

MARCH

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MY  
Devotions®

Daily Readings for Young Christians



Contributors to the March devotions:

Emily Barz-Belvery, Nicole Dreyer, Phil Lang, Dawn Napier,  
Gail Pawlitz, Christine Ross

Edited by Mark S. Sengele

# MARCH

1

Sunday

But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our potter; we are all the work of Your hand.



Isaiah 64:8

# The Potter's Wheel

Sarah held her breath as her father turned his wrapped gift over and over, trying to guess what was inside. "Just open it, Dad. But please be careful. It's breakable!" Sarah cried out. Dad smiled when he saw a beautiful container filled with pens and pencils.

"This is so unique, Sarah. It's beautiful. Did you make it?" Sarah beamed. She explained how she had used clay and the potter's wheel at school to make his gift.

Have you seen a potter's wheel? It looks like a round table in the center of a turning wheel. The clay sits on the tabletop. The potter places his or her hands on the clay and forms the clay while the wheel turns. The clay can be shaped into a sturdy vase or a pencil holder or many other objects.

You are like clay. God is your potter. He is forming you. Unlike clay, however, people have feelings and might not like the way they are being formed. They might even rebel against God and try to remake themselves!

Remember Moses? God wanted to make him a spokesman to Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. At first, Moses argued with God. "I'm not a very good speaker," Moses said. "I don't want to be what You want me to be." But God, the potter, was patient with Moses. Finally, with God's help, Moses agreed to be what God wanted him to be.

God knows that it is easy for us to rebel against Him. That's why He sent Jesus to forgive us for our sin of rebellion. That's why He gives us His Holy Spirit in Baptism to help form us in His way. Isn't it exciting to know that God is working in you today?

## Journal:

*Watch a video clip of a potter at work. Think of and write about two ways God is forming you.*

## Pray:

*God, my Creator and my potter, thank You for forming me into the person You want me to be. Help me rejoice in Your plan for my life. Forgive me when I rebel and ignore You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

C. R.

## Peeks and Surprises

Have you ever been to Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, Colorado? It is a public park with amazing red rock formations. If you go there, you will see the Balanced Rock, the Kissing Camels, and the Siamese Twins.

While on vacation, Emma wanted to hike the trail to the Siamese Twins. Everyone agreed. It wasn't a long or difficult journey, but it required sure footing and careful balance. There were surprises along the way—like a patch of blooming cactus and hoofprints left by horses.

The biggest surprise happened when the group of five reached the base of the formation. Emma spied it first. She peeked through the opening and saw the glory of Pike's Peak.

Long ago, Jesus took several disciples on a hike up the Mount of Transfiguration. At the top, the disciples had a lot of surprises. They saw Jesus transformed in glory. His face looked different. His clothing was dazzling white. They saw Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah about His upcoming suffering and death. Then, the disciples heard God the Father speaking from a cloud: "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him" (Luke 9:35).

In the Church Year, the season changes from the brightness of Epiphany to the somber mood of Lent. Going through the forty days of Lent is kind of like going on a hike. Week by week, we hear about our sinful condition and walk with hope to Calvary, where Jesus died for the sins of all.

There, Jesus finished His work for our salvation. His life was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. So on Easter morning, when the disciples peeked into the tomb, guess what? It was empty!

### Journal:

*Write about one way you saw God's surprising love today.*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, as I walk through Lent, help me listen to You. Help me hear again that Your surprising and sacrificial love is for me. Help me share that news and love with others. Amen.*

## MARCH

# 2

## Monday

Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. And as the men were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

**Luke 9:32-33**

# MARCH

# 3

## Tuesday

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.



**Luke 2:52**

# Growing in God

Was Jesus ever a toddler? teenager? young man? Sure He was. Our Lord Jesus was a baby, a child, a teenager, a young adult, and a man. He went through growth stages too. He lost His baby teeth. His voice changed. Perhaps He even felt clumsy as His body grew faster than His motor skills.

The Bible doesn't tell us very much about Jesus during the years He was growing up. From Luke 2:41–52, we know that when Jesus was twelve years old, He sat in the temple, listening and talking to the teachers. He enjoyed being in His Father's house.

Jesus can relate to the physical changes you go through. He also understands your spiritual growth. You may have questions about the Bible. You may become more curious to learn about God's Word than when you were a young child.

For Jesus, the temple was a wonderful place to listen, learn, and respond. You will also find that your church is a wonderful place to listen and respond to God and His Word. Through His Word, you will grow in your understanding of who God is and the work of Jesus while He was on earth. Through God's help, your spiritual muscles will be strengthened and grow.

God loves you and wants your mind, body, and heart to be healthy. Through His Word and the living power of Baptism, God is making sure that you grow in wisdom, and He helps your body mature. He helps you relate with God and with other people.

### Journal:

*Where or when do you learn about God? Think of something that God taught you about Himself this week.*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord Jesus, I pray that You would help me see how I am growing in wisdom, how my body is maturing, and how I can be more like You. Thank You for caring about the way I grow up. Amen.*

*C. R.*

## Set in Love

There are people in life who will always love you. Your family loved you from the moment they knew you were coming, just because you're family! There was no choice involved.

There are other things we choose to love just for a time. When I was in sixth grade, I loved cherries. I had cherry earrings and cherry shirts and a cherry purse. But after a year or two I moved on to something else.

There's something special about love when it's a choice *and* it's lasting. The love of a best friend is like that. My best friend and I have been friends for twenty-six years. She didn't have to love me, but out of all the people she knew, she chose me to be her closest friend!

Deuteronomy talks about God's love like that too—but even greater. Heaven and earth and all the creatures in them belong to God, and yet God chose to love *you*. He fixed His heart on you. He went to death and back to prove that His love for you is eternal!

### Journal:

*Who is your closest friend? How does it make you feel to know that person chose you?*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord, thank You for setting Your heart in love on me! Help me to know the depth and height and length of Your love for me and to share that love with others. Amen.*

*E. B.*

## MARCH

# 4

.....  
**Wednesday**  
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Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set His heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

**Deuteronomy  
10:14-15**

# MARCH

## 5

### Thursday

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him, my salvation and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore, I remember You from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

**Psalm 42:4-6**

## I'm Talking to You!

The Psalms are prayers—honest prayers from real people calling out to the God who saves us. My favorite thing about this psalm is that the person praying doesn't only talk to God—he also talks to himself.

He's clearly going through a really hard time in life. Maybe he's been betrayed by a friend. Maybe he's failed at something. Other people are mocking him. He doesn't feel like praising and worshipping God.

But he trusts God anyway. He reminds himself of what God has done for him in the past and trusts that God will do that again. He talks to his own soul. "Soul, why are you upset? Why are you so sad? God is your hope!"

God is our hope as well. Through Him, we have the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

### Journal:

*What words or promises from the Bible do you need to tell your heart today?*

### Pray:

*Dear Savior, some days I feel too hurt or discouraged to praise You. Remind me of Your promises. Remind me of Your salvation. Renew my hope and joy as I wait for You. Amen.*

*E. B.*

## Impossible!

One of the strangest things about this familiar miracle is that Jesus tells the disciples to feed the crowd. I'm sure they were thinking, "Impossible! How could we ever feed all these people? You know that's too hard for us, Jesus!"

But all Jesus asks them to do is to trust Him with what they have. He says, "Bring to me what you have. I'll do the rest."

Five loaves and two fish is nothing. It's not even close to being enough to feed all these people. But the disciples trust. They bring Jesus the little bit that they have, and He makes it enough! Jesus uses an impossible problem to help them learn to trust Him. Their weakness and trust let them see Jesus' strength!

Jesus does the impossible for us too. Through His death and resurrection, our sins are washed away, and we receive the promise of eternal life with Him.

### Journal:

*What hard or impossible problems do you have? How might trusting God with this problem let you see Him work?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, I am so small and my problems often seem so big. Give me faith to trust You to do the rest. Nothing is impossible for You! Amen. E. B.*

## MARCH

# 6

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**Friday**  
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Now when it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to Him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And He said, "Bring them here to Me."

**Matthew  
14:15-18**

# MARCH



## Saturday

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

**Ephesians  
6:10-11**

# Stand Firm

Have you ever played that game where you stand across from someone and put up your hands? You slap the other person's hands and try to make that person step backward. Those who keep their feet still the longest win.

It's can be a hard game—especially if the other person is stronger than you! But what if you stood with your back against the wall? No one could knock you over then!

In life, we face a lot of things that are stronger than us—sickness, sin, heartbreak, temptation, failure, loneliness. Our enemy, Satan, uses all these things to attack and discourage us. How can we make it through?

In his Letter to the Ephesians, Paul tells us the secret: “Be strong in the Lord.” Trusting in God is like standing against the wall. He's got our back so that nothing in life can take us down. No matter what sin or Satan throw at us, we can stand firm in Christ!

## Journal:

*Keep reading in Ephesians (vv. 14–18) about the armor of God. Draw a person wearing all this armor, and remember the things God gives us to protect us.*

## Pray:

*Almighty God, You are great and strong, and nothing can stand against you! Keep me in You, so that no matter what I face in life, I can stand firm in faith. Amen.*

*E. B.*





# MARCH

## 8

### Sunday

You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

**Psalm 56:8-11**

## Keeping Count

Do you collect anything? I've collected various things in my life. For a while, I collected key chains. Then I collected playing cards with special pictures on them. Most recently, I've been collecting postcards from different places I've been.

Do you know what God collects? This psalm says that God counts our tossings and turnings and collects our tears! When we're awake at night worried or scared and unable to sleep, God knows. He even knows exactly how many times we turned back and forth. When we're upset or hurt and cry, God knows. He knows exactly how many tears we've cried.

Why would God want to hold onto that? God knows suffering. Jesus cried. He was hurt. And He's with us whenever we're struggling. But there's an even greater promise. God is for us! Jesus came to defeat suffering for us. And someday in heaven, He will wipe away every tear from our eyes. He will turn our tears into laughter and our sleepless tossing into complete peace and rest.

### Journal:

*What other things does God know about you? How does it feel to know He's always there?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, I know You are for me! I praise Your Word, and I trust in You alone. When I cry or toss and turn, comfort me with Your presence and bring joy with the morning! Amen.*

*E. B.*

# Let the Children Come

Who has told you about Jesus in your life? Parents? Teachers? Sunday School teachers? Pastors? Grandparents, aunts, or uncles? Friends? Praise God for all these opportunities to hear God's Word and know about His love for you!

Not every child has these opportunities. Certainly, some children don't have Christian families and don't go to church when they are growing up. But in some places, it's even illegal for children to go to church! There are countries where Sunday School is banned and children can't even enter the church building.

Maybe these governments know the same thing Jesus knew: the kingdom of heaven belongs to children. You're not too young to understand or believe or follow Jesus! God works at your Baptism and through His Word, and He continues to work in you in powerful ways right now! Praise God for the gift of faith He's given you, and pray for more and more children to know Jesus too.

## Journal:

*Write about one person who has been important in teaching you about Jesus. Then, go tell that person thank you!*

## Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for all the people who have taught me about You. Thank You for giving me faith. Help more and more children to know Your Word and Your love for them. Make a way for all children to be free to know and worship You! Amen. E. B.*

# MARCH

# 9

## Monday

Then children were brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." And He laid His hands on them and went away.

**Matthew  
19:13-15**

**MARCH**

**10**

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**Tuesday**  
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My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.



**Proverbs  
4:20-23**

## What Flows from Your Heart?

Where I live, we can't drink water from the sink. We have to buy bottles of water to drink. We also have to use that bottled water for cooking, brewing coffee, making ice, and so forth. If we used tap water for these things, impurities from the water would end up in our food and drink.

Many of the proverbs talk about our hearts in the same way. Just as we use water to make many things, our hearts are the source of our thoughts, words, and actions. Sin makes our hearts unclean. From those sinful hearts come unkind words, angry thoughts, and hurtful actions.

But Jesus died to wash away our sin and make our hearts His home. When our hearts are made clean by God's Spirit, then out of our hearts come words of praise and love, peaceful thoughts, and kind actions. Keep reading God's Word, and tuck it safely in your heart. Pray for God to guard your heart and keep it full of Him and His Word. Then, out of your heart of faith will come a life that glorifies God!

### Journal:

*Read Psalm 119:11; Psalm 119:105; and 2 Timothy 3:15-17. Write down some things God's Word does for us in addition to protecting our hearts.*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord, put Your Word into my heart. Fill my heart with Your Spirit that gives life. May everything that comes out of my heart, mind, mouth, and life glorify You. Amen.*

*E. B.*

# Jumping for Joy

What makes you jump up and down with excitement? Good grades? A visit from your grandparents? Spring break? Those are all exciting things. Here's what makes me jump up and down: a life bird! Are you wondering what a life bird is? For people who like to watch birds, a life bird is a bird that a person finally sees for the first time. Both my mom and I are bird-watchers. She watches them with her binoculars, and I take photos of them. My mom is happy when she sees a life bird, but I am thrilled when I can take a photograph of one.

One day last spring, my mom and I were bird-watching at Lake Artemesia. We had almost finished walking all the way around the lake, but we hadn't seen many birds. I was really disappointed. Suddenly, we saw a blue-gray bird fly up into a tree. We stood very still and were treated to an amazing sight—a male and a female blue-gray gnatcatcher pair were flying in and out of a tree, building a nest! It was so exciting! Not only did I see a bird that I had never seen before, but I also took great photos of them.

When I look at the photos that I've taken, I'm amazed at how different birds are from one another. Some birds are very small, such as the hummingbird; others are large raptors, such as the bald eagle. Male cardinals and scarlet tanagers are bright red; bluebirds and male buntings are bright blue; goldfinches and some warblers are bright yellow. But there is one thing they all have in common: each one was created and loved by our heavenly Father. And yet, as much as God cares for the birds, He loves you even more. Knowing how much God loves me really makes me want to jump for joy. How about you?

## Journal:

*Write a prayer thanking God for things that make you jump for joy.*

## Pray:

*Pray the prayer you wrote.*

*N. D.*

# MARCH

# 11

.....  
**Wednesday**  
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Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?



# MARCH

# 12

## Thursday

And when He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.” And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.



**Luke 22:40-43**

# Blue Hours

One morning, when I was a little girl, I woke up very early, before sunrise, and I couldn’t believe what I saw: everything in my bedroom seemed to have turned blue! It was an amazing experience, and I never forgot it. It wasn’t until a few years ago that I learned that photographers call this time of day the “blue hour,” which happens twice a day. During this time—just before sunrise and just after sunset—the light outside becomes almost totally blue! During those two times each day, the sun is just below the horizon and that makes the indirect sunlight appear to be a different shade of blue than anything we can see during the day or at night. Isn’t that cool?

When I think about the blue hour, it makes me think about Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. He and His disciples had just finished eating the Passover meal together. They sang a hymn and walked to the garden. They would have eaten after sunset, so by the time Jesus went to the garden, it was long after twilight. Even so, it was still a blue hour for Jesus. Imagine Jesus on His knees—His disciples asleep—praying, “Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me.” How blue Jesus must have been feeling! In fact, Luke tells us that Jesus was in so much agony that His sweat became like great drops of blood! Jesus loves us so much that He was willing to die for us, and so

He also prayed, “Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.” Jesus’ blue hour turned black as night as He was arrested, falsely convicted, and crucified. But Jesus’ dark hours became His glorious day as He conquered death and rose again! Praise God for Jesus, the light of the world!

### Journal:

*What is your favorite time of the day? How does God bless you then?*

### Pray:

*Thank You, God, that You are always with us during our dark hours. Thank You for sending Jesus to be our one true light, life, and salvation. Amen. N. D.*

# Sharing the Comfort

Sal and his classmates were excited because Sal's grandfather was bringing Kezia to visit their class. Sal's grandpa, Mr. Ric, is a handler for the Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dogs, and Kezia is a comfort dog. Mr. Ric told the class that today was a special day for all K-9 dogs because the US Army started training dogs to serve in the military on March 13, 1942. Those dogs were part of the War Dog Program. Mr. Ric explained that over the last seventy-eight years, more programs have been developed to train dogs to help people, not just in the military, but also in many different ways. Guide dogs help the blind, bomb- or drug-sniffing dogs assist the police, service dogs aid the disabled, and since 2008, LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs minister to people in traumatic circumstances.

As Sal's classmates took turns petting Kezia, Mr. Ric shared with them the mission of comfort dogs: "They are a ministry of the church that serves as a bridge for compassionate ministry." He explained that the dogs are "trained to interact with people of all ages and circumstances who are suffering or are in need."

"But, Grandpa," said Sal, "we aren't suffering, except for homework!" Everyone laughed, but then Mr. Ric said that the comfort dogs also like to listen to students read to them. "That's cool!" "I want to read to Kezia!" "Can we all get a turn?" the class said. Soon, everyone in the class was taking turns reading to Kezia. It was a great day!

Later that evening, Sal was having dinner with his grandparents. "Grandpa, I think it's amazing that God uses dogs to bring comfort and love to people." Grandpa agreed. "You're right, Sal, but it's not really the dogs; it's the people with the dogs who are really sharing God's love with others. That's what Jesus meant when He said, 'Whatever you do for the least of these, you do it also to Me.' And that is amazing!"

## Journal:

*How can you share the comfort and love of Jesus with someone you know?*

## Pray:

*Thank You, Jesus, for the ministry of comfort dogs, their handlers, and ministry partners. Bless everyone who meets a comfort dog with Your love. Amen.*

*N. D.*

# MARCH

# 13

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**Friday**  
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Comfort, comfort My  
people, says your God.

**Isaiah 40:1**

# MARCH

# 14

.....  
**Saturday**  
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The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.



**Psalm 119:72**

# Better than Gold!

Do you have a favorite type of music? I like Christian, classical, beach music, and a style you could call oldies (which means songs from before you were born!). And in each of those styles, I have favorite songs that I can listen to over and over again. When a song becomes so popular that it sells more than 500,000 copies, it becomes a Gold Record. Sixty-two years ago today, the Recording Industry Association of America awarded the very first Gold Record to a singer named Perry Como. (Ask your grandparents!) Mr. Como recorded a song called “Catch a Falling Star” that was a megahit. It even sold more records than a song by Elvis Presley, who was on his way to becoming a superstar.

