



Preschool Ages 3 & 4

# Leader Devotions

Each week, read these leader devotions  
to prepare your heart.





## Buzz Leader Devotions, Boo-Boo Buster, Preschool, Spring

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### Group

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#### Thanks to our talented Buzz team!

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## Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



#### Relational

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

#### Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

#### Applicable

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#### Learner-based

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## We know you care about kids...

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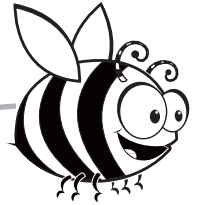
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- **biblically solid**—in each lesson, kids explore one Bible truth in a fresh way!
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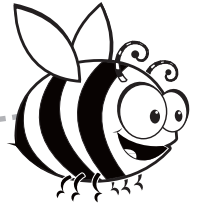
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# Buzz Tips







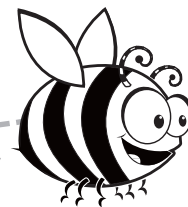
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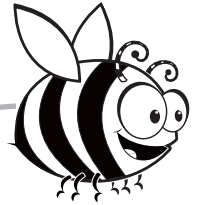
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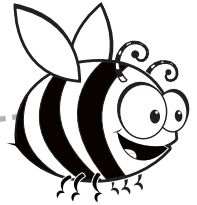
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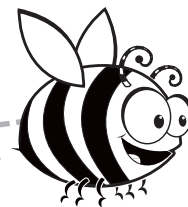
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# Week 1

## A Roman Officer Has Great Faith MATTHEW 8:5-13 *We trust God.*

### What the Bible Says

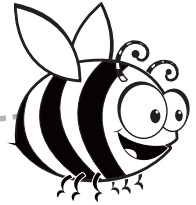
When Jesus arrived in Capernaum, a Roman officer approached him. The officer was a centurion who oversaw a division of 100 troops. The centurion told Jesus that one of his servants was paralyzed and in pain, and Jesus responded immediately by saying he'd go heal the servant. Aware that religious customs forbade Jews from entering the homes of Gentiles (anyone who wasn't an Israelite), the Roman officer told Jesus he didn't have to come; in fact, he believed that Jesus could heal his servant just by willing it so. The officer compared Jesus' authority to his own: Just as the officer could command his own troops, he believed Jesus had the authority to heal an illness at his command. Jesus was amazed and pointed out to his disciples that this Gentile's faith was greater than he'd seen among all the people in Israel. Jesus then answered the officer's request, telling him his servant would be healed...and he was.

### What It Means

From the start, this Roman officer showed Jesus great respect. He called him "Lord" each time he addressed him, and he declared himself unworthy to have Jesus enter his home. We don't know how much the centurion understood about who Jesus was, but it's clear that the officer deeply and profoundly believed in Jesus' authority. He believed Jesus had authority over supernatural things in the same way he himself had an ability to command his troops. There was no precedent for this type of miracle—a long-distance healing—but this man still believed Jesus could do it. This "outsider" somehow grasped the scope of Jesus' amazing power and authority, even when most of the "insiders" didn't.

### Why It Matters

Jesus was astonished by this officer's faith. What is this faith that captures Jesus' attention? In much of our culture today, *having faith* seems to be watered down to mean "wishing for," "hoping in," "believing really hard in," or "feeling good about" a set of beliefs. But this man's faith was deeply grounded not in mere feelings or wishes but in his fundamental view of Jesus' immense power and authority. Similarly, when we burst through the stereotypes that



put Jesus in a nice, neat, safe little box, and instead see him as the awesome, eternal Son with ultimate power over all things, we demonstrate faith that astonishes even Jesus.

Whether we realize it or not, many of us have a tendency to tame Jesus, to make him familiar, and—often unintentionally—to limit him. It’s so very important to have a friendship with Jesus, but at the same time we must be careful not to become so used to our “friend” Jesus that we lose sight of how stunningly, incomprehensibly amazing he is.

