

Stories of Faith - 6

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The Classroom

There was once a teacher called Mr. Tom who had dreadful trouble controlling his class. He was almost tearing his hair out! While his back was turned one student would take something from another.

"Hey, bring back my calculator!" someone would shout.

"It's not yours, it's mine!" would be the reply. Then a fight would break out. Day after day this sort of thing went on. The class was just out of control. Something had to be done!

One day while Mr. Tom was having his breakfast, he had a brilliant idea. 'Today is going to be different,' he thought to himself. As he drove to school he felt more and more convinced that he had the answer to his problem.

At 9 o'clock the bell rang as usual. Mr. Tom walked into the class, which was having a riot as usual. Mr. Tom took a deep breath and stood before the class.

"Class," he shouted, "What we need is a set of rules."

The class stopped the riot immediately. They had never heard of such an idea. Now all ears were listening for what Mr. Tom would say next.

"For the sake of us all, we must introduce some class rules, and I would like you to suggest them."

"No stealing," said one.

Mr. Tom wrote 'No stealing' on a big piece of white paper.

"No hitting," said another.

"No name calling," said another.

The list went on.

Finally Mr. Tom said, "I would like to add just one more rule. "Not one rule is to be broken. If anyone does break a rule, he or she shall be punished. What should the punishment be?" asked Mr. Tom.

"Ten strikes with a stick!" cried one.

Everyone agreed.

Mr. Tom drove home happily that afternoon. 'I think I have solved my problem' he thought to himself.

When Mr. Tom walked into the classroom at 9 o'clock the next morning, things were very different. There was no shouting, screaming or fighting. Everyone worked peacefully. Then suddenly it happened.

"He's stolen my homework and put his own name on it!"

So the argument began. Mr. Tom took a look at the homework in question. Sure enough, the handwriting was that of another student.

"Is this really your homework, William?" asked Mr. Tom.

"No," confessed the guilty student.

To the realisation of everyone, the golden rule had been broken. William must now take the punishment.

"Please come with me, William," said Mr. Tom.

William stepped forward.

"No, no!" came a shout from a class member. It was William's best friend. "I will take the place of William. I will take the punishment for him."

William returned to his place and his friend followed Mr. Tom to receive the punishment.

In this story, there was punishment for breaking the rules. God also had to punish the breaking of His rules. The punishment was to be separation from God forever. However, God showed love to the world by allowing His Son to die, taking the punishment we deserve. We saw in the story how one student took the punishment for another, but in real life it was Jesus who took the punishment for us. This means that we can live forever if we ask for forgiveness and become His friend.

God is Love – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – The Classroom

PART A

1. What was happening in Mr. Tom's classroom?
2. How did Mr. Tom think he could improve things?
3. Were the students cooperative after the rules had been made?
4. What caused things to go wrong once again?
5. Why do you think William's best friend wanted to take the punishment for William?
6. In the story, rules had to be made for good classroom behaviour. God too, had to make rules for the people He had made. What were some of the rules God made for people, so that they could live together peacefully?
7. Who, in real life, deserved the punishment?
8. Who, in real life, took the punishment?
9. What do we call it when we break God's rules?
10. Who breaks God's rules? (Romans 3:23)
11. What should we do if we want God to forgive us for our sin?

PART B - God is love

Copy and fill in the missing words:

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever _____ in Him shall not perish but have _____ life. (John 3:16)

Find the missing words in the Bible.

How can I accept God's gift of love?

I can thank God for sending Jesus to take the _____ that I deserved.

I can _____ Jesus to forgive me for my sin.

I can ask Jesus to be my _____ forever.

I can _____ God and do what He wants me to do.

Missing words: friend punishment ask love

A Mother Hen's Sacrifice

It was one of those hot windy days in February. A raging bushfire was making its way towards the farm. Small flakes of black ash floated down and the smell of smoke was in the air.

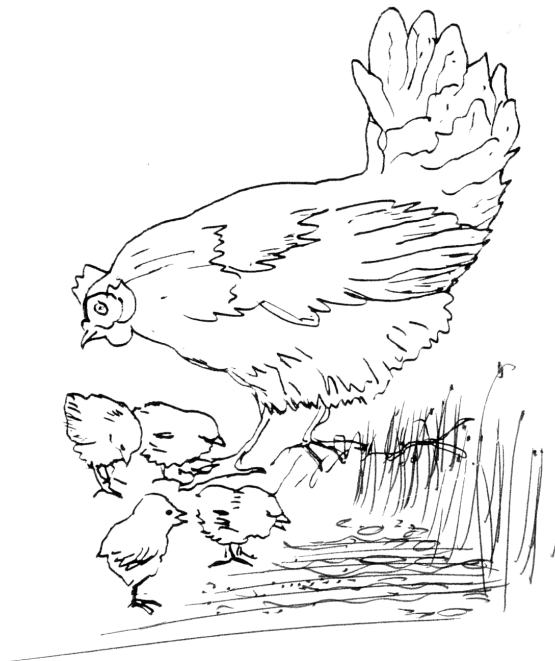
The farmer made preparations. He moved the sheep to the house paddock and began pumping water from the dam.

Somehow the hen house was forgotten. Hettie had recently become the proud mother of six baby chicks. Something inside her said "danger". She gathered her chicks together and spread her wings over them. She sat very still. Suddenly there was a gust of wind. The enraged flames now engulfed the hen house. Hettie did not move...her chicks beneath her wings.

In half an hour the fire had passed. The farmer had managed to save the farm house and his sheep. He walked towards the ashes of the hen house. All was quiet except for a faint cheeping sound. He looked and saw six yellow chicks walking among the ashes. Hettie had given her own life to save the chicks.

This story reminds us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Everyone does the wrong. No one is perfect, but God is. Jesus took the punishment for our sins. By asking Jesus to forgive us for our sins, we can live with God forever. In the story, the mother hen gave her life for her chicks. In real life, Jesus gave His life for us.

God is Love – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – A Mother hen’s Sacrifice

PART A

1. Describe the weather conditions.
2. Why do you think the hen house was forgotten?
3. Could this story have been true?
4. What does *sacrifice* mean?
5. What sacrifices do your parents make for you?
6. What sacrifice did God our Heavenly Father make for us?
7. Write out the Bible verse, John 15:13.
8. Write a prayer of thanks to Jesus for what He has done for us.

PART B - God is love

Read:

God loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die in our place. Because of our sin, we should have received the punishment. That punishment is separation from God forever. Just imagine how terrible that would be. God is light. Where there is no God, there is no light... only darkness. The good news is that we don't have to be separated from God! If we ask Him to take our sin, and invite Him into our life, then we can live with Him forever.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I accept God's gift of eternal life?

I can ask Jesus to take my _____.

I can ask Him into my _____.

I can _____ Him forever.

Missing words: life follow sin

The Journey to the Promised Land

God's people, the Israelites, were in slavery to the cruel Egyptian Pharaoh. God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to a new land, which He had promised to them. There they would be free, and would have many special things. God said that it would be a "land flowing with milk and honey". However before they could get there, two big obstacles had to be overcome:

One... to get away from the wicked Egyptian Pharaoh.

Two... to find their way across the desert.

God used Moses for both of these challenges. Moses warned the Pharaoh that God had spoken, "Let my people go". But the Pharaoh would not listen, so God had to send many plagues and diseases upon the Egyptians. Finally, when he did let them go, He sent His army after them to bring them back again. However God did not allow the army to catch the Israelites. He opened up the Red Sea and allowed the Israelites to pass through on dry land, and then closed it up again, drowning the army.

The Israelites were now free, but faced with the second obstacle. How could they find their way across the desert? God had an answer for this problem. By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way. By night the Lord gave them a pillar of fire to light their way, so that they could travel both day and night.

The fire and cloud were signs to the Israelites that God was with them. To find their way to the Promised Land, they had to follow the cloud. Think about what would have happened if some had decided to go their own way. Just as the Israelites needed to allow God to guide them, so do people today. God's directions for life are written down for us in the Bible. Going our own way only leads to trouble.

God is Wise – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities – Journey to the Promised Land

PART A

1. What was the Promised Land going to be like?
2. How did God persuade the Pharaoh to let His people go?
3. What did God do when Pharaoh's army chased the Israelites?
4. How did God guide the Israelites across the desert?
5. What might have happened if they didn't follow God's guidance?
6. How can God guide us today in our every-day life?
7. What kind of people could He use to help guide us? Make a list.
8. What can happen if we don't follow God's advice?
9. Divide a piece of paper in half. On one side draw the Israelites travelling by day, being guided by the cloud. On the other side draw the Israelites camped for the night, with the fire to give them light.

PART B - God is wise

Copy and fill in the missing words:

The wisest choice we can make is to allow God be our guide. God guided the Israelites across the _____. God can guide us through _____.

Missing words: life desert

How can God guide me every day?

I can listen to His _____ when I pray.

I can think about what the _____ has to say.

I can listen to wise advice from _____ people in whom I _____.

Missing words: trust Bible Christian voice

Christopher Columbus

Just as God guided the Israelites on their journey, He has guided many people throughout history as they looked to Him. One is Christopher Columbus.

Columbus was sure that the world was round, and not flat, as most other people in his time believed. If this was so, then by sailing straight westward across the Atlantic he could reach those lands on the other side of the world. He was sure that God wanted him to make this expedition, and, after a long time trying to convince the king of Spain that the journey would be worthwhile, the king provided the money that was needed.

Columbus set out from Spain in 1492. He was in charge of a fleet of three ships. Columbus himself commanded the 'Santa Maria', his best friend commanded the 'Pinta' and his brother commanded the 'Nina'.

As the long days passed without any sight of land, the crew became more and more afraid. They planned to get rid of Columbus and sail back home. 'Perhaps the world is flat after all,' they thought. 'What if we fall over the edge?'

However, nothing could change Columbus's mind. He continued to trust in God. God protected Columbus and the mutiny did not occur. After seventy days Columbus saw a light that seemed to come from a fire along the coast. The next morning the three tiny ships made for the shore. With the flag of Spain in one hand and a sword in the other, Columbus knelt down and gave thanks to God. The new-found land was an island off the coast of America, part of the West Indies. He named the island San Salvador which means Holy Redeemer.

God had not only protected Columbus, but also guided him. God guided him because of his great faith and trust. Columbus had confidence in continuing the journey, even when everyone else wanted to turn back. His confidence was in God.

God is Wise – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – Christopher Columbus

PART A

1. Why were the members of the crew afraid?
2. What is the meaning of mutiny?
3. Why didn't the mutiny occur?
4. How did Columbus know he was approaching land?
5. What was the name of the island discovered by Columbus, and where was it?
6. Which Old Testament hero trusted God while making a journey?
7. Why was the voyage of Columbus and his crew similar to the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land? Choose the correct answers:
 - a) None of the travellers had been to the new land before.
 - b) Both events took place on the continent of Africa.
 - c) God was guiding them.
 - d) All the travellers trusted in God for the whole of the journey.
 - e) The travellers did not always trust their leader.