But did you know that in the music world, there is something even better than gold? When a record sells more than one million copies, it becomes a Platinum Record; if it sells two million copies, it’s a Multi-Platinum Record. Wow!

When King David was writing the Psalms, he said that the Law of the Lord was more precious to him than thousands of pieces of silver or gold! And when Peter was writing about Jesus’ sacrifice, he said that the blood of Jesus was also more precious than silver or gold. That’s really precious! Of course, David and Peter didn’t know about platinum. If they had, I’m sure they would have written that both the Law of the Lord and the blood of Jesus are more precious than silver, gold, or platinum! But what they did know was that the Law and the Gospel are the most precious things that we have, and the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus are priceless!

## Journal:

*Read 1 Peter 1:18–19. How was Jesus’ precious blood a ransom?*

## Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for paying the ransom for my sins with Your precious blood. I love You, Lord! Amen.*

*N. D.*



## The Ides of March

Has anyone said to you today, “Beware the Ides of March!”? Do you know what that means? Before Jesus was born, the Roman Empire was led by a man named Julius Caesar. He was a brilliant military leader who expanded the empire far and wide. But over time, the Roman Senate was worried that Julius would do away with the Senate and make himself king. That’s when a group of men decided to assassinate him. In William Shakespeare’s play, *Julius Caesar*, Caesar was warned to “beware the Ides of March”—which is March 15 on the Roman calendar. But Caesar just laughed.

Unfortunately for the character of Caesar, the warning was accurate. He was attacked and killed in the Roman Senate on March 15, 44 BC. However, the plan to prevent the rising of a king backfired. Eventually, Julius’s heir, Caesar Augustus, became emperor. Yes, *that* Caesar Augustus: the same emperor who declared that “all the world should be registered,” which sent Joseph and Mary on their journey to Bethlehem! And while they were there, Mary gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior and King of the whole world!

Throughout the history of the world, men and women have risen to power as kings, queens, emperors, pharaohs, presidents, dictators, and rulers. Many have been good leaders; many have not. But they all have one thing in common: their leadership ended and, eventually, so did their lives. When Caesar Augustus, who was considered a “god,” died, he did not know that the almighty God had used this census to locate the birthplace of the King of kings and Lord of lords, who existed with the Father and the Spirit before the world began, whose rule will never end.

### Journal:

*Jesus wore a crown of thorns when He was crucified. What do you think His heavenly crown will look like?*

### Pray:

*King of kings, rule in my heart and guide my steps to walk in Your ways.  
Amen.*

## MARCH

# 15

## Sunday

He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

**Ephesians  
1:20-21**

N. D.

**MARCH**

**16**

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**Monday**  
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For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well.



**Psalm  
139:13-14**

## **Fearfully and Wonderfully Made**

Today is a special day for my family because it's my dad's eighty-ninth birthday. He was born on March 16, 1931, before there were televisions, computers, or cell phones.

Thinking about birthdays made me wonder how many people are born every day in the world. So I did some research and found out that there are 360,000 babies born every day—that's 15,000 each hour, 250 every minute! Isn't that incredible? I wonder how many of those babies will grow up to make discoveries that you will be telling your grandchildren about someday!

When I think about those 360,000 babies born every day, I know that God is with each and every one of them, just as He was with my dad when he was born, and just as He was with you when you were born. How do I know that? Because God says so: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5). Jesus

said, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30).

Isn't it wonderful to know that God has created each and every one of us? And, not only did He create us, but He also knows everything about us in our past, our present, and our future! He knows what you are going to be when you grow up. He knows if you will make a new discovery or create a new invention. He knows if you will marry and who your husband or wife will be. He knows how many children you will have! Wow! So today, as I thank God for my dad, I will also thank God for all of you, and I will praise Him for all that He has in store for you!

### **Journal:**

*What do you want to be when you grow up?*

### **Pray:**

*I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Amen.*

*N. D.*

# The Feast of St. Patrick

## MARCH

# 17

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**Tuesday**  
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Are you wearing green today? Is your classroom decorated with leprechauns and shamrocks? Many people wear green on March 17 because it's St. Patrick's Day. But today is not about fantasies like leprechauns or gold at the end of a rainbow. Just who was St. Patrick anyway?

Patrick was born in the late fourth century in Roman Britain, and he grew up on his family's country estate until he was sixteen. Raiders from Ireland kidnapped Patrick and sold him as a slave. Patrick was made to be a shepherd on the green hills of Ireland until he escaped. On the way home, he felt God calling him to return to Ireland and preach the Gospel. So Patrick studied for the priesthood and was eventually sent to Ireland. He said, "For His name, I want to spend myself in that country." That's exactly what he did; the Holy Spirit worked through him to convert many people to Christianity.

And the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased."



**Luke 3:22**

When he returned there, Patrick needed a way to teach the people about the Holy Trinity. Growing on the hills were green shamrocks, a plant similar to clover, with three leaves. Tradition tells us that Patrick realized the shamrock was one way to explain the Trinity—three-in-one and one-in-three. The name of the Trinity was so important to Patrick that he wrote a hymn calling on it for protection ("St. Patrick's Breastplate"). "I Bind unto Myself Today" in *Lutheran Service Book* (604) is a modern translation of Patrick's hymn.

So if you are wearing green today, and even if you aren't, think about how God used a green three-leaf plant and a former slave to bring His message of salvation to Ireland. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

### Journal:

*Draw a picture of a shamrock. Label one leaf "Father," one leaf "Son," and one leaf "Holy Spirit"; then color it green.*

### Pray:

*"I bind unto myself today The strong name of the Trinity." Amen. (LSB 604)*

*N. D.*

# MARCH

# 18

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

He went throughout all Galilee . . . healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So His fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought Him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and He healed them.

**Matthew**  
**4:23-24**

# No Hair!

Imagine you had no hair—it all fell out. That’s what happened to Virginia’s grandmother.

Virginia asked her grandmother, “Why are you wearing a wig?”

Oma explained, “I lost all of my hair.”

“Why did you lose your hair?”

“I have cancer, Virginia. I know you remember when the doctors did surgery to remove the tumor. Now I get treatments called chemo. The chemicals are supposed to kill the bad cells in my body. One side effect of that treatment is the loss of my hair.”

“Oh, that’s awful!”

“It does sound awful, but it’s really not so bad,” Oma continued. “My hair will grow back. I’m thankful God is using the doctors and the chemotherapy to heal my body. God is giving me more years to be your Oma, to love you and care for you.”

“I’m thankful too!” smiled Virginia.

“Virginia, you know someday, I will die. However, that’s okay. God has promised me a home in heaven. He sent Jesus to die on the cross to pay the price of sin. I have faith in Jesus as my Savior. He will take care of me now and forever. You believe that too, right?”

“Oh yes, Oma. I believe God has healed me through Jesus too. And I know that someday He will take me to heaven.”

After a quiet moment, Virginia spoke. “Oma, can I tell my friends why you are wearing a wig?”

Oma hugged Virginia. “Yes, of course you may. And tell them about Jesus too. Tell them how He wants to heal them—to wash away their sins so they can also go to heaven.”

## Journal:

*Write about a time you were sick. Thank God for His care.*

## Pray:

*Dear God, thank You for healing me from all my sin. Amen.*

*P. L.*

## Saved and Sent

When I was young, the United States sent the first astronauts on missions to the moon. The original NASA moon program was called Project Apollo.

Astronauts train hard. They need to know what to do in space, so they practice over and over with simulators. After months of training, the crew on the ground and the crew who ride into space are ready for the launch.

Those early Apollo launches were exciting to watch, but they were also scary and filled with danger. Families and classes would gather around a TV to see the astronauts wave and climb into the spacecraft, then listen to the countdown before liftoff! Viewers held their breath until the rocket finally cleared the launch pad and took the astronauts out of sight.

Over the years, there have been other exciting and dangerous missions. The most important one happened many years ago when God sent Jesus to earth to be our Savior. To accomplish His mission, Jesus had to live perfectly and then die for our sins. Through His life and death, He won the forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all who believe in Him. We are so thankful He did that for us. It was a mission we could not have accomplished.

We who believe in Jesus are sent too. As baptized children of God, we study God's Word to get ready. We daily repent of our sins and launch into our new life in Jesus. Today's journey will not take us to the moon, but it will take us somewhere on a mission, somewhere to share God's love and story.

### Journal:

*Where are you going today? Identify those places in your journal and think about the people you will meet.*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord, help me daily to live the new life You have created in me through the waters of Baptism. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.* P. L.

## MARCH

# 19

## Thursday

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

**Romans 6:3-4**

# MARCH

# 20

.....  
**Friday**  
.....

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.



**John 15:1-2**

# Grapevines

“Peter, would you help me with the grapevines?”

“Why, Dad? They look fine to me.”

“You’re right. They look fine now. But if I don’t prune the branches now, that might change. The plants won’t be as healthy or have many big grapes at harvest time. Pruning gets the plant ready for the next growing season.”

“You mean pruning the plant back now actually helps the grapes later?” asked Peter.

“Yes, that’s exactly what I mean. We cut them now while they’re dormant. Then they’re ready to begin new growth. So, let’s go. Are you ready?”

Peter nodded. Then he and his dad went to work.

Did you know that Jesus talks about cutting grapevine branches in the Bible? Jesus told His disciples that all who believe in Him are like branches of a grapevine that are attached, or grafted, onto Him. We need to be cut back once in a while so we can grow healthy in God and

bear fruit by serving others who need our help.

Have you felt God’s kind of pruning? Have you had to move from one home to another? Have you been disappointed because you didn’t achieve some goal you set? Have you been caught doing wrong?

Pruning can hurt. But it leads to confession and change. God wants us to confess our sins, to get rid of the bad things we think or say or do. He wants us to stay away from things that would destroy our faith in Jesus. He wants us to trust in Jesus and Jesus only. He wants us to find strength in His Word and Sacraments.

Even though pruning hurts, it allows good things to grow. For when we are connected to Jesus, we can bear much fruit.

## Journal:

*Write about a time of pruning in your life that made you feel closer to Jesus.*

## Pray:

*Dear God, please prune away the things in me that prevent me from trusting only in Jesus, the vine. Amen.*

*P. L.*



# MARCH

# 22

.....  
**Sunday**  
.....

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.



**John 3:16**

## Two Choices, One Gift

“It’s your turn, Molly. Choose which present you want.”

Molly was at her friend’s birthday party. Her friend had a gift for each of her guests. Molly was the second-to-last to choose her gift. Which one did she want? One gift was wrapped in plain paper. The other gift was wrapped in shiny red paper with a white bow on top.

Molly chose the box with the expensive-looking wrapping paper. Her friend Jessie got the one wrapped in plain paper. As they both opened their presents, they were surprised to see that they had the very same thing—a red heart-shaped pillow.

When Molly got home, she told her mom about the two presents.

Mom said, “You can learn a lesson from the two presents.”

“What’s that, Mom?” Molly asked.

“People are like those two presents,” Mom said. “Some dress in plain clothes and others in expensive clothes.”

“I think I know what you’re going to say, Mom. No matter what clothing a person wears, she has a heart.”

“That’s right,” Mom said. “And God knows the condition of that heart. He knows we are sinners and cannot save ourselves. But God’s heart is so big that He sent Jesus, His own Son, to pay for sin! Jesus died to save every heart.”

God sent Jesus, who died to give the gifts of forgiveness and salvation to all who have faith in His name. What a generous God!

### Journal:

*God loves the whole world! Write down as many countries as you can fit in your journal. Pray for the people of those countries.*

### Pray:

*Dear God, help me remember that the gift of Your love and salvation is for each person. Help me to love them too. Amen.*

*P. L.*



## Who Will Win?

Sunday School was over. Mr. B. was packing up. He overheard Aiden and Jeremy in a serious discussion.

“No, really,” boasted Aiden, “I’m the best! Just look at how many home runs I’ve hit.”

“I doubt you’re better than me,” said Jeremy with a huff. “I have more total hits. That makes me the best.”

“Whoa, boys! What’s going on?” asked Mr. B.

“We’re talking about who’s a better baseball player and whose team is going to win the league this season!”

“How can you tell? The season just began,” said Mr. B. “There are still lots of games to play and many chances to improve your skills. But by the end of the season, we will all know. The team with the best record will win the championship. The player with the most votes will get the most valuable player award. Yes, time will tell.”

Now the boys realized their argument was silly, and they felt foolish. “You’re right,” they agreed. “At the end of the season, we’ll know the truth.”

In this life, a more serious competition than baseball is going on. The devil is competing with God for you and others. What will happen at the end of this world’s season? Do you know? Will the devil win his battle with God or will God win?

You don’t have to wait until the end of time to know. The Bible tells us the truth. On the Last Day, Jesus will return in glory with all His angels. At that time, He will take believers to heaven.

He can do that because His sacrifice on the cross scored the victory we needed over our enemies—sin, death, and the devil. And through the gift of faith, which the Holy Spirit gives us, that eternal victory becomes ours. Through faith, Jesus makes us winners too.

### Journal:

*Draw a picture of what the Bible reading tells you.*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for giving me Your victory and promising to take me home with You to heaven. Amen.*

## MARCH

# 23

## Monday

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

**Matthew 25:31**

**MARCH**

**24**

**Tuesday**

He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."



**Luke 10:27**

## Who's the Boss?

"Good morning. Welcome to the children's sermon," smiled Pastor. "Today, I have some questions for you about bosses. Who's the boss in your classroom? Who's the boss of your sports team? Who's the boss at your house?"

"Now, for the most important question. Who is the boss of the world?" The children began to offer their answers.

Pastor continued, "Many people think they are the boss of the world. Maybe you are a little bit like that. You want to have things done your way."

"Satan was like that too. Since the beginning, he thought that he should be the boss of the world. Now, he works hard to get people like us to follow his temptations. He wants to lead us away from God and trick us into thinking that we are in charge of our own lives."

"But that is a lie. God is in charge. He is the boss of the world. He created the world and keeps it running the way He wants."

"God, our heavenly Father, sent His Son, Jesus, to do what we can't do on our own. Jesus obeyed His Father perfectly. Then, He suffered our punishment on the cross so we won't have to be punished for our disobedience. Jesus rose from the grave on Easter to show His power over death and the devil. Now, Jesus promises He will raise us from death and take us to heaven. We don't have to obey God or be good enough to get to heaven. Jesus did it all for us."

"However, with the Holy Spirit at work in us now, we want to obey God's Word as a way to serve others in God's kingdom."

"So let's praise Jesus as we listen to our God, our boss, and serve others."

### Journal:

*Who are the bosses in your life? Parents, teachers, coaches, and hopefully, Jesus.*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, help me listen to Your Word. Amen.*

*P. L.*

## Wrestling with God

Once, twin brothers named Jacob and Esau had a big fight. Because of it, they separated for many years. Later, Jacob knew he was going to meet his brother again, but he was frightened. Carefully, Jacob prepared to meet Esau. Surprisingly, God prepared Jacob.

The night before meeting Esau, Jacob prayed. He also wrestled with God in a very real way. When Jacob realized this, he held on tightly, pleading with God for a blessing.

God in His grace allowed Jacob to hang on. Then, God touched Jacob's hip so that it was slightly dislocated. Even with an injured hip, Jacob wrestled until daylight. As the night ended, so did the darkness of Jacob's problems. He received God's blessing. Later, his meeting with his brother was filled with forgiveness and joy.

Wrestling requires strength and energy. Sometimes, praying is like wrestling. It can require strength and energy, especially if we are struggling with a tough problem or are fearful of something. When we pray, God does not injure us, as happened to Jacob. However, if we don't see how God is blessing us, our spirits may feel bruised with discouragement.

God came to us in human form when Jesus was born. He lived and died to take away our sins. Like Jacob, we hang on. We do not cling to an actual person, but through faith, we cling to the promises God makes in His Word. We can trust He will bless us and give us what we need when we need it.

### Journal:

*Write down what you pray about. Keep track of how God answers your prayers.*

### Pray:

*Heavenly Father, when I pray, help me hold on to Your promises and recognize Your presence in my life. Amen.*

## MARCH

# 25

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

Then He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."

**Genesis 32:28**

# MARCH

# 26

## Thursday

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation.



**Isaiah 12:2**

# God's Story

Robert Fulghum wrote a book called *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. The book lists simple things we teach young children about being responsible and kind. The author believes these rules are more important than many other things we learn.

The Bible, God's book, is filled with words of wisdom, advice, history, and praise. Most important, it tells the amazing story of our salvation through Jesus. Here is that story in God's own words:

### Part 1—Our Sin

*And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)*

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:16–17)*

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)*

### Part 2—God's Promise

*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. . . . I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31, 34)*

### Part 3—God's Gift

*God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

### Part 4—God's Grace

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)*

## Journal:

*Draw a story map or sketches to illustrate God's story.*

## Pray:

*I praise You, God, for making me part of Your story through Jesus! In His name I pray. Amen.*

*D. N.*

## He Is God

Jada had many troubles. After a long illness, she could not go to work. She had medical bills to pay and little money. Then, a large branch fell from a tree onto her car.

Jada's friends prayed that God would give Jada strength to face her problems. They asked Him to provide what she needed to pay her bills and repair her car.

"Thank you for your prayers," Jada told her friends. "I don't understand why I have to go through these things. I look forward to someday understanding the reason for my problems."

Jada's friend Danica spoke softly, "You may never understand why you suffered these things, Jada. God doesn't always give us reasons. We know God is good and His plans are good. You can trust Him even if the reasons for problems are mysterious."

One of the hardest things for us to understand is why bad things happen. We know that when sin came into the world, so did all the bad things sin causes, including death. Yet it seems unfair when sickness, sadness, and losses occur. Our human minds want to understand why we suffer or have troubles.

But there is Good News! God, in His great love, saw our sin and suffering. The God who put the stars in the sky and made the whole world cares about what we are facing. He sent His own Son to die on the cross to bring us forgiveness and hope. If God cared enough to solve our biggest problem, we can trust Him with everything else. He is God!

