

Miracles

Let Him Be Known



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Prayer, Fasting, and Consecration | 2023

Family Devotional



EVERY NATION

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Contributors: Victory Kids Fort Writers Pool

Illustrations by: Glorienne Diaz and Roy Diaz

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This family devotional is designed to be used by parents with children from the ages of two to twelve.

Fasting 101

Connect

All of us have needs and wants. Needs are things that we cannot live without. Wants are things we would like to have. What are some of your needs? What are some of your wants? There are many things we need and want. But sometimes, we focus so much on our needs and wants that we put aside our relationship with God. Fasting lets us focus more on God by setting aside our needs and wants.

What is fasting?

Fasting is stopping an activity (usually eating) for a period of time to know and hear God more. We replace eating or using our gadgets with time with God. This means praying, worshiping, and reading the Bible. These activities strengthen our relationship with God.

When our parents speak to us, we should pay attention and listen to them. Fasting helps us pay attention and listen to God. It helps us put aside distractions. We say to God, "I am going to listen to you because you are my Father. I trust you!"

Jesus gave us an example of fasting in Matthew 4. Jesus knew that he would need strength and power for his ministry. He prepared by fasting for forty days in the desert. During this time, he was tempted by Satan. His response to that temptation is the truth we can hold on to for strength when we fast:

Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man must not live only on bread. He must also live on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4

Fasting is usually keeping yourself from eating and drinking as you devote more time to God. But you can also fast from different media (TV, video games) and technology (gadgets, internet) if you cannot fast from food. The important thing is to keep your focus away from the things the world offers to spend more time with God.

BEFORE FASTING

1. Pray

Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. Write down your specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.

2. Commit

Pray about the kind of fast that you will do and commit to it ahead of time. Ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decision. Also, ask your parents and maybe even your doctor if you are allowed to do a specific type of food fast.

3. Act

If you will be fasting from food, start eating smaller portions a few days before you fast. Avoid sugary and fatty foods. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast.

WHILE FASTING

1. Focus

Set aside time to read God's Word and pray. This devotional will help you go through your fast. Just be ready to listen to God's voice and do what the Holy Spirit is telling you.

2. Pray

If you can, join at least one prayer meeting in your church. Pray for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and missions throughout the week.

3. Fill Up

During mealtimes, if you're fasting from food, read the Bible and pray instead. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Keep in mind that you may find yourself becoming physically weak, tired, impatient, or irritated. If you're doing a different type of fast, read the Bible and pray during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from (for example, browsing through social media or playing video games).

AFTER FASTING

1. Eat

If you fasted from food, reintroduce solid food gradually. Your body will need time to adjust to a normal diet. Start with fruits, juices, and salad, then add more vegetables. Eat small portions throughout the day. It may be tempting, but try not to eat junk food and sweets right away. If you've finished a different type of fast, remember what God revealed to you as you spent time with him. Take what you learned from the fast into your everyday life.

2. Pray

Don't stop praying! Trust that God will keep his promises and knows what he's doing. Don't stop believing in and listening to God all year. Be in faith and expect God to answer your prayers!

Our Plan

Day 1

FASTING OPTIONS FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

- Social media fast _____
 - Gadget fast _____
 - Skip one meal _____
 - Other: _____
- Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend: _____

Day 2

FASTING OPTIONS FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

- Social media fast _____
 - Gadget fast _____
 - Skip one meal _____
 - Other: _____
- Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend: _____

Day 3

FASTING OPTIONS FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

- Social media fast _____
 - Gadget fast _____
 - Skip one meal _____
 - Other: _____
- Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend: _____

Day 4

FASTING OPTIONS FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

Social media fast _____

Gadget fast _____

Skip one meal _____

Other: _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend: _____

Day 5

FASTING OPTIONS FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

Social media fast _____

Gadget fast _____

Skip one meal _____

Other: _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend: _____

We are thankful to God for...

How did God answer your prayers in 2022?

For 2023, we will seek God and trust him in these areas . . .

What are your prayer requests for the year?

My Family (e.g., good health for parents and siblings)

My School (e.g., good grades)

My Friends (e.g., for friends to know Jesus)

Others (e.g., for more people to know Christ)

“Again, here is what I tell you. Suppose two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for. My Father in heaven will do it for you.”

Matthew 18:19

Did you know?

Every Nation is in **80** nations around the world!

Is there a nation that God is leading you to pray for? Ask God how he can use your family to be a blessing to that nation and for the gospel to be preached there.

