to a leader so they can find out about Your love! In Jesus' name, amen.



Family FollowUp

Turn to page 190 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!



Tonight the Sparkies learned about the first disciples. In John 1:37, Jesus began to gather some followers. Some were fishermen, some were John the Baptist's disciples and others were friends of the other men. Your child heard that Jesus is impartial and called the first disciples not because of what they did or how much they obeyed God but because He loved them. The encounters that Jesus had with the first few disciples affirm the words in Romans 2:4 where Paul reminds us that it is God's kindness that brings us to repentance. We are truly free to love God even when we don't do everything right. Thank God that Jesus did everything for us!

Romans 8 reminds us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. People often make excuses for not trusting Christ, such as: "I've sinned too much," or "I've gone too far." Believing the gospel can be difficult – we often concentrate on our behavior rather than on what Christ has done for us. Tell your kids how you accept Christ's forgiveness for your own sins. Be a model of grace to your son or daughter in your behavior toward them and toward others. By showing them unconditional love, you will be modeling Christ.

Here are a few dinner table discussion starters to get the ball rolling:

- Is there anything you feel badly about?
- Did you ever do anything that you don't think Jesus would forgive you for?
- Do you know that I (we) love you even when you do things that are bad?
- What are some words that describe Jesus?

Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- **Disciples Night** – Decorate your area with the different disciples' professions and biographies. Each display of the disciples should include the words "He followed Jesus." Bible dictionaries, concordances and the Bible should help you find a few items about each of the disciples.

Game Ideas

- **Sparky's Day** – Designate one leader to be Sparky and have the Sparkies follow Sparky around everywhere, mimicking his actions. Any time a Sparkie doesn't do what Sparky does, he is eliminated from the game.
- **Mother/Father May I** – In an effort to teach the Sparkies how to listen to instructions, have them all line up. Each of them takes a turn asking the leader (Mother or Father depending on gender) if they can take a giant step or two small steps or whatever they decide to ask for that can get them closer to the Mother/Father. The Mother/Father responds with "Yes you may," or "No you may not. However, you may ...". Then that person has to follow through with what they are told. The person that reaches the Mother/Father first wins.

Play any other game that requires paying attention to following instructions.

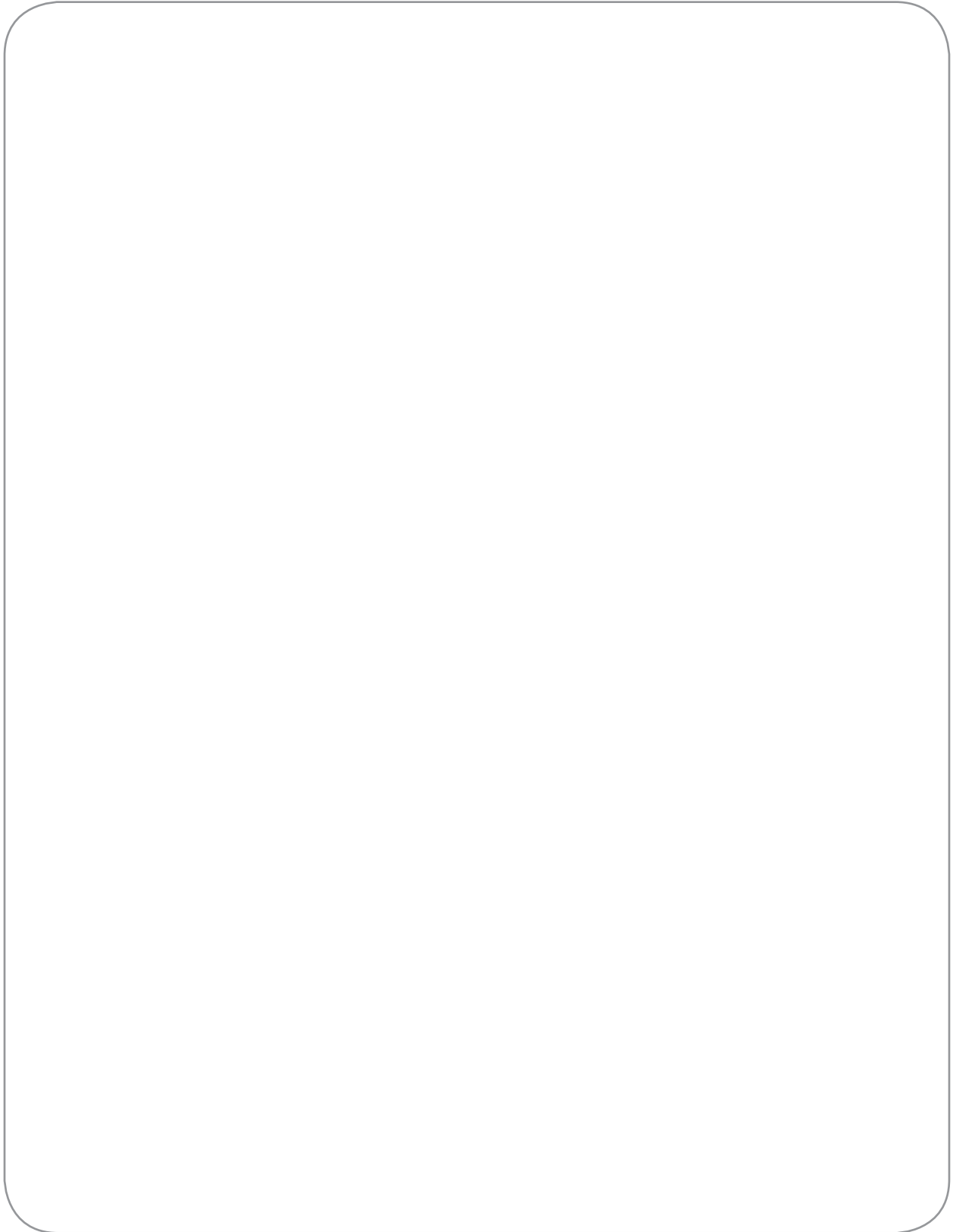
Teaching Options

- If you decorated your area with biographies about each disciple, take your Sparkies around to each one and show them what each one says. Then when they are done, ask some questions (What was Simon Peter's job? Who was the disciple who betrayed Jesus?, etc.) about various disciples and award team points or candy for correct answers.

Since Matthew was a tax collector, explain what a tax collector was and why no one liked them. (They often charged the people way more than they owed.)

SparksActivity

Are you one of Jesus' disciples? If you are, draw a picture of yourself here with Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip or Nathanael. Have fun coloring the picture!



Reading

John 3:1-21

Thinking

If you have cable, you probably know about the Nickelodeon® channel. At night it shows older shows. Sometimes it's *I Love Lucy* and other times it's *Leave it to Beaver*. When these shows come on in the evening, the network often calls it "Nick at Nite®." And in a way, that's what this lesson is about. No, it's not about old black and white sitcoms from the 50s. But it is about a man named *Nicodemus* who came to Jesus at *night*.

Read through the chapter and look at the unique conversation between this ruler and Jesus. A lot of people have dismissed Nicodemus as a kind of devil's advocate; someone just trying to start a fight. But look carefully at his questions and look at Jesus' responses. Nicodemus, more than likely, was genuinely searching for answers.

Not only that, but he came to Jesus at night. Either this man's work schedule was off-the-charts busy, or he wanted to protect himself and Jesus. Perhaps word got out about Jesus' choice of followers or the way John the Baptist was affirming Him as the Messiah. And he certainly knew about Jesus' miracles. At any rate, Nicodemus wanted to know more, and here we get to be a fly on the wall as we see the conversation on conversion unfold. Have a good time jumping into this text as you get to see Jesus, a rabbi, confront a fellow teacher of the law on true birth.

Showing

Who knows what the Jewish Ruling Council is? In the Bible, Jesus had many talks with the Jewish Ruling Council. Sometimes they are called Pharisees. Sometimes they are called Sadducees. Sometimes they are called Elders. These are all names for the group of men that governed or led the Jews.

Those are big words! Let's say them together. Can you say elder? (**Have Sparkies say it with you.**) Now let's say Pharisee. Phar-i-see. (**Have Sparkies say it with you.**) Now let's do one more. Let's say Sadducee. (**Have Sparkies say it with you.**) Both of these groups were in the Jewish Ruling Council, but they are not the same.

Telling

(Enter Nicodemus.)

My name is Nicodemus. You may have heard of me before. I came to Jesus at night to ask Him a few questions. There were some rumors spreading about Jesus, and I wanted to know if they were true. I wanted to ask Him face-to-face.

I didn't know exactly what I would say when I met Jesus. I just knew I needed to see Him face-to-face and alone. I knew after we talked just once, I could figure out if I believed Him or not. I was in for a big surprise.

I felt confident when I went to see Jesus, because I, too, was a teacher. I told Him, "Jesus, some of the men I work with on the Jewish Ruling Council know that you must be from God. If You didn't have God's power, there is no way that You could be doing miracles."

I thought I was going to teach Him. I was the older rabbi; I had been teaching for years. Jesus had just started. But Jesus said some things that really made me think hard. He told me that He would be teaching me. I thought I knew God and I believed Jesus was from God, but Jesus showed me that I was not what you might call a believer. I wasn't born again.

"Well, how can I be born again then? I've been born once already and I'm pretty sure that I can't be a baby inside my mother's stomach again." Jesus remained patient yet firm. I think He knew I was confused.

Jesus told me that I had to be born of the water and the Spirit. "What?" I was confused enough by the thought of having to be born all over again. Jesus was patient again and explained. "Everyone is born once. You were born from your mom. Now you have to be born again, but this time by the Spirit."

Because I knew God's Word very well, I knew about God's Spirit, which is called the Holy Spirit. But how could I be born of the Spirit?

Then Jesus went on to tell me some amazing words.



Telling

continued

In fact, what He said next has become one of the most familiar verses in the entire Bible. Who can come up here and help me say John 3:16? **(Get a volunteer or two or even three to come up and say John 3:16. Make sure Nicodemus uses the same Bible version as your club does.)** Thank you for helping me! **(Volunteers should have a seat.)**

Yes, Jesus told me that God loved the whole world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to show the world what God was like. Jesus told me I had to believe in Him. And that even though I thought I believed before, I was not really believing the right thing.

That thought scared me. I spent every day trying to do what was right, trying to keep the law and teach other people. Now, Jesus was telling me I had it all wrong. And this man was claiming to be God's Son, not just another rabbi. If some of the other leaders knew what Jesus was telling me, they would have wanted to kill Him. But what He was saying to me was amazing. I had more questions, but at this point I needed Him to keep talking.

Jesus did keep talking. And things started to make more sense to me. He told me that He came to earth because God loved the world. He also said that anyone who believed in Him would be able to have eternal life. That's because Jesus took care of the punishment for the wrong stuff that everyone did

Jesus and I didn't talk too much after that. But I was there the day Jesus died. I watched from a distance. When they took His body off the cross after He died, I helped Joseph of Arimathea prepare the body for burial and wrapped it in cloths.

When He died, I knew for certain that Jesus really was the Savior that God the Father promised. Jesus changed my life. I hope He changes yours too.

(Leader enters.)

Let's thank Nicodemus for sharing with us tonight! **(Clap as Nicodemus leaves.)**

God loves us because He wants to. God also loves us because it is part of what He does. The Bible tells us that God IS love. Think about it. Jesus was living in heaven in a perfect place. God sent Jesus down into the world to show us what He is like. Jesus lived with the people. He saw all the horrible things that happen. He saw how much everyone sins. But He didn't run away from it. No, He lived a perfect life even though He was tempted all the time. Jesus never sinned. That means that, if you trust Jesus to take the punishment for your sin, it's OK if you're not perfect.

God has told us how we should behave, and He knows best. We can show Him how much we love Him by obeying Him. But if we mess up and sin, and we will, He won't love us any less. He doesn't see us as sinners any more because, when He looks at us, He sees what Jesus did for us.

Challenging

Nicodemus got the chance to talk to Jesus alone for a long time. And some of the stuff Nicodemus heard was confusing. Maybe you are a little confused too. We don't want you to leave confused. If you have any questions, you can ask a leader. In fact, we want you to talk to us tonight!

If there is one thing to remember from Nicodemus, it is that Jesus loved the world so much that He came to die for it! Jesus lived a perfect life so that you can know God, be loved by God and live with Him forever.

(Have leaders ready.)

Right now we will give you some time if you have any questions. You can either come up here and get your activity sheet or you can talk to a leader about the lesson. Either way, we hope you know the Lord Jesus Christ already or that you don't leave here tonight without knowing Him.

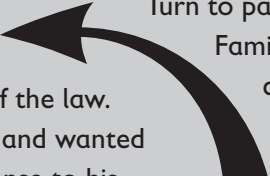
Family Follow Up

Tonight's lesson was about Nicodemus, a high-profile ruler of the law. The Sparkies learned that Nicodemus went to Jesus at night and wanted to ask Him some questions. What Nicodemus heard in response to his questions has become some of the most familiar words in the Bible.

Jesus told Nicodemus that even though he believed, his belief wasn't in the right thing. What a scary place to be: thinking you have the favor of God when you really don't.

After the lengthy discussion, Jesus showed Nicodemus the right belief – belief in Him (Jesus Christ).

At the dinner table, talk to your child about belief. Ask her what she believes in, what saves her. She might believe in you (as the parent), or even in doing good things. Ask her what she thinks about Jesus Christ. Does she see Him as the means to salvation? If she has not believed yet, ask her if she would like to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.



Turn to page 191 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Night Night** – Because Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, have the Sparkies bring flashlights or have some flashlights ready to share. Also ask them to speak in a whisper since it's late at night.
- **Hideout Night** – Nicodemus was waiting for Jesus to be alone late at night. He didn't want to be seen. Hide verses and other items around the room for the Sparkies to find.

Game Ideas

- **One Smart Cookie** – Nicodemus was a very smart man. Play a game of trivia with the Sparkies. You can ask them questions from the lessons the last few weeks or you can say some verses from the Sparks handbooks and see who can give you the references (or vice versa). Award with points!
- **Flashlight Relay** – Dim the lights in your playing area, and have the Sparkies turn on the flashlights as they run around the circle. Instead of passing a baton like a normal relay, have them pass the flashlight.

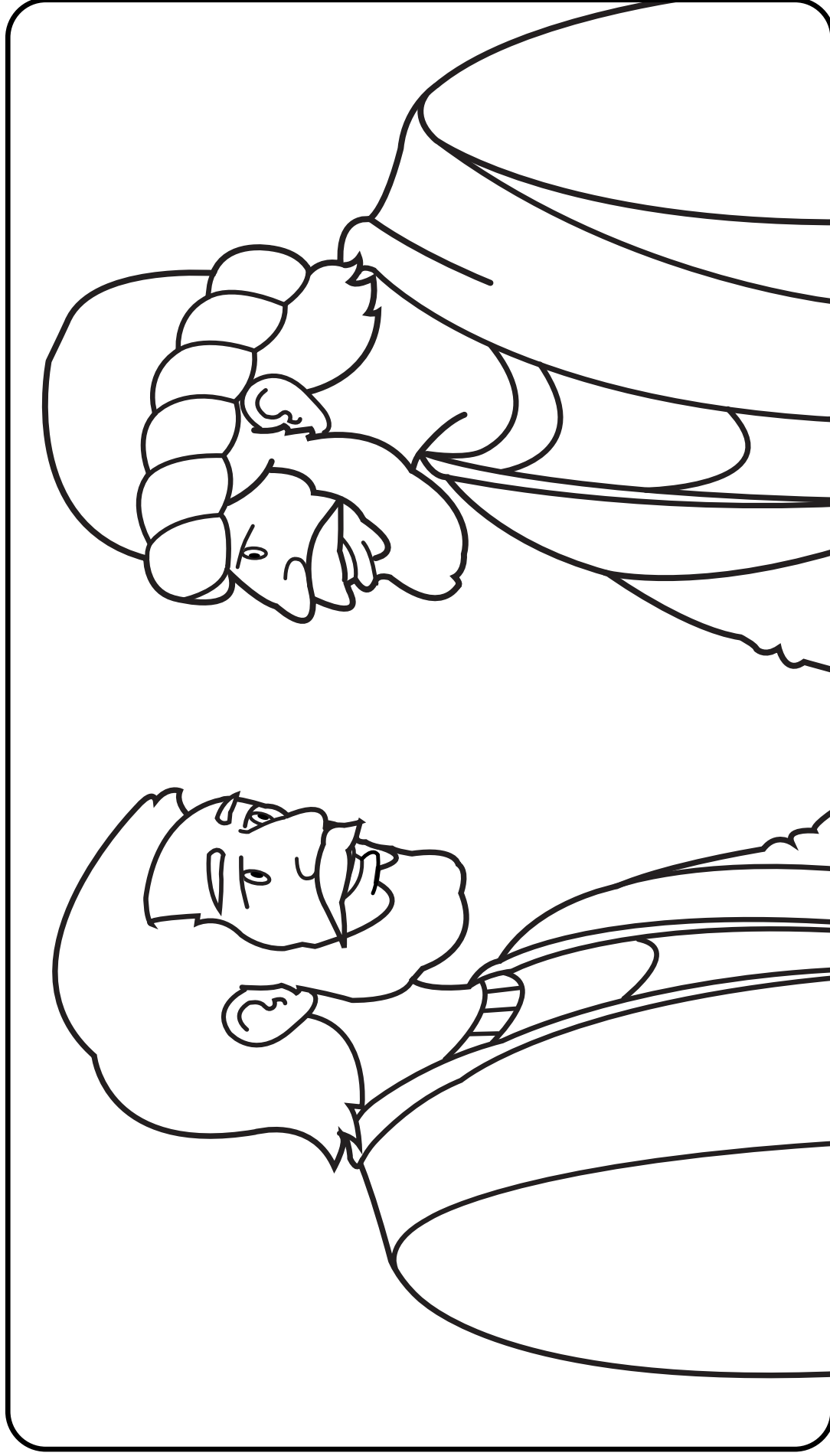
Teaching Option

- Before you begin the lesson, explain Pharisees, Sadducees, Jewish Ruling Council members, etc. You can find the definitions in a Bible dictionary. Keep it simple.



SparksActivity

Color this picture of Nicodemus and Jesus having a talk.



© 2010 Awana® Clubs International. This page may be reproduced only by churches registered with Awana.



Reading

Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:18-26

Thinking

Have you ever seen a friend go through a hard day? Maybe he went through a hard week or month, perhaps even year. After you said all you could, and encouraged him as much as possible, his pain was beyond your help.

Maybe when some men passed the paralytic man on their way to see Jesus, they felt the same way. They could give him money, but they wanted to do more. You can almost see them look at each other with a glimmer of hope and a why-not-give-it-a-try smile. Before the paralytic could say anything, the men were carrying him on his mat.

After finally getting this man through the crowds and even through a roof, they lowered him down right in front of Jesus. They carried him right to Jesus. The men knew they weren't able to heal the paralytic, so they did what they could to get him to Jesus.

Maybe that's the role more believers need to take. Instead of looking for ways to be the savior and help someone's needs, we should be the one willing to carry people to the feet of Jesus. Let Jesus do the forgiving and the healing; that's what He does!

As you teach this lesson to your Sparkies, keep in mind that a child's salvation is not up to you. Your only "job" is to preach Christ crucified and resurrected and leave the results up to God. First Corinthians 1 gives some wisdom here. A lot of people can water a plant but only God makes it grow. It's easy to get eager and even pushy when it comes to "getting kids saved." As you teach the gospel each week, remember that God will soften the hearts of the children.



Showing

Definitions they will need to know:

Paralytic: a person who can't walk.

I want you to think about the last time you were sick. Did you want to stay in bed? Maybe you like to watch movies or sleep. Have you ever been sick for a long time? Maybe you were so sick that you had to stay in bed for a week. Maybe you even looked outside and wished you could feel better so you could play with your friends. It's hard to be trapped inside when you're sick.

Imagine being so sick you couldn't even walk. You had to lie in bed for days. Now imagine you had to lie in bed for months. That's a long time, huh? Now think about lying in bed for YEARS! If you think it would be hard to not go outside to play for a few days, think how hard it would be to be in bed for years. **(Be sensitive to any Sparkies who are chronically ill or in a wheelchair.)** This lesson is about a man who spent his life unable to walk. Every day he had to watch people walk by, people who were well. Listen to what happened to him.

Telling

It was an ordinary day for a paralytic man in Israel. He woke up, rubbed his eyes, asked some people to help turn him over and waited to hear the clink of coins in his tin cup – just like every other day. Little did he know that he would meet Jesus on this ordinary day. Surely it was no ordinary day at all. It was special. And all the days after that would also be special.

Some men walked by the paralytic while they were on their way to see Jesus. Jesus was teaching and healing so they thought if they could just get this paralytic man to Jesus, maybe Jesus would heal him. But Jesus had something bigger and better in mind.

As they got closer to the house where Jesus was, it was harder to walk because the streets were crowded with people. Finally, they reached the house, still carrying the paralytic man on his mat – but they couldn't get inside. The house was full of people! The crowd wanted to hear what the Lord Jesus was saying. People came from far, far away to see Jesus.

The men grew eager. "Will He do it again?" "I can't wait to see everyone's expression when Jesus heals this guy too!" And then Jesus said something no one was expecting.

Jesus looked down at this man who wanted to be healed. But Jesus saw that the paralytic had an even bigger need. "Your sins are ... forgiven."

The men looked at each other confused. "Wait. What? Did Jesus just say what I thought He said? Um, Jesus, you were supposed to say, 'Be healed.'"

The leaders of the people were not happy with Jesus' words. You see, they knew that only God had the power to forgive sins. They had no idea that Jesus was God. But because Jesus was God He knew what they were thinking.

Jesus looked at the leaders and told them that they were thinking evil thoughts. Jesus also asked them, "What is easier to say? Your sins are forgiven or get up and walk?" Isn't that a weird question? Think about it this way, which is easier to prove true? If someone told the paralytic to get up and walk, you could prove he was healed if he actually got up and began walking. **(To really help them understand, model this with another leader. Have one leader lie on the ground and tell them to get up and walk. Then the leader gets up and walks.)** But, if someone says your sins are forgiven, you can't prove that very well. **(Have another leader come to you and tell him that his sins are forgiven. The leader should look at himself as if nothing really happened.)** When your sins are forgiven nothing happens that anyone can see.

After Jesus told the people that He already forgave the paralytic man's sins He went on to show the people that He wanted them to believe He was God. Jesus looked at the paralytic and told him to get up and walk. Immediately the man was able to move. He probably stood up and felt the ground under his feet in a way he never felt before.

After one step forward and another, he continued and walked right out of the house. Can you imagine how surprised everyone standing around must have been? They heard that Jesus had been healing people, but most of them hadn't seen Him do so. Because they saw Jesus make the paralytic man walk, they would have reason to believe that Jesus also did forgive the man's sins.

Challenging

Sometimes you hurt and you might think the pain will never go away. Maybe your grandma or grandpa is sick or your dog died or you have to move to another town. You might even ask Jesus to take away the pain but sometimes He doesn't. Jesus' first desire wasn't to help this man walk. No, Jesus wanted to save him from his sins. You can have two good legs and be in good health, but if you don't have Jesus' forgiveness, then in the end you have nothing.

Do you know if you have Jesus' forgiveness? Everyone is born a sinner and everyone does bad things. But God the Father sent Jesus, who was His own Son, to earth to live a perfect life and show us what God is like.

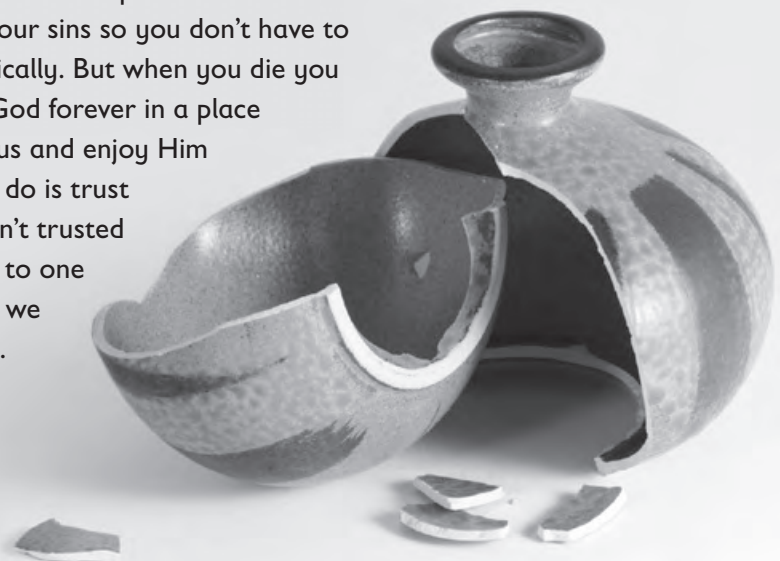
Jesus was perfect and never sinned. He perfectly kept all the laws, But we don't. We mess up and sin all the time. So we need a Savior to help us. Jesus not only lived the perfect life, but He also died and took the punishment for us. Three days later He came alive again and now lives in heaven.

If you have an older brother or sister, think about this. Let's say you break something at home that your mom or dad loves. You hide all the pieces and pretend as if it never happened. But when your parent asks you if you know anything about it, you lie and say you don't even though they know you did it.

So finally you admit that you broke it (sin number one) and that you lied (sin number two). Then your parent tells you to go to your room, and you can't see your friends or talk to them for a week. But then your older brother walks in the room and says that instead he will go to his room and not see his friends for a whole week. Your brother took your punishment. That should have been you, but he covered for you.

In a very small way, it is like what Jesus does. We do a lot of bad things. When God says "What have you done?" you admit that you are sorry. But sorry doesn't help. God says that if you sin you deserve to die. Then Jesus steps in and takes the punishment for you. He died for your sins so you don't have to die spiritually. Everyone dies physically. But when you die you will either be in pain, away from God forever in a place called hell, or you will be with Jesus and enjoy Him forever in heaven. All you have to do is trust Jesus to go to heaven. If you haven't trusted Jesus yet and want to, please talk to one of the leaders tonight. As soon as we are done praying, come talk to us.

(Close in prayer.)




Family Follow Up

Tonight's lesson was on the paralytic man in Matthew 9:2-8. The Sparkies learned that sometimes Jesus doesn't do what we expect. Sometimes He doesn't do what we want Him to do, but does something much, much better. Sometimes we forget that the forgiveness of our sin is much more important than any physical problem.

God often sees past our immediate needs for the bigger-picture need: salvation. While we are told to pray for things on our hearts, sometimes God's biggest mercy is not giving us what we want or what we think is best. In the case of the paralytic man, the story really wasn't about Him at all, but rather about God and His glory. His ability to walk wasn't what was at stake; it was Jesus showing other people who He was.

You have probably had moments in child-raising that are similar. Your child may whine and complain or outright throw a tantrum in the middle of the grocery store, but you can see the bigger picture. Encourage your child when things don't go her way that she just might be getting something better, like the paralytic did. God might want to use what she can't have in order to make her the person who He wants her to be.



Turn to page 191 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Bring Your Mat to Club** – Tell the Sparkies a week in advance that they can bring a small blanket or carpet square to club to sit on during Handbook Time and Large Group Time.
- **Friends Night** – The paralytic man needed others to bring him to Jesus. The Sparkies can also bring their friends to church to know Jesus. Encourage the Sparkies to bring their friends to club.

Game Idea

- **Carry Me!** – Bring in some old blankets or sheets that you don't mind ruining. For each heat, one Sparkie from each team will sit on a blanket. When the whistle blows, two players will pull the player seated on the blanket around the circle. Careful! Don't knock over the team pins! Players will have to stop and put them back up if they do. Once the team pulls the player past their circle pin, the person seated can get up and run in for the pin or beanbag.

Teaching Options

- Have all the Sparkies sit on mats on the floor as you teach the lesson.
- Explain that there were not wheelchairs or the medical advancements we have today.
- Explain that paralytic beggars likely had no family to help them.

SparksActivity

Try to find words from the lesson in the puzzle!

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

PARALYTIC

JESUS

MEN

ROOF

HEALED

SINS

FORGIVEN

Reading

Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25

Thinking

We know that the Lord Jesus Christ is extraordinary. He answers questions with questions. He forgives sins. He chooses smelly fishermen and unpopular tax collectors. He even silences the wind and waves.

The more we read about Jesus, the more familiar He becomes. But, instead of looking at the Gospels as something you've read 100 times, try to read with fresh eyes. Look at the disciples' reaction when Jesus calmed the storm. Read Matthew 8:27 out loud.

Here you'll see the disciples have an "Oh, wow!" moment. They thought they knew Jesus. They saw Him give sermons, heal a girl from miles away, heal Peter's mother-in-law and interact with the crowds. But calm a storm? Who could possibly tell the winds and waves to be silent? The Creator of the winds and the waves, of course! The disciples were amazed.

When was the last time Jesus took you off guard? When was the last time He made you say "Oh, wow!"? Have you ever felt like you have become so familiar with Jesus that who He is and what He does doesn't surprise you?

Choose one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) and read about Jesus Christ. Allow the truth of the Gospels and the reality of Jesus Christ to become new all over again. Have some "Oh, wow!" moments. Thank God for sending such an extraordinary Savior.

Getting It Ready

Make a ship to surround your teaching area for this lesson. You can use old cardboard boxes or paper bags. Simply open your boxes or bags and tape them together until they cover the length of your room on both sides. Using scissors or a craft knife, make a dip in the middle like a ship has. Then make the ends of the boat come to a point and tape them so they stay closed. Cut out a doorway for your Sparkies to come into the ship or find a creative way for them to enter.

Showing

Set up your boat so that your Sparkies can sit inside. For this lesson, they can sit on a rug in the boat as they listen. If your group is large, make several boat profiles that are a few feet (about a meter) long and a few feet (about a meter) high. Then lean them along your walls where you sit. Scatter cargo inside your ship. If you are able, have your Sparkies sit on the floor so that they get the overall effect of being on a ship.

When the Sparkies come into the room have plenty of newspaper (and leaders to help) for the kids to make sailor hats.

After all the Sparkies have made a sailor hat, have them sit in the boat with their hats on.



Telling

Are you ready for our Bible lesson tonight? Tonight's lesson is about a ship and BIG storm! I need you to be brave sailors for me tonight. That's why we have our sailor hats on!

Who remembers when we met Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip and Nathanael? **(Allow Sparkies to raise hands.)** Who can tell me who they were? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** Good!

After Jesus chose His followers, He healed some sick people so everyone would know who He was. After a very long day of helping people, Jesus was tired. He took some of His disciples and told them to get on the boat to move away from the crowds.

Just after they got on board, Jesus settled into a corner in the back of the boat with a pillow and fell asleep. We don't normally think of Jesus as someone who would need to sleep, do we? No, we don't. He was God, after all. But He was human too. And like all humans, He got tired and needed to sleep.

The Bible doesn't tell us what the disciples were doing. Maybe they were talking to each other about all the things Jesus had done already – helping sick people, curing people from leprosy (a painful skin sickness) and telling people who He was. The disciples saw a lot of what Jesus was able to do already. It's possible they were saying, "Did you see it when Jesus helped that guy with leprosy?" "Yeah, did you see Him heal my mother-in-law just by touching her hand?" Or, maybe the disciples were tired too. Maybe they started to fall asleep like Jesus did.

All of a sudden, a few raindrops hit the boat. **(Have the Sparkies pat their laps with their hands lightly so it sounds like light drizzle.)** Then it started to rain a little harder. **(Have the Sparkies pat their laps with their hands a little harder so it sounds like harder rain.)** The waves got fierce. **(Have the Sparkies stomp their feet while they are sitting and pat their laps with their hands harder so it sounds like a big storm.)** Lightning hit the sea and made the sky light up like it was daytime! The rain was so thick that the disciples couldn't see well at all. But Jesus was still sleeping soundly. **(They should be done helping you with sound effects now.)**

Remember how some of the disciples were fishermen? They were used to rain and they were used to wind. They'd been in many storms. But not storms like this. This storm was scary. As they tied down some of the loose things sliding around the boat's deck, they remembered Jesus was on the boat and He could help them.

"Jesus, wake up! JESUS! WAKE UP! WE NEED YOU!" Finally, Jesus woke up. He looked at the disciples' panicky faces.

"Jesus, we're going to drown! Help us!"

Jesus, seeing their concern, stood up, went to the edge of the boat and did something the disciples didn't expect. Jesus just scolded (rebuked) the sea and wind.

Guess what happened? The whole sea became calm immediately. The rain stopped, the wind stopped blowing and the disciples looked at Jesus with complete shock. "How did He do that?"

Challenging

Can you imagine being on the boat with the disciples? How would you feel? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** What would you do if you saw Jesus sleeping? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** Do you ever have days when you get scared? What scares you? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** What do you do when you are scared? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)**

That storm sure scared the disciples! Even though Jesus was right there with them, they were scared. Did you know that Jesus is with you all the time? He is! Everywhere you go, He is there. When your ball bounces into a dark basement, He's there. When other kids make fun of you, He's there with you. When there is a storm that makes the lights go out, Jesus is there. You can trust Jesus in the scary times. He created the world and everything in it. Since He created it, He controls it too! You can trust a God who is that powerful!



Family Follow Up

Tonight's lesson came from Matthew 8:23-27. After a long day of teaching, Jesus wanted to get away to rest. He and the disciples boarded a boat and as they sailed Jesus fell asleep. A fierce storm came over the sea. The disciples panicked and woke Jesus up, crying for His help. He rebuked the wind and the waves. Immediately, the wind died down, the rain stopped and the sea was calm.

Baffled, the disciples asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him!"

The disciples forgot they were with Jesus, the Maker and Sustainer of all things. The Sparkies were challenged to remember that wherever they go, Jesus is with them.

Your child brought home a sailor hat to remember that Jesus calmed the storm. Use that hat as a reminder to your child that Jesus is with us and always knows what is happening to us.

Turn to page 192 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Storm Night** – Decorate to look like a storm. Hang string from the ceiling for rain and put blue, wavy lines on the floor for waves. Serve blue JELL-O® with whipped cream layered as waves. Draw lightning bolts on the JELL-O with yellow icing.
- **Life-saver Night** – Decorate the area to give it a beach theme. Emphasize that the real life saver is Jesus.