PART B - God is wise

Read:

Because God knows everything there is to know, it is wise to let Him be our guide through life. God knows the future. He knows the best decisions to make. Being a Christian is more than just asking Jesus to forgive our sins. We also need to ask Jesus to be our guide through life. We need to be listening to what He has to say, and obeying His advice.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I know what God wants me to do?

I can learn what the _____ has to say.

I can ask God to speak to me and show me what _____ is.

I can listen to His voice when I _____.

I can listen to what my conscience is _____.

Missing words: right saying Bible pray

Saved From the Sea

A true story told by Colin Marsland of South Australia

The schnapper season, in the waters around my home in Moonta, South Australia, occur during the months of November and December. Each year my cousin and I spent time camped at Cape Elizabeth, on Yorke Peninsula, to use our fishing boats to take advantage of the plentiful supply of schnapper in these waters at that season.

We began our fishing at day-break, when landmarks became visible. This day the waters were calm and clear when I set out soon after dawn. But by 9 am the wind began to freshen and by 10 am I decided I should set out again for shore. My well-boat is to enable the fisherman to keep his catch of fish alive and fresh for market. Nowadays well-boats are not built, as most fishermen use ice-boxes or refrigeration, which is much more convenient.

By this time I was experiencing near gale force winds, so I reefed down my main sail and began running before the wind, heading for the shore. I had only been under way a few minutes when I heard the eerie hissing of a freak wave about to break over me. (I've since seen that great wall of water many times in my dreams!) In a moment the boat was engulfed and filled with water. She slewed against the following seas and immediately went down by the stern. In a matter of seconds only the bowsprit was visible. I was flung from the tiller and had to scramble almost vertically up to the bowsprit. Filled with a dreadful fear, I screamed out to God, above the howling wind. Immediately, I was conscious of a wonderful peace of mind and the feeling of such power that I felt there wasn't anything I couldn't conquer.

For two hours I clung to the boat, which was reasonably air-tight, kept afloat by an airlock in the bow. I had hoped that the wind and swell of the waves would carry the boat towards the shore. But I realized, to my dismay, that an under-current was carrying me further out to the open sea. Finally I decided to remove my clothes and strike out for the shore, since by this time the boat was beginning to slowly sink as the air in the bow gradually escaped. I had never swum any distance and only considered myself a good 50-metre swimmer. I doubted if I could reach the shore under these extremely difficult circumstances. But in my mind's eye I kept seeing my lovely wife and beautiful little daughter, and, thinking of them, I knew I would not give up without a fight. With this unusual feeling of great strength and power in my body I noted a land-mark on the shore and set out to swim towards it. The crest of each wave gave me a glimpse of the coast line gradually drawing nearer, and by the time I was half-way there I knew in my heart that I was going to reach the shore. This unusual feeling of great strength in my body remained with me, although my legs were beginning to weaken, my upper body and arms were as strong as ever.

Suddenly my heart sank. Quite close by I noticed a dorsal fin. Sharks are always very prevalent in these waters at that time of year, because they love schnapper and often take them off a fishing line. I remembered the time a huge, hungry eighteen-footer attacked my boat. It reared itself out of the water and snapped at the side of my boat, only three feet from where I was standing. I could see straight into its great jaws with its rows of evil-looking teeth. It left its teeth marks on the water line of the boat, and one of its teeth was left embedded in the timber.

So you can imagine my relief when I realized that the dorsal fin belonged to a friendly dolphin. I was greatly comforted for a considerable distance on my lonely swim by the presence of three dolphins that frolicked around me, as close as six feet away. Ever since then I have a tremendous regard for dolphins, as I firmly believe that the comfort of their presence at that time helped to save my life. Knowing that the sharks do not come near to where dolphins are, was especially comforting to me, and I felt a little sad when they finally disappeared.

As I neared the coast I could see the great waves breaking over the reefs in a long, white line. I knew I could be dashed to death on them; but eventually I found myself in calmer water beyond the reefs. Then, to my relief, a wave swept me up on to a patch of golden sand.

However, the same wave that brought me in also swept me out again. I had completely lost the use of my legs, so that each time a wave carried me up on shore, the powerful under-tow drew me back again into the water. I began to panic. Had I been saved from the reef only to be drowned in the shallow water, because I could not use my legs? But in that moment of panic I received a clear thought from God. "Dig your elbows into the sand and this will hold you against the tremendous strength of the under-tow." As I obeyed that instruction, I allowed each wave to carry me further up the beach, until I was able to inch myself quite clear of the water. There I lay for a full hour in the baking sun, my only attire being my wrist watch. I was safe at last, three hours after leaving my boat.

After regaining some strength in my legs, I set out on a seven-mile trek along the beach to the camp where I staggered into, two and a half hours later. You can imagine the reaction of my cousin and our other fishermen friends when they saw me alive. They had kept a close watch and had searched unsuccessfully for me right along the coast-line. They had given up hope of ever seeing me alive again.

They gave me clothing, gave me food and hot drinks and took me home to my wife and daughter. It was wonderful to see them again, realizing what a narrow escape from death I had. After recovering from my ordeal I returned from the place where I had been swept ashore, because I could not understand how I had escaped being dashed to death on the reefs. It was easy to locate the place because I had driven a piece of driftwood into the soft sand above high water level. I discovered that I had been guided through the narrow gap, only twenty

feet wide, which was the only break in the reef on that particular part of the coast. I am convinced that God, who gave me the super-natural power in my body to swim three miles to the shore, had also guided me to the one gap in the reef where I could swim through safely.

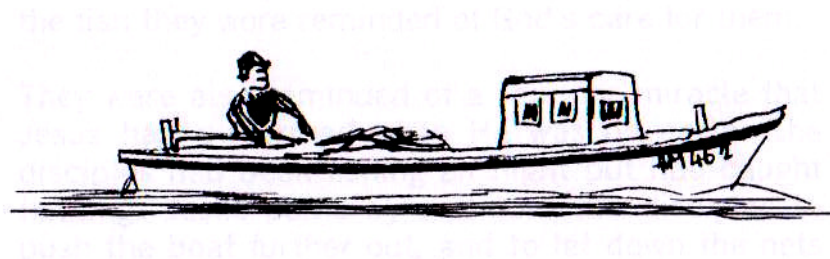
I soon discovered that God does not do things by halves. A week later, after I had full recovered the use of my legs, the local fishermen asked me if I knew where my boat had sunk. It had not been washed ashore, and there was no sign of any wreckage along the shore, so it was assumed it was still out there where it had sunk, in about 70 feet of water.

At the time of the disaster I had taken note of the landmarks. This is something a fisherman does automatically. A few days later, thirty fishermen in twenty-two boats formed a line abreast, each towing small grappling hooks and schnapper lines in the area I had land-marked when I was clinging to my stricken vessel. The boats moved forward together dragging the lines in the hope of striking the boat. On the very first run a schnapper line hooked the boat! Excitedly, the men worked together to raise the boat to the surface. Imagine our surprise when we found that the schnapper hook had caught in a ring two inches in diameter on the very tip of the mast! How amazed we were at this further miracle of God.

During the week, the boat had moved along the sea-bed about six hundred yards, yet there was no damage to the hull at all, except that a little paint had scraped off.

It has been some years since this incident happened. Up to that time I was not concerned about God. I knew He was "out there somewhere", but I did not know Him personally. Yet He cared for me, and heard my desperate cry for help, and answered me with so many signs of His special caring. That adventure changed my life. I decided that if God cared enough for me, to not only save my life and my boat, but enough to send His Son, Jesus, to save my life for eternity, then I wanted to love and serve Him for the rest of my days.

God is Protector – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – Saved from the sea

PART A

1. When was the schnapper season?
2. Who was fishing with the writer?
3. How would a 'well-boat' keep the fish from spoiling?
4. What is a bowsprit?
5. What did the writer do when his boat went down?
6. How was he kept afloat?
7. Why did he decide to swim for the shore?
8. Why was the presence of dolphins a good sign?
9. Explain several ways in which God showed his care and protection.
10. How did this adventure change the writer's life?

PART B - God is protector

Read:

God knows everyone in the world by name. He even loves those who do not love Him. He wants everyone to come to know Him. Sometimes God does special miracles for people who do not know Him. The way in which God protected this fisherman was a miracle. It made him understand that God is real, and cares for each one of us.

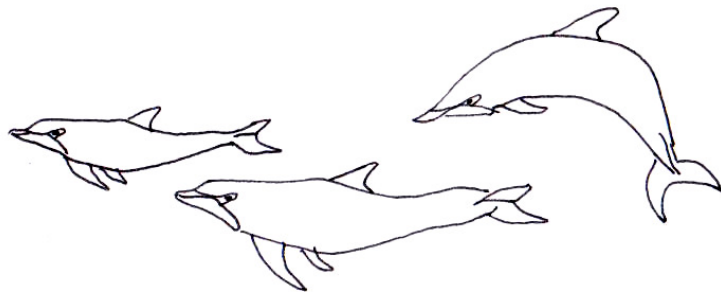
Copy and fill in the missing words:

How do I know that God loves and cares for me?

The _____ tells me that He does.

When I make Jesus my _____ I can feel His love.

Missing words: friend Bible



God's Justice Wins the Case

On December 22, 1984, in Greece, three Christian missionaries were sentenced to three-and-a-half year imprisonment. What was their crime? It was simply speaking about their faith in Jesus and handing out Bibles on the streets.

In 1938, a law had been passed in Greece which prevented anyone openly speaking about Jesus. The three missionaries were Don Stephens, Alan Williams, and Costas Macris. They had been working as part of the crew of the M/V Anastasis. This ship was a 12,000 ton, passenger cargo vessel. Its purpose was to take people from place to place, spreading the Good News of Jesus. It also provided food and medical assistance to those in needy countries.

The Anastasis crew had been giving emergency aid following an earthquake in the devastated city of Megara, Greece. They gave out free clothing, canned food, and as well, told people about Jesus. During this time, a 16 year old man named Costas became a Christian. He asked for a Bible, and of course he was given one by a crew-member. Costas read his Bible every day. His life changed completely. The young man's mother however was not happy. She didn't like her son's new found faith, so different to her own religion. She went to the police, and soon the three Christians found themselves sentenced to three-and-a-half year imprisonment. It seemed a high price to pay for giving away a Bible!

A Christian lawyer named Max, heard about the case. He prayed to the Lord. Could he help in any way, being a lawyer? In August 1983 Max and his family were attending a Christian camp when the Lord spoke to him. "Leave your work," said the Lord. "I want you to go and help the three missionaries."