### **God Sightings®**

Focus your heart and mind on Jesus’ power and authority, his majesty and wonder. This week, whenever you interact with an authority figure such as your boss or a police officer, ask God to reveal his ultimate authority over everything in your life—even your boo-boos.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will have a profound trust in Jesus’ power and authority, just as the Roman centurion did. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 2

## Jesus Is a Friend to Lazarus JOHN 11:1-44 *We trust God.*

### What the Bible Says

Jesus received word from his close friends Mary and Martha that their brother, Lazarus, was very sick. But rather than quickly going to Bethany to help his beloved friends, Jesus stayed where he was for two days. Jesus knew that Lazarus had died from his sickness, and he told his disciples, "I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe." They traveled to Bethany, and when they arrived there, Martha confronted Jesus immediately. She told him she believed he could have healed her brother if only he'd been there. Jesus told Martha that he is "the resurrection and the life," and Martha declared her belief in Jesus. Jesus then saw Mary, who was weeping and also likely confused about why Jesus hadn't come to heal her brother. They all went to Lazarus' tomb, and Jesus asked for the stone that sealed the tomb to be rolled away. Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" and Lazarus, who'd been dead for four days, miraculously walked out of the tomb alive.

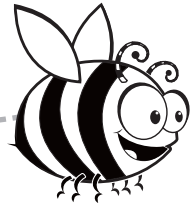
### What It Means

Martha's conversation with Jesus before her brother was raised to life is stunning. She was understandably grieved that Jesus didn't come to heal her brother when they'd sent him the message,

but she continued to show great faith despite her sorrow and confusion. In fact, in her conversation with Jesus, Martha was the first female follower of Jesus in John's Gospel to boldly declare that "you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Though Martha had seen her beloved brother suffer and die, though Jesus arrived later than she'd hoped, and though she was grieving and confused, she still held fervently to what she knew to be true: Jesus was the Messiah, the long-awaited deliverer for the Jews. She didn't waver in her trust even while her brother lay dead in his grave.

### Why It Matters

Martha didn't wait for Jesus to perform an amazing miracle (like raising her brother to life) to trust in Jesus. She trusted in Jesus despite the bad ending she'd experienced in the story so far. She declared her belief in Jesus before the miracle. That's what trust looks like in our lives, too. We can hope and pray for miraculous happy endings, but we trust Jesus in the meantime. Authentic trust is centered on an unwavering faith in Jesus himself, regardless of how the end of the story turns out.



### **God Sightings®**

Martha had good reason to be confused and frustrated. How about you? What situations frustrate you? Have there been times you needed God but felt like he didn't "show up"? Just as Jesus showed up for Martha and her family, he will show up for you, too. When you're frustrated this week, look for Jesus, who is always nearby, and turn to him in prayer, remembering that he is the Messiah, the Son of God.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will have a friendship with Jesus like Martha's—a relationship of honesty and enduring trust. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 3

## Peter Walks on Water MATTHEW 14:22-33 *We trust God.*

### What the Bible Says

After miraculously feeding a crowd of 5,000, Jesus wanted time alone to pray. So he sent his disciples to get their boat and go across the lake without him. Jesus prayed by himself well into the night; meanwhile the disciples were weathering a terrible storm in the boat. Sometime around 3 o'clock in the morning, Jesus walked out to them on the stormy water of the lake. At first the disciples were terrified and thought he was a ghost, but Jesus identified himself, saying, "Take courage! I am here!" Peter asked to participate in the miracle, and Jesus invited him onto the water. At first Peter was able to walk toward Jesus, but his attention soon focused on the violent winds and waves around him. In fear, he started to sink and cried out to Jesus for help. Jesus saved Peter from drowning, but also confronted him for doubting.

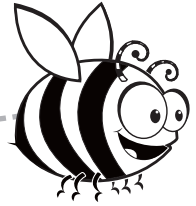
### What It Means

Peter was the only disciple of the 12 who called out to Jesus and who trusted in him so fully that he stepped out onto the water. So why did Jesus say to Peter, "You have so little faith"? Peter's faith sure seems bigger than that of the other 11 disciples!

Jesus also asked Peter, "Why did you doubt me?" The Greek word for doubt here, *distazo*, has the connotation of someone being pulled or split in two different directions—someone aiming or focusing on two different things. In other words, Peter did have an immense faith in Jesus—a faith that gave him the assurance to put his full weight onto water and trust he wouldn't sink. But Peter also began to have a split focus: A part of him was distracted and frightened by the storm raging around him.