### Journal:

*Jesus once said, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). What does this mean to you?*

### Pray:

*I trust in You, Lord Jesus. Give me peace and patience in times of trouble. I pray in Your name. Amen.*

## MARCH

# 27

.....  
**Friday**  
.....

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

**Romans 8:31-32**

# MARCH

# 28

.....  
**Saturday**  
.....

God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.

**1 Corinthians  
1:27-28**

Jesus wants us to realize that all people are equal in God's eyes, equally lost in sin and equally loved by our heavenly Father!

No matter how smart or strong we are, we cannot save ourselves or earn God's favor. We are great because our God is great. God's glory was shown when Jesus died for our sins and rose again so that all might have eternal life. Followers of Christ shine with greatness every day, not because of what we accomplish but because of what Jesus accomplished for us.

## Journal:

*What talents or gifts has God given you? How can you use these things to serve Him every day?*

## Pray:

*Great God, help me serve others in Your name and show them Your greatness every day. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*D. N.*

# Everyday Greatness

Does your school give awards? Many schools give awards to celebrate things that students have achieved.

One school principal gives an award for something he calls "everyday greatness." For this award, he chooses students who are not outstanding in any one way.

Does this seem strange? Most awards go to students who have the best grades or who excel in the arts or sports or who have perfect attendance. However, this principal believes students who go to class, do their homework, and are respectful of others set an example of greatness every day.

God also measures greatness differently than the world expects. The Son of God was not born in comfort to a rich family; He was laid in a manger. His parents were not rich. Jesus did not live among wise or powerful people. He chose fishermen and an unpopular tax collector to be His disciples. Jesus taught that little children, a poor widow, and a sinful woman were examples of greatness in God's kingdom.

## Choices

A farmer kept a watchdog on his farm. Each night, the dog barked and barked. Most nights, the loud, endless baying of the dog kept the farmer awake. Finally, he sold the dog. The first night the dog was gone, the farmer slept soundly. The next morning, he discovered that someone had broken into his barn, stolen some of his tools, and damaged some of his expensive farm equipment.

The farmer realized that even though the dog had been a bother, he had protected him. The farmer had silenced the thing that was actually keeping away thieves.

Each day, we make many choices. Some choices can have serious effects, like the farmer selling his watchdog. Often, we make choices to ignore or shut out warnings that could protect us from falling into sin. You may think the instruction of parents and teachers is like noise you want to ignore. You may not think it is important to read and study God's Word. You may avoid the advice of a caring friend. Sometimes, even your conscience can annoy you when you know something you are doing is wrong. Ignoring God's Law will always lead to unhappiness and problems.

When God's wonderful creation was still new, Adam and Eve ignored an important warning. Their disobedience brought sin and death into the world. Our loving and gracious God sent Jesus to live a perfect life and shed His blood for us. His death and resurrection brought forgiveness and eternal life. How wonderful that when we repent of our sins, God faithfully forgives us for Jesus' sake.

### Journal:

*Think of a time you made a wrong choice that caused you to sin. Ask God to forgive you for Jesus' sake.*

### Pray:

*Thank You, Father, for forgiving my sins. Help me make choices according to Your will. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

## MARCH

# 29

.....  
**Sunday**  
.....

And now, O sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep my ways.



**Proverbs 8:32**

# MARCH

# 30

Monday

Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents over disaster.



**Joel 2:13**

# Come to Jesus

Mr. Morales invited his Sunday School class to his farm. The children enjoyed looking at the animals. Yago saw chickens in the backyard, pecking at corn kernels. One hen was standing by itself. It looked like an ordinary chicken with fluffy brown feathers and a red beak. However, Yago noticed something very strange.

“Mr. Morales!” He called. “Why does the hen have so many legs?”

The teacher looked at the bird. Then he laughed. “Oh, Yago. The hen only has two legs. The rest of the legs belong to her chicks. They are hiding under her wings, so all you see are their legs.

“When a mother hen senses danger,” Mr. Morales said, “she gathers her chicks under her wings to protect them.”

A mother hen is a beautiful illustration of how our Savior loves and cares for us. The Bible tells us that once Jesus looked at the city of Jerusalem and began to weep. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . . . How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (Matthew 23:37).

Like a mother hen, Jesus calls His children to come to Him for forgiveness and shelter from sin. Yet many people resist Him. They may not understand the Gospel message of the forgiveness He offers. Perhaps they don’t believe they need Jesus in their lives. Some don’t want to obey God’s Law. Our loving Savior is sad when His children don’t receive His love and forgiveness.

Yet Jesus does not stop calling His children because they reject Him. The Bible teaches that He wants all people to be saved and protected from the storms and dangers of sin.

## Journal:

*Read today’s Bible passage again. How does God respond when His people return to Him? Why is He gracious and merciful?*

## Pray:

*Dear Lord, “Let me dwell in Your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of Your wings!” (Psalm 61:4). Amen.*

*D. N.*



## From Death to Life

Mr. and Mrs. Buchman are an older couple at my church. Mr. Buchman had a stroke, and walking is difficult for him. He moves slowly with a cane. He needs help with even simple things. Mrs. Buchman is in better health. She cares for her husband. He leans on her when he walks, and she does for him many of the things he cannot do for himself.

When I watch this couple, I think about two things. First, I am sad as I realize that nothing in life lasts. Mr. Buchman was once an officer in the United States Army. He was a strong leader of soldiers. Now, he needs help with almost everything.

Because of sin in the world, we will all die. For those who live to be old, bodies and minds often become frail and weak.

The second thing I think about is God's faithfulness. That fills me with joy. Mrs. Buchman is a wonderful example of faithfulness as she patiently helps her husband. Surely, she must tire of doing so much for him. Yet she never leaves his side. She smiles as she cares for him.

Our heavenly Father is even more patient and faithful with us. He did not leave us in our sin. He gave us eternal life when He sent His Son to the cross. He never stops loving and forgiving us, even when we sin and disappoint Him. He never leaves us, even if we forget He is by our side. Someday, we will live with Him in heaven, where there will be no more suffering and tears.

During this season of Lent, we remember the sad and deadly price of our sins. We also rejoice in the forgiveness and eternal life given by Jesus, who paid that price for us.

### Journal:

*Memorize this verse: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). How are both sin and eternal life part of your life?*

### Pray:

*Faithful God, thank You for eternal life! Amen.*

## MARCH

# 31

.....  
**Tuesday**  
.....

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations.

**Deuteronomy 7:9**

D. N

# March

**Bible puzzles, games, and activities**

**Solutions on page 40**





## In a Bind (or a Fish)

However you look at it, Jonah is in trouble. He tried to flee from the Lord's presence (Jonah 1:3) and instead ended up in the belly of a big fish. What to do now? Jonah did the only thing he could, and that was to pray. Before you read Jonah's prayer in chapter 2, take a couple of minutes to compose your own prayer. If you were Jonah in the belly of a fish, what would you say to God?

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What was the purpose of Jonah's prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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Even though Jonah turned away from God, God did not forget Jonah. Jonah recognized God's will in his life. In this thanksgiving prayer, Jonah acknowledges that God rescued him from the sea and possibly death. Like Jonah, we may try to do our own thing and go against God's will. But like Jonah, through Christ's death and resurrection, God welcomes us back with open arms.



## Trusting Jesus in the Bible

The Bible is full of examples of people who could have let worry take over their lives. Often their lives were in danger, but still they trusted in God to guide them and help them. They are great examples for us today. Match the names with their situations as described below.

### Biblical People Who Trusted in God

ABEDNEGO

ABRAHAM

DANIEL

DAVID

ESTHER

JAIRUS

JOSEPH

JOSHUA

MARY

MATTHEW

MESHACH

MOSES

NOAH

PAUL

SAMUEL

SHADRACH

\_\_\_\_\_ listened to the angel who told her she would be the mother of Jesus.

\_\_\_\_\_ led the Israelites into the Promised Land.

\_\_\_\_\_ listened to God's calling at the burning bush.

\_\_\_\_\_ anointed Saul and David to be kings of Israel.

\_\_\_\_\_ built an ark to save his family and animals from the flood.

\_\_\_\_\_ almost sacrificed his son because God told him to.

\_\_\_\_\_ took the baby Jesus and his mother to Egypt to be safe from King Herod.

\_\_\_\_\_ would pray only to the true God, even if it meant ending up in the lions' den.

\_\_\_\_\_ was rescued by God from the jail in Philippi.

\_\_\_\_\_ was a queen who saved the Jewish people from being killed, by speaking to the king, even though her life might be in danger.

\_\_\_\_\_ fought against a giant in the name of the Lord.

\_\_\_\_\_ would not bow down to worship the statue made by the king.

\_\_\_\_\_ believed that Jesus could heal his daughter.

\_\_\_\_\_ left his tax collector job to follow Jesus.

# My Coloring Page



# Answer Key

## Puzzle 1 Answer

### Trusting Jesus in the Bible

The Bible is full of examples of people who could have let worry take over their lives. Often their lives were in danger, but still they trusted in God to guide them and help them. They are great examples for us today. Match the names with their situations as described below.

Biblical People Who Trusted in God		
ABEDNEGO	JAIRUS	MOSES
ABRAHAM	JOSEPH	NOAH
DANIEL	JOSHUA	PAUL
DAVID	MARY	SAMUEL
ESTHER	MATTHEW	SHADRACH
	MESHACH	

**MARY** \_\_\_\_\_ listened to the angel who told her she would be the mother of Jesus.

**JOSHUA** \_\_\_\_\_ led the Israelites into the Promised Land.

**MOSES** \_\_\_\_\_ listened to God's calling at the burning bush.

**SAMUEL** \_\_\_\_\_ anointed Saul and David to be kings of Israel.

**NOAH** \_\_\_\_\_ built an ark to save his family and animals from the flood.

**ABRAHAM** \_\_\_\_\_ almost sacrificed his son because God told him to.

**JOSEPH** \_\_\_\_\_ took the baby Jesus and his mother to Egypt to be safe from King Herod.

**DANIEL** \_\_\_\_\_ would pray only to the true God, even if it meant ending up in the lions' den.

**PAUL** \_\_\_\_\_ was rescued by God from the jail in Philippi.

**ESTHER** \_\_\_\_\_ was a queen who saved the Jewish people from being killed, by speaking to the king, even though her life might be in danger.

**DAVID** \_\_\_\_\_ fought against a giant in the name of the Lord.

**SHADRACH** \_\_\_\_\_ **MESHACH** \_\_\_\_\_ **ABEDNEGO** \_\_\_\_\_ would not bow down to worship the statue made by the king.

**JAIRUS** \_\_\_\_\_ believed that Jesus could heal his daughter.

**MATTHEW** \_\_\_\_\_ left his tax collector job to follow Jesus.



APRIL

March – May 2020  
Vol 62 – Issue No. 3

MY  
Devotions®

Daily Readings for Young Christians



Contributors to the April devotions:

Rebekah Curtis, Ed Grube, Lisa Hahn,  
Jackie Loontjer, Kari Vo

Edited by Mark S. Sengele

# APRIL

# 1

## Wednesday

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**1 Corinthians  
1:22-25**

# The Foolishness of God

How foolish have you been today? Did you tie someone's shoelaces together? Did you put salt in the sugar bowl? Did you put a sign on someone's back that said "Kick me"?

On April 1, practical jokes and hoaxes can be fun to do and even funny for the person being fooled. But on most days, it's not funny. In fact, it's embarrassing.

Foolishness can also be sinful. Destroying property is wrong. It ruins things that belong to others. Sending text messages or posting lies on a computer about another person is wrong. The victim is hurt and humiliated. When caught, the cruel people say, "It was only a joke." But that's not true.

Can a wise teaching be foolish to some people? The Bible says, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (v. 25). God's foolish truth is this: Jesus Christ died for sinners. If someone is looking to be saved by his or her good deeds, the idea of salvation only through Jesus' deeds is foolish. Is someone expecting Jesus to do miracles before he or she believes in Him? Well, that's foolishness too.

Nothing we do saves us from sin, death, and the devil. God does it all. He saves us. He sent His only Son to take the punishment we deserve. Jesus took our sins to the cross. There, He paid for them.

No joke. Jesus is the wisdom and power of God. No kidding. God's Word gives us Jesus. There is no other way. Jesus gives us salvation.

### Journal:

*Draw a picture to show your thanks for Jesus' sacrifice. Share the drawing with a friend or family member. Tell that person why you are so thankful.*

### Pray:

*Dear heavenly Father, thank You for sacrificing Your Son, Jesus, so I can receive salvation. In His name I pray. Amen.*

*J. L.*

# Lent and Love

Have you seen a lot of purple at church recently? That color goes along with Lent, the forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. During these days, we “think purple”—we confess our sin and read again about the high price Jesus paid for our redemption. Lent shows us God’s love through Jesus’ sacrifice.

Let’s think about LENT and LOVE in acrostics. An acrostic is a kind of poem. The first letter of each line spells out a word. The words in the lines tell something about the main word.

**L**ove  
**E**ternal  
**N**ullifies our  
**T**respases

God’s love is eternal. His love caused Him to send His only Son to suffer for our trespasses. Trespasses are the things we do wrong against Him and others. No matter how hard we try, we can’t get rid of trespasses by ourselves.

God knew we couldn’t. He knew we were helpless. So, to cancel the debt we owed Him, God sent Jesus to nullify, or get rid of, the cost of our sin and to defeat the devil.

During Lent, we hear again about Jesus’ Passion. We learn of His love for us on a cross and His victory over all evil.

**L**earn of the Lord’s  
**O**verwhelming  
**V**ictory over all  
**E**vil

## Journal:

*Write your own acrostic poem about Jesus or God’s love.*

## Pray:

*Thank You, Jesus, for all You did for me on the cross. Amen.*

*J. L.*

# APRIL

# 2

## Thursday

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!” And having said this He breathed His last.

**Luke 23:44-46**

# APRIL

# 3

.....  
**Friday**  
.....

So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”



**John 12:35-36**

Without the sun, our solar system would be dark. Without God’s Son, Jesus, we would be lost the darkness of sin and death. But the Holy Spirit came and gave us the light of faith through God’s Word and in Baptism. He put a flame of faith in us so that we believe in Jesus. And that flame of faith in the Son of God shines in our lives like the sun—bright and powerful.

## Journal:

*Come up with your own sentence for Son of God and sun.*

## Pray:

*Son of God, help me look to Your Word and believe in You, even if I don’t understand everything about You. Amen.*

*J. L.*

# Son and Sun

On the board in the classroom was a list of words:

You, ewe, yew  
Hey, hay  
Son, sun

The class was studying homophones—words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. As the list grew, the class combined the homophones into sentences.

The ewe chased *you* into the yew hedge.  
*Hey*, the haystack is on fire!  
The *Son* of God shines like the *sun* in me.

The last one is my favorite. Let’s talk about it. In the verses that come before our Bible reading, some people questioned Jesus about how He could die but also live forever. They wondered if Jesus is the Son of Man He spoke about.

Jesus said that the Son of Man is “the light” (v. 35). He also said, “While you have the light, believe in the light” (v. 36). In other words, believe in Me. I am the Savior.

## Power Failure

During a summer thunderstorm, lightning hit the electrical transformer in my backyard—again! My neighborhood was dark. Nothing electrical worked. My house got hot fast.

“Let’s find the flashlights,” I said.

“Mom,” said my son, “they won’t work. They need new batteries.”

Then I remembered what I forgot to put on my shopping list.

*Now what should we do?* I wondered.

My children and I made the best of the situation. We lit candles and told stories. We made sandwiches and had a twilight picnic. We went outside when it got darker to count stars. When the power goes out, we wait for repairs.

Aren’t you glad our God never loses His power? In our Bible verse, Paul tells us the Gospel is the “power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (v. 16). God’s power comes to us through faith.

So let’s review what we by faith believe. We believe God loves us now and forever. We also believe that we are sinners from birth and cannot save ourselves. We are thankful that God’s Son took our sins on Himself to make us righteous before the Father. And, finally, we believe the Holy Spirit lives in us.

Unlike electricity, God’s power will not fail. He will always be ours: Father, Son, and Spirit; Creator, Savior, and Guide. He powers us to “live by faith” so others can see His love and forgiveness (v. 17).

### Journal:

*List items you have that need batteries. Their power will die. Thank God for His uninterrupted power and grace.*

### Pray:

*Connect me, Lord, to Your love and forgiveness through Jesus. Never let me be disconnected from Your life-giving power. Amen.*

J. L.

## APRIL

# 4

.....  
**Saturday**  
.....

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

**Romans 1:16-17**

## APRIL

# 5

## Sunday

The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”

**John 12:12-13**

## Right Both Ways

Lena and Brian laid down their palm leaves, took off their costumes, and wiped their sweaty faces. “Whew!” said Lena. “That was fun, but I’m tired now.”

“Me too,” agreed Brian. He rubbed at his throat. “I like being in the church play, but I think I’m losing my voice already. All those ‘Hosannas’ and ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Mr. Gonzalez, the play director, stuck his head through the door. “You two ready for a break?” he asked. “I’ve got some water, if you want it. You don’t go on again for a few minutes.”

Together, they drank their water and relaxed. Then Lena asked, “Mr. Gonzalez, what does ‘Hosanna’ mean?”

He answered, “It’s Hebrew. It means ‘Please save us.’”

Brian looked interested. “And what does this mean: ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’?”

The director smiled. “Well, it means the people knew that God sent Jesus, and they were happy that He came. Jesus came in the name of the Lord—He came under God’s authority, to

live and to die and to rise again.”

Lena picked up her palm leaf again and started to twirl it. “So they were right with both things they said, then,” she said. “Jesus came in the name of the Lord to save us!”

### Journal:

*Draw a palm leaf in your journal. Under it, list some of the things Jesus came to save you from. Over the leaf, write, “Thank You!”*

### Pray:

*Father, thank You for sending Jesus to save me! Amen.*

*K. V.*

# The Beginning of the End

What was it like for Jesus on that last Monday before His crucifixion? He knew one of His disciples already planned to betray Him. He knew it would not be an easy death. The image of the cross must have haunted His thoughts, getting closer and closer and closer.

No wonder Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me” (Mark 14:36). He was afraid, just as we are. And fear hurts.