Game Ideas

- **Shipwreck** – Designate the four sides of the game square as “port,” “starboard,” “bow” and “stern.” Designate a small area in the middle of the room as the lifeboat. Call out one of the areas of the ship. All the Sparkies race to reach that location. The last Sparkie to reach that side of the ship is eliminated. If “lifeboat” is called, all the Sparkies run to the middle and sit down. The last one to sit is eliminated. Play until one player is left.
- **Sailor Hat Run** – The Sparkies will be making sailor hats during the lesson time, but if you want they can make them in game time instead. Have them run around the circle while wearing the sailor hat on their heads. (If the hat comes off at any time, they need to stop and put it back on before they continue.)
- **Inner Tube Run** – Attach rope to the inner tube handle or loop the rope around the tube and tie a knot. One player sits in the inner tube while player two holds the end of the rope. When the whistle blows, the second player pulls the first player around the circle. At the halfway mark, they switch and continue the race. Once they pass their team’s pin, the player in the inner tube runs in for the center pin or beanbag.

Teaching Options

- As you begin the lesson, dim the lights (but not so much that you scare the Sparkies). Invite the Sparkies into a pretend boat. Explain (dramatically) how Jesus calmed the storm.
- Discuss with the Sparkies what it was like to be a fisherman.

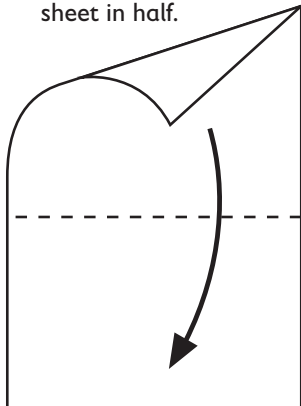


SparksActivity

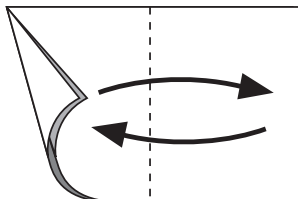
You had fun wearing a sailor hat tonight. Now you can take a little more time to color this new hat to remind you what you learned tonight. Have your mom or dad help you fold it when you get home. Jesus calmed the storm to show the disciples His power.

HOW TO MAKE A SAILOR HAT

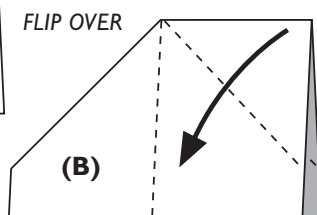
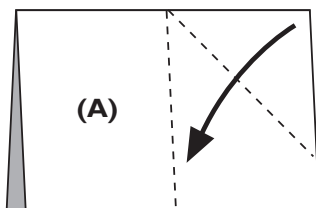
- 1.** Fold a newspaper sheet in half.



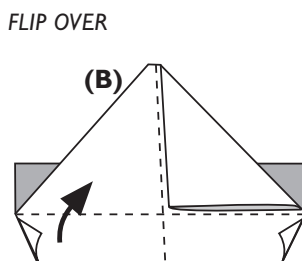
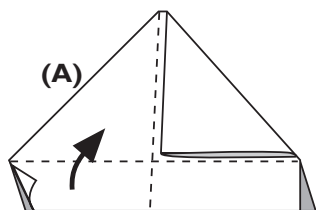
- 2.** Fold in half again and unfold. This will create a center line for step 3.



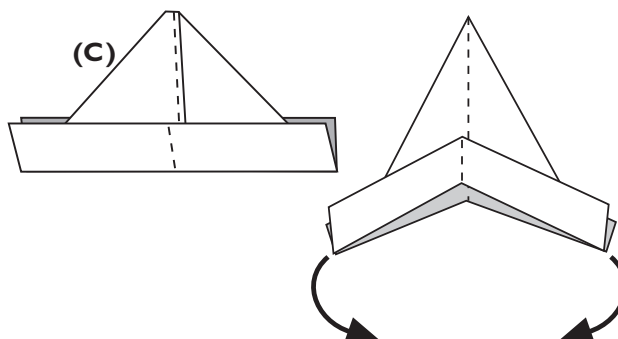
- 3.** (A) Fold the top right corner to the center line.
(B) Flip over and repeat.



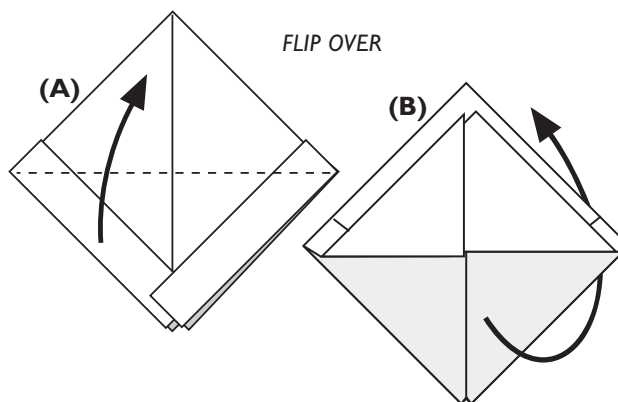
- 4.** (A) Fold up the outside flap of paper to cover the folded corner.
(B) Flip over and repeat to achieve (C). See Number 5.



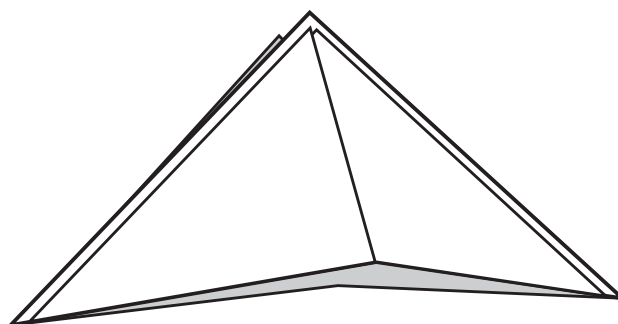
- 5.** Fold down from the bottom corners to create a square.



- 6.** (A) Fold up the outside flap of the square to the top corner.
(B) Flip over and repeat.



- 7.** Tape here and you have a sailor's hat!



Reading

Matthew 14:9-21; Mark 6:30-46; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15

Thinking

The feeding of the multitude is one of the few events recorded in all four Gospels. What is so unique about this miracle? Why did all four authors include it?

Notice the different ways each author writes about what happened. As you read each account, you'll see the personalities and purposes of the writers.

Matthew shows us the reason Jesus needed to get away. He had just heard that John the Baptist was beheaded. Isn't it refreshing to know that we have a Savior who grieves and needs time to think and get away? This shows us that we shouldn't rush the grieving process. Matthew also tells us that, once Jesus' boat landed, the crowds had already gathered and Jesus had compassion for them.

Mark's Gospel is the briefest – and has the briefest account of the miracle. Unlike the other three authors, Mark doesn't report anything new. Mark does explain that Jesus felt compassion because the people didn't have a shepherd.

Luke reports that Jesus healed those who needed healing. He also records that it was getting late in the afternoon, and people needed food and lodging. It's good to have a God who cares about people's physical needs!

John's record is different than the others. The other authors left out names, but John included them. John tells us that Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was the one to find the boy who had the five loaves of bread and the two fish.

Note that John also writes that Philip was tested by Jesus. Jesus questioned Philip, even though He knew how He would provide the food. Jesus didn't just stumble upon opportunities to teach, He created them.

Interesting, too, that Andrew is almost always mentioned as Simon Peter's brother – as if that was his sole identity. True, there could have been more than one Andrew and identifying his brother made it easy to distinguish Andrew by family relationship. Or, perhaps sibling seniority played out in Bible times as well as now. Do you identify any Sparkies by their siblings? Maybe the same thing's been happening for centuries.

Hopefully you have been able to enter into the four Gospels' accounts of the feeding of the multitude. You've seen how the authors' different personalities show us different aspects of the miracle.



Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Some loaves of bread

Showing

If you can make more bread simply by breaking this bread into pieces, I'll give you \$100.

(If you have a large club, just have two loaves of bread and ask a few Sparkies to come up front and try to multiply the bread.)

As you can see, no matter how hard you or your friends try, you can't make more bread. You made a mess, but you did not make more bread. You made more pieces, but you did not make more bread.



Telling

A long, long time ago, Jesus and some of His disciples took a boat across the Sea of Galilee. Large crowds of people followed Him. The people had heard about Jesus and all the amazing things He had done. They were anxious to hear what He had to say and see if He would heal anyone else.

Soon the people got hungry because it was getting late in the afternoon.

The disciples came up to Jesus and said, “Jesus, we need to feed these people. But we don’t have money to buy food for over 5,000 men – and there are also the women and children! We would have to work for eight months in order to pay for the food to feed all these people. What should we do?”

If you were one of the disciples, what would you have done? What would you have asked Jesus? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)**

Before the disciples even asked Jesus what to do, Jesus had a plan. He would feed the people in a BIG way. Jesus knew that He would use this event to teach the disciples about how much He could do.

Andrew told Jesus that he found a boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. That boy probably wasn’t much older than you are right now.

Jesus asked Andrew for the food the boy gave him. All of a sudden people started watching Jesus. After Jesus prayed to thank God for providing the food they were about to eat, He took the first fish and began to tear it apart. But the fish never seemed to get smaller. Jesus also began pulling the bread apart. **(Demonstrate with the bread that the Sparkies tried to multiply before.)** But the bread never seemed to get smaller either! Jesus just kept pulling the fish and bread apart, and the disciples started passing it out to all the people. First one hundred people were fed, then two hundred, then three hundred. Soon one thousand people were fed! Then two thousand, then three thousand were fed. Soon over five thousand men were fed. That doesn’t even include all the women and the children who were there who ate too! And guess what!? There were leftovers!

Do you ever have a big family meal? Do you ever have so much food that there is food still on the table when everyone is full? Maybe your mom or dad put the extra leftover food in the refrigerator so that you could eat it later. Well, that day there were over 12 baskets of bread and fish left over. Not only was everyone fed, but each person was able to eat until they were no longer hungry.

What do you think the people thought when they saw Jesus perform this miracle? **(Let Sparkies answer.)** How do you think the little boy whose food Jesus used felt? **(Let Sparkies answer.)**

The boy probably stood close to Jesus and watched Him carefully tear apart his bread and fish. Maybe that boy wondered if he would get to eat at all. Maybe his eyes got really big when Jesus turned his little bit of food into a huge amount of food.



Challenging

Jesus did a lot of different things that day. He healed sick people. He taught the crowd that He was the Son of God. He showed His followers that He could feed thousands of people with just five loaves and two fish.

Jesus made a way to show everyone how powerful He was. Jesus used the people's hunger to show them that He cared about their needs. He knew they were hungry, so He did something about it.

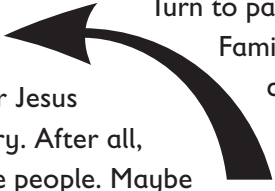
He also showed them by doing these miracles that He was God's Son. Jesus didn't perform miracles to get people to think He was cool or to get people to like Him. He did miracles so people could know He is who He says He is. He is God's Son, the Savior of the world.

The men who wrote the Bible recorded this biography so we would also know that Jesus is the Son of the true God, just as He says. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Do you believe that? Talk to a leader tonight if you have any questions or if you want the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Savior.

Family Follow Up

The lesson this week was on the feeding of the multitude. After Jesus taught and spoke to the people for a long time, they got hungry. After all, they were human. Maybe you even find yourself relating to the people. Maybe rough economic times have hit you hard and caused you to wonder where your next meal is coming from. Maybe you have even thought, "If only Jesus were here, He could take my last piece of bread and multiply it." Jesus does know our needs before we even ask and He provides.

Take time this week to pray expressing thanks to God for meeting our needs in good times and bad times.



Turn to page 192 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Give It Away Night** – Focus on not holding on to things too tightly. Encourage the kids to share their toys and candy. Perhaps you could donate to a shelter or food bank.
- **Follow the Leader Night** – When Jesus was teaching and healing, people followed Him around everywhere. Have the Sparkies do various activities where they have to follow the leader.

Game Ideas

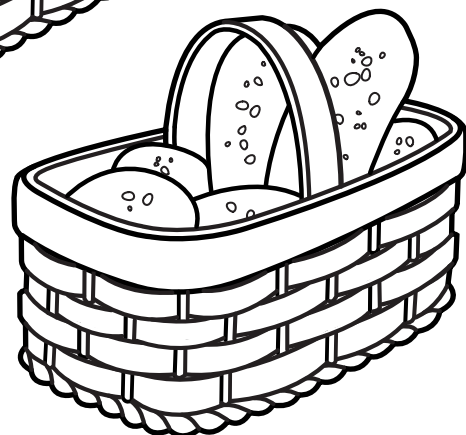
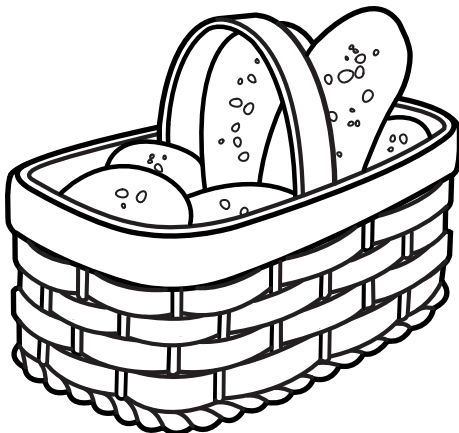
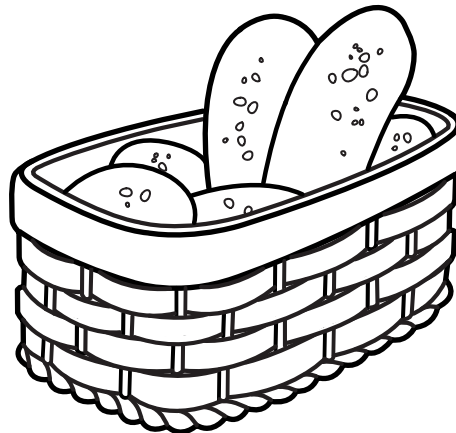
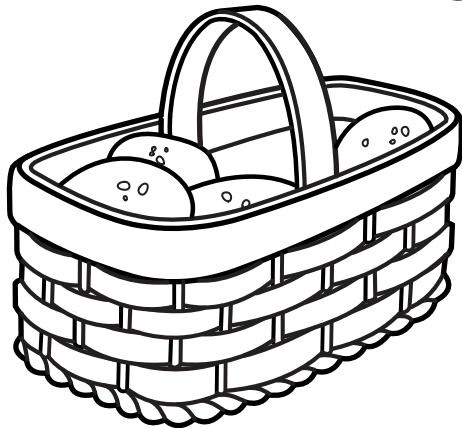
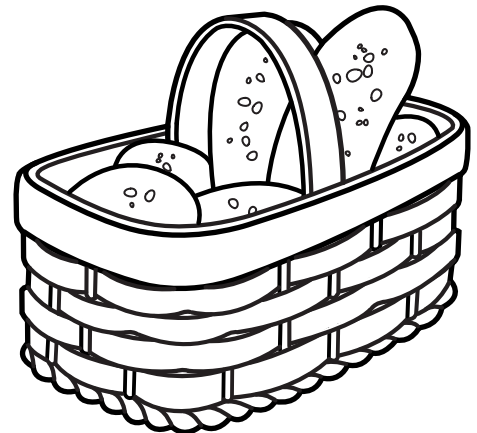
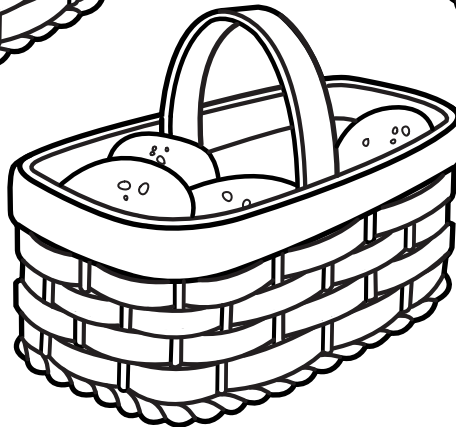
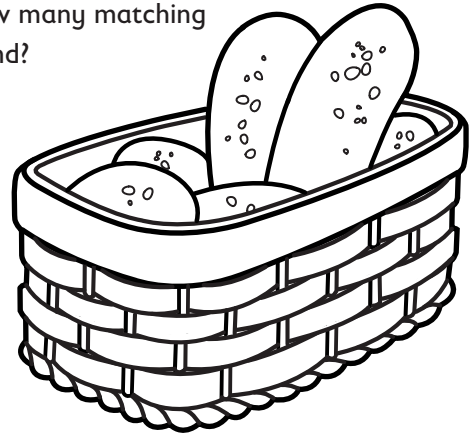
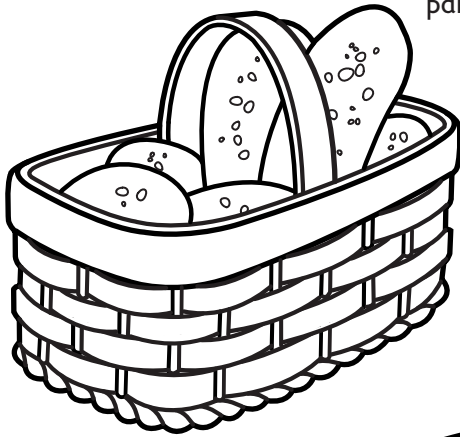
- **Hot Potato** – Have the players pass along a potato while music plays. When the music stops, the player holding the potato has to sit out. Play continues until only one person is left.
- **Bread Relay** – Give each team a piece of bread. Have the first player run around the circle and then tear the piece of bread in half and hand both pieces to the next player. The second player runs around the circle and tears one of the pieces in half and hands the three pieces to the fourth player who runs around the circle and in for the pin or beanbag.
- **Hidden Loaf** – Hide loaves of bread (you could use mini-muffins) or paper fish around your playing area for the Sparkies to find as if they were the disciples looking for food.

Teaching Option

- Explain to Sparkies what a miracle is. A miracle is something that can only be done by God's power.

SparksActivity

When Jesus fed over 5,000 hungry people with only 5 loaves and 2 fish, there were even baskets of leftovers! How many matching pairs of baskets can you find?



Reading

Luke 10:25-37

Thinking

Jesus has an uncanny way of dealing with people. In the parable of the good Samaritan, an expert of the law came up to Jesus and asked Him how to have eternal life. We know this was a popular question among the teachers and leaders. The leaders were trying to trap Jesus into saying something wrong.

Jesus looked at this expert and asked him what was written in the law. Then Jesus pointed the question right back at him. "Well, you're a teacher of the law, what does the law say?" Jesus was shrewd in His answer and ready to turn this trap into a learning opportunity.

Sometimes, it's easiest just to answer your Sparkies' questions. And at 5 or 6 years old, sometimes their questions are very sincere and should be answered with the respect that they deserve. But sometimes, it's good to let them think through things so that there is a "heart connect." As they ask you questions, ask them questions in return. You'll be able to see if they're understanding what you are teaching.

Getting It Ready

Bring in a map of Samaria, Jerusalem and the surrounding areas including Jericho. For this lesson's skit, you will need seven actors. Give them a copy of the lesson a few weeks ahead of time so they can become familiar with it. You might also want to bring in some props for the scenes in the skit.

Showing

(Explain what a Samaritan is. Bring in a map with Samaria on it as well as Jerusalem and surrounding areas.)

Tonight we are going to talk about the good Samaritan. The Samaritans lived near Jerusalem. The Jews who lived in Jerusalem didn't like the Samaritans and tried to stay away from them as much as they could.

(Pull out the Bible map with Jerusalem and Samaria on it. If you have a large group and have access to PowerPoint® and a screen, put it up so they all can see it.) You can see that Samaria was right in the middle of the area. But because people from Jerusalem hated Samaritans so much, they would often walk WAY out of the way in order to avoid Samaria. *(Show on the map how far it would be from Bethlehem to Nazareth by going all the way around Samaria instead of through it.)*

Tonight, though, some special guests will help us understand what Jesus thought of the Samaritan who was kind to someone who needed help.



Telling

Everywhere Jesus went, crowds gathered to hear what Jesus had to say. One day an expert in the law stood up and asked Jesus a question. He said, “Teacher, what do I need to do in order to be saved?”

Jesus asked him what he thought. “What do you think the law says to do?”

The expert said that it all goes back to loving God with everything you have. Love Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind. You need to love your neighbor the way that you love yourself too.

Jesus told him he was right!

Now the expert of the law wanted to trick Jesus so he could prove Jesus didn’t know everything. He said, “Well, tell me, who is my neighbor?” ***(Raises eye brows, gives a high five to his friends while looking at them as if to say, “Aha! We finally got Him!”)***

Jesus told him a story to help him understand. ***(Enter the seven actors who silently act out what Jesus says. Designate one side of the stage as the place the robbers hurt the man and the other side of the stage set up like an inn with a desk for the innkeeper.)*** There once was a man who was walking along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, minding his own business. All of a sudden, robbers came out of nowhere and took his belongings and beat him up so badly that he couldn’t walk.

Some time passed and a priest walked down the road. The priest saw that someone was lying hurt along the road, so he got as far as he could to the other side of the road and walked by him.

A little while later a Levite saw the man and passed by him without helping just as the priest did.

Finally, a Samaritan was walking down the road and saw the man. Even though the Samaritan had somewhere to go, he saw the man and felt sorry for him. He put medicine on the man’s cuts and bruises and bandaged him with cloths. After that, the Samaritan picked up the injured man and put him on his donkey. He walked along until he found an inn. The Samaritan stayed at the inn with the man and helped to take care of him.

The next morning, the Samaritan gave some money to the innkeeper and asked him to take care of the injured man. The Samaritan even told the innkeeper that he would pay whatever it took to take care of the man.

Narrator: Then Jesus looked at the expert of the law when He was done telling the story and asked him, “Who was the neighbor? The priest, the Levite or the Samaritan?”

The expert knew it was the man who showed kindness, the Samaritan.

Jesus said, “You are right! Now, go and love people the same way.”

(The actors leave the stage.)



Challenging

Even though the Samaritan was someone no one respected, Jesus told the expert in the law to be like the Samaritan. Jesus knows it's easy to love people you like. But it's another thing to love those you don't like at all. Are there kids at school that you don't like very much? Even if they aren't very likeable, Jesus wants you to love them.

Think of it this way: You should love your neighbor. And who is your neighbor? Anyone who isn't you is your neighbor. Jesus wanted the people that heard the story to know that a neighbor wasn't just the person who lives next door. Your neighbors are everywhere!

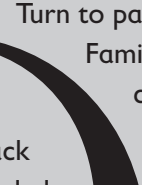
Treat everyone with kindness – God created those people just like He created you.

Family Follow Up

Have you ever questioned who your neighbors are? An expert in the law wanted to know how to have eternal life. Jesus gave the question right back to the expert and asked him what he thought. The expert said that he needed to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, strength and mind and also love his neighbor as himself. This expert knew that the law was more about love for God and others and less about keeping a set of rules. But then he asked Jesus another question because loving is harder than keeping a set of rules.

The expert asked, "Who's my neighbor?" And Jesus responded with the parable of the good Samaritan.

Read Luke 10:25-37 with your family after dinner one evening and ask your son or daughter to sum up in his or her own words what the parable is about. The Sparkies learned that the Samaritans weren't liked by the people who lived around them. They also learned that loving people is difficult, but Jesus wants us to love everybody because God created them too.



Turn to page 192 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!

TeachingIdeas

Theme Nights

- **Do Somethin' Nice Night** – Encourage Sparkies to go out of their way to do nice things for people. It could be helping another Sparkie learn a hard verse or picking up trash they see on the ground. Any nice thing goes!
- **Ornament Night** – Check out Awana International's Web site at www.awanainternational.org and search for the ornament campaign that Awana does annually to help other Awana clubs across the globe!

Game Ideas

- **Rescue** – Mark or designate two lines on opposite sides of the room. Pick 10 players from each team. One player from each team should stand behind one line. The other players (1-9) should stand behind the opposite line. When the whistle blows, player 10 runs across the room and grabs the hand of player 9 and brings him back to where she started from. Now player 9 runs back and grabs the hand of player 8. Together they run back and player 8 goes out to get number 7. The game continues until all players are behind player number 10. The team who sits down in correct order behind the line wins.

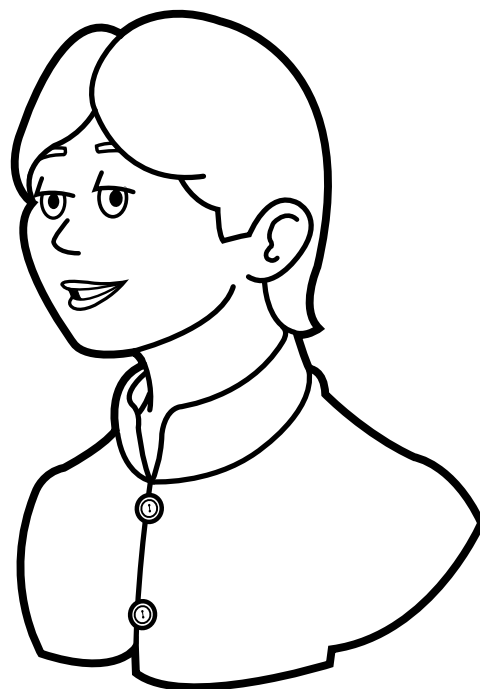
Teaching Options

- When you begin the lesson, explain what an Old Testament priest and a Levite are. Those are the two men that passed by the injured man before the Samaritan helped him. If you need help, ask your pastor or consult a Bible dictionary.
- Talk about a time when you acted like the Good Samaritan and a time when you didn't. Explain that it isn't easy to always do the right thing. Then you can share how it felt when you did act like the Good Samaritan.



SparksActivity

Whom should you love and treat with kindness?
Color all the pictures of people whom you should love.



Reading

Luke 19:28-20:47

Thinking

All four gospels record the events of Palm Sunday. When Jesus told His disciples to get a young donkey for Him to ride, the proverbial bells probably chimed in their heads. They knew the prophecies. They remembered that Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9) said the Savior would come riding on a colt.

Jesus' ministry wasn't long, but it was full. Every day He interacted with people who needed healing and feeding. But His intent wasn't to satisfy all the physical needs of the world and make people more comfortable. He came to earth to show people the way to God the Father. He did, however, have compassion on people and helped those in need. He performed miracles that showed the watching world He was not only the Son of God, but also God Himself.



Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A palm branch for each Sparkie
- Two leaders to play the parts of the two disciples. Give them copies of the script a week or so before you do the lesson.

Showing

Give each of the Sparkies a palm branch. (You should be able to find them at craft stores like Hobby Lobby® or Michaels®.) Lead them in a walk around the room. Have them repeat, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” Demonstrate how to raise their palm branches up and down as they follow you around your teaching space.

Telling

Today we have two special guests! We have learned a lot this year already. We’ve learned how Jesus healed sick people, helped feed a crowd of people with just a few pieces of bread and some fish, calmed a storm and many other things. Today, two of Jesus’ disciples are going to tell us what it was like the week before Jesus died.

(Enter disciples.)

Disciple 1: Hello everyone! Thank you for having us here to tell you about something that happened a week before Jesus was hung on the cross.

Has anyone ever heard of Palm Sunday? (**Allow Sparkies to raise hands.**) Well, I was there on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into town on a young donkey. Let me tell you why things happened the way that they did.

Can you say *prophecy*? It’s a big word. Let’s say it together. Pro-phe-cy. Good. Let’s say it again. Pro-phe-cy. One more time. Prophecy! Excellent! I knew you were smart!

A prophecy is a promise about the future. For example, if I say you will have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch in 30 days, that would be telling you about a future event, so it would be a prophecy. There are a lot of prophecies in the Old Testament.

Telling

continued

Disciple 2: Some of the men who wrote the Old Testament were called prophets. Many of their prophecies, or promises, were about the coming of the Savior. (Remember, God told the men who wrote the Bible what He wanted them to write, so the prophets' promises really came from God.)

One of the prophecies about the coming Savior said that He would ride into the city of Jerusalem on a young donkey. Let me read Zechariah 9:9. **(Read Zechariah 9:9.)** Zechariah was one of the Old Testament prophets we have been talking about. Zechariah made that prophecy about 500 years before Jesus came to earth! Now let me read some verses about what happened when Jesus rode into Jerusalem. **(Read Matthew 21:1-7.)**

Did you notice that Zechariah's prophecy came true?! The very thing that he said Jesus would do really happened – Matthew wanted to make sure the readers knew that prophecy was coming true.

The Old Testament prophets made lots of promises about what the Savior would be like. That the Savior would ride into the city on a young donkey was just one of the many prophecies. Other prophecies told us where Jesus would be from and whose family He would be in. They told us how Jesus would rule and even how He would die. Jesus made every prophecy about the Savior come true. So when Jesus asked for the donkey, it was just one of many ways that the disciples, and those who knew the prophecies, knew Jesus was the Savior everyone was waiting for.

Disciple 1: When Jesus came into town on the donkey, people started shouting praises to Him, "Hosanna!" *Hosanna* means "Hooray for salvation!" The people recognized that Jesus was the one they had waited for so long. When you were walking around the room waving your palm branches, you were doing what the people who saw Jesus were doing. They were praising Him and thanking God that their King had finally come! God's people had waited many years for this to happen, so it was very exciting!

But not everyone was happy about people saying Jesus was the King that they were waiting for. The leaders didn't want a king because then they wouldn't be in charge anymore. They wanted the people to listen to them. The leaders were jealous of the praise the people gave Jesus.

Disciple 2: So after Jesus rode through town on the young donkey, the leaders made a plan to stop Jesus from getting love and praise from the people. They were angry about what was happening.

The leaders met together and decided the only way to get the people to stop praising Jesus was to kill Him. But how would they convince everyone that Jesus was a bad guy? They would have to lie! Can you believe it? Even though Jesus was perfect, and the Savior everyone needed, they decided to kill Him because they were jealous. Just a week later, they put Jesus to death. When the people who had been praising Jesus saw that He wasn't going to give them everything they wanted, they were happy to see Him die.

Leader: Wow. That's so sad that Jesus had to die. Is there any good news?

Disciple 1: Yes! Easter is the good news! Jesus was perfect. Jesus never sinned. But you'll have to come back next week to see what happened!

Challenging

Leader: The Bible tells us the truth about the Lord Jesus.

When you have a question about Jesus, you should always find out what the Bible has to say. If someone tells you something about Jesus, make sure you read the Bible and find out if it's true.

You see, the people thought they knew what the Savior would be like. They thought He was going to look a certain way and act a certain way and do things a certain way. So when Jesus didn't look and act the way they thought He would, they stopped listening to Him. Not only that, but they wanted to kill Him. (We'll learn about that next week.) The leaders of the people were very smart, and the prophecies they read about Jesus were supposed to help them know who the Savior was when He arrived. But they misunderstood, and so they missed out on knowing Jesus, the real Savior.

Always read your Bible to learn about Jesus. It's also good to ask a parent or one of us leaders about Him too. We don't know everything, but we will help you find the answers to your questions in the Bible.

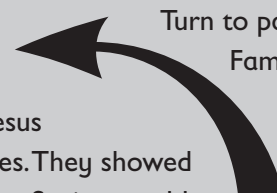
Family Follow Up

This week's lesson was on Palm Sunday. Two "disciples" of Jesus came and visited and shared about Old Testament prophecies. They showed the Sparkies Zechariah 9:9, where the prophet wrote that the Savior would come riding on a young donkey. So when Jesus asked His disciples for a colt to ride into town, the people who knew their Old Testament remembered the prophecies. Jesus had been fulfilling the prophecies about the Savior throughout His entire life.

But even with all the promises that were fulfilled by Jesus, the religious leaders were angry that He claimed to be the true Messiah. They had their ideas about what He would look like and how He would rule. So when Jesus didn't match their preconceived ideas, they decided to kill Him.

The Sparkies were reminded that the more they read the Bible, the more they will get to know Jesus. They were encouraged to keep going back to the Bible to learn about Him so their own preconceived ideas wouldn't get in the way of knowing the real Savior, Jesus.

Take some time to ask your child about Jesus. Make sure you back up what you say with the Bible so he or she will learn that the answers are found in God's Word.



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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Ideas

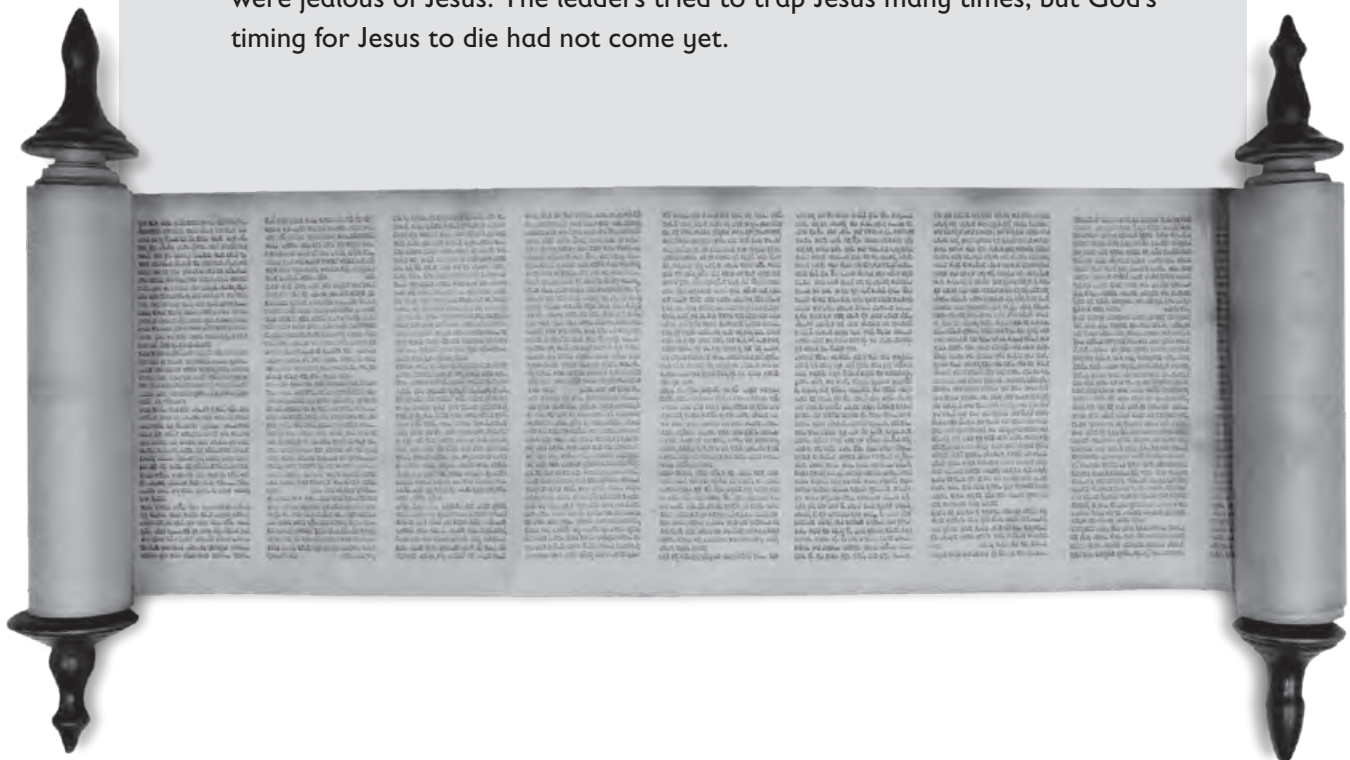
- **Hosanna Night** – Make a Hosanna Wall (tape a large, lightly-colored piece of paper to a wall) where the Sparkies (with the help of a leader, if needed) write down a reason they are thankful for the Savior.