### Why It Matters

Peter's doubt wasn't a matter of not believing in Jesus' power but, rather, it was an inability to focus on that power despite the havoc raging around him. We, too, often let our experiences and circumstances split our attention and divide our focus. Economic difficulties, marriage challenges, family schedules, work frustrations...the list of potential distractions can be endless. These issues, like the storm that night, can be very real, incredibly painful, and even dangerous. But we *can* maintain a concentrated focus, with both eyes on Jesus instead of our challenges. Truly trusting Jesus means having a singular focus on Jesus' power, above and beyond every challenge and circumstance.



### **God Sightings®**

What are the dangers, fears, problems, or anxieties storming in your life? What is threatening to pull your focus off Jesus? Talk to God this week about those storms. Let changes in weather throughout the week remind you that God is in control during the sunny and stormy times in your own life. Then invite God to bring you peace and calm your storms.

Invite Jesus to help you focus on him rather than the distractions of life so you can have faith to stay afloat.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray for your kids, asking God to help them develop a faith that focuses on Jesus' power despite any circumstance. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 4

## Jesus Heals an Official's Son JOHN 4:43-54 *We trust God.*

### What the Bible Says

Jesus traveled through Galilee to Cana, the place where he'd performed his first miracle by turning water into wine during a wedding (John 2:1-12). This time, while in Cana, Jesus was approached by an official from Herod's government who asked Jesus to travel to Capernaum to heal his dying son. At first, Jesus responded to the man's request by criticizing the type of faith that's based on miracles and signs. But the government official didn't give up—he begged Jesus again to come and heal his little boy. Jesus told the man his son would live, and the man believed Jesus' promise. On his way to his son in Capernaum, the official received the news that his son had been healed—and that the healing happened at the very moment Jesus said it! The official and his entire family became devoted followers of Jesus.

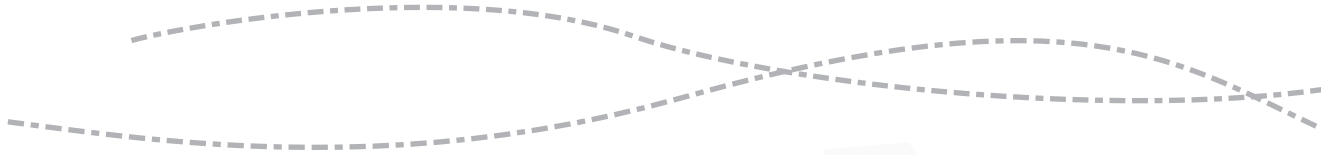
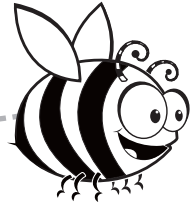
### What It Means

At first glance, Jesus' initial response to the official's plea for help seems harsh: "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?" But Jesus wasn't talking only to the official here; he was also addressing the other people gathered around him. Jesus drew a clear line between two types of faith: a superficial faith that's based on hype and

theatrics versus a real faith that's based solely on the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. And in this story, the government official showed which type of faith he had: real faith. He asked for help repeatedly, revealing his great confidence that Jesus had the power to heal his son. Further, he didn't need to "see" a miraculous sign to believe; he believed Jesus had healed his son (who was 20 miles away) without seeing any amazing demonstration of power. He simply trusted Jesus' words.

### Why It Matters

This man asked Jesus for help with full confidence that Jesus could heal his son. We can have the same confidence and hope when we pray about our problems. We can trust in Jesus and take him at his word, whether or not we have evidence or proof. Let this man's confidence in Jesus inspire you to pray with greater boldness this week, bringing all your concerns to Jesus and seeking his help.



**God Sightings®**  
This week, look for God in the little things. Look for the smaller blessings that show God helping you, and let these strengthen your faith as you ask for God's help with bigger things. Remember how God helps you even when the bigger prayers seem to go unanswered, and keep praying persistently, believing that God can do anything.

**Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will turn to Jesus in complete trust whenever they face a problem in their lives. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 5

## Zacchaeus Meets Jesus LUKE 19:1-10 *We accept God's forgiveness.*

### What the Bible Says

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector in Jericho; though he was Jewish, he collected taxes for the Romans and became wealthy doing so. Tax collectors like Zacchaeus were strongly disliked in the Jewish world—they worked for “unclean” people of other nationalities. They often charged exorbitant amounts above and beyond the taxes themselves, and some collectors were even excommunicated from Judaism entirely.