But there’s one thing that makes His prayer different from all the panicky prayers that we say when we’re scared out of our wits. Jesus added, “Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

What? Jesus desperately wanted to escape. And yet He said to God, “Go ahead and let it happen if that’s Your will.” Why?

Simple. He was thinking of you. He was thinking of all of us, trapped in our fears and under the power of death, the devil, and hell. To set us free, Jesus was willing to face fear Himself—and more than that, He was willing to die. He walked through fear so He could rescue us from our fears.

And it worked! Now, by His suffering, death, and resurrection, Jesus has become our rescuer from all evil. Now, when we are afraid, we aren’t alone anymore. We have Jesus with us. He holds on to us, protecting us from evil, because we are the people He loves. He walks with us through the middle of our fears. He comforts us. He is patient with us. He understands us, because He, too, has known fear.

What a wonderful God we have!

## Journal:

*What are you afraid of? Write a short prayer asking Jesus to help you with that fear.*

## Pray:

*Dear Lord Jesus, when I am afraid, be with me and help me. Amen.*

*K. V.*

# APRIL

# 6

Monday

When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

**Psalm 56:3-4**

# APRIL



## Tuesday

Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

**Matthew  
11:28-30**

# Busy, Busy

Gina threw herself onto the couch. “Whew!” she said, putting her feet up.

“Don’t put your feet there. Mom’ll yell at you,” said her sister automatically. “What’s wrong with you anyway?”

Gina sat up and groaned. “I’m totally wiped out. First, I have to do hours and hours of homework, then I have band practice, and then there’s that group project for social studies. And on top of it all, I have to go do a service project this Saturday. I don’t know how I’m going to survive, Alison.”

Her sister chucked a pillow across the room at her. “Poor baby,” she said. “No, really, I know how you feel, Gina. You should try being in high school.”

“You mean it gets worse?” Gina groaned. “What do you do about the stress?”

“Well,” Alison said thoughtfully, “I just do the best I can. But sometimes, when I just can’t stand it anymore, I go for a walk and talk to God about it. I mean, the same thing happened to Jesus, didn’t it?”

“You mean with all those people following Him around?”

“Well, yeah, even in the last week of His life. He barely had time to eat. He must have been exhausted. And He knew He was going to die for us soon. But He still wanted the people to come to Him. He even invited them to come, and He promised to give them rest. So I figure He can give me rest too.”

“Sounds good to me,” said Gina, closing her eyes and collapsing against the cushions. “I’ll ask Him to help me too.”

### Journal:

*When you need a break, where do you go? What do you do? Thank God for that place or activity, whatever it is.*

### Pray:

*Lord, when I’m tired and have way too much on my mind, please be with me and help me. Amen.*

*K. V.*



## Saying Goodbye

"I hate saying goodbye," Maddy said as she turned away from the window. "My cousins are going back home, and I won't see them again for months and months!"

"I hate it too," said her mother softly. "Goodbyes are no fun at all."

Maddy turned to see her mother wiping away a tear. "Oh, I'm sorry, Mom!" she said. "You had to say goodbye to your best friend last week when she went to heaven. I didn't mean to remind you."

Maddy's mother pulled her into a hug. "No, it's all right, sweetheart," she said. "I did have to say goodbye, but I know I will see her again. She belongs to Jesus, and He will keep her safe until He comes back again."

"And Granny too," said Maddy. "Why does it have to hurt so much?"

Her mother sighed. "I don't know, Maddy. But it happened with Jesus' disciples too. The night before He died on the cross, Jesus told them He was going away, and they were very sad."

"I would be too," said Maddy.

"But Jesus knew He had to do it so He could rescue all of us from death and every evil. So He warned them, but He also gave them hope. He said, 'I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.'"

"Right, Mom. And it came true, three days later, on Easter!"

"That's right," her mother said. "And we will see Jesus and all His people again when Jesus comes back to take us all home. That will be a joyful day."

"It sure will," Maddy said with a smile.

### Journal:

*Draw a picture of yourself, Jesus, and the people you love on the day Jesus returns.*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord Jesus, please come back quickly and bring me to my heavenly home. And please bring many more people to trust in You. Amen.*

*K. V.*

## APRIL

# 8

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

A little while, and you will see Me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see Me.



**John 16:16**

## APRIL

# 9

## Thursday

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.



**John 17:24**

## Family Forever

“I’m better than you-oo! I’m better than you-oo!” Joel dropped his sister’s report card and did a victory dance around the table.

Cindy turned bright red. “Well, at least I don’t get in trouble for talking in class! And I’m the best basketball player. So there!”

The kitchen door burst open. “What are you two arguing about?” asked their mother.

They looked at each other. “Er, never mind,” they said.

Their mother dropped the dish towels she’d been carrying on the table and said, “Here, come sit down.” They did, sitting as far apart from each other as they could. Mom said, “Why do you think your dad and I had you two kids?”

“Huh?” asked Joel. Cindy shook her head wordlessly.

Mom said, “We had you because we wanted someone to love. We did not have you because we knew you would be so smart or so strong or so well-behaved. Not even to make you do the

dishes or take out the trash, though I know those are your favorite things to do,” she teased. Both kids sighed.

“We wanted you to be with us so we could love you.”

“But we fight all the time!” Cindy said.

“I know,” Mom answered, “and it drives me crazy. I’m sure Jesus didn’t like it either when the disciples were fighting about who was the greatest. But Jesus still wanted them to be with Him. He wanted us to be with Him, so He could love us forever. That’s why He died and rose again, so we could be forgiven and be children of God forever. Now, we’re permanently in His family, just like you two are permanently in my family.”

She got up and hugged them both. “Now both of you, go do that job you’re so great at—washing the dishes.”

### Journal:

*Whom has God given you to love? Write their names and pray for them.*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord, thank You for making me Your child forever, just because You love me and wanted me forever. Amen.*

*K. V.*



# APRIL

# 10

## Friday

For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in My eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

**Isaiah 43:3-4**

## “Because I Love You”

“I hate Good Friday,” said John.

Angie was shocked. “Don’t say that! That’s terrible!”

“Sshhhh,” said their dad. “Why do you hate Good Friday, John?”

“Because it always makes me feel so guilty,” he answered. “We always hear about how Jesus died for us and all these terrible things happened to Him, and it’s all our fault because we sinned. And I can’t stand it!”

His father came and sat down next to him. Rolling up his sleeve, he said, “Do you see that scar?”

Both children looked. There was an ugly pink scar running all the way up his arm and disappearing under his sleeve.

“Sure, Dad. You’ve had that as long as I can remember. Why?”

“Well, when the two of you were tiny, we had a fire in our old house. Your mom and I had to go through the fire to get you out of your beds. That’s how I got this scar, and a few others too.”

Angie was horrified. “You mean it’s our fault? You got hurt because of me?”

“No, that’s not what I mean,” their dad answered. “I was so happy when we got you out that I didn’t even think about the fire. And the scars don’t bother me at all. Every time I see them, they remind me that you both are alive. Looking at them makes me happy, because I love you.”

John wrinkled his brow. “So you think Jesus feels the same way about dying on the cross? And He’s okay having those scars, because it means we’re alive and safe?”

“I’m sure of it,” their dad said.

### Journal:

*Think of one object, picture, or letter that you keep because it reminds you of someone you love. Describe it or draw it in your journal.*

### Pray:

*Lord, I’m glad You love me. I love You. Amen.*

*K. V.*

## Rest

“I just want to get home and go to bed,” Jimmy yawned. “It’s been a long, long week.”

“What?” his dad teased. “Whatever happened to the kid who was going to stay up all night and watch videos?”

He got no answer. Looking in the rearview mirror, he saw that Jimmy’s eyes were shut and he was beginning to slump to one side. Jimmy’s dad smiled. He parked the car as quietly as he could and got out. Reaching into the backseat, he scooped up his son to carry him into the house and to bed.

Holy Saturday is a day of waiting, a day of rest. The terrible events of Good Friday are over. The suffering is past; the dying is done. Now, Jesus’ body rests in the tomb, and His disciples rest also in their hiding place in Jerusalem. Though they don’t yet know it, tomorrow will be the start of an explosively exciting day—the day Jesus rises from the dead and begins to send them out to the whole world to tell the Good News of forgiveness. But for now, things are quiet. They rest. And it is good.

God sends you times of rest too—days when everything is quiet and nothing exciting is happening. You may even complain, “I’m bored!” But God has great plans for you, and you will need the rest He is giving to you now. Never forget that you are God’s own child, the one Jesus suffered, died, and rose again for. And He has plans for your life. Enjoy your rest!

### Journal:

*When are you usually the busiest? When do you rest? Write a prayer thanking God for both of these times.*

### Pray:

*Dear Father, thank You for the rest You give me. Please let it make me strong to serve You. Amen.*

## APRIL

# 11

.....  
**Saturday**  
.....

I wait for the LORD,  
my soul waits, and in  
His word I hope; my  
soul waits for the LORD  
more than watchmen  
for the morning, more  
than watchmen for the  
morning.

**Psalm 130:5-6**

# APRIL

# 12

.....  
**Sunday**  
.....

Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here.”



**Mark 16:5-6**

Has someone you loved died? If so, then you miss that person. And you will be happy to know that you will see your loved one again. Everyone who believes in Jesus as his or her Savior will be together on the Last Day. Each of us will rise from the dead, just as Jesus did.

Best of all, we will see Jesus and live with Him forever. What will that be like? We don't know, but it is another happy mystery to think about.

## Journal:

*Make an Easter card for someone who can't make it to church this Easter. You can still send it this week. (Next Sunday is a little Easter—remember?)*

## Pray:

*Praise to You, Jesus! You rose from the dead, and I will too! Come back to earth soon. Amen.*

*E. G.*

## We Want to See Jesus

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Churches are crowded today. Most Christians wouldn't miss an Easter Sunday service, though they might not come to church often on other Sundays. They want to hear again how Jesus came back to life after dying on the cross.

Who wouldn't want to hear that story? It's filled with mystery, suspense, and joy. It's a story worth telling every Sunday, even if the crowds and lilies are missing.

Did you know that every Sunday is like a little Easter? Even without colored eggs and chocolate bunnies, each Sunday is special. On that day, the Church rejoices because Jesus rose from the dead.

Someday, every day will be like Easter. When will that happen? We don't know. That's a mystery. Jesus will solve that mystery when He returns to earth. Oh, yes, He is coming again. He will not stay when He comes again. He will gather you and all believers. He'll take us to heaven. We will be in heaven with Him forever.

## Grateful Words!

**G**rave, open and empty  
**R**eal body and blood for us  
**A**ngels who protect us  
**T**he Savior, Jesus Christ  
**I**n time and into eternity  
**T**he forgiveness of sins  
**U**nder the Spirit's guidance  
**D**efended against all danger  
**E**ternal thanks and praise

The acrostic poem above builds on the word *gratitude*. The words that come after the first letter in each line explain things for which I am grateful.

When you think about all of God's goodness to you, what would you name? You could list God's earthly blessings, such as your family or life in a free country. You could also name healthy foods and exercise and sports. How about your school, books, and technology? They are for learning and fun. God also gives you friends and a place to live. When you think about it, God gives you *everything!*

In Baptism and through His Word, the Holy Spirit gives us faith in Jesus. And because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we have a victory over our enemies and a home with Him in heaven.

Yes, we can express our gratitude to God for so many things. With the apostle Paul, we can say, "Thanks be to God."

### Journal:

*Make a list of your physical and spiritual gifts.*

### Pray:

*Thank You, heavenly Father, for Jesus, my Savior, who gives me the victory He won on the cross. Amen.*

*J. L.*

## APRIL

# 13

Monday

But thanks be to God,  
who gives us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus  
Christ.

**1 Corinthians**  
**15:57**

# APRIL

# 14

.....  
**Tuesday**  
.....

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.



**Psalm 119:105**

## Books to Love

Introducing children to books has been one of my lifelong joys. I give my grandchildren gifts of award-winning books on birthdays and Christmas. At school, my students can count on a good book during story time. For years, I have reread favorites: *A Wrinkle in Time*, *The Sign of the Beaver*, and *Henry and Ribsy*.

I love to read too. At the library, I seek out books about history, spy thrillers, and mysteries. On the internet, I search for books by best-selling authors and upload them to my e-reader. At a bookstore, I browse the shelf of new releases to find the best ones.

The Bible is a book with exciting characters and plots. Children and adults can open and study it. God's Word is God's voice. It tells us the powerful message of God's love in sending Jesus.

Long ago, Bibles were carefully copied on scrolls by scribes. They wrote every word by hand. When the printing press was invented, God's Word was copied and distributed more quickly. Today, with modern technology, the Bible can be "copied" to a tablet or smart phone almost instantly. No matter how or in what form you read the Bible, the Holy Spirit is at work through God's Word.

You see, all of Scripture points to Jesus. He is the Savior God promised long ago in the Garden of Eden. As we hear God's Word, the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts. The Word of God is a lamp to guide our path. It leads us on the true path of faith in Jesus, on the pathway to heaven. It surely is a book to love.

### Journal:

*Choose a Bible verse that speaks to you. Put it on a poster and hang it on your bedroom wall.*

### Pray:

*Dear God, teach me to love Your Word. Let me seek You and find You there. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

*J. L.*



## Connections

Who are your relatives? Where did they come from? Were they royalty? Were they explorers or servants? Were they farmers or teachers? Were they rich? Were they servants?

Many people are interested in finding out more about their ancestors. They search a town's birth or death records to trace their genealogy. They ask elderly relatives probing questions. They examine the backs of old photos, looking for names and dates. However they search, their findings can be enlightening.

The ancestors of the Son of God are documented in the Bible—from Adam to Jesus. Even though they proved sinful time and time again, the generations were connected by faith to the perfect Son of God.

The list begins with Adam and Eve. After they sinned, God promised a Savior. Years later, God saved Noah and his family from the worldwide flood, and humanity went on. Many years after that, God chose Abraham to be the father of His chosen people. God promised Abraham many descendants, one of whom would be the Savior.

The Bible gives us a detailed genealogy of Jesus. It shows how God was at work through sinful yet believing people: Isaac, David, Ruth, and many more. Finally, in generation forty-two of Abraham's descendants, Jesus was born.

Even though Jesus was faithful and sinless, the sins of all generations were piled on Him. In fact, He died as the payment for all those sins. Now, the sins of all who believe in Jesus can be forgiven; heaven is a gift. By faith, we are connected to all the believers before us and those still to come. We are family. Jesus makes us relatives to those who have gone before, to one another, and to our heavenly Father.

### Journal:

*Find out about some of your ancestors. Which ones led you to Jesus?*

### Pray:

*Dear eternal God, Your love reached through time to give us a Savior. In His name I pray. Amen.*

## APRIL

# 15

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.



**Matthew 1:17**

# APRIL

# 16

.....  
**Thursday**  
.....

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.



**Matthew 24:35**

## Indestructible

Zaelynn hated the rain. Every spring, it flooded the backyard. This year, water seeped into the basement. Lots of things were damp and smelly. Mom said some things would need to be thrown out. Zaelynn was helping to clear off a shelf against the wet wall. She noticed a soggy box. “Oh, no!” she cried. It was the box of her favorite baby books. She had been hoping to read them to her little brother once he was old enough to sit still. The thick pages were rippled and swollen. Some of the words and pictures were smeary. The whole box had a musty smell. “I’m afraid these will have to go,” said Mom. “Maybe we can replace some of them over the summer. Don’t worry! You will be reading to Bo before you know it!”

God’s words have been around much longer than any of our books. From “Let there be light” to the readings you heard in church last Sunday, God’s eternal Word has endured. No flood, fire, or other disaster can destroy it. Even if every Bible in the entire world were burned to ashes, God’s eternal Word would remain!

Jesus is God’s Word in the flesh. His enemies tried to destroy Him, but they couldn’t! Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive! The forgiveness, life, and promises He has given to us are indestructible. They are ours forever!

### Journal:

*Memorizing is a great way to keep God’s Word with you! Write down today’s verse or another verse that you would like to learn.*

### Pray:

*Dear God, thank You for Your Word. Thank You that it is mine forever. Amen.*

*L. H.*

## Dead and Alive

See if you can correctly place the following words into the paragraph below:

**buried cross Good tomb Baptism us**

Last Friday was \_\_\_\_\_ Friday. That is the day we remember Jesus' death on the \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus was dead! When the Bible says He "gave up His spirit," it means He chose to die for \_\_\_\_\_. Then, He was put in a \_\_\_\_\_. Our verse says we were \_\_\_\_\_ with Him by \_\_\_\_\_.

Because of our sins, we deserve death. But Jesus died for us. By His death, Jesus took the punishment that was going to be yours. When Jesus rose, He conquered death for you too! In your Baptism, His life now gives you new life—eternal life!

Each morning when you get up, think about your Baptism. Each time you think about the guilt of your sins, remember your Baptism. When you feel discouraged or alone, think about your Baptism! You belong to Christ! You are His—you have His life, and He is with you always. Enjoy walking in newness of life today!

### Journal:

*Try using the word list at the top of the page to make a sentence telling what Jesus has done for you.*

### Pray:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of eternal life that is mine each day. Help me to walk in newness of life. Help me to encourage others with this wonderful news. In my Savior's name. Amen.*

L. H.

## APRIL

# 17

## Friday

We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

**Romans 6:4**

**APRIL**

**18**

.....  
**Saturday**  
.....

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.

**Deuteronomy  
5:12**

## Yes or No?

Circle the things you would say yes to doing:

1. Giving a speech in front of five hundred people
2. Exploring a cave
3. Riding in a rocket
4. Learning a new instrument
5. Going to church for worship
6. Having a pet snake

Our lives are full of choices. We have to make lots of decisions every day. Sometimes we have to choose between right and wrong. Sometimes we can just choose between liking and not liking. Sometimes we aren't sure what to choose! Number 5 above—going to church—is a right choice! God knows what is best for you. His commandment tells us to “observe the Sabbath

day.” That means we get to go to church! You may not always feel like going. You may not always understand everything about the service. But you do know it is good to go—because God said so! You are God's own child. He said yes to you at your Baptism. Come to church for worship and receive His gifts. His Word and His forgiveness are yours!