Game Ideas

- **Palm Branch Relay** – Instead of passing the baton from one player to another during a relay, pass a palm branch.
- **Colt Grab** – One player should be the colt and another player should be one of the disciples. The disciples run across the room to get the colt and they hold hands and run back to the starting line. Once both players pass the line, the disciple runs in for the pin or beanbag.

Teaching Options

- Find some other prophecies in Scripture that show that Jesus was the Messiah everyone was waiting for and share them with the group.
- Use the time to show the Sparkies some other ways that the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus. The leaders tried to trap Jesus many times, but God's timing for Jesus to die had not come yet.

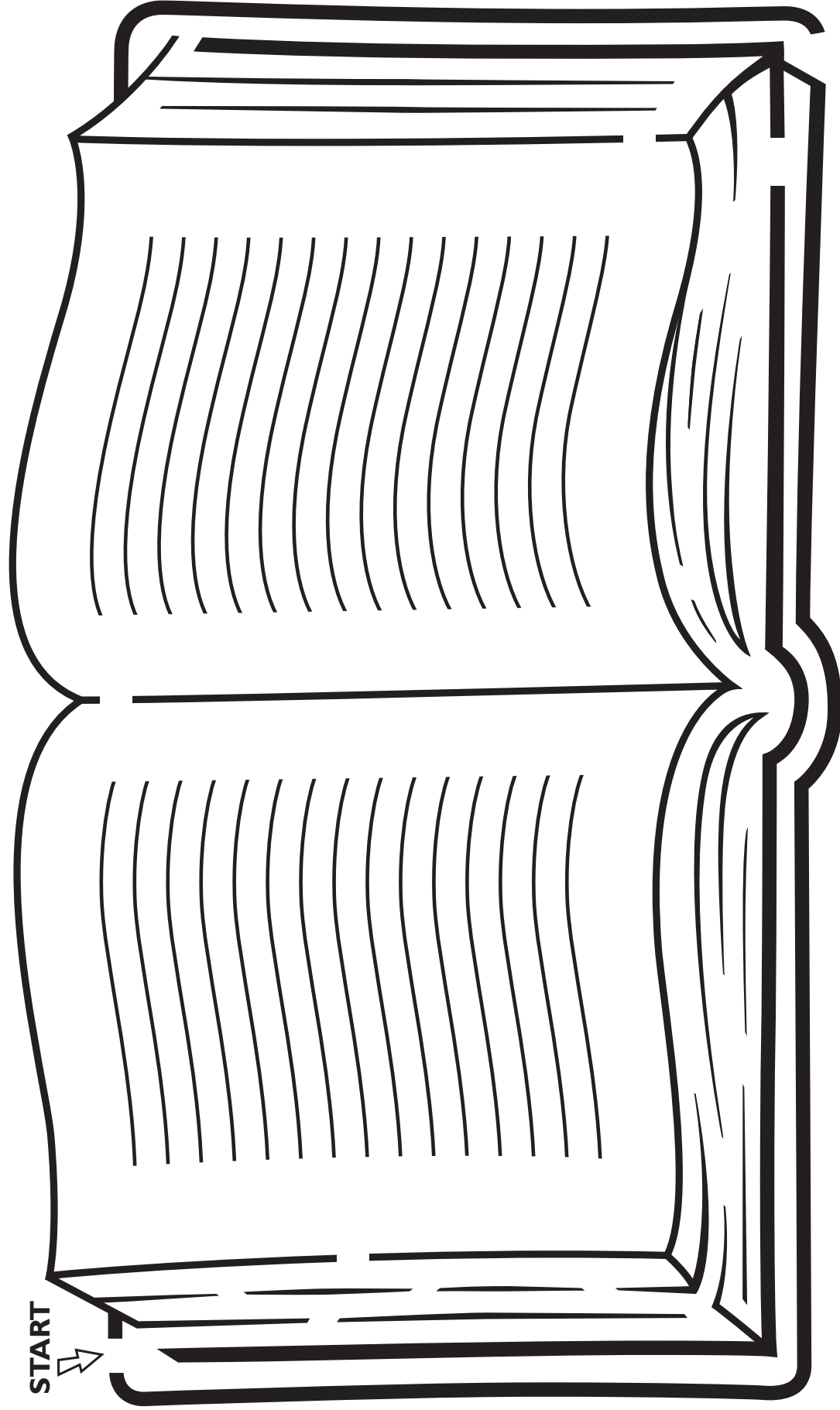


SparksActivity

Find your way through the maze.

**The way to
know Jesus**

START



FINISH

I get to know Jesus by reading the Bible.

Reading

Matthew 27:1-54; Mark 15:1-39; Luke 23:1-49; John 18:28-19:30

Thinking

People often think of Jesus' death as a final event. Many times, gospel presentations end with the grave. But it's important to remember that if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then, as Paul says, our faith is useless. As you teach this lesson, keep in mind the event that validates your faith happened three days later.

However, tonight's lesson will have its own challenges for young children. Many of them haven't experienced death in any capacity, so the concept will seem foreign to most of them. Because attention spans are short, and this is an important topic, the lesson will bring back the two disciples seen in last week's lesson. Encourage the actors to memorize their lines so the message doesn't get choppy or hard to understand.

Getting It Ready

Provide scripts to the two people portraying the disciples a week or so before you teach the lesson. You will also need:

- A spotless, white, new cloth
- A clear plastic bowl or a fishbowl filled with water
- Black dye to color the water
- Gloves to protect your skin
- Cross or picture of a cross



Showing

Who can tell me the names of the first two people God made?

(Allow Sparkies to answer.)

Adam and Eve were created perfect, but they disobeyed God. They sinned. **(Immerse**

the white cloth in the black dye. Swish it around for a few seconds, then pull it out and wring out as much water as possible.)

Do you see what happened when the white cloth was put in the black dye? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** Let's pretend that the black dye is sin. Just as the black dye ruined the white cloth, so one tiny, little sin will mess up your life. When you sin, it becomes part of who you are. You see how the cloth is dirty now?

When Adam and Eve sinned, they passed down, or gave, sin to their children. Everyone who has been born after Adam and Eve has been born a sinner. Everyone is born dirty now. **(Hold up the cloth.)** In order to go to heaven you have to be clean. But you can't make yourself clean. Because you are sinful, you need someone to give (sacrifice) his life for yours. But it can't be just anyone. It has to be a person who is perfect, someone who has never sinned. But who is without sin in his life? There is only one way to have our sins forgiven and become clean again. Who knows how? **(Allow children to share answers.)** The only way to be clean (righteous, forgiven) is to trust the Lord Jesus to take care of your sin – trust Him to become your sacrifice. He gave His life for you. We'll learn more about that in a little while.

Telling

Last week we talked about Palm Sunday. Do you remember waving your palm branches and shouting “Hosanna!”? The people were very excited to see Jesus fulfilling prophecy. Who can tell me what prophecy is? **(Allow Sparkies to answer – some of them should remember.)** Yes, a prophecy is a promise of God that comes true in the future. Last week we learned that one of the prophecies about the Savior was that He would ride on a young donkey. And then, Jesus rode into town on a donkey!

Tonight we want to welcome back our guests from last week. **(Enter Disciples 1 and 2.) (Applause.)**

Disciple 1: Thank you so much for having us back! I enjoyed talking with you last week about the Lord’s life on earth. Today, we will talk with you about His death.

Disciple 2: Death is a hard thing. Maybe some of you have had a family member, friend or pet die. It’s never easy to say goodbye to people or pets we love. One of the hardest days of my life was the day Jesus died because I loved Him, and He didn’t deserve to die.

We are all sinners, so we deserve to die. We all do things that break God’s law. But the Lord Jesus is perfect. I’m sorry for the way I treated the Lord Jesus Christ. When things got hard for Him, I ran away as fast as I could. I didn’t want to get killed too. The leaders of the people told a few people to lie about Jesus. When Jesus told them who He was, the liars were ready to say that Jesus broke laws and that Jesus was pretending to be God’s Son.

Disciple 1: He’s right. **(Points to Disciple 2.)** You should have seen the look on Jesus’ face when the people told those lies about Him. He looked like He expected them to say those things. He looked like He knew all along that this moment was going to happen.

After the leaders decided that Jesus was guilty, which He really wasn’t, they took Him away. They beat Jesus until He looked so bad that He didn’t even look like a man anymore. After the Lord Jesus was beaten, they put Him on a cross. **(Point to a cross in the room or show a picture.)** He was in horrible pain for a long time, but Jesus didn’t complain once. The Lord Jesus knew why He had to die.

Disciple 2: Who knows why Jesus had to die? **(Allow Sparkies to share responses.)** Jesus had to die because of our sin. God tells us in His Word that the punishment for sin is death. All of us – men, women and children – have sinned. Because we have sinned, we cannot be friends with God. We cannot go to heaven. So Jesus, God’s Son, came to earth and paid the punishment for our sin by giving up His own life and dying. When we believe that He did this for us, our sins are forgiven and God sees us as perfect.

Disciple 1: But why was the Lord Jesus willing to die? Was it just because He was a nice person? He was, but that wasn’t the reason. Was it because He didn’t have the power to stop the religious leaders who killed Him? No, He could have gotten away if He wanted to. After Adam and Eve sinned, the whole human race was ruined by a sinful nature. The Lord Jesus was willing to die because He loved us and didn’t want us to stay ruined. He still loves us!

Because Jesus kept every single commandment, He was a perfect sacrifice. God put all of our sins onto Jesus when He died, making Him take the punishment for us. Jesus has made a way for us to be with God forever. We are no longer separated from God or His love.

Disciple 2: Well, we have to go, but thank-you for letting us share about Jesus. (*Thank disciples with applause.*)

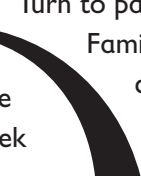


Challenging

Who do you think Jesus is? Is He your Savior? Did you know that He died on the cross so that you wouldn't have to take the punishment for your sin? Our disciple friends came tonight to remind you that Jesus was the sacrifice that we need. Please come talk to us if you have questions or want Jesus to be your Savior.

Family Follow Up

This week the Sparkies learned about Jesus' death. The "disciples" who came to visit last week to tell the Sparkies about Palm Sunday came back this week to share with them about the death of Jesus.



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

Has your child experienced the death of a loved one? The Sparkies learned in the lesson that Jesus was perfect and didn't deserve to die. But because everyone else is a sinner, everyone else deserves to die.

If your child hasn't experienced loss yet, remind them that death happens to everyone. However, Christ's death was different because He was a sacrifice.

The most important part of the life and death of Jesus Christ was the fact that He came back to life! All the prophecies hinge on that one thing. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:17 that if Christ wasn't raised from the dead, the rest of what happened is worthless and so is faith. Jesus' resurrection proves that everything is true. This week, talk to your child about the death of Jesus but remind him that He came back to life three days later. Next week's lesson will cover the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Teaching Ideas

Theme Idea

- **Easter Night** – Hide hollow, plastic eggs all over the church. Any time a Sparkie finds one he can turn it in for a point or a piece of candy.

Game Idea

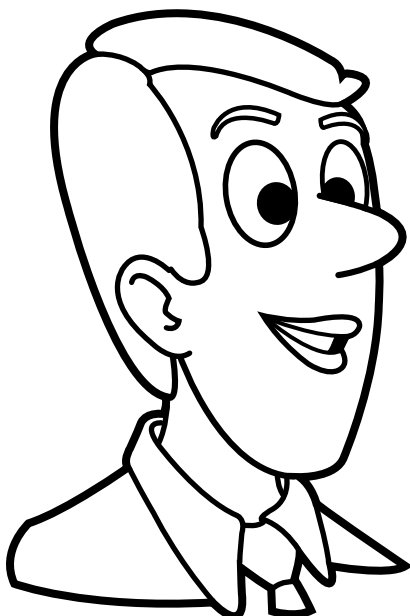
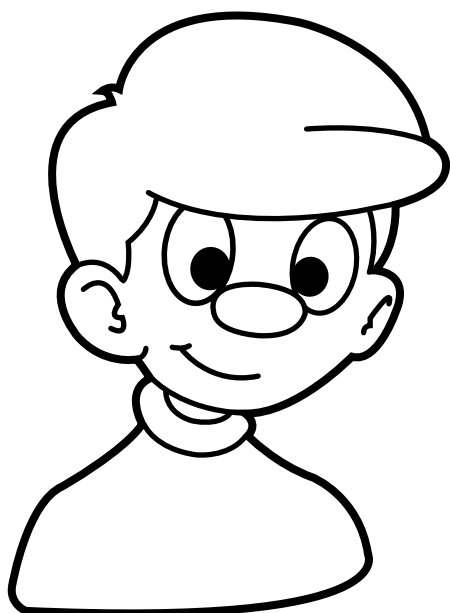
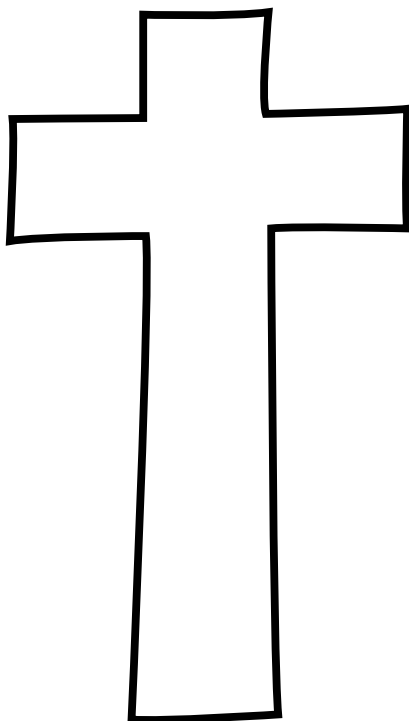
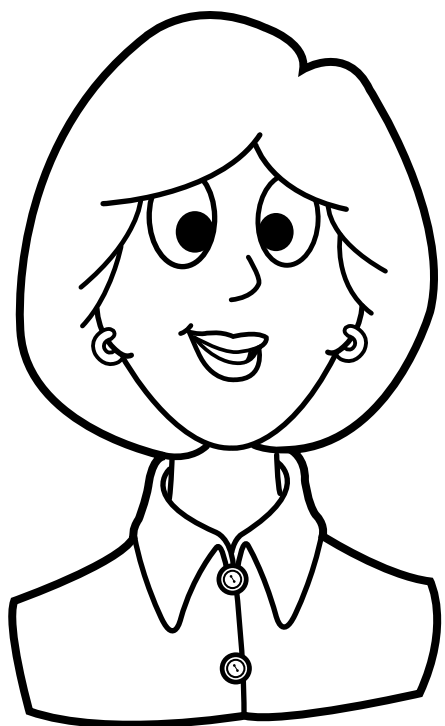
- **Israel Night** – Plan an Israel night. Have a snack of oranges (or other fruit grown in Israel). If you have shekels – use them in games. Show pictures of Israel.

Teaching Options

- Make an Easter timeline! Start with the Old Testament key events like creation, Israel's exodus from Egypt, God bringing Joshua and Israel into the Promised Land, the succession of kings, the promise of the Messiah in Isaiah (and all the books for that matter!), the birth of Jesus and His life and ministry. Make the timeline a long one. Place this timeline in a place where the Sparkies can come up close and see it. Take them through the timeline and show the events that happened that led up to the need for the death of Jesus Christ.

SparksActivity

Color all the pictures and then circle the cross when you are done to remind you that everyone needs Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for your sins.





Reading

Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-20;
Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18

Thinking

John 20:1-18 paints one of the more vivid and emotional portraits of the resurrection of Christ as He appears to Mary Magdalene. All He had to do was say her name, and she knew who He was.

It's a story we have heard many times. Most Christians know the truth of the resurrection but it doesn't play an important role in their lives. If Jesus had not risen, everything Jesus did in His life would have been for naught. We would not have the assurance of eternal life. We would be destined for hell.

This Bible account is a good one to assure your Sparkies that not only did Jesus live on earth and live a perfect life, but after He died He REALLY did come back to life again three days later. And He appeared to people to show them He was alive! If He hadn't, we would have no hope.

Looking It Up

John 20:1-18 (*Ask Sparkies to look this up in their Bibles before you begin the lesson.*)

Getting It Ready

Read John 20:1-18 several times before this lesson. Be prepared to read it enthusiastically.



Showing

OK everyone, tonight I'm ready to talk to you about one of the most important events that happened in the Bible. It's a truly wonderful and important event. But first, I have a question. You all know me pretty well, right? And you know your leaders, right? Do you trust us? If we say we'll do something, do you believe we'll do it? So you trust us even though we're human and not perfect, right? OK, good.

Telling

Now, let's talk about Someone else you can and should trust to do what He says He will do. Many of us know that Jesus Christ died and came alive again three days later. But I want to tell you about the resurrection again tonight because it's SO very important to us as Christians. Just think, if Jesus had died but never came alive again, where would we be tonight? Well, we wouldn't be in Awana. There would be no Awana! We would have no hope because in order for us to have hope in heaven, Jesus had to come alive again.

So let's open our Bibles and look at John 20. I'm going to read a bit of it and then talk about it. Then we'll read some more. **(Read John 20:1-9.)** The Bible tells us that Mary Magdalene (not the mother of Jesus) went to the tomb early in the morning. When she got to the tomb, the stone was rolled away! It probably scared her because the stone that was in front of the tomb was very, very, heavy. It would take many men to move it. She looked inside and saw the tomb was empty. Jesus was gone! She ran to tell Peter and another disciple whose name we don't know. She told them that someone took Jesus. Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see what happened and they found the same thing – the tomb was empty and the cloths that Jesus had been wrapped in were lying inside the tomb.



Can you imagine how confused Peter and the other disciple must have been? Jesus wasn't there. When He was alive, Jesus explained to the disciples about other verses in the Bible that told about His death and resurrection. But instead of remembering what Jesus told them before He died, they assumed Jesus' body had been stolen.

Let's look at some more verses here. We'll read John 20:11-18. Imagine that you're living in Jesus' time. You've listened to Him teach and you watched Him die on the cross. You would be really sad. Now think of what it would be like to hear His voice and to see Him alive! That's probably what it was like for Mary Magdalene.

Mary was in the garden near the tomb when she heard someone ask her why she was crying and whom she was looking for. When she looked up, she didn't recognize the person at first. Then Jesus said her name. As soon as He said her name, Mary knew who He was. She KNEW it was Jesus. Kind of like when you're in a busy place like church or a store and you hear your mom or dad call your name. You KNOW it's them calling you because you recognize their voice.

So Jesus told Mary that it was really Him and that He wanted her to go tell the disciples that He was returning to God the Father.

Wow, this is truly a wonderful passage from the Bible. Jesus came alive again just like He said He would and just like the Bible said He would! Many people believe in religions that have many gods. But Jesus is the only one who died and came alive again. He is the real God, and the only way we can go to heaven is by trusting that He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die for us to take the punishment for our sin. And we must believe that Jesus came alive again and now lives in heaven.

Sparkies! This is what knowing the Lord Jesus Christ is all about! We need to be excited about this! Jesus came alive again and that proved that EVERYTHING He said was true. We can know we can go to heaven because of what He said and did.

Challenging

What about you? Some of you have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. If you have already done so that is wonderful. Since you've trusted Jesus Christ as Savior, are you telling others about Him and how they can go to heaven?

What if you haven't trusted Jesus as Savior? You can trust Him tonight! When we tell Jesus that we know we're sinners and that we know He died and came alive again to take the punishment for our sin, we are Christians. We can know that we will live forever with Jesus in heaven. If you haven't trusted Jesus as Savior and would like to, please talk to one of your leaders. We would LOVE to talk with you about it and pray with you. This is the most important decision you will ever make!

Family Follow Up

Read John 20:1-18 together. Have everyone share about the time they trusted Jesus as Savior. If someone hasn't trusted Christ, then give her the opportunity but don't push.

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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- **Spiritual Birthday Night** – Have birthday cake and punch. Hang birthday decorations around the room. A week prior to this club night, send home birthday party invitations for them to give to their friends.

Game Idea

- Play typical birthday party games such as Pin the Tail on the Donkey, Drop the Clothespin in the Bottle, etc.

Teaching Option

- Be very enthusiastic as you read the Bible passage to the Sparkies. Encourage the Sparkies by explaining that this is God's Word. It's holy and true. Tell the Sparkies how important it is to show respect to what is being read by sitting quietly and listening.



SparksActivity

Here's a fun activity for you! Look at these two pictures closely. Find eight things that are different between these two pictures and circle them. Then color the pictures.



Reading

Acts 6:7-8:3



Thinking

This could be a hard lesson to teach to young Sparkies. It's a frightening account – a man is stoned to death for speaking the truth about God. So which part of this account can we focus on? Something Sparkies can relate to is the potential to be scared when facing a scary situation. Maybe the death of a grandparent, the divorce of parents, parents being out of work ... there are a lot of situations these young ones face that can cause them to be fearful. Sparkies are afraid of more simple things such as storms, dogs, etc. But what did Stephen do in the middle of a scary situation? He looked to God. He looked to the heavens and was at peace. Acts 6:15 says that he had the face of an angel. If someone has the face of an angel in the middle of such a situation, surely he has peace!

This lesson focuses on how your Sparkies can know peace even when they face scary situations. We'll encourage them in the fact that Jesus is ALWAYS with them.

Looking It Up

Acts 6:15; Philippians 4:6-7

Getting It Ready

Have a candle, plastic wrap and a hand-held fan available. The fan can even be a piece of copy paper folded accordion style. You'll need it for the end of the lesson. Also have a few small, medium and large stones on hand to show the kinds of stones that may have been used to stone Stephen.

Showing

Can everyone see this candle? We're going to light it and keep it lit during the lesson. I'll use it to show you something at the end of the lesson. But for now we'll light it so we can all enjoy it.

Telling

How many of you have heard about a man in the Bible named Stephen? Our lesson tonight is about Stephen. He was a brave man. Stephen talked to people about Jesus. He told them the truth about Jesus Christ and he had discussions with the Jewish leaders. But these leaders didn't like what Stephen said to them and what he told other people. These leaders were so mad at Stephen that they arrested him, brought him before a bunch of other leaders (kind of like going to court) and had some people make up stories about Stephen. They wanted to make him look bad so that they could get rid of him. The leaders asked Stephen some questions and got really mad at what he said when he answered. Stephen told them that they were wrong and were not allowing the Holy Spirit to lead them. This made the leaders SUPER mad. So they took him outside the city and stoned him. That means they took stones and threw them at him until he died.

Look at these stones here. **(Hold up stones to give a visual.)** I have all sorts of stones. Some are small, some are medium-sized and some are large. We don't know exactly what kinds of stones were used, but we do know that people threw the stones so hard at Stephen that he died.

What do you think Stephen was doing while the leaders were asking him questions? What would you do? **(Allow for a few answers.)** I think I'd be scared and crying and praying! Well, the Bible tells us in Acts 6:15 that when Stephen was talking with the leaders and answering their questions, he had the face of an angel. Let's look up that verse in our Bibles. **(Read the verse.)** Wow! The face of an angel? That is another way of saying that Stephen was at peace. What did Stephen do when the people were stoning him? Acts 7:59 says that Stephen prayed while the people were stoning him. In the middle of a very scary situation, Stephen was at peace and he was praying.

So how can we be like Stephen? How can we have peace when we're in the middle of scary situations? Remember Stephen prayed. Even when people were hurting him, he prayed. Sometimes we'll be in a scary situation. Maybe your mom or dad lost a job. Maybe your grandma or grandpa died. Maybe someone at school is being mean to you. Whatever the scary situation is, you can pray and have peace. Let's look at Philippians 4:6-7. **(Read the verses.)** These verses tell us that when we pray, we can have peace from God. We can have peace that we can't explain! Next time you're scared, think about this verse and think about Stephen. Stephen was in a scary situation and he prayed.



So let's look at this candle here. When I wave this fan around the candle, the flame flickers. When we're in a scary situation, we can be like the candle flame ... we flicker because we're scared. But you know what? When we have God's peace, we won't flicker. **(Have another leader or Sparkie hold the plastic wrap between the flame and the fan.)** See how when the plastic wrap is between the candle and the fan, **(move the fan)** the flame doesn't flicker? The plastic wrap is like the peace of God. The peace of God will help us when we're in scary situations. The peace of God can keep us from being scared.



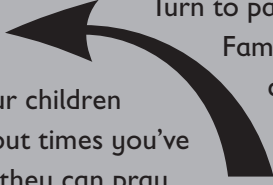
Challenging

So next time you're feeling scared, think about Stephen. When he was in a scary situation, he prayed. When you pray you can have peace that only God can give you.

(Close the time in prayer. Pray for all the Sparkies – that they will remember to pray when they are in scary situations so that they can have peace.)

Family Follow Up

Take a walk as a family. While on your walk, ask your children about times they've been afraid. Share with them about times you've been afraid. Encourage your children in the fact that they can pray when they're scared. In fact, that's what God wants us to do. He wants us to come to Him when we're scared because only He can give us peace. When you get home from your walk, pray together and thank God that He loves us and will give us peace when we pray.



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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- **Invite a Friend Night** – In the weeks prior to this night, encourage your Sparkies to invite their non-churched friends. Their friends need to trust Jesus Christ so they can have peace from God when they are in scary situations. Provide invitations that Sparkies can give to their friends. Have a welcoming party for all the guests.

Game Idea

- **Double Up** – Play games that involve pairs such as three-legged races.

Teaching Options

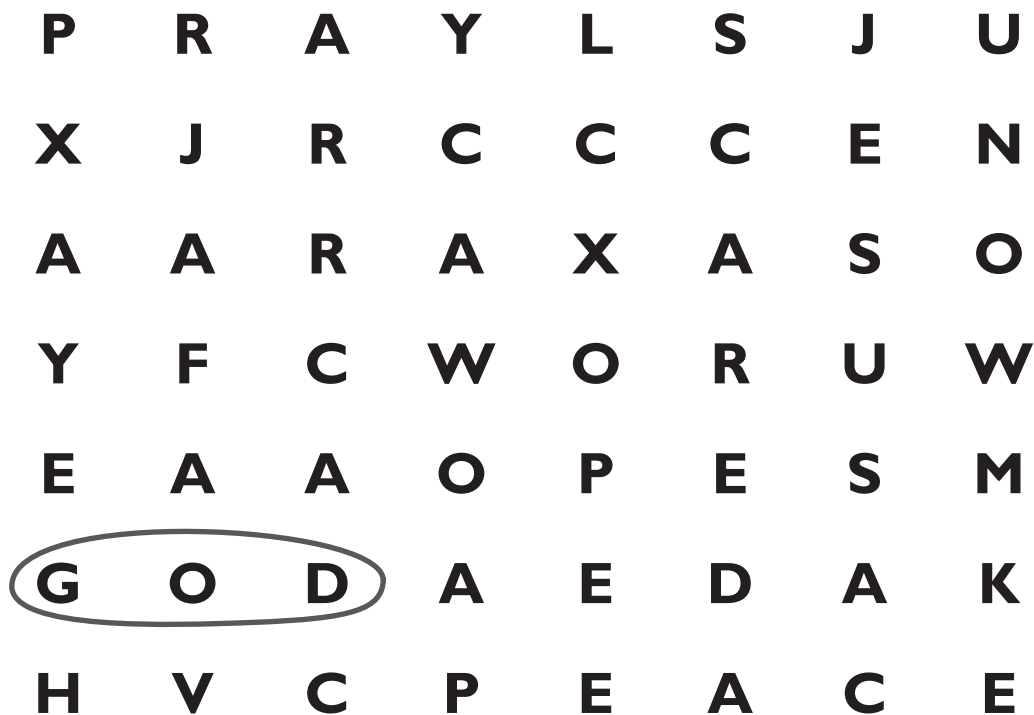
- Consider allowing a Sparkie to assist you in holding the plastic wrap. Or before the lesson, select a Sparkie you know can read well and ask him or her to look up Acts 6:15 and be ready to read it. The more you involve your Sparkies, the more interested they'll be in the lesson.

SparksActivity

Here is a word search. There are five words hidden in these letters.

When you find the word, circle it. We'll do one for you.

We circled the word God to get you started. Now you find the other four words.



GOD

JESUS

PEACE

PRAY

SCARED

Reading

Acts 9:1-19

Thinking

Saul was one of the men observing and supporting the stoning of Stephen. Long before he was known as Paul, Saul fervently oppressed and persecuted Christians. He took them as prisoners and made sure they ended up in prison. Imagine the fear of the disciples when they met him. This is the man who hurt Christians and now he proclaimed he was a Christian? It didn't make sense. But God, in His infinite mercy and love, brought Saul to a place where he recognized that Jesus truly IS the Son of God.

In Acts 9:16, God tells Ananias that He will show Saul how much he'll suffer for his faith. God has big plans for Saul. Imagine being Saul – the very God you are defying comes to you and causes blindness. That is rather humbling.

There are a few angles we can take with this lesson. The lesson will mostly be the biography itself. But in the Challenging section, Sparkies will be encouraged to begin telling others about the Lord Jesus right now – and not to wait until they're adults.

Looking It Up

Acts 9:1-9 and Acts 9:10-19 (*Ask Sparkies to look these verses up before the lesson.*)

Getting It Ready

You'll need a blindfold and a willing leader.



Showing

Hello everyone. I'm glad you're here for Sparks! I have a question for you – have you ever played Pin the Tail on the Donkey? What do you do? You have to be _____ (**blindfolded!**). That's right, you have to be blindfolded so you can't see. Someone spins you around, and then you try to pin the tail on the donkey.

I need _____ (**a leader**) to come up and help me. We'll blindfold _____. Then she or he needs to walk across the room, get the _____ (**pick some object lying across the room**) and bring it back to me. OK, here you go, _____. Can you see anything? No? OK, good. Now start walking. (**Everyone watches as leader walks across the room, picks up the object and walks back.**)

OK, _____, what was it like to be blindfolded as you walked across the room? (It was hard, kind of scary and frustrating.) Yes, that must have been hard to find something without being able to see it. (Yes, it was.) OK, well thank you for helping us! Everyone give _____ a hand!

Telling

Tonight, we're looking at a Bible passage that talks about a man named Saul. Have any of you ever heard of Paul? He wrote a lot of the books in the Bible. Well, before he was called Paul, his name was Saul. Saul was not a nice man. Actually, before He trusted Christ, Saul searched for Christians and put them in prison! He worked very hard to hurt people who loved Jesus.

But, God still loves even the meanest people. God had big plans for Saul. Later on, Saul's name would be changed to Paul and he would lead many, many, many people to know Jesus Christ as Savior! So how did God help Paul to see that he was doing wrong? Let's look at what the Bible says about how Saul met God. Open your Bibles to Acts 9. We'll start in verse 1. I'll read verse 1 through verse 9. **(Read the verses. Be enthusiastic and emphatic in your reading to keep the Sparkies' attention.)**

Wow – isn't this interesting and wonderful? Saul was on his way to Damascus to find even more Christians to put in jail. God spoke to Him and flashed a light from heaven! How would you feel if you were walking from this room to the gym for Game Time and all of a sudden you heard a voice calling your name and a light flashed? That would be scary, huh?

Well, the Bible says that the other men around Saul were speechless. I think I'd be speechless too if I saw what they saw! Well, Saul finally gets up but he can't see! He's blind. Remember how _____ said it was frustrating and scary to walk around but not be able to see? That's probably what Saul felt like.

The men who were with Saul took him to Damascus. He didn't eat or drink anything for three days. But God wasn't planning to let him stay blind. While Saul was in Damascus, God told a man named Ananias to go to Saul and heal his eyes. Ananias knew who Saul was – he knew that Saul was mean to Christians and that he put them in prison. Ananias didn't want to heal Saul! He was scared of Saul! Let's see what Ananias said to God. Let's look again at Acts 9 and read what it says. We'll start in Acts 9:10 and read through verse 19. **(Read the verses.)**

So Ananias obeyed God and went to Saul and healed him. Something like scales fell off of Saul's eyes and he could see again! He was now filled with the Holy Spirit.

In the future, Saul would become a missionary. He would travel many, many miles by foot and boat, telling people about Jesus and teaching churches how to reach out to others. God can use anyone who trusts Christ as Savior to share the good news of the gospel.

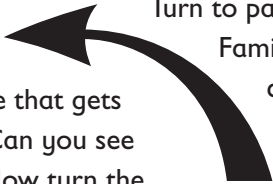


Challenging

God had big plans for Saul even before Saul knew it! God has big plans for all of us. Some of us will be missionaries, some of us will be teachers and some of us will work on computers. But you know what? God has big plans for you right now too! You can tell others about Jesus Christ at school, at the park and in your own family. Saul didn't start telling others about Jesus Christ until he was an adult, but the Bible doesn't say that only adults can tell others about Him. **EVERYONE** can tell others about Jesus Christ. This week, think about whom you can talk to and do it.

