

Stories of Faith – 5

Adam Names the Animals (<i>Biblical</i>)	3
Wrong Choices (<i>Biblical</i>)	5
The Good Samaritan (<i>Biblical</i>)	7
Nabor (<i>True Story</i>)	9
Who do we Love? (<i>Christian Fiction</i>)	12
Caroline Chisholm (<i>True Story</i>)	14
Ruth and Naomi (<i>Biblical</i>)	19
Seeing Through the Eyes of Christ (<i>Christian Fiction</i>)	22
The Woman at the Well (<i>Biblical</i>)	26
The Ant and the Grasshopper (<i>Aesop's Fable</i>)	28
Be Prepared (<i>Biblical illustration</i>)	30
God's Army of Angels (<i>Biblical</i>)	32
Tomorrow you Die (<i>True Story</i>)	34
Under New Management (<i>Christian Fiction</i>)	39
Saul Becomes a Christian (<i>Biblical</i>)	41
Naaman's Problem (<i>Biblical</i>)	42
The Way	44
Fool's Gold	46
Galileo Searches for Truth (<i>True Story</i>)	47
Mr. Biggs (<i>Christian Fiction</i>)	49

Peter shows his anger	51
The King who could not Control his Anger (<i>Biblical</i>)	52
Self -control	56
The Greedy Dog (<i>Aesop's Fable</i>)	58
The Golden Eggs (<i>Aesop's Fable</i>)	59
The Faithful Friends (<i>Biblical</i>)	61
John Flynn	63
Betty's problem (puppet play)	66
Food and water in the desert	67
Gladys Aylward (<i>Biography</i>)	69
Water from a Rock (<i>Biblical</i>)	73
Money from a Fish (<i>Biblical</i>)	74
The Two Artists (<i>Christian Fiction</i>)	76
Troubled times for Jesus' friends (<i>Biblical</i>)	77
Houdini (<i>True Story</i>)	78
Blonden, the Tight-rope Walker (<i>True story</i>)	80

Adam Names the Animals

The children sat around the campfire on a clear starry night. They loved to go camping with Grandpa. They especially loved these times when they were allowed to stay up a little later than usual. They would toast marshmallows or make damper. Then Grandpa would tell a story.

"Twit-twoo," they heard from the bush.

"That's an owl," said Grandpa. "Listen carefully and you might hear some other night animals. The bush is very active at night you know. Why do you think koalas and wombats and possums sleep so much in the day-time? It's because they are awake at night time."

The children all listened carefully.

"There's a sound," whispered one.

"That's a morepork," whispered Grandpa. "He gets his name from the noise he makes. Listen."

"How did the animals get their names anyway?" asked Hannah.

"Well," said Grandpa. "I'll tell you the story. It's a very old story actually. It's as old as the Creation itself."

"After God made the world," went on Grandpa, "He made a man called Adam. One of the first things God asked Adam to do was to give names to all the animals...not just the land animals but the birds and fish as well. God did this because He wanted Adam to know that animals were created to help humans. Some animals were tame and some were wild, but whether tame or wild, Adam was to take care of them. God wanted Adam to name the animals so that he would get to know them, and also, so that he would realise his responsibility in taking care of them.

It must have been fun for Adam to think up names for the animals. Just imagine. 'That one with the long neck. I'll call him a giraffe... and what could I call that funny animal that looks a bit like a duck and a bit like a beaver. I'll have to call him a platypus... and that friendly one...I think he would like to be my special friend. I'll call him a dog.'

Adam spent a long time naming the animals. He remembered what God had told him:

"You shall rule over all the animals of the earth."

Adam knew what God meant. He was to look after all the animals. He was to be God's caretaker. What a responsible job that was. Adam felt happy that God had given him the ability to make choices and decisions.

God is Creator – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

PART A

1. We should remember that when God first created the animals, there was no killing, because sin had not yet entered the world. What did Adam, Eve and all the animals eat in the Garden of Eden? (Genesis 1:29-30).
2. Read the verses that tell us that Adam named the animals, (Genesis 2:19-20). Write the part that tells us that Adam named the animals.
3. Make a list of some of the choices and decisions that Adam had to make.
4. What did God mean when He said that people would rule over the animals?
5. Give some examples of ways in which people can take care of God's creation, including animals.
6. Name two animals that are endangered today, and explain why they are endangered.

PART B - God is creator

Read:

God created the animals so that we could enjoy them. Some animals provide food or clothes for us. Some animals are just good friends. God wants us to take care of all the animals in His creation.

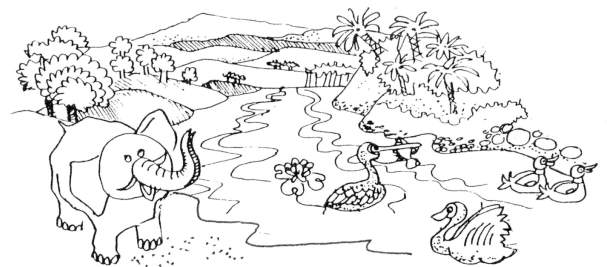
Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I take care of God's creatures?

I can look after my _____.

I can care for the _____.

Missing words: creation pets



Wrong Choices

We all know the true story about the creation of the world. The most beautiful creatures that God created were the man and the woman. God created them to walk and talk with Him, and to be His friends. He wanted the man and the woman to choose to love and obey Him. He could have created them like robots, which automatically obey everything, but He didn't.

God set up a situation where the man and the woman had to make a choice. The tree in the Garden of Eden, called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was the tree that they were not to touch. They could eat the fruit from any other tree, but not that one.

Guess who came along and tempted them to eat the fruit? Yes, it was Satan in the disguise of a snake. "You will be like God," said the snake. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve made the wrong choice. This meant that they could no longer be part of God's perfect garden. Thistles started to grow, and animals started killing. Sin had brought a curse.

Once the first people had chosen to disobey, the children born to them disobeyed God as well. There is only one way we can be forgiven for wrong choices. That is through Jesus, who died on the cross for us.

Adam and Eve had two sons. They called their first son Cain, and the second one, Abel. When the boys grew up they helped their parents to grow food and look after the animals. Cain became a farmer. He grew grain and fruit and vegetables. Abel became a shepherd.

It was the custom in those days to bring an offering once a year to say 'thank you' to God for providing everything they needed. They built a special table called an altar, and placed upon it their gifts to God. Abel brought a lamb, and Cain brought some of the produce that he had grown.

God was happy with Abel's gift because Abel had chosen to love and obey God. God was not happy with Cain's gift because Cain did not love God. Cain chose evil. He knew in his heart that God was not happy with him. He also knew that God was happy with Abel.

Cain became angry and jealous. He was jealous of his brother who always chose to do the right thing. Jealousy grew in Cain's heart. He became so filled with hatred that he killed his brother Abel. Now there was bloodshed among humans as well as animals. God was very sad about the choices His people had made.

God is Creator – Themes 5

Activities

PART A

1. What did God say to Cain? (Gen. 4:6-7)
2. What did Cain do? (verse 8)
3. What did God say to Cain? (verse 9)
4. What was Cain's answer? (verse 9)
5. Was this the truth?
6. Could Cain hide from God? (verse 10-11)
7. What was the punishment? (verse 12)
8. What was Cain's first wrong choice?
9. How did one wrong choice lead to another one?
10. What would you say if someone asked you to smoke?
11. Think of some of the choices we have to make in life. Name some good choices.

PART B - God is creator

Read:

When God created people, He gave them the ability to think and choose for themselves. He wanted people to be responsible, and to make good choices. One of the first things Adam had to do was to name the animals. He had to choose names for them. The next choice was a bit more difficult. Adam and Eve had to choose between good and evil. That is, between obeying God or disobeying God. I wonder what choice we would have made. Because of one wrong choice, the whole of creation suffered. People made more and more wrong choices. Cain's wrong choice was just one of many more to follow.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I make right choices?

I can find out what God has to say in His _____.

I can _____ God's word.

I can obey Christian people who are _____ and wiser than I am.

Missing words: obey older word

The Good Samaritan

Read the story from Luke 10:25-38, then answer this question:

Why do you think the first two people refused to help the man by the roadside?

Play: Modern day Good Samaritan

Here is a play written by some students from a Christian School in South Australia. Perhaps you could act out the play, or make up your own.

1st Person:

Let's play 'Stuck in the mud'.

2nd Person:

O.K. Good idea.

3rd Person:

I'm definitely not going 'caught'. I went 'caught' first last time.

4th Person:

Alright. Don't complain.

5th Person:

I'll go 'caught'.... ready, go!

(3rd person falls over.)

2nd person:

Ha, ha, ha. That looked so funny.

1st Person:

Let's not bother about him/her.

4th person:

Yeah. Let's not waste OUR lunch time.

5th Person:

Let's go before we have to give a testimony to the teacher.

(6th person comes along.)

6th Person:

You poor thing. Let me help you.

3rd Person:

Oooh.

6th Person:

Looks like you've had a bad accident. There's a great big bump on your head. I'll take you to the first aid room.

Next day...

3rd Person:

I really don't know why he/she helped me. I've always been nasty to them. Guess I'll go and thank him/her.

God is Love – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

PART A

1. Why did **persons 1,2,3,4 & 5** NOT want to help?
2. Why was the injured person surprised to get help from the **6th person**?
3. Read Matthew 5:44. How was the **6th person**, putting into practice the words of Jesus?
4. How was the injured person also obeying God?
5. Read the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-38, then answer this question: Why do you think the first two people refused to help the man by the roadside?

PART B - God is love

Read:

God loves everyone. He loves the rich and the poor. He loves people who do good deeds and people who do bad deeds. He doesn't love us according to how good we are. God wants us to love others too. He even wants us to love people who are unkind to us. Showing kindness is a way of showing God's love.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I be kind to everyone?

When people treat me unkindly, I can _____ God to take away my anger.

I can forgive those who are unkind to me and help them when they _____ help.

Missing words: need ask

Nabor

Many true stories are told about the help that Australian Aboriginal people have given to white people. The story of Nabor is one of these.

The Australian Aboriginal people did not understand the ways of the first white people, who arrived on the Australian shores over 200 years ago. The Aboriginal people had their own laws which they kept with great care; but the white man's laws were new and strange to them.

When the white people took over the land, many of the past hunting-grounds of the Aboriginal people were lost to them. Since they could no longer hunt for kangaroos and other animals, they, being hungry, took the white man's animals instead.

Sometimes too, they would raid an outback hut, and steal the food. The white people, who needed the food themselves, tried to put a stop to this.

Once, a policeman and his party of 'black trackers' set out to catch four Aboriginal people who had broken the law and raided such a hut. They caught them and fastened them one to the other with chains about their necks. Then the policeman and the trackers, with their captives, set out for home. The captives walked by the police horses.

Now, heavy rains had fallen since the police party had set out, and they found that a small river, which they had crossed before was already in full flood.

On the return, the party had to cross this river. The policeman had told the captives to swim while he and the black trackers went across on their horses. He then undid the chains, and these hung down loosely from their necks. Each of the captives then wound the loose chain about his neck and under his arms.

Then they dived into the water. The captives were all strong swimmers, and all swam the flooded river quite safely. So also did the black trackers. The policeman, however, seemed to have disappeared.

Then they saw that he had been thrown from his horse. He and the horse had both been caught in the strong current. They watched the policeman struggle back to his horse, but the terrified animal kicked him. The policeman fell back into the water unconscious. Already the current was carrying him away. It seemed almost certain that the flood would cost him his life.

Suddenly, Nabor, one of the captives, wound his loose chain about himself and ran along the river bank in the same direction as the current was going. He noted the spot where the policeman was, and running past it, dived into the flooded river. He swam and struggled against the current, until he managed to draw nearer to the policeman.

Even when he reached him the struggle wasn't over. Nabor was tiring, and the chains about him felt heavy. It was hard, in the strong current, to keep the policeman afloat and struggle toward the bank.