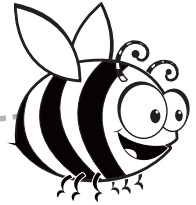
When this outsider, Zacchaeus, heard that Jesus was coming to town, he was so eager to see him that he climbed a tree to get a good view. When Jesus passed by, he called to Zacchaeus and invited himself to Zacchaeus' home. The people of Jericho were upset that Jesus befriended such an outcast—a “notorious sinner.” But after spending time with Jesus, Zacchaeus committed to giving half of his money to the poor and also to paying back four times the amount of money he'd gained dishonestly. Jesus praised Zacchaeus' response, saying, “Salvation has come to this home today.”

### What It Means

Zacchaeus likely lived a lonely life, hated by his own people and not fully accepted by his Roman employers. He probably had very few—if any—friends. So Zacchaeus was probably floored when Jesus chose to spend time with him! We don't know what Jesus said to Zacchaeus during their time together, but we can see evidence in Zacchaeus' life that he was profoundly changed by Jesus. Zacchaeus responded to Jesus' love with more than mere personal devotion; he responded with a total life transformation. Zacchaeus committed to take action by making amends for wrongs he'd committed and by giving a tremendous amount—50 percent!—of his own wealth to the poor.

### Why It Matters

At the end of this account, Jesus explained why he chose to be Zacchaeus' guest rather than visit the homes of the pious or popular in Jericho. He said, “The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.” Jesus offered love and forgiveness to lost, sinful Zacchaeus, and we can see, by the way his life changed, that Zacchaeus accepted that forgiveness. The new life we find in Christ isn't simply about benefits received—it's about that life overflowing into others' lives from our new wellsprings of compassion, generosity, justice, righteous living, and love.



### **God Sightings®**

Just as Jesus' love transformed Zacchaeus' life both inwardly and outwardly, God has been at work changing you. The outward signs of change in Zacchaeus' life involved money, as he repented of his extortion and gave back what he'd wrongfully taken. This week, when you pull out your credit card, checkbook, or cash, remember how Jesus changed Zacchaeus' life. Listen to how God wants to change how you live, and praise and thank God for his transforming power already at work in your life.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will be inspired by Zacchaeus' immediate obedience and commitment to life-change. Ask God to help them show their love for him by the way they live their lives. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 6

## Jesus Meets a Samaritan Woman JOHN 4:1-42 *We accept God's forgiveness.*

### What the Bible Says

To put it mildly, in Jesus' time Jews and Samaritans didn't get along. A strong prejudice—bordering on hostility—existed between the groups based on ethnicity, religion, and history. So it was somewhat unusual when Jesus and his disciples traveled right through Samaria on their way from Judea to Galilee rather than going the alternate route taken by many Jews, a route that bypassed Samaria.

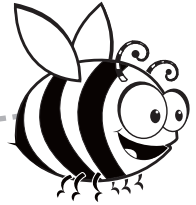
While he was there, Jesus met a woman by a well. He spoke to her, asking for a drink. Pretty soon they were having a conversation about the differences between Jewish and Samaritan beliefs, about her own shameful past, and eventually about his identity as the promised Messiah. After talking with Jesus, the woman immediately ran to her village and told people about him. Through her bold witness, many of them joined her in the belief that he was “the Savior of the world.”

### What It Means

In this encounter at the well, Jesus defied all sorts of cultural taboos. The Samaritan woman herself was shocked when he, a Jew, spoke to her. Jews considered Samaritans to be both ethnically and religiously impure because, centuries earlier, the people of Samaria had been captured by the Assyrians; they'd intermarried and their Judaism became polluted by pagan ideas. Jesus also did something shocking by speaking to a *woman!* For a man to speak to a woman with such frankness and respect as Jesus did in this account was unheard of. But perhaps the biggest shock of all was that Jesus was speaking to a well-known *sinner!* This woman had been married five times already and was currently living with another man. Jesus knew all about her sin... but he spoke to her anyway and offered her eternal life.

### Why It Matters

Judaism in Jesus' day required purity as a prerequisite for people to approach God. But here Jesus shows that there are no prerequisites for having a relationship with him. Men and women of any race, of any social group, and with any kind of past can come to know Jesus and receive his forgiveness.



