

A detailed illustration of a kingdom where the top half is upside down. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with clouds. The top half shows a city with domes and spires hanging from the sky. The bottom half shows a city with spires and domes on a rocky island. The text is centered in the middle.

UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM

*An 11-week journey through the
parables for families*

Upside Down Kingdom

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Published by Faith Oakville.

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Publisher: Faith Oakville

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This devotional reading plan was created with the assistance of artificial intelligence as a tool to help organize content and support clarity. The Scripture selections, theological focus, and pastoral direction reflect the convictions and oversight of our pastoral team and were intentionally aligned with the teaching series developed by the lead pastor.

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UPSIDE DOWN **KINGDOM**

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Upside Down Kingdom

Your Family: Your First Micro Group

Life with a young family can oftentimes feel chaotic and out of control. There's the pressure of work deadlines, school schedules, sports practices, family events, errands, and trying to keep up with the endless pace of everyday life.

Some days, it feels like you're simply an Uber driver for tiny people while trying to survive the week yourself. And somewhere in the middle of all of it, you sit in church and hear Jesus' command:

"As you are going, make disciples."

And if you're honest, your first thought might be:

How am I supposed to do that, too?

You already feel stretched thin. The idea of adding another Bible study, another meeting, another ministry commitment, or finding someone new to disciple can feel impossible in this season of life. So many families quietly begin to believe the lie that disciple making is for people with more time, more margin, or a different stage of life.

But what if disciple making was never meant to be another thing added to your schedule? What if Jesus intended it to happen as you are going through the ordinary rhythms of everyday life? What if your first micro group is already sitting around your dinner table?

Your family is more than just the people you live with. They are the first people God entrusted to you spiritually. The car rides, the bedtime routines, the family dinners, the walks, the practices, and even the chaotic moments become opportunities to help one another know and follow Jesus together. That's the heart behind this devotional.

We want to help you discover that your home can become one of the most powerful places of discipleship in your life. Not through complicated lessons. Not through perfection. Not through adding

more pressure to your already busy life. But through simple, intentional conversations centered around Jesus.

Whether your home is full of little kids, teenagers, grown children, grandparents, or just a couple sitting around the table together, your family can become a micro group - a small community learning to follow Jesus together in everyday life. Because the truth is, discipleship was never meant to happen only in church buildings. It was meant to happen along the way.

In this devotional, each week includes:

- A Scripture passage from the Upside Down Kingdom series
- Simple Discovery Bible Study (DBS) questions
- Easy ways to talk about Jesus together
- Practical family discipleship ideas
- Discussion questions for different age groups

The goal isn't to create perfect family moments. The goal is to create intentional ones. Even ten minutes around the table can become a sacred moment where the teachings of Jesus shape generations. And over time, those simple conversations can change the spiritual culture of your home forever. Because your first micro group may already be right in front of you. It's your family.

I pray this resource helps you disciple your first micro group.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Matt Peebles

What Is a Micro Group?

A micro group is a small group of people learning to follow Jesus together in everyday life. It's simple, relational, and reproducible. A micro group doesn't require a complicated curriculum, a trained teacher, or hours of preparation. It simply creates intentional space for people to open God's Word together, listen to Jesus, and encourage one another to live it out. And for many people, the family is the most natural place to begin.

What Is Discovery Bible Study (DBS)?

Discovery Bible Study is a simple way to engage Scripture together and discover how God wants to shape our lives through His Word.

At its core, DBS is built around three simple questions that can be asked anytime you open the Bible together. These questions help you understand who God is, understand yourself and the world around you more clearly, and help you live out the teachings of Jesus in everyday life.

1. What does this tell you about God?

All of Scripture tells us something about God. The Bible is ultimately His story. Every page reveals something about His character, His heart, His promises, and the way He works in the world. And unlike people around us, God is radically consistent. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His promises are always good and always true. His character never changes. That means every time you open Scripture, you have an opportunity to know Him more deeply.

As you begin asking this question consistently, you'll start seeing God's faithfulness everywhere in Scripture. And the more you know who God is, the more you'll learn to trust Him in your everyday life.

2. What does this tell you about yourself or the world around you?

Scripture is unique because it doesn't just inform you it reads you. God's Word has a way of cutting into our hearts and helping us see things we wouldn't otherwise notice about ourselves. Sometimes it comforts us. Sometimes it encourages us. Sometimes it guides us. And sometimes it lovingly corrects us. That's the power of Scripture.