The other Aboriginal men had run to the nearest spot, and, as Nabor struggled toward the bank, they took the policeman from his arms and put him carefully on the ground. He lay quite still.

The rest of the party stood and looked down at the one white man among them. He was so pale and still that even then they thought he might die. Then suddenly Nabor wound his loose chain around his arm and disappeared.

He ran straight into the bush; not to escape, but to get help for the white man. For three miles he ran, until he found some white men. With them he hurried back again. These men were able to help the policeman, and soon he looked less pale and began to speak to them. Later he was able to go on his way. When the party reached the police station, the policeman told the story of Nabor's bravery.

This true story was told in the newspapers. When the story reached England, the King decided that Nabor deserved a medal, and ordered that one should be sent to him.

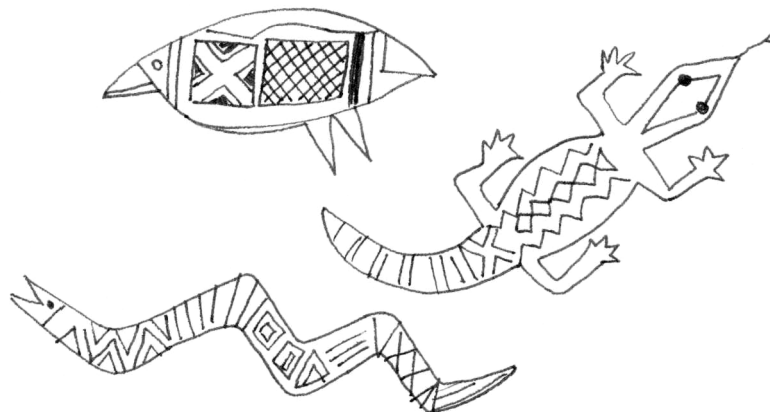
Even though Nabor had probably never read the words of Jesus, he was actually doing as Jesus commands us. You can read this in Luke 6:27-28. Nabor also gave us a true example of what it means to love your neighbour. Perhaps Nabor was given his name because

of the kindness he showed to all people...even his enemies. He gave us a true example of loving our neighbour.

God is Love – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities – Nabor the Aboriginal

1. Why did Australian Aboriginal people steal the food of the white people?
2. What did the white people do about this?
3. Who were the captives?
4. How do we know that the captives were good swimmers?
5. Do you think that the policeman deserved to be rescued by Nabor? Explain why or why not.
6. Write this verse from the Bible: Luke 6:27, starting from the word 'Love'.
7. Read Mark 12:30-31. Explain why Nabor was being a good neighbour?



Who do we love?

Mr. Lane was a very rich man. He also was a Christian and went to church each Sunday. He always drove his big car and wore a nice suit.

One Sunday morning when he got up he found his paper had not been delivered as usual. He quickly put on his old trousers and jumper and went to the garage. His daughter's small car was blocking his own car, so he got her keys and drove the small car to the newsagent.

Coming back, Mr. Lane got a puncture, so he changed the tyre. He got a bit dirty and it took him much longer than he thought it would. It was nearly time for church. If he went home and changed into his suit he would be late.

He decided to go to church as he was. He brushed the dirt off as best he could and drove the small car into the church yard. To his surprise, as he went into the church, he was not greeted warmly as he usually was. He sat in the same seat as usual. A lady he knew came up to him but as he was about to say 'Hello', she said, 'You can't sit there. That's Mr. Lane's seat.' Before he could say, 'I am Mr. Lane', she had rushed off.

Mr. Lane was absolutely astonished. People did not seem to recognise him without his suit. As he got into his daughter's car after the service he smiled and waved at a man he knew. The man gave a polite wave but looked at him as if he had never seen him before.

Mr. Lane was quite upset. Were people really interested in him, he wondered, or just his money? How would they treat someone new who was not dressed in a suit?

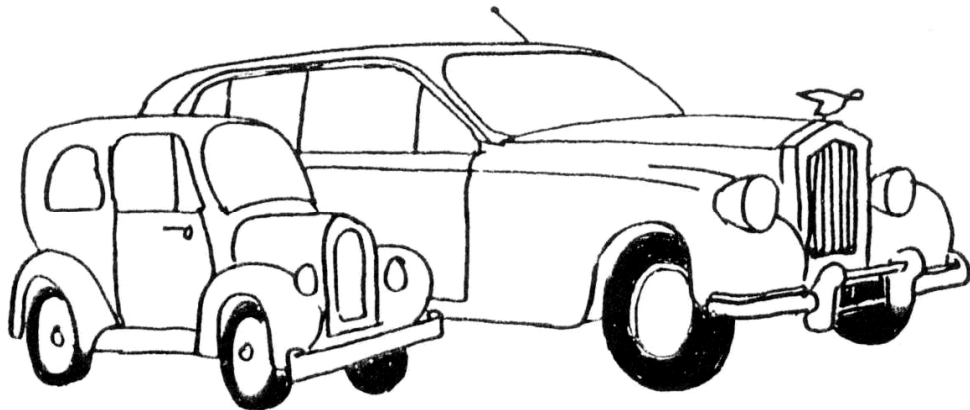
Mr. Lane thought about it all the following week. He decided to go to another church the following Sunday. This time he again drove his daughter's car, and he deliberately wore old clothes.

Even though the people at this church had never seen him before they were very friendly. Mr. Lane has been going to that church ever since.

God is Love – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. What was Mr. Lane's own car like?
2. What was his daughter's car like?
3. How did Mr. Lane usually dress for church?
4. How was he dressed on this day?
5. How did people treat him at church on this day?
6. Read James 2:1-8. What warning is given in these verses?
7. Does God love people who are rich more than those who are poor?
8. How does God want us to treat people who are poor?
9. What does it mean to love others as God loves us?



Caroline Chisholm

Caroline Chisholm came to Australia in the early 1800s along with many others new settlers. She was married to a sea captain called Archibald. Although originally from Britain, Caroline and Archibald had worked in India, helping British soldiers and their families. They were very excited as they left India to come to a new land. The first European settlers had arrived in Australia only 50 years before.

"Where will we be living, Archibald?" asked Caroline.

"We will be at Sydney, the largest town. My duty will be to help guard the convicts who have been sent out from the over-crowded prisons in England."

When they arrived in Sydney they found it to be a busy, bustling sea-port with narrow, unpaved streets. The horses and carts had churned up the dirt roads so much that they were scarcely useable. Some of the people were rich. They had fine horses and elegant carriages. There were also some wealthy land owners with well-built homes, but most people had tumble down shacks, or small dingy houses to live in. However, hundreds had no homes at all. They slept under trees or in the shelter of rocks. This is what worried Caroline. She was especially concerned for the young women and girls who had no home.

"Why are there so many young girls on the streets all day and night?" Caroline asked the wife of an officer.

"Oh, my dear, the government in England sends out these immigrants. They are expected to find work and a home when they arrive in Sydney, but there's not enough work for all the people who arrive here," was the reply.

Caroline decided that she wanted help the young women. She took as many as she could into her own home, but there were hundreds more sleeping on the streets and in the parks.

"Something must be done!" she said to Archibald. "These girls need a big home where they can be sheltered and protected. I'm going to see if any of our friends can help me do something for them."

At first no one was helpful. Then after a lot of persistence, Caroline finally persuaded the governor to allow her to use an old building for the girls. The walls were cracked and it was rat infested. The only light was from her own candle.

Caroline poisoned the rats and cleaned up the old building as best she could. Soon she had ninety young women to care for. She asked friends to give food to feed the girls. She then tried to find jobs for the girls. Many of the jobs were on farms in the country. The girls, who had come from the crowded cities of England, were too afraid to go to the country on their own, so Caroline went with them. The roads were rough and there were rivers without bridges to be crossed. The hot sun would beat upon them and the rain poured into the open cart. Bushrangers made the journeys dangerous. These men would often hold up travellers in order to rob them.

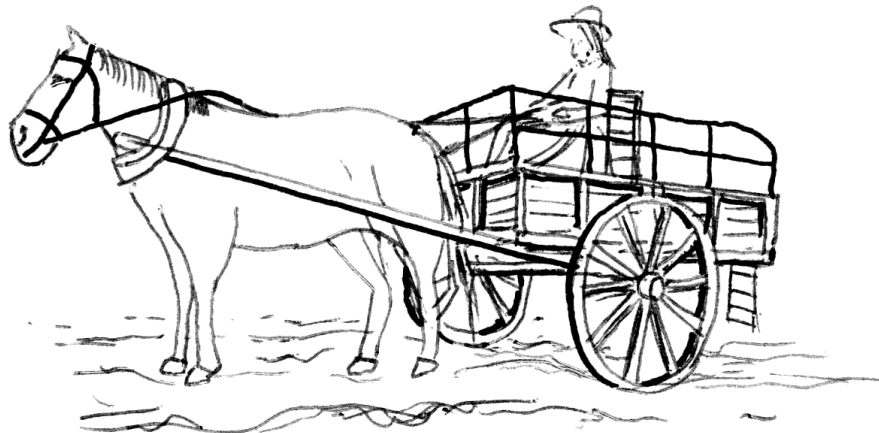
As time went on Caroline worked at bringing together again the families of convicts. Many people had been imprisoned for small crimes like stealing a loaf of bread. As punishment, these people had then been sent to Australia to work. They were therefore separated from their families. Caroline arranged for wives and children who had been left behind in England to join their fathers and husbands in the new colony.

Caroline is remembered most of all today for her kindness to needy young women, at a time when their troubles were ignored by everyone else. She loved God and shared His love with others, giving up her own comforts to help those in need.

God is Love - Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. How did Caroline help?
2. What can Christians learn from her example?
3. How did Caroline carry out the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:35-36?
4. Read the list of the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23. Which fruits of the Spirit do you think Caroline showed the most?
5. Show the fruit of kindness by being an 'angel' to someone this week. Do not let the person know that you are going to be their angel. Plan ways of showing kindness towards that person, but do your acts of kindness in secret. You can do anonymous jobs for them, or make gifts for them. Write the person's name on the gift and leave it in a place for them to find. You could also make message cards. Write something that would make the person feel happy. It could be a verse from the Bible.



Convict Letters

To Matthew Beardsley, 18 North Rd., Derby, England

Letter 1

Date: 7 . 8 . 87

My dear brother Matthew,

Right now I am in a hulk. I got transported to New Holland for five years for stealing a black satin cloak. That night as you know, I had a party to go to. I needed something pretty to wear. I saw a lady with a cloak in her hand so I ran up and snatched it from her. Next year I will be arriving in Botany Bay. Please do not worry about me for I will be fine.

from Ann

Letter 2

Date: 10 . 9 . 87

My dear brother Matthew,

I am in this ship going to New Holland. It's very stuffy and hot! People are sick and some are dying. I am feeling a bit sick myself. When you get this letter I will be in New Holland! When I am bored I read my bible. At night I can never get any sleep. People are snoring, people are crying and some are screaming! However I have made one friend and she is very nice. Her name is Mary, and she is here for theft of apparel, the same as me. Mary is 25, just three years older than I am, and I hope that we can stay together when we get off the ship. How are Ma and Pa going? Please do write soon!
Love, Ann

Letter 3

Date: 10 . 3 . 88

Dear Matthew,

I am in New Holland! On the 26th of January we arrived. We stayed on the ship until the 6th of February. On the 6th we finally got off board. It had been so crowded! It took all day for just the ladies to get off board. The men got off earlier and started work, building houses. The climate here is so strange. When it's snowing in England it's hot here! Last night there was a thunder storm and you could never imagine how scary it was!