### **God Sightings®**

In his conversation with the woman that day, Jesus offered her “living water.” In fact, he promised that those who drink his living water “will never be thirsty again.” Every time you’re thirsty this week, think about how God satisfies more than just your physical thirst.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will get a sense of how generous, complete, and unconditional Jesus’ love and forgiveness are. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 7

**Jesus Dies** LUKE 23:26-49 *We accept God's forgiveness.*



## What the Bible Says

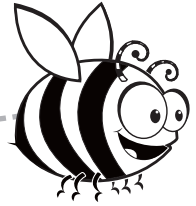
Betrayed by Judas, Jesus was arrested and tried before the Jewish high council, the ruler Herod, and the Roman governor Pilate himself. Though Pilate found him innocent of wrongdoing, he surrendered to public pressure and had Jesus beaten and then crucified. Jesus and two other criminals were led to a hill called The Skull where they were each nailed to a cross. The crowds mocked Jesus, and Pilate placed a sign that said, "This is the King of the Jews" on top of his cross. Yet as he hung on the cross, Jesus responded to his brutal treatment by asking God to forgive those crucifying and mocking him. One of the condemned criminals mocked Jesus, too, challenging him to prove he was God's Son by saving himself from crucifixion. But the other criminal crucified next to Jesus had a very different reaction. He acknowledged his own guilt and Jesus' guiltlessness. He then demonstrated faith in Jesus by asking Jesus to remember him in his kingdom. Several hours later, Jesus died.

## What It Means

Though we don't know why the repentant criminal was sentenced to death, it was for reasons bad enough that he personally felt he deserved to be executed. Yet Jesus responded to the man's request by promising the criminal eternal life with him in paradise. How could he offer forgiveness like that? Romans 6:23 explains for us the ultimate meaning of Jesus' death: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Though the criminal deserved death for his sin, Jesus' *own* death paid the penalty for that sin, enabling Jesus to offer full forgiveness and eternal life.

## Why It Matters

If you're spending time teaching Buzz to preschoolers, chances are you probably haven't committed any horrific crimes like the criminal next to Jesus. But the reality is we're all sinners. "We all fall short of God's glorious standard" (Romans 3:23). Regardless of how "good" or "bad" we think we are, every single human being—from Sunday school teacher to hardened criminal—needs God's forgiveness. Jesus died in our place to pay the penalty we each deserve. And just as he did for the crucified criminal, Jesus offers each of us his free gift of eternal life.



### **God Sightings®**

To fully experience the joy of Easter and the coming celebration of the Resurrection, we must first delve into the darkness of the Cross. Whenever you turn off a light this week, remember the darkness Jesus experienced on the cross. Ask God to help you understand the pain and suffering Jesus endured to forgive sinners—to forgive you. You'll be changed as you take time to truly consider what Jesus went through on your behalf.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will sense the love Jesus has for each of them and will begin to understand the meaning of the forgiveness he offers. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 8

**Jesus Is Alive!** JOHN 20:1-18 *We accept God's forgiveness.*



## What the Bible Says

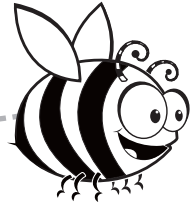
It had been a terrible weekend for Jesus' followers. Their hopes had been crushed, their dreams devastated. Jesus had been arrested, tried, beaten, crucified, and buried. But on Sunday morning, everything changed. Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb and saw that the stone had been rolled away and his body was gone. She told Simon Peter and John, who ran to the tomb and also saw it was empty. Mary stayed there, crying because she thought Jesus' body had been taken. Two angels appeared and spoke with her; then Mary spoke to a man nearby whom she didn't recognize at first. But when he said her name—"Mary!"—she realized it was Jesus! She hurried to tell the other disciples, "I have seen the Lord!"

## What It Means

Jesus died as a willing sacrifice to pay for our sins. So could the story have ended there? Certainly not. Jesus' resurrection was the necessary grand finale. It was the final blow against the curse of sin and death—it was the proof of Jesus' victory! The Apostle Paul emphasized how essential the resurrection is to our faith, arguing that "if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Jesus' resurrection saves us from our sin and gives us the hope of eternal life with him in heaven.

## Why It Matters

Jesus' death paid the price for our sin, and Jesus' resurrection shows us that we, too, can have victory over sin in our lives. Truly accepting God's forgiveness means moving beyond a "woe is me, I'm so weak and sinful" attitude to a reliance on the power of the risen Christ to turn away from sin. Sure, we'll each struggle with sin at times—we're human after all! But as we grow in our faith in Christ and as we rely on his power to defeat sin, we can live differently. Paul put it this way: "Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24-25).