### Journal:

*What do you like about going to church?*

### Pray:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for my church! Bless our pastor as he teaches us about Jesus. Help me to always gladly hear and learn Your Word. Amen. L. H.*

## Who Is My Neighbor?

Can you guess what these people have in common?

*The person in front of you in line at the store*

*The person sitting beside you*

*Your bus driver*

*Your sister*

*Your dad*

*A person you pass on the sidewalk*

*The pitcher in your kickball game*

They are all your neighbors! The verse today is from the story of the Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan helped a man who had been beaten and left for dead. These two men did not live next door to each other. How could they have been neighbors?

The word *neighbor* means “whoever happens to be nearby.” When the Samaritan found the injured man on the side of the road, he had found his neighbor!

God calls us to serve our neighbors. Your “neighborhood” changes each day! Be on the lookout for the people God puts in your path. Find ways to be of service to them. The last seven commandments give us some great ideas for doing just that.

The perfect servant and neighbor is Jesus. He is always near to you and meeting each need you have. He gave His life for you. He will use your life today to love and serve others.

### Journal:

*Make a list of neighbors you may be able to serve today.*

### Pray:

*Dear God, thank You for showing me love and mercy. Help me to serve whomever You put in my path today. Amen.*

*L. H.*

## APRIL

# 19

.....  
**Sunday**  
.....

You shall love . . . your neighbor as yourself.



**Luke 10:27**

**APRIL**

**20**

**Monday**

This God—His way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him.

**2 Samuel 22:31**

## Happy Monday!

What are your plans for this week? Do you have a test? a track meet or ballgame? a birthday party? Write a couple of your plans here:

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Now add some words describing how you think these events will go. You may want an easy test or a winning ballgame. Maybe you are hoping for an exciting party. If you can remember, come back to this page on Friday. See if your week went as planned! Chances are . . . it won't! Things often don't turn out the way we think they will. This might make us disappointed, upset, or worried.

But God's way is certainly better than anything we can come up with! He is perfect—He knows you perfectly. He loves you perfectly! He had the perfect plan for creating the world and everything in it. He had the perfect plan for sending His Son to redeem us. He most certainly will not fail to plan what is best for you today.

### Journal:

*Write down some things happening in your life that concern you. Draw a cross by each one. Remind yourself that God will do what is best!*

### Pray:

*Dear God, You know everything! I am thankful that You love me and will take care of me. When things don't go my way, help me to remember to trust in You. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

*L. H.*

# Safe and Sound

Little Sophie was learning to walk. Noah loved helping his little sister explore. Today, Mom said they could go to the backyard and practice walking. Noah held Sophie's little hand and guided her. He led her around rocks, holes, and a wasps' nest. Sophie bent down to feel the grass by the picnic table. Noah made sure she didn't hit her head on the bench. She tried to go faster than her little legs would take her. He scooped her up before she could fall down on the cement. Sophie just giggled. She had no idea that there were dangers in the yard! She just knew there was a big brother to enjoy spending time with.

In this world, there are many dangers and evils. The Bible tells us Satan is prowling around and looking to destroy us. We don't even see all of the dangers around us! But we don't need to be afraid! We have God's protection. We have His promises! He has promised to keep us from all evil. He has promised to be with us always. His guiding hand will never fail to keep your life. Jesus died and rose to redeem you. He will most certainly take care of you today!

## Journal:

*What are some things that make you scared or worried?*

## Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for guiding me. Thank You for protecting me. Help me to remember the promises in Your Word. Amen.*

*L. H.*

APRIL

21

Tuesday

The LORD will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

**Psalm 121:7-8**

**APRIL**

**22**

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.



**1 John 3:1**

## You're In!

When you read about God's Book of Life in the Book of Revelation, does it make you want to grab the nearest pen and write your name in it? Sorry—but you can't! Does today's Bible verse make you want to sign up to be one of God's children? Sure—but you can't do that either!

No one has ever written his or her own name in God's Book of Life. And just like a baby cannot choose its family, you cannot choose to be God's child. You can't work your way into heaven. Now, for the good news: you don't need to work your way into heaven! You don't even have to make sure your name is written in the Book of Life. God chose you! When you were baptized, God added you to His family. He wrote your name in the Book of Life! The grace and forgiveness Jesus gives became yours. You did

nothing to earn or deserve this eternal gift. God simply gave it to you.

God is your heavenly Father. He chose you and loves you and will keep you as His own child forever.

### Journal:

*Write your full name here (use your best handwriting!):*

\_\_\_\_\_ *is God's Child!*

### Pray:

*Dear God, thank You for making me Your child in Baptism! Thank You for writing my name in the Book of Life. Amen.*

*L. H.*



# Mercy Seat

There is a game called “Mercy” with a simple goal: you grab a friend’s hand, and then you both twist as hard as you can. The first person to call “Mercy!” loses. The winner has to have mercy and let go.

God’s Old Testament people saw God drown the world in a flood. They saw Him drown Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea. They knew He was powerful and that He punished sin. They loved and trusted Him because He saved them from the flood and the sea. They also feared Him because they had seen Him punish His enemies. They knew they needed His mercy.

How were the people supposed to meet a God who was loving and trustworthy but also fearsome? God had an answer. He made a place of mercy where He would meet them. He spoke with His priest at the mercy seat. Then, the priest could bring the people God’s words.

God meets you in a place of mercy too: His house, the church. In church, God saves us through the waters of Holy Baptism. He feeds us His own body and blood to forgive our sins. His pastors have His word of forgiveness for us. We are wise to fear God. But we also love and trust the God who meets us in mercy.

Mercy is never a game for God. We are hopeless without God’s mercy, but He tells us exactly where to find it. God’s mercy is in His house.

## Journal:

*When did someone bigger and stronger than you show you mercy?*

## Pray:

*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen.*

*R. C.*

APRIL

23

Thursday

And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

**Exodus 25:21-22**

**APRIL**

**24**

**Friday**

On a Sabbath, while [Jesus] was going through the grainfields, His disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” . . . And [Jesus] said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

**Luke 6:1-2, 5**

## The Lord of the Sabbath Is the Lord of You

Did your grandma ever serve cake for breakfast and waffles for supper? Has your dad tossed you into a pool? You probably aren't allowed to do these things, so why can adults do them?

It's because each of those grown-ups loves you and cares for you. They make the rules and use them for your good. But sometimes, on special occasions, they break the regular rules. They're allowed to!

God gave people the Sabbath day to teach them how to rest and to worship Him. Since He made the Sabbath day, it belongs to Him. That means He can do what He likes with it. Normally, it was against the rules to pick grain on the Sabbath. But Jesus was able to because He is Lord of the Sabbath. He's allowed to!

Jesus is not just Lord of the Sabbath. He is Lord of you. You break rules when you're not supposed to, but Jesus never did. He died on the cross to pay for your sins, and He rose from the dead so that He could raise you from the dead too. He loves you, and He bought you with His own life. Now, He says you belong to Him. He's allowed to!

### **Journal:**

*Tell about a time a grown-up did something crazy with you.*

### **Pray:**

*Dear Jesus, thank You for being my Lord and doing what You want with me. I belong to You.  
Amen.*

*R. C.*

## Friends Forgive

Have you ever had a fight with a friend? How long did it last? Did you get things sorted out, or is it still going on?

Once, the apostle Paul got in a fight with his friends Barnabas and Mark. Mark had let Paul down. Barnabas wanted to give Mark a second chance, but Paul didn't want to be with Mark any more. Paul decided to leave Barnabas and Mark behind because of what Mark had done.

Each one of us has treated God like Mark treated Paul. We let God down by disobeying Him. God could decide to leave us behind because of what we have done. But He loves us too much. He sent His Son, who died on the cross to forgive our sins because He wanted to be with us.

We don't know exactly what happened next between Mark and Paul. We only know that close to the end of his life, Paul asked Timothy to bring Mark to him. Paul must have forgiven Mark. He loved Mark too much to keep fighting with him. Love is what helps us forgive one another.

Today is the day of remembrance for St. Mark. It's a good day to remember that loving people means forgiving them, and forgiving people is how you show you love them. God showed Paul how to do it by forgiving Paul's sins. God has forgiven you too.

### Journal:

*Tell about a time you and a friend weren't getting along. Are you getting along now?*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord Jesus, I know You love me because You forgive me, and I know You forgive me because You love me. I love You. Amen.* R. C.

APRIL

25

Saturday

Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

2 Timothy 4:11

APRIL

26

Sunday

One generation shall commend Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.

*Psalm 145:4*

## From Generation to Generation

Grandparents have some crazy stories. One of my grandmas remembers dropping a ball she was playing with and being terrified when she found it by a toad. My other grandma was a troublemaker. She drove her dad to work in the morning and then went joyriding around town while she was supposed to be at high school. Neither of those stories sound like the calm, reliable old grandmas I know!

It's fun to hear about things that happened before we were born. There's one story that's more important than all the others that older people have for us. It's the story of how God saved His people: the story of Jesus dying on the cross to pay the price for our sins, and rising again so that we will also be raised to eternal life with Him. Maybe that story sounds like old news. But that's because it's so important we can never tell it enough.

The grown-ups who love you also like to hear about things that happen to you! The story of Jesus is yours to tell them too. They need to hear it just as much as you do! Someday, God willing, you'll be the old person with amazing stories to tell—your own crazy stories, and the truly amazing true story of Jesus.

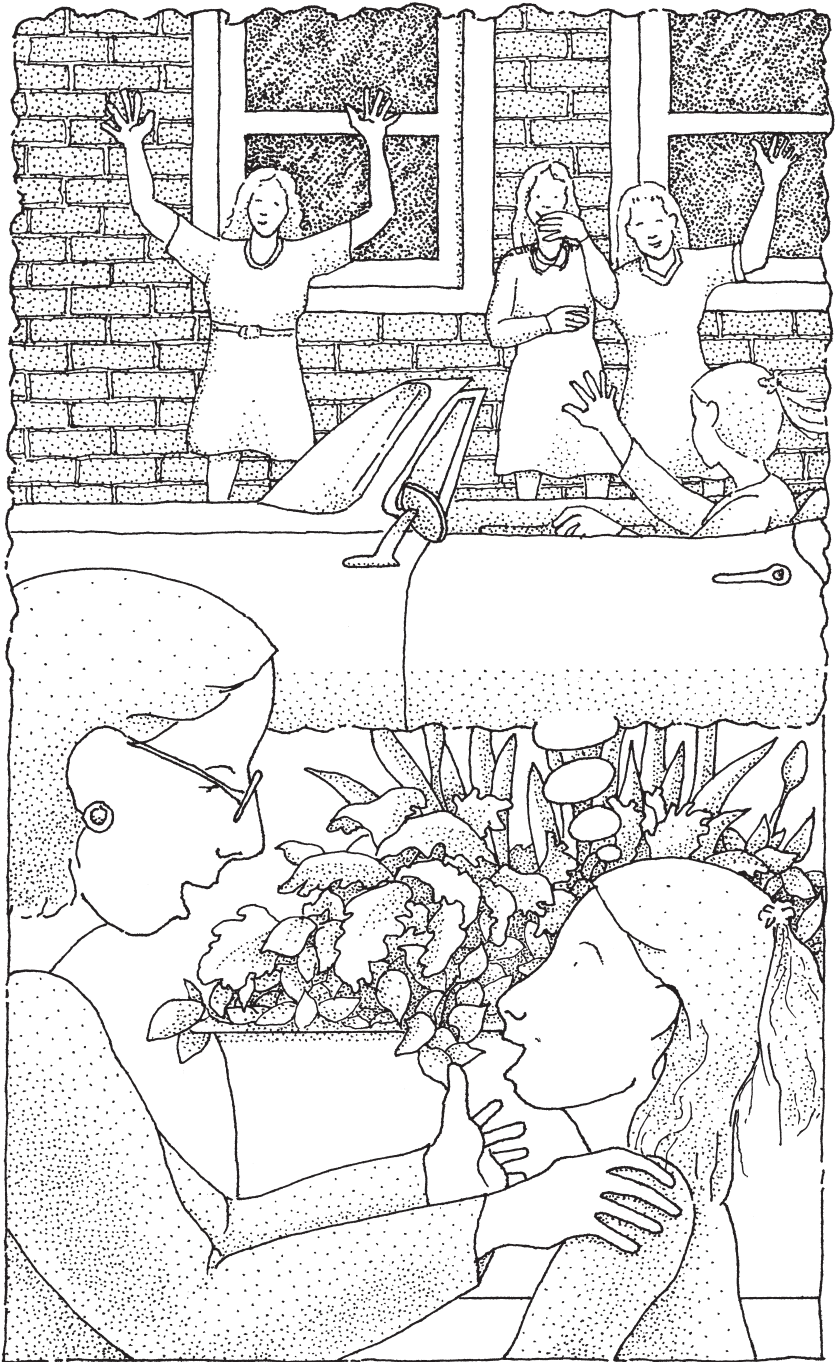
### Journal:

*Tell a story you've heard from an adult in your family about something that happened before you were born.*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for the people You've given me to tell me good stories. Thank You most of all for making me a part of Your story. Please help me to share it with everyone. Amen.*

*R. C.*



**APRIL**

**27**

.....  
**Monday**  
.....

Restore us, O God; let  
Your face shine, that we  
may be saved!



**Psalm 80:3**

## Shining Faces

What does it mean when we say that someone's face is shining? Is it sprinkled with glitter or greased up with butter? No! We mean that the person is happy. He has a big smile all full of teeth. His eyes scrunch up and his dimples show. Something has brought him all the joy his face can hold.

What does it mean for God's face to shine on us? It means He is happy with us. We bring Him joy.

But how can we bring God joy? We can't do it ourselves. By ourselves, we are bad and sinful. We don't love God, and we do bad things. The only way for us to be good is for God to give us goodness. Jesus took our sinfulness to the cross and paid the price for it. He died so that

we could be forgiven and live forever. He gives us the gift of faith so that we believe Him when He says, "Your sins are forgiven."

Nothing brings God more joy than when we trust Him to save us. He restores us with His perfect life, His innocent death, and His resurrection from the dead. God's face is shining on you, and you are saved.

### Journal:

*Think of someone you know who has an extra shiny smile. Tell about a time you saw that smile come out.*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, restore me. Let Your face shine on me. Save me and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.* R. C.

## Unite My Heart

If you ever take a philosophy class, you might learn about a confused donkey. This donkey is standing between two piles of hay. The piles of hay are the same. The donkey is hungry, but he can't decide which one to eat! His heart is divided, so his stomach stays empty.

Maybe you've felt this way too. It's a beautiful day, but your bed is warm and soft; do you get up? Those brownies are great, but if you eat another, your belly will hurt; do you grab one anyway?

Decisions can get harder. Your brother busts up your LEGO car; do you punch him or forgive him? Your mom tells you it's bedtime; do you find your pajamas or pretend you didn't hear? Sunday School sounds boring; do you moan and groan or set a good example for the other people there?

Bad news: the donkey from philosophy is going to starve. He can't decide. But there's good news for you! First, God helps you make decisions by giving you His Word. He teaches you what's right or wrong. And there's even better news. When the wrong part of your heart wins and you make a bad choice, God has already paid for that sin. Jesus walked in the way of truth for you, and He will always bring you back to that way. He has saved you once and for all.

### Journal:

*What's a hard decision you had to make? What were your reasons for the choice you made?*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord, please teach me Your way and help me to walk in Your truth. Unite my heart to fear Your name. Amen.*

APRIL

28

Tuesday

Teach me Your way, O LORD, that I may walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name.

**Psalm 86:11**

**APRIL**

**29**

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.



**Psalm 84:3**

## **His Eye Is on the Sparrow . . . and the Dog and the Squirrel**

True story: animals love my church. We had to stop hanging wreaths on the door because birds kept building nests in them. Last Easter, one of the elders had to kick out a German shepherd that came to celebrate Jesus' resurrection with us. And then, there was the Sunday a squirrel got inside. It ran all over, looking for an escape. Finally, one of the pastors shut the squirrel in the vestry. The acolytes were also in the vestry. One of them caught the squirrel by the tail. He had to carry it the whole length of the church to return it to a proper squirrel environment.

Animals don't really belong in church. But Psalm 84 reminds us how loving our God is. A mama bird might even try to keep her eggs safe in the house of the Lord who made her. God's house is your house too. It is where you can always go to find the Lord who made you. Your Lord Jesus died to forgive your sins and rose again so that you could live with Him forever. A God like that will always protect you and welcome you in His house.

Maybe someday, you'll even get to catch a squirrel there.

### **Journal:**

*Has your church or school ever had an animal invader or another strange occurrence? Tell the story!*

### **Pray:**

*Dear Lord, thank You for making me. Thank You for inviting me to Your house and making me safe there by forgiving my sins. Amen.*

*R. C.*



## Parables and Poems

Do you like poems? It probably depends on the poem. Some poems are easy to understand, like Shel Silverstein's. Other poems seem like something teachers make you read when they run out of recesses to take away. You don't know why someone hurt all those words by stuffing them into a weird poem.

Parables can be the same way. A parable is a little story that teaches a lesson. But sometimes it's hard to see what the lesson is. When Jesus told parables, the people listening didn't always know what He meant. Sometimes, He told parables because He wanted people to see that they were confused!

Why would Jesus do that? It's because He wanted the people to ask Him more questions. He wanted them to recognize that He was the one with the answers. When you're assigned a poem that isn't clear, it's your teacher's job to help you see the meaning. Jesus is the world's best teacher. He always has the answer because He *is* the answer. When you are confused, scared, or guilty, Jesus is the solution. He helps you and forgives you. You don't have the answers, but Jesus does. He is the answer for you.

### Journal:

*Do you remember a particular parable that Jesus told? What is it? Why do you remember it?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, there is a lot I don't understand. Thank You for teaching me that You are with me and that You will take care of me no matter what happens.*  
Amen.

R. C.

## APRIL

# 30

.....  
**Thursday**  
.....