Continue to pray that God would open doors for more Every Nation church plants in the remaining **115** nations.

“Ask me, and I will give the nations to you. All the nations on earth will belong to you.” **Psalm 2:8**



Introduction

The Purpose of Miracles

CONNECT

Let's take a look at some of the signs used every day! Can you guess what these signs mean?

1.  _____

2.  _____

3.  _____

4.  _____

5.  _____

Did we answer them all correctly? Let's find out after we read today's Bible story.

Why do you think we need to have signs? They are meant to point us to something or a place. They help us understand where we need to go and avoid being lost.

READ THE WORD

Let's read from Acts 1.

⁵“John baptized with water. But in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”⁶Then the apostles gathered around Jesus and asked him a question. “Lord,” they said, “are you going to give the kingdom back to Israel now?”⁷He said to them, “You should not be concerned about times or dates. The Father has set them by his own authority.⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other.” **Acts 1:5-8**

In this story, Jesus gave his followers some instructions and encouragement before he went to heaven. We also see in Matthew 28 how Jesus commanded them to make disciples of all nations. Imagine telling people from all over the world about Jesus! How many people do you think you can talk to about him? With their own ability, this seemed like an impossible task for a small group of disciples. Thankfully, all things are possible with God.

“I am the LORD. I am the God of all people. Is anything too hard for me?” **Jeremiah 32:27**

Jesus replied, “Things that are impossible with people are possible with God.” **Luke 18:27**

Acts 1 tells us that Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with them as they share to others about him. The Holy Spirit would guide them and give them power to tell others what Jesus did. This “power” refers to miraculous power that doesn't come from man, but only from God.

What are miracles and why are they important? Miracles are extraordinary events that cannot be explained by the laws of nature and science and are considered to be the work of God. They are amazing ways that God gets

involved in our daily lives beyond what is normal. Whenever the gospel was proclaimed in the book of Acts, God would often back it up with a miracle.

While miracles may seem grand and supernatural, they are not meant to be an end in themselves. We are not meant to be satisfied with the miracle alone. They are signs that point others to who Jesus is and what he has done.

Miracles still happen, even today. God is still intervening and making himself known through miracles. He loves to do these to testify the truthfulness of the gospel.

In the coming days, during our prayer and fasting, we will be reading from the book of Acts about many more miracles that will fill you with wonder and awe at God's power, love, and presence.



HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

2–6 years old

- ▶ Have you ever seen a cloud or a rainbow in the sky?
- ▶ Can you make a cloud or a rainbow?

7–12 years old

- ▶ What is the most amazing thing you see in nature?
- ▶ How does the sun rise and set every day?
- ▶ What is something God can do that man can't do?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ What is the most extraordinary thing you can do?
- ▶ Have you seen or experienced a miracle in your life? What was it?

God uses miracles to point us to something greater—a loving relationship of knowing God and letting him be known. Today, he is offering this same power and love to us. Would you like to receive this and share this truth with others?



PRAY

Dear God, I praise you because you are powerful. Thank you for all the miracles around me every day. Thank you for giving me the Holy Spirit, who will help me tell other people about you and your love for them. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

Rabbit in a Hat

The hat trick is a classic magic trick where a performer will produce an object (traditionally a rabbit or a bouquet of flowers) out of an apparently empty top hat.

In its simplest form, the trick works by placing the hat on a specially made table or chest. Both the hat and the surface it is placed on will have a hidden opening in them, through which an object stored in a compartment in the table or chest can be pulled.

Alternatively, the performer can produce an item hidden in his or her sleeve using sleight of hand and misdirection. This eliminates the need to place the hat on a surface and also allows the performer to give the hat to an audience member for inspection. However, producing a rabbit from a hat using nothing but sleight of hand is a much more difficult trick.



This trick is also traditionally performed for children, since it is a basic trick with simple props.

Louis Comte was one of the earliest magicians to pull a rabbit out of a hat, performing this magic trick in 1814.¹

Magic is done by sleight of hand for entertainment. People are awed by their quick hands and amusing stories. But in reality, they are just illusions. Miracles, on the other hand, are by God and cannot be duplicated by people. Miracles show us that God has power, and they point us to him and his kingdom.

¹ Bill Severn, *Bill Severn's Big Book of Magic* (David McKay Company, Inc., 1980), 212.

Answers to the Connect activity: Restroom, Parking, Elevator, Escalator, Pedestrian Crossing

Day 1

Pentecost

CONNECT

Let the adults say: *"Kon'nichiwa!"*

Do you know what I just said?