### **God Sightings®**

When you're in the shower or tub this week, consider how Jesus' forgiveness washes you clean. Let your shower time be a time of confession as well, and then feel the freedom of forgiveness as your sins disappear just like water down a drain.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids' hearts will be open to victory over sin through Jesus. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 9

## Jesus Tells About His Resurrection LUKE 24:13-34 *We accept God's forgiveness.*

### What the Bible Says

On Resurrection Sunday, two of Jesus' followers traveled to Emmaus and talked about all the events that had just taken place. Jesus joined them on the road, but God supernaturally prevented them from recognizing him. With great sadness, the two travelers told Jesus about what they'd been discussing, uttering these discouraged words, "We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel." They said they'd heard Jesus' tomb was empty, but they didn't seem to know what that meant. Jesus explained prophecies from the Old Testament to them that foretold his suffering as well as his coming glory. When they arrived in Emmaus, Jesus joined the travelers for a meal. When Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them, the two suddenly were able to recognize who he was. Right at that moment, Jesus disappeared! When they realized who they'd been talking to, the travelers couldn't help but share the news. They hurried back to Jerusalem to see the disciples and celebrate Jesus' resurrection with them.

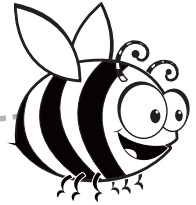
### What It Means

Instead of explaining his death and resurrection in his own words, Jesus relied upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Beginning

with Moses' writings, Jesus gave these two followers a picture of why he came and why he suffered. We don't know which specific Scriptures Jesus explained, but he probably talked with them about passages like Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" and Isaiah 53:5-6, "He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins... The LORD laid on him the sins of us all." But despite his explanations and profound knowledge of the Scriptures, the travelers didn't recognize Jesus until he broke bread. The passage indicates that the two people were good friends of Jesus' disciples. Perhaps they'd heard of the Passover meal with his disciples and remembered how Jesus compared the bread to his own body, given for them (Luke 22:19).

### Why It Matters

Jesus used the Old Testament to teach these people because Jesus' suffering on the cross had always been a part of God's plan of forgiveness and redemption. From the very first sin in the garden to the revelation of God's Law to the system of sacrificing animals to the details about Jesus revealed through the prophets, all of the Old Testament points toward the fulfillment of God's plan in Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' sacrifice was always part of God's story, unfolding throughout time.



### God Sightings®

Bread. You probably eat it (or at least see others eat it) fairly often. We don't often think about it when we eat this ordinary dietary staple, but it can be a great reminder of how Jesus used bread as a symbol of his body.

This week, whenever you eat bread or see others eating it, recognize Jesus as your Savior just as the travelers on the road to Emmaus did. Let the bread remind you that as a follower of Christ, you're part of a story that God has been weaving throughout the earth's entire history.

### Prayer Starter

Pray that your kids, like the men on the road to Emmaus, will develop a deeper understanding of what Jesus' suffering on the cross means for them. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 10

## Bartimaeus Can See MARK 10:46-52 *We ask Jesus for help.*

### What the Bible Says

Jesus, his disciples, and a large crowd walked along a road. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus sat at the side of the road. When he heard Jesus was approaching, he called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” The crowd tried to quiet him; as a beggar, he was a social outsider, and they probably thought him unworthy to bother Jesus. But the man refused to give up and cried out to Jesus even louder. Jesus stopped in his tracks when he heard him. Then he invited Bartimaeus to come to him. Bartimaeus asked Jesus to give him eyesight—and Jesus did, telling Bartimaeus his faith had healed him.

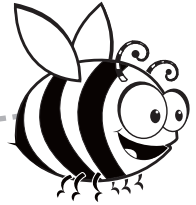
### What It Means

Bartimaeus boldly called Jesus “Son of David,” a title for the Jews’ expected deliverer, the Messiah, drawn from Old Testament promises. He also called him *Rabbouni*. Though this term is often translated into English as “Rabbi” or “My Rabbi,” it’s actually a more reverential term. *Rabbouni* was often reserved as a way to address God in prayer. In his simple call to Jesus for

help, we see that Bartimaeus believed Jesus was the promised Messiah and honored him highly, as he would honor God the Father. Bartimaeus came to Jesus for help out of a deep belief in who Jesus really was. He may have been physically blind, but Bartimaeus was able to see what the others in the crowd couldn’t.