Family Follow Up

Gather in your family room or another room in your house that gets really dark at night when the lights are off. Ask your kids: Can you see the other people in your family? Can you see your hand? Now turn the lights back on. When Ananias healed Saul's eyes, and Saul could see again, the Bible says that something like scales fell off Saul's eyes and he received the Holy Spirit. When we trust Jesus Christ as Savior, it's like the scales have fallen off our eyes so we can see again and know Christ. Compare the darkness of the room to not knowing Jesus Christ as Savior. We can't see anything. But when we know Christ as Savior, we can see everything.



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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Idea

- **Wacky Shoe Night** – Saul was walking to Damascus when God met him on the road. Saul probably did A LOT of walking. Have a wacky shoe night where everyone wears their wackiest, funniest, most favorite shoes. Award prizes for most colorful, funniest, etc.

Game Ideas

- **Touch and Guess** – Blindfold a Sparkie. Have different objects in a paper bag. The Sparkie picks one out and has to guess what it is by touch. Keep the objects simple, like a calculator, Sparks handbook, plastic cup, etc.
- **Direct a Sparkie** – Divide your team into pairs. One Sparkie in each pair is blindfolded. The other Sparkie must give the blindfolded child directions (without touching him) to a designated spot in the room.

Teaching Options

If you have time, allow some Sparkies to walk around the room with a blindfold on. Ask them how it feels to be blind.

- Do you have someone in your church who is blind and wouldn't mind talking to your Sparkies about how he gets around, does his job, etc.? This would be especially poignant if the person has a positive testimony. (Be sensitive in asking someone to do this – some may not feel comfortable in talking with kids about their situation.)

SparksActivity

Here's a picture of a house. You need to draw the exact same house on the other side of the paper.
BUT, you have to do it with your eyes closed! No peeking!
Close your eyes and try to draw the same house.



Reading

Acts 9:20-31; Acts 22:17-21

Thinking

Needless to say, people were afraid of Saul after his conversion. After all, he stood by and watched the stoning of Stephen. He sought out Christians and persecuted them, arrested them and sent them to prison. Now he wanted to hang out with the disciples! Imagine their fear. Was he tricking them? Had he really changed?

As you read the Bible passages for this lesson, think about the situation from the perspective of the disciples but also think about it from Saul's perspective. He really **HAD** changed and yet few believed him. That would be discouraging. But he was as persistent in preaching Christ as he was in persecuting Christ's followers.



Looking It Up

Acts 9:23-25 *(Give the Sparkies the opportunity to look up these verses before you begin the lesson to avoid having to pause in the middle of your lesson. Ask them to mark the place in their Bibles.)*

Getting It Ready

A week or two prior to this lesson, find someone to play the part of Saul. And to make the skit more authentic, have the person playing Saul dress in a tunic, belt and sandals.

Showing

Hello everyone! I'm so glad you're here tonight. Hasn't it been a great night so far? Well it will only get better! Tonight we're meeting a man who lived many, many years ago. Saul is coming! He's here tonight! Actually, it's really _____ dressed up like Saul. But _____ will tell us what it might have been like for Saul to be a new Christian when everyone around remembered him only as the one who arrested believers. Well, look – here's Saul right now! **(Saul enters, smiling and waving.)**

Telling

You: Hi Saul! I'm so glad you could make it tonight!

Saul: Thank you! I'm glad you invited me. There was a time when people didn't want to see me because I spent my time arresting Christians.

You: Yes, we've heard about that in some of our Large Group Time lessons. You had quite the experience on the road to Damascus.

Saul: Yes, I did. As you may know, I was traveling along the road when a light shone on me. It was so bright! Kind of like when you look at the sun for too long and your eyes hurt.

You: That must have been a really bright light!

Saul: It was. It blinded me. I couldn't see anything even after the light went away. Well, God spoke to me on that road and told me to go to Damascus. He said He would tell me what to do when I got there. So I went to the city and waited for three days. Then Ananias came to me and healed me. I could see again!

Telling

continued

You: That's amazing! Did God speak to him and tell him to go see you?

Saul: Yes, God spoke to Ananias and told him to find me and heal me. Ananias didn't want to at first because he knew I was the one who put Christians in prison. But he obeyed God. So after Ananias healed me, I started preaching about Jesus right away. I was so excited!

You: Wow! You started preaching right away?

Saul: Yes. I finally knew the truth about God and I had to tell everyone. People were really frightened of me though. They kept asking if I was the same person – the person who had put Christians in prison. But I showed them that Jesus had changed me. I kept preaching and preaching. But there were some people who were still scared of me and didn't like me.

You: That's awful!

Saul: Yes, it's sad. But I kind of understood why some people were scared of me – I had done some really bad things to Christians. I had watched Stephen be stoned and didn't try to stop it. But that was only part of the problem.

You: What do you mean?

Saul: Well, in addition to the people who were scared of me, there were other people who were mad at me because they didn't like what I was preaching. Some of the Jewish people didn't like what I said about Jesus Christ. What I said was the truth, but they didn't like it so they wanted to kill me.

You: So what did you do when you found out about people who wanted to kill you?

Saul: Well, the people who believed I had changed and that I now loved Christ helped me. I couldn't leave the city through the main gates because the people who wanted to kill me were watching the gates, looking for me. So one night, my friends found a hole in the wall of the city – wait, you guys don't have walls around your cities, do you?

You: No, we don't have walls or gates around our cities.

Saul: OK, most cities back in my time had walls built around them for protection. Walls protected us from enemy attacks. And we had a big gate in the front of the city. The gate is where everyone went in and out of the city.

You: That's interesting – yeah, we don't have cities like that here today.

Saul: Well, now you can see what I'm talking about when I tell you how I escaped Damascus. So, where was I? Oh, yes, some friends helped me escape the city one night. We found a hole in the wall of the city, and they put me in a basket and lowered me through the opening.

You: Wow! What an escape!

Saul: Yes, it was. So I left Damascus and traveled to Jerusalem to find the disciples. When I got there, they were scared of me because they knew what I had done. But Barnabas talked with them and told them how God spoke to me on the road to Damascus, and how after I trusted Him as Savior,

I preached about Jesus to everyone. Then the disciples accepted me, and I was able to walk around Jerusalem without being scared. Unfortunately, after a while, some people in Jerusalem became upset with me and wanted to kill me. So I had to leave Jerusalem and go to Tarsus.

You: That's sad that people wanted to kill you again!

Saul: Yes, but I was doing what God wanted me to do – I was preaching about Him. I was telling people that the Lord Jesus Christ was His Son.

You: So what advice do you have for our Sparkies?

Saul: I would say that you should treat everyone with kindness, even the people who are mean to you. You never know – the person who is mean to you might know you love the Lord Jesus. They might want to know why you act the way you do and give you an opportunity to tell them about Christ.

You: That's great advice, Saul. Thank you so much for coming tonight. I think we all learned a lot from what happened to you.

Saul: You're very welcome. I'd love to come back again and tell you about one of my missionary journeys!

You: Sounds great! Let's plan on it!

Saul (leaving): OK, everyone. Have a great night!

You: Bye, Saul.



Challenging

Wow – Saul had some good advice for us. We all have had someone be mean to us, haven't we? Maybe someone at school took your pencil or tried to get you in trouble with the teacher. Maybe your brother or sister took your allowance money that was sitting on your dresser.

Did you notice that, after Saul trusted Jesus as Savior, he wasn't mean to people anymore? He told people about Jesus. Even though some people wanted to kill him, he kept preaching the good news of the gospel. We need to be kind to everyone. You never know – your kindness might help the other person. Jesus might use your kind words or actions to help that other person trust Jesus as Savior. So it's important to be kind – to the people who are your friends and to the people who are mean to you.

Let's pray right now and ask God to help us show kindness.

Family Follow Up

Help your children learn the importance of being kind. As a family, do something nice for someone. Bake cookies for the new family across the street, visit an elderly person for an hour or greet people as they arrive for church.

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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Ideas

- **Kindness Night** – Anytime leaders see a Sparkie showing kindness to someone else, that Sparkie gets a treat from a treat bowl. Turn the tables too – when Sparkies see a leader showing kindness to someone, they get to give the leaders a treat.
- **Hole in the Wall Night** – Put newspaper or paper bags over the door to your club room. Make a hole in the middle for the Sparkies to crawl through to get into club.

Game Idea

- **Charades** – On pieces of paper, write down different actions that show kindness. One at a time, Sparkies pick a piece of paper out of a basket and act it out.
- **Obstacle course** – Make an obstacle course for your clubroom. Kids jump over hurdles, crawl under chairs, etc. If someone has a play tunnel, ask if they'll loan it to your club for the evening – and make it part of the obstacle course.

Teaching Options

- Do some additional research on prisons of that day. Share age-appropriate information with the Sparkies. (In other words, tell them what they were like, but don't frighten them with gruesome detail.)
- Consider dressing up yourself for the skit. Decorate the room with items and pictures of places where Saul would have been.



SparksActivity

Draw a picture of one way you can show kindness to others.

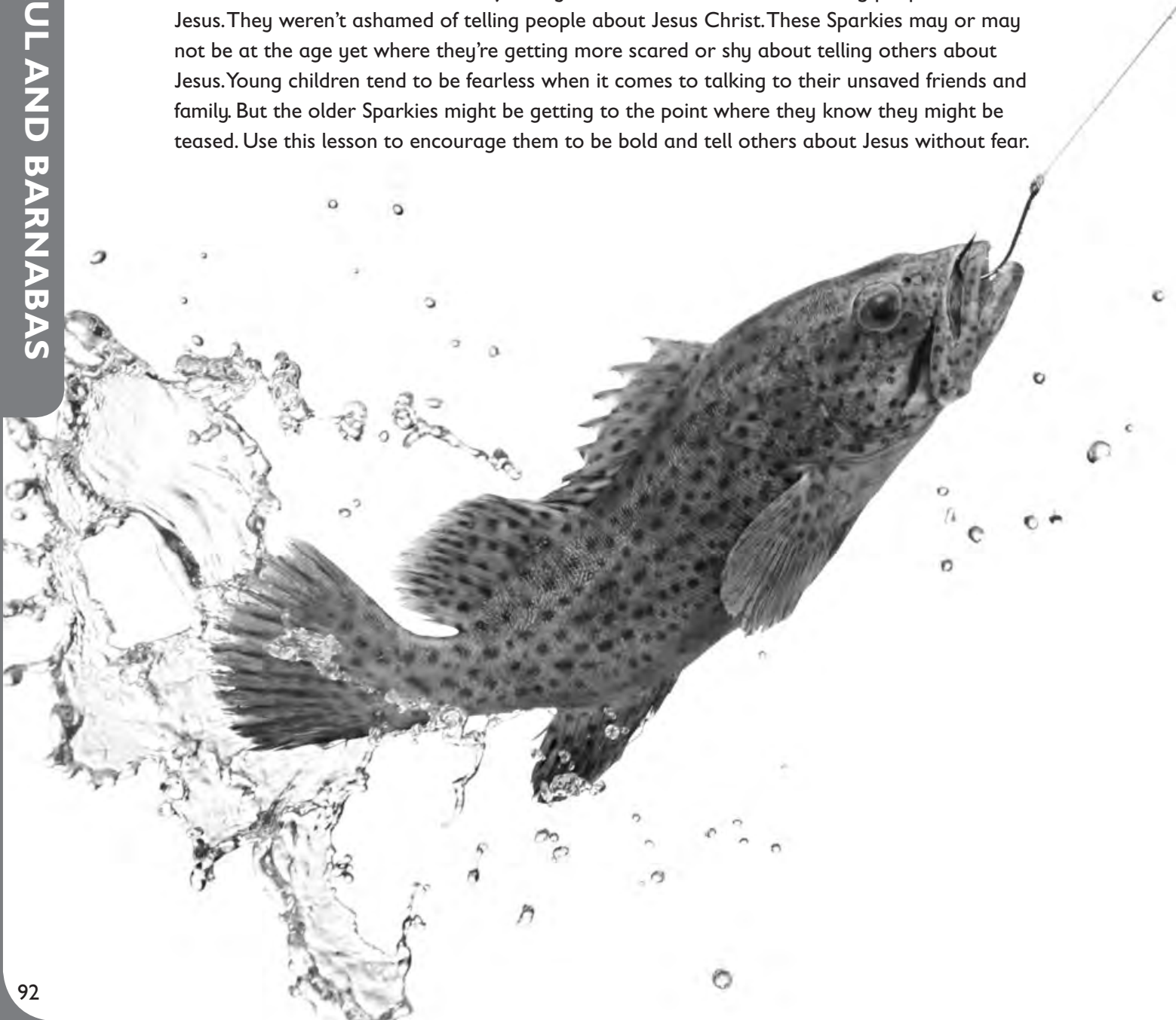
Reading

Acts 12:24-25, 13:1-13, 14:21-28

Thinking

Paul, Barnabas and John Mark set out on what became a two to three year journey. This trip wasn't your typical short-term mission trip. This was an indefinite period of time and a huge sacrifice. Maybe that's why John Mark left Paul and Barnabas at Perga to return to Jerusalem.

Paul and Barnabas continued their journey after John Mark left them, telling people about Jesus. They weren't ashamed of telling people about Jesus Christ. These Sparkies may or may not be at the age yet where they're getting more scared or shy about telling others about Jesus. Young children tend to be fearless when it comes to talking to their unsaved friends and family. But the older Sparkies might be getting to the point where they know they might be teased. Use this lesson to encourage them to be bold and tell others about Jesus without fear.



Looking It Up

Acts 14:21-22 (*Ask the Sparkies to look up the verses before you begin the lesson.*)

Getting It Ready

You'll need a fishing pole and fishing line. Have a curtain hanging between two chairs to act as the ocean and have someone behind the "ocean" to attach a fish or cutout of a fish to the end of your fishing pole. You'll also need a stuffed or paper fish.

Showing

Have any of you ever gone fishing? Fishing is fun. I love casting my line and seeing what I can catch. Well, I have my fishing pole here so I'm going to cast it into this ocean (**Point to the "ocean."**) and see what I can get. Here we go! (**Cast the line and wait ten seconds so the person behind the curtain can attach a stuffed fish, or cutout of a fish to the line. Then pretend that the fish is pulling on the line.**)

Look at this! Something is pulling on my line! I'm going to try to pull it out of the water. Ready everyone? Here we go! Wow! Look! It's a fish! And it's a BIG fish!

Telling

Fishing is fun! Have you ever heard anyone say that we need to be fishers of men? That sounds kind of weird, doesn't it? How are we supposed to fish for people? Well, let's start our lesson tonight, and I'll tell you how you all can be fishers of people. Oh, we won't really throw our fishing line out and try to catch people. No, this is a different kind of fishing. It's even better than trying to catch real fish!

Remember Saul? Saul used to persecute Christians, and then God spoke to him on the road to Damascus. He became a Christian and started to tell others about Jesus instead of trying to throw them in prison. Saul's name changed to Paul. We're not sure exactly when or why his name changed, but it did. So now Saul is called Paul.

Telling continued

Paul and Barnabas were at a church in Antioch where they prayed and taught others about Jesus. God wanted Paul and Barnabas to go out to the rest of the area to tell people about Jesus. So Paul and Barnabas set off with another man called John Mark. They traveled to many, many cities and churches. Their job was to tell everyone about Jesus Christ and how He lived a perfect life on earth, died on the cross and came alive again to save people from their sins.

They went from Antioch to Cypress and then to Perga. From Perga they went to another place called Pisidia. But before they went to Pisidia, John Mark decided to leave them and go to Jerusalem. Later on in the Bible, Paul says that John Mark left because he wasn't all that excited about being on the journey.

From Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. That's a lot of cities to visit! And this wasn't a short trip. This was a loooong trip and they weren't even sure when the trip would end. By the time Paul and Barnabas traveled back to Antioch, their missionary journey had lasted two to three years!

So when Paul and Barnabas finished teaching and telling people about Jesus in Derbe, they decided to go back to the cities they had just been to. Why would they do that? Let's look at what the Bible says in Acts 14:21-22. I'll read the verses for us. **(Give Sparkies a minute to find their places.)** They wanted to go back to follow up with people. They wanted to see if the people had questions and to encourage them in their new faith.



After Paul and Barnabas went back to the cities they had already visited, they returned to Antioch, which is where they had started their journey.

Paul and Barnabas told many, many people about Jesus. Sometimes it was hard because some of the people didn't want to hear what they had to say. But they refused to stop talking. They were fishers of men. To be a fisher of men means to tell people about Jesus – to tell them that Jesus lived a perfect life on earth, that He died on the cross and came alive again three days later to pay the punishment for our sins.

Are you a fisher of people? Do you sometimes get scared to tell others about Jesus? Paul and Barnabas knew that the Holy Spirit was with them and the Holy Spirit gave them courage to tell others about Jesus. The Holy Spirit can give us the courage too. We have the Holy Spirit when we trust Jesus as Savior.

(Bring out your fishing pole again.) Remember how I went fishing and caught a fish? We go fishing for people when we tell others about Jesus Christ. It's not up to us to make sure others trust Jesus as Savior. That's up to the Holy Spirit. But what we ARE supposed to do is tell others about Jesus.

Challenging

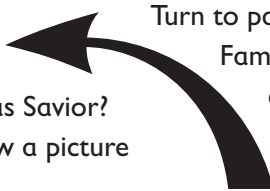
Who do you need to tell about Jesus? Is it your friend at school? Is it your grandma? This week I want you all to pray for the chance to tell someone about Jesus Christ. If you tell your friend at school about Jesus, why not invite him or her to Awana?

Maybe there are some of you here tonight who haven't trusted Jesus as Savior. Please talk with me or one of the other leaders. We would LOVE to tell you about Jesus and show you what the Bible says about trusting Jesus as Savior. It's the most important decision you'll ever make!

Let's pray together right now. **(Pray for the Sparkies as they tell others about Jesus. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give them courage. Also pray for anyone in club who may not have trusted Jesus as Savior yet.)**

Family Follow Up

Do you have a family member who doesn't know Jesus as Savior? Ask your Sparkie to write a letter to that person or draw a picture for him. As a family, pray for the person's salvation.



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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Fish Night** – Serve Goldfish® crackers as a snack or as treats for wining teams (as always check for allergies). If you or other teachers have fish in a small bowl at home, bring a few to club. Or ask one or two Sparkies to bring their fish to club for the night. Decorate the room to look like an aquarium.
- **Journey Night** – Talk about Paul and Barnabas and what they might've taken on their trip.

Game Idea

- **Fishing Game** – Have small “pools” set up – these can be rubber tubs or buckets. Provide fishing poles (**sticks with string and magnets tied to the end of the string**). Draw fish on construction paper and then cut out. (**For sturdier fish, cover with clear contact paper or laminate them and then cut out.**) Glue a magnet to one side of each fish. Put the fish in your “pools.” Let the kids go fishing.

Teaching Option

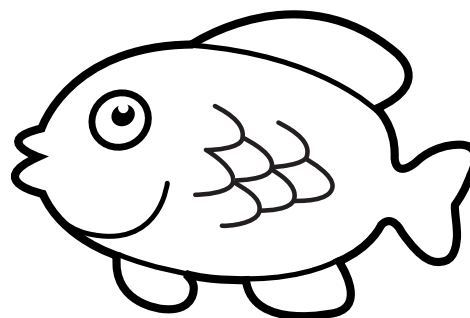
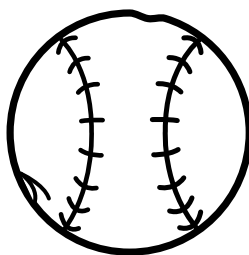
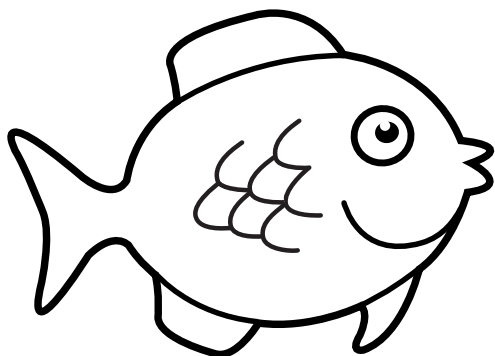
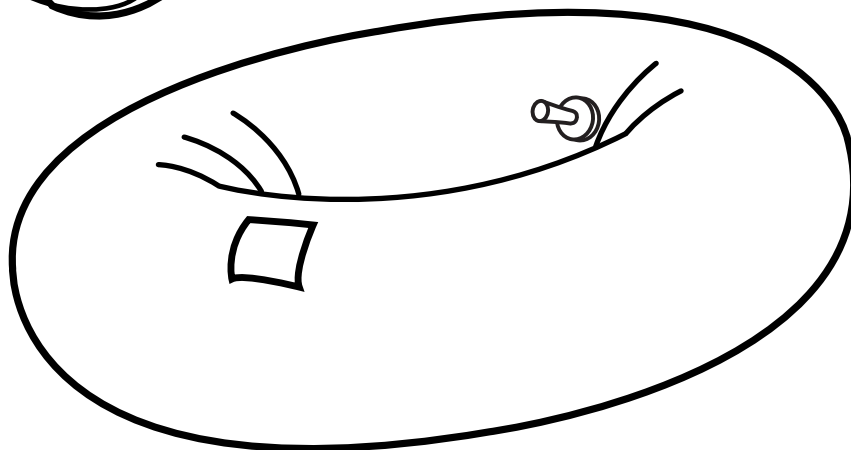
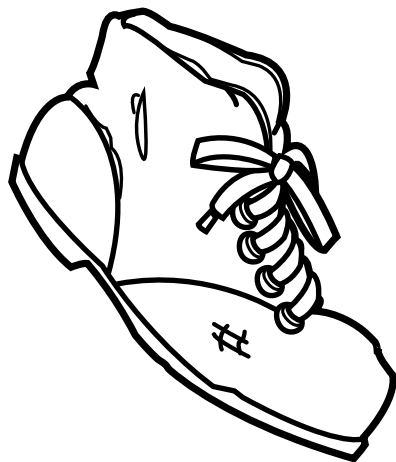
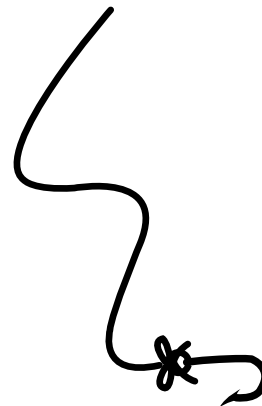
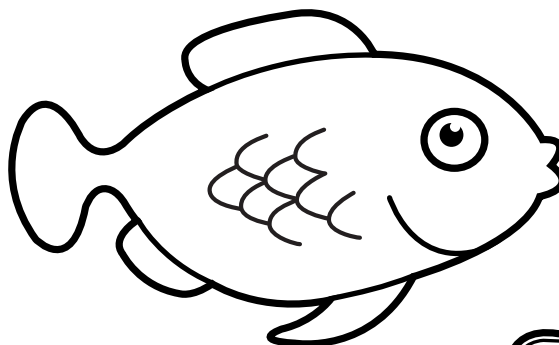
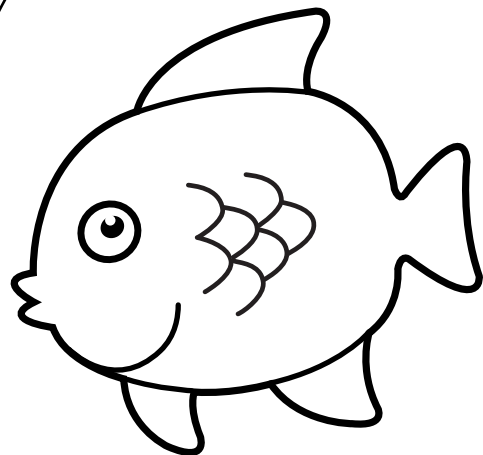
- Bring in a map of Paul's first missionary journey and reference it as you talk about the different cities Paul and Barnabas visited. Sparkies will remember more when they have visuals. You can find maps that show the cities and the paths that Paul and Barnabas would have taken online.

SparksActivity

It's time to go fishing!

Circle the things you don't want to get when you're fishing.

Then color the pictures when you're done.



Reading

Acts 14:8-28

Thinking

We need to be grounded in the Word so that when others come along and attempt to shake our faith, we know the truth and can stand our ground. The people in Lystra saw the miracles that Paul did and instead of trusting Jesus Christ as Savior, they thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods. Then other people from Antioch and Iconium (most likely the people who had wanted to kill Paul before) came and encouraged the crowds to stone Paul.

Because these people weren't grounded in God's Word, they didn't know the truth and they acted foolishly. We can encourage these young Sparkies to learn God's Word. No one is too young to hear God's Word. It's important to know what God's Word says because when we know what God says, we won't listen to people telling us lies.



HOLY BIBLE

Looking It Up

Acts 14:14-15 (*Have the Sparkies look up the verses before you begin the lesson.*)

Getting It Ready

Have several stuffed animals on hand such as a bear, rabbit and horse (or whichever ones you can find).



Showing

Hi everyone. Are you ready for Large Group Time? I am! I have something very important to talk about tonight. But first, let's play a quick game. **(Hold up the bear.)** This is a porcupine. **(Sparkies will say it's not.)** It's not? Well, what is it? **(A bear!)** That's right it's a bear. OK, what about this? **(Hold up the rabbit.)** What is it? I think it's a frog. **(No it's not!)** It's not? OK, what is it? **(A rabbit!)** OK, it's a rabbit. OK, one more. **(Hold up horse.)** What's this? **(A horse!)** It is? I thought it was a moose!

Telling

You guys did a great job with our game. You know your animals really well. You must have learned about them somewhere. You probably learned about them from your parents or at school or maybe you've visited a zoo or two. Or maybe you have a book about animals.

It's important to learn as much as you can because then you can move up to the next grade. Soon you'll be in middle school, then high school and maybe even college. Even as an adult, you will learn new things all the time. But what if you didn't work hard to learn things in school? Would you be able to go to the next grade or high school or college? No! And you wouldn't know that this **(hold up the bear)** is a bear and not a porcupine. Learning as much as we can is a good thing.

And it's the same with the Bible. The Bible is God's Word to us. It's important that we learn as much about the Bible as we can. But why is it important? We'll look in the Bible to find out. We've been talking a lot about Paul. We talked about how he became a Christian, how he escaped in a basket and how he and Barnabas went on their first missionary journey. Now we'll talk about an event that happened during their first missionary journey. I'll tell you part of it and then we'll read some of it from the Bible.

Telling

continued

Paul and Barnabas were in Lystra teaching the good news of Jesus Christ to the people. One day Paul saw a man who couldn't walk because the man had been born with legs that didn't work right. The man had been listening to Paul teach. Paul looked at him and told him to stand up. The man stood up and was healed! This is wonderful, right? God allowed Paul to heal someone.

The people in the city heard about the healing of the crippled man and they were really excited. But they weren't excited because Paul healed someone with the power of God. No, they thought that Barnabas and Paul were gods. This made Paul and Barnabas very sad and scared. They wanted people to see that what they did was because of God's power. Paul and Barnabas told the people that they weren't gods.

Let's look in our Bibles and read Acts 14:14-15. **(Read the verses.)** See? Paul wanted the people to know that God did the miracle and that he (Paul) was using God's power. But the people didn't listen. Then some other people from Iconium and Antioch came to Lystra. These people were the ones who tried to kill Paul before because they didn't like what he was saying. But Paul and Barnabas were able to get away unharmed. So these same people now came to Lystra to try to kill Paul again.

These people from Iconium and Antioch got the crowd (the people who thought Paul and Barnabas were gods) to hate them too. They probably lied to them about what Paul and Barnabas were teaching. Instead of listening to Paul and Barnabas (the ones who were telling the truth), the crowd listened to the people from Iconium and Antioch who hated Paul and Barnabas. Then they took Paul and stoned him! But God still had work for Paul to do on earth so Paul didn't die.

Can you see how foolish the crowd was? They didn't listen to what Paul and Barnabas said. If they had been listening to Paul and Barnabas, they could have learned the truth and that what they were saying was from God's Word. That way they would have known that the other people who hated Paul and Barnabas were lying.

It's important for us to read our Bibles and learn God's Word. There are people in this world who believe lots of different things. But the TRUE thing to believe is that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life on earth, died on the cross and came alive again three days later to save us from the punishment of our sins. If someone says there's a different way to have eternal life with Jesus Christ, it's a lie. We need to read the Bible so we can know what's true.

You may be young, but you're never too young to learn God's Word. And you know what? You learn God's Word when you memorize Bible verses and read your Sparks handbooks! That's a good way to learn the truth in the Bible so you can know when something is not true.



Challenging

OK, we all work in our handbooks and memorize our Bible verses for Sparks, but you can do more! If you can read on your own, ask your mom or dad to get you a devotional so you can spend time with God every day. And don't forget to read some of the Bible each day. You don't have to read a lot, but read it so you can learn truth. If you can't read on your own quite yet, ask Mom or Dad to read the Bible with you or to read a Bible devotional with you. Ask Dad or Mom to explain words that you may not understand.

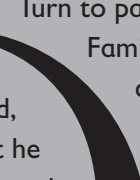
Of course, the most important part of the Bible for us to know is that Jesus died for our sins and He came alive again. He is now in heaven preparing a place for those who know Him as Savior.

If you would like to know more about trusting Christ, ask me or one of the other leaders to talk with you. This is the most important decision you can ever make.

Family Follow Up

Visit a Christian bookstore together. If your child can read, find a simple children's devotional or devotional Bible that he can read on his own. If your child can't read, promise to spend time each day reading the devotional or Bible together. Make time for the family to gather together and talk about what you have read and learned.

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



Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- **Inside-Out Night** – A week prior, announce that Sparkies need to come to club the next week with their clothes inside out. Have awards ready for the Sparkies who take it the furthest – like wearing their socks inside out, etc. Points are awarded to all Sparkies who come with at least two articles of clothing inside out – vests included!

Game Idea

- **True or False** – A week prior, have leaders write down several things about themselves – some that are true and some that aren't. Then go through them, announce the leader's name and have Sparkies guess whether each statement is true or false.

Teaching Option

- Ask a leader to share a time when someone told her something in the Bible wasn't true. How did knowing the Bible help her understand the person was saying something wrong?

SparksActivity

Are you ready to think? You have some true or false questions to answer!
Read the question and circle True or False.

Jesus was born in Rome.

True or false?

Red and blue make purple.

True or false?

Paul's name used to be Saul.

True or false?

There are 27 books in the New Testament.

True or false?

Some of the Bible is untrue.

True or false?

Sparky is a lady bug.

True or false?

Trusting Jesus is only one of many ways we can have eternal life.

True or false?

Answers: False, True, True, True, True, False, False, False

Reading

Acts 15:36-16:15

Thinking

This Bible passage focuses on Paul's second missionary journey. On this trip, Paul spent a lot of time visiting the churches and towns he had visited on the previous journey. The goal was to strengthen churches by letting them know the decisions that the elders and apostles in Jerusalem had made. Unfortunately, Barnabas was not on this trip. Paul and Barnabas disagreed on whether or not to bring John Mark with them. The disagreement was so severe that they parted ways. Paul took Silas and left to go visit the churches and Barnabas took John Mark and left for Cyprus. Later we discover that Paul and John Mark were again friends (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24 and 2 Timothy 4:11).

What's interesting to note is that Paul's work resulted in the churches growing in their numbers daily, and the Bible is specific in telling us that Paul's travels were fruitful.

Looking It Up

Acts 15:37-38 (*Before you begin the lesson, have the Sparkies find the verses in their Bibles.*)

Getting It Ready

It's time for Saul/Paul to shake the dust off the tunic and belt again! Ask the same person who played Saul in the lesson about Saul's escape to don the tunic again for this lesson. Tell him a week or two before so he can prepare.



Showing

Here we are again – it's Large Group Time! We've been learning some great things.
(For a minute or two, review what was learned the previous week.)

I'm so glad we've been able to learn these things together. Tonight is a special night. How many of you remember when Saul visited us? Good, a bunch of you do! Well Saul is here again tonight! Except now his name is Paul.

Telling

(Paul enters, waving and smiling.)

Paul: Hello everyone!

You: Hello Paul! I'm so glad you could come back!

Paul: I am too! I want to tell you about my second missionary journey. So here I am!

You: We're looking forward to learning more about your travels.

Paul: Then I'll start right away. My second missionary journey didn't start off very well.

You: That's too bad. What happened?

Paul: Barnabas and I were in Antioch, teaching and preaching. I thought it would be a good thing to go back to the churches we had visited on our first journey. I wanted to tell the people the decisions the apostles and elders had made at the church in Jerusalem.

Barnabas wanted to bring his cousin, John Mark, along with us, but I didn't think it was a good idea. John Mark had deserted us before. It's important to be committed to something and to stick with it. But John Mark didn't do that. He wasn't trustworthy.

You: Wow – I agree it's important to be trustworthy. When we say we're going to do something we need to do it.

Paul: Exactly. Barnabas and I disagreed about this issue, so he chose to take John Mark and go to Cyprus. I took Silas and went to visit the churches we had been to on the last trip. It was a good trip because we were able to share about the decisions the apostles had made.

You: What kinds of decisions were they?

Paul: The elders and apostles in Jerusalem said that Christians needed to obey things that God says in His Word, like avoiding sin. We thought it was good to deliver these decrees in person. Wait ... do you all know what a decree is?

You: Some of us might, but please tell us so everyone can know.

Paul: A decree is an order or a rule that people are to follow and obey.

You: That makes sense, doesn't it everyone?

Paul: Great! OK, so we told the churches about all the decrees that came from the elders and apostles in Jerusalem. And as we did, the churches grew in numbers every day!

You: Wait a minute – EVERY day? You mean every day more people came to the churches?

Paul: Yes! Isn't it exciting? The churches were growing every day. There's also another exciting part about this journey. Well, actually there are a couple more things, but the first one is that on this trip I met Timothy. Many people had told me that Timothy was a godly young man, and people spoke very well of him. So I asked him to come on the rest of our journey with us.

Another wonderful thing about this journey was that we got to meet Lydia. She and her entire family trusted Jesus as Savior and were baptized. We were able to stay at her home for a time.

You: It sounds like this second journey was a great success!

Paul: Yes, it was. People trusted Jesus as Savior, we were able to encourage the churches, and Timothy joined us on our journey. It was a good trip and God blessed us and many of the people we met.