It's filled with God's promises for your life, but it also reveals the places where God wants to grow and shape you. Not only that, Scripture becomes like a pair of glasses that helps you see the world around you more clearly.

Even though our culture constantly changes, the truths of God's Word remain steady. As we read Scripture, we begin to understand people, relationships, struggles, hope, and the world around us with a clarity we can't find anywhere else.

3. How will you live this out?

This final question is where discipleship becomes real. Because Scripture wasn't meant to simply be listened to, remembered, or even understood. It was meant to be lived.

Sometimes that means trusting God's promises when life feels uncertain. Sometimes it means forgiving someone. Sometimes it means loving your neighbor, serving your family, praying boldly, or stepping out in obedience even when it's hard.

Following Jesus is not just about knowing His words. It's about learning to live His way. And that's the heart behind Discovery Bible Study. These three simple questions help move Scripture from information in our heads to transformation in our lives.

Wherever you're reading in the Bible, you can always use these questions to better understand:

- who God is
- yourself and the world around you
- how to live the way of Jesus in the places you live, work, learn, and play

Simple conversations, simple obedience, simple discipleship. Over time, those simple moments can shape your family for generations to come.

Family Tips & Ideas

Dear Families,

As parents and caregivers, we often feel pressure to make discipleship in the home look polished, organized, and meaningful every single time. But the truth is, family discipleship is less about perfection and more about intentional presence. Think of your family micro group time as an event - not elaborate, but intentional.

Choose a consistent time and place that can easily happen every week. Maybe it's around the dinner table, on the living room floor, or during bedtime routines. Write it on the calendar and protect it as best you can. And if friends happen to be over; don't cancel - invite them in.

One of the most helpful things you can do is limit distractions. Turn off the TV, silence phones, and put electronics away before you begin. Creating this rhythm from the start helps everyone understand that this time matters.

It's also important to set expectations... and eliminate expectations. That may sound confusing, but here's what we mean: Set simple and attainable expectations for your family, especially for younger kids. Let them know what your time together will look like and remind them that spending time with God is important.

At the same time, let go of expectations about perfection. Some nights your kids may be engaged and thoughtful. Other nights someone may interrupt every prayer, spill their drink, or refuse to participate entirely. That's okay. The goal is not a perfect family devotional time. The goal is simply showing up together consistently.

Discipleship in the home is messy because people are messy. We are all broken people learning to follow Jesus together.

If you have older kids who struggle with deeper conversations, try sitting side-by-side instead of face-to-face. Sometimes conversations flow more naturally without direct eye contact.

If you have younger kids who struggle to sit still, give them something quiet to do with their hands - Play-Doh, crayons, fidgets, or coloring pages while you read Scripture together. Don't be afraid to make this time feel special. Maybe it's hot chocolate around the table, popsicles on the porch, or pancakes on Saturday mornings. Small touches create warm memories.

Most importantly, remember this: you do not have to have all the answers. God is not asking you to lead your family perfectly. He is simply inviting you to faithfully create space for Him in your home. So don't delay. Let the Bible be the curriculum, the Holy Spirit be the teacher, and Jesus be the center.

Blessings,

Taylor Weiss
Faith Kids Director



Let Us Know You're Leading a Family Micro Group!

We would love to celebrate what God is doing in your home. Scan the QR code and let us know that you're leading a family micro group. Your story may inspire another family to begin discipling one another as they are going, too.

Week 1: The Parable of the Sower

3 "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." 9 And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." 10 And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. 11 And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, 12 so that

"they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven."

13 And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. 16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. 17 And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.[a] 18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. 20 But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept

it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Mark 4:3-8

Kids Devotion

The Bible is the living Word of God. The Word made flesh is Jesus, and Jesus is for everyone. The Bible we read inside our churches and inside our homes isn't meant to stay there. We are children of God. We are meant to hear God's Word, read God's Word, live by God's Word, and share God's Word.

Every heart longs for the Word of God. But not every heart is open to receive it. Some hearts are distracted. Some hearts are hardened or closed off. Some want an easy life or a life filled with money and power.



And then some hearts, in the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the Word of God, and their lives are forever changed. These hearts are given new life in Christ, and that is something we celebrate!

But we shouldn't forget the hearts that have not yet turned to Jesus. In all we say and in all we do, we should love others so that the soil of their heart is good in God's time.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. If you were going to plant a seed, where would you plant it?
2. What made you pick that spot?
3. If seeds grow best in good dirt, how can we help our hearts be good dirt for the seed of faith?