### Why It Matters

Jesus told Bartimaeus “your faith has healed you”; the word for *healed* (*sozo*) also means “saved.” In essence, Jesus not only healed Bartimaeus physically, but he also declared that Bartimaeus received salvation through his profound faith in Jesus. And though Jesus told him to “go” after he was healed, Bartimaeus didn’t. Instead, he instantly became Jesus’ follower and walked with the disciples along the road. Like Bartimaeus, we come to Jesus because we believe in him as the Christ, the Savior of the world! Like Bartimaeus, we can come to Jesus in our desperation and need, asking for help. And like Bartimaeus, we can respond to Jesus by following him.



### God Sightings®

“Son of David, have mercy on me!” This cry of Bartimaeus to Jesus has been spoken by Christians throughout the centuries as part of an ancient prayer called “The Jesus Prayer.” This simple prayer combines Bartimaeus’ words with the prayer of a tax collector in Jesus’ parable in Luke 18:13. Anytime you feel you need help this week, pray the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” As you pray these words, think about your own need for mercy. You may need help with a specific situation the way Bartimaeus did with his blindness—or you may simply want to focus on your general need for God’s help and mercy in your life.

### Prayer Starter

Pray that your kids will have the spiritual sight of blind Bartimaeus, fearlessly believing in who Jesus is and boldly calling out to him for help. Write your prayer here.

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# Week II

## Jesus Heals a Bleeding Woman MARK 5:24-34 *We ask Jesus for help.*

### What the Bible Says

Jesus was surrounded by a large crowd. A woman in the crowd had been bleeding for 12 years and had spent all her money on doctors, but her problem—likely a uterine or menstrual disorder—had continued to worsen. This woman had heard about Jesus and she sought him out in the crowd. She believed that if she could just touch his clothing, she'd be healed. So she reached out and touched him...and immediately she was healed! Jesus stopped to see who'd touched him because he felt his healing power go out to someone. The woman fell at Jesus' feet, telling him what she'd done. Jesus publicly called her "daughter" and spoke compassionately to her about her suffering, telling her that her faith had healed her.

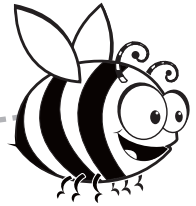
### What It Means

Jewish law considered a woman to be unclean during her monthly menstrual cycle. Any irregular flow of blood also made the woman unclean. A woman in this unclean state couldn't go out in public, couldn't enter a synagogue, and definitely couldn't touch anyone. In fact, if someone touched something an unclean woman touched—let alone the woman herself— that person would also be considered unclean for the rest of the day. So

this poor woman had been considered unclean for 12 years! For 12 years, she was forbidden to go into public. For 12 years, she couldn't go to her synagogue. For 12 years, she couldn't touch another human being. But because this woman believed, she defied the rules and went out into the crowd that day...and she dared to reach out and touch Jesus. And instead of her touch making Jesus unclean, his power made her clean!

### Why It Matters

We can only imagine the humiliation, frustration, and depression that characterized this woman's lonely, desperate life. She carried a heavy burden of social shame—but it wasn't too heavy to hold her back from seeing and touching Jesus that day. Jesus' response to the woman's audacity wasn't to rebuke her for breaking the law. Instead, his response was overwhelmingly loving. He intimately called her "daughter" and promised her peace. Jesus does the same for us. When we come to him in our desperation and brokenness, he doesn't rebuke us or heap shame upon us. Instead, Jesus responds with tender compassion and affection, healing us as only he can.



### **God Sightings®**

Watch for “boo-boos” this week. If you stub your toe, get a paper cut, or get your feelings hurt, let it remind you of how Jesus heals your boo-boos. Picture yourself reaching out to touch the “Boo-Boo Buster” who can heal your pain, and look for ways he brings you peace and comfort.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will develop a faith in Jesus like the woman in this story. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 12

## Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man JOHN 5:1-15 *We ask Jesus for help.*

### What the Bible Says

Jesus went to Jerusalem and came to the pool of Bethesda. Occasionally the water of this pool would be disturbed. People believed that the first person who entered the water after it was disturbed would be miraculously healed, and so many sick people regularly gathered around the pool—the blind, the paralyzed, and people with all sorts of diseases—hoping to be the first in the water and thus healed.