So Max closed his lawyer's office and began full time work to try to set the missionaries free. He went to Greece on a fact-finding mission to try to get evidence in the missionaries' favour. As a lawyer, Max knew that the three men had been unjustly convicted. He had to use his skills to prove this. However it was a difficult task, and he knew that it would take a miracle to win the trial. He asked Christians around the world to pray for their release. On the day of the trial, believers in sixty countries around the world were praying. It was a long hard battle. Although the missionaries were sentenced, the judge later set them free pending an appeal.

God had allowed the missionaries to be victimized in order to bring about change to the Greek law. It was discovered that the laws written in 1938 were out of date. While most of the laws had been re-written, this particular one had not. God had worked a miracle... not only set the innocent free, but now the gospel could be freely preached in Greece.

Activities – God’s Justice Wins the Case

PART A

1. Why were the missionaries imprisoned?
2. Describe the Anastasis. What was its purpose?
3. How did the authorities know that the missionaries had given a Bible away?
4. How did Max help the missionaries?
5. What is the meaning of 'victimised'?
6. What changes took place in Greece as a result of the episode?
7. What similarities do you see between this story, and the story of *Paul and Silas in Jail*?
8. Why do you think many governments around the world are against the spread of Christianity?
9. How should we react when we are in trouble for telling others about Jesus? Choose the correct answers:
 - a) Fight back angrily
 - b) Pray
 - c) Ask God to bring about justice

PART B – God is protector

Read:

God does not promise Christians that they will be free from trouble. Christians have troubles just like anyone else. However, God promises to help us when we *are* in trouble. Paul was shipwrecked, but God saved him. God protects those who are doing His will. God sometimes performs miracles of protection for those who do not know him. He does this to make people think about Him.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

What do I do when I am in trouble?

I can ask God to _____ me.

I can put my _____ in God.

Missing words: trust help

God is Protector – from Themes for Christian Studies 6

Elijah

Elijah was a prophet. That meant that he heard God's voice, and told others what God was saying. Once when Elijah was visiting a place called Zarephath he saw a widow gathering firewood. He asked the woman for a drink and a piece of bread. The woman explained that she had no bread, and she had only a tiny bit of flour and oil left in her jars. She had no more money. Elijah wanted to help the woman and her son, so he prayed to God. God did a miracle for this woman.

"Go and make a loaf of bread out of the flour and oil you have," Elijah told the woman. Give some of the bread to me, and then some to yourself and your boy. The woman did exactly as Elijah said, and she found that the flour and oil jars just kept on filling up, as she used the flour and oil. The flour and oil jars never became empty.

Some time later, the widow's son became sick. He was so ill that he actually stopped breathing. Elijah took the boy upstairs and laid him on the bed. Elijah prayed for the boy.

"Lord, let this boy live again," he said, and the boy came back to life.

When Elijah was very old, he went to be with God. A new prophet was needed to speak God's word to the people. Elisha was chosen.

God is Powerful – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities

1. Why do you think the woman could have been reluctant to give the bread to Elijah?
2. How did God reward the widow for her kindness?
3. What happened when Elijah prayed for the boy?

Elisha

Through God's power, Elisha was able to help a widow woman in a similar way to what Elisha had done. The woman had no money. Elisha asked God to miraculously fill all the woman's jars with expensive oil. She was able to sell the oil and have enough money to live on for the rest of her days.

Another time, Elisha was going to Shunem. An important woman lived there. She was kind to Elijah because she knew that he was a prophet of God. She asked her husband to build a little room for Elisha so that he could visit whenever he wanted to.

Elisha wanted to repay the woman for her kindness. The woman had no children and was now too old to have a baby. Elisha prayed that the Lord would give her a son. "About this time next year you will hold a baby boy in your arms," said Elisha. This happened, exactly as Elisha had said.

The little boy grew and was soon old enough to go out into the fields with his father. However, one day, the boy became very ill.

The mother rode on a donkey to find Elisha. Elisha saw her coming. He knew something was wrong.

"My son is dying!" said the woman.

By the time Elisha reached the son, he was dead. Elisha stretched himself over the boy's body. Immediately the boy's body became warm. Through God's power, the boy had come back to life!

Elisha and Elijah not only believed that God was powerful, but they also believed that God's power could work through them. They were not afraid to ask God for miracles.

God is Powerful – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities

1. List all the similarities between Elisha's miracles, and Elijah's miracles.
2. How did Elijah and Elijah perform these miracles?
3. What do these miracles show us about God?

The Mountain that Moved

This story has been discovered from the writings of the Italian explorer, Marco Polo who lived in the 13th century. Marco Polo searched for a route from Italy to China so that their own goods may be traded for things like spices, silks, carpets and precious stones.

On one of his trading expeditions Marco Polo found himself in Baghdad (Iraq). The ruler of Baghdad wanted all who lived in his dominions to be converted to the religion of Islam. He was determined to put to death those who did not follow this religion. There were some Christians living in Baghdad who were hated by the ruler. He devised a plan to get rid of them. He ordered the Christians to appear before him.

Not believing in the Bible himself, the ruler found a verse, which he believed would present an impossible challenge to the Christians. He read Matthew 17:20: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove."

After he finished reading, he said cynically, "If this is true, let me see which of you can prove it. I will give you ten days. If you have not caused a mountain to move through the power of your God, then you will be given a choice: either convert to Islam or die."

The Christians began to pray without ceasing. They prayed all day and all night. They did not eat. On the eighth day, one of the Christians had a dream in which God told him to go and find a particular shoe-maker who would lead them in prayer for the mountain to be removed. The shoe-maker was a very humble man and did not consider himself to be worthy for the task, but finally agreed.

When the tenth day arrived, the Christians marched in a solemn procession to the mountain. The ruler and his guards stood by and watched with amusement, waiting to take the Christians captive at the failure of their prayer. Then, at the front of the gathering the shoe-maker knelt down, and lifting his hands towards heaven, cried out in a loud voice, "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I command thee O mountain to remove thyself." At once the mountain obeyed and Marco Polo recounts that the earth trembled in a wonderful and alarming manner. Many onlookers were converted to Christianity that day, including the ruler himself.

God is Powerful – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities – the Mountain that Moved

1. When did Marco Polo live?
2. Why was he looking for a new trading route?
3. Why are the followers of Islam so much against Christianity?
4. What does "cynically" mean?
5. Why did the ruler quote the Scripture verse, Matthew 17:20?
6. How did the Christians cope with this test?
7. Why do you think God chose the shoe-maker to be the one to lead the prayer gathering?
8. What good thing happened as a result of the event?



Miracles in Java

This is a true story of a man who was raised from the dead in Indonesia during a period of great Christian revival.

In January of 1973, a man and his wife were walking home at the end of a long hard day's work. They had been weeding their rice fields outside their village in Java and they were terribly hot, tired and dirty. As they trudged up the road, they passed their neighbour's house. All at once they heard loud crying from inside the house. They were shocked. The wailing was so loud that something terrible must have happened.

They knocked on the door but there was no answer. The sobbing just continued louder than ever. Finally they pushed the door open and walked in. There in the dim half-light of the little room they could make out a form lying motionless on the bed and a woman kneeling on the dirt floor.

"What on earth is the matter?" the couple asked.

"Oh, my husband has died," the lady sobbed.

"How long ago?"

"I don't know. Several hours at least. I've been crying ever since."

The couple walked over to the bed. The corpse had no breath and no pulse. In fact, it had already become so still that they couldn't move its arms or legs. It didn't take too many brains for the farmer and his wife to work out that the lady was right. Her husband was dead.

"Oh, we're so sorry," they said, trying to comfort her. "We must go back home right now to wash and change our clothes. Then we'll tell all our friends what has happened and make arrangements to have him buried. But first we want to pray for you."

Now actually, the farmer and his wife were brand-new Christians. Four months before, they had been Moslems. But since their conversion they were trying to learn everything possible about the new faith.

"Our pastor told us last Sunday that Jesus never changes," they went on. "If He could bring dead people back to life two thousand years ago, He certainly can do it again for us today. So let's ask Him to let His perfect will be done."

They bowed their heads and began to talk to the Lord. "O dear Lord Jesus, if You want to, please raise this man from the dead. You know how this lady needs her husband."

Then they said good-bye and walked outside the house. They had only gone about 20 metres when all of a sudden the lady ran to the doorway. "Come back! Come back!" she yelled. "As soon as you left my husband started to move!"

By the time they got back inside the man was sitting in the middle of the bed, smiling from ear to ear.

"What happened to you?" they asked.

"Oh, I died and went to heaven to be with Jesus. It was so wonderful up there. I really didn't want to come back to earth."

This true story is a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit who is able to work miraculously today. Jesus is just as powerful today as He was when He was on earth two thousand years ago.

God is Powerful – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities

PART A

1. Where is Java?
2. What is meant by 'a period of great Christian revival'?
3. How do we know that the people in this story were poor?
4. What evidence is there in the story that the body was actually dead.
5. Why did the farmer and his wife believe that this man could come back to life again?
6. What does this miracle show us about God?
7. Read the story of a little girl who came back to life. (Mark 5:22-43)
8. Did the father believe that Jesus could bring his daughter back to life? (verse 23)
9. What did Jesus say in verse 36?
10. Do you think that Jesus could perform miracles today if people believed?

PART B - God is powerful

Copy and fill in the missing words:

God is powerful today, just as He was in _____ days. He can do miracles for you and me if we _____.

Missing words: Bible believe

What does the Bible say about God's power?

The things which are _____ with men are _____ with God. (Luke 18:27)

Missing words: impossible possible

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A Scuba Diving Adventure

Ian McCormack was a young man who loved adventure. In 1980, at the age of 24, he decided to leave New Zealand to see the world. Surfing and fishing in South-East Asia, sailing on a schooner, and observing African wildlife were just some of his experiences. While deep-sea diving off the coast of Mauritius, late one night, he was bitten by not one, but five, deadly box jellyfish. Here is his story.

While in Mauritius, Ian had made good friends with the local divers. They helped him to learn about the wonderful deep sea life off the Mauritian coast. One night, his Mauritian friend, Simon, invited Ian to come night diving. Now Ian knew that night diving could be dangerous. 'Tonight's conditions look pretty risky,' he thought to himself, as he watched some electrical storms hovering further out to sea.

"Don't worry," said Simon. "This storm will miss us."

Although Ian felt a little nervous, he could not resist an opportunity for an exciting new experience. Night diving proved to be more wonderful than he had ever imagined. There, right before them, lay huge crayfish and sleeping parrot fish, all for the taking. Meanwhile, the nocturnal life of the sea had come to life. He was seeing things he had never seen before.