Elementary Questions

1. What do you know about seeds and growing plants?
2. How do you think the farmer in the story felt watching the seeds he planted fall on rocks or be eaten by birds?
3. What made the good soil a good place for the seed to take root?
4. How can we help our hearts become a place where the seeds of faith can take root?

Weekly Activity: Good Dirt

What You'll Need

Supplies to plant seeds or seedlings - flowers or herbs are fun! Make sure you have a pot, soil, seeds or seedlings, and water.

Instructions

Plant the seeds. Let the kids do as much of the work as possible. Talk about how faith inspires action. It wasn't enough to simply buy the necessary supplies. It wasn't enough to just prepare them. In the same way that growing plants is an ongoing process of care and action, so too is following Jesus, walking with Him in faith.

Week 2 - The Parable of the Growing Seed

26 And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. 28 The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." Mark 4:26-29



Kids Devotion

We are God's children. He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. Everything good in the world and everything good in us is from God.

Our faith in Jesus is a gift. We didn't earn it. We can't buy it. We can't grow it. Our faith increases by the incredible and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit.

A greenhouse is a space where growing healthy plants is easy, because the air is good, the soil is good, and the plants are protected and cared for. But plants aren't meant to stay in a greenhouse. Once they reach a certain size and proper maturity, they are taken out of the greenhouse and planted. We, God's children, are planted in our neighborhoods, in our schools, and in our cities. It is our greatest opportunity to share Jesus with people where we live, work, learn, and play.

And just like a plant that produces fruit, we are meant to be harvested. The Holy Spirit is growing our faith in God the Father so that when the time is right, we will join Him in paradise because of the saving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. If you plant a tiny seed in the dirt, can you see it grow right away? What does it need to grow big and strong?
2. The Bible says the farmer goes to sleep, and the seed grows all by itself. Who makes the seed grow?
3. Just like God makes seeds grow in the dirt, how do you think God helps us grow?

Elementary Questions

1. Have you ever planted a seed in the ground or in a cup? What did it look like at first?
2. Did you know you are a part of God's kingdom? What are some small ways you can show God's love to your friends or family?
3. If you want to grow a big, strong plant, you have to water it. What are some things you can do every day to help your faith grow?

Weekly Activity: The Mini Greenhouse

What You'll Need

- Clear sandwich or quart-sized plastic zipper bags
- Cotton balls or paper towels
- Large, fast-sprouting seeds (e.g., lima beans, green beans, peas, or pumpkin)
- Water and a spray bottle
- Clear or painter's tape

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Prep the seeds: Soak your seeds in a bowl of water overnight.
2. Moisten the material: Dampen a folded paper towel or a few cotton balls. It should be wet, but not dripping.
3. Assemble the Greenhouse: Place the wet paper towel or cotton inside the plastic bag.
4. Place the seeds: Carefully slide two or three seeds between the paper towel (or cotton) and the clear side of the bag. This ensures you can clearly see them from the outside.
5. Seal and tape: Zip the bag shut. Use your tape to stick the top of the bag to a sunny window.
6. Watch: Over the next 3 to 7 days, the seed will swell, sprout its first white roots, and shoot up a bright green stem.

Tips for Success

- Sunlight: A south-facing window works best. Face the actual seeds away from the window glass so the intense direct sun doesn't dry out the bag.
- Moisture check: Keep the paper towel damp. If it starts to dry out, use a spray bottle to add a little more water.
- Transplanting: Once the sprout gets leaves, it's time to transfer it to a pot with soil so it has room to grow.

Week 3 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

3 So he told them this parable: 4 "What man of you, having a hundred



sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'

7 Just so, I tell you, there will be

more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:1-7

Kids Devotion

Jesus is the mighty Son of God, the One worthy of our worship, the King of Kings. He deserves our best. But Jesus doesn't wait for our best.

Jesus came for the tax collectors and sinners, and He came for you and me. He didn't wait for us to clean up our mess or get it all together. Jesus is following after us, chasing after us, right now and always. God loved the whole world so much that He sent Jesus to die for everyone - everyone who ever was and ever will be. The ones who are alive in Jesus now, and the ones who aren't yet. Every one matters to God. And

when even one receives the gift of faith and confesses with their heart that Jesus is the risen Son of God, the heavens rejoice. God rejoices at our turning away from a life without Him and turning to the fullest life with Him.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. Have you ever lost a very special toy or blanket? How did it feel when you finally found it?
2. The shepherd loved his one missing sheep so much that he went looking for it. Who is the "Good Shepherd" who loves and looks after you?
3. How does Jesus feel when you come to Him and say sorry when you do something wrong?