On the day that Jesus came by the pool, he spoke to a man who'd been disabled and sick for 38 years. The man explained to Jesus that he had no hope of being miraculously healed in the pool; because of his illness, he had no chance of being the first one in the water. He needed someone to help him get into the pool. Rather than help him in that way, Jesus told the man, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!" and the man was instantly healed!

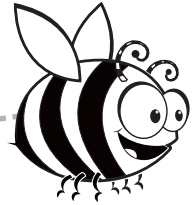
### What It Means

"God helps those who help themselves." It's a phrase many people think comes from Scripture, but it's actually from Ben Franklin. In fact, in this story Jesus chose to help the person who perhaps was *least* able to help himself. Of all the sick and needy

people at the pool that day, Jesus zeroed in on the one whose case was possibly the most hopeless. This man had absolutely no way of helping himself into the pool and so no way of helping himself heal.

### Why It Matters

When we come to Jesus for help, we too recognize our inability to help ourselves. This doesn't mean that when we face a problem, we must pretend we have no skills, ingenuity, or talents—after all, these things are given to us by God and he wants us to use them! But it does mean we realize that ultimately we're totally reliant on God. Our very lives—our very next heartbeat and very next breath—come from God. Though we can certainly do our best to tackle challenges in life, we do so with a constant reliance upon God for strength, guidance, and power rather than a reliance on our own efforts.



### **God Sightings®**

It's so easy to lose perspective on how reliant we are upon God. So take some time to regain the right frame of mind. This week, wherever you go, think about how everything and everyone you see is ultimately dependent upon God, and thank God for his provision.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that as your kids face tough situations in life, they'll learn to rely fully upon Jesus, not their own abilities. Write your prayer here.

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# Week 13

## Jesus Heals a Blind Man JOHN 9:1-41 *We ask Jesus for help.*

### What the Bible Says

One Sabbath day, Jesus encountered a man who'd been blind from birth. Jesus spat on the ground and made mud with his saliva and then spread the mud on the blind man's eyes. Jesus sent the man to wash his eyes at a nearby pool—and when the man returned, he could see! This healing soon began an uproar among the Pharisees, a group of religious leaders already upset with some of Jesus' teachings. When the Pharisees repeatedly questioned him, the man stuck to his story, asserting, "I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!" Though the man didn't know much about Jesus, he contended that Jesus must be from God. This angered the Pharisees, and they threw the man out of the synagogue. Later, Jesus saw the man and asked him if he believed in the Son of Man. When he found out that Jesus was the Son of Man, the man professed his faith in Jesus and worshipped him.

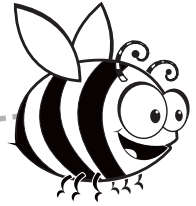
### What It Means

The controversy about Jesus (which eventually led to his crucifixion) had already begun broiling, so when the Pharisees questioned the healed man and his parents about the miracle, the situation was very tense and even dangerous. Rather than

publicly rejoicing at their son's healed eyesight, the man's parents cowered at the Pharisees' power, evading their questions. But despite the danger to himself, the healed man spoke truthfully about the life-changing help he'd received from Jesus. He paid a price for his assertions, but that didn't divert him from later committing his life to Jesus as his Lord and following him as the Messiah.

### Why It Matters

We can only imagine the joy this man felt when he was able to see sunlight, grass, water, and smiling faces for the very first time in his life. So it was only natural that he spoke freely—even to the intimidating Pharisees—about what had happened to him. Like this man, we can speak openly and clearly to others about what Jesus has done in our lives. Though sharing our faith can seem scary, it really can be easy and straightforward: We can simply speak honestly about what Jesus has done for us. And unlike the healed man's parents, who hid their joy and downplayed the story out of fear, our joy and gratefulness can motivate us to share this good news freely with others.



### **God Sightings®**

When the blind man could see again, he had a very literal God Sighting. For the first time in his life, he could see, and one of the first things he saw was Jesus. Although the situation was tense, he didn't hesitate to share that Jesus had healed him. As you see God at work in your life this week, remember the bold man who professed that Jesus had healed him, and ask God who he'd like you to share your God Sighting with.

### **Prayer Starter**

Pray that your kids will speak to others with delight, confidence and freedom about what Jesus has done for them. Write your prayer here.

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