From Ann

Letter 4

Date: 1 . 6 . 88

Dear Matthew

I am working in a wool factory. Mary is working there too. It is very hard work and the weather is very hot. At first we had nowhere to live, but a kind lady called Caroline said that we could live in her dormitory. We feel safe here. It's much safer than being on the streets. There are many strange animals here, like 'kangaroo', 'koala' and 'wombat'. There's also a strange bird called a 'kookaburra'. It doesn't chirp or tweet or sing or anything. It laughs!

Love you lots! Ann

Letter 5

Date: 30 . 11 . 88

Dear Matthew,

It happened so quickly! I got a ticket of leave and so did Mary! When we were walking home from the factory we saw a lady. She was yelling "Help! Help! I've been robbed!" Then Mary and I saw the thief and we ran after him. After ten minutes we caught him. A policeman saw us and helped us. He gave us a ticket of leave for helping the lady. We returned all the stolen goods. In two years time Mary and I will hopefully be back in England. Please tell Ma and Pa the exciting news!

Love Ann.

Ruth and Naomi

Long ago, in Old Testament times, lived a man called Elimelech and his wife Naomi. Their home was in Israel, but during a time of drought, they moved away from Israel to a land where there was more food. The new place was called Moab. Although there was plenty of food there, the people who lived there did not worship God. Naomi's two sons grew up and married young ladies who worshipped other gods.

Then one day something very bad happened to Naomi. First, her husband Elimelech died, and then her two sons died. Naomi's heart was filled with sadness. She was lonely too. She had heard that the rains had come again to Israel, so decided to go back to be among her own people.

Naomi told the wives of her two sons. The wives names were Orpah and Ruth. They wanted to come with Naomi. They all got ready for the journey and started walking.

After a while, Naomi stopped. She turned to her two daughters-in-law and said, "You have been very kind to me. Do not feel that you must take care of me any longer. You are young and I am old. Go back to your own people and be happy."

Orpah kissed Naomi and then went back to her own people. But Ruth did not. Naomi said, "Look, Orpah has gone back to her people and to her gods. Go and follow her."

What was Ruth's reply?
Find out from Ruth 1:16-18

So Ruth and Naomi went back to Israel. They got there just at the beginning of the grain harvest. In those days people were allowed to gather the left over grain from the fields, after the farmers had cut it. This is what Ruth and Naomi did. What ever grain they picked up they were allowed to keep for themselves.

One day Ruth went into the fields of a very rich man named Boaz. When Boaz saw Ruth working in his field he wanted to find out who she was. One of the field workers said, "Her name is Ruth. She came with Naomi from a country far away. She asked me if she could pick up grain in our fields for herself and Naomi."

Then Boaz went over to Ruth and said, "I have heard about you, Ruth. I have heard of your kindness and faithfulness to Naomi. I am glad to have you as a worker in my fields. You may drink from my well and eat with the women who work for me if you wish."

Ruth thanked Boaz. Boaz told his workers to leave some grain so that Ruth and Naomi would have plenty to pick up.

Boaz grew to love Ruth very much. One day he asked Ruth to be his wife. Ruth loved Boaz too and was happy to marry him. Ruth and Naomi went to live at the house of Boaz. The Lord was happy with Ruth for being so faithful. He gave Ruth a little son named Obed. Obed became the grandfather of King David.

God is Love – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities – Ruth and Naomi

PART A

1. Which country was Naomi from?
2. Why did Naomi and her family have to move to Moab?
3. Did the people of Moab worship the true God?
4. Did Naomi's sons marry Israelites?
5. What happened to Naomi's husband and sons?
6. Why did Naomi want to go back to Israel?
7. Did she expect Ruth to go with her?
8. Read Luke 10:27. What are the two greatest commandments given to us by Jesus?
9. Read Proverbs 18:24 and fill in the missing words.

There is a friend who is closer than a _____. That friend is Jesus.

PART B - God is love

Read:

Ruth obeyed both of the two greatest commandments. She could have chosen to go back to her own people who worshipped other gods, but instead she chose to follow Naomi, who worshipped the true God. In doing this she was showing that she wanted to love God with all her heart. She also showed a great love for Naomi by deciding to go with her to a new land. To love someone faithfully means that we never stop loving. God is like that. People sometimes stop loving, but God never stops loving us. He is always with us, by our side.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I love God with all my heart, and love my neighbour as myself?

I can talk to God in prayer and _____ to what He has to say to me.

I can _____ God I love Him.

I can care _____ others.

I can be _____ to others.

I can _____ on loving and forgiving.

Missing words: for keep tell kind listen

Seeing through the eyes of Christ

Scene 1

Mum:

"How was your day at school?"

John:

"O.K. I guess. There was a new boy there today."

Mum:

"What was he like?"

John:

"Awful Mum. Nobody likes him. He is dirty and he looks at you with a real mean look every time you go near him."

Mum:

"Did anyone talk to him? You should try to get to know him a bit. Maybe he was just not feeling too sure of himself."

John:

"No way. He'd probably punch anyone who went near him."

Mum:

You and your friends seem to know this boy pretty well, considering that not one of you has spoken to him."

John:

"Well, sometimes you just know."

Mum:

Maybe what you need is for Jesus to help you see this boy differently."

John:

"What do you mean?"

Mum:

"Well, God wants us to LOVE other people."

John:

Oh, but He doesn't mean this kid."

Mum:

"Why not?"

John:

"Well, I'm sure he's not a Christian. He swears! I've heard him, Mum. He's a real creep."

Mum:

God wants us to LOVE others...Christian or not."

John:

I can't. He's not my type. Besides, the others would think I'd gone off my rocker if I started to be friendly with him."

Mum:

"If you asked God to help you, I'm sure you'd be able to see this boy with new eyes."

John:

"What do you mean?"

Mum:

"Just try it."

Scene 2

THAT NIGHT IN BED:

John: (praying)

"O.K. Lord. I guess I don't really feel too good about the way I've treated Sam. But I can't really help not liking him much. If you want me to like him you're going to have to help me see him differently."

ASLEEP AND DREAMING...TWO CHILDREN WEARING HUGE GLASSES:

Child 1:

"Hey, these new glasses are terrific. Suddenly I see the whole world differently."

Child 2:

"Yes. Isn't it great? I don't know why, but suddenly I find myself talking to people who I previously had no time for, and I'm enjoying it! There's a lot more to these people than I ever imagined."

Child 1:

"They make me feel all warm inside, and there's so much I could just never see before I had these."

John:

"Hey, where did you get those glasses? Can I try a pair?"

Child 2:

Oh, I'm sorry. They're all specially fitted by the Teacher. They only fit the person for whom they're made. Even then they have to keep going back for re-adjustment."

John:

"That must be a bit of a nuisance."

Child 2:

"Oh, no. It's terrific. Every time we go for an adjustment, we come back able to see more and more wonderful things that we've never been able to see before."

John:

"Wow! I'd like to get a pair of these glasses. Are they expensive?"

Child 2:

"Oh no they're free."

John:

"Well, tell me where to go and I'll get a pair. Who is this Teacher? Where does He live? He'd give me a pair wouldn't he?"

Child 2:

"Well, that depends."

John:

"On what?"

Child 2:

"On whether you really want them."

John:

"Of course I want them. I said so didn't I?"

Child 2:

"But there's a price."

John:

"But you said they were free."

Child 2:

"Well, yes and no. You have to WANT to see people differently, as the Teacher sees them. He only gives glasses to those who believe in Him, and want to be like Him, and see like Him. If you see like the Teacher, you will no longer see people the same way as some of your friends do."

John:

"That's a problem. Maybe my friends won't like me if I see things differently to them. But I do WANT these new eyes. I do want to see differently."

Child 2:

"O.K. Let's ask the Teacher."

John:

Where is He?

Child 2:

He's everywhere and hears every word we say. Just ask Him to give you those special eyes."

John:

"Please Sir, let me see things with your special eyes."

(Looking around:) "Wow! I've got them. Let's go and try them out."

Child 2: (taking John to meet the new boy...)

"I think you know this boy."

John:

"Hello. I'm sorry we were all so mean to you yesterday. Where do you live? Maybe I could show you around the district after school today."

Sam:

"O.K. I'd really like that."

John: (to himself...)

"Wow! What's happening to me? That's the same boy I saw yesterday. He's not too bad after all. In fact I really like him. It's like a dream."

Scene 3

Mum:

"Wake up John. You're going to be late for school."

John: (groping around...)

"Where are my glasses?"

Mum:

"John, You've never worn glasses in your life. What are you talking about?"

John:

"The Teacher gave me His glasses so that I could see people in a new way...Ooh, it was only a dream."

Mum:

"Maybe not John. Did you pray the way I suggested last night?"

John:

"Well, yes."

Mum:

You may not be able to see the glasses, but perhaps they are there all the same."

John:

"You mean Jesus will help me see people differently?"

Mum:

"Why not?"

God is Love – Themes 5

Activities

1. What did the two children think about the new boy?
2. In the dream, how did the glasses help John to see things differently?
3. Who was the Teacher in the story?
4. How can He help us?
5. It is easy to be kind to those who treat us kindly. How should we treat those who are unfriendly towards us?
6. Why is it important to speak kindly to others?

The woman at the well

Jesus loved all people. Jesus showed kindness towards people who did wrong. He tried to help them. He tried to show them that God would forgive them if they were truly sorry.

There is a true story in the Bible about a woman who Jesus met at a well. People did not have taps in their houses in those days so everyone had to go to the village well to get their water. It was a meeting place where women would talk together as they collected their water in their clay jars. There was one woman who everyone talked about. She was not a good woman. She lived with a man who was not her husband. For that reason no one talked to her.

There was another reason no one talked to this woman. She was a Samaritan. Jewish people did not like people from Samaria. However, there was one person who did talk to her. That was Jesus.

"Will you give me a drink from your water jar," asked Jesus. "I am thirsty and don't have a water container myself."

The woman was surprised. "Why are you talking to me?" she asked. "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan."

Jesus told the woman of the special gift that God could give her. Jesus could forgive her and give her a special peace and joy inside. Jesus called this gift 'Living Water'.

Jesus knew how the woman lived. It was not God's way. He told her about her life, but not unkindly. The woman was surprised because no one had ever told Jesus these things. She knew that Jesus was special. "Could He be the One sent from God?...the One that the scriptures spoke about?"

She knew that Jesus was the One. Yes, she wanted the 'Living Water'.

God is Love – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities – The woman at the well

1. How was water collected in Bible times?
2. Why was the woman disliked? Give two reasons.
3. Why was the woman surprised when Jesus asked her for a drink?
4. What was the gift that Jesus could give to the woman?
5. How did the woman know Jesus was the one sent from God?
6. Find out what this Bible verse is, using the code.

**A=26 B=25 C=24 D=23 E=22 F=21 G=20 H=19 I=18 J=17
K=16 L=15 M=14 N=13 O=12 P=11 Q=10 R=9 S=8 T=7
U=6 V=5 W=4 X=3 Y=2 Z=1**

Bible verse:

15.12.5.22 18.8. 11.26.7.18.22.13.7 26.13.23. 16.18.13.23.
18.7 16.22.22.11.8 13.12 9.22.24.12.9.23
12.21 4.9.12.13.20.8

7. Think of some more actions that show love.
Love is...sharing
Love is...forgiving
Love is...planning a nice surprise for someone
Love is...
Love is...



The Ant and the Grasshopper

One lovely summer day a grasshopper was sitting in the sun singing with all his might. Nearby an ant was struggling along carrying a grain of wheat.

"Isn't it a beautiful day?" sang the grasshopper. "Why don't you sing like me?"

"I'm too busy," muttered the ant as he scurried along.

"What are you too busy about?" asked the grasshopper.

"I'm getting ready for the winter," replied the ant as he put a grain of wheat into his little store hole. Then off he went to fetch some more food.

"Well, I think you're silly," said the grasshopper as the ant returned with another grain. "As long as the sun shines I shall go on singing."