Suddenly Ian saw a huge cray. Just as he was about to reach out to grab it, an unusual sort of jelly fish swam past. Ian had never seen one of these before. He touched the weird creature, which was almost invisible. It's transparent form was box-shaped and it had long tentacles.

Ian reached out for his cray. Suddenly a huge electric current hit his arm. Something had stung him. Ian looked at his arm but could see no sign of a sting. He rubbed his arm and immediately felt pain. Ian did not know it, but he had just been bitten by a box jelly fish, or sea-wasp. He had also just rubbed the venom further into his blood stream.

The box jellyfish is described in first-aid books as "a jelly-like creature with long venomous tentacles... and... little can be done if a lethal dose of venom is received."

Ian did not realize the seriousness of the sting. Holding the cray, he made his way back to the boat. As he swam, his arm started to feel numb. Swimming became more difficult. The arm soon became paralyzed. Ian looked below him and saw thousands of the jelly fish. The electrical storm had caused them to come in closer to the reef. By the time Ian had reached the boat he had been stung another three times on the same arm. The same electric shock went through his body each time.

Reaching the boat, Ian signalled to his friend Simon. As he put his head down into the water to gain his friend's attention, another jellyfish surged towards him. It was in front of his face. Ian held up his arm to protect his face. The tentacles of the fifth jellyfish stung the same arm. Simon surfaced and swam to the boat. Simon looked at the arm which had now swollen to twice its normal size.

"Invisible?" asked Simon in French. ('Invisible' was the term given to the box jelly fish by the Mauritian divers.)

"Yes." said Ian.

"How many?" asked Simon.

"Five," said Ian.

Simon looked horrified. "One!" he said, "and that's the end of you. You must get to a hospital immediately!"

Only now did Ian realize the seriousness of the situation.

Normally one bite was enough to cause death. The tentacles had stung him directly across his main artery, sending the poison directly into his blood. Death should occur in 15 -20 minutes.

Ian's friends would now have to get the boat back to shore the quickest possible way. That was directly across the reef and into the lagoon. With all aboard the boat, progress would be slow, and the bottom of the boat risked being torn open by its scraping on sharp coral. For the lightest possible load, they decided to send Ian ahead with the youngest member who was about 14 years old. As soon as they reached the shore the young boy decided that he must go back to get the others.

"Come back!" shouted Ian, but it was too late. Ian stood there alone. He struggled along the road, his arm now completely numb, and his legs weakening as the poison gradually moved through his body. Although close to midnight in an isolated part of the island, surprisingly he came across a parked taxi with some people standing near it.

"Please, would you take me to the hospital?" he asked the Indian taxi driver.

"Where is your money?" asked the taxi driver.

"I don't have any money on me," answered Ian, "but I can pay later."

The three men started to walk away. Ian heard a voice inside him saying, 'Would you be willing to beg for your life?' Ian followed the men, begging, "Please, please, I need a hospital!"

One of the Indians turned around and walked towards the taxi. He opened the door for Ian. Ian climbed in and the car drove off. However, not to the hospital. The driver pulled up outside a tourist hotel. He opened the car door and pushed Ian out on to the ground. "The tourists can take care of you," he said, and he drove off.

Ian dragged himself up to the entrance of the hotel. Someone saw him. It was one of his Mauritian friends, Daniel. Daniel carried him inside, sat him in a chair, then called for an ambulance. All took too long. Ian knew that he was dying. Finally the ambulance arrived. In the ambulance, Ian started to see a picture in his mind. It was a picture of himself as a young boy. Then he saw another picture of himself as a teenager. It was as if he was seeing before him a video of his life. He thought about God for the first time in many years. Would God accept him when he died? How could He? Ian thought of the years he had lived independently from God. He had given no thought to God at all. He thought of some words his mother had once said to him: 'When you are in need, cry out to God with all your heart.' (Ian's mother was a Christian.)

That's what Ian did. God heard his cry. Ian asked Jesus to forgive him for his past life, and promised that for the rest of his life, however short it may be, he would love and serve God. There in the taxi, he prayed the Lord's Prayer, which he remembered from his Sunday School days.

Desperately clinging to his life, he arrived at the hospital. The nurse took his blood pressure. Where was it? According to the instrument his heart had almost stopped beating. Surely the instrument was wrong. She tried another. It measured the same. When would someone realize the urgency of the situation? Finally a doctor looked at him. Ian mustered up all the strength he had. He looked the doctor in the eye and said, "I am dying. I need anti-venom...NOW!"

The doctor rushed him to another room. The anti-venom was administered. But all too late. Ian could stay awake no longer. He fell into a deep sleep. He soon realized that this was not sleep. He had died! He was still himself, but he had no body.

For the next 15 minutes, Ian, minus body, was taken on a tour of the places in which one may spend eternity. The first place he visited was a place of darkness. Ian had never believed in hell before, but now he knew there was such a place. God showed him this place so that he would understand that he had been snatched from here by his death-bed prayer. Then suddenly he was swept up in a shaft of light. Now he was in heaven. Ian came face to face with Jesus. His face was so radiant that he couldn't make out the details.

"Do you want to stay in Heaven or do you want to go back to your earthly life?" asked Jesus. Then He added, "If you want to go back, you must see things in a new light."

Heaven was the most beautiful place Ian had ever seen. He not only saw beauty, but he felt peace, joy and wonderful, wonderful love. Why would he want to go back? Then he saw a vision of his mother whom he loved dearly. She would be

so sad to know that her son had died. She wouldn't even know that Ian had given his life to Jesus.

Then Ian saw a vision of many, many people standing behind his mother. All these people needed to know about the reality of Jesus, and this place called Heaven. Ian decided that he would go back and tell them. He wanted to tell others that to be with Jesus in Heaven was the most glorious place anyone could be.

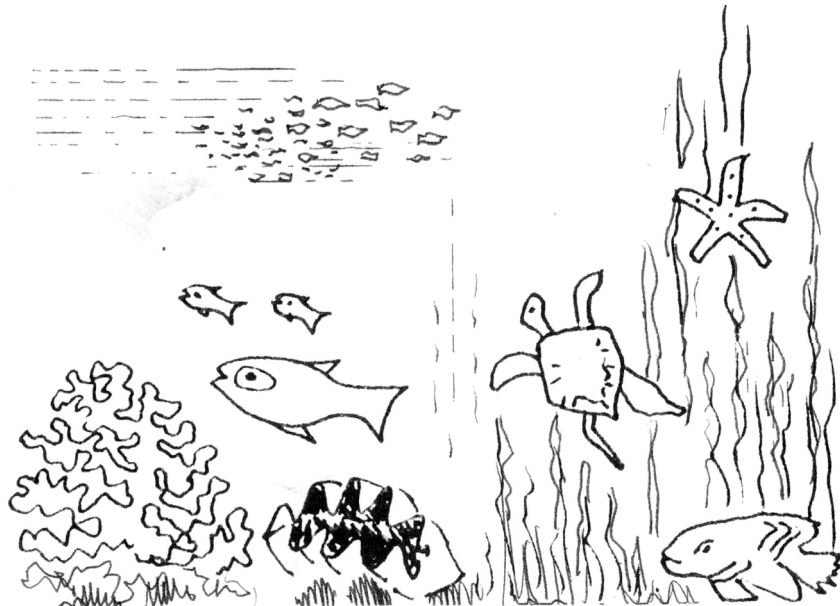
"Yes," said Ian. "I want to go back".

Ian woke up in his hospital bed. He had been dead for 15 minutes. The doctors and nurses could not believe their eyes. But there was more to come. Ian was still paralysed from the jelly fish stings.

"I don't want to live the rest of my life as a quadriplegic," he thought. "Lord, heal me!" he cried desperately. As he prayed, the feeling gradually came back into his body. Within a day, he was completely healed.

Ian has now dedicated his whole life to telling others about Jesus.

God is Powerful – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – The Scuba Diving Adventure

PART A

1. Where is Mauritius?
2. Why was night diving so exciting?
3. Describe the appearance of a box-jelly fish.
4. How venomous is it?
5. What does it feel like to be stung by a box-jelly fish?
6. Why did they send Ian with a fourteen-year-old boy to get help?
7. How helpful was the boy once they had reached the shore?
8. Why did Ian start to think about God while he was waiting for the ambulance?
9. Describe Ian's picture of heaven.
10. Why do you think God wanted Ian to live?
11. What is eternal life? Read John 17:3

PART B - God is powerful

Read:

God has power to do anything He wants to do. However, because He is also wise, He does not act like a magician. He does not do miracles so that people can be entertained.

A miracle shows us that God is the greatest person in the whole universe. It also shows that He cares about people. He does not do miracles to impress people. He does them to help people.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can God's power help me?

It can help me to _____ God better.

It can help me to _____ others about Jesus.

It can help me to _____ for others.

Missing words: tell know pray

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

The hungry wolf sat and watched a flock of fat sheep. His mouth watered as he thought about the tasty meal he could get from any one of them. But how could he get in amongst the flock without being noticed by the watchful shepherd?

The wolf sat and thought for a while. He noticed an old sheep skin on the ground, the remains of his last week's meal. That gave him a most brilliant idea. If he were to put the sheep-skin over his own back he would look just like a sheep. Then he could creep in amongst the flock without being noticed and make his kill.

The wolf waited until sunset so that he would not be noticed in the dim light. He crept in and stood in the middle of the flock. His trick seemed to be working. It was now time for the sheep to be herded into the pen for the night. The wolf went along with the sheep.

"Once in the pen," thought the wolf, "I will have my big chance. The shepherd will go to bed for the night and I will have the sheep all to myself."

The shepherd opened the gate of the pen. One by one the sheep went through. However the old wolf's disguise was not quite good enough to fool the shepherd.

"This is not one of my sheep!" said the shepherd to himself as the wolf passed through the gate. The wolf had his head down and did not see the big knife tucked into the shepherd's belt. As quick as lightning the shepherd lunged toward the wolf and slit his throat.

"You old rogue," he said to himself. "You're still a wolf, whatever you're wearing."

God is Truth – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities – A wolf in sheep’s clothing

PART A

1. What is the important message we can learn from this fable?
2. Read about the Good Shepherd from John 10:1-15.
3. What does the sheep-fold represent?
4. What kinds of people try to get into the sheep-fold? (verse 1)
5. How can the sheep tell the difference between the true shepherd and a stranger? (verse 3)
6. How should the sheep guard against strangers? (verse 5)
7. How can we guard against people who try to lead us in false directions?
8. What does Jesus mean when He says, "I am the door"? (verses 7-9)

PART B - God is truth

Read:

Jesus and God our Heavenly Father are one. Jesus came to earth as a human being. He came to be one of us. Through His death on the cross, people can get to God. There is no other way, and no other god.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

Jesus said, "I am the way, the _____ and the _____. No one can come to the Father except by _____." (John 14:6)

How can I tell others about the truth?