You: OK, Paul, last time I asked you to share something with us that we can learn from your experiences. So I have the same question now – what’s one lesson we can learn from your second missionary journey?

Paul: I think a very important thing you can learn is to be trustworthy. John Mark deserted us on a previous trip but Barnabas wanted to bring him with us on this second journey. I was afraid John Mark would leave us again when we would most need him. So we all need to be trustworthy. That means that we all should do what we say we will do.

(You could read a couple of the verses mentioned in the “Thinking” section to show that John Mark eventually did work again with Paul.)

You: That’s a great lesson to learn! Thanks so much for coming back, Paul.

Paul: You’re welcome. I’m glad I was able to tell you what happened on my second missionary journey. OK, bye everybody!

You: Bye, Paul.

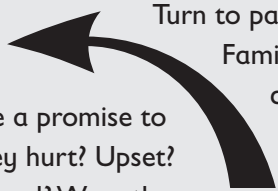


Challenging

Wasn’t it great to see Paul again? And he mentioned something very important for us to remember: we need to be trustworthy. Let’s look in our Bibles at Acts 15:37 and 38. **(Read the verses.)** When we say we’ll do something, we need to do it. Like when you tell your mom you’ll clean your room right after dinner – you should clean your room as soon as you finish dinner, not an hour later, not the next day. Or when you tell a friend you’ll help him learn his verses for Sparks – you need to be true to your word and help him with his verses. When we are trustworthy, we show our love for God.

Family Follow Up

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



Ask family members to share a time someone made a promise to them, but didn't keep it. How did they feel? Were they hurt? Upset? What about a time when someone did keep their word? Were they happy? (This would be a good time to discuss that sometimes people can't keep their promises. Dad promises to take you bowling after work, but a crisis happens and he gets home too late. Mom promises to take you shopping for shoes, but then comes down with the flu. Tell your kids that as much as possible, you keep your promises, but sometimes life gets in the way! Yet, God ALWAYS keeps His promises.)

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Tunic Night** – Everyone wears a tunic (over other clothes) and belt and sandals to dress like people did in the days of Paul. Use brown paper to make a sand path to represent the path Paul, Silas and Timothy would have walked on their journey.
- **Purple Night** – Many Sparks-aged girls love the color purple. Have kids wear purple to club. Provide a purple snack. Share the biography of Lydia.

Game Ideas

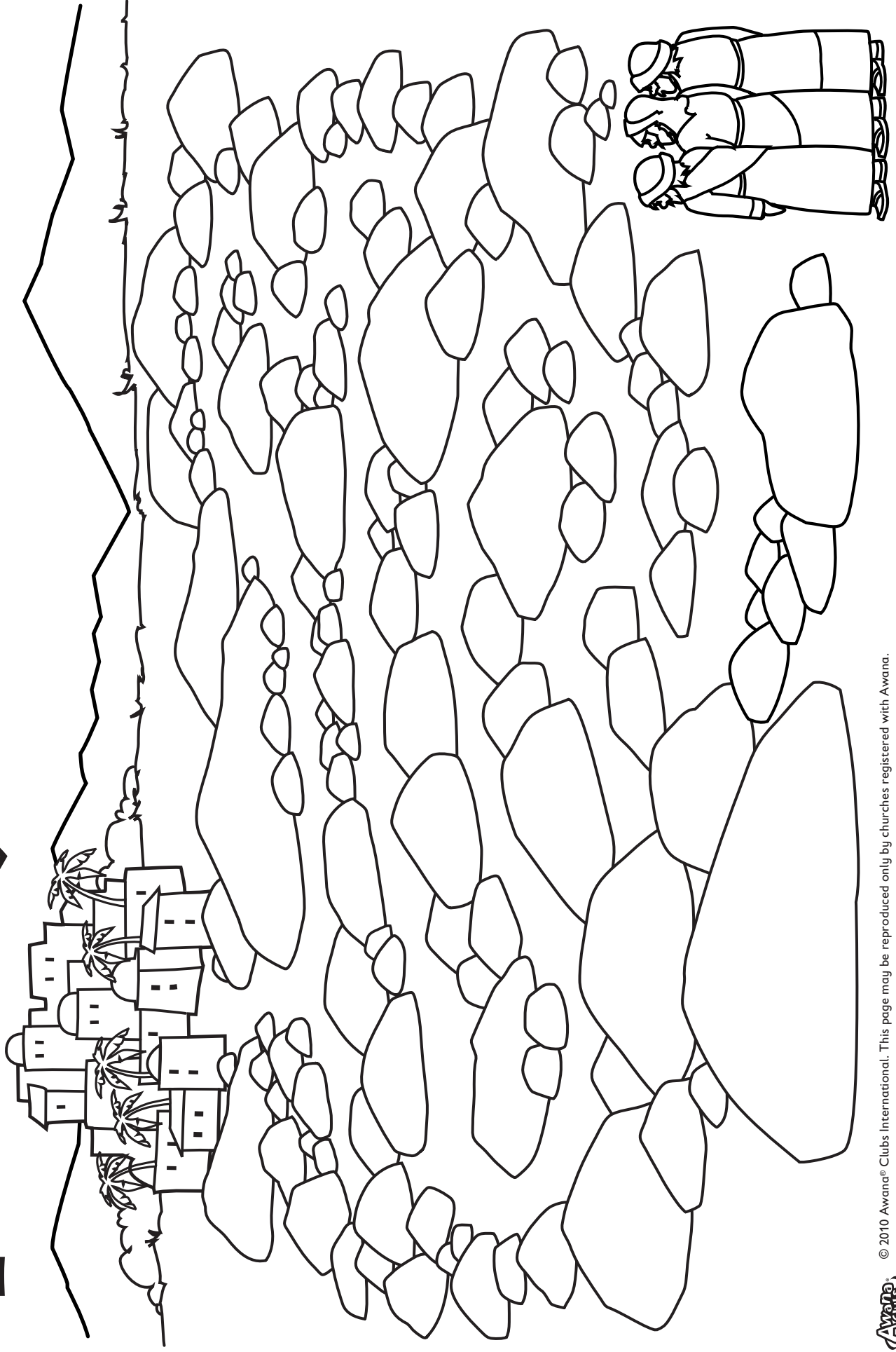
- **Tunic Race** – Sparkies need to carry items, like a ball, in their tunics as they run around the game circle. They carry the ball in their tunics as they run around the circle. As they pass their team and run in to get the center pin or beanbag, they need to hang on to the ball. (This is why it's important to wear clothes under their tunics!)

Teaching Options

- Consider writing the takeaway in the Challenging section on a board or easel. Have the Sparkies say it with you – I need to be trustworthy. Saying it and seeing it will instill it in their hearts.
- Study Lydia and give a brief biography of her to your Sparkies.

SparksActivity

You have a job to do – you need to complete the maze so that Paul, Silas and Timothy can get to the next town on their missionary journey.



Reading

Acts 18

Thinking

Life wasn't easy for Aquila and Priscilla. We know they were evicted from Italy when Emperor Claudius demanded that all Jews leave Rome. From there they went to Corinth where they made a living making tents.

That was when they met the apostle Paul – also a tentmaker. Later they moved to Ephesus.

Wherever they were, however, they showed hospitality to those around them. They welcomed Paul as a fellow tentmaker (instead of resenting the competition in the tent-making market). Later, they invited Apollos, a brilliant man from Alexandria, to stay with them while he was in town. We also read that they had a church in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19).

But Aquila and Priscilla's spiritual gifts did not stop at hospitality – they were also good teachers. Apollos was a great speaker, but he was mixed up – he knew about God, but he didn't have the rest of the story. He needed to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that His death on the cross provided salvation by grace. Instead of becoming angry that Apollos was not preaching the complete message, they took him into their home and gently explained Scripture.

Wouldn't you like to meet this gracious couple who served the Lord together by reaching out to others both in friendship and biblical knowledge?



Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Pictures of tents used during Bible times (You can find these on the Web – you might even find a picture of a contemporary Bedouin tent village with satellite dishes!)
- Copies of the skits for those taking part
- Time to practice the skits



Showing

Skit #1 – *The skit has three actors: two friend Sparkies and a new kid. (You may use Sparkies to act this out, but you would probably do better with leaders acting as Sparkies, or ask some Trek® or Journey™ teenagers if they'd be willing to do the skits.)*

(Two Sparkies are standing together talking when New Kid walks in the door.)

Sparkie 1: I am so excited that it's Love Your Neighbor Night.

Sparkie 2: I wonder what games we'll play.

(Meanwhile, New Kid looks around wondering where to go and what to do.)

Sparkie 1: I hope I can be on your team for games. I don't like to be with people I don't know.

Sparkie 2: That new girl who came last week was weird!

(New Kid comes over to talk with the other two Sparkies, but they ignore her.)

Sparkie 1 (whispering to her friend): Do you even KNOW her? Who IS she and why is she bothering US?

New Kid: Can I be your friend?

(Two Sparkies walk away. New Kid sits down on the floor, head down.)

Telling

Aquila and Priscilla lived in Rome in the region of Italy way back in Bible times. (Italy did not become a country until much later.) You might have heard of Rome or even know someone who is from there. Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers and a lot of people needed tents back then, so making tents was a good job.

At that time, Rome was ruled by Emperor Claudius, a man who didn't want any Jews around, so he told them all to get out! Since Aquila and Priscilla were Jews, that meant they had to leave too. So they headed to Corinth, an important city in the country of Greece.

Many people came to the city to trade their goods. Farmers, who lived nearby, came into the city to sell their crops. You can imagine that Corinth was a busy place.

One day Aquila and Priscilla met another tentmaker. This man's name was Paul. Have you heard of him? Who can tell me something about the apostle Paul? **(Give Sparkies an opportunity to answer, but if no one volunteers an answer, move on.)**

Paul was a missionary (someone who told people about the Lord Jesus) and he was also a tentmaker. He probably learned how to make tents from his father – because that's how boys learned how to do things back then. Paul was from a city that made tents from a special kind of goat hair. Many of the tents were made for the Roman army, so people could earn a lot of money from making tents.

When Paul arrived in Corinth and started making tents in that city, he met Aquila and Priscilla. Now, Aquila and Priscilla could've been mean to Paul and told him to get away because they were the best tentmakers in the city and they didn't want anyone else making tents.

But that's not what they did. They worked with him.

Now, because there were a lot of people in the city of Corinth and a lot of people were making a lot of money, the people started spending their money on bad things. They didn't like it when Paul came to their synagogues and preached about the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes the people were very mean toward Paul.

But Aquila and Priscilla loved God too, and they listened to all the good things Paul was preaching to the people. For awhile, they even opened their home so the people could have a church where they would meet together and learn more about the Lord Jesus.

Later, Aquila and Priscilla went with Paul when he left for Ephesus. But when they arrived in Ephesus, Paul moved on and Priscilla and Aquila stayed there.

A Jewish man, named Apollos, came to town. He was a smart man and knew a lot of Scripture. He loved God and spoke in the synagogues, telling other people about God too. But Apollos had a problem – he didn't understand that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God. He didn't understand that when Christ died, He took the punishment for our sins. People needed to believe that Christ died and rose again and they needed to trust Him as Savior. This was God's gift of grace to us. (Grace: God giving us something that we did not earn and could never repay.)

Once again Aquila and Priscilla showed their friendliness. They invited Apollos to their home. They had learned a lot from the apostle Paul and now they taught Apollos what they had learned from Paul. Apollos listened to what they were saying. Later he moved on to another city and taught other people about the grace of God.

Aquila and Priscilla understood God's grace. They also showed grace in the way they acted toward others. **They** were friendly to Paul. **They** were friendly to Apollos. **They** were friendly to the other Christians by allowing them to meet in their house for church.

Challenging

Because of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ died for us too. He took the punishment for our sins and offers us the gift of eternal life.

If you do not know the Lord Jesus as Savior, talk to one of your leaders tonight. This is too important for you to wait even another week.

If you do know Christ as Savior, practice showing grace to those around you by being kind and friendly.

Skit #2 – The skit has three actors: two friend Sparkies and a new kid. *(You may use Sparkies to act this out, but you would probably do better with leaders acting as Sparkies, or ask some Trek or Journey teenagers if they'd be willing to do the skits.)*

(Two Sparkies are standing together talking when New Kid walks in the door.)

Sparkie 1: I am so excited that it's Love Your Neighbor Night.

Sparkie 2: I wonder what games we'll play.

(Meanwhile, New Kid looks around wondering where to go and what to do.)

Sparkie 1: Oh, look! I think that girl is new. Let's go talk to her.

Sparkie 2: We can tell her all about Sparks and what to do and where to go.

(New Kid comes over to talk with the other two Sparkies.)

Sparkie 1: Hi, is this your first time here?


New Kid: Yes.

Sparkie 2: You can be our friend. Come on, let's go get in line.

(The three Sparkies walk off together.)

Family Follow Up

Think of three people/families that could use some kindness. This could be a family who's going through a difficult time because of a job loss or illness, or an elderly neighbor who is housebound or a church staff member who has been overly busy. As a family, make a Thinking of You basket for each of these people. Fill the basket with some baked goods, flowers, homemade cards, soup mixes, tea bags, etc. Copy the activity page – one for each basket. Decorate the page in cool colors.



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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Bring a Friend Night** – Even though this lesson comes near the end of the book, plan a special night for Sparkies to bring guests. Announce the night a few weeks in advance and make invitations for Sparkies to hand out to their friends. Give small prizes to those Sparkies who bring a friend. Emphasize that Aquila and Priscilla were excited about people knowing the gospel.
- **Travel Night** – Aquila and Priscilla traveled from Rome to Corinth to Ephesus. Plan a travel theme. Tell kids to dress as tourists. Serve snacks from another country.

Game Ideas

- **Lug the Luggage** – Use old suitcases (one of equal size for each team) for games. You could do relays, pulling the suitcases around the circle. You could add something each time a lap is completed (pins, beanbags, batons, etc.).
- **Photo Scavenge** – Borrow four inexpensive digital cameras and assign each team to take a list of pictures of things such as a Sparkie doing a cartwheel, a Sparkie making a funny face, a Sparkie who is dressed in red, etc.

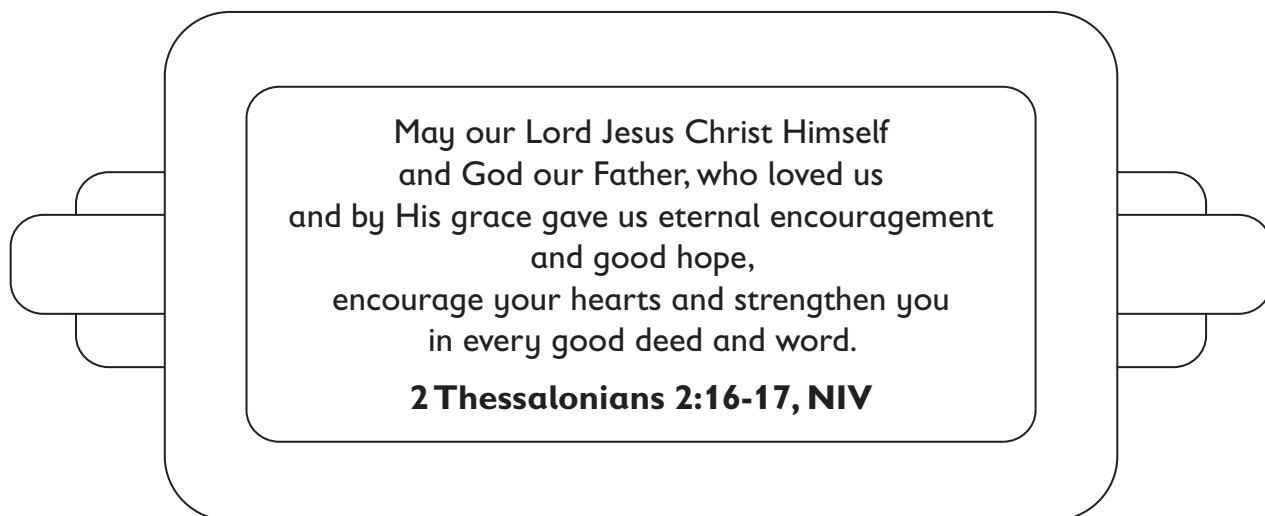
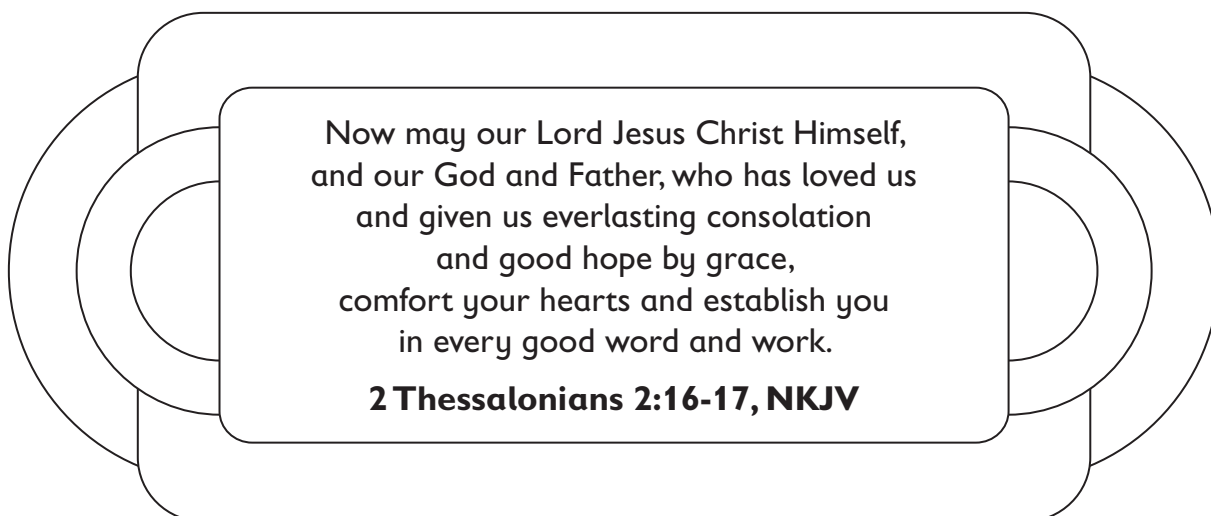
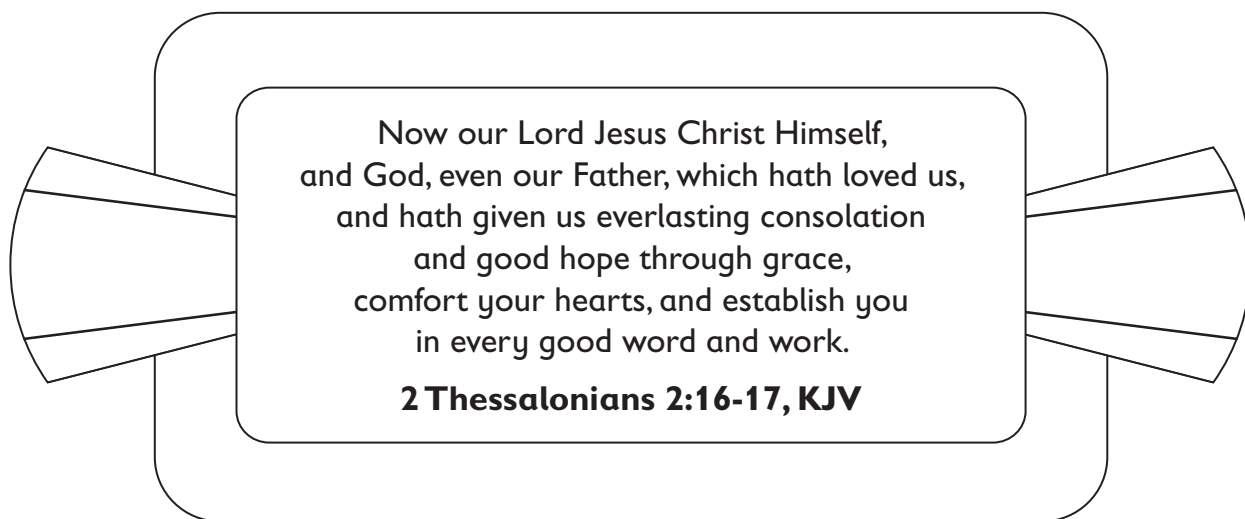
Teaching Options

- Announce that the next week will be Sparky Kindness week. Challenge the Sparkies to go out of their way to show kindness to someone. Next week, talk about the same lesson. Give opportunity for Sparkies to tell how they showed kindness to others.
- Look up verses about friendship in the Bible and discuss them with your Sparkies.
Proverbs 17:17 – A friend should be a friend at all times.
Proverbs 18:24 – A friend should be there for you.
Proverbs 19:4 – Sometimes people are friends because of what you have rather than for who you are.
Proverbs 27:6 – A friend should be trusted.
Ecclesiastes 4:10 – A friend should help you when you're in trouble.

SparksActivity

Make three copies of the verse. Color the letters and make a cool frame.

Add the verse card to your basket.



Reading

Acts 19:1-12

Thinking

We're never too young (or too old) to tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage gives us a glimpse of Paul's intensity in preaching the gospel. Acts 19:8-10 tells us that Paul spent three months in a synagogue, preaching and teaching – all to no avail. Then he spent two years (yep, that's right – two years) teaching the disciples and preaching the gospel so that every Jew and Greek in Asia could have opportunity to hear the Word of God. EVERY Jew and Greek. Wow. Paul was the real deal. We know the Bible says that Paul dedicated his whole life to preaching the gospel, but when we hear of actual time frames such as three months and two years it makes an impact.

Your young Sparkies probably know that they need to tell their friends and family members about Jesus Christ. But maybe they're shy or they think they're too young to be listened to. We are called to tell others about Jesus Christ. The rest is up to the Holy Spirit. Encourage your young Sparkies to be bold, even though they're young. Telling others about Jesus Christ is what EVERY Christian is supposed to do – not just adults.

Looking It Up

Acts 19:8-10 (*Have the Sparkies look up the verses before you begin the lesson.*)

Getting It Ready

Have some kind of snack that you can munch on as you walk in. Have a bottle of water, toothpaste and a tooth brush ready. You're going to brush your teeth! Ask another leader to volunteer to ask you to brush your teeth at the appropriate time. Print out Acts 19:8 in bold and in regular font. *(Bring a small paper cup to spit in when you're finished brushing.)*

Showing

(Walk in chewing on a snack.) Hey everyone. It's good to see you. Pardon me while I finish my snack. Yum. That was a good snack.

Other leader: Shouldn't you brush your teeth?

You: What? Brush my teeth? Nah. I haven't brushed my teeth in weeks.

(The other leaders gasp – and hopefully some kids will say “gross,” etc.)

You: What's wrong? Why should I brush my teeth? I'm fine.

Other leader: Well, it's important that we brush our teeth to keep them clean so we don't get infections or cavities and so our breath doesn't stink! **EVERYONE** is supposed to brush his or her teeth! It's something we all do.

You: Hmm. You have a point. OK, I'll brush my teeth when I get home.

Other leader: NO! Please brush them now!

You: Oh, all right, I'll brush them now. *(Brush them with some flair.)* OK, how do they look? I feel squeaky clean!



Telling

Now that my teeth are clean and my breath is fresh, let's get on with our lesson, shall we? Guess who we're talking about tonight? We've been talking about him A LOT lately in our Large Group Time lessons! **(Paul!)** That's right. We're talking about Paul again! But the book of the Bible we'll read from wasn't written by Paul. It was written by Luke.

The book I'm talking about is Acts. Acts gives us a history of some of Paul's travels. It's also an account of how the gospel spread around the area after Jesus came alive again and went up to heaven.

The book of Acts focuses a lot on Paul and what he did to tell others about Jesus Christ. Let's open our Bibles and read Acts 19:8-10 together. **(If there's a Sparkie who is a good reader, ask him or her to read the passage. Otherwise read it yourself.)** Wow. Paul was a very busy man! He spent a lot of time telling others about Jesus Christ! Look – it says in verse 8 that he taught in a synagogue for three months! Then it says that he spent time teaching and preaching for two years! TWO YEARS!! That's a lot of time! OK, look back at verse 8. See how it says that Paul spoke boldly? That's a word I want you to remember.

When you think of the word *bold* what comes to mind? **(Allow for some answers.)** Sometimes I think of my mom's spaghetti sauce. She makes it strong and spicy, but it tastes so good! Or you might think of your computer. If you want something to be bold **(make it bigger and darker)**, you click on the B in the toolbar. **(Hold up the piece of paper with Acts 19:8 printed in bold and printed in regular font.)** Well, when the Bible says bold here in Acts 19:8, it means that Paul told others about Jesus Christ without any fear. He was bold. He didn't shy away from the chance to tell others about Jesus. He told how Jesus came to earth to live a perfect life, died on the cross and came alive again three days later to take the punishment for our sins. Paul was bold.

You all can be bold too! You might think you're too young to tell others about Jesus Christ but you're not! No one is too young or too old to tell others about Jesus Christ. It's something everyone can and should do. Remember how _____ **(leader)** said that everyone is supposed to brush his or her teeth? Well, just like we all are supposed to brush our teeth, we're all supposed to be bold and tell others about Jesus Christ. You can do it! I can do it too! We all can do it!

So how can you be bold and tell others about Jesus Christ? What are your ideas? **(Take some ideas.)** Those are great ideas. Here are some others: invite your friends or family members to Sparks (or one of the other Awana clubs), invite friends or family members to church on Sundays, pray for your lunch at school before you eat so your friends can see you and ask what you're doing, etc. These are just a few ways you can be bold in telling others about Jesus Christ.

Challenging

Everyone can tell others about Jesus Christ. I can and you can. You're never too young or too old to tell others about how Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins.

If you haven't trusted Jesus as Savior, this is a great time to do it! Talk with one of the leaders. We would love to share with you how you can trust Jesus as Savior.

If you have trusted Jesus as Savior, you have a responsibility to be bold like Paul was. We all are supposed to tell others about Jesus Christ!



Family Follow Up

Are there people in your family who don't know Jesus Christ as Savior? What about your neighbors? Be an example to your children of what it means to be bold in telling others about Jesus. Bake some cookies for your neighbors and walk over to their house. Offer them the cookies and invite them to your church.

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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

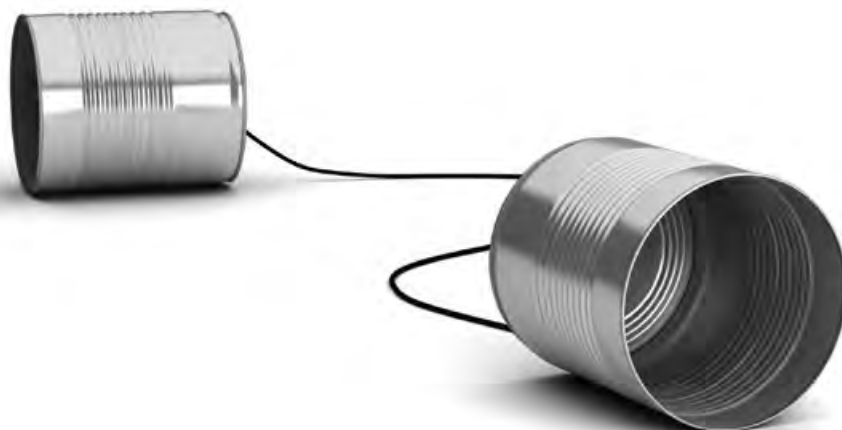
- **BOLD Night** – Everyone dresses in bold colors. For a team challenge, award a prize to the team that comes up with the best acronym for the word *bold*. (***You will probably need a lot of leader help in this activity.***)

Game Idea

- Play a game of Telephone. Think of a phrase before Game Time – something like Sparky likes to sing songs by the seashore. Each team sits on its line. You hand a leader from each team a piece of paper with the phrase on it. Then the leader whispers the phrase to the first Sparkie in line. Then that Sparkie whispers it to the Sparkie sitting next to him or her. It continues down the line. The last Sparkie comes to you and whispers what the phrase is. If the phrase is the same as the one you originally told the leaders, award points. If it's close to the original phrase, award fewer points. If it's really different, no points are awarded.

Teaching Option

- Have other leaders or Sparkies share with everyone how they've been bold in telling others about Jesus Christ. Or consider asking a T&T™ clubber to come into your club to do the same. Bringing in an "older" clubber will speak volumes to the Sparkies



SparksActivity

How can you tell your friend about Jesus Christ?
Draw a picture of how you would tell your friend. Then color it in.

Reading

The book of Ephesians

Thinking

The book of Ephesians was written by Paul when he was imprisoned (probably in Rome). But his imprisonment wasn't the typical imprisonment. It appears that he most likely lived in a house with a guard and was free to meet and talk with people, and to write letters.

Ephesians is a letter that Paul wrote to a church in Ephesus. It's divided into two parts. The first part is the doctrinal part (chapters 1-3), and the second part is the practical or application part (chapters 4-6).

The city of Ephesus was a well-known and honored city of Ionia in Asia Minor. It was located near the mouth of the river Cayster. The people of Ephesus were known for their fine manners and for desiring and attaining luxury. They were also known for loving music and dancing and having many festivals (some of an inappropriate nature).

Here is a list of the topics Paul addresses in the practical part of the book:

- (1) Exhortation to unity, drawn from the consideration that there was one God, one faith, etc., Ephesians 4:1-16
- (2) An exhortation to a holy life "in general," from the fact that they differed from other Gentiles, Ephesians 4:17-24
- (3) Exhortation to exhibit "particular" virtues — "specifying" what was required by their religion, and what they should avoid — particularly to avoid the vices of anger, lying, licentiousness, and intemperance, Ephesians 4:25-32; 5:1-20
- (4) The duties of husbands and wives, Ephesians 5:21-33
- (5) The duties of parents and children, Ephesians 6:1-3
- (6) The duties of masters and servants, Ephesians 6:4-9
- (7) An exhortation to fidelity in Christian warfare, Ephesians 6:10-20
- (8) Conclusion, Ephesians 6:21-24

(Albert Barnes, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, *Barnes' Notes Electronic Database*. Seattle, WA, BibleSoft, Inc., 2006.)

The book of Ephesians focuses on aspects of the Christian walk. This lesson will encourage your Sparkies to listen to and obey their parents. Kids hear this a lot — especially FROM their parents! But sometimes when kids hear the same message their parents say from someone else, they take it to heart and heed it more. Take advantage of this as you teach the important truth of obeying one's parents.

Looking It Up

Ephesians 6:1-3 *(Before you begin the lesson, have the Sparkies find these verses in their Bibles.)*

Getting It Ready

Have your Bible on hand.

Showing

Hello everyone! Tonight I have a story to tell you. It's a story about two kids. I'm going to tell you the first part of it now, and then we'll come back to it at the end of the lesson. This story is about Jen and Jason. Jen and Jason are brother and sister. Jen is 11 and Jason is 9. They each have their own bedroom. Jason usually keeps his bedroom nice and neat, but every once in a while it gets kind of messy. Jen's, on the other hand, is a total mess! Her room always has laundry on the floor, she never makes her bed and she even has a grilled cheese sandwich on a paper plate that has been sitting on her desk for a week. Ewwwwwww!

So one night after dinner, Jen and Jason's mom walked past their rooms. Jason's was a bit messy. Not too bad, but it needed to be picked up. Jen's room was a disaster area. So Mom told them both to clean their rooms before they went to bed. That was three hours away, so they had some time.

One of them cleaned up their bedroom right away. It took a bit of time, but it was done. The other one decided to wait a while longer. But then bedtime came and the room was still dirty. One of them obeyed and one of them disobeyed. In a bit I'll tell you who cleaned and who didn't, but first let's talk about a man named Paul and a letter he wrote to a church.



Telling

We've talked about Paul before. Remember his name used to be Saul? But then God spoke to him when he was traveling to Damascus. Paul became a Christian and instead of hurting people who followed Jesus Christ, he encouraged everyone to trust Jesus Christ as Savior!

Paul visited many cities as he told people about Jesus Christ. One of those cities was Ephesus. Ephesus was known as an important city. It was near a river, and the people who lived there were known to have good manners and like very nice things. They also liked to sing and dance. Long after Paul left Ephesus, he wrote them a letter. When he wrote the letter, he was in prison. But this prison wasn't as bad as others. He was able to live in a house and had a guard there to watch him. He was still able to meet with people and write letters.

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus. Does anyone know which book in the Bible this letter became? **(See if any Sparkies can relate it to Ephesians.)** It's the book of Ephesians! Get it? Ephesians was written to Ephesus, like Colossians was written to Colossae and Philippians was written to Philippi. Anyway, Paul wrote this letter because he wanted to encourage and remind people how they were supposed to act as Christians. The book of Ephesians has two main parts. There are six chapters. The first three chapters talk about doctrine. *Doctrine* means rules or truths that we need to live by. The last three chapters of the book talk about how we are supposed to follow the doctrine that Paul is teaching – how we are supposed to live as Christians.



One of the ways we are supposed to live as Christians is to obey our parents. I know you hear this a lot. You know you're SUPPOSED to obey your parents. But do you know WHY you're supposed to obey them? Let's look at Ephesians 6:1-3 to find out. Everyone open your Bibles to Ephesians 6. (**Read the three verses.**)

Wow – did you catch what these verses said?! We're supposed to obey our parents because God says it's the right thing to do AND He commands it! And He says that if we obey our parents, He makes a promise that He will keep. That promise is that we will be happier and our lives will be better when we obey our parents. We please God and obey Him when we obey our parents. I know it's not always fun, but obeying our parents is the right thing to do.

Let's go back to our story about Jen and Jason. One of them cleaned their room before bedtime and the other didn't. Now it doesn't really matter who obeyed and who didn't, but if you really want to know, Jen obeyed her mom and cleaned her bedroom before bedtime. And she had more mess to clean up! Jason's room wasn't very messy and it wouldn't have taken him very long to clean his room, but he didn't obey. As a result, his mom needed to punish him. Jason loved riding his bike with his friends. It was his favorite thing to do. His mom told him he couldn't ride his bike for five days because of his disobedience. But not only did he disobey his mom, Jason also disobeyed God. When we don't obey our parents, we disobey God's command. Remember what Ephesians 6 says – when we obey our parents, our lives will be happier and better. Jason's life wasn't happier and better because he didn't obey his mom. Because Jen cleaned her room and obeyed her mom, she wasn't punished.