Elementary Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus went out of His way to eat and spend time with people who weren't perfect?
2. Does the shepherd sound angry when he finds the sheep? How does God feel when someone makes a mistake and comes back to Him?
3. How can you show God's love to someone at school or at home who feels "lost" or left out?

Weekly Activity: 100 Sheep

What You'll Need

100 cotton balls

Instructions

- Hide 100 cotton balls around the house, placing 99 in easy-to-see spots. Hide one cottonball in a very hard-to-find spot.
- Let kids search the house for the easy 99 cotton balls.
- Once the 99 easy ones are found, guide your kids with clues and hints to find the one hidden away.
- Once the one is found, celebrate together.
- Revisit this week's story, asking how it felt to find the one cotton ball.

Week 4 - The Parable of the Lost Coin

8 "Or what woman, having ten silver coins,[a] if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:8-10

Kids Devotion

Silver coins from the days of Jesus were crafted by hand with care, and the value of a silver coin largely depended on whose face was printed on it.

You and I are fearfully and wonderfully made by our caring Father in Heaven. We have value because we are made in God's image.



Being God's children and bearing His image and name are the roots of our identity, worth, and purpose. Our value doesn't change if we get dirty or are lost. And God certainly doesn't stop looking. No one is too far gone, too hidden, too broken for God's family. Every lost child who returns to the Father is met with a joyful celebration!

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. Have you ever lost a favorite toy? How do you think the woman felt when her coin was lost?
2. Did the woman give up looking for her one coin?
3. Does God give up on us?

Elementary Questions

1. Have you ever lost something really important or special to you? How did it feel when you couldn't find it, and how did you feel when you finally got it back?
2. Did the coin find itself, or did the woman have to search for it? What does this teach us about how God searches for us when we are "lost" or far away from Him?
3. Why do you think the woman threw a big party with her friends when she found the coin? What does her celebration tell us about how happy God is when we turn back to Him?

Weekly Activity: Coin Rubbing

What You'll Need

- Coins
- Paper
- Crayons

Instructions

- Place a real coin under a piece of paper and gently rub it with a crayon to create an impression.
- Have the kids write "Luke 15:10 - Rejoice with me!" at the bottom as a keepsake.

Week 5 - The Parable of the Lost Son

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. 14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" 20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. 25 "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29 but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat,

that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'" Luke 15:11-32

Kids Devotion

Father and son and son. The father graciously provides all that his sons need to flourish. The younger son rejects his father's gifts to establish his own power and rely on his own strength. The older son, having been faithful, finds himself judging and jealous.

God is our good Father who knows only how to give good gifts. God's gifts, how he provides for us, are not ours to parade around as a badge of honor, nor should they be tossed away.

Only when we recognize how much we need Jesus, the Father's greatest gift, can we take our rightful place as dependent, loved, protected, and provided for children of God, welcomed home with open arms by our Good, Good Father.



Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. How do you think the boy felt when he left his cozy home and ran out of money?
2. Have you ever made a bad choice and felt sorry about it later?
3. How does God show us that He is always happy to have us come back to Him when we make mistakes?

Elementary Questions

1. What did the younger son ask for, and why was that hurtful to his father?
2. Why was the older brother so angry when his brother came home? Do you think it was fair for the father to throw a party for the son who made bad choices? Why or why not?
3. In this story, the father represents God. What does this story teach us about how God feels when we make mistakes and say we are sorry?

Weekly Activity: Welcome Home Banner

What You'll Need

Poster board

Crayons, markers, etc.

Instructions

Set out markers and poster board. Have kids create a "Welcome Home" sign as a reminder that God joyfully forgives and welcomes us back.

Week 6 - The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.



47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. 48 When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." 52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." Matthew 13:44-52

Kids Devotion

There are many things we can spend our time on earth striving after - money, power, one more hour of screen time. While those things may feel good when we first get them, they won't satisfy our souls.