I can tell them what Jesus has _____.

I can tell them that Jesus is the _____ way to God.

I can tell them that I know Jesus is _____.

Missing words: only done real

Robert Bruce and the Spider

Robert Bruce was a brave man who lived in Scotland in the 13th century. In those days Scotland was under the rule of the English. Robert made up his mind to set his country free from English rule.

When the Scots saw that Robert Bruce was such a brave man, they decided to make him king. But this made the English people very angry. They set out to kill Bruce and take the crown from him.

Before the Scots were ready for battle, the English army came upon them. The Scots fought bravely, but they were beaten, and Bruce had to flee for his life. For some time after this, Bruce had to hide out in the mountains. Once he hid in a deserted cabin. As he lay there, tired and hungry, he was very sad. He thought that he could never again drive the English out and make Scotland free.

As he was trying to think what to do, he saw a spider at work in the cabin. The spider had spun a long thread and was trying to swing by it from one part of the wall to another. It tried again and again. Bruce counted six times. This was the same number of times that he had failed in battle against the English. Then he thought the spider would give up and not try again.

He said to himself, "If the spider does try again and does reach the other wall, then I will try again to set my country free."

Once more the spider swung itself from the wall, and this time it got to the place it had been trying to reach. When Bruce saw that the spider had kept trying and finally succeeded, he felt much better. He decided that he too would try once more to defeat the English. So he gathered his army together, and soon he was master of the land.

Have you heard this proverb? If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again. Have you ever noticed what a spider does when its web has been destroyed? Sometimes spiders decide to make webs on the ceiling of your house...particularly in the corners. Mum will then get out the broom or vacuum cleaner and get rid of the cobwebs. The spider runs away, but before long you will find it in exactly the same place rebuilding its web. It never gives up, no matter how many times the web is destroyed.

The lesson Robert Bruce learned from the spider was to try, try, try again. A word for this is 'perseverance'.

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities – Robert Bruce and the Spider

PART A

1. Who was Robert Bruce?
2. In which country did he live?
3. Why did he want to defeat the English?
4. Why was he sitting in the cabin?
5. How many times did he watch the spider try to build its web?
6. How many times had his army been defeated by the English?
7. Why did Robert decide to keep on trying to set his country free?
8. What is the dictionary meaning of 'perseverance'?
9. How does a spider show perseverance?

PART B - God is patient

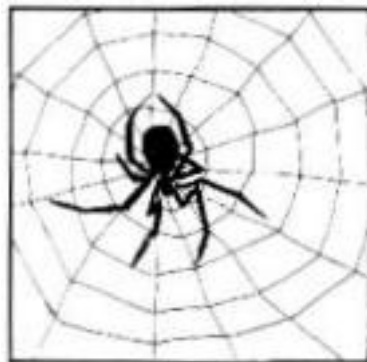
Read:

God does not like war, but this true story shows us something about never giving up. God never gives up on us. Even when we fail many times over, God keeps on loving us.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I be more persevering?

There are some of the things that are difficult for me, but I know I should keep trying. From now on I am going to try hard at these things... (*Make a list*)



Rebuilding Jerusalem

Darius was a king of Babylon in Old Testament times. We remember how the Egyptian Pharaoh had held God's people captive in earlier times. God's people were being held captive once again, this time, by King Darius. Darius had been responsible for throwing Daniel into the lion's den. The Israelites were pleased when Darius died and a new king took his place. The new king, Cyrus, was kind to the Israelites.

During the 70 years that Darius had been king, Jerusalem had been destroyed. The houses had been burned, the beautiful temple built by king Solomon had been destroyed, and the city walls had been broken down. King Cyrus decided to let the Israelites have Jerusalem back again. He said that they may rebuild the city, including the temple.

The Israelites set off for Jerusalem. It was a long way back...more than 500 miles. The people walked while the animals carried their possessions. Although the journey was long and difficult, the people were excited. When they arrived, they found nothing but a heap of rubbish. It took them a long time to clear it all away. Finally the day came for them to start building.

However the work was not as easy as they thought. As soon as they finished building the city the walls, trouble began. Some of the Babylonians did not like what the Israelites were doing. King Cyrus's reign had been short. He died suddenly and a new king took his place. The trouble-makers persuaded the new king to believe that the Israelites would not pay taxes once they had a city of their own. The new king put a stop to all work on the city. For 16 years the Israelites did no more work. During this time God sent two prophets to encourage the people. "Don't worry," said the prophets. "The temple will be built before long."

Then another new king came to reign. His name was Darius the Great. Darius the Great permitted the building to continue. He gave the Israelites money and materials, animals and food. Soon the temple was finished. It had taken 20 years to build. The people were filled with joy and praised God for sending King Darius the Great.

The re-building of the temple was an important sign to the Israelites, because God had promised them that soon after the rebuilding of the temple, a Saviour would be born in Israel. He would be God's own Son.

Although the Israelites were happy about the temple, there were dangers. The stone wall around the temple was still broken down. As fast as the workers tried to build up the wall, the enemies would come and knock it down again. Nehemiah, a servant in the king's palace, heard about the problem and wanted to help. Nehemiah knew exactly what to do. He gave instruction to the builders:

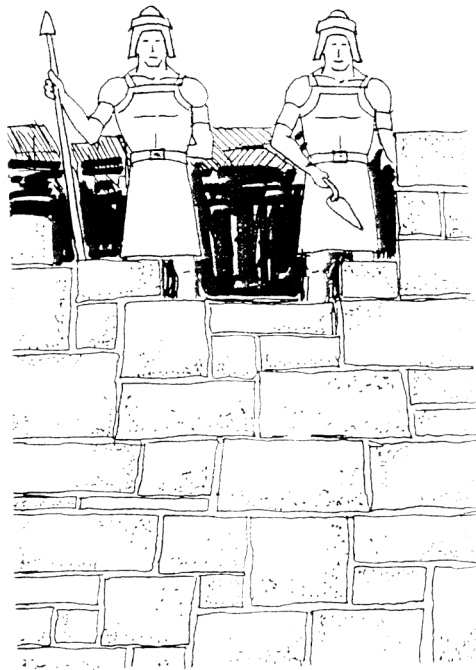
"Every man," he said, "must build the part of the wall that is closest to his own house. Every man must have a sword as well as a trowel to build with. On the first day, half of the men will stand guard with their swords while the others build. On the next day, the men will change places."

Everyone set to work. But there were still difficulties with the enemies. At one point the builders were ready to give up.

"Don't stop!" said Nehemiah. "Keep working. Don't be afraid. God will help us."

God did help them, and in 52 days the wall was complete. Once again the Israelites praised God for sending another great helper, Nehemiah.

God is Patient – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – Rebuilding Jerusalem

PART A

1. What had happened while Darius was king?
2. What kind of a king was he?
3. How did King Cyrus help the Israelites?
4. What happened when King Cyrus died?
5. How did the two prophets help the Israelites?
6. Which king helped the Israelites to finish re-building the temple?
7. Why was the re-building of the temple so important?
8. Why was the re-building of the wall important?
9. Who did God send to help the Israelites build the wall?
10. What advice did Nehemiah give?
11. How long did it take to re-build the wall?
12. What would have happened if the Israelites were not patient and persevering?

PART B - God is patient

Read:

God never gives up on us. He is patient with us. We often do the wrong thing. God just keeps forgiving. God wants us to be patient too. He wants us to be patient with others, and patient in the things we do. We can also be patient in prayer.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

If we _____ God for something we need, and we don't get it the first time we pray, then we shouldn't give up. God will _____ our prayers in His time. He knows the right time to _____ us the things we are praying for.

Missing words: give answer ask

What should I do when my prayers are not answered?

I should _____ on praying.

I should trust that God *will* answer my prayers when He is _____.

I must remember that God knows what is _____ for me.

Missing words: best keep ready

William Booth

Before Jesus came, people lived in 'darkness'. This did not mean that it was dark all the time. It meant that people were suffering from sadness and guilt. They felt guilty for their sin. They felt distant from God because of the original separation that took place in the Garden of Eden.

However the prophets promised that a 'light' was coming. The light was a symbol of hope. The light was to be Jesus. Just as a light lights up the darkness, Jesus would bring hope to a world of sorrow. There would now be a chance for people to be free from guilt. Jesus could forgive them.

When Jesus grew up and started His work, He announced to everyone that He was the light promised from long ago. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world".

Jesus told all those who followed Him that they too could be lights. A Christian can be a light by bringing the Good News to others. Those who do this are called missionaries.

In England in the 19th century lived a man who felt God calling him to bring light to people in darkness. His name was William Booth. In 1855, after marrying his wife Catherine, he decided to become a church minister. However, he soon felt dissatisfied with preaching to the well-dressed people in churches. His heart went out to the poor people on the streets of London. These were the people who really needed to hear God's word. Perhaps they felt too ashamed to enter the beautiful church buildings.

William decided to erect a tent and hold a meeting for them. Many came to see what it was all about. Some were drunk and the meetings were often noisy. William also preached on the streets outside the pubs. Many would leave the pubs to listen to him. In days when there was no TV or radio, many people would come out to hear street preaching. However, some did not like the preaching. They did not want to receive God's forgiveness. They laughed and threw things at William.

William cared particularly for the poor. He knew that he must do more than just tell them the Good News. He must show them God's care by helping them in a practical way. In those days there were many poor people in England. Most people received a very low wage and often one family had to sleep in one room. Many could not afford beds, nor adequate food or clothing. Many were so depressed about their poverty that they turned to drink. Drinking was a huge problem, even for children.

William decided to set up a 'soup kitchen'. He collected unwanted vegetables from the market, and unwanted bones from the butcher. With these ingredients he and his wife made soup and served it to the hungry. Soon William had many

helpers. Together they decided that they were like an army. They were soldiers for God, fighting against a world of poverty and suffering. They became known as the 'Salvation Army' because they preached the Good News...that Jesus came to save people from sadness and guilt. They told people how they could receive God's forgiveness and begin a new life as a follower of Jesus.

God is a Servant – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities

1. Make a list of ways in which we can receive news today.
2. How do you think news would have been spread in Bible times?
3. How did people receive news in the 19th century?
4. How did William proclaim the Good News of Jesus?
5. How did he show the love of Jesus?
6. What is the Good News?
7. Who is the **light to the world**, promised in the Old Testament? (Read Isaiah 42:6-7 and Isaiah 60:1).
8. Read Matthew 5:13-14. How can Christians be lights to the world?
9. Find out what the Bible says about 'feet' which carry the Good News. (Romans 10:14 and Ephesians 6:15).
10. Draw a set of foot-prints and write one of these Bible verses inside the foot-prints. You will need one foot-print for each word.