And when [Jesus'] disciples asked Him what this parable meant, He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"



**Luke 8:9-10**

# April

**Bible puzzles, games, and activities**

**Solutions on page 80**



## God Gives Me

Martin Luther lists some of the things that God gives to us. This list can be found in Luther's Small Catechism under the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Luther groups the items in pairs. Record each pair in the following chart. In the third column, write the category that the pair has in common. The first one has been done for you.

BLESSINGS	BLESSINGS	CATEGORY
food	drink	items you consume
clothing	shoes	
house		
	animals	
		family members

Now, it's your turn. If Martin Luther were alive today, how would his list change? What blessings would he add? What new categories would have been included? Make your own list like Martin Luther's list.

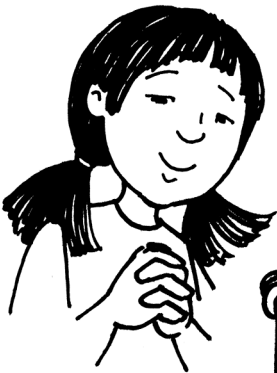
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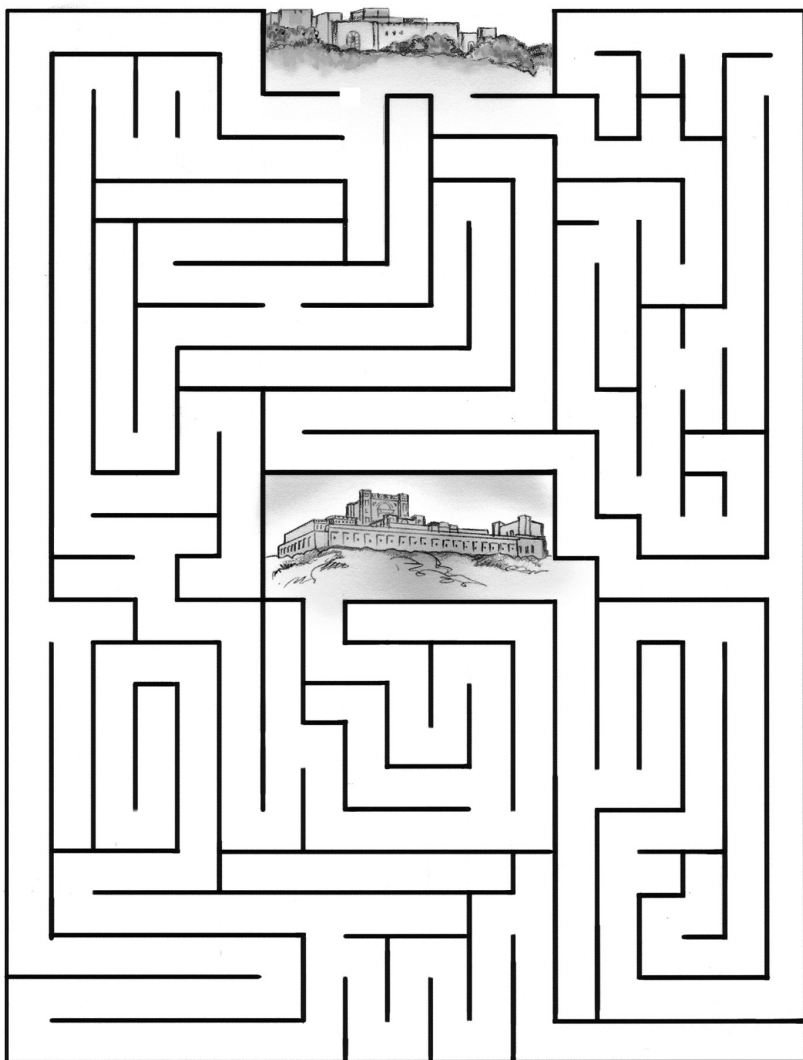


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# My Coloring Page



# Answer Key

## Puzzle 1 Answer

### God Gives Me

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BLESSINGS	BLESSINGS	CATEGORY
food	drink	items you consume
clothing	shoes	items to wear
house	home	places to live
land	animals	items to own
money	goods	business related
devout spouse	devout children	family members
devout workers	faithful rulers	other helpers
good government	good weather	good things
peace	health	things we desire
self-control	good reputation	personality traits
good friends	faithful neighbors	companions

Now, it's your turn. If Martin Luther were alive today, how would his list change? What blessings would he add? What new categories would have been included? Make your own list like Martin Luther's list.

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MAY

March – May 2020  
Vol 62 – Issue No. 3

MY  
Devotions®

Daily Readings for Young Christians



Contributors to the May devotions:

Michelle Bauman, Eunice Graham, Jacqueline Loontjer,  
Mark Rhoads, Faith Spelbring, Trevor Sutton

Edited by Mark S. Sengele

# MAY

# 1

.....  
**Friday**  
.....

“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in Him.”

**Lamentations**  
**3:24**

# May Day

My grandma once told me that when she was a girl, it was the custom to give secret presents on May Day. A person would fill a May basket with flowers and other treats, leave it on a friend’s doorstep, knock on the door, and then run away. When the person answered the door, he or she would find the flowers and treats but wouldn’t know who gave them.

I thought this custom sounded fun, so I tried it with a few of my friends. I made baskets of flowers and gum and left them on their doorsteps. It was fun to surprise them. I especially liked running away before they answered the door!

God surprises us too. He gives us wonderful things while we’re not looking! In spring, we see new flowers, leaves, and birds just outside our doorstep. He also gives us other blessings we don’t expect, like kindness from family and friends, help with problems, and happy times at school.

Of course, not every basket is perfect. Sometimes, bugs crawl into May baskets or the fresh flowers in them wilt. Sometimes, problems crawl into our lives or beautiful situations wilt.

We all have the problem of sin—sin against God and against other people. Others also sin against us. To deal with sin, God gives us the best unexpected gift of all—His love and forgiveness.

Jesus won God’s forgiveness for us on the cross, and because of that, we can be sure of God’s love. God’s love is a blessing on a day of beautiful surprises or on a day of sadness and trouble.

## Journal:

*What beautiful surprises have you had today? Write about them. Can you give one to someone else?*

## Pray:

*Dear heavenly Father, thank You for giving me beautiful surprises every day and for Your love and forgiveness, which are with me always. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.*

*E. G.*

## A Perilous Bridge

My friend Dan was a missionary for many years in the Philippines. Some people there are terrified to die. They believe that when they die, they must cross over a razor-thin bridge to get to heaven. If they fall off the bridge, they will go all the way down to hell. They say it is such a long way down that if a coconut fell off the bridge, it would be a coconut tree when it reached the bottom!

One day, Dan asked a man, "What if you didn't have to cross that bridge to get to heaven?"

"Oh!" gasped the man. "That would be wonderful!" Then Dan told him about Jesus.

We don't have to accomplish any impossible tasks to get to heaven. Jesus did that work. First, He lived perfectly in our place. Then, He paid for the sins of the whole world on the cross. When He came out of the grave, He proved He was stronger than death and hell.

Those who have faith in Jesus don't have to be afraid to die. There won't be a perilous bridge to cross, a tough exam to pass, a court case to win, or even a secret password to remember. There will just be our Savior.

People such as my friend Dan are so excited by this Good News that they want to share it with others. Some Christians leave their homes and live in different cultures so they can do this. There's nothing like the joy of seeing Jesus' love come alive for people all around the world!

### Journal:

*Do you know anyone who is afraid to die? How could you share the Good News of Jesus with them?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for saving me from sin, death, and the devil. Bless all those who share Your Good News at home and around the world. Amen. E. G.*

MAY

2

.....  
Saturday  
.....

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

*John 3:17*

**MAY**

**3**

**Sunday**

So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. . . . The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

**John 10:7, 10**

## The Door

Most people lock the front door of their house when they leave because, in this world, there are thieves and robbers. Some homes are even protected by elaborate security systems. If someone tries to break in, an alarm goes off, lights flash, and help comes quickly.

If you saw someone climbing into your neighbor’s second-story window, what would you do? You would probably call the police! You know burglars crawl through windows to steal. They barge in doors to rob people.

A sheepfold is a pen for sheep. The pen has a doorway. Inside the pen, the sheep are safe from their enemies. The shepherd is the elaborate security system. At night, the shepherd lies in front of the doorway. He actually becomes the way in or out of the sheepfold. If wolves or thieves come, the shepherd defends his sheep.

We are sheep in Jesus’ flock. God calls us and gathers us to be part of His flock through Jesus’ loving sacrifice and forgiveness.

Jesus says He is “the door of the sheep” (v. 7). He protects His flock. When the devil, the ideas of this world, and unbelievers want to steal the sheep from Jesus, He is our alarm. Jesus calls these threats thieves and robbers.

Jesus is the only door to the sheep pen of heaven. There is no other. He is so loving that He welcomes everyone into His flock. Through the Spirit, He offers them the free gift of grace. Jesus also feeds and protects all His sheep. He is the Good Shepherd, “the door of the sheep.”

### Journal:

*Look on the internet for pictures of a sheep pen. Then draw one in your journal.*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for being the door that lets me into Your flock. Please guard and protect me from all harm and danger. In Your name I pray. Amen.*

*E. G.*

# The Wonderful Ship

If your church has stained glass windows, or if you've ever visited one that does, you might have seen a window that shows a ship sailing on rough waves. It might have reminded you of the story of Jesus calming the storm when He was in a boat with His disciples. Perhaps you've imagined you were in that boat too. It would have been awesome when Jesus spoke to the wind and waters, when He told them to be still, and they were! The storm was over.

In a way, you actually are with Jesus. For centuries, the Church has pictured itself as a ship filled with believers. God's people are traveling to heaven on that ship, and Jesus is with us.

You can search on the internet for images showing a stained glass window of the Church as a ship. If you look closely at this symbol, you might see that the mast is shaped like a cross or has a sail with a cross on it. This reminds us that Jesus' death and life brought us onto the ship.

Life is like a storm sometimes. We have waves of problems and worries and fears. We have winds of violence and worry. We have the tossing and turning of our friends or family. We might even wonder if we're going to make it to heaven or if we're going to be washed overboard.

It's comforting to remember that Jesus is beside us in the boat of His Church. With Him, no storm will sink the Church. With Him, we can withstand the fierce winds and choppy waves. His presence brings His peace.

## Journal:

*Are you having any storms in your life right now? Write about them. How can Jesus help you with them?*

## Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for being present with me and with all people in Your Church through the storms of life. Give me Your peace. Amen.* E. G.

MAY

4

Monday

And He said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then He rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey Him?"

**Matthew  
8:26-27**

MAY

5

Tuesday

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3:2

## Tadpoles

Have you ever watched a tadpole become a frog? I have, and it's really a lot of fun. It's amazing to see the legs grow out of the body, then the arms, while all the time the tail slowly disappears. Before you know it, you have a brand-new animal. It's not a tadpole anymore—it's a frog!

Have you ever wished you could change like that? Have you ever wanted to be a totally new person? You might wish you could be more helpful and pleasant with your family. Or perhaps you wish you could be a better friend. When you make some progress, you may feel your grouchy, selfish tail is disappearing. But then, one day, without meaning to, you snap at your mom or fight with your best friend. Then, sadly, you realize that you don't seem to be changing into a frog after all. You're still the same old tadpole!

But there is good news. Jesus' death on the cross means that God goes on forgiving and loving you no matter what. You don't have to change yourself into a brand-new person to win or keep God's love. And there's even better news. God is at work in you, slowly turning you into the new person He wants you to be. It will take awhile, a lot longer than it takes a tadpole to become a frog. In fact, the job won't ever be finished as long as you live on this earth. But God promises that when we see Jesus face-to-face, we will be like Him. There's no greater transformation than that!

### Journal:

*How does God's love encourage you when you are down on yourself?*

### Pray:

*Dear Lord, please help me to become more loving every day. Thank You for forgiving my sins and helping me every time I fail. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

E. G.

## Your Church

If I asked you to tell me about your church, you might tell me about the building. It might be an old, beautiful building with stained glass windows and an intricately carved wooden altar. It might be a simple newer building full of light and space. It might be small, or it might be so large that you feel little inside. It might have a bell or a towering cross outside.

If you asked people from the very early years after Jesus returned to heaven to tell you about their church, they probably wouldn't tell you about a building. They might tell you that they worshiped together in a friend's house. At first, that's where Christians worshiped. If you were rich and had a big house, you would invite others to come and worship in your home. If you lived in Rome, you might sometimes worship in a system of underground caves called catacombs. It might have been a little safer there, because for a while the Roman Empire persecuted Christians. The catacombs were a good place to bury Christians who died, and to have Communion to remember that the dead people were alive with Jesus and that Jesus was also with His people who were still on earth.

Early Christians would tell you that the church is people. They would tell you about their pastors and teachers and friends who were like family to them. So, if you tell me about your church, be sure to tell me about the people Jesus died for and who share with you in His love and forgiveness!

### Journal:

*Who are some special people in your church who share God's love? Write about them.*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing Your people together into a church so we can love one another and worship You. Thank You for including me. Amen. E. G.*

## MAY

# 6

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone. . . . In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**Ephesians  
2:20, 22**

**MAY**



.....  
**Thursday**  
.....

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

**1 Corinthians  
6:19-20**

## Where Is God's Temple?

When I lived in China, I saw a number of temples. They were small buildings with statues of local gods and goddesses. People would go to the temples and take a present or food for their favorite god or goddess and ask for favors.

King Solomon built a temple for God. It was the place where God came to be with His people. Priests offered sacrifices of animals so the sins of people could be forgiven. Years later, that temple was destroyed, and God's people were taken captive. When they returned to their land, they built a new temple for God.

One day, Jesus said that if anyone destroyed God's temple, He would build it up in three days. Nobody understood what He meant, because it had taken them years to build the second temple. But Jesus was talking about Himself as God's temple, because He was truly God. His human body was the place where God lived in a way it could never live in a building.

Jesus laid down His life on the cross so that the sins of all people could be forgiven. He rose to life on the third day, just as He said He would.

Do you wonder why we don't call our church buildings temples? For one thing, sacrifices were offered in temples. We don't need animal sacrifices to pay for our sins. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross did that once for all. It was perfect and final.

There's another reason. In Baptism, God gives us His Holy Spirit. So now, our own bodies are God's holy temples! God is with us in a special way, not just when we go to church, but every day, all the time.

### Journal:

*How can you care for your body like you would a temple? How can you "glorify God in your body" (v. 20)?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, thank You for Jesus' perfect sacrifice and for living in me. Amen.*

*E. G.*



## A Member of the Family

Connor and his dad stood toe-to-toe. “Connor,” said Dad, “you made a bad choice. You sinned, son.” Connor had taken something that didn’t belong to him. He stole money from his teacher’s desk at school.

Tears rolled down Connor’s face. He looked into his dad’s face and thought about what he had done.

“Son, I think you should go to your room for now. We will talk about this later,” his father said.

All evening, Connor sat in his room. *Why*, he thought. *Why did I do something so foolish? What if Dad doesn’t love me anymore?*

Then, the bedroom door opened. His father entered the room.

“Dad! I’m sorry!” Connor blurted out. “I am sorry that I took that money. If you don’t love me anymore, I understand.”

His father sat down next to him. What do you think Connor’s dad said?

“Oh, Connor,” Dad said, “I will never stop loving you. You will always be part of this family.” You see, Connor’s sin did not change the fact that he was a member of the family.

We are members of God’s family! Through the waters of Baptism, we become children of God. Though we are not perfect, God doesn’t kick us out or send us away. God loves us and promises we will always have a place with Him.

As the perfect child of God, Jesus made a way for us to be part of God’s family. He gave us the right to become children of God now and forever.

### Journal:

*What are the benefits of being a member of God’s family? What are the responsibilities of being a member of God’s family?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, through faith in Jesus, You have made me a member of Your family. Help me to live as a child of God. Amen.*

T. S.

# MAY

# 8

.....  
**Friday**  
.....

He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.



**John 1:11-13**

MAY

9

Saturday

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Acts 17:24-25

## All Day, Every Day

“How about when I am at soccer practice?” Simon asked.

“Yep! All day, every day!” his soccer coach replied.

“How about when I am eating breakfast?” Simon asked.

“Yep! All day, every day!” his soccer coach replied.

“Okay, one more. How about when I am riding on the school bus?”

This time, his coach was grinning and replied, “Yes, Simon. God is using you for His purposes all day, every day!”

Simon was absolutely amazed to know that God was using him. Simon was by far the smallest member of the school’s soccer team; everybody was at least a head taller than he was. Even more, Simon was the youngest player on the team by two whole months. Despite Simon’s being young and small, his coach insisted that God used him for His purposes.

God is at work in you even when you are doing everyday activities. When done in faith, walking your younger siblings to the bus stop or even playing with a friend are ways that God

uses you to care for other people. God’s Word tells us, “In Him we live and move and have our being” (v. 28).

Through faith in Jesus Christ, God has given you new life. You are now a new creation in Him! Since God has given you new life through Jesus, He is working through the little things of your life in order to accomplish His great purposes. Whether your day is filled with big projects or lots of little chores, God is at work in your life all day, every day!

### Journal:

*What activities did you do this week? How does God use those activities for good?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, thank You for making me a new creation. Use me for Your good purposes. Amen.*

T. S.

## A Fellow Citizen

Raul was embarrassed. Everyone else in school had ordinary names like Grant, Jack, or Molly. He was the only one named Raul. He came from another country, and more than half of the students could not pronounce his name correctly. He would always have to help them out by saying it very slowly: “Raa . . . OOL.”

The embarrassment he felt changed when Raul was baptized.

“How did it feel when you first arrived here from Portugal?” the pastor asked.

“Lonely. I felt lonely because everyone was a stranger to me. I felt like I did not belong here because I was so far from home,” Raul replied.

“After today, we will not be strangers anymore,” the pastor said. “Through Baptism, God makes us members of the same household. Through water and God’s Word, we become one in Christ. Do you want this?”

Raul nodded his head in agreement. He wanted to belong. He wanted God to make him a member of His family through Baptism.

“Raul, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen,” the pastor said.

Through God’s Word and the water of Baptism, Raul became a fellow citizen in the household of God.

Even though he was from far away and had a name that was hard to pronounce, Raul belonged to God’s household. He and his classmates now had something in common—Jesus Christ was their Savior! They were now all citizens of the same heavenly kingdom.