And so he did. But it wasn't long before Autumn came, and then Winter. The sun no longer shone and the cold winds blew. The green grass had turned to brown. Soon it became covered with a light dusting of snow. The leaves had fallen from the trees and had blown away. There was nothing to eat. The grasshopper was shivering with cold and was dreadfully hungry.

The ant, however, was snug and warm inside his hole with all the good food he had collected.

"Please give me some of your food," the grasshopper called down the hole. "I am so hungry."

"No, I can't," said the ant. "I should like to help you, but it has taken me all my time to collect this food and I need it to last me the winter. I have none to spare for anyone else. You should have prepared for the winter as I did."

Ants, like many other creatures, prepare for the future by storing up food. They are wise little creatures because they work hard and think ahead. God says that people should learn a lesson from the ant. People can be prepared for the future by inviting Jesus into their

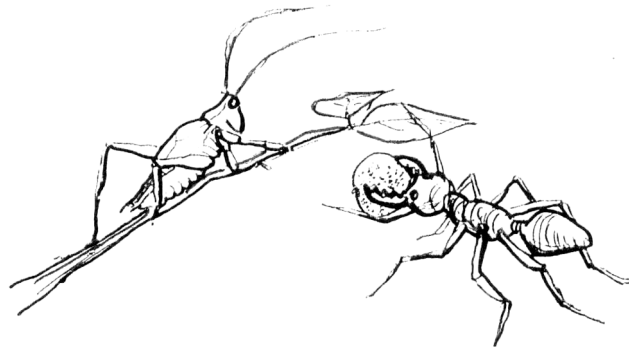
lives. Then, no matter what happens in the future God will be with them. Christians can prepare for the future by storing God's word in their hearts.

Aesop's Fables

God is Wise – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. Why did the grasshopper think the ant was silly?
2. How did the grasshopper feel when winter came?
3. Why couldn't the ant give the grasshopper any food?
4. Why was the ant wise?
5. Read Matthew 6:19-21. What does it tell us? (Use your own words).



Be Prepared

Astronauts must train on earth before they can go into space. They practice working under water, because floating in water is like floating in space. They work, eat and drink inside a full-sized model of a spacecraft which is submerged in a huge water tank.

They must also practice for lift-off and landing. A machine called a centrifuge spins the astronauts around very fast. Spinning gives them the same hard push they will feel when their spacecraft lifts off and zooms upward.

Astronauts need to be very fit. They prepare their bodies by intensive exercise programs. There is a lot to know about the space voyage and operating the spacecraft so they spend a lot of time learning and studying.

For some astronauts, the experience of being in space causes them to think about the wonder of the creation. For one astronaut named Charles Duke, his time in space brought him closer to God than ever before. As he thought about the great God of the universe, he suddenly realised that he was not prepared to meet Him. Although he had spent so much time preparing for the space voyage, he had never given time to God. It was because of this voyage that Charles decided to give his life to Jesus.

There is a story in the Bible about some girls who were not prepared for the future. You can read the story from Matthew 25:1-13. Five were prepared for the journey because they had oil in their lamps. This meant they would always have light to show the way. However, five were not prepared. They had no oil in their lamps.

Jesus wants us to prepare our hearts for the future. We can prepare our mind by learning and we can prepare our bodies by healthy eating and exercise, but there is only one way to prepare our heart. That is to invite Jesus to come and live in our life. Jesus told this story to show us that we must be prepared for the day when He comes again. We will be prepared if we have asked Jesus to be our special friend.

God is Wise – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities – Be Prepared

PART A

1. What are some of the things that astronauts do to train, before going into space?
2. Why do you think astronauts have to be physically fit?
3. In space, what could cause astronauts to think about God?
4. What can astronauts teach us about being prepared?
5. In the Bible story, why were five of the girls unprepared?
6. Who is the light of life?
7. Why did Jesus tell this story?

PART B - God is wise

Read:

God knows everything. He knows the future. God tells us that we should prepare for the future, just like ants prepare for the winter, or like astronauts who prepare to go to space. The best way we can prepare for the future is to know Jesus. Then whatever happens in life, Jesus will be with us to help us. God also tells us to prepare for eternal life. That means that we live, even after our bodies die. No one knows when they will die. No one knows when Jesus will come again, but if we have Jesus in our life, then we will be ready. Be wise... be prepared!

Copy and fill in the missing words:

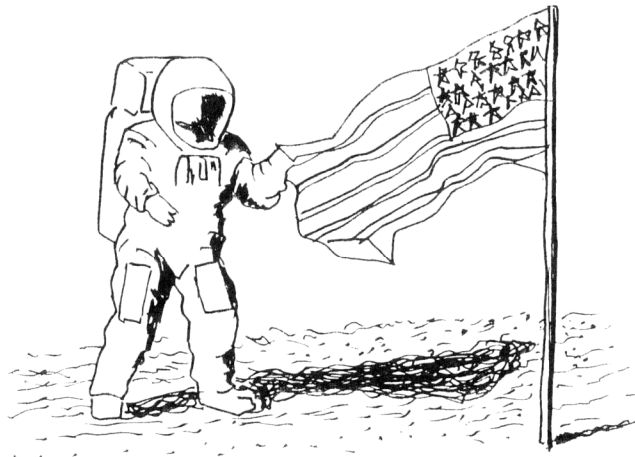
How can I be prepared for Jesus?

I can ask Jesus to forgive me for my _____.

I can invite Him into my _____.

I can do the things He wants me to _____.

Missing words: life do sins



God's Army of Angels

The king of Syria wanted to make war with Israel. He organised his men to set up camp in a place where they could easily capture some of the Israelite soldiers.

There was an Israelite called Elisha who had the special gift of being able to hear messages from God. God told Elisha what the king of Syria was planning to do. God told Elisha where the Syrian camp was. Elisha went straight to the Israelite king to warn him. The Israelite army were able to keep well away from the Syrian camp, so the Syrians couldn't capture them.

The Syrians tried again and again, but each time the Lord showed Elisha their plans. Each time they avoided the Syrians. Finally, the Syrian king called his soldiers together and said, "Which one of you is a spy, and telling the Israelites our plans?"

One of the soldiers replied, "There are no spies amongst us, but there is an Israelite named Elisha who hears messages from God. He knows your plans and tells them to the Israelite king."

The Syrian king was very angry. He found out where Elisha lived. The king and his men came by night with their horses and chariots and surrounded the town where Elisha lived.

The next morning, when Elisha and his servant got up, they saw horses and chariots everywhere!

"Don't worry," said Elisha. "We have more soldiers with us than they have with them. (But the servant saw no soldiers with Elisha, as the Israelite army was based in another place called Samaria.)"

Then Elisha asked God to open the servant's eyes. God opened his eyes and he saw horses and chariots of fire, there with them on the mountain. It was God's army of angels. God had sent his angels to fight for Elisha.

Then Elisha spoke to the king of Syria. "Is it Elisha you are looking for? He does not live here. Let me take you to him."

The king and his army followed Elisha all the way to Samaria without realising that it was actually Elisha they were following. Elisha led them right into the Israelite camp. When the Syrians realized where they were they were terribly afraid. There were now more Israelite soldiers than Syrians.

"What shall we do?" the Israelite king asked Elisha. "Shall we kill them?"

"No," said Elisha. "Let them go free."

So Elisha sent the Syrian army home, and they did not bother the Israelites for a long time after that.

God is Protector – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. What was Elisha's special gift?
2. How did God protect the Israelites?
3. What did the Syrian king do when he found out that Elisha knew their plans?
4. How did God protect Elisha?
5. Did the servant see the angel army at first?
6. What did he see when God opened his eyes?
7. What did Elisha say to the Israelite king once they were in the hands of the Israelites?
8. Could it be possible that armies of angels protect us, even though we can't see them? Write about a time when angels may have protected you.
9. Write a verse from Psalm 23 that tells us about God's protection.

Tomorrow you Die

(A true story)

Reona Peterson and her friend Evey had a dangerous mission to accomplish. God had called them to take His message of love into the country of Albania. In 1973, when this story took place, the Albanian government had a strong hatred for Christians. People were forbidden by law to believe in the God of the Bible. People were expected to honour and obey the government above everything else.

Reona had been a teacher from New Zealand, and Evey, a nurse from England. The only way they could get into Albania was with a tour group. Tour groups were seldom allowed into Albania, but the two ladies finally found a French group leaving for Albania that summer.

They boarded the bus in Paris, travelled through France, then Italy and Yugoslavia. As they crossed the border between Yugoslavia and Albania, they sensed the danger that lay ahead. Through the bus window they could see a cluster of white concrete buildings and a large red and black flag fluttering from a flag pole. Without warning, the bus stopped. Within seconds they were surrounded by soldiers with guns at their sides. All those on board were asked to get off. Clothing was checked carefully. Anyone with bright, conspicuous clothing had to change immediately. Luggage was searched, then visas checked.

Finally they were on the bus again, heading for their hotel. On arrival, they were assigned three to a room. Reona and Evey were joined by a British woman named Mary.

"This is my second trip to Albania," said Mary. "On my last trip, six years ago, two members of the group were interrogated for carrying Christian books and leaflets. That's the thing they're after."

Reona and Evey froze as they thought of the small New Testaments and Christian leaflets they were carrying in their shoulder bags. The bags had concealed compartments where the Bibles and leaflets could be hidden quite well.

After a few days the tour party visited the city of Tirana. The guide surprised everyone with the news that they had two hours walk in the city. The tourists were allowed to go off on their own instead of being supervised as usual. There were several parks in the city. Reona and Evey made their way to these, leaving Christian leaflets on benches, on tops of hedges, or on walls of fountains. While walking in the city they met a man who spoke French. This was unusual, as most people here spoke only Albanian. Both Reona and Evey knew some French so they were able to tell him about Jesus.

"I know it and believe it," said the man in French. He was a secret believer. How glad he was to meet some other Christians.

One night, towards the end of the tour, Reona and Evey were returning to their hotel, when Reona felt ill. She had a terrible night with severe stomach pains. By morning, she knew that she could not join the party for the two day excursion which had been planned. Evey would have to go alone.

At lunch time, a woman came into the room with a food tray. Reona knew what she must say try to tell the woman about Jesus.

Tears came to the woman's eyes.
"Me Christian too," she said in broken English.
Reona gave her a New Testament.

About four O'clock there was another knock at the door. Reona was expecting the waitress again, but instead it was a stern-faced man who demanded that Reona come down stairs for interrogation.

Grabbing her dressing gown she followed the man downstairs to a small room where a special chair awaited her. A copy of a New Testament was placed on the table in front of her.

"Have you seen this before?" asked the chief interrogator.
Reona said that she had.
"The one who received this from you has betrayed you," said the interrogator.

Reona did not believe this. The truth was, that the Christian waitress had left it lying about somewhere.

"Why did you come to Albania?" continued the interrogator. "Don't you know that no one in Albania believes in God? You will never see your family again. You are a traitor to our government, and traitors are shot. We will come for you at nine O'clock tomorrow morning."

Photographs were taken, and Reona was led back to her room. Reona lay on her bed and prayed, "Lord Jesus," she said, "It will be a privilege to lay down my life for you."

When the next day arrived, Reona was interrogated once more. Then the tour party returned and Evey was interrogated as well. During Evey's eight hours of interrogation she tried to take every opportunity to talk about God.

"Don't mention God again!" roared the interrogator angrily.

The French tour guide knew the situation the women were in and tried to be helpful. He assured them that he would do everything he could to try to get them released.

The next morning, Reona and Evey were told that they would be released.

"We will drive them to the border and leave them there. Never again will they be allowed to enter Albania," was the announcement to the group. However, after the group departed, the women were interrogated again.

"So you thought you were free! There are still more questions for you to answer," said the chief.

Had the announcement of their release just been to fool the group into thinking they were free? Did the authorities have other plans for them?