Spreading the Good News

The disciples followed Jesus for three years. They spent as much time as possible with Him, listening, watching and learning. Jesus had a plan for the disciples right from the moment He called them. "I will make you fishermen for men", He said. Jesus spent the three years training the disciples to spread the Good News. Only Jesus knew how short their learning time would be. Three short years, and then it would be up to the disciples to carry the light of the Gospel to others. Jesus told them that they would do the works that He did. They would not only tell people the Good News, but also do miracles through the power of God. (John 14:12)

Jesus called His followers together and sent them out. Jesus now called them apostles, because they were His messengers.
Read about this in Luke 9:1-6.

When the time came for Jesus to go back to His Father in Heaven, He called the disciples together and gave them another special command. They would not just be His messengers to the people of Israel but they were to go to other parts of the world too. Jesus said, "Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:96-20).

After Jesus returned to His Father, the apostles began travelling by land and sea to far away places. More apostles, such as Paul, Philip and Timothy were added to their number. They found themselves preaching the Gospel not only to Jews, but to people from different countries and different races.

Philip was sent by an angel on a special errand to meet a man from Ethiopia. The man was an officer in the army for the Queen of Ethiopia. He was returning from Jerusalem, sitting in a chariot, reading from the Old Testament. Find out what happened (Acts 8:29-40).

Another time Paul had a vision of a man far away in a place called Macedonia. God was calling Paul to go there and tell the Good News. (Acts 16:6-15).

Amazing things were happening. God was now giving the apostles His power to spread the Gospel. Since those days, many people have experienced that same power as they have carried the Good News to different parts of the world.

God is a Servant – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities – Spreading the Good News

1. How long did Jesus spend with the disciples?
2. What is the meaning of a disciple?
3. What is the meaning of an apostle?
4. Jesus told the apostles to go to peoples everywhere, in every part of the world. The apostles could not take the gospel to ALL the world by themselves. Many countries were unknown to them at that time. Who do you think this command was meant for?
5. Where is Ethiopia?
6. What happened when the man from Ethiopia met Philip?
7. Where is Macedonia?
8. What did Paul do after he had a vision of the man from Macedonia?



The Story of Hudson Taylor

Hudson Taylor was born in England in 1832. His parents knew and loved God, and at the age of 12 Hudson decided that he would one day become a missionary in China. However in his teenage years he turned away from the Christian life. One day he picked up a Christian story. He decided to read it, and was suddenly overcome by the need to ask Jesus for forgiveness, and once again became His follower.

When he was 17 years old, Hudson heard a clear voice from God, saying, "Go to China." He went to see a minister about it. The minister told him that going to China would be a very foolish thing to do.

"There are so few missionary societies working there, and the climate is unbearable!" he said.

However Hudson did not give up. He read all the books he could find about China, and even tried to teach himself the Chinese language. After writing to several missionary societies, he finally received an answer from one. It was the Chinese Evangelization Society. They arranged to pay for his training as a doctor at a London hospital.

At the age of 21, he boarded a sailing ship bound for China. It was a dangerous journey, around the Cape and through the East Indies. At one point they were almost shipwrecked. After 23 weeks the ship finally arrived in Shanghai. In those days Hudson was the only missionary in Shanghai and he was often homesick. He missed his family and friends in England. He also missed the food that he was so used to. The Lord sent to him a Chinese Christian to help him in his medical work. His helper had a long pigtail, almost reaching the ground.

Hudson travelled as much as he could, not only to give medical help, but also to preach the Gospel. Hudson had no trouble in attracting a crowd. People were very curious. In fact the listeners did not take their eyes off him. Then one day he was asked, "What can be the meaning of those buttons in the middle of the honourable back?"

Hudson realized how amusing his 19th century English costume was to the Chinese. In fact they probably paid more attention to his clothes than the words he preached! Hudson realized that before the Chinese could really understand the Good News, he must become like them. He must show them that he was not someone so unusual, but an ordinary person, just like themselves. Hudson threw away his English clothes and chose Chinese dress. He even grew a pigtail.

In 1858, Hudson married Maria. Together they worked to bring the Good News to the Chinese people. Life was difficult as they battled against hardship and disease. The summers were extremely hot and their health suffered. Two of their children died from disease, and then one day, Maria died also. Hudson did not

stop trusting in God. He continued to serve God through difficult circumstances knowing one thing... that God had called him to preach the Good News to those who had never heard. Through his work, Hudson opened the way for other missionaries to come to China. Hudson Taylor started one of the most successful missions to China. It was known as the China Inland Mission.

God is a Servant – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities

1. Put these in the right order:
 - a) Hudson turned away from God
 - b) Hudson came back to God after reading a book
 - c) At the age of 12 Hudson decided to become a missionary.
2. Why did the minister think that going to China was foolish?
3. How did Hudson train and prepare for being a missionary?
4. Use an atlas and trace with your finger, the route that Hudson took to China.
5. What were some of the things Hudson missed about home?
6. Who did the Lord send to help Hudson?
7. Why did Hudson change his way of dressing?
8. What sad events did Hudson experience?
9. How do you think Hudson kept on going, even when sad things happened?
10. Hudson's work was only the beginning of a much larger work. What was it?
11. Find out about a missionary who has gone to another part of the world to preach the Gospel.

Death in the Jungle

The Auca Indians who lived in the jungles of Ecuador were a fierce tribe, feared by all other tribes. In the 1950s they were still living in their traditional tribal way. The only contact with white people they had ever had was that of the rubber traders some years before. The rubber traders had come with guns, which had terrified the Aucas. When the five young American missionaries, Nat, Jim, Peter, Ed and Roger decided to make contact with the Aucas, they were really exposing themselves to great danger.

Ed, Jim and Peter had already spent three years working with another tribe of Indians in Ecuador. These were the more friendly Quichas. The Quichas territory bordered that of the Aucas. There they had got to know Nat. He was a pilot with Missionary Aviation Fellowship. His work involved flying a single-engined plane over the jungles and landing on tiny air strips which were merely small clearings in the jungle. He helped other missionaries with transport and supplies. He enjoyed his work, even though it was dangerous.

The four missionaries began praying about going into Auca territory. God would have to open the way for them, as the government had made things so difficult. One day they came across an Auca girl called Dayuma who had run away from the tribe. They were able to make friends with her and learn some of her language. Once a week they would fly over the Auca village and drop gifts using a canvas bucket on a long rope. Their first gift was a shiny aluminium kettle filled with coloured buttons. Other gifts included salt, axe-heads, plastic combs, clothing and little parcels of food wrapped in banana leaves.

Each time they flew over there were more and more Aucas waiting to receive their gifts. They started flying lower with the hope of broadcasting a message to the Aucas through a loud speaker. With the help of Dayuma, they were able to translate the message into the Auca language. "We like you. We have come to pay you a visit," was the message.

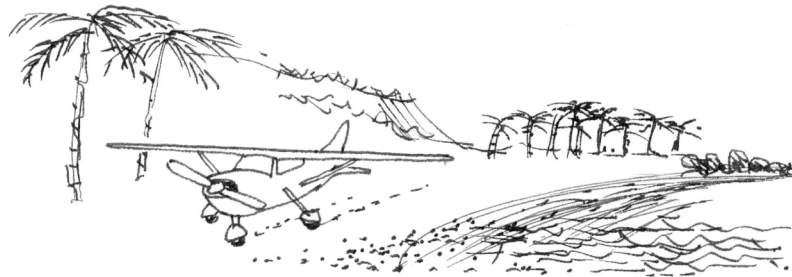
The Aucas seemed to be responding. They started sending gifts back to the missionaries using the bucket and rope. They sent a black bird in a cage and some cotton thread.

By now, a fifth missionary, Roger, had joined the four. It was time to make a landing in Auca territory. Nat, the pilot landed the plane safely on a sandy beach four miles from the Auca settlement. They set up base here and prepared to stay for two weeks. They kept up their routine of flying over the settlement delivering gifts. It was not long before the Aucas realized that the plane was landing on the beach and their curiosity overcame their fear. Three Aucas came to investigate. The missionaries made friends with the three Aucas and one of them even agreed to have a ride in the plane.

A couple of days later the men radioed their wives as usual, saying that they had seen ten Aucas heading towards the base. That was the last message they sent. A search party some days later found their bodies in a shallow river. The five missionaries had been killed by the Aucas.

Although the death of the men was tragic, they had pioneered the way for others to spread the gospel. Many other brave Christians continued their work. Two of these were Jim's wife and Nat's older sister. Other missionaries from the U.S.A. also joined them. Some Indians from the surrounding tribes who had previously received the Good News, came to share with the Aucas. Many Aucas eventually gave their lives to Jesus, and they will always remember the five men who gave their lives to bring them the Good News.

God is a Servant – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – Death in the jungle

PART A

1. Where is Ecuador?
2. Why were the four American missionaries exposing themselves to great danger?
3. How were the Quicha Indians different to the Aucas?
4. Describe the work of Nat.
5. How did the Auca girl, Dayuma, help the missionaries prepare for reaching the Auca tribe?
6. How did the missionaries try to make friends with the Aucas, before they actually visited them?
7. What kind of gifts did they deliver?
8. What gifts did the Aucas send back?
9. How did the missionaries know that the Aucas were accepting them?
10. How did the work of these men continue after their death?
11. Read about someone else who gave his life for Jesus (Acts 7:51-60)

PART B - God is a servant

Read:

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." He is the light that had been spoken about in the Old Testament. People who knew the Scriptures knew that someone would come who would be a light in their world of darkness. Many did not recognise Jesus.

Many people did not realise that He was the light that had come into the world. They were not listening. For people who did listen, they knew that Jesus had come to bring Good News. Jesus told people that they could be forgiven and healed if they believed in Him. People didn't have to offer sacrifices any more. Jesus had come to forgive their sins once and for all.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I help to spread the Good news?

I can tell God that I _____ to be his servant.

I can use my gifts and _____ for Him.

I can ask God to help me meet people who need to _____ about Jesus.

I can ask God to give me the right _____ to say.

Missing words: know words want talents

The Secret

Yami was an Australian Aboriginal boy who lived with his family at Wallatinna, about 1,000 Km. north of Adelaide. In Yami's culture nothing was written down. Everything to do with the land and the history of his people was told to the children by the older Aboriginal people. Through the wealth of stories told by the older people, Yami started learning about the land at an early age. The older people knew where the rock holes and water holes were, and they knew all about finding food. This information remained a secret within the tribe.