Our unhappiness, discontent, and unsettled hearts are symptoms of a greater need - Jesus. At our core, we long for a right relationship with

God. Nothing is worth more than eternity with God. Loosen your grip on the things of this world. Hold tightly to Jesus.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. In the story, the man found a treasure that was more awesome than anything he owned. How do you think he felt when he found it?
2. Who do you think is the best, most special treasure of all?
3. Jesus said His Kingdom is like a big fishing net that catches all kinds of fish. At the end of the story, what does Jesus do with the good fish?

Elementary Questions

1. If you had to trade your absolute favorite thing in the world for something even better, what would that "something better" be?
2. If a fisherman throws a big net into the ocean, he catches all kinds of things. Has there ever been a time when you saw good things and bad things all mixed together?
3. Jesus talked about a teacher who brings out treasures both new and old. What are some "old" stories you know from the Bible, and what is something "new" you learned today?

Weekly Activity: Greatest Treasure

What You'll Need

- Bible

Instructions

- "Hide" a Bible in plain sight.
- Let your kids know that there is something worth more than gold hidden in your house.
- Send them off to find things they think you might be referring to.
- After several guesses, begin giving them hints - where the Bible might be, what shape and color it is.
- Whether they discover the Bible on their own or not, finish by discussing that our relationship with Jesus is the most important treasure we have.

Week 7 - The Parable of the Ten Talents

14 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' 26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my



money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matthew 25:14-30

Kids Devotion

Each of us is given a unique set of talents, resources, and opportunities from our Father God. We are to delight in these gifts, cultivate them even, but they aren't only for our own enjoyment. A tree doesn't eat its own fruit.

As a child of God, our uniqueness, our strengths, and even our weaknesses are an investment of God in us. We are invited into the eternal work of expanding God's kingdom, with good works laid out for us before time began.

The Holy Spirit goes with every baptized follower of Jesus, so we don't have to rely on our own strength to carry out these good works alone.

Wherever your talents take you, whoever your opportunities put you in community with, whatever doors your resources open, allow yourself to be willingly and joyfully available to God.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. In our story, a master gives his helpers special coins to take care of while he is away. What are some things you are really good at doing?
2. If someone gave you a really fun toy, would you hide it all by yourself, or share it with a friend? Why?
3. When we are helpful, kind, and share our talents, the Bible says God is so happy! How does being kind make you feel inside?

Elementary Questions

1. The master represents God, and the "talents" represent everything God has given us. It isn't just money - what are some special gifts, abilities, or even times you have been given?
2. The third servant was afraid of losing the money. Have you ever felt too nervous or afraid to try something new? What happened?
3. What is a "steward"? (It means taking great care of something that belongs to someone else.) How can you be a good "steward" of your family, your schoolwork, or your friendships?

Weekly Activity: Gift Sort

What You'll Need

- Paper
- Something to write with

Instructions

Have kids divide a paper in half. In one column, write personal gifts (creativity, academics, money, friendship), and in the other, brainstorm ways to use those gifts to help others and glorify God.

Week 8 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went



to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who

fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." Luke 10:25-37

Kids Devotion

God desires two acts of obedience from us, to love Him and to love others. The Bible doesn't specify who to love and who not to love. In fact, as vessels for the Holy Spirit and proclaimers of Jesus, we are told to love everyone - the ones who look different than we do, the ones who are hard to love, and the team on the other bench. How we love others may change based upon the situation, but it will always require us to think more of them and less of ourselves. It requires us to pour out the grace and mercy and forgiveness that we freely receive from Jesus.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. Who did Jesus say our neighbors are?
2. Who are some of your neighbors at home, at school, or in your neighborhood?
3. What is one kind thing we can do for someone else today?

Elementary Questions

1. Why do you think the religious leaders (the priest and the Levite) walked past the hurt man? What excuses might they have made?
2. Jesus changed the question from "Who is my neighbor?" to "How can I be a good neighbor?" How can you be a good neighbor at school, on the playground, or in your neighborhood?
3. Who is someone that might be hard for you to show kindness to, and how can you show them God's love anyway?

Weekly Activity: First Aid Kits

What You'll Need

- Small bag or box
- Bandages
- Chocolates
- Paper
- Something to write or draw with

Instructions

Decorate a small bag or box to act as a first aid kit. Fill it with bandages, chocolates, and a note of encouragement to deliver to someone who needs a little cheering up.