Finally they were given some forms to sign concerning the crimes they had committed, and then they were ushered into a car. The car drove for about half an hour and then stopped. The ladies did not know where they were being taken. The two interrogators got out and the car continued. Could this be the road leading to the border, or was it leading to a prison?

Finally they passed through a town that they recognised. They knew they were only half an hour from the border. On arriving at the

border their passports were stamped, 'PERSONAE NON GRATA', (a person forbidden to enter the country again).

"You may go," said a voice.

The two women walked through the gates into 'no-man's land'. This was an area of swampy country between Albania and Yugoslavia, a zone belonging to neither country. The Yugoslavian border was still about ten kilometres away. How could they ever find their way?

It was not long before a car pulled up.

"Taxi?" said a young man.

"No dinar," said Reona, meaning 'no money'.

The car drove back in the direction that it had come. Soon the car returned. The young man got out, took their suitcases and motioned to the women to get in. This time they did not argue. The taxi drove them to the Yugoslavian border for no cost. "Why would a taxi driver do this?" they wondered. "Was he an angel in disguise?"

From here, another driver offered them a ride to Italy. They did not know the driver, but at the end of the journey he pushed into their hands a large number of silver coins. They had exactly enough money for the bus and train fare back to Switzerland, where Christian friends had been praying earnestly for the safety and protection of the two women.

God is Protector – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities – Tomorrow you die

PART A

1. Find the country of Albania on a map. Albania is in which continent?
2. Name some countries that border it.
3. What did the government think about people who believed in God?
4. How did the two ladies get into Albania?
5. What did Mary tell the two ladies about carrying Christian books and leaflets?
6. How did Reona and Evey hide their Bibles and leaflets?
7. What did they intend to do with these?
8. How were they caught?
9. What is an interrogation?
10. What happened just after they thought they were free?
11. What miracles happened to get them to Switzerland?

PART B - God is protector

Read:

God has a whole army of angels fighting for us. We don't know who the taxi driver was in this story. The Bible tells us that we should take care in entertaining strangers, because these strangers just might be angels. Angels don't have to have a white gown and wings. They could look like ordinary people. The taxi driver may have been an angel. He had certainly been sent by God to help Reona and Evey. God wants us to pray for protection, not just for ourselves, but for others too. Reona and Evey had friends who were praying for them.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I trust God to protect me?

I can _____ for protection.

I can remember that God is with me _____ the time.

I can remember that God loves and _____ for me.

Missing words: all cares pray

Under New Management

"Dad, Pete's Milk Bar is all different!" said Don as he raced in the door with the milk.

"Different?" asked his Dad.

"Yes, it has all been changed around while we've been away," said Don. "Pete's still there, which is good. But things have been moved around. And the shop's been painted a different colour."

"Does it look better?" asked his Dad.

"I think so," said Don. "It is better set out... and cleaner. But I am so glad Pete's still there. It wouldn't be the same without him."

Oh, there's a sign in the window, "Under New Management," added Don. "What does that mean?"

"Well, I suppose it means that Pete still runs the shop, but he does not own it," explained his father. "The man who did own it has sold it to someone else. It looks as if the new owner made some changes."

"But it's still Pete's shop, isn't it?" asked Don.

"Yes, if Pete's there, it's still Pete's shop," agreed his Dad.

The disciples were like that after Pentecost. Once the Holy Spirit had come upon them they were all 'under new management'. That was clear from their changed lives. No longer were they frightened and purposeless. Now they were determined to speak about the Lord Jesus, even though to do so would probably mean persecution and imprisonment.

Just as the Holy Spirit changed the lives of the disciples, He can change lives today.

God is powerful – Themes 5

Activities – Under New Management

1. Describe the changes that had been made to Pete's milk bar.
2. Who had made the changes?
3. Who owns us?
4. How can Jesus make changes to us once we become a Christian?
5. What does "Under new management" mean?
6. Find the meaning of these words:
purposeless determined persecution
7. The disciples were not afraid to speak up even though they knew they might be put in prison. What had changed them?

Saul Becomes a Christian

Saul was not one of the disciples. In fact he hated Christians. He hated them so much that he persecuted them. However, something very unusual happened to him. Read about it in Acts 9:1-21.

Saul's life changed so much that God chose a new name for him. From then he was called Paul. We can also read about others in the Bible who had a change of name to show that their life had changed. One of these was Simon the fisherman, whose name was changed to Peter.

Not everyone has a change of name when they become a Christian, but they can have a change of life.

God is Powerful – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

PART A

1. How did Saul treat Christians?
2. How did God change him?
3. What was Saul's new name?
4. Who else in the Bible had a new name?
5. Why do you think God gave people new names?

PART B - God is powerful

Read:

God's power can change people's lives. However, God does not force people to accept Him. When a person decides to become a Christian, God can do miracles in the life of that person.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can God's power change me?

I can ask God to help me do the things I _____.

I can share God's love with _____.

I can tell Jesus that I want to be more _____ Him.

Missing words: others like should

Naaman's Problem

Naaman had a big problem. It seemed as if there was no answer. It seemed as if his trouble would never go away.

Naaman had once been a strong healthy man. He had been commander of the king's army. He and his wife lived in a beautiful home. They were very rich. He used to be very happy. Then one day, he was struck by an incurable, contagious disease called leprosy. A person with leprosy had running sores all over their body. No doctor could cure a leper.

Naaman's blistered and his hands and feet turned white as the dreadful disease started spreading over his body.

Naaman was a Syrian, not a Jew, But he did have a little Jewish servant girl who worked in his house.

"I know a servant of God who could help Naaman," said the little girl to Naaman's wife. "His name is Elisha. "God's power works through him and great things happen when he prays."

Naaman's wife told Naaman what the little girl had said. Naaman decided that he must go to the land of Israel to find this person called Elisha.

Naaman was good friends with the Syrian king. "Go to Israel," said the king. "I will give you a letter of recommendation."

So Naaman went to Israel with the letter, but the king of Israel did not welcome Naaman who was a Syrian. When Elisha heard about the king's visitor he said, "Send the captain to me."

Continue the story from 2 Kings 5:9-11

Naaman did not believe that washing in the Jordan seven times could make him better. He was very angry. However, Naaman's servants helped him to believe.

Read verses 13-15

When Naaman believed and obeyed God's words spoken through Elisha, Naaman was healed. He then understood the great power of God available to those who believe and obey God. God's power was greater than Naaman's problem. Whether our problems are big or small, God has the power to change things. When the problem is too big for us, by His power, He can find an answer to the problem.

God is Powerful – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

PART A

1. What was Naaman's problem?
2. How did the little servant girl help Naaman?
3. What did Elisha tell Naaman to do?
4. How did Naaman's servants help him?
5. What happened when Naaman believed and obeyed?
6. What must we do if we want God to help us with our problems?
7. What do these verses say about God's power?

Jeremiah 32:17

PART B - God is Powerful

Read:

God has the power to change things. He has the power to help us when things are difficult. He has power to heal us. God did this for Naaman. God never changes. His power is the same today.

Naaman had to obey God in order to be healed. He had to wash in the river seven times. Sometimes God may ask us to do something. We must obey too!

Copy and fill in the missing words:

What do I do when I have a problem?

Whether my problem is big or small, I must remember that God's _____ is greater than my _____.

Missing words: problem power

The Way

Searcher:

Excuse me, can you show me the way?

First deceiver:

"Yes, come with me. I know a huge toy store in the city where you can buy all the latest toys...and they give out free lollies with every purchase."

Searcher:

"Ah... no thanks."

Searcher:

Excuse me, can you show me the way?

Second deceiver:

"Yes. If you come with me to the clothing store we'll buy the latest outfits and look really cool."

Searcher:

"No thanks."

Searcher:

Excuse me. Can you show me the way?

Third deceiver:

"This is it! Computer games. Once you start you just can't stop. This is the way to REAL happiness!"

Searcher:

(Just stares at deceiver's addiction and shakes head.)

Searcher:

Excuse me. Can you show me the way:

Christian: (reading the Bible)

"Yes. Jesus is the way. Look. It says right here in God's book that the only way to have truth and happiness forever is to follow God's Son, Jesus Christ!"

God is Truth – Themes 5

Activities – he Way

1. Find out the meaning of 'deceiver' and 'deceive'.
2. What are some of the things that people believe are more important than God?
3. It is not wrong to have toys, clothes and computers, but when can they become a problem?
4. How can T.V. commercials trick us into thinking that we must have lots of things?
5. How can T.V. commercials deceive us?

Fool's Gold!

Some rocks and soils contain tiny gold particles. People are often fooled into thinking it is gold, but really it is another mineral called iron pyrites. What would you do if you found something that looked like gold?

If you are wise you would first find out whether it really is gold before getting too excited. Finding truth is a bit like finding gold, because truth, like gold, is very valuable. Just as people can mistake fool's gold for real gold, people can also make a mistake about finding truth. Many people think they have found truth, but they don't take time to find out what truth really is. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the truth and other gods are false. Living a Christian life is the only way to find truth.

Some things look great, but they are not at all. Have you ever had an inexpensive toy that has fallen to pieces in five minutes? Satan can make evil things look attractive, but they only make people happy for a short time. This is why the Bible calls Satan a liar and a deceiver.

Only Jesus, who is the truth, gives people happiness that lasts forever.

God is Truth – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. What is fool's gold?
2. Who is the greatest liar and deceiver?
3. Who can help us know the truth? (John 14:15-21 and 1 John 5:6)

Galileo Searches for Truth

Galileo lived in Italy from 1564-1642. People in those days believed that the earth was the centre of the universe. They thought that the sun, moon and stars moved around the earth. Because the great teacher, Aristotle, had said that this was so, everyone believed it. Everyone, that is, except Galileo. He was one who wanted to find out truth for himself.

Galileo's brain couldn't rest. He had heard of a boy in Holland who had looked through a tube with spectacle glass in each end, and who found that distant objects looked much bigger. Galileo was determined to work out how this gadget worked.

He soon did. But Galileo's invention was far superior to the Dutch one. Through his telescope he could see Jupiter, which had four moons, Saturn with its rings, the spots on the sun and the milky way. Now that he had seen these things for himself, he was sure that the earth moved around the sun, and not the sun around the earth.

Galileo was very excited. He now understood that God's creation was greater than people had ever realised. Enthusiastically he started telling people of his discovery.

However, trouble lay ahead. Galileo was called before the Pope. "How dare you defy the teachings of Aristotle!" shouted the Pope. "You must promise not to talk or write about your theory!"

Galileo kept quiet for seventeen years, but continued working silently. Then finally, he could keep quiet no longer. He published a book of his discoveries. He was brought before the Pope again. "Deny your theory or you will be imprisoned!" the Pope demanded.

Now quite old, and unable to bear the thought of imprisonment or torture, Galileo decided to agree that he had made some mistakes. But in his heart he knew that he had discovered the truth. Galileo lived the rest of his life quietly, working until his death in 1642.

In due time, the world found out that his discoveries were true, for truth cannot be stopped by threats of imprisonment or torture. Soon others took up the teachings of Galileo, which opened people's eyes to the laws of the Creation and the glory of the stars.

Activities – Galileo searches for truth

PART A

1. Where did Galileo live?
2. Which great teacher did everyone believe in those days?
3. What did people believe about the earth?
4. Draw a picture of the earth in the centre and the planets, sun moon and stars orbiting around it.
5. How did Galileo prove that this was not so?
6. Now draw the solar system as it really is, with the sun at the centre.
7. How do you think Galileo would have felt when no one would believe him?
8. How does God feel when so many people do not believe the truth about Him?

PART B - God is truth

Read:

It is not always easy to see the truth. There are so many ideas that *could* be right. Some ideas sound right at first. We have to search for truth, like searching for gold. To the people in Galileo's day, it seemed right that the earth was flat. If they had have searched for the truth as Galileo did, then they would have believed Galileo. Many people do not believe in the Bible because the have not searched to find Jesus. Many people don't want to take the time to think about Jesus because they do not want to change the way they live.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I help someone to find the truth?