### Journal:

*Do you remember your Baptism? If you were too young to recall it, ask your parents about how you became a citizen in the household of God.*

### Pray:

*Dear God, through Your Word and water, You made me a member of Your family. Thank You! Use me in Your kingdom. Amen.*

T. S.

## MAY

# 10

.....  
**Sunday**  
.....

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

**Ephesians 2:19**

MAY

11

Monday

But now thus says the LORD, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine.”



Isaiah 43:1

## A Family Tree of Faith

Samantha traced her hand along the “limbs” of her family tree. She saw the names of her mother and father. Then she thought of what her parents had taught her. Samantha learned how to fish from her father and how to plant a garden from her mother.

Tracing her finger farther down the tree, she saw the names of her grandparents. Her grandfather had taught her how to cook, and her grandmother had taught her how to make strawberry jam.

As she looked at her family tree, she thought of all the neat things her family had passed on to her. Each generation had taught Samantha something important, something she would cherish for the rest of her life.

Although her family had taught her many lessons, she valued one above all the others. Can you guess what it was? It was learning what God had done for her through Jesus Christ!

She was blessed. In her family, each generation had taught the next that God loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to give her life eternal. Samantha’s family had taught her that Jesus came for all people—moms, dads, grandmas, grandpas, aunts, uncles, and cousins! Even now, her family members from long, long ago, whom she had never met, are resting from their labors with Jesus.

You may be in a family like Samantha’s, a family where everyone believes in Jesus. That would be great. But you may not be in that kind of family. You may be one of only a handful of people in your family who believe in Jesus as your Savior. But even if that is true, you are still a part of God’s big family. You are listed on His family tree.

### Journal:

*Who taught you about Jesus? Is that person a member of your family?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, through Your Holy Spirit, I have learned many great things. You have given me faith to trust in Jesus. Thank You, God. Please keep me close to You always. Amen.*

T. S.

## Two Important Names

Amos had been enjoying his favorite activity—barking at and chasing squirrels. Then, he ran deep into the woods. Jackie was afraid she would never see her beloved dog, Amos, again.

Fortunately, a neighbor found him and brought him home.

“Amos! There you are!” Jackie exclaimed.

Just saying his name made Jackie happy. He was not just any dog. He was a specific dog with a specific name.

We name things we love. We name things that are special and unique. That is why your parents named you when you were born! You are not just anyone; you are a specific person with a specific name. Your birth certificate proudly documents your full name for anyone to see.

Along with the name you were given at birth, you were given another name in Baptism. You were baptized into the name of Jesus. Through water and God’s Word, the name of Jesus was forever given to you. Now, you personally bear the name of Jesus! Your baptismal certificate proudly documents your new name for all of heaven and earth to see.

Since you bear the name of Jesus, you can forgive in His name, love in His name, and have compassion in His name. You have two names: the name your parents gave you and the name your heavenly Father gave you. Wherever you go, you now bear the name of Jesus.

### Journal:

*How did your parents choose your name?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, I have not always realized how special I am to You. I have not always acted as Your child. Forgive me! Thank You for calling me in Baptism to be Yours. Help me proudly to bear the name of Jesus wherever I am. Amen. T. S.*

MAY

12

Tuesday

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.”

**Acts 2:37-39**

MAY

13

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.



**Matthew  
10:26-27**

## A Message from the Rooftops

Jessica loved to listen to Grandpa Fischer tell stories. She could sit for hours and listen to him talk about the years he spent in the army. He was a member of a special group called the Signal Corps. His job was to deliver messages. He carried backpack radios and built massive control towers. Sometimes, he even had to send secret messages using something called Morse code.

As he told stories from his time in the army with the Signal Corps, Jessica realized that the messages Grandpa Fischer helped deliver were very important. They were of life-and-death importance. If the messages were not delivered, the lives of many people would have been in danger.

His stories reminded Jessica of the message of Jesus. She recalled reading in the Bible about how Jesus sent out His disciples with a message of life-and-death importance. Jesus

wanted all to know about the salvation He came to bring through His coming death and resurrection.

Unlike the secret army messages that Grandpa Fischer delivered, the message of Jesus is for everyone! It is a life-and-death message for all to hear and for all to believe. The Good News of Jesus is a message that offers eternal life. It is not a top-secret, classified message meant only for a few. Instead, "Jesus is Lord" is a message of eternal life for the whole world!

### Journal:

*Who delivered the message of Jesus to you? How can you support ways to deliver the message of Jesus to others?*

### Pray:

*Gracious God, forgive me when I don't realize how important it is that all people hear that Jesus is the Savior. Use me in my various callings and through my offerings to proclaim the life-giving message of Jesus. Amen.* T. S.

# A Call Unanswered

Ring . . . ring. Jonathan felt guiltier by the second. He knew exactly who was calling; he could see the last name on the phone's caller identification. It was Zach.

"Jonathan, why don't you pick up the phone?" his father said as he entered the kitchen.

"Dad, I don't like spending time with Zach! He's okay, I guess, but he's not a Christian, and he talks way too much. Some people at school don't like him for that reason," said Jonathan.

"You sound a bit like Jonah!" his father said.

"Jonah? I don't know who Jonah is," Jonathan replied.

"Go grab your Bible," said Dad. "After you read about Jonah, you might think twice about screening your calls!" his father laughed.

Jonathan read about how God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and tell the people that God wanted them to repent. But Jonah did not care for the people of Nineveh.

Then Jonah got on a boat and ran away from God's call! Reading about the giant fish swallowing Jonah and spitting him out three days later made Jonathan just about fall out of his seat.

"Dad, God really wants everyone to be sorry for their sins, doesn't He? He wants everyone to know about Jesus. I wonder if I made a huge mistake. I'm sorry now I didn't answer the phone. You know, maybe if I got to know Zach better, I could invite him to Sunday School and church," Jonathan said.

"Well, son," said his father. "There's the phone. If you like, you can call him back."

## Journal:

*In your journal, write the names of people who have been Christian friends to you. Thank God for them.*

## Pray:

*Dear God, when You give me opportunities to show others Your love, don't let me run away. Instead, lead me to run to You for help. Thank You for forgiving me through Your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

MAY

14

Thursday

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before Me."



MAY

15

Friday

But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

**Jonah 1:3**

## Not Them

Sam stared at the headline: “Over 1,200 Christians Killed in Nigeria.”

Sam didn’t need to read the story; he’d heard about it at school. More Christians killed by radicals, dead because they confessed Christ.

It made Sam angry, angry enough to hate.

Sam tossed his phone facedown on his bed. Why didn’t God just destroy those radicals? Why didn’t God kill them?

They’d be getting exactly what they deserved, Sam thought.

But his thoughts made Sam uncomfortable. They made him squirm. Hadn’t Sam’s parents taught him that God loved all people? Hadn’t Jesus come to save everyone?

*Even them, Lord?* Sam wondered. *Even those who murder Your people?*

Sam sighed. He knew it was true. God wanted all people to be saved, even those who had done horrendous things. In fact, Sam could think of many examples in the Bible: the thief on the cross, Paul, and even the Ninevites.

Yep, the Ninevites were awful people, arrogant and cruel. When God told Jonah to preach to them, he ran in the opposite direction instead. And if Sam remembered correctly, that decision didn’t go so well for Jonah.

Sam sighed again. *I should probably pray for them instead of hate them*, Sam thought. *Only God can change hearts for good. God could change my own heart too.*

### Journal:

*Who is persecuting God’s people today?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, help those who persecute Your people to come to faith. Amen.*

*M. B.*





**MAY**

**16**

**Saturday**

Arise, call out to your  
god!



**Jonah 1:6**

## Hope during Hardship

Laura sat on the couch. “Dad?”

“What’s up?” her father asked.

“The principal asked for a moment of silence today for Mrs. Johnson. She’s really sick,” Laura said.

“I’m sorry to hear it,” said Dad. “Did you pray for her?”

“I did, and so did some of my friends. Even Rachel prayed!”

“Does that surprise you?” Dad asked.

“Well, yeah, sort of. Rachel always says there is no God, or if there is, she doesn’t know which god is the right one. Why would she pray if she doesn’t believe?”

“Well, sometimes hardships remind us that we won’t live forever. Christians know what happens after death because Jesus died and rose again, but others aren’t so sure. Their hardship causes them to turn to God with hope. Remember the men on Jonah’s boat? They were afraid of drowning and asked Jonah to pray. When God rescued them and calmed the water, they came to faith.”

“So do you think Rachel has faith?”

“Well, it’s clear she hopes there is a God, and it sounds like she may be open to hearing about Jesus! I’ll pray for Mrs. Johnson tonight, but I’ll also be praying that God gives you the opportunity to share true hope in Christ with Rachel.”

### Journal:

*How does Jesus offer me hope during hardships?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for being my hope. Help me to share Your hope with others. Amen.*

*M. B.*

## True Healing

Pierce sat in the chair beside Grandpa's bed, listening to the steady beep of machines.

"Hey, Gramps, how are you?"

Grandpa opened his eyes and smiled, "Well, I've been better."

"It sounds like you'll be farming again pretty soon."

"Oh, I don't know," Grandpa said. "I might let your dad take this season." Grandpa squeezed Pierce's hand and smiled.

"Gramps . . . were you scared?" Pierce asked.

"I was," Grandpa said. "I knew I needed help, and I was afraid it wasn't going to come in time. My chest was hurting so badly I could barely . . ."

"It's okay, you don't need to talk about it."

Grandpa shook his head. "I was afraid at first, but I also knew God was with me. No matter what, He was going to save me," Grandpa said, "and that gave me peace."

"You knew God would fix your heart?" Pierce asked.

"Because Christ died on the cross and rose again so I might live eternally, I knew He would heal me here or in heaven."

"I prayed for you," Pierce said.

"I prayed too. God saved me from death at my Baptism, and He did so again today. God is always faithful."

### Journal:

*How has God been faithful to you?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, help me to trust in Your salvation. Amen.*

*M. B.*

MAY

17

Sunday

I called out to the LORD,  
out of my distress. . . .  
Salvation belongs to the  
LORD.

*Jonah 2:2, 9*

MAY

18

Monday

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time.



Jonah 3:1

Mrs. Sheffield laughed. “Who told you that leads have to be perfect? God knows we can’t be perfect, and I know the same thing. Because our sins are forgiven through Jesus, God gives us the opportunity to start over again many times in life. I hope to do the same for you,” said Mrs. Sheffield.

Amelia thought about it. *Even when I made mistakes today, she kept encouraging me. She could have been angry, but instead she’s been kind.*

“Thanks, Mrs. Sheffield. I’ll keep trying.”

“God doesn’t give up on His people, and I’m not going to give up on you, Amelia. You’ll be fantastic!”

### Journal:

*How has God allowed you to try again?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, forgive me when I fail and help me to follow You. Amen. M. B.*

## Take Two

Amelia sighed. It had been a long, difficult practice. *Can we just be done?* she thought to herself.

“Okay, let’s take a quick break! Be back on stage in five minutes,” the director said. “Amelia, can I see you for a minute?”

Amelia stepped off the stage and sat down by her director.

“You seem a little off today. Is something wrong?” Mrs. Sheffield asked.

Amelia sighed. “I’m just not getting it. The dance steps. I keep messing them up.”

“They’re difficult dance steps; it’s okay if you’re struggling a bit.”

“Yeah, but I’m a lead in this musical; I should be able to do it by now.”

## Moved to Repent

Marlee cried. She wept and wept some more. And though she'd been quiet, someone had heard.

Her older brother knocked softly on her door. "Mar, are you okay?" Jackson asked.

*If I don't answer, maybe he'll go away,* Marlee thought. But if Jackson was anything, it was persistent.

"Mar, I'm going to come in now, okay?"

*And kind,* Marlee thought, *persistent and kind.*

"Are you hurt?" Jackson asked.

Marlee shook her head and wiped her eyes. "No, I'm just sorry . . ." She couldn't help it; she started crying again. "I did something bad, and I can't fix it. I'm so ashamed."

Jackson sat on the edge of her bed. "I don't know what you did, Mar, but I do know you're sorry, and I know you're forgiven because Jesus died on the cross and rose to pay for this sin too."

Marlee's eyes welled with tears. "I just don't know . . ."

"God still loves you, Mar. We all do. There's nothing you can do to change that. And if there are consequences, we'll get through them together. It's going to get better; you'll see."

### Journal:

*When have you been moved to repent?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for the Law, which shows me my sin so that I might repent and be forgiven. Amen.*

*M. B.*

## MAY

# 19

.....  
**Tuesday**  
.....

And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.



**Jonah 3:5**

MAY

20

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.



**Jonah 4:1**

## Not Fair

Seth tossed his bag on the kitchen floor. “It’s just not fair,” he said.

“What’s not fair?” asked Mom.

“Mr. Johnson invited Joe to be in student government today.”

“Aren’t you in student government too?” Mom asked.

“Yeah, but Joe can be really mean. He doesn’t deserve to be in student government,” said Seth.

“Hmm . . . it sounds to me like you can relate to Jonah,” Mom said.

“Jonah who?” asked Seth.

Mom smiled, “Jonah the prophet. Remember him?”

“You mean the guy who was swallowed by the fish?” Seth asked. “I’m not exactly on a boat, Mom,” Seth sighed.

“Oh, you’re on a boat all right—a boat that’s floating on a sea of anger,” Mom said gently.

“I have a right to be!” Seth said angrily.

Mom smiled. “I think Jonah felt the same way. God told him to preach repentance to the Ninevites, but Jonah refused because the Ninevites were known for their cruelty and arrogance. They definitely didn’t deserve God’s grace. But God loved them too, despite their sin. In the same way, God sent Jesus to die and rise again in order to remove our sins. Could Mr. Johnson be showing kindness to Joe? Could he be trying to care for him?”

“Maybe,” sighed Seth. “Even though it’s not fair, maybe you’re right; kindness should be free.”

### Journal:

*Who needs kindness in your life?*

### Pray:

*Dear Jesus, please help me to show Your love to everyone, even those who don’t deserve it. Amen.*

*M. B.*

# Mighty Mercy

Liam sat nervously as the classroom emptied.

“Liam, do you know why you needed to stay after class?” asked Mr. Austin.

Liam sighed, “Because of my essay.”

“What about your essay?” asked Mr. Austin.

Liam looked up sheepishly. “It’s not my writing,” Liam said.

“You’re right; it’s not your writing,” said Mr. Austin. “Do you know what happens when students turn in work that’s not their own?”

Liam wiped his palms on his shorts. “Yeah, they get a detention.”

“And a zero on the paper,” said Mr. Austin.

Liam swallowed. His Mom was going to be so mad.

“I deserve it,” Liam said. “I’m sorry.”

Mr. Austin sat down. “Liam, I want you to rewrite the paper, in your own words this time, and I’m not going to give you a detention.”

Surprised, Liam looked up.

“I’m going to forgive you, just like Jesus has forgiven me, and I’m going to take away your consequences too.”

Liam’s eyes filled with tears.

“Mercy can change lives for the better,” said Mr. Austin. “I’m hoping this small gift of mercy will affect your decisions in the future.”

Liam swallowed the lump in his throat, “It definitely will. Thank you, Mr. Austin.”

## Journal:

*How has God shown you mercy?*

## Pray:

*Dear Jesus, thank You for being slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.*

*M. B.*

MAY

21

Thursday

You are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

**Jonah 4:2**

MAY

22

Friday

If YOU, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.

*Psalm 130:3-4*

## A List of Wrongs

Shantel's parents went out for the night and left her big sister, Natalia, in charge. Shantel wasn't listening to her sister, but their parents didn't allow Natalia to punish Shantel. So Natalia started to make a list of everything Shantel did wrong. She planned to give the list to her parents so they would punish Shantel when they got home.

Natalia's list was long! "Shantel jumped on the couches after I told her not to. Shantel hit me when I told her to stop jumping on the couches. Shantel wore her shoes on the carpet. Shantel left three candy wrappers on the end table by the lamp." The list went on and on!

When Shantel's parents got home, Natalia gave them the huge list of wrongs Shantel had done. Before her parents could say a word, Shantel yelled, "I know, I'm in trouble!" Then she ran to her room and slammed the door.

Can you imagine what it would be like if someone followed you around, just waiting for you to mess up? Then, when you did, they added it to a list of everything you've done wrong? That would be embarrassing!

God does see everything we do. He knows when we are on our best behavior and when we fail. Thankfully, He doesn't keep a record of our iniquities—that means our sins. Instead, He took the punishment for our sins and made up for all of them on the cross. Instead of punishment, He gives us forgiveness because of Jesus.

### Journal:

*How would you feel if someone wrote a list of all the things that you did wrong?*

### Pray:

*Thank You, Lord, for not keeping track of everything I do wrong. Thank You for forgiving my sins and loving me anyway. Help me to live in a way that would make You proud. Amen.*

F. S.



## Friends See More Than the Outside

Alexia moved to a new town in the middle of the school year. Her new school had uniforms. She had never worn a uniform to school before. She didn't mind it too much. Getting ready in the morning was easier because she didn't have to worry about picking an outfit.

It took Alexia a while to make friends in her new school. She was excited when Kate asked her to hang out that Saturday. When Kate saw Alexia walking up to her house, she was a little surprised. Alexia was wearing cowgirl boots, a denim skirt, and a sparkly shirt. Kate was wearing all black.

Kate said, "If we didn't have uniforms, we might not be friends. I would have looked at you and assumed we had nothing in common." Alexia laughed because she was thinking the same thing. Sometimes people assume they won't get along well with others who look different from themselves. That day, the girls were thankful for uniforms, because they helped them look beyond what their eyes could see. If they were looking at the outside, they might have missed the opportunity to make a new friend.

People often judge one another based on outward appearance. Sometimes we misjudge people based on their looks, their family's car, or the stuff they own. But God doesn't do that. He doesn't judge us based on our clothes or shoes, bikes or devices. He looks past all of that and right to our heart. For Christians, God looks into our heart and calls us "friend" because of Jesus!