Sometimes Yami would travel with his family over the land. It was on these journeys that the secret information was most important. At first they would follow the creek up to the hills. There was always plenty of water in the creek. Then they left the creek and traveled across the bush. They followed a special track well known to the people of Yami's tribe. Along this track there were little rock-holes in which water could be found. Yami's father knew exactly where to find these holes. Yami knew that he too must learn where to find them because one day he would be responsible for finding the holes by himself.

They stopped at a small rock-hole and Yami's father lifted the flat stone lid which had been placed there to stop the water from evaporating. The rock-hole had filled with water during a rainy period. Even though there had not been rain for some time, the water remained in the rock-hole because of its secure lid. Yami's father carefully placed the lid after each person had drunk some water.

Sometimes Yami's family would travel with other families into the drier parts, but before attempting such a journey they would wait for the rain to fill the rock-holes and clay pans.

Knowing where to find water was a special secret passed on from person to person in Yami's tribe. Through this secret information life was sustained in the dry times.

Every living thing needs water. We could say that water is the next most important thing to air in sustaining life. Without water we would have no life.

Jesus said that there is something else that is absolutely important to life. Jesus was talking about our spiritual life. Our spirit is the part of us that lives forever. We need water for our body to have life, but for our spirit to have life we need Jesus.

God is Life – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities – The secret

PART A

1. How did Australian Aboriginal children learn about their cultural traditions?
2. What kind of information was important for children to learn?
3. Why did Aboriginal people place flat-topped rocks over their water holes?
4. What happens when you put water into clay?
5. What do you think a clay pan might be?
6. Why did the knowledge about the water holes have to remain a tribal secret?
7. Just as water is important to life, Jesus is important to life too. What does Jesus tell us about Himself in John 7:37-39?
8. Read about the woman at the well. (John 4:5-15)
9. In Bible days, people did not have taps in their homes. There was a well at the centre of the village and everyone would go there with their water pots, fill them up, then take them back to their houses.
 - a) What sort of water was Jesus talking about?
 - b) Did the woman understand at first?
 - c) Do you think she understood after Jesus explained?
 - d) How do we know that the woman accepted the living water?

PART B - God is life

Read:

Jesus said, "Whoever drinks the water I give, will never thirst. The water I give will become a spring of water, welling up to eternal life." (John 4:13)

When we think of water, we think of how it gives life to all living things. Jesus spoke about water when He was trying to tell people about eternal life. Just as water from a spring keeps bubbling up, the life that Jesus gives never runs dry. He gives us life that will last forever.

Copy and fill in the missing word:

How can I show others that Jesus lives in me?

I can try to _____ what Jesus would do.

Elijah Fed by Ravens

Elijah was a prophet of God, who lived in Old Testament times. He saw many miracles even though he lived long before Jesus came to earth. Through God's power, he brought a boy back to life. He had great faith that nothing was impossible with God. He knew God as his closest friend and heard God speak to him. Often God gave Elijah messages to tell other people. Because of this he was called a prophet.

The first of Elijah's miracles happened when the whole land of Israel was going through a great drought. God had caused the drought to come upon the land as a warning to the king who no longer worshipped the true God. He had begun to worship Baal. God sent Elijah to warn the king and to explain why God had sent the drought.

Instead of accepting God's message, and turning away from his idol worship, the king became angry at Elijah. God protected Elijah. He told him to go and live at a place near Cherith Brook, where there was plenty of water.

"Don't worry about food, Elijah," said the Lord, "I have already commanded the ravens that live in the area to bring you food every day."

Elijah obeyed the Lord's command, and went and stayed by the brook. He drank water from the brook, and the ravens brought him food, just as God had said.

"This is remarkable," thought Elijah. "The ravens are meat eaters, yet they bring this food to me every day instead of eating it themselves. What's more, they bring bread as well, and ravens do not eat bread. So why would they pick it up, unless God had chosen to use them especially to feed me?"

Thank you God for your loving care."

God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities

1. What amazing miracles had Elijah performed through God's power?
2. Why did Elijah have to go and live near the brook?
3. What kind of food did the ravens bring? (1 Kings 17:6)
4. Why Elijah was amazed that the ravens brought him food?

Fish for Everyone

This is a true story of a miracle that occurred in 1981. It happened to a group of people who travelled by ship to spread the Good News, and help the poor. The name of the group was 'Youth With A Mission', and the name of their ship was the Anastasis. The crew of the Anastasis was made up of 175 people from many different nations. All saw the miracle which occurred while the ship was anchored at a port in Greece.

One of the ship's crew named Moustafa was walking down the beach. As he was walking along the water's edge, he saw twelve fish leave the water and swim ashore. Moustafa thought that this was strange, as fish don't normally do this. Then he actually watched them flop out of the sea and into the shallow rock-pools close to the shore. He quickly picked them up and ran back to show his friends.

Moustafa was from North Africa and had learnt to cook fish in a special way over an open fire. He cooked the fish and shared them with his friends.

The next day a family was sitting in the ship's dining room having their evening meal. The family looked in amazement as 5 to 7 metres away from their table at the shoreline, a large fish jumped ashore. They ran to the beach and grabbed the fish.

Then a few days later, another one of the ship's crew noticed many fish coming ashore. The fish were jumping out of the sea on to dry land. The fish were gathered up. There were 210. That was enough for everyone to have fresh fish.

Two days later it began to happen again.

"The fish are jumping out of the sea again!" called someone.

Fish by the tens, fifties and hundreds were jumping ashore. The crew gathered fish for a long time. Two wheel-barrows were used to cart the fish back to the galley. When all had been collected there were nearly two ton of fish. Two thousand, three hundred and one fish were counted and put into large plastic barrels. There was enough fish in the ship's freezer to last for a long, long time. Every time the crew ate the fish they were reminded of God's care for them.

They were also reminded of a similar miracle that Jesus had performed when He was on earth. The disciples had been fishing all night but had caught nothing. Jesus came by and told the disciples to push the boat further out, and to let down the nets for a catch. Jesus knew, without being told, that they had caught nothing during the night. The night was the best time for fishing.

"If we caught nothing during the night, then certainly we will not catch anything during the day," they were thinking. But the disciples obeyed anyway. They caught so many fish that the boat almost sank!

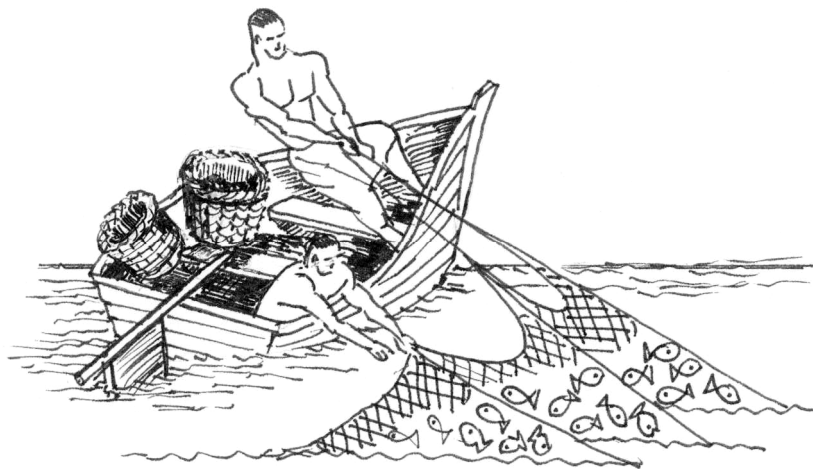
The disciples were amazed at the miracle. They knew that Jesus must be God's Son. Jesus performed this miracle for His friends to show how much He cared for them.

"From now on," Jesus said, "you will be catching men." This meant that they were to follow Jesus and bring many others to know Him. If they followed Jesus, and did His work, then He would care for them and provide for them.

God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 6

Activities

1. Describe the purpose of the people on board the ship.
2. Where was the ship anchored at the time of this story?
3. What kind of people made up the crew?
4. How is this story similar to the Bible story of the great catch, in Luke 5:1-11?
5. Why did Jesus perform the miracle of the great catch for the disciples?
6. Why do you think God performed the modern-day miracle?



The Precious Vitamin Drops

This is a true story about someone who used their faith to trust God when things were very difficult. It took place in Europe during the Second World War where the Jews who lived there were being captured and taken to prison camps.

The story is told by a lady called Corrie ten Boom who was not Jewish, but Dutch. She and her family decided to risk their own lives in order to help the Jews at that time. They took Jews into their own home for protection and hid them in a secret room. However, finally the day came when they were discovered.

Corrie ten Boom and her sister Betsie were placed into a prison camp along with the Jews they had tried to hide.

Women were crammed into dirty, cold, damp barracks. Food was little more than watery turnip soup. During the day they were forced to do extremely hard labour. Despite their dreadful circumstances Corrie and Betsie did not stop trusting God. Betsie found it particularly difficult because she was not well. She was suffering from a vitamin deficiency for which she needed vitamin drops. Corrie and Betsie had managed to bring some of their things with them to the first prison camp, including the vitamin drops and a Bible. However, when they were moved to a second camp they were not allowed to take anything in with them. Each woman was searched thoroughly as she passed in line through the gates. All Corrie and Betsie could do was to pray desperately to their Heavenly Father.

Corrie stood in the queue, trying to hide behind her back, a jumper with vitamin drops and Bible wrapped inside. When it was Corrie's turn to pass the guard, instead of searching her, he just pushed her through the gate with the words, "Move along! You're holding up the queue."

And so Corrie and Betsie arrived inside the barracks bringing not only the Bible and vitamins, but the knowledge of God's power to work a miracle. Soon Corrie discovered that there were twenty-five other women with the same vitamin deficiency. They too need the precious vitamin drops.

"What should I do, Lord?" asked Corrie. "If I give the drops to all these women there will only be enough to last a day! Even if I save the drops for Betsie there will be only enough to last a month."

Corrie knew what she must do. She lined up all the women who were ill and gave them the drops. Strangely enough, she lined the women up again the next day and there were still enough drops for everyone. She tried it again the next day, and the next. Still there were enough. Every time she tilted the bottle a drop appeared at the tip of the glass stopper.

"It just couldn't be!" said Corrie. She held it up to the light, trying to see how much was left, but the dark brown glass was too thick to see through.

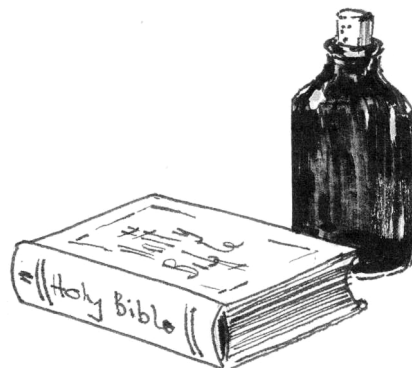
"There was a woman in the Bible," said Betsie, "whose oil jar was never empty." She turned to the story in the book of 1st Kings. They read about the poor widow of Zarephath who had cared for Elijah. She continued to have oil in her jar and flour in her flour bin no matter how much she used.