I can share God's _____ with others.

I can pray for people who don't _____ Jesus.

I can _____ people what God has done for me.

Missing words: know tell love

God is Truth – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Mr. Biggs

There was once a school teacher named Mr. Biggs. He liked his class to be neat and tidy, but could never manage to be neat and tidy himself. He made the children tidy their work area at the end of every day. Everything had to be in place. However, Mr. Biggs's own table was piled high with a mess of papers and books. The mess was so bad that he always had trouble finding what he needed.

Mr. Biggs told the children that they must never drop rubbish in the playground. There was extra homework for anyone who did. However, when Mr. Biggs went to the park or the beach, he just left his own rubbish lying around.

Mr. Biggs told the children that they must never enter the classroom with muddy shoes. However, in his own home he didn't bother to wipe his shoes on the door mat. He just left muddy footprints on the floor for his wife to clean up.

Mr. Biggs knew the right thing to do. He believed in being neat and tidy, but just couldn't manage to be neat and tidy himself.

Some people are like Mr. Biggs because they believe in the words of the Bible. They may believe that being good and honest and pure is what God wants us to be. However, they do not live their lives the way that God wants them to live.

Living the way God wants us to live is called GOODNESS. Goodness is one of the fruits of the Spirit. We may know the right thing to do. We may even tell others what is the right thing to do, but unless we DO it we are not showing the fruit of goodness. When we truly follow the example of Jesus by doing what God want us to do, then we are like a candle which shines brightly for everyone to see. If we say we are a Christian, then we must show it by our actions.

God is Pure – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities – Mr. Biggs

PART A

1. Describe Mr. Biggs' table.
2. How did he expect the children to behave?
3. What do we call 'doing the right thing'?
4. Bible research:
 - a) Write the names of the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22. Which fruit did Mr. Biggs need?
 - b) Read Philippians 4:8-9
What does God want us to do?
 - c) Read Romans 13:12
What does the Bible mean when it speaks about darkness and light?
 - d) Read Ephesians 5:10-11
How can Christians be lights to the world?

PART B - God is pure

Read:

God has no sin. God's purity and light are the opposites to darkness. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world". The Bible tells us to live as children of the light. This means that we live a life of purity. We follow Jesus, and try to live without sin. What happens when we fail? We ask Jesus to forgive us, so that His light can shine through us once again. It is not good enough just to know the words of Jesus. We must do what He says.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I be a light to the world?

I can ___ the things Jesus _____ me to do.

Missing words: do wants

Peter Shows his Anger

Jesus and his friends were praying in the garden. It was the evening that Jesus would be arrested. Judas had made plans with the chief priests. For carrying out the plan he would receive thirty pieces of silver.

A crowd of men entered the garden. The leader of the group was Judas. Judas walked up to Jesus and kissed Him. This was part of the plan. Judas had arranged to kiss Jesus as a sign, so that the priests would know which man to arrest.

Jesus looked at Judas.

"Are you trying to sell me with a kiss?" He asked.

"Are you Jesus of Nazareth?" the chief priest asked Jesus.

"I am." said Jesus calmly.

Peter was extremely angry. Instead of acting calmly as Jesus did, he drew his sword. He lashed out with the sword and cut off the right ear of the chief priest's servant.

"Put away your sword, Peter," said Jesus.

Jesus could have reacted by fighting too. He had good reason to fight. He was arrested simply for saying that He was the Son of God. He could have acted angrily toward Judas for betraying Him. Judas had once been one of Jesus' best friends.

In all of this, Jesus managed to live by the words He had spoken:

"Love your enemies," He had told His disciples.

Jesus spoke to Peter.

"I could stop these men if I wanted to," He said. "I could pray to my Father and He would send Me a thousand angels to fight for Me."

But Jesus didn't want to fight with words or actions. Instead, He touched the servant's ear and healed him. Then Jesus was led away by the chief priests and Pharisees.

When someone does something against us, we can hurt the other person physically, or with our tongue. Jesus wants us to have self-control in the way we act and the way we speak.

Read Matthew 5:39 and James 3:8-11.

Activities – Peter shows his anger

1. What was the sign that showed the priests who Jesus was?
2. How did Jesus react when he was arrested?
3. How did Peter react?
4. What important message had Jesus given to His disciples?

Finish the sentence:

Love _____ . (Matthew 5:44)

PART B - God is patient

Read:

God is patient with us when we make mistakes. He wants us to be patient with others too. This means that we must think first, before we do something out of anger. When we are quick to get angry we can do something that we will regret later on.

PART C

Here is someone from the Bible who was patient. His name is Job.

1. What did Satan do to Job? (Job 2:7-8)
2. Did Job become angry and turn away from God? (Job 2:10)
3. How did God reward Job? (Job 42:10-16)
4. What should people do when they have trouble in their life?
5. Patience is never giving up. Job never gave up his _____ in God, even though he suffered terrible times. He didn't get _____ at God.

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 5

The Patience of Job

Job was one of God's faithful servants. Satan knew this, and decided he would cause trouble for Job. His plan was to bring so much trouble into his life, that Job would become angry with God and turn away from Him.

When we read the story of Job, we must remember that God is in control of those who love and obey Him. Satan cannot control the life of a Christian who is truly serving God. However, God allowed Satan to send hard times to Job, so that Job could be tested. Yes, God was giving Job a test! It was a very difficult test. God wanted to see whether Job would still serve Him after going through the hard times.

The first hardship Job endured was to be covered from the top of his head to the soles of his feet with sores. Job's wife said, why don't you blame God for this! But Job did not speak against God.

No matter how much trouble Satan brought along, Job was patient. He continued to trust God. Finally, after Job had lost everything he owned, Satan stopped bothering Job, because he could see that Job was not going to give up trusting in God. God rewarded Job for being faithful.

You can read the end of the story from Job 42:10-16.

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. What did Satan do to Job? (Job 2:7-8)
2. Did Job become angry and turn away from God? (Job 2:10)
3. How did God reward Job? (Job 42:10-16)
4. What should people do when they have trouble in their life?
5. Find the meaning of these words:
endured hardship prosperous

6. The King Who Could Not Control His Anger

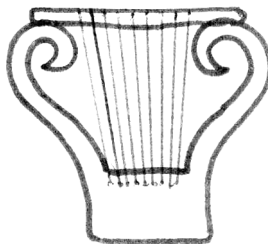
King Saul had been a good king. He had helped the Israelites defeat their enemies. People sang songs about his victories. However, now the people were paying more attention to David than Saul. David was now the brave hero who helped the Israelites win their battles. David had killed the giant, Goliath, completely unarmed. It was now David who the people sang about.

Jealousy grew in King Saul's heart. It caused him to change from a noble, upright king, to a king who could not control his anger.

David had played music for King Saul, on his lyre. However King Saul didn't like David's music any more. One day, as David sat playing, King Saul suddenly took his spear and threw it at David. David dodged and the spear went into the wall.

From this point on, David knew that he must hide from the king. King Saul remained David's enemy for many years, until Saul finally died, and David became the new king.

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 5



Activities – The king who could not control his anger

PART A

1. Why was King Saul jealous?
2. How did the jealousy make him feel?
3. What is another word for jealousy? e _ _ _ _
4. What did David do to try to help Saul?
5. How did King Saul show his anger?
6. When did David finally come out of hiding?
7. What should someone do when they feel jealous?
8. What should someone do when they feel angry?
9. Find out what the Bible says about controlling anger in:
Ephesians 4:26 and Ecclesiastes 7:9

PART B - God is patient

Read:

God is patient with us. The Bible says He is 'slow to anger'. Unfortunately many people are quick to get angry. Instead of being patient with people, they do things in anger, and hurt the person who has offended them. People can be hurt with words just as much as actions. Controlling our anger is called self-control. Just as God is patient with us, He wants us to be patient with others.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I have more self-control?

I can say to myself, 'stop!' when I _____ anger in my heart.

I can say to Jesus, "Help me to _____ them."

I can take a deep breath and remember _____ Jesus would do.

Missing words: what feel forgive

Self-control

Scene 1

Billy

Can I have a go of your new magnifying glass, Betty?

Betty

Sure Billy, but be careful with it.

Billy

Thanks Betty.

(Billy is not careful, drops the magnifying glass and breaks it.)

Betty

Oh look what you've done Billy! You've broken it, you clumsy thing!

(Betty screams, shouts and hits Billy.)

Mum

What are you two fighting about? (Mum sees the broken magnifying glass). Betty, I know you are upset, but hitting and screaming is not going to help. I'm sure Billy wants to say sorry. You must give him a chance to say sorry. Even though you *feel* angry, try to ask Jesus to take that anger, and try to forgive Billy.

Scene 2

Betty

How much money have you got in your money box Billy?

Billy

About \$2 I think.

Betty

I've got \$1.50. Why don't we go and spend our money!

Billy

Well, I was actually saving up for Mum's birthday present.

Betty

Come on, Billy! You can get some more money before your Mum's birthday.

Billy

Well, OK then.

(Billy and Betty appear with a large plastic bag full of sweets.)

Betty

Do you think we should eat them all now, or save some for later?

Billy

Let's eat them all now.

Dad

Where did you get the money for those sweets?

Billy

It's our own money, Dad.

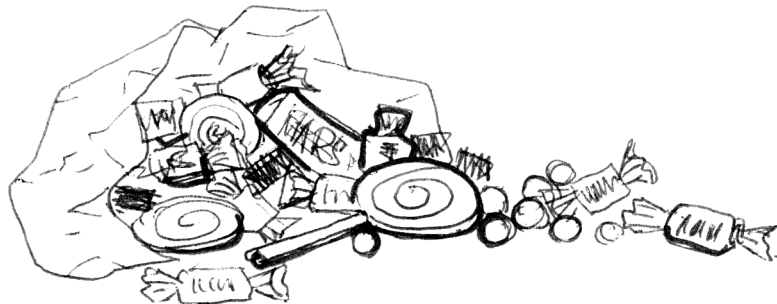
Dad

Even if it is your money, God wants you to spend it wisely. Spending it all at once on sweets is really not having self-control.

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. Why did Betty need self-control in scene 1?
2. Why did both children need self-control in scene 2?
3. Sometimes want everything they see when they go shopping, watch T.V. advertisements or look at advertising catalogues. What is wrong with wanting every new and exciting thing we see?
4. What does the Bible say about this? (Hebrews 13:5)
5. Instead of wanting everything, we can have self-control by th_____ God for all He has given us.



The Greedy Dog

Once there was a dog that was given a juicy bone for his dinner. He took the bone and ran off with it, in search of a special hiding place. He wanted to find a place where no other dog would take it.

On his way to the special hiding place he crossed over a bridge. As he was running across the bridge he caught sight of another dog in the water. He stopped at once. He noticed that the other dog had a bone even bigger than his own! The greedy dog growled at the other dog, dropped his own bone and jumped into the water, thinking that he could grab hold of the other dog's bone.

Splash! Into the water he fell. There was no dog there after all. He had only been looking at his reflection. As for his own bone, it had sunk to the bottom of the river. The greedy dog went home sadly, with no bone at all.

Aesop's Fable

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. What kind of bone did the dog have?
2. Why did the dog want to hide his bone?
3. What is a reflection?
4. Who was the other dog in the water?
5. What would you say to the dog at the end of the story?



The Golden Eggs

One day a farmer went to the market to buy a goose. When he went out to his barn the next morning he found that the goose had laid a golden egg. He called his wife at once. They were both amazed.

"I wonder if the goose will lay another egg tomorrow?" said the farmer's wife.

Sure enough they found another golden egg the next day, and the next, and the next.

"If we save up all the golden eggs we will be rich enough to buy whatever we want," said the farmer's wife, "but with only one egg every day it will take too long. Why don't we kill the goose, cut it open and take out all the golden eggs. Then we will be rich at once."