Challenging

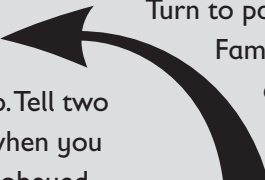
None of us is perfect. We've ALL disobeyed our parents. I disobeyed my parents when I was younger too. But we need to remember that when we obey our parents it pleases God.

Sometime this next week, your mom or dad will ask you to do something or not to do something. Maybe you need to make sure you only play video games for one hour each night, or maybe your dad will tell you not to pester your older brother or sister. When Mom or Dad asks you to do something or not to do something, think about Ephesians 6:1-3 and how God commands us to obey our parents. Not only does it please Him, but He promises that our lives will be better off when we obey them. But you know what? It's important to live this way ALL the time, not just this next week! This is how we should live our whole lives.

Family Follow Up

Show your kids that you were once young too. Tell two memories of your childhood – one of a time when you disobeyed your parents and one of when you obeyed.

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



Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- Have a night where the Sparkies make a rule that the leaders must follow. It needs to be doable and possible to do the whole night. Consider listing five different options and whichever two are cheered for the loudest are the two rules the leaders must obey that club night. A couple of options are: leaders must call Sparkies Mr. _____ (Mr. Andrew, Miss Addy, etc.); when leaders say a certain word (chosen by leaders or Sparkies) they must touch their nose, etc.

Game Idea

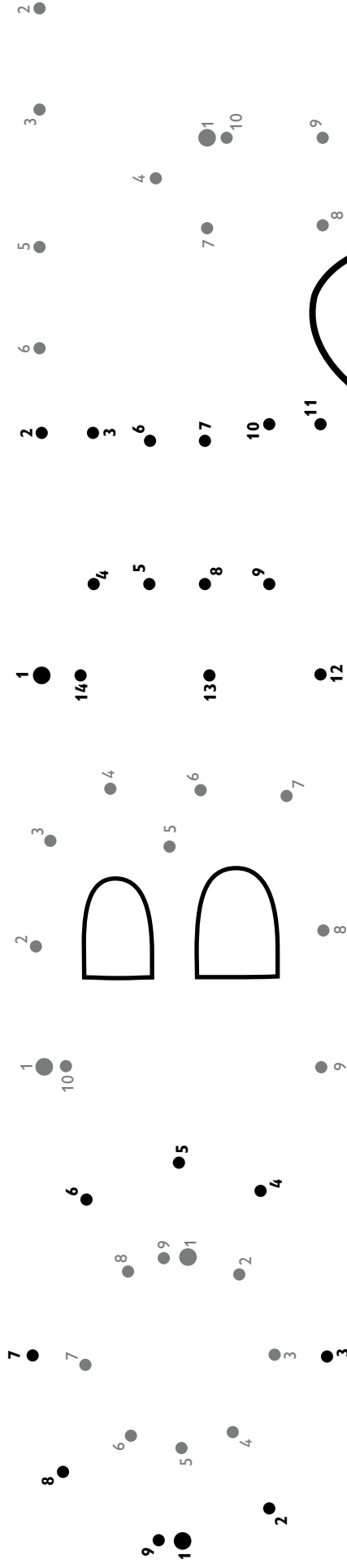
- Since it's a game all about listening and obeying, play Simon Says!

Teaching Option

- Consider sharing a couple of stories about when you were young. What happened one time when you disobeyed your parents? What about a time when you did obey? How was your life better off when you obeyed? Sparkies have a lot of respect for their leaders and will often listen and take to heart what you say.

SparksActivity

Here's a dot-to-dot for you! After you complete it, color the picture of Paul writing the letter to the church in Ephesus. When you're finished, tell your leader one way you can obey your parents.



Reading

The book of Philippians

Thinking

This lesson will give Sparkies a basic introduction to Philippians as well as give them encouragement in being joyful. So many times we hear that we are to rejoice in the Lord all the time. But what happens when a Sparkie is faced with a difficult situation? Are we supposed to rejoice because of what's going on in our lives? No. We're supposed to rejoice despite what happens to us and to our friends and family. We can still rejoice during hard times because the Lord is near to us. That's an important truth to instill within these young ones.

Looking It Up

Philippians 4:4-5 (*Ask the Sparkies to look up the verses before you begin the lesson.*)

Getting It Ready

Have your Bible on hand.





Showing

Hi everyone! It's been a great night so far, hasn't it? In our lesson tonight, we're looking at the book of Philippians. Philippians was written by Paul. Remember him? We've been talking about him a lot lately. **(Review a few details about Paul from previous lessons.)** Paul wrote the book of Philippians when he was a prisoner in Rome. This was about the same time that he wrote Ephesians. Philippians was written for the church in the town of Philippi.

Telling

Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians because they had sent a man named Epaphroditus (**say his name slowly and have the Sparkies say it with you**) to Paul to find out if he was OK. The people at the church in Philippi were worried about Paul. He had been in prison for a very long time, and they wanted to see him again. Do you have a friend or family member that you love very much but don't get to see very often? Well this is what it was like for Paul and the people in Philippi. They missed Paul, and he missed them.

When Epaphroditus told Paul of the people's worries, Paul wrote them a letter and had Epaphroditus bring it to them. In the letter, Paul told the people how much he cared for them. He thanked them for their kindness and concern and he said that he was concerned for them as well. You see, Paul wasn't sure if he would be set free or if he would die. He had every reason to be scared and upset. But you know what? He wasn't! He told the Philippians to rejoice! Rejoicing is what we do when we're really happy about something important. It's not just smiling because we're eating a cookie. That cookie won't last very long, and then we won't have a reason to be happy anymore. Rejoicing is about more important things, like that our mom and dad love us. Paul said to rejoice in the Lord always. And he said that we are to be gentle and kind to everyone. Let's look at Philippians 4:4-5 together. (**Read the verses.**) There it is! Paul told the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord and to be gentle and kind. He also said that the Lord is near. And that's true. The Lord is near to us ALL the time – in the times when we're happy and in the times when we're sad or scared. Isn't it good to know that God is always near us?

There's something important to know in these verses – Paul said to rejoice. Now there will be times when we're mad or sad or scared. We don't have to rejoice about the fact that we're sad, mad or scared, but we can still rejoice because God is very close to us. Maybe your grandpa is really sick. You don't have to rejoice because he is sick, but you can rejoice because God is with you when you're sad. You're never alone. Does that make sense? (**Consider listing a few other examples to drive home the point. Choose situations that are relevant to your Sparkies.**)

In verse 5, Paul said that our gentleness is to be evident to all. So what do you think that means? (**Allow a few Sparkies to give ideas.**) It means that we are to be kind to everyone. It means that's how we show others that we love Jesus. Do your actions show that you love Jesus? (**Ask for some examples of how our actions show that we love Jesus.**)

We can see from what Paul said and how he acted that he followed Jesus. Paul was joyful in all situations. Did you know that the words *joy* and *rejoice* are in the book of Philippians more than 10 times? And Philippians is only four chapters long! When a word appears in a book of the Bible as often as these two words do, that means they're important. So the idea that Paul wants us to remember in this book of the Bible is that we're to be joyful. We are to rejoice! Paul faced a lot of hard times. He had been in prison for a long time and he had been beaten and hurt. But he still rejoiced even during the hard times. Remember, he didn't rejoice BECAUSE of the hard times, but he rejoiced during the hard times because he knew that God was near to him.



Challenging

Sometimes it's hard to be joyful, isn't it? But you know what? We can still be joyful even in the hard times because we know that God is close to us. He'll never leave us. He'll never forget about us. He'll ALWAYS be here for us. That's something to rejoice about, isn't it?

Let's pray and thank God for always being with us. Let's thank God for giving us the Bible so we can learn about how we should live our lives.

Family Follow Up

As a family, make a list of things that make each person happy and joyful. Make a list of things that make each person sad or scared. Pray and thank God for the things that make us joyful and thank Him for being near us when we're sad or scared.

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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Special Delivery Night** – Have everyone dress up as various delivery people. There's FedEx®, UPS® and the United States Postal Service® – even the pizza guy. There are also people who deliver flowers and home appliances.
- **Mail Night** – Give the Sparkies cards telling them how much you appreciate them. You could have a “mail carrier” deliver the letters to each of the kids.

Game Idea

- **Mail Carriers** – Sparkies need to deliver a letter just like Epaphroditus did. While running around the game circle for various games, Sparkies need to carry a “letter” with them. Use newspapers, reams of paper, etc., as the letters. Play games that you normally play but add the “letter” as an additional twist.

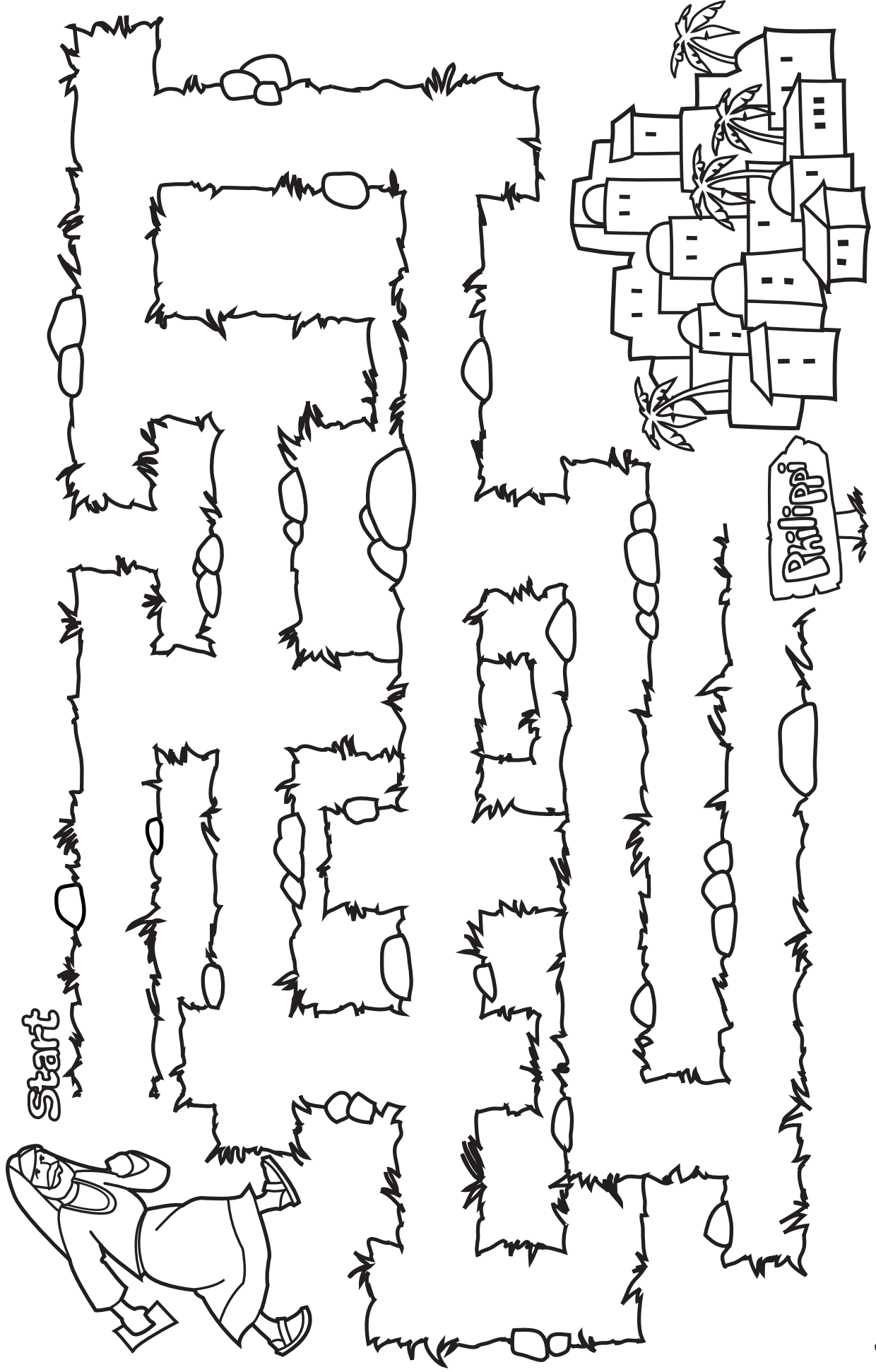
Teaching Options

- Find a map of the area around Greece as it looked in Paul's time so you can point out where Philippi was located.
- Do some research on Philippi and describe what life was like in Philippi during the time of Paul.



SparksActivity

Your job is to help Epaphroditus find his way to Philippi so he can deliver the letter Paul wrote to the church there. Color Epaphroditus and the city of Philippi when you're done.



Reading

Proverbs 1:1-6

Thinking

Sparkies are at an age at which they are constantly learning. Think about those fresh-from-Cubbies kindergarteners who can't yet read or write more than their name. Yet by the time many of these children are in second grade, they are able to read chapter books, study their verses on their own and have intelligent conversations with you that often use very grown-up words.

When we asked kids this age to tell us their biggest question about God and the Bible, many asked for the details. They wanted to know exactly what it was like when Jesus was born, when Noah was in the ark, when the Israelites wandered for forty years. They had questions and they wanted answers.

Our goal in designing the Sparks curriculum was to give them the details, to teach them as much about the Bible as we could – to give them Bible knowledge.

But the Sparkies need more than knowledge. They need to know how to transform that knowledge into wisdom in living their everyday lives.

As you teach this lesson, emphasize the need for making wise choices.

Looking It Up

Colossians 2:3 (*Before you begin the lesson, have the Sparkies look up the verse.*)

Telling

(The following is based on a true story.)

“Come on, Emily.” Megan and Kayley each pulled on one of her arms. “We’re only going to the corner and getting ice cream. You have enough money and the day is soooo hot.”

Emily didn’t move from the porch steps. She knew the ice cream store wasn’t that far away, but Mom had told her to stay on the porch while she worked on the computer. The ice cream store was NOT on the porch. The ice cream store was the whole way DOWN the street.

“You know your mom will be on the computer for a long time. She’ll never miss you.”

Mom did work on the computer every day. She was in charge of a Web site about recipes. While she was working, Emily was supposed to quietly play.

But the sun was hot, and Emily wanted ice cream more than anything.

“EMILY, come on,” Megan begged.

Emily looked in the front window. Her mother was busy entering something in the computer. She looked at the money in her hand – money left over from what Grandpa had sent her for her birthday.

I know the Bible says I’m supposed to listen to my parents, she thought. I know Mom said I was supposed to stay on the porch, but if I hurry, she won’t even know that I’m gone. I’ll be safe with my friends. And I’ll get ice cream for this very, VERY hot day.

“OK,” Emily said to her friends.

The three girls skipped down to the corner and ordered ice cream cones, vanilla ones with lots of sprinkles on top.

“This is sooooo good,” Megan said, as she took her first bite. “See, Emily, aren’t you glad you came?”

“I am,” said Emily (even though deep, down inside she knew she shouldn’t be there).

The girls ate their cones and slowly started home. Suddenly rain poured down on them as if someone had turned on a huge sprinkler.

“Yowee! I’m getting wet.” The girls dashed back to Emily’s porch and collapsed on the porch swing.

“What’s going on?” Emily’s mother came out on the porch.

“Emily? Why are you wet? You were supposed to be staying on the porch.”

Telling continued

Emily looked down. She could not look her mother in the eyes. "I went down to the Dairy Barn for ice cream," she confessed.

Her mother told Megan and Kayley that they could wait on the front porch until the rain stopped, but that Emily needed to go inside the house.

"What were you thinking?" her mother asked. "You disobeyed me."

"I'm sorry," Emily said.

"Well, you should be. What if it hadn't rained and I didn't see that you were wet? Would you have told me that you disobeyed?"

Emily couldn't answer.

"Emily, remember that little poem you learned in Awana?"

Emily nodded and said:

"Is it right or wrong?
I must think it through.
What's the wisest choice
That God wants me to do?"

"I'm sorry, Mom," Emily said again, and this time she meant it.
"Next time I will make the wise choice."



Challenging

Sparkies, there are two kinds of choices.

(Optional: You could write the two types of choices on poster board and display them in your Sparks room.)

Wise choices – the choices that go along with what God says in His Word, the Bible

Foolish choices – the choices that go against what God says in His Word, the Bible

One of the reasons we learn about the Bible is so we can make wise choices in our lives. Think about the poem and say it before you make a foolish choice.

(Explain the following situations to the Sparkies and have them respond with the poem. Then have them discuss the right choice for the child in the situation.)

Is it right or wrong?

I must think it through.

What's the wisest choice

That God wants me to do?

1. Nathan didn't know the answer to his math problem, but he saw his friend Peter's paper. Peter had answered the question. Nathan could look at his paper.

(Have the Sparkies repeat the poem and then volunteer the right choice.)

2. Anna was angry. Her sister received a new doll for her birthday and it was exactly the doll that Anna wanted. Now her sister was at a friend's house and wouldn't see Anna play with the doll. What would it matter if she just played with it for a couple of minutes?

(Have the Sparkies repeat the poem and then volunteer the right choice.)

3. Andrew did not want to go to bed. He wanted to finish the game on the computer. But now Mom was saying he had to go to bed right away. He stomped his foot and screamed "No!"

(Have the Sparkies repeat the poem and then volunteer the right choice.)

Sparkies, make wise choices in your lives. They're the best! That's one of the BIG reasons you learn about the Bible – to make wise choices.

But wait a minute, maybe you haven't made the wisest choice of all – the choice to trust the Lord Jesus as your Savior. If you haven't, talk to me or one of the other leaders. We will be happy to answer any questions you might have or to explain anything you don't understand.

Family Follow Up

Parents, this week, keep a log of wise and foolish choices made by your kids. Make it fun and serious at the same time. Perhaps you could keep a chart on the fridge and if your kids make a specified number of wise choices, they earn a special surprise at the end of the week. Reinforce the poem [below] and remind them that learning to make wise choices is one of the BIGGEST reasons we study the Bible.

Is it right or wrong?
I must think it through.
What's the wisest choice
That God wants me to do?

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



Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- **Wise and Foolish Night** – Have a series of choices for the Sparkies to make. Do they want Game Time first or last? Do they want to do running races or beanbag races? Do they want to sing the “Sparks Theme Song” or the “Awana Theme Song”?

Teach the Sparkies “The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock” song. (It is in public domain. Lyrics and tune can be found on the Web.)

Game Idea

- **Choice Race** – Give each line leader an object such as a piece of candy or a quarter. Line leaders change teams (just for this game – so they won’t be hiding the object from their own team). Line leaders hide the object in one of their hands. Sparkies run around the circle and then guess which hand the object is in. If they guess it correctly, they can run in for the pin or beanbag. Otherwise, they need to run around the circle again and guess again. Line leaders may switch the object to the other hand.
- You could do this as a relay, with one Sparkie needing to make the correct guess before it is the next child’s turn to go, etc.

Teaching Options

- Tell the biography of a Bible character who made a wise or foolish choice.
- Act out some events in the life of several Bible characters (like charades) and have the Sparkies guess who you’re talking about.

SparksActivity

(Leaders, before passing out this activity, give your Sparkies some examples. For instance, wise choices: Noah, Joseph, Joshua and foolish choices: Jonah, Saul, Adam and Eve.)

Draw a picture of someone in the Bible who made a wise choice
and someone who made a foolish choice.

Reading

1 Timothy

Thinking

Timothy was a young man who grew up with a Greek dad and a Jewish mom. From what we read in Paul's letters to the young pastor, Eunice (his mom) and Lois (his grandmother) are the two people who spiritually influenced Timothy. You can picture these godly women sitting under a tree, diligently impressing the words of God on the mind of this young boy.

We know he was taught the Old Testament Scripture from a young age. When Paul came to town with the message that the Lord Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, Timothy was ready to respond. He understood.

We know that Paul thought highly of Timothy's character since he put him in charge of the church in Ephesus. In fact, Timothy was promoted to overseer of all the churches in Asia.

Being a pastor or a church leader, came (and still comes) with a lot of responsibility. At that time, there was a lot of immorality in Ephesus. (Sound like any place you know?) Therefore, church leaders needed (and still need) to be especially upstanding in how they lived their lives (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

Timothy possessed three necessary pastoral qualities. 1. He had high moral character. 2. He had administrative abilities. 3. He possessed the spiritual gifts of a pastor.

As you read through the book of 1 Timothy, think about the qualities God requires in a church leader. Do you possess those qualities? We also live in an immoral age when godly men and women need to be the ones in position to influence children. You need to think through your own moral values. Is there a habit you need to drop? An attitude that's pervading your thought process? A lack of excitement toward your relationship with Christ? Talk to the Lord and ask Him to give you the courage to make any changes that need to be made in your life.

And be excited about the privilege of leading the kids in your club.

Note: This type of lesson is very effective with Sparkies. They enjoy taking part – so make a big deal about choosing quiet, attentive kids to hold the posters. They also enjoy learning specific points, so review, review, review until they can tell you the four ways to be examples. Also, review the reference of the verse that talks about being an example. Continue to review the points during the upcoming weeks.

This lesson could be divided into two or more weeks if desired.

Looking It Up

1 Timothy 4:12 (Ask Sparkies to look up the verse and mark it in their Bibles before you begin so you don't have to stop in the middle of the lesson.)

Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A “course” for the follow-the-leader game
- Four pieces of posterboard with the following words –

Posterboard #1 – WHAT I SAY
(Include a large picture of a mouth.)

Posterboard #2 – HOW I LIVE
(Include a large picture of a house.)

Posterboard #3 – HOW I LOVE
(Include a picture of a child giving someone some food or clothes or giving money for a missions project.)

Posterboard #4 – WHAT I BELIEVE
(Include a picture of a Bible.)



Showing

(Play a game of Follow the Leader. Because some of your kids might feel “too old” for a little kids’ game, set up the room beforehand to make it extra fun. You could crawl under chairs, go through a hallway, all stop by the pastor’s office to say “hi,” stop by the church kitchen and eat a cookie, etc.)

Tonight, we’ll begin with a game of Follow the Leader. Leader _____ will be the one the rest of us need to imitate. He is our example. Does anyone know what it means to be an example? *(Allow Sparkies to respond. Look for answers such as “the person who shows us what to do” or “someone we should follow.”)* OK, line up in a straight line and we’re on our way. *(Play the game according to your time restrictions, the number of Sparkies in your group and space limitations.)* That was great. Leader _____ was a good example and you were good followers.

Telling

Have you ever heard of Timothy, a man in the Bible? **(Because Timothy is a common name, you'll need to identify that you're talking about the biblical Timothy. Allow Sparkies to respond. You will probably get answers such as two of the Bible books are called Timothy.)**

Do you know one way that Timothy is a lot like you? He learned verses when he was a child. The Bible tells us that his mother and grandmother taught him the Scripture. When Timothy grew up, he met the apostle Paul and became a pastor of a church in Ephesus. Paul loved Timothy as his own son and wrote two letters to him. We can read those letters: 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy in the Bible.

Now, Timothy was grown up, but he was still a young man when Paul wrote the letters. Let's read part of that letter in 1 Timothy 4:12. **(Ask a Sparkie to read the verse.)**

Paul told Timothy he was not too young to be an example. Did you know YOU'RE not too young to be an example either? Being an example means that you make good choices. People watching you can learn to make good choices too!

Maybe you're thinking, "How can I be an example? What do I do well?"

Here are four ways that Paul told Timothy he could be an example – and these are also four ways in which you can be an example.

I'll need some help. _____, could you come up and hold this sign for us?

I can be an example in **(indicate that you would like Sparkies to read the poster together)**
WHAT I SAY.

I will say some sentences and you tell me if I'm being a good or bad example.

1. No, I don't want to clean my room!
2. Robbie, you're the best little brother ever. Would you like me to play a game with you?
3. Mom, I'm sorry. You told me to stay in the yard, but I ran down to Madison's house to see her puppy. **(This could be tricky for kids. The child should've stayed in the yard and that was a bad example. However, she did tell her mom the truth and in that she was a good example.)**

OK, let's say this again. I can be an example in WHAT I SAY.

I need some more help. _____, please come up and hold this poster. Let's read it together.
I can be an example in HOW I LIVE.

Again, I will say some sentences and you tell me if I'm being a good or bad example.

1. Oh, I think I'll sweep the kitchen floor for mom. My baby sister dropped a lot of cereal when she was sitting in her high chair.
2. I'll tell Dad I'm done with my chores because I want to watch TV. I'll do my chores later.
3. **(angrily)** This isn't the present I wanted. I wanted the bigger set of blocks! **(Attitude is not only what we say, but also what we do.)**

OK. Let's review. I can be an example in WHAT I SAY and in HOW I LIVE.

Yes, I need another Sparkie to help me. _____, you can hold the third poster.

I can be an example by HOW I LOVE. That means we should help others and be kind. Sometimes people learn about the Lord by watching how we care about the kids at school, our neighbors and other people we meet too.

Think about the following statements. Good examples or bad examples?

1. The new girl is really weird. I'm not gonna be her friend.
2. Hey, Mom, could we get some food for the food bank? Our Sparks club is collecting food for the homeless.
3. Mrs. Wilson, I could help you rake your leaves. You've got a lot of trees and raking your yard takes a long time. I asked Mom if I could come over and help you since I like to rake.

Good job! Let's review. I can be an example in WHAT I SAY, HOW I LIVE and HOW I LOVE.

I need one more helper. You can come up, _____. From this poster we see that we're to be an example in WHAT WE BELIEVE.

I have three more statements. Good example or bad example?

1. I like learning my verses for Sparks. The more verses I learn, the smarter I am about what God says to me.
2. Please, Mom, can I visit Nathan's church? I know what they believe is different from what God says in the Bible, but they're having such a fun party!
3. Dad, I learned at Awana that the people who go to the temple next to the mall worship idols. I want to pray for them every night.

Good job!

Challenging

Tonight we learned four ways we should be examples from 1 Timothy 4:12. Let's say them together. **(You could point to the different posters as you're saying the words.)** Now let's see if we can say them without looking at the posters. Poster holders – turn around!


Timothy was a special man who loved God very much. He lived his life as an example. Do you love God? You, too, can live your life as an example to others.

But maybe you don't know about God. You don't know that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. If you would like to talk to a leader about this and what it means, please do so tonight.

Family Follow Up

Your child heard a lesson on Timothy and the importance of being an example to others. Read 1 Timothy 4:12 together as a family. Make a list of five ways your family can be an example, showing God's love to those in your neighborhood.

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



Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

Say-a-section Night – Timothy learned Scripture as a child. Emphasize this as you encourage the Sparkies to say verses. Give extra points or a small treat for all Sparkies who come to club ready to say two sections. You could send a notice home with the child so parents know it's a special section-saying night.

Copy-Cat Night – Sparkies copy the actions of one of the leaders. The leader makes it difficult by doing random silly and crazy actions. Or you could have Twin Night where kids come dressed alike.

Game Idea

Memory Game – Put about 20 items on a tray: candy, comb, key, paper clip, etc. Give the kids one minute to look at the tray, then take the tray away. The Sparkies tell their leader all the items they remember so the leader can list them. (By having leaders write down the objects, you won't be penalizing any younger Sparkies who cannot write.) The Sparkie, or team, that remembers the most objects wins.

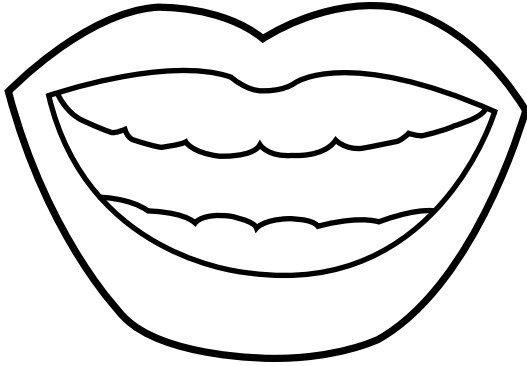
Teaching Options

Paul writes a lot about the leaders of the church. Do your Sparkies know the leaders of your church? Invite the pastor or a staff member or two to visit club. (Actually, you should invite your pastor to visit the club several times during the year.) You could list jobs that people do at the church. Yes, the pastor preaches, but someone has to keep the furnace in good condition, someone has to wash the crib sheets in the nursery, someone has to pay the electric bill, etc. Pray for the people in your church.

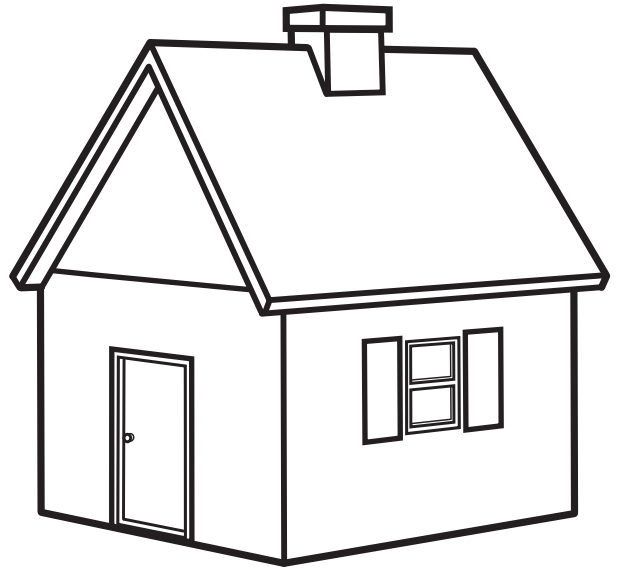
Discuss what we mean when we talk about being an example. Ask the Sparkies what they have learned by example. Actually, they probably learned to talk by mimicking what they've heard others say. Remind them that others are watching them, including younger brothers and sisters.

SparksActivity

Here are four ways you can be example. Color the pictures. Cut out the cards.
Look at them during the week and think about the ways you can be an example.



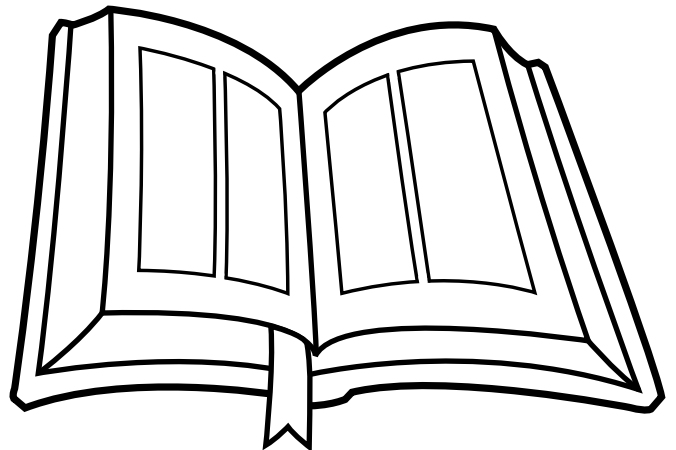
What I say



How I live



How I love



What I believe

Reading

2 Timothy

Thinking

Second Timothy is usually considered the last of Paul's letters. He wrote the second epistle to Timothy during his final imprisonment in Rome, shortly before he was beheaded for preaching the gospel.

The book focuses on two messages: Paul's own relationship with Christ and his encouragement to Timothy to keep preaching against false prophets. He warns Timothy about Alexander, the metalworker. Alexander hurt Paul's message in some way, and Paul tells Timothy to guard against him.

Paul did not live an easy life. He writes that only faithful Luke is with him. He pleads with Timothy to come and visit and to bring his coat and parchments (books). He explains that no one came to his support when he was accused, but he understood that God was on his side.

He knows he has fought the good fight and kept the faith. He rests in the knowledge that God will rescue him and take him to his heavenly home.

In the lesson on 1 Timothy, we challenged the Sparkies to be an example. We can also take that challenge – to live our lives as the kind of example that Paul was to those around him.



Looking It Up

2 Timothy 2:3-6 (*Before you begin the lesson, have the Sparkies find the verses in their Bibles.*)

Getting It Ready

Gather together objects representing:

- A soldier – hat, dog tags, camouflage, etc., or you could bring some toy soldiers (***Leave the weapons at home.***)
- An athlete – shoes, ball, game equipment, etc.
- A farmer – a hoe, seeds, rake, etc.



Showing

Tonight we will talk about three different jobs that people have. Let's see if you can guess what they are.

Show the soldier items one by one until they guess what the items represent. What does a soldier do? (***Allow Sparkies to answer.***)

Let's guess the second job. (***Show the athletic items and allow Sparkies to guess.***)

Good job! Let's guess the third job. (***Show the farmer items and allow Sparkies to guess.***)

Right again. You guessed all three: a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. Do you think those jobs are alike or different? (***Discuss for a few minutes.***)

In our lesson today, we will talk about a way in which they are all alike.

Telling

Remember our lesson about Timothy? Who can tell me what we learned in that lesson? (**Review the four ways we are to be an example.**) Remember, Timothy was a good friend of the apostle Paul because Paul told Timothy about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul now writes Timothy another letter. Paul is in prison because the government didn't like that he was telling others about the Lord Jesus. Paul knew that the Roman government would probably kill him because of what he believed and he wanted to remind Timothy of some important truths.

He writes this letter to remind Timothy to be strong in his faith. What do you think that means? (**Some Sparkies may understand, but most probably won't.**) Strong in the faith means that Timothy knew what he believed about the Bible and absolutely no one could make him believe something else.

_____, would you like to read 2 Timothy 2:3-4 for us? In these verses, Paul wrote that a Christian should be like a soldier. How do you think that's possible? (**Allow Sparkies to answer.**) Right, we should be strong and full of courage. We need to fight evil.

Sometimes, you may feel like a battle is happening inside of you. Your friend asks you to steal some candy at the store. You know it's wrong, but that candy looks so YUMMY and you really want some. So it's like a battle in your heart and mind. You want to do what's right, but you also want to do what's wrong. Being a soldier is making good choices even though making good choices can be difficult.

Paul wrote to Timothy that a soldier obeys his commanding officer – just as we are to obey God.

Now, I need someone to read 2 Timothy 2:5. (**Have a Sparkie read the verse.**) Here Paul wrote Timothy that we are to be like an athlete. What does an athlete do? (**Allow Sparkies to answer.**) Right, an athlete plays sports. He trains for the race. He eats right and knows the rules. Part of being a Christian is being like an athlete. We train by studying God's Word and learning how we are to live our lives (the rules). Just like training and eating right is how the athlete becomes strong in his body, studying God's Word is how we become strong spiritually.