### Journal:

*Write about a time when you witnessed someone being misjudged because of his or her outward appearance. Pray for that person and for the one who passed judgment.*

### Pray:

*Thank You, Father, for not judging me like the world sometimes does. Thank You for loving me, giving me faith, and calling me Your friend! Amen.* F. S.

MAY

23

.....  
Saturday  
.....

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

**1 Samuel 16:7**

MAY

24

Sunday

When I thought, “My foot slips,” Your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, Your consolations cheer my soul.

*Psalm 94:18-19*

## I’ve Got You

Jack was sweating . . . and not just because it was hot! His whole class was watching as he tried to climb the rock wall on a field trip. His hands were sweaty, and he was losing his grip. His toes were balancing on little pegs, and he knew he couldn’t go any further up the wall. Jack screamed, “I’m going to fall!”

“You will not fall, Jack. I have you!” called Mr. Williams, Jack’s teacher. Jack was wearing a harness that was connected by a rope to Mr. Williams’ harness. If Jack fell, the harness, rope, and Mr. Williams would all catch him. Jack was safe, but Jack was scared.

Finally, it happened. Jack’s feet slipped off the pegs and he started to fall! Before he could even let out a scream, he felt the pull of the rope. Mr. Williams yelled, “I have you!”

Jack found himself still high in the air, just sitting in the climbing harness. Jack’s teacher slowly lowered him down until he stood on solid ground. Mr. Williams explained, “I had you the whole time!”

We all find ourselves in trouble sometimes. No matter what kind of trouble you are in, God always has you. When you feel like life might knock you down, remember the kind of God you have. God loves you, gave His Son, Jesus, for you, and is with you always!

### Journal:

*Tell of a time when you were scared but God totally took care of you.*

### Pray:

*Father, when I am in trouble, You hold me up. I know I am safe with You!  
Amen.*

*F. S.*

# Liberty for All

The Liberty Memorial is a tall, round tower in Kansas City. It was built to remind people of the struggles of World War I, “the war to end all wars.” The people of Kansas City wanted to honor the men and women who fought in that war. They wanted to believe that there wouldn’t be any more global wars. Sadly, we realize that things turned out differently.

What exactly is liberty? According to the dictionary, it’s “the ability to act, speak, or think the way one pleases.” That’s a basic right we have as citizens of the US. We can do as we please as long as we don’t step on someone else’s rights. These rights are written down in the laws of our country. We are free within the limits of the law.

We Christians have another kind of liberty. Christ has freed us from sin through His suffering and death. Now, we are free to be slaves to God. Freedom and slavery seem to be opposite ideas. But they aren’t, because God’s love frees us to love others in His name.

Christians have their own “liberty memorial.” It’s the empty tomb of Easter. Jesus has fought the most important war and won! Now, we know that our greatest enemies—sin, death, and the devil—can no longer threaten us with destruction. Jesus will lead us safely through our earthly battles. Then, one day, we’ll return home to heaven in triumph, full of praise for our commander.

## Journal:

*What earthly freedom do you appreciate the most? Why? What spiritual freedom means the most to you? Why?*

## Pray:

*Dear Lord, government rulers come and go, but Your power is forever. Thank You for Your promises, which will never fail. Today, may the victory of Your cross go before me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.*

J. L.

MAY

25

Monday

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

**John 8:31-3**

MAY

26

Tuesday

Yes, He loved His people, all His holy ones were in His hand; so they followed in Your steps, receiving direction from You.

**Deuteronomy  
33:3**

## Follow the Leader

Messiah Lutheran School has a fantastic band! But, at the spring concert, something went wrong during their Disney medley. One trumpet player skipped a line of music by mistake. The other trumpet players thought they had made a mistake, so they followed him. Then the entire brass section followed the trumpets into the wrong part of the song.

Soon, half of the band was playing “A Whole New World” from *Aladdin* and the other half was playing “Part of Your World” from *The Little Mermaid*. Through it all, the director kept his beat steady. During a flute solo, the director managed to get everyone back on the same page. They finished the song beautifully as they carefully followed the director, and only the director!

Deuteronomy 33 says that God’s people receive direction from the Lord and follow Him.

Just like the band that followed the trumpet instead of their leader, we can be pulled away from God by many things.

God gave us His Word, the Bible, to direct us in the right way to live. When we get off track, He lovingly directs us to the cross, where Jesus paid the price for all our mistakes. Then, He leads us on again!

### Journal:

*Write of a time when you didn’t follow God’s direction. What happened? Did you ask God to forgive you?*

### Pray:

*Lord, I’m sorry I don’t always follow Your directions! Please forgive me and get me back where I should be. Thank You for loving me and never giving up on me! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.*

F. S.

# Adopted, Cleaned, and Loved

The Smiths adopted a little girl named Emma. When she arrived at their house, she was very dirty. Her hair was matted down, and her fingernails were very scratchy.

Even so, the Smiths loved her right away! They gave her a bath and found the most beautiful curly, brown hair under all that dirt. They clipped her nails so she wouldn't scrape herself anymore. They got her some new clothes to wear, read books to her, and gave her a teddy bear to hug at night.

Emma went from being alone to having a family. She went from dirty to clean. She went from being abandoned to being adopted into a family where she would be loved and protected. She became a Smith and was so happy!

The Bible tells us that God adopted us into His family through our Baptism. Our sin made us dirty and separated us from God. But, because Jesus Christ died and rose again to save us, our sin was cleaned up.

Jesus brought us into God's family. He takes care of us and gives us His good gifts. He even gave us His name to call on in prayer anytime. We are His children. With Jesus, we have a place to belong and be loved!

## Journal:

*What is the best part of having a family?*

## Pray:

*Thank You, Lord, for making me part of Your family through Jesus! I love that I belong to You! Amen.*

MAY

27

.....  
**Wednesday**  
.....

In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

*Ephesians 1:4-6*

MAY

28

Thursday

I sought the LORD, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

**Psalm 34:4-6**

In the Bible, the Book of Psalms is full of songs and prayers that God's people use to pray to Him. They are full of people being worried about something and calling on God to help. When you read the Book of Psalms, it's like reading a prayer book for any emotion you could feel. It's a great book to read when you feel scared or stressed.

### Journal:

*Think about things that stress you or make you feel anxious. Write a letter to God explaining your stress to Him. Include a request for Him to help you.*

### Pray:

*Lord, I am calling out to You. I believe that You can help me. Please help me deal with all the stresses of life. Help me put my trust in You forever. Amen. F. S.*

## God Hears and Saves Us

Life was too much for Samuel. He worried a lot. He would often get stressed and start to feel sick to his stomach. He would get migraines and sometimes miss school because of them. When he wasn't feeling sick, he would feel anxious about the next time he would get sick.

Samuel's parents spent a lot of time trying to figure out if he was allergic to anything. They took certain foods out of his diet. They took him to special doctors. They took him to counseling. Some of those things helped, but some added to his stress. The one thing that always helped was praying.

Samuel's mom and dad would pray with him, read Bible verses to him, and remind him how big and strong God is. They would say, "God is watching out for you. He went all the way to the cross to prove it." Then they would pray, "We know You hear our prayers, God. We know You saved us from sin. Please save us from this trouble too! Help us put our trust and hope in You always! Amen."

## Playing the Game

The Bible is like the ball used in a baseball game. Let me explain.

The same ball is used for defense and offense. Defensively, the ball is used to keep a team from scoring points or runs. When the ball is caught, the other team is out. Offensively, when the ball is hit past the “enemy,” the team can score runs. The team with the higher score is the winner.

The Bible is used for defense and offense. Defensively, it shows us our sins: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (v. 23). The Bible lists the Ten Commandments and other rules that we’re supposed to keep. As we read them, we realize we can never keep them perfectly. Our sinful nature and sinful acts put us out of our relationship with God like the ball in the game gets players out. We can’t score a single run by ourselves. We call this part the Law.

The Bible’s Gospel is like the offensive play. It gets past Satan and his temptations. Offensively, the Bible shows us our Savior. The verses following today’s reading record how Jesus won salvation for us: “[All] are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (v. 24).

Jesus, our designated hitter, stepped up to the plate for us. He hit a home run when He died on the cross and rose again. He won forgiveness for all sins and eternal life for all believers.

For children of God, the game is won! Let the crowd rejoice!

### Journal:

*How does it feel to make an out? What sin is “putting you out” today? Confess that sin to God or someone else you trust. How does it feel to score a run? How has Jesus helped you today? Have you thanked Him?*

### Pray:

*Dear God, thanks for the Bible. Parts of it make me feel bad, and other parts make me glad. I know I need to hear both parts, because I know I need You. Thanks for being my Helper and Savior. Amen.*

*M. R.*

MAY

29

Friday

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

**Romans 3:21-22**

MAY

30

Saturday

And He told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Luke 13:6-9

## Fix It or Forget It

Things break. That is a reality of life. What do you have that is broken? A couple of weeks ago, my TV broke. I have a broken screen door. When something breaks, I either fix it (or have someone else fix it), or I throw it away.

Do you have any broken trees? Jesus tells a parable in Luke 13 about a man with a “broken” fig tree in his vineyard. The tree is not doing what it’s supposed to do—produce figs. The owner wants to get rid of it. At first, he tells the gardener to chop it down. But the gardener wants to save the tree. He tells the owner to give him one more year to dig around the tree and fertilize it. If the tree doesn’t bear fruit next year, then he will chop it down.

Who is the parable about? It’s about God and it’s about us. He expects us, His trees, to bear the fruit of right living. But we are dead trees—dead in sin. The bad things that we think, do, and say do not bear fruit. Since we’re broken people, our heavenly Father can either fix us or decide to forget about us and start over with new people.

The good news is that God in His mercy, like the vinedresser in our Bible reading, chose to fix us. He did this by sending Jesus to earth. Jesus took all our brokenness, all our sin, to the cross. By dying on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our repair.

Through Baptism and in His Word, He gives us faith to believe in Him so we are new people. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we bear fruit.

### Journal:

*What is “broken” in your life now? How can God fix it?*

### Pray:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for fixing me through Jesus’ death and glorious resurrection. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, may I bear fruit. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.*

M. R.



# Better Together

When the western part of North America began to open up in the 1800s, many people traveled west in search of things like gold, land, and a new life for their families. There were no paved roads or easy ways to find and cook food. People packed everything they had in covered wagons, which meant they had to watch out for robbers. For safety, people traveled in groups called wagon trains. Families who traveled together watched out for one another.

Doesn't that sound nice? A group of people headed for a new life together, keeping one another safe along the way? Being part of a church is a lot like that. Christians go through life together. Life is sometimes hard, and living the way God wants can be difficult. So God put His people together to support one another.

If someone is in the hospital, you can visit or send cards. If a parent loses his or her job, people from church can bring a meal or help find new work. When someone makes a bad choice, the church family is there to remind the person what God wants and offer forgiveness.

Your church is a gift from God! It is full of people who watch out for you. It is also full of people who need you to watch out for them. Christians, no matter how old or young, can help one another through life when it gets hard. God knew His people needed one another and gave us the Church.

## Journal:

*Tell about a time when you saw Christians helping one another.*

## Pray:

*Thank You, God, for taking care of me through my church! Thanks for using me to take care of others. Help us all love one another. Amen.* F. S.

MAY

31

Sunday

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

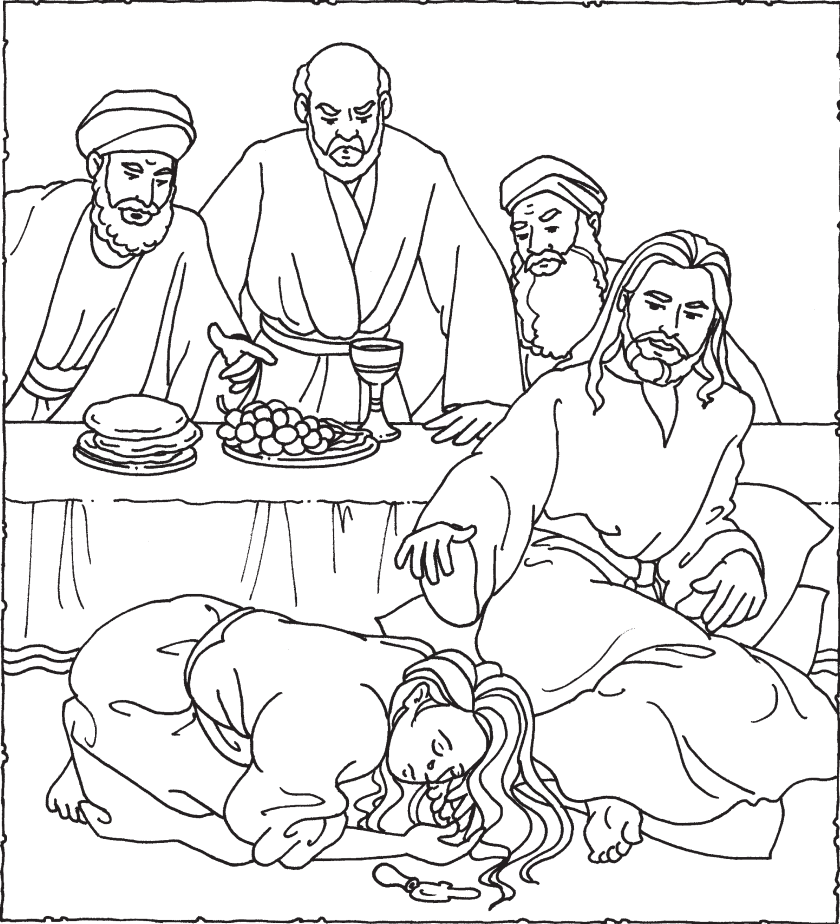
**Ecclesiastes**  
**4:9-10**

May

**Bible puzzles, games, and activities**

**Solutions on page 120**

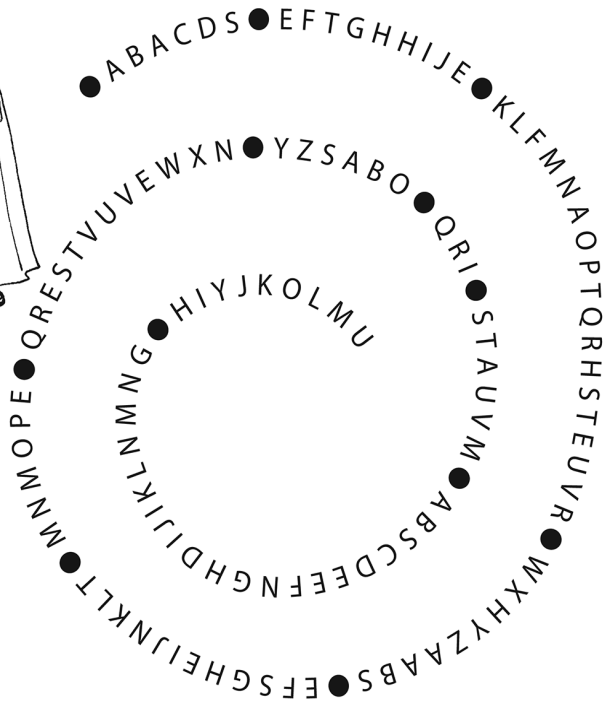


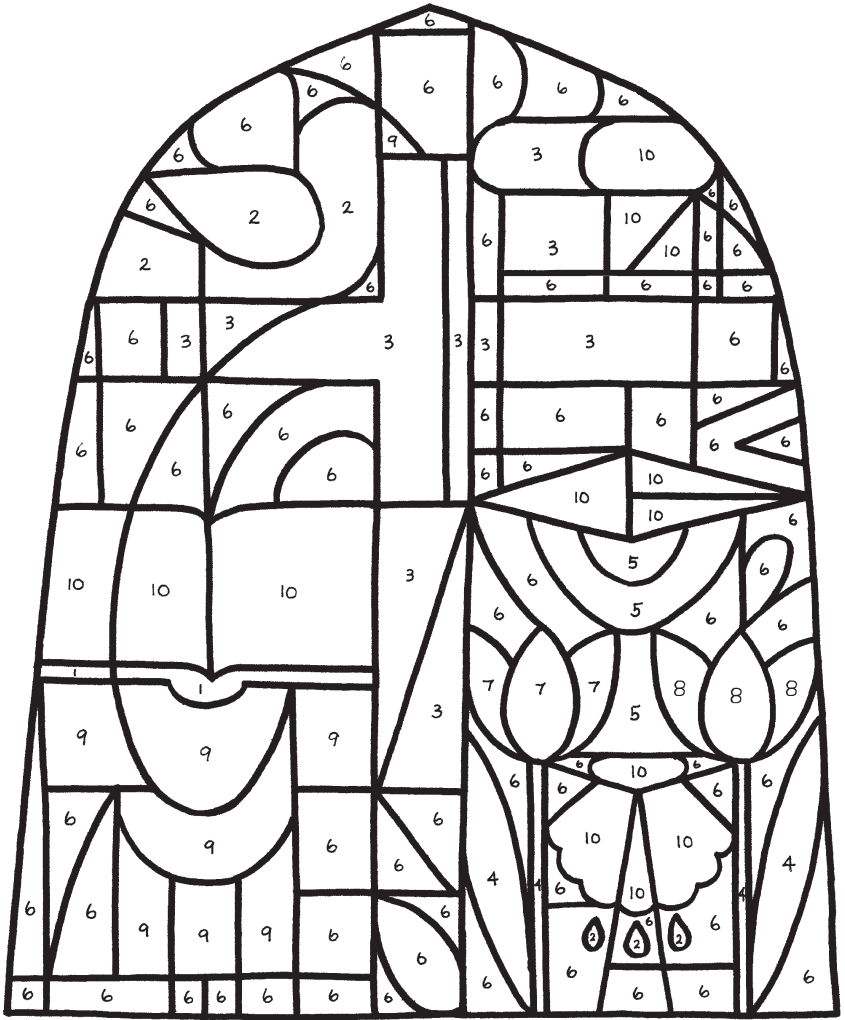


Cross out the letters in alphabetical order to reveal the hidden message.

[Jesus said,] " \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ●  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ● , \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ●  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ● \_\_\_\_\_ ● ."

John 20:21





# My Coloring Page



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## Answer Key

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### Puzzle 1 Answer

AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, EVEN SO I AM SENDING YOU.