Week 9 - The Parable of the Rich Man & Lazarus

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ 27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house - 28 for I have five brothers - so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ 29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Luke 16: 19-31



Kids Devotion

Do not store up things of this world, but instead treasure heavenly things. When our time here on earth has ended and we are reunited with Jesus, none of the things we've collected will come with us. We won't take our cars, our money, our promotions, or our trophies. When we get to heaven, we won't be surrounded by our things. We'll be surrounded by people.

Everything we have been given is a resource, a means to connect the people around us to the extraordinary life found in Jesus. Lean on the Holy Spirit to soften your heart, to open your eyes, to evaluate your priorities and align them with the Father's will.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. In the story, the rich man had so many wonderful things, but who did he forget to help?
2. Do you think God cares more about having lots of toys, or having a big and loving heart?
3. Can you think of one way you can be a helper this week?

Elementary Questions

1. What was the rich man's biggest mistake? Was it that he was rich, or how he treated Lazarus?
2. What are some things God has blessed you with (like food, toys, or time) that you could share with others?
3. The rich man wanted a miracle to help his brothers believe, but someone actually did rise from the dead to save us. Who is that?

Weekly Activity: Lava Jar

What You'll Need

- Clear bottle or jar
- Water
- Oil
- Food coloring
- Glitter (optional)

Instructions

Fill a clear bottle or jar halfway with water, and fill the rest with vegetable oil. Then add food coloring and glitter.

Tape the lid shut securely. Kids can shake it to watch the oil and water separate.

Use this to discuss the parable's lesson: life can seem mixed up or unfair now, but God's justice eventually settles things and makes them right.

Week 10 - The Parable of the Persistent Widow

1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" 6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Luke 18:1-8

Kids Devotion

Knowing the character of God changes how we view prayer. God is compassionate, faithful, and loving. Our prayers are a pleasing aroma, a scent that brings delight. God doesn't just delight in us praying for our lives to be pleasing to Him, but He also delights in us sharing our life with Him.

We were built for a relationship with God. By the blood of Jesus and with the Holy Spirit as our translator, we have a direct line to bring all of our cares and concerns to God the Father. And unlike the corrupt judge, God is both empathetic and unbothered by our continual prayers. God welcomes you in every moment.



Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. What does it mean to "pray"?
2. How is God different from the mean judge?
3. What should you do when you are waiting for God to answer a prayer?

Elementary Questions

1. How would you describe the judge in this story? Was he fair and kind?
2. When we pray, we don't always get what we want right away. What are some different ways God might answer our prayers?
3. Has there ever been a time you felt like giving up - like on a hard school assignment, a sport, or a tough situation? How can remembering this story help you keep trying and keep praying?

Weekly Activity: Prayer Chain

What You'll Need

- Strips of paper
- Tape, glue, or a stapler
- Something to write with

Instructions

Have kids write down people or things they want to pray for on colorful strips of paper. Staple or tape the strips into interconnected loops to form a "prayer chain" they can hang in their room as a visual reminder to pray without ceasing.

Week 11 - The Parable of the Weeds

24 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'""

31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

33 He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

34 All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. 35 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." 37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy

who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Kids Devotion

Our world will often let us down. We might find ourselves asking God why bad people get to do bad things. If we're honest, we all disappoint God. We all choose to do things God wouldn't want us to do.

Instead of focusing on the brokenness, we ought to view everyone through Jesus' eyes. Jesus is calling every person to turn to Him. In the end, God will judge whose heart is sincere. For now, we get to live together in a world that needs to know Jesus, and we get to help share that good news.

Discovery Bible Study

1. What does this passage teach you about God?
2. What does this passage teach you about yourself or the world around you?
3. How will you live this out?

Preschool Questions

1. Why did the farmer tell the helpers to leave the weeds alone?
2. Who is the only one who knows what's in our hearts?
3. If God is taking care of His big garden, what kind of helper does He want you to be today?

Elementary Questions

1. In the story, what did the farmer plant? What did his enemy sneak in and plant?
2. Is it always easy to look at someone and know if they are a "wheat" or a "weed"? What happens when we try to guess who is good and who is bad?
3. Has anyone ever done something mean to you, or gotten away with breaking the rules, and you wanted them to get in trouble right then? How does it feel to know God is patient?

Weekly Activity: Just One Drop

What You'll Need

- Clear jar or bowl
- Water
- Food coloring

Instructions

Fill a clear jar or bowl with water. Ask the kids how many drops of food coloring it takes to change the color of the whole bowl of water. Drop one single drop in and watch it spread to demonstrate how one small, good choice impacts the people around them.





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