_____, please read 2 Timothy 2:6. (**Have a Sparkie read it.**) Here Paul wrote that Christians are to be like farmers. Farmers plant seeds and then wait for their crop. Sometimes that takes a long time. They might plant a crop in early spring, but the crop isn't ready to pick until late fall. The farmer doesn't go out one day and plant corn and the next day expect to have fresh corn for supper. We, too, need to be patient and to continue doing what is right.

For instance, you might invite your friend to Sparks club, but your friend won't come. Sometimes you talk to your friend about God, but you would like her to come to club with you to hear even more about God. In a way, you have planted a seed. (**This is a difficult concept for Sparks, but some will understand it – don't underestimate what they can learn.**) Maybe someone else will come along next year and tell your friend more about the Lord Jesus. Or the next time someone invites her to church, she will be able to go.

Just like the farmer doesn't walk away and move to the city because he doesn't have corn in two weeks – so we need to keep living the way God wants us to live and not give up.



Challenging

What are the three jobs Christians have? (**Allow Sparkies to answer: soldier, athlete and farmer.**)
That's kind of cool, isn't it? Just think, you're a soldier! You're an athlete! You're a farmer!

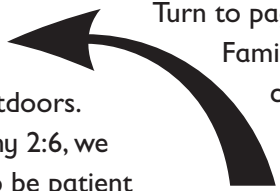
Once we know Christ as our Savior, He wants us to tell others. He wants us to make good choices, to grow in our faith and to tell others about His death and how He came alive again.

We need to pray, thanking God for sending the Lord Jesus to die for our sins and for coming alive three days later. That's exciting!

But wait a minute. Maybe you haven't trusted the Lord Jesus as your Savior. You need to talk to me or one of the other leaders. In fact, if you want to talk with someone about becoming a Christian, please go right now with Leader _____. (**You could have the other Sparkies bow their heads and close their eyes while those desiring to talk with someone leave the room.**)

Family Follow Up

Plant some seeds. You can either do this project indoors or outdoors. Talk about the amount of time seeds take to grow. In 2 Timothy 2:6, we read that a Christian is like a hardworking farmer. We need to be patient and continue to make good choices. Talk with your children about a time when you needed a lot of patience. This could be a time you prayed for a relative to trust Christ and years went by before that person responded to the gospel. Or, it could be a bad habit you wanted to get rid of and yet it took years for you to do so.



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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Athlete Night** – Have Sparkies wear an article of clothing from their favorite sports team. You could even decorate with crepe paper in the colors of a favorite local team.
- **Farmer Night** – Sparkies dress as if they're getting ready to work in the fields. Or, if feasible, you could actually hold your club on a farm. Do you have a leader who lives on a farm or someone in your church who would open their home?

Game Ideas

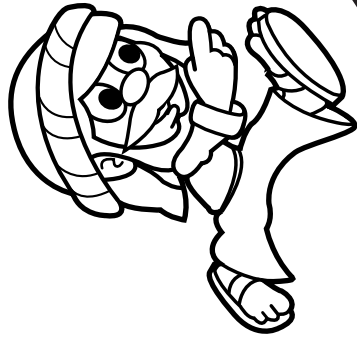
- **Vegetable Roll** – Sparkies roll a vegetable (such as a potato) around the circle, using their feet.
- **Seed Pass** – Sparkies stand on their color line. Give each Sparkie a plastic spoon. Place a cup of sunflower seeds at the beginning of the line and an empty cup at the end. At the whistle, the first Sparkie picks up a spoonful of seeds and passes it to the second Sparkie, etc. The first Sparkie then gets another spoonful from the cup. Sparkies continue passing seeds. Whichever team gets the most seeds into the cup within a certain time limit wins.

Teaching Options

- Ask a soldier, athlete or farmer to speak to your club. *(If you choose a soldier, have him/her focus on preparation and training rather than any battle experiences.)*
- Discuss 2 Timothy 2:15. Explain to the Sparkies that it is the key verse of Awana and the name came from the words in this verse.

SparksActivity

Help the runner get to the finish line. Don't let him get lost!



FINISH

Reading

Revelation 21, 22

Thinking

We do not know a lot about the future. God has chosen only to tell us that we'll live forever in a beautiful, perfect place. Sometimes people have the idea that we'll be sitting around playing the harp forever and ever or tiptoeing quietly through jeweled streets.

We do know this – there will be food (Revelation 19:9). Those who live in heaven are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. We also know there is a tree in the New Jerusalem that produces 12 different crops of fruit – one for every month (Revelation 22:2).

We know that there won't be crying or pain (Revelation 21:4).

We know there will be music (Revelation 5:8-10).

Think about all the many talents, interests and personalities the Lord has given to people here on earth – think about all those things in their perfect state. That's heaven!



Getting It Ready

Gather a bag of items that won't be in heaven. For instance: mosquito spray, Band-Aids®, a toy ambulance, flashlight, keys, etc.

Showing

(One by one take the objects out of your bag.)

(Holding up first object.) Will this be found in heaven? Why or why not?

(Continue until you have displayed all the objects in the bag.)



Telling

A long, long time ago, a people called the Romans would send their criminals to Patmos, which is an island in the Aegean Sea. Because the Roman government did not like people who believed in the true God, Christians were sometimes treated as criminals and sent to the island too. One of those men sent to Patmos was the apostle John.

Which part of the Bible do you think John wrote? **(Give clues until Sparkies guess the books of John and 1, 2, 3 John.)** Right. Can you tell me a verse that John wrote? **(Sparkies can mention any verse in John – but steer them toward John 3:16.)**

Well, when John was living on the island of Patmos, God gave him a vision of another book he wanted John to write. This is the book of the Bible we call Revelation. Revelation tells us about the future – a time that has not yet happened.

One of the things John wrote about is a city called the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven. *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2).*

We cannot even imagine the beauty of this city. Here is a description. **(Gather pictures from a book on gems or from the Web to show the kids what these various gems and stones look like.)**

- The city will be a square.
- The walls will be made from jasper. (Jasper means spotted or speckled stone – and is a rare and expensive stone which can be polished smooth.)
- The streets will be made from gold as pure as glass.
- Every kind of jewel you can imagine will decorate the walls.
- The gates will be made of pearls.

Wow! The Lord Jesus is preparing this special place right now as we talk.

(Ask a Sparkie to quote John 14:2.)

(Ask thoughtfully.) How does someone make sure they will have forever life in heaven?

(Allow kids to explain the gospel.)

That's right. We need to trust Christ as our Savior. That means we need to believe we are sinners and that Christ died for that sin and that He came alive again and now lives in heaven where He is preparing a place for us.

Once we trust Christ as Savior, our names are written in the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5). They can never, ever be erased.

Heaven will be a great place to live. Don't you agree?



Challenging

How can you be sure you will go to heaven? (*Once again, allow a Sparkie to explain the gospel.*)

That's right. If you haven't trusted Christ as Savior, talk to me or one of the other leaders tonight. You need to have your name written in the Book of Life.

Family Follow Up

Discuss the most beautiful place you've ever been as a family. Perhaps you could get out some old vacation pictures and "relive" the visit to that place. Heaven will be even more beautiful. Discuss what you think heaven will be like.

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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Bandage Night** – Sparkies come wearing a bandage. You could give fun Band-Aids out for prizes. For every verse said, children get to put a Band-Aid on themselves (or on their leader).
- **Vacation Night** – Sparkies each tell their favorite place to go on vacation.

Game Ideas

- **Suitcase Relay** – Give each team a cheap (or old) wheeled suitcases. Provide five pieces of clothing for each team. At the whistle, the Sparkie must pack the suitcase and wheel it around the circle.
- **Mummy Mania** – Give each team a roll of toilet tissue. At the whistle, they must wrap their leader as a mummy. The first team to have their leader completely wrapped wins.

Teaching Option

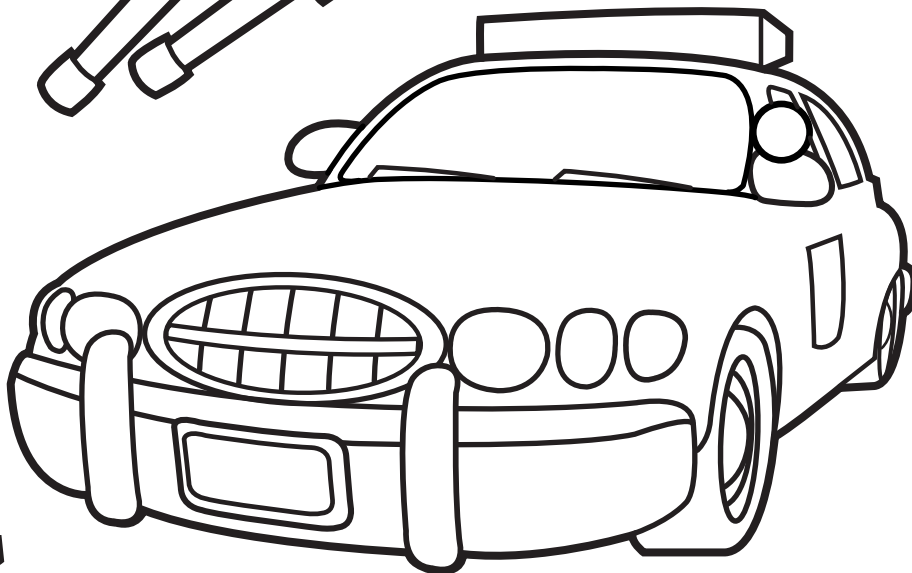
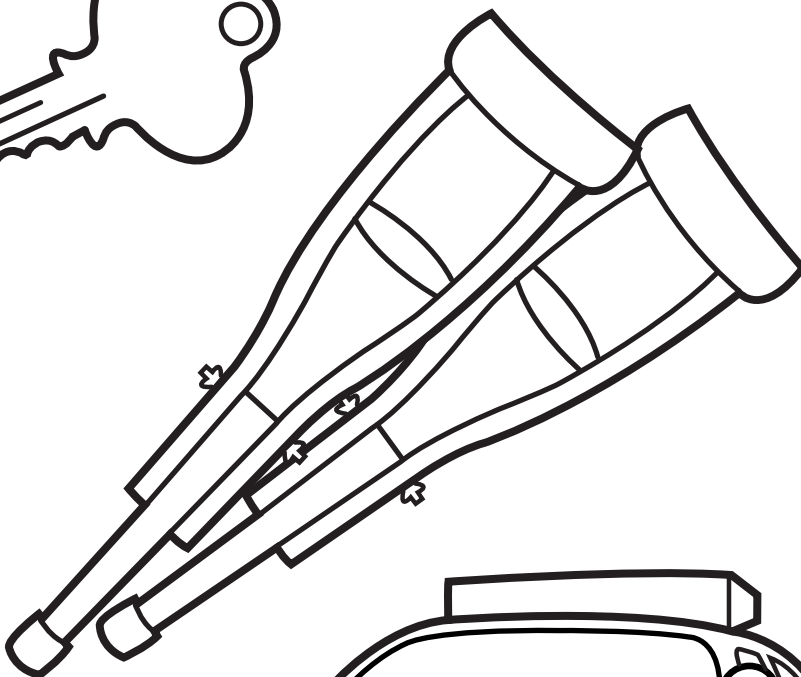
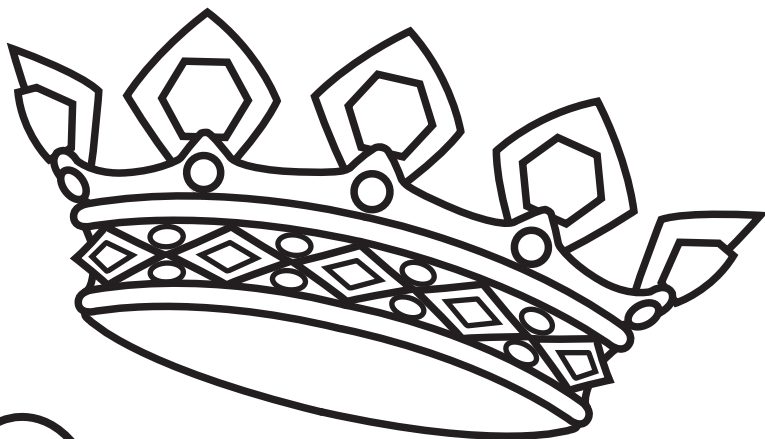
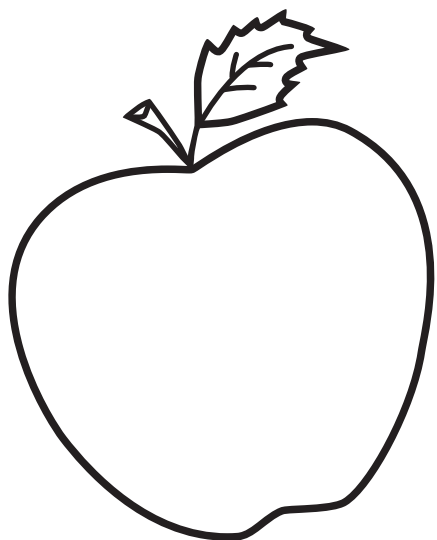
- Before you teach the lesson, ask the Sparkies to describe heaven to you. Don't tell them they're right or wrong, but list what they say. This will give you an opportunity to see where they're coming from.



SparksActivity

Draw a circle around the pictures that show something that will be in heaven.

Cross out the things that won't be in heaven.



Reading

Deuteronomy 10:12-22

Thinking

Missions is most often seen as a New Testament movement. But a closer examination of the Old Testament will show otherwise. God has always wanted everyone to know Him, and His method of achieving that has always been through people and relationships.

Tonight's lesson will cover the topic of missions as seen in the Old Testament. The Sparkies will see that God wants His people, from all time periods, to love their neighbors and people from other countries.

Getting It Ready

Bring in a map or large globe to use as a prop during the lesson. Also bring in prayer cards for missionaries you or your church support. At the end of the lesson, have some greeting cards ready for the Sparkies to sign for the various missionaries you support. You can even have your Sparkies draw pictures to send with the cards.



Telling

Who can tell me what an alien is? **(Allow Sparkies to raise their hands and try to explain. Pick up on any ideas or words that define an alien as someone who isn't welcome or a thing that doesn't belong. Most will probably say slimy, gross or scary. Try to pull out the idea of an alien being a stranger or something/ someone unfamiliar.)**

Aliens in movies or in pictures may look a lot different than we do. But did you know that the Bible mentions aliens? But in the Bible, aliens aren't from outer space. When the Bible talks about aliens, it's talking about strangers. Do you know what a stranger is? **(Allow Sparkies to answer. Some will say dangerous from what they have learned from "stranger danger" lessons and some will say someone they aren't supposed to talk to. Reinforce this idea of listening to their parents and teachers and not talking to strangers.)**

When the Bible says strangers or aliens it means someone who lives in another country. **(Show other countries on a map or globe. Show them where your club is and then where a few other countries are.)** People who live in other countries sometimes eat different foods, speak different languages, and they even do things like shop differently than you do. The Bible describes these kinds of people as aliens and strangers. If you went to another country you would be an alien and stranger to the people who live there. If those people come here to visit the place where we live, then they would be strangers or aliens to us.

A long time ago, God's people were slaves in Egypt. **(Show the Sparkies where Egypt is on the globe.)** They weren't treated fairly and they were made to work for the Egyptians. God promised to bring them to a place where they would be free from slavery. While they lived in Egypt they were aliens or strangers to the people of Egypt because they were not from Egypt. So God helped them escape from the Egyptians. They traveled through the wilderness **(a big open place where no one lived)** for over 40 years!

Finally they got to the place God promised them. God told them that they needed to welcome strangers and aliens into their group because they knew what it was like to be strangers in Egypt. If God's people welcomed strangers and aliens into their homes, maybe the strangers would learn about God and become part of the family of God too.

Telling continued

When God's people helped aliens and strangers know the one true God, they acted like missionaries. Who can tell me what a missionary does? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** A missionary tells other people about Jesus. A lot of the time, missionaries help people who live in other countries. Sometimes they even move far away to tell people about Jesus. **(Go over to your map or globe and point out the countries where your church has missionaries or where you know of missionaries who are serving. Talk about the land, the climate, the food, the people and anything culturally relevant the Sparkies would understand. Show the prayer cards for the missionaries you or your church supports, if you can.)** But you don't have to move to another country to be a missionary. Some missionaries stay close to home or just move to another city in this country.

Missionaries don't just move to other countries or cities because they like to travel. They do it because the Lord Jesus loves them, and they want to let other people know that the Lord Jesus loves them too. People who live in other countries might be different from us in a lot of ways. But there is one thing all people everywhere have that is the same. Everyone needs Jesus Christ!

Because people need to hear about Jesus Christ in order to believe in Him, missionaries leave their houses and towns and families and friends. They want people to come to know Jesus Christ so badly that they are willing to give up a lot to go and tell strangers about Him.

Maybe you want to tell people about the Lord Jesus too. But you're too young to move away. That's OK. You can start telling your friends about the Lord Jesus today! You don't have to wait to do that. Tell other kids in your class or your friend who lives next door what you've learned about Jesus Christ.

Challenging

When you meet people who are different from you, or who are strangers or aliens, how do you treat them? Do you try to love them? Do you welcome them into your group of friends at school? Do you ask them to sit with you at lunch? If they are sitting alone, do you go and sit with them? Try to find someone this week that you don't usually talk to, someone who might be a little different, and try to be their friend. Remember, they need the Lord Jesus too!

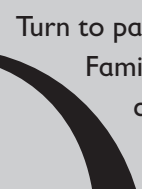


Family FollowUp

This week's lesson was about missions. The Sparkies were challenged to love the strangers and aliens in their lives. That is, the Old Testament version of strangers and aliens!

In the book of Deuteronomy, God told the Israelite people that they needed to remember where they came from. They were strangers and aliens in Egypt. They were not treated well, so they knew what it was like. So, when a stranger or alien came to their country and needed help, they were told to be kind and treat him well.

In order to bring this idea home, invite someone over to your house that you normally wouldn't consider inviting over. Perhaps your son or daughter is having a hard time with another child at school, or maybe there is someone who doesn't fit in well, even at Awana. Set up a play date or time to have that child (or that child's family!) over for a dinner or game night.



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

TeachingIdeas

Theme Nights

- **International Night** – Decorate your room with items from all over the world. Talk to any leaders or friends who have been abroad and ask to borrow items. Gather things as simple as flags or as elaborate as paintings. You can also find pictures of items on the Internet to post around the room.
- **Awana Missionary Night** – Since you are focusing on missions, ask your Awana missionary to visit and say hi to your Sparkies.
- **Urban Night** – Focus on the city nearest you. (If you are in an urban area, pick another urban area.) Explore its diversity and talk about the ethnic make-up and various foods it's known for. Bring maps of the public transportation system (most are available on the city Web sites).

Game Idea

- **The Globe That Ate Me** – Have three players start off holding hands in a circle. They are the “globe.” When the whistle blows, all the other players scatter within a defined area while the players in the globe run to tag other players. Once a player is tagged, he or she then becomes part of the globe. Now the globe is four strong. Keep the game going until only one or two players are left.

Teaching Options

- Ask someone at your church who has been on a short-term mission trip (or a missionary home on furlough) to give a five-minute talk about where he ministered, what he did there and how the people and culture were different.
- On the map that you brought in, show how far away some countries are. Find a few facts about the countries of your choice. Explain to the Sparkies some things that might be different about the food, clothing, houses and culture of the people in those countries.



SparksActivity

God loves the world! Have fun coloring this picture of the world!



Reading

Acts 1:8



Thinking

Many of those serving the Lord in other countries can trace their initial interest in becoming a missionary back to their days in elementary school. Those young Sparkies who jump and skip their way into club each week are NOT too young to begin thinking about international missions. Tell the story of Mary Slessor with enthusiasm, praying that something about the narrative will touch a young child's life.

Discuss Acts 1:8 with your Sparkies and remind them that they can tell people about the Lord in their neighborhoods, school and families. Challenge them to serve the Lord NOW, wherever they are.

Think about missions in your own life. How excited are you about your role as a Sparks leader? Those little kids sitting in front of you are part of your mission field. Pray about your commitment.

Note: The babies Mary Slessor rescued were twins. The people of Calabar were involved in witchcraft, and twins were murdered because they were considered bad luck. The mothers of twins were also shunned. Others would refuse to touch the twin babies – sometimes even the twins' own mothers refused to be near them. Often these babies were left in the woods. This lesson, however, talks about babies in a general way so as not to frighten any twins in your Sparks group.

Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A map or globe to find the city of Calabar
- Pictures of Mary Slessor (check out Google® images)

Showing

Bring a globe to Sparks and have the kids locate Calabar. (Calabar is a city on the coast of Nigeria.) Or take a short field trip through the church to check out the missionary map.

Telling

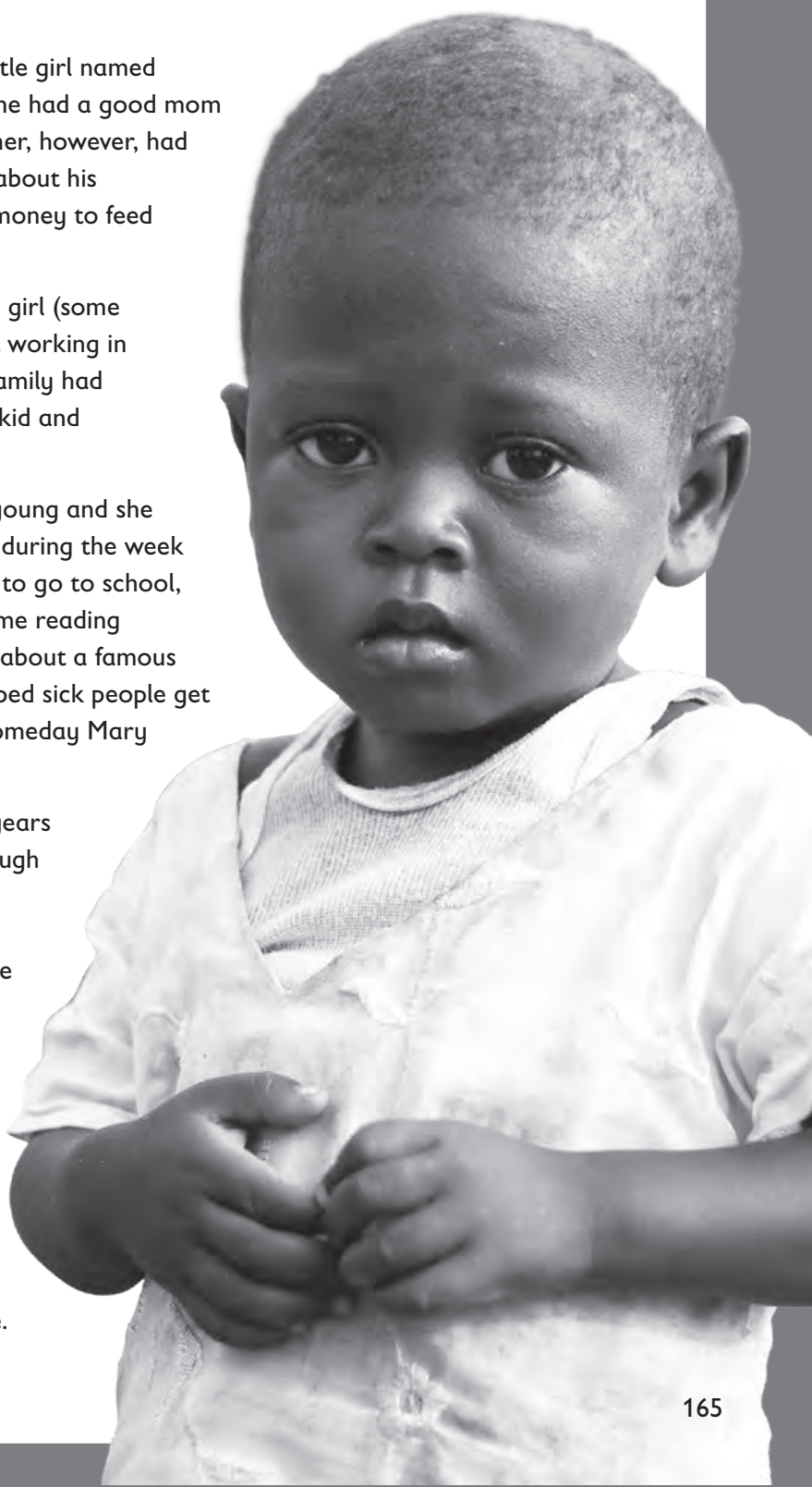
A long time ago – more than 150 years – a little girl named Mary Mitchell Slessor was born in Scotland. She had a good mom who taught her a lot about the Bible. Her father, however, had some problems and he didn't care very much about his family. So Mary's mother didn't have enough money to feed and take care of her seven children.

That meant that when Mary was just a young girl (some people think she was only 11) she had to start working in the town's factory for 10 hours a day so the family had enough to eat. (Can you imagine still being a kid and having to go to work every day?)

Mary trusted Christ as Savior when she was young and she loved going to church. That was the one time during the week when life didn't seem so hard. She wasn't able to go to school, but she loved to read and she spent a lot of time reading the Bible. Mary had a dream – she had heard about a famous doctor, David Livingstone. Dr. Livingstone helped sick people get better and he told them about God. Maybe someday Mary could also help the people of Africa.

Mary worked in the factory until she was 28 years old and her brothers and sisters were old enough to care for themselves. Then she followed her dream and joined a mission and headed for Calabar, which is in western Africa. At first she taught school, but the more she heard about little babies that weren't treated properly, the more she wanted to care for them.

Because of witchcraft and other bad beliefs, people would sometimes kill the babies and stop talking to the babies' mothers. (Sometimes the people would throw the babies into the forest.) This was very sad and shows what sin can do to people.



Telling

continued

Mary cared about these babies and their mothers. She wanted them to know about God's love and how much He cared for the mothers – and for the little babies.

Mary prayed and asked God to help her rescue the babies. The people didn't like that Mary was rescuing the babies that they wanted to kill. But God helped her and she was able to save many of the babies and help their mothers learn what they needed to know to care for their children.

The more Mary worked with the mothers and babies, the more she knew God wanted her to do what she could to help them. She traveled from village to village and told the people that witchcraft was wrong and trusting in God was right. She was not afraid as she told people the truth. Many hundreds of babies were rescued because of Mary's bravery.

After awhile, Mary decided to do something that showed even more courage. She decided to go to another area called Okoyong. It was further inland, far from any town. Many missionaries had tried to go there before and tell the people about God, but the Okoyong people told them to get out. Sometimes they even killed people who came to help them. Still, Mary decided to go. She thought maybe the people would be nicer to her because she was a woman and not a man. People wouldn't think that she had come to fight. God helped Mary and for 15 years she lived with the Okoyong people. She taught them about God, nursed them when they were sick and helped them when they had fights with each other. The people grew to respect her so much that they made her a judge for the entire area of Okoyong. Even though Okoyong had no pastor, more and more people came to know Christ as Savior.

One time she had to go back to Duke Town – the area of Calabar where she had lived when she first arrived in Africa. There she met a young missionary teacher – they grew in love and planned to get married, but he became ill and could not stay in Africa. Although Mary loved him, she loved God more and so she decided to stay and help the people.

For many years Mary lived with her adopted babies in a mud hut. (Yes, there were rats and bugs living there too.) She lived like the people themselves, wearing cotton dresses rather than the fancy dresses worn by other women from Scotland. Others looked down on her because her mud hut wasn't that clean and she didn't wear European clothes – but Mary didn't care. She knew she was doing what God wanted her to do.

Mary worked with the people, doing what she could to rescue the babies and teach them about the Lord. Her oldest adopted daughter grew to help her mother with her work. Mary spent 40 years working in Africa.

Mary cared about the babies and the grown ups too. She had known from the time she was a little girl that she wanted to tell people in Africa about Jesus – and that's just what she did.

The Scottish people respected her so much that they put her picture on a ten pound note – like the pictures of famous people we have on our paper money.



Challenging

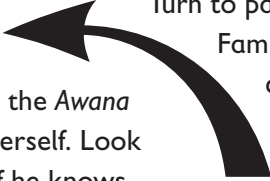
Mary worked hard to teach the African people about the Lord – she wanted them to know that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and then came alive again. Have you trusted Him as Savior? If not, do so tonight.

Mary was just a little girl when she decided that someday she would like to go to Africa and teach the people about the Lord Jesus. You don't know what will happen when you grow up, but are you willing to do what God wants you to do? Why not tell Him that you want to serve Him? (And you don't have to wait until you're grown up; you can serve Him right now.)

Family Follow Up

As a family, read a children's book about a missionary. (See the *Awana Ministry Catalog*.) You may be able to find one about Mary herself. Look in your public or church library or ask your Awana leader if he knows where you can get a book. Talk about why the missionary did what he did. How can your family serve God in your neighborhood?

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



Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Missions Night** – Invite your Awana missionary or ministry team member to club to tell the Sparkies what they do each day. You could have a month-long penny drive to raise money for the missionary. (Perhaps the Sparkies could challenge the T&T clubbers to see which group can bring the most pennies.) Or, you could have a stamp drive. Missionaries do a lot of mailing – you could help out by collecting stamps.
- **What-I-Want-To-Be-When-I-Grow-Up Night** – Have kids dress up for the occupation they want to have as adults (be prepared for a lot of ballerinas and firemen). Ask a few of the leaders to tell about their own jobs. Emphasize serving God no matter what job they have.

Game Ideas

- **Penny Balance** – Have the Sparkies run around the circle with a beanbag on their heads. Put a penny on top of the beanbag so their balance has to be super good. When a penny drops, they must stop and rebalance it before continuing to run.
- **Dressed for the Job** – Gather clothing items that depict a particular occupation, for instance, a suit coat and briefcase or a sweatshirt and ball cap. Kids must put on the outfit before running around the circle (as in a regular circle race).

Teaching Options

- To correlate with a missionary penny drive, give each child a penny and talk about how it is one cent or one sent. Explain how “one sent” can remind them of the missionaries serving God in other countries. Ask them to pray for their missionaries (give them the name of a specific missionary) every time they see a penny.
- Talk about some of the missionaries from the Bible such as Jonah or Paul.
- Do you know a Sparkie's parent who has an unusual occupation? Ask her to talk to the Sparkies about what she does. This would be particularly effective if you know that the person has a strong testimony in her job.

SparksActivity

Color the map of Africa. Find Nigeria. Find Calabar.



Reading

Luke 2; Philippians 2:6-11

Thinking

How often have you heard someone say “Jesus is the reason for the season?” Even the phrase has become so trite that it doesn’t mean anything anymore.

Some people don’t think about Christ at all at Christmas – or at any other time of the year.

Some people *do* think about Him for the purpose of keeping watch over the local public school – to make sure they don’t call the holiday Christmas or accidentally sing a carol during the “mid-winter” concert.

Some people superstitiously think about Him – because that’s what you’re supposed to do to be religious.

Some people seriously desire to remember Him, so they attend a church service and quickly read through Luke 2. That makes them feel a lot better because they did what they were supposed to do.

Some people do think about Christ in a right way, but then again, they think about Him every other day of the year too.

We find it easy to forget that God Himself became a man so that we could have forgiveness of our sin and eternal life in heaven. Lost in the rush of Christmas catalogs, church programs and present wrapping, we forget the extent of love shown to us by our heavenly Father.

As leaders, and especially as leaders of Sparkies, we can find it difficult to break through the yard-long Christmas wish list to focus on Christ.

The purpose of this story is to show Sparkies the importance of being thankful to God for His gift of salvation and to also show gratitude to those around us. Yes, maybe the boy in the story sounds harsh in his ungratefulness, but many Sparks-aged children respond like this. Children in our society often are used to getting whatever they want.

Showing

Before the lesson, pass out a small treat. Without letting on that you’re doing so, count how many Sparkies say thank you. Remember the number.

Telling

(Before telling the story, you may want to tell the kids that it is a made-up story but that sadly, unthankfulness often happens.)

More than anything, Connor liked to visit his Uncle Ben and Aunt Emma. Now, you might think he liked visiting them because they were great people (which they were), but mostly he liked visiting them because they were really, really rich. They lived in a big house with a big yard and had a big game room with games like air hockey. They even had an arcade game with clatteringly loud bells and whistles.

A week before Thanksgiving, Connor's parents dropped him off at his aunt and uncle's house while they went to a concert in the city. Connor played the arcade game with his uncle and then went up to the kitchen to have a snack – Aunt Emma's super delicious lemon cake with mile-high frosting. (Well, the frosting wasn't really a mile high – just a few inches high, but Uncle Ben always said Aunt Emma made mile-high frosting.)

"Oh, you have the Tyler Toys and Trivia Catalogue," Connor said as he sat down. "Can I look at it? I'll show you what I want for Christmas."



Telling continued

Aunt Emma picked up the catalog and handed it to Connor, but she shook her head as she did so. “I don’t know why we get so many catalogs! So ridiculous to waste all that paper.”

Connor wasn’t listening. He was looking for page 28. They had this same catalog at home, so he knew that was the right page. “This is what I want,” Connor said, pointing to the Splash Century Water Park.

“Whoa.” Uncle Ben looked at the picture. “That costs \$149.00 and for what? Two hundred plastic pieces?”

“I really, really, really want it,” Connor told him. He was sure his parents weren’t going to buy it for him, so Uncle Ben and Aunt Emma were his only hope.

“I remember the space set you really, really wanted last Christmas,” Uncle Ben said. “By the end of the day, the pieces were everywhere.”

“Including one in the dog’s stomach,” Aunt Emma reminded him.

“This is different,” Connor said. “I really, really, REALLY want this.”

During the next couple of weeks, Connor told all his friends that his aunt and uncle (who were very, very rich) were getting him the Splash Century Water Park. All his friends were impressed – and jealous – because that’s what they wanted too.

Christmas morning, Connor and his two older brothers hurried to the living room. Connor opened a scooter from his parents and a DVD from his older brothers and a shirt from his grandma. He got some other things, too, but mostly he kept thinking about the Splash Century Water Park that he was sure Uncle Ben and Aunt Emma would bring when they came for Christmas dinner.