It was one thing to believe that such things happened thousands of years ago, but another thing to believe that it could happen today. And yet it happened.

"Don't try to explain it." said Corrie to Betsie. "Just accept it as a surprise from a Father who loves you."

Then one day a young Dutch woman, also in the prison camp, came to Corrie. "Look what I've got for you!" she said. "Vitamins!" Somehow she had stolen them from the staff-room. There were several huge containers of vitamins and yeast compound. "We'll finish the drops first," thought Corrie. But that night, no matter how long she held the bottle upside-down, or how hard she shook it, not another drop appeared.

God is Provider – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – The Precious Vitamin Drops

PART A

1. What nationality was Corrie ten Boom?
2. Why do you think Corrie's family tried to help Jews?
3. Why do you think the enemy wanted to kill Jews?
4. What happened to Corrie and Betsie for their efforts in trying to protect the Jews?
5. How was Corrie able to get the vitamins and her Bible into the prison?
6. Why do you think most of the ladies, including Betsie, needed vitamins?
7. Corrie decided to share the vitamins. What does this show us about her?
8. Do you think Corrie expected the Lord to keep on filling the vitamin bottle?
9. Which miracle in the Bible is similar to this one?

PART B - God is provider

Read:

There are several miracles recorded in the Bible where God did a miracle of provision. This means that He didn't just provide in the usual way. God usually provides food through the sun, rain and soil, which are part of His Creation. There are three times in the Bible where God did amazing miracles to provide food. You will remember the story of the loaves and the fishes, and the two stories in the Old Testament where God provided flour and oil when Elijah and Elisha prayed. Sometimes God provides in unusual ways. God can still provide in unusual ways today, just as He did for Corrie ten Boom.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How does God provide for me?

God provides through His _____.

God provides through my _____.

God provides when I _____ in Him.

God could do a miracle if I really _____ one!

Missing words: trust parents creation needed

Peace Child

This is a true story of a whole group of people who changed their life-style from one of killing and cheating to a life of peace and happiness as they came to know the true peace-maker, Jesus Christ.

In 1962, Don and Carol Richardson went to live among the Sawi people of Irian Jaya. Irian Jaya is the western part of New Guinea. The Sawis had only occasionally seen white people. These were the men sent by the Dutch government to observe the area. The Sawis lived in deep tropical jungle on the edge of the crocodile infested Kronkel River. The Sawis stood in awe of white people, with their planes and helicopters, their jet propelled rafts and their precious gifts of steel axes and razor blades.

It was a great privilege to have Don and Carol as their very own white residents in their small village. However, for Don and Carol, life was unpredictable, completely foreign to their own way of life, and very dangerous. Only their faith in God gave them the courage they needed to live among the Sawis. They had an inner certainty that Jesus had sent them on a special mission... to bring the Good News to people who lived a life of violence and fear.

At the foundation of all Sawi life was treachery and mistrust. Children were brought up to hold in high esteem the killing of another human being. The Sawis, along with their surrounding tribes, were head hunters. At least this was the case until the mid sixties, when Don and Carol penetrated the world of the Sawi.

The Sawis used a tactic of 'fattening with friendship'. To befriend a member of the enemy tribe, gain his confidence, and then kill him when he was not suspecting it, was a deed highly honoured among the Sawis. It was not surprising then, that as Don started to share the Gospel story, Judas was the hero, not Jesus. Judas had done the very thing that the Sawis honoured. That is, to become a friend of Jesus, and then later, turn Him over to the enemy to be killed.

"How can the Gospel be shared with these people?" thought Don. The whole foundation of their society would have to change before the Sawis could even begin to understand why Jesus had to die for them. It was a task too difficult for Don and Carol. They knew that only the Lord could open the minds of the Sawi people by some enormous miracle.

Don and Carol concentrated their work on three Sawi tribes. These were the Haenam, Kamur and Yawi tribes. To these tribes they gave medicine, supplied implements and worked at learning their language so that they could share the Gospel with them. They also taught some of the Sawis to read, in their own language, for the first time.

Working with the three tribes, however, brought about some problems. Don and Carol's work brought the three tribes into closer contact. This meant that fighting among them was becoming more common, and contagious diseases were spreading more rapidly. Don concluded that their past habit of living in small isolated groups had been the key to their survival. Before Don and Carol arrived, potential enemies were out of sight and there were fewer occasions to shed blood. Don and Carol decided that for the good of the people they should leave them. Otherwise the three tribes could die out altogether.

The leaders from two of the warring groups confronted Don.

"Tuan," as they called him, "don't leave us!" they pleaded.

"But I don't want you to kill each other," replied Don.

"Tuan," one of them said, "We're not going to kill each other." "Tomorrow we are going to make peace!"

Don and Carol hardly slept that night, wondering what daybreak would bring. Few of the Sawis slept either. All through the night voices could be heard. Then as daylight broke all was deathly quiet, just as it had been before previous battles.

Then one of the tribe members, Mahaen, and his wife climbed down from their houses. Mahaen was carrying a child, one of his own sons on his back. His wife Syado was sobbing violently. The people of the tribe also started descending from their houses. All eyes were on Mahaen, Syado and the child. Suddenly Syado wrenched the boy from her husband's shoulders and ran off with him. She was not going to give him up. Now all the other women of the Haenem tribes clutched their babies close to their breasts. Someone had to give up their baby.

Finally a man named Kaiyo decided that he would be the one.

"It is necessary," Kaiyo reminded himself. "There's no other way to stop the fighting. And if the fighting does not stop, the Tuan will leave."

Kaiyo reached down and picked up his only child, six-month-old Biakadon. He held the soft, warm gurgling body of his son close to his chest one last time. Kaiyo's wife, Wumi, did not yet know of the decision. Then her eyes flashed towards her husband, who, with Biakadon in his arms, was running towards the other tribe. Wumi screamed and ran after Kaiyo, but Kaiyo did not look back. Wumi felt her feet sinking into the bog. She had missed the trail. There was no hope now. He was too far ahead.

As Kaiyo reached the Haenam tribe his heart was breaking. The men of the village were grouped together waiting to receive the child. The peace ceremony began.

"I give you my son, and with him my name," Kaiyo said as he held forth little Biakadon. Mahor, of the Haeman tribe received him gently into his arms.

"It is enough!" said Mahor. "I will surely plead for peace between us."

Then a father from the Haenam tribe held up one of his sons.

"Will you plead peace among your people?" Kaiyo was asked.

"Yes!" replied Kaiyo.

"Then I give you my son and I give you my name," said the father.

Kaiyo took his newly adopted son, Mani, into his arms and ran quickly back to his own tribe. In each village young and old, male and female, filed past the babies and laid their hands upon them, sealing their acceptance of peace with the other tribe. The adopted babies were then decorated, ready for a peace celebration.

Don tried to comprehend what had just taken place. He questioned one of the men.

"Why is this necessary?" he asked.

"Tuan," was the reply. "Don't you know that it is impossible to have peace without a peace child?"

"What will happen to Biakadon and Mani?" asked Don. "Will they be harmed?"

"They will not be harmed, Tuan," was the reply. "In fact both our villages will guard the lives of these children even more carefully than they protect their own children."

The exchange of the two babies did actually cause the two warring groups to cease fighting. But for Don and Carol, the peace child illustration meant so much more. Now, finally a way of explaining the sacrifice of God's son had been demonstrated before their very eyes. Don was now able to explain the Gospel in a way in which the Sawis would understand.

"Like Kaiyo," said Don, "God had only one son to give, and like Kaiyo, He gave Him away. The son you gave was a son you loved. The Son that God gave was a son He loved even more. God has sent me to tell you that God has sent a peace child. His name is Jesus. From now on, let Sawi mothers keep their own babies. God has given His Son for YOU! Ask His Spirit to live in your hearts and He will keep you in the way of peace."

For three months Don kept telling the Sawis about the Peace Child of God, but still no one had committed their life to Christ.

"What else will it take to draw these men and their families to Jesus? he thought. And then it happened.

One afternoon Don and Carol and their two baby boys took a boat trip upstream with their Sawi house-boy. Suddenly the boat hit a submerged log and the boat capsized. All four were thrown into the strong currents of the crocodile infested Kronkel river. Both parents holding the babies, managed to grab hold of the up-turned boat. Then, by a miracle, a man in a canoe came by and rescued them before they were swept away. The Sawi people could see from this experience that God really did give peace and protection. As a result, one whole family gave their lives to the Lord.

"When I saw that God could give you peace, even when your two sons almost drowned, I knew that everything you said about the Peace Child was true," said one of the Sawi leaders. "I decided that He could take care of us too."

As Don and Carol continued to live among the Sawi people, they saw more miracles as people gave their lives to Christ. Gradually old customs and evil practices gave way to a new life of peace and happiness. Because of the Peace Child story, the Sawis had a new hope. Instead of hate and mistrust between villages, they developed a bond which kept them from war. That bond was peace through Jesus Christ.

Think about it...

God our Heavenly Father made a great sacrifice in giving His only Son, Jesus. As people receive God's Son, they experience peace in their hearts and lives. Receiving God's Son, Jesus, is making a promise that we will, from this point on, try to stop going against God, and instead, become His friend. Being a friend of God means doing what HE wants us to do, and not always what WE want to do.

God is Peace – Themes for Christian Studies 6



Activities – Peace Child

PART A

1. Find Irian Jaya on a map. Name a country that borders it. Find out which country Irian Jaya belongs to.
2. Why did the Sawi tribe stand in awe of white people?
3. Why do you think the Sawis wanted Don and Carol to live with them?
4. Why was life dangerous for Don and Carol and their children?
5. What is the meaning of treachery?
6. Explain the Sawi's tactic of 'fattening with friendship'.
7. Why do you think the Sawis saw Judas as the hero in the gospel story, and not Jesus?
8. Why did Don and Carol almost decide to leave?
9. What stopped them?
10. What had to happen for peace to be made between two tribes?
11. What were the names of the two babies that had to be exchanged?
12. How was the Sawis experience of giving up a peace child similar to God's sacrifice for us?
13. How did the Sawis lives change when they received Jesus?

PART B - God is peace

Read:

God our Heavenly Father made a great sacrifice in giving His only Son, Jesus. As people receive God's Son, they have peace in their hearts and lives. When you receive God's Son, Jesus, you make a promise that from now on you will become His friend, and do what He wants you to do.

Copy and fill in the missing words:

How can I have God's peace?

Find out from the Bible...

- a) I can confess my _____ . (1 John 1:9)
- b) I can become a _____ of Jesus. (John 15:14)