"What a good idea," said the farmer. He killed the goose and cut her open, but sad to say, there were no golden eggs inside. Now all they had was one ordinary dead goose! How sorry they were for being so greedy.

Aesop's Fable

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 5



Activities – The Golden Egg

PART A

1. What would you say to the farmer and his wife at the end of the story?
2. Who said this?
 - a) "If we save up all the golden eggs we will be rich enough to buy whatever we want."
 - b) "Why don't we kill the goose and take out all the eggs."
 - c) "What a good idea"
3. Complete the sentence: _____
_____, *but sad to say there were no golden eggs inside.*

PART B - God is patient

Read:

Self-control is not always about controlling our anger. Sometimes it's about controlling our desire to want things. Wanting too many things is being greedy. If we are patient and content, then we will not want everything we see.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

Being greedy could mean:

- E _____ too much.
- S _____ all your money on things you don't need.
- W _____ all the things your friends have.
- Others could _____ out.

Missing words: wanting miss eating spending

How can I have more self-control when I see things I want?

I can remember that Jesus _____ me the things I really need.

I must decide which things I really _____,

I can be happy with the things _____.

I can be patient, and wait for Mum and Dad to _____ me things at the right time.

Missing words: need gives buy have

The Faithful Friends

Imagine that you are one of the eleven faithful friends. You are feeling sad because Jesus has gone to be with his Heavenly Father. Jesus has told you to tell others about Him, and to heal people in his name, but you don't know how you can possibly do these things. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come and give you power. "How would this happen? What is the Holy Spirit like?" you are thinking.

Then, as you are waiting and praying with the other disciples, it happens. There is a mighty rushing wind. The sound is almost deafening. Then there appear to be little flames of fire on everyone's head, including your own! What is happening? No, your hair doesn't catch alight. It's not that kind of fire. You feel so happy, and just full of God's love.

The wind and fire leave, but you feel different. You are no longer sad that Jesus has gone. You can feel Him right there with you all the time, even though you can't see Him. You are no longer afraid. You want to go and tell others about Jesus. You want to pray for people and help them just like Jesus did. Your friends feel the same way.

All the friends of Jesus are now speaking about Him in the streets and market places, healing people and seeing other miracles. People are being healed and set free from their problems. Thousands of people are becoming followers of Jesus.

However it is not long before there is trouble. It's the religious leaders again. They do not like everyone following this new religion called Christianity. Peter and John have been told not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John cannot keep quiet. "We must speak about what we have seen and heard," they say.

One of the followers called Stephen speaks very boldly about Jesus and even puts down the teachings of the religious leaders. The older religious leaders talk amongst themselves. "This man is always saying things against the old way of Moses. He talks about a new way... that Jesus can forgive sins and there is no need to offer sacrifices any more! We don't like the new way. Let's get rid of him!" they say.

Stephen does not stop talking about Jesus even though he knows what the religious leaders are thinking. It is not long before the religious leaders decide to get rid of Stephen. Stephen is stoned to death.

Now all the followers of Jesus are faced with a choice. It is obvious that following Jesus from now on will be very difficult, and very dangerous. If you want to stay out of trouble, then you will have to give up following Jesus. Or, you could choose to be faithful and continue speaking about what you know to be true.

With the other followers, you decide that you will continue to speak about what you have seen and heard. You continue to meet together to pray and sing and learn about God's kingdom, but you now have to do it in secret. You often meet in underground caves so that the Roman soldiers will not find you. On the walls of the caves there appears the special secret sign that shows you are Christians. It is the sign of the fish.

God is a Servant – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. What happened to the disciples while they were waiting and praying?
2. The faithful friends are now different. Why?
3. What happened when Stephen spoke boldly?
4. Why do you think the early Christians chose a fish for their secret sign?
5. The early followers did not give up following Jesus, even when it was difficult. When might it be difficult for us to be Christians today?
6. What can we do when things get difficult?

John Flynn

John Flynn believed that God wanted him to become a minister and go the centre of Australia. It was a time when much of the outback was being opened up for sheep and cattle stations. People had to travel hundreds of miles for medical help. There were also hundreds of people in the outback who had not heard the Gospel, because there was no one to tell it.

John began working in the outback of South Australia in 1911. He travelled over the hot, sandy country in a horse and buggy. He often had to act as doctor, dentist, school teacher as well as preacher.

John knew that people in remote places must have better access to medical centres, or many would die. In his time there were 15 inland hospitals set up, where station people could receive medical help more quickly.

However this was not the complete answer. One day, John was visiting Adelaide and saw an aeroplane.

"That's what we need," he said.

John Flynn now ran a mission, and with the help of others worked towards establishing a Flying Doctor service, so that doctors could fly to visit patients, and patients could be flown to hospital. One of the problems in the outback was the sending of messages. With the help of his friend Alfred Traegar, John managed to develop a pedal wireless, which could send and receive messages, if the people worked the pedals as they used it.

The radio receiver was not just used by people in an emergency, but enabled lonely, isolated people talk with others every day.

God is a Servant – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

PART A

1. Why did John want to go to the outback?
2. How did he travel in the early days?
3. How did he *want* to travel?
4. How could an aeroplane help his work?
5. What is the name of the special service he began?
6. How did the people of the outback get messages to John?
7. What were some of the gifts and talents John may have had as a young boy?
8. Why do you think John was so successful?
9. Read the story Jesus told, from Matthew 25: 14-29. It is not just a story about servants receiving bags of money. The hidden meaning is to do with God's servants receiving gifts from Him.
 - a) Write a list of the different gifts that God gives to people. Don't just think of people who are very clever. Think about people who are kind, friendly or patient. They are gifts too!
 - b) Choose one of these things and explain how it could be used for God:
music; helping; crafts; building; speaking; computers

PART B - God is a faithful servant

Read:

God never gets tired of helping us. We can depend on Him. God wants us to be faithful too. Can God depend on us? Can He depend on us to use our talents for Him? We can serve God in many different talents. Just as the men in the Bible story had to use their money to earn more money, Christians should serve God with the ways God has given them. God used the talents of John Flynn's. Because John was a faithful servant, many, many people were helped.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I be a faithful servant?

I can _____ out what my gifts and talents are.

I can work hard at becoming _____ at using these gifts.

I can say, "Yes, I will help," when God asks me to _____ my gifts for Him.

Missing words: use better find

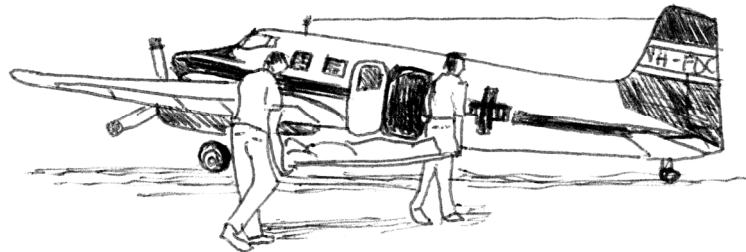
Something more to read

Jesus once told a story about three servants. It is a story about using our gifts for God.

Read Matthew 25: 14-29

It is not just a story about servants receiving bags of money. The hidden meaning is to do with God's servants receiving gifts from Him. The servants received different amounts of money. We cannot measure God's gifts to people in 'amounts', but we can say that God gives people different KINDS of gifts.

To some He gives a gift of music. To others He gives the gift of caring. There are many different ways in which we can serve Him. Just as the men in the story had to use their money to earn money, Christians should serve God with the talents God has given them. God used John Flynn's talents and multiplied them, so that many more people were reached.



Betty's Problem

Billy

What's wrong, Betty?

Betty

I'm not feeling very happy today.

Billy

Why not?

Betty

The boy from next door was rude to me, then he squirted me with his water pistol, and as I was running inside to get away from him I slipped over and got my dress all muddy. Then I went to wash it and spilt the washing powder all over the floor.

Billy

Don't worry Betty. I'll help you clean up the mess... and never mind about that boy next door. Hey Betty! How would you like to come over to my place after we've cleaned up. We can watch T.V. and have some ice-cream... and I'll let you have a lend of my favourite racing car.

Betty

Thanks Billy. You're a real friend.

God is Life – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

What was Betty's problem?

How did Billy cheer her up?

Think

In being kind to Betty, and helping her to feel happier, Billy was giving JOY. Giving away joy is like giving away a smile. We don't lose it by giving it away. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

Satan can make us lose our joy. He doesn't like to see Christians happy so tries to steal our joy. However, God has given us a special weapon to fight this kind of attack from Satan. It is the weapon of PRAISE. When we are having a hard time, it helps to praise God for who He is. This is what Paul and Silas did when they were having a hard time in jail.

Food and Water in the Desert

God's people were travelling through the desert. It was only three days after crossing the Red Sea. They had been travelling three days with no water. They would have to find water soon or they would die. Moses prayed to God.

They came to a place called Marah. There was water here but it was stagnant and smelly. If they drank this water they would probably die anyway.

Find out what God did. (Exodus 15:25a)

The Israelites had just learned their first lesson. They must trust God even when things seem desperate. They now understood a little more about God's faithfulness.

God proved His faithfulness again six weeks later. This time the people were desperately hungry. They forgot about God's faithfulness in the previous water crisis. They started complaining.

What did they say? (Exodus 16:2-3)
What did God tell Moses? (verses 4-5)

God provided food for them just as He had promised.
What food did He provide? (verses 13-16)

Each person was instructed to gather as much as they needed. Some were greedy and disobedient and wanted to gather extra, "just in case God didn't provide tomorrow," they thought.

Read what happened to their food. (verse 19)

God also told them that He would not provide on the seventh day as this was a day of rest. On the sixth day they were permitted to gather extra and save it for the next day.

Read about this in verses 22-26.

Some foolish people did not believe God. What did they do? (verses 27-30)

God has promised to provide for the whole of His creation.
Read Job 36:26-31.

Some people in certain parts of the world have too much food, while in other places people have too little. God expects people with too much to share with those who have too little. That is another way God provides...through people!

God can also provide through miracles, just as He did with the Israelites. Here is a story about God's miraculous provision for someone who trusted God.

God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activity

Write the story – “Food and water in the desert” in your own words, as if you were one of the people travelling through the desert.

Gladys Aylward

Gladys knew that God was calling her to China.

"You would not make a good missionary!" some people said. "You are not even trained for anything useful, like teaching or nursing."

Living in England fifty years ago, the family was quite poor. Gladys's father was a postman and did not earn very much.

"How can I ever get enough money to go to China?" thought Gladys.

When Gladys was old enough she was able to get a job herself. She saved hard and worked over time. Finally she had enough money for a one-way ticket to China. In fact she had just two pounds over. The ticket to China was not a plane ticket or a boat ticket, but a train ticket. She would have to go overland through Holland, Germany and Russia.

Gladys had heard of an old lady who was working as a missionary in China. Her name was Mrs. Lawson. Gladys decided that she would go to help Mrs. Lawson.

As Gladys boarded the train with her two suit cases and just two pounds, she felt excited. The train set off. Gladys had been warned about the war between Russia and China.

"You may not get through, you know," people said. But Gladys didn't worry. God would take care of her.

While travelling through Russia, the train stopped suddenly. It could go no further because the line was blocked due to the war. Gladys got off the train and started walking.

After walking many miles carrying her luggage, she was able to catch another train to a busy Russian port. From here she caught a boat to Japan, then another to China.

Now that she was in China, she had to find Mrs. Lawson. It was another long journey to the inland of China, through wild mountains, on the back of a mule.

Gladys proved to be a great help to Mrs. Lawson, who ran an inn for travellers. As travellers stopped to rest, and water their mules, she would share the love of Jesus with them. She had employed a good Chinese cook, so the inn had quite a reputation for its good food. Each night, before the travellers went to bed, Mrs. Lawson would tell stories from the Bible.