But when they arrived, they didn’t have any presents at all, at least not any that Connor could see.

“As you know,” Uncle Ben said as he looked around at the family, “this past year Emma and I had the opportunity to visit India on a mission trip with our church. We spent much of our time at an orphanage. They are desperate for more room and better facilities, so this year we thought we would donate money to get them started on building a new wing. We also will be supporting a young couple at our church whose prayer is to work at the orphanage and share the gospel with the children.” He looked at Connor’s parents. “We told your dad and mom about the idea and they encouraged us and even contributed some additional money.”

“That’s right,” Connor’s dad said. “We wanted to do what we could.”

Connor couldn't believe that he wasn't getting the Splash Century Water Park. He was sure the kids in India needed food and all, still ...

Later after dinner, the adults were talking together and Connor's brothers were outside on their new scooters, but Connor was still angry. Now, he'd NEVER get the Water Park. Ever. Besides that, he couldn't even watch his new DVD because the adults had some Christmas special on in the background. Connor sat on the steps and pouted.

"Hey, Connor." Uncle Ben sat down beside him. "We do have something we'd like to give you for Christmas."

Immediately, Connor smiled. They had bought the Water Park after all!

But Uncle Ben took a small package out of his pocket and handed it to Connor. "Instead of buying you something that would fall apart in a few hours, we wanted to do something extra special this year. This is a pocket watch that belonged to my father. I've kept the watch in a safe place waiting for the right time to give it to you."

Connor couldn't believe it. Why did he want an old pocket watch? He turned his head away.

"You don't want this?" Uncle Ben asked.

"Not really," Connor said.



Telling

continued

“OK.” Uncle Ben put the watch back in his pocket and walked away. Connor went to his room.

After dinner, the family played some board games together and it was late when Uncle Ben and Aunt Emma got ready to leave. Before he put his coat on, Uncle Ben took two more small packages out of his pocket and gave one to each of Connor’s brothers.

“Cool,” Chris said. “you’re giving me your compass?”

“And you’re giving me your pocket knife?” Kevin gasped in surprise. “I can’t believe it.”

“You need to be very careful of those,” their dad said. “They’re valuable antiques.”

Uncle Ben laughed. “Someday you can sell them and get college money.”

“Yeah, you told me your pocket watch was worth \$5,000 last time I was at your house,” Kevin said.

Suddenly Connor sat up. Five thousand dollars! “Maybe I do want the watch,” he said.

“No, not today,” Uncle Ben said. “You said you weren’t interested. We’ll think about it again in the future.” Everyone said good-bye and left.

“I can’t believe you didn’t take Uncle Ben’s gift, Connor.” Kevin shook his head. “Besides being foolish, it was rude.”

“Kevin is right,” Connor’s dad said. “You always accept a gift with thankfulness. You know that.”

“That’s what Christmas is about,” added his mother, “a time to be thankful in a special way for all God has done for us.”

Connor knew his family was right. He had been thinking about himself ever since he made out his Christmas list. He hadn’t cared about the children in India learning about God and he hadn’t cared about Uncle Ben’s feelings. He just wanted what he wanted. And because of his selfishness, he had lost a very special gift. And that was that.

Challenging

To end this lesson, ask your Sparkies questions to challenge them to think about Connor's story.

1. Why didn't Uncle Ben and Aunt Emma want to buy Connor the Splash Century Water Park? **(Because he didn't take care of the gift they had bought the year before, because they were giving the money to an orphanage in India and because they didn't want to spend that much money on a toy.)**
2. What did Uncle Ben and Aunt Emma do for Christmas this year? **(Gave money to an orphanage in India so more children could hear about the gospel.)**
3. What did Connor do when Uncle Ben gave him the pocket watch? **(Acted like he didn't want it and then said he didn't want it.)**
4. What was wrong with the way Connor acted? **(He wasn't polite. He should've been thankful for the watch even if he didn't know it was expensive.)**
5. Can you think of another gift that people say they don't want? **(You may need to give some clues – but encourage Sparkies to say the gift of salvation.)**
6. Why do people say they don't want this gift? **(Because they think they can get to heaven some other way, because they think they can do things on their own, because they don't believe what God says, etc.)**
7. How can we show thankfulness at Christmas and all through the year? **(By thanking God for the gift of His Son, Jesus; by saying thank you to the people who give us gifts.)**
8. What could Connor do? **(He could thank God for sending His Son; he could write an apology note to Uncle Ben; he could remember to be thankful in the future. Make sure the Sparkies know that the apology note should not be written for the purpose of getting the watch.)**

(If you passed out treats at the beginning of the lesson, tell the kids how many said thank you. If everyone did so, commend them for having an attitude of thankfulness.)

Close the lesson by telling the Sparkies that you and the other leaders are always willing to talk to them about trusting Christ as Savior. Invite them to accept God's gift.



Family Follow Up

Choose a family project where your children can do something for those around them this season. This could be singing carols at a shelter, collecting food for or working at a food bank, giving toys to a mission, etc. Or perhaps it's inviting some unsaved neighbors over for dinner to get to know them and open the way to sharing your faith.

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

Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- **Thank you Night** — Talk about the importance of being thankful and give points each time a child says thank you for when someone has done something for them during the evening. (You can have fun with this, awarding points even when the child says “thank you” for something funny. The goal is to help the kids get in the habit of saying “thank you.”)
- **Christmas Party Night** — Plan a Christmas party. Serve Christmas cookies or cupcakes. Leaders could give small gifts to the kids. *(Gift exchanges can be sensitive. Sometimes kids forget and can't participate or someone gets something super cool and someone else gets something small.)*

Game Ideas

- **Gift Wrap** — Buy some fun, but inexpensive, gifts. Wrap them in many, many layers of paper. Have the kids sit in a circle. Play Christmas music and pass a gift around the circle. The person holding the gift when the music stops gets to unwrap one layer of paper. Continue with the game until someone actually unwraps the gift.
- **Wrap a Leader Night** — Buy some cheap wrapping paper (check out your local dollar store) or use leftover-from-last-year paper. Give each team some tape and a roll of paper. At the whistle, they need to wrap their leader in the paper.

Teaching Options

- Role-play some scenarios when kids open a present they don't like or want. Teach the kids how to be thankful, no matter what the gift.
- Show a DVD of Israel and point out the different places that we read about in Luke: Nazareth, the hills outside of Bethlehem, etc.



SparksActivity

Here is a thank-you card. Color the card and write a thank-you note to someone who has done something for you.

Thank You

Reading

John 15:9-14

Thinking

Kids love getting valentines. They need to feel loved and at this age, they can still be very tender and loving towards their friends without a ton of encouragement. Take advantage of this tenderness as you teach this lesson.

Remind them that God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. Remind them that our friends and family learn about God's love through the way we act toward them. We are to show love to others by the way we live our lives.

Looking It Up

John 15:9-14 (*Ask the Sparkies to look up the verses before you begin the lesson.*)

Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Cardboard (or some other strong paper)
- A marker to write the verses on the backs of the pieces,
- Double-sided tape
- Candy (or some other prize)



Also — plan to give each Sparkie a valentine. Ask other leaders to help you prepare them ahead of time. Your Sparkies will appreciate getting valentines signed by their leaders. This might be tricky if you have a lot of kids. Keep a few extra valentines handy for visitors. Make an effort to write Sparkies' names on the valentines.

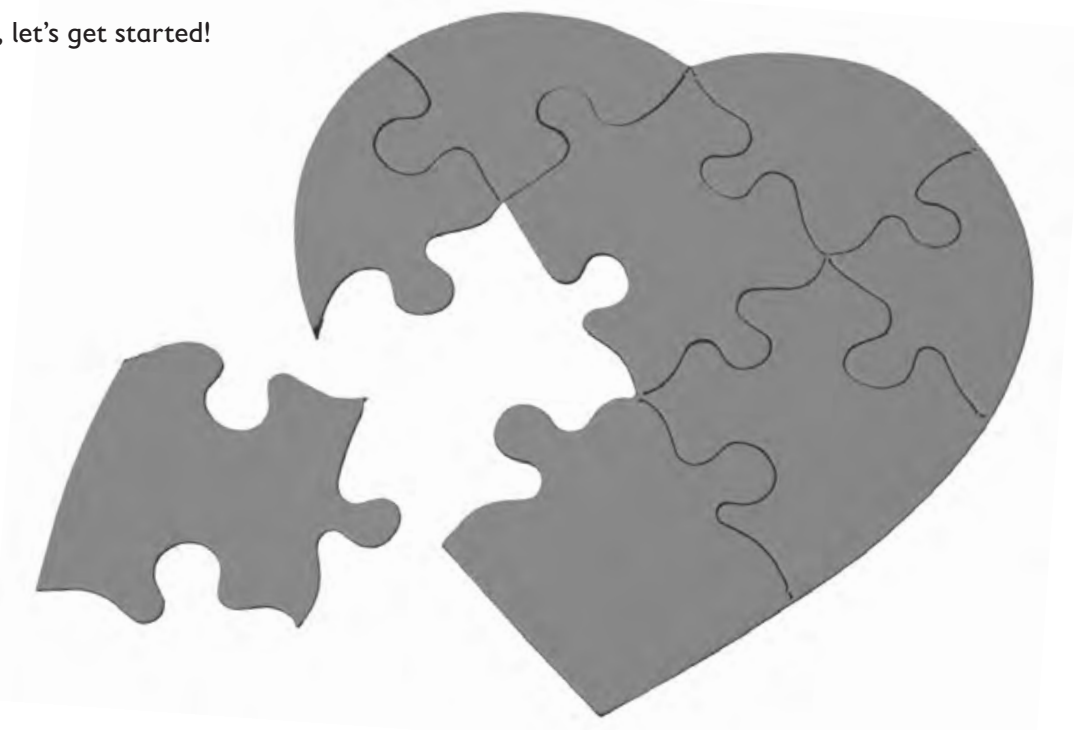
Showing

Draw a heart on thick cardboard or some other thick, sturdy paper product. Cut the heart into a jigsaw puzzle. Use double-sided tape on the back of the pieces and stick them on a blackboard (or some other board) where they will be seen by everyone.

For each piece of the puzzle, choose a different Bible verse from the Sparks handbooks. Find a common theme — love, God’s love for us, our love for each other, etc. Choose verses from all three handbooks, but be sure to choose many from the first handbook. That assures that all Sparkies will have a chance to recite a verse. One by one, announce the reference of a verse from one of the pieces. (Write the references and verses on the back of the pieces so you can check accuracy.) The Sparkie who raises his or her hand first and can recite the verse perfectly gets to place that piece on the board. As the pieces are placed together the Sparkies will see a heart begin to take shape. Each Sparkie who recites a verse gets a prize or candy.

Hi, everyone! Welcome back to Large Group Time. Before we get into the lesson, we have a fun project to do! I have all these puzzle pieces and we need to figure out what shape they make. I’ll call out a Bible verse and I’ll call on the first Sparkie to raise his or her hand. If you can say the verse, you get to place a puzzle piece on the board. ***(You might need to direct Sparkies when they put the pieces on the board to make sure you get the heart shape.)***

OK, let’s get started!



Telling

Great job everybody! OK, what shape do we see here? **(A heart!)** That's right! All the pieces made a heart! And what special day is coming **(or has come, or is here)** that we think of when we see hearts? **(Valentine's Day!)** Exactly! Valentine's Day! I'm so glad you all are here so we can celebrate Valentine's Day together!

What if we were missing a piece or two in this heart? Would it be a complete heart? **(No.)** No, it wouldn't be complete. And when we see a heart what does it make us think of? What were all the verses about that we just recited? **(Love.)** That's right. The verses were about love. The Bible says a lot about love. Let's look at some Bible verses that talk about love. Everyone turn in your Bibles to John 15:9-14 and follow along as I read it. OK, let's read. **(Read the verses.)**

Did you catch what one of these verses said? In verse 11, Jesus is telling the people about love so that His joy will be in them and so that their joy will be complete. Look again at the heart we put together. If pieces were missing, it wouldn't be a complete heart. Without Jesus, we aren't complete. Trusting Jesus as Savior helps us to become who we need to be – people who love, obey and follow Jesus and tell others about Him. When you trust Jesus as your Savior, it's like you have a valentine every day! Jesus loves you and He died on the cross and came alive again to save you from your sins.

Now let's look at one of the other verses in this passage. Verse 12 tells us that we are to love others just as Christ as loved us. And it's not an option. It's a command! Jesus commands us to love each other! Let's list some ways that we can love each other. **(Use a black or white board.)** If you know a way we can love each other, raise your hand and I'll call on you. **(Take a couple of minutes to make a list.)** This is a great list! These are all good ways we can show others that we love them. When we do these things, we are obeying the command that Jesus gives us in John 15:12.

Challenging

OK, I have two challenges for you. The first one is for those of you who don't know Jesus Christ as your Savior. Jesus loves you SO much that He died on the cross and came alive again to save you from your sins. We're all sinners. We've all done bad things like lie or cheat or hit our sister or brother. So we ALL need to be saved from our sins. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross and take the punishment for our sins. That means that we can live forever in heaven with Jesus when we trust Him as our Savior. If you haven't trusted Jesus as your Savior, please talk with one of your leaders. I'm going to pray in a little bit, and if you want to trust Jesus as your Savior, you can pray silently with me. Just remember that it's not the prayer that saves you, but the fact that you're trusting Jesus as your Savior.

The second challenge is for everybody. I want everyone to show love to others this week. Look at our list that we made and pick two of the things on the list and do them this week for someone. Next week I'm going to ask you what you did to show love for others!

OK, let's all bow our heads and close our eyes and pray. ***(Lead in a prayer for those who want to trust Jesus as Savior. Then finish the prayer, thanking God for sending Jesus and for showing us how to love others.)***

Now I have a surprise for you! It's a way to show you that all the leaders here love you. We have valentines for all of you! We love you all very much! The leaders will help me pass them out.



Family Follow Up

How can your family show love to others as Jesus commands us? Come up with your own list and make it a priority to show others love. Also, ask your child if he or she has trusted Jesus as Savior. If so, pray together and thank God for sending Jesus to die for us. If not, ask why he or she hasn't done so yet and answer any questions.

Turn to page 198 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Night

- Keep with the Valentine's Day theme. Hang hearts around the room, use Valentine's Day candy for prizes, etc. Have kids wear red (their vests will fit in well)! Serve some simple valentine snacks. (Don't forget Sparkies who have food allergies.)

Game Idea

- Hide conversational hearts around the room (or if your Game Time room is conducive, hide them there). When you blow the whistle, Sparkies hunt for the hearts. One point is awarded for each candy heart and five points are awarded for each candy heart that says "love" on it. The team with the most points wins, AND the Sparkie with the most points wins. Choose appropriate awards.

Teaching Idea

- There will probably be Sparkies who know the verses but don't get their hands up fast enough to be called on when you're putting together the puzzle pieces. Consider doing the puzzle a second time at the end of the lesson and allowing only Sparkies who didn't get a turn before to raise their hands. Or if time is short, tell Sparkies they can come up to you individually and say one of the verses for a piece of candy (or whatever prize you chose).



SparksActivity

Here's a word search for you!

S	J	O	P	S	L	F	D
A	E	H	J	I	R	N	Y
V	S	S	O	I	A	L	H
I	U	L	E	M	I	D	E
O	S	N	M	I	S	B	A
R	D	O	A	U	I	B	R
S	C	L	O	V	E	V	T
H	B	I	B	L	E	B	I

BIBLE

COMMAND

FRIENDS

HEART

JESUS

LOVE

SAVIOR



(The lesson is informal and probably will not take as much time as a regular lesson. Use it during one of those last nights before wrapping up club for summer break.)

Reading

Psalm 119

Thinking

The focus of the Sparks curriculum is teaching children the details of the Bible through a chronological study of the major events and people. The goal of Sparks leaders is to teach how to transform that knowledge into wisdom for everyday living. As Sparkies move into T&T, they'll learn the importance of reflecting grace in their relationships with others. They will also strengthen their faith by learning the answers to big questions such as how we know the Bible is true and what heaven is really like.

Sadly, you are getting ready to say good-bye to your older Sparkies. You have probably enjoyed teaching them, (though some may have been a challenge).

Your goal tonight is to give your second-graders a heads up about what to expect when they get to T&T. Most of them will be excited, but occasionally one will dread what's coming – usually because an older brother or sister has told her how difficult it is.

As kids move into the older elementary years, more and more activities are vying for their time. Emphasize how important God's Word is in our lives and encourage them to continue to attend Awana.



Looking It Up

John 3:16

Showing

Start the lesson by quizzing the Sparkies on some of the people or events they've studied. (You might want to bring a small treat to award children who answer questions correctly.) You can make the quiz as long or as brief as you want, depending on the time factor. You can find questions in the Parent Cards section of the Frequent Flyer Cards.

Telling

(Ask three of your leaders to dress up as Sparkies to do the following skit. You could do this by making Sparkie vests out of paper bags and coloring them red.)

Sparkie 1: I'll miss Sparks.

Sparkie 2: Me too. I liked earning my wings and jewels.

Sparkie 3: And learning about the people in the Bible.

Sparkie 1: And I found out how important it is to know God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die for our sins.

Sparkie 2: Don't forget that He came alive again and is now living in heaven.

Sparkie 1: He's preparing a place for us.

Sparkie 3: A perfect place for all those who trust Him as Savior.

Sparkie 2: We'll learn even more about God and the Bible in T&T. My sister says it's cool because you learn answers to hard questions like how we know the Bible is true and how to be a good friend.

Sparkie 1: But don't you have to learn like bunches and bunches of verses?

Sparkie 2: My sister's leader told her the *Ultimate Adventure Book One* has only 15 more verses than the *SkyStormer* handbook.

Sparkie 3: And *SkyStormer* has 15 more verses than *WingRunner*.

Sparkie 2: And *WingRunner* has 15 more verses than *HangGlider*.

Sparkie 1: So I only have to learn 15 more verses than I did this year? Oh, that's good. I can do that. No problem.

Sparkie 3: And in T&T we get to ... **(Fill in any activities that the T&T clubbers (but not the Sparkies) do in your church.)**

Sparkie 2: I like the shirts, too, and those Streamwood awards with the bones.

Sparkie 1: Who's Streamwood?

Sparkie 3: He's the dog that hangs with the T&T characters.

Sparkie 2: Like Leah and Arthur and Carlos.

Sparkie 1: And we can still come back and see our Sparks leaders. They're just across the hall. **(Adjust to fit the locations in your church.)**

Sparkie 3: Maybe we should thank our leaders for helping us learn about the Lord Jesus.

Sparkie 2: We could have a party and ...

Sparkie 3: Make cards and ...

Sparkie 1: I'm excited about going to T&T. Sounds like a lot of fun!

(You could conclude this lesson by having some T&T kids visit Sparks. Ask them to tell the Sparkies what they enjoy about T&T. Make sure, of course, you choose vocal kids who will be positive about their T&T experience. You could also show the Sparkies the book finisher awards they can earn in T&T.)



Challenging

Who can quote the Sparks key verse? **(Choose a Sparkie to do so.)**

Good job. Always remember that verse. You need to know that God loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins – and that Jesus came alive again and is now living in heaven to prepare a place for those who trust Him as Savior. He gives us forgiveness for our sins and promises that we will live with Him in heaven for forever.

Have you trusted Christ as your Savior?

If not, why not do so before you leave Sparks tonight? This is the VERY MOST IMPORTANT decision you can EVER make. If you have any questions, you can ask me or one of the other leaders. We'd be happy to answer them or to explain anything you don't understand.

Family Follow Up

Maybe you don't know much about T&T. You are welcome to visit our T&T club or to meet with one of the leaders to ask any questions you may have or to learn more about the program.

Turn to page 198 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Nights

- **Welcome Summer Night** – If the weather is warm enough, meet outside. Play outdoor summer games such as baseball (use a Nerf® bat and ball), Frisbee®, or tag. Plan a picnic with hotdogs, chips, watermelon, etc.
- **T&T Night** – Sparkies wear clothes that start with T, such as T-shirts, trousers or a top hat! Play games that start with T such as Tug-of-War or Toss the Beanbag.

Game Ideas

- **Be-Kind-to-a-Cubbie Game** – Are the older Cubbies® visiting your club? Pair them up with a Sparkie and allow them to work together during games.
- **T&T Games** – Are there games the T&T clubbers play that the Sparkies haven't played? Why not try them out?

Teaching Options

- Take your older Sparkies to visit T&T. Talk with the T&T leaders ahead of time so you can arrange times, activities, etc.



SparksActivity



*thank
you*

Family FollowUp

Good News!

Has your child trusted Christ as Savior? If so, rejoice together with a family fun night party. Have cake and allow other special treats such as staying up later to celebrate the fact that your child knows Jesus Christ as Savior.

If your child has not trusted Christ as Savior, walk through the gospel with him and see if he has any lingering questions or worries. Don't put a lot of pressure on him, but emphasize that this decision is very important. As a family, pray for each other and for your little one's decision.

Family FollowUp

Respect

Help your Sparkie become physically and spiritually stronger this week by spending time together doing a fun activity like riding bikes or taking a hike. Also spend time together as a family in prayer or reading the Bible. Encourage your children when you see them being respectful — acknowledge it and affirm them.

Family FollowUp

The Disciples

Tonight the Sparkies learned about the first disciples. In John 1:37, Jesus began to gather some followers. Some were fishermen, some were John the Baptist's disciples and others were friends of the other men. Your child heard that Jesus is impartial and called the first disciples not because of what they did or how much they obeyed God but because He loved them. The encounters that Jesus had with the first few disciples affirm the words in Romans 2:4 where Paul reminds us that it is God's kindness that brings us to repentance. We are truly free to love God even when we don't do everything right. Thank God that Jesus did everything for us!

Romans 8 reminds us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. People often make excuses for not trusting Christ, such as: "I've sinned too much," or "I've gone too far." Believing the gospel can be difficult — we often concentrate on our behavior rather than on what Christ has done for us. Tell your kids how you accept Christ's forgiveness for your own sins. Be a model of grace to your son or daughter in your behavior toward them and toward others. By showing them unconditional love, you will be modeling Christ.

Here are a few dinner table discussion starters to get the ball rolling:

- Is there anything you feel badly about?
- Did you ever do anything that you don't think Jesus would forgive you for?
- Do you know that I (we) love you even when you do things that are bad?
- What are some words that describe Jesus?

FamilyFollowUp

Nicodemus

Tonight's lesson was about Nicodemus, a high-profile ruler of the law. The Sparkies learned that Nicodemus went to Jesus at night and wanted to ask Him some questions. What Nicodemus heard in response to his questions has become some of the most familiar words in the Bible.

Jesus told Nicodemus that even though he believed, his belief wasn't in the right thing. What a scary place to be: thinking you have the favor of God when you really don't.

After the lengthy discussion, Jesus showed Nicodemus the right belief – belief in Him (Jesus Christ).

At the dinner table, talk to your child about belief. Ask her what she believes in, what saves her. She might believe in you (as the parent), or even in doing good things. Ask her what she thinks about Jesus Christ. Does she see Him as the means to salvation? If she has not believed yet, ask her if she would like to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.

FamilyFollowUp

The Paralytic Man

Tonight's lesson was on the paralytic man in Matthew 9:2-8. The Sparkies learned that sometimes Jesus doesn't do what we expect. Sometimes He doesn't do what we want Him to do, but does something much, much better. Sometimes we forget that the forgiveness of our sin is much more important than any physical problem.

God often sees past our immediate needs for the bigger-picture need: salvation. While we are told to pray for things on our hearts, sometimes God's biggest mercy is not giving us what we want or what we think is best. In the case of the paralytic man, the story really wasn't about Him at all, but rather about God and His glory. His ability to walk wasn't what was at stake; it was Jesus showing other people who He was.

You have probably had moments in child-raising that are similar. Your child may whine and complain or outright throw a tantrum in the middle of the grocery store, but you can see the bigger picture. Encourage your child when things don't go her way that she just might be getting something better, like the paralytic did. God might want to use what she can't have in order to make her the person who He wants her to be.

Family FollowUp

Jesus Calms the Storm

Tonight's lesson came from Matthew 8:23-27. After a long day of teaching, Jesus wanted to get away to rest. He and the disciples boarded a boat and as they sailed Jesus fell asleep. A fierce storm came over the sea. The disciples panicked and woke Jesus up, crying for His help. He rebuked the wind and the waves. Immediately, the wind died down, the rain stopped and the sea was calm.

Baffled, the disciples asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him!"

The disciples forgot they were with Jesus, the Maker and Sustainer of all things. The Sparkies were challenged to remember that wherever they go, Jesus is with them.

Your child brought home a sailor hat to remember that Jesus calmed the storm. Use that hat as a reminder to your child that Jesus is with us and always knows what is happening to us.

Family FollowUp

Feeding the Multitude

The lesson this week was on the feeding of the multitude. After Jesus taught and spoke to the people for a long time, they got hungry. After all, they were human. Maybe you even find yourself relating to the people. Maybe rough economic times have hit you hard and caused you to wonder where your next meal is coming from. Maybe you have even thought, "If only Jesus were here, He could take my last piece of bread and multiply it." Jesus does know our needs before we even ask and He provides.

Take time this week to pray expressing thanks to God for meeting our needs in good times and bad times.

Family FollowUp

The Good Samaritan

Have you ever questioned who your neighbors are? An expert in the law wanted to know how to have eternal life. Jesus gave the question right back to the expert and asked him what he thought. The expert said that he needed to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, strength and mind and also love his neighbor as himself. This expert knew that the law was more about love for God and others and less about keeping a set of rules. But then he asked Jesus another question because loving is harder than keeping a set of rules.

The expert asked, "Who's my neighbor?" And Jesus responded with the parable of the good Samaritan.

Read Luke 10:25-37 with your family after dinner one evening and ask your son or daughter to sum up in his or her own words what the parable is about. The Sparkies learned that the Samaritans weren't liked by the people who lived around them. They also learned that loving people is difficult, but Jesus wants us to love everybody because God created them too.

FamilyFollowUp

Palm Sunday

This week's lesson was on Palm Sunday. Two "disciples" of Jesus came and visited and shared about Old Testament prophecies. They showed the Sparkies Zechariah 9:9, where the prophet wrote that the Savior would come riding on a young donkey. So when Jesus asked His disciples for a colt to ride into town, the people who knew their Old Testament remembered the prophecies. Jesus had been fulfilling the prophecies about the Savior throughout His entire life.

But even with all the promises that were fulfilled by Jesus, the religious leaders were angry that He claimed to be the true Messiah. They had their ideas about what He would look like and how He would rule. So when Jesus didn't match their preconceived ideas, they decided to kill Him.

The Sparkies were reminded that the more they read the Bible, the more they will get to know Jesus. They were encouraged to keep going back to the Bible to learn about Him so their own preconceived ideas wouldn't get in the way of knowing the real Savior, Jesus.

Take some time to ask your child about Jesus. Make sure you back up what you say with the Bible so he or she will learn that the answers are found in God's Word.

FamilyFollowUp

The Cross

This week the Sparkies learned about Jesus' death. The "disciples" who came to visit last week to tell the Sparkies about Palm Sunday came back this week to share with them about the death of Jesus.

Has your child experienced the death of a loved one? The Sparkies learned in the lesson that Jesus was perfect and didn't deserve to die. But because everyone else is a sinner, everyone else deserves to die.

If your child hasn't experienced loss yet, remind them that death happens to everyone. However, Christ's death was different because He was a sacrifice.

The most important part of the life and death of Jesus Christ was the fact that He came back to life! All the prophecies hinge on that one thing. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:17 that if Christ wasn't raised from the dead, the rest of what happened is worthless and so is faith. Jesus' resurrection proves that everything is true. This week, talk to your child about the death of Jesus but remind him that He came back to life three days later. Next week's lesson will cover the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Family FollowUp

The Resurrection

Read John 20:1-18 together. Have everyone share about the time they trusted Jesus as Savior. If someone hasn't trusted Christ, then give her the opportunity but don't push.

Family FollowUp

Stephen

Take a walk as a family. While on your walk, ask your children about times they've been afraid. Share with them about times you've been afraid. Encourage your children in the fact that they can pray when they're scared. In fact, that's what God wants us to do. He wants us to come to Him when we're scared because only He can give us peace. When you get home from your walk, pray together and thank God that He loves us and will give us peace when we pray.

Family FollowUp

The Road to Damascus

Gather in your family room or another room in your house that gets really dark at night when the lights are off. Ask your kids: Can you see the other people in your family? Can you see your hand? Now turn the lights back on. When Ananias healed Saul's eyes, and Saul could see again, the Bible says that something like scales fell off Saul's eyes and he received the Holy Spirit. When we trust Jesus Christ as Savior, it's like the scales have fallen off our eyes so we can see again and know Christ. Compare the darkness of the room to not knowing Jesus Christ as Savior. We can't see anything. But when we know Christ as Savior, we can see everything.

Family FollowUp

Saul Escapes

Help your children learn the importance of being kind. As a family, do something nice for someone. Bake cookies for the new family across the street, visit an elderly person for an hour or greet people as they arrive for church.

Family FollowUp

The Journey of Paul and Barnabus

Do you have a family member who doesn't know Jesus as Savior? Ask your Sparkie to write a letter to that person or draw a picture for him. As a family, pray for the person's salvation.

Family Follow Up

We're Just People

Visit a Christian bookstore together. If your child can read, find a simple children's devotional or devotional Bible that he can read on his own. If your child can't read, promise to spend time each day reading the devotional or Bible together. Make time for the family to gather together and talk about what you have read and learned.

Family Follow Up

The Second Journey

Ask family members to share a time someone made a promise to them, but didn't keep it. How did they feel? Were they hurt? Upset? What about a time when someone did keep their word? Were they happy? (This would be a good time to discuss that sometimes people can't keep their promises. Dad promises to take you bowling after work, but a crisis happens and he gets home too late. Mom promises to take you shopping for shoes, but then comes down with the flu. Tell your kids that as much as possible, you keep your promises, but sometimes life gets in the way! Yet, God ALWAYS keeps His promises.)

Family Follow Up

Tent Talk

Think of three people/families that could use some kindness. This could be a family who's going through a difficult time because of a job loss or illness, or an elderly neighbor who is housebound or a church staff member who has been overly busy. As a family, make a Thinking of You basket for each of these people. Fill the basket with some baked goods, flowers, homemade cards, soup mixes, tea bags, etc. Copy the activity page – one for each basket. Decorate the page in cool colors.

Family Follow Up

Being Bold

Are there people in your family who don't know Jesus Christ as Savior? What about your neighbors? Be an example to your children of what it means to be bold in telling others about Jesus. Bake some cookies for your neighbors and walk over to their house. Offer them the cookies and invite them to your church.

Family Follow Up

Obedying Your Parents

Show your kids that you were once young too. Tell two memories of your childhood – one of a time when you disobeyed your parents and one of when you obeyed.

Family Follow Up

Joy

As a family, make a list of things that make each person happy and joyful. Make a list of things that make each person sad or scared. Pray and thank God for the things that make us joyful and thank Him for being near us when we're sad or scared.

Family Follow Up

Wisdom Walking

Parents, this week, keep a log of wise and foolish choices made by your kids. Make it fun and serious at the same time. Perhaps you could keep a chart on the fridge and if your kids make a specified number of wise choices, they earn a special surprise at the end of the week. Reinforce the poem [below] and remind them that learning to make wise choices is one of the BIGGEST reasons we study the Bible.

Is it right or wrong?

I must think it through.

What's the wisest choice

That God wants me to do?

Family Follow Up

A Letter to My Young Friend Timothy

Your child heard a lesson on Timothy and the importance of being an example to others. Read 1 Timothy 4:12 together as a family. Make a list of five ways your family can be an example, showing God's love to those in your neighborhood.

Family Follow Up

The Soldier, the Athlete and the Farmer

Plant some seeds. You can either do this project indoors or outdoors. Talk about the amount of time seeds take to grow. In 2 Timothy 2:6, we read that a Christian is like a hardworking farmer. We need to be patient and continue to make good choices.

Talk with your children about a time when you needed a lot of patience. This could be a time you prayed for a relative to trust Christ and years went by before that person responded to the gospel. Or, it could be a bad habit you wanted to get rid of and yet it took years for you to do so.

FamilyFollowUp

A Forever Home

Discuss the most beautiful place you've ever been as a family. Perhaps you could get out some old vacation pictures and "re-live" the visit to that place. Heaven will be even more beautiful. Discuss what you think heaven will be like.

FamilyFollowUp

Missions

This week's lesson was about missions. The Sparkies were challenged to love the strangers and aliens in their lives. That is, the Old Testament version of strangers and aliens!

In the book of Deuteronomy, God told the Israelite people that they needed to remember where they came from. They were strangers and aliens in Egypt. They were not treated well, so they knew what it was like. So, when a stranger or alien came to their country and needed help, they were told to be kind and treat him well.

In order to bring this idea home, invite someone over to your house that you normally wouldn't consider inviting over. Perhaps your son or daughter is having a hard time with another child at school, or maybe there is someone who doesn't fit in well, even at Awana. Set up a play date or time to have that child (or that child's family!) over for a dinner or game night.

FamilyFollowUp

Mary Slessor

As a family, read a children's book about a missionary. (See the *Awana Ministry Catalog*.) You may be able to find one about Mary herself. Look in your public or church library or ask your Awana leader if he knows where you can get a book. Talk about why the missionary did what he did. How can your family serve God in your neighborhood?

FamilyFollowUp

The Gift Connor Didn't Get

Choose a family project where your children can do something for those around them this season. This could be singing carols at a shelter, collecting food for or working at a food bank, giving toys to a mission, etc. Or perhaps it's inviting some unsaved neighbors over for dinner to get to know them and open the way to sharing your faith.

Family Follow Up

A Puzzling Heart (Valentine's Day)

How can your family show love to others as Jesus commands us? Come up with your own list and make it a priority to show others love. Also, ask your child if he or she has trusted Jesus as Savior. If so, pray together and thank God for sending Jesus to die for us. If not, ask why he or she hasn't done so yet and answer any questions.

Family Follow Up

Moving On Up

Maybe you don't know much about T&T. You are welcome to visit our T&T club or to meet with one of the leaders to ask any questions you may have or to learn more about the program.