Gladys listened carefully to the Chinese language and was soon making good progress. One day, Mrs. Lawson, who was now a very old lady, died suddenly. Now it was up to Gladys to carry on the work.

Gladys soon became popular with the Mandarin. (The Mandarin was like a prime minister.) He asked Gladys to help him stamp out the old practice of foot-binding. For many centuries, the feet of baby girls had been tightly bandaged so that the feet would not grow to their proper size. Small feet were thought to be more attractive. The Mandarin asked Gladys to be the official inspector of feet! This meant visiting the villages and reporting any cases of foot-binding.

It was on one of these visits to the villages that Gladys met a woman who could not afford to look after her child. Gladys took the little girl home and cared for the child herself. Soon Gladys found that there were many children who had no homes because their parents could not afford to look after them. Soon she had many children to care for.

A war had broken out between China and Japan. It took some time for the fighting to reach the inland, but finally the bomber planes encircled the city where Gladys lived. They came again, and this time dropped bombs on the city. Gladys and her children were not harmed, but she knew that she must flee from the city to a village far away, where she knew of some Christians who could help her look after the children. By this time Gladys was looking after nearly one hundred children.

It was soon obvious that even the village would not be safe. She knew of a centre for homeless children far away beyond the mountains in Siam. She must take them there. They would have to go on foot. The Mandarin, who had now become a Christian, gave Gladys some sacks of rice and two men to carry them.

It normally took four days to cross the mountains, but because of the Japanese soldiers, they had to avoid the main road. They would have to pass through difficult terrain.

"It will take you at least twelve days," said the Mandarin.

The children walked and walked, without complaining for the first few days, but then they became tired. The sacks of rice started to get low. Every day Gladys read to the children from the Bible, and they asked God to help them. As the last of their food was used, Gladys knew that God would provide.

"We're hungry!" said the little ones.

"Look, some soldiers!" said Gladys. No, not Japanese soldiers. They were Chinese soldiers who gave the children some food. Soon this food was gone, and they were hungry again. God provided again as they came upon a mountain village.

"Please give us some food," begged Gladys. "The children are hungry."

The villagers gladly supplied them with food.

At last they reached the Great Yellow River. This was the final obstacle before reaching safety. When they reached the river bank they realized that there was no ferry to take them across. The Japanese soldiers had stopped all boats. If they waited here too long they would be discovered. They waited and prayed. Then a Chinese soldier came along.

"What are you doing here with all these children?" he asked. Gladys explained.

The soldier knew about a secret boat, hidden amongst the reeds on the other bank. The soldier gave a whistle. Quickly and quietly the boat made its way across the river. It collected the children and ferried them to the other side. Once again the Lord had provided for them, and protected them.

By the time they reached the town where the children would be cared for, Gladys was very ill. In this town there was a Christian mission hospital where Gladys stayed until she was well again.

It was only because of the Gladys's great trust in a great God, that she was able to take one hundred children on such a dangerous journey, and every one of them was kept safe.

God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

PART A

1. How did Gladys get enough money for a ticket to China?
2. What troubles did she have on the journey?
3. Who was Mrs. Lawson?
4. How did Mrs. Lawson share the love of Jesus with travellers?
5. Why did Gladys visit Chinese villages?
6. Why did Gladys have so many children to look after?
7. How did God provide for the hungry children as they walked across the mountains?
8. Why was the journey dangerous?
9. How did they cross the river at the end of the journey?

PART B - God is provider

Read:

God is faithful. He will never let us down. Because Gladys trusted in her Heavenly Father, she had the courage to make such a dangerous journey. She also trusted that God would provide, and He did!

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I have courage to do things for God?

I can remember that God is faithful. He will _____ let me down.

I can trust Him to protect me and _____ for me.

Missing words: provide never

Water from a Rock

God's people, the Israelites were travelling from Egypt to a special land which God had promised to them. Much of the country over which they travelled was desert. Occasionally they would come across some water. They would drink as much as they needed, and then replenish the supply of fresh water in their skin bags. This time, however, they had run out of water, and there was no water in sight. The people were thirsty. They were also afraid of dying there in the desert. They had forgotten about the time God had provided water for them just three days after crossing the Red Sea. They started complaining to Moses.

"Have we come out here in the desert to die?" they asked.

Moses prayed to God. God spoke back to Moses:

"Take your stick and go to the big rock at Mount Sinai. Hit the rock with a stick and water will come out of it. Then the people and the animals will be able to drink."

Moses did as God had said. Water gushed out of the rock and all the people drank as much as they needed.

When we trust God He always gives us what we need. He never lets us down. God is faithful.

God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. How did the Israelites carry water in the desert?
2. Why were the Israelites afraid when they ran out of water?
3. What did Moses do?
4. What could have happened if Moses had not obeyed God?
5. How much water came out of the rock?
6. What does this story show us?

Money from a Fish

The twelve disciples travelled around the country with Jesus. They watched Him heal people. They listened to Him tell stories about God's kingdom. Jesus and the disciples needed many things, but Jesus always provided.

The disciples could have worried about food and clothes. After all, they didn't work as fishermen or tax-collectors any more. They didn't go to work each day to earn money. But Jesus told them not to worry. "Your Heavenly Father knows what you need," he said.

Jesus always made sure the disciples had the things they needed. He even provided money to pay their taxes. This was the money everyone had to pay to the king.

One day, a tax-collector came to Peter. The tax-collector said, "Does Jesus pay taxes?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Jesus pays taxes."

Peter went to Jesus to ask about the tax money, but Jesus already knew what Peter was going to ask.

"Go down to the lake," said Jesus, "and do some fishing. Open the mouth of the first fish you catch. Inside the mouth of the fish you will find a coin. Take that coin and give it to the tax-collector. That will be enough to pay taxes for all of us."

Peter did as Jesus said, and sure enough, Peter pulled up a fish with a coin in its mouth. God had once again provided the money that they needed.

God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities – Money from a fish

1. How did the disciples get the things they needed?
2. What are taxes?
3. How did Jesus get the money to pay the tax-collector?
4. Why do you think Jesus performed this miracle?
5. When we find it difficult to trust God, we can remember how faithful He has been in the past. Think of as many Bible stories as possible which remind us of God's faithfulness. Think of times when God has been faithful to you or your family in the past.
6. Put in the missing words:
 - God always gives us the things we need. He is _____.
 - Water came out of the _____.
 - The Israelites found it difficult to _____ God, even though they had seen Him do great miracles before.
 - Jesus said, "Do not worry about food or _____."
 - Jesus said, "Pull up the _____ fish you catch and open its mouth."
 - The tax-collector asked _____ whether Jesus paid taxes.
 - Moses hit the rock with a _____.
 - These two stories show us that God always _____ for His children.

The Two Artists

Once upon a time there were two artists. Each artist was asked to paint a picture that would best depict the idea of peace.

One artist painted a crystal clear lake in the mountains. There was not a breath of wind, and not a ripple on the lake. The lake, like a mirror, reflected the image of the surrounding trees and mountains.

The second artist painted a picture of a roaring waterfall. Hanging over the waterfall was a great tree branch. Hidden away in a secure part of the limb was a little bird's nest. Inside the nest was a tiny bird, sitting peacefully as the water rushed and swirled below her and the water sprayed around her. Amidst the tremendous roar of the waterfall the little bird sat as if she had not a worry in the world. Her nest was snug and warm, nestled in the strong branch. She knew she was safe.

God is Peace – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. Why did the first painting give the feeling of peace?
2. Why did the second painting give the feeling of peace?
3. Which painting do you think was the most peaceful? Why?
4. Why is it that Christians feel at peace, even when there is trouble going on?
5. What are some of the troubles we could have in life?
6. What does John 16:33 say about troubles?
7. What is the meaning of Matthew 11:28?
8. Why is this story similar to the story *The house on the rock?* (Matthew 7:24-26)

Troubled Times for Jesus' Friends

Jesus called His disciples together. He tried to explain the hard times ahead for them all. Jesus would have to die, but on the third day He would come alive again.

"No!" said His friends. "You do not have to die!" They could not understand it. The thought of losing their best friend was too much for them to bear.

Jesus understood how they felt. He knew that it was going to be hard for them. He also knew that God had a special surprise in store for them .

"Don't let your hearts be troubled," said Jesus. "I am going to leave you, but I won't leave you alone like orphans,"

Jesus explained that He was going to send the Holy Spirit who would help them. The Holy Spirit would help them and give them peace inside.

God is Peace – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities

1. How did Jesus know He was going to die?
2. Why would it be hard for the friends of Jesus?
3. Read John 14:25-26. Who did Jesus send as a helper in troubled times?
4. What does Jesus tell us in John 14:27?
5. What should we do when we feel troubled or afraid?

Houdini

Houdini was one of history's most famous performers. "How does he do it?" people would wonder.

One of his most famous acts involved an escape from a sealed box, submerged under water. With his great strength he could break himself free and swim to the surface. His strength was not only in his muscles, but also in his lungs. He could hold his breath under water for an amazing time.

Houdini's success was due to his great strength and superb muscle control. However, there was something else. Houdini had no fear.

The story about Houdini teaches us something about trust. Houdini had no fear because he knew that his great strength and muscle control could enable to do amazing things. He TRUSTED in his own great ability. This is why he had no fear.

Fortunately for us, we do not have to trust in our own strength, but we can trust in God who is a mighty God. If we trust in God's greatness we will have no fear.

God is Peace – Themes for Christian Studies 5

Activities- Houdini

PART A

1. What were some of Houdini's most famous acts?
2. Give three reasons why Houdini was able to do such amazing things.
3. Christians can also do amazing things if they t _ _ _ _ in God's strength.

PART B - God is peace

Read:

God does not want His children to be afraid. When we are afraid we have no peace. We are worried and upset. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be our comforter. When you feel comfortable you feel relaxed. You are not worried. You are calm and peaceful. Just imagine sitting on a large, comfortable armchair, or relaxing in a comfortable, warm bed. That's comfort!

Now think about the way you feel on the inside. When you have no worries or fears, you have peace. Jesus can give us that peace. He can make us feel relaxed and comfortable on the inside, even when there are troubles on the outside. We can trust Him to take care of us!

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I trust God when I feel afraid?

I can remember how great, _____ and mighty God is.

I can remember that God loves me and is _____ after me.

I can ask the Holy Spirit to _____ me.

Missing words: comfort strong looking

Blonden, the Tightrope Walker

There is a well-known story of a famous tight rope walker called Blonden, who stretched a tight-rope across the great Niagra Falls. With a crowd of spectators watching in amazement, he proceeded to walk across the tight-rope to the other side. One slip would have sent him falling to his death below.

The crowd cheered as Blonden reached the other side safely. Then, much to everyone's surprise, he walked the rope again, this time, wheeling a wheel-barrow before him. Once again the crowd cheered as he reached the other side safely.

'What will he do next?' the crowd wondered. Then, Blonden stood and called out to the spectators, "Who would be willing to sit in the wheel-barrow and be taken across to the other side?"

There were no volunteers.

This story shows us that even the greatest human skill in the world cannot always be trusted. However, there is someone who can always be trusted. That's God. We can trust God because He has power and ability greater than any human. When we feel afraid, we should remember that He will never let us down. When we TRUST Him we have peace inside.

Activities – Blonden, the tightrope walker

PART A

1. Why was this tight-rope stunt more dangerous than most?
2. How did the crowd respond to the amazing act?
3. Why do you think there were no volunteers for the wheel-barrow stunt?

PART B - God is peace

read:

This story shows us that it is possible for even the greatest people to make mistakes. We cannot trust in human ability. However we can trust in God's ability. One slip on the tight-rope would have sent Blonden falling to his death. God will never let us down. To have peace we must trust in Him. When things are difficult, we must let God carry us.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I have peace inside?

I can believe that God is greater than _____.

I can believe that God will _____ let me down.

I can put my _____ in Him.

Missing words: trust never anyone