I said, "Hello!" in Japanese!

Cool, right?

Could you try to say it?

(Let the kids say *"Kon'nichiwa!"*)

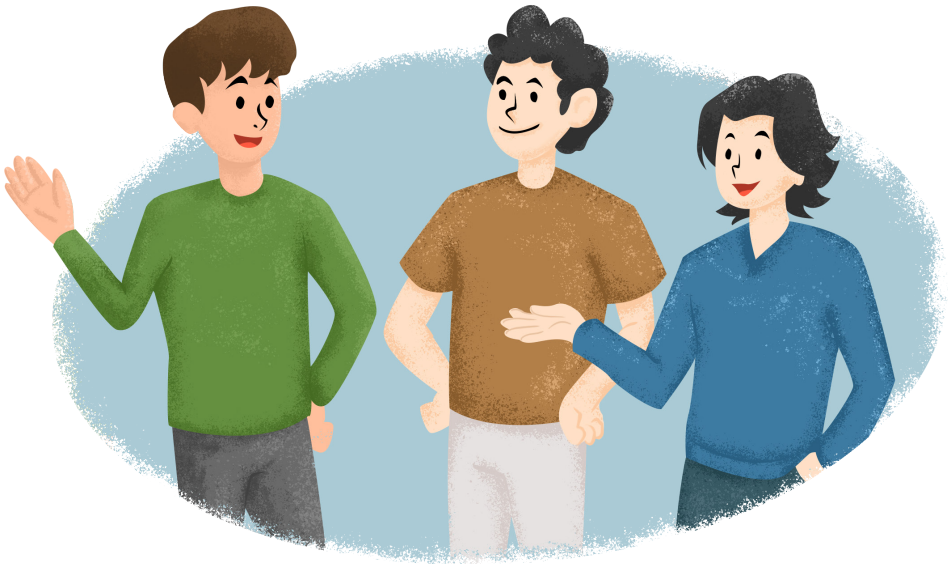
Adults say: Awesome! You are such a fast learner!

For our activity today, we are going to learn how to say "Hello!" in different languages. The table in the next page shows three columns. In the first column, we can see the greeting, and in the second column, we can see how it is said or pronounced correctly. The third column shows the word "country." But why do you think the names of the countries are not written? It's because we have to guess which country this language belongs to! Challenging, isn't it? Don't worry, the tiny flags inside the boxes will give us a clue! Let's start!



Greeting	How to pronounce it	Country
<i>Nǐ hǎo!</i>	“nee haow”	 _____
<i>Ciao!</i>	“chau”	 _____
<i>Hola!</i>	“o·la”	 _____
<i>Annyeonghaseyo!</i>	“an·yong·ha·se·yo”	 _____
<i>Swāṣḍī</i>	“sah·wah·dee”	 _____
<i>Namaste</i>	“na·muh·stay”	 _____

Now that we know some greetings from other languages, we can use these to greet our friends! Do you think we guessed all the countries from where these languages came from correctly? We'll find out after our Bible story and application.



READ THE WORD

You may be wondering why we talked about different languages. It actually has something to do with today's Bible story. Let us read from Acts 2:1–8, 14:

*¹When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers gathered in one place. ²Suddenly a sound came from heaven. It was like a strong wind blowing. It filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw something that looked like fire in the shape of tongues. The flames separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in languages they had not known before. The Spirit gave them the ability to do this. ⁵Godly Jews from every country in the world were staying in Jerusalem. ⁶A crowd came together when they heard the sound. They were bewildered because each of them heard their own language being spoken. ⁷The crowd was really amazed. They asked, "Aren't all these people who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then why do we each hear them speaking in our own native language? . . ." ¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the 11 apostles. In a loud voice he spoke to the crowd. "My fellow Jews," he said, "let me explain this to you. All of you who live in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I say." **Acts 2:1–8, 14***

The story that we have just read is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to his disciples before he ascended to heaven. If you can still remember our lesson from last week, Jesus said in Acts 1:8:

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other." **Acts 1:8***

This is exactly what happened when the disciples were together during Pentecost.

As the story goes, all the disciples were gathered together in one place when, suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. After this, the disciples saw what looked like *fire in the shape of tongues* resting right above each of their heads. Then, one by one the disciples started to do something impossible—they began speaking in different languages that they had not known before! In simple terms, they spoke a different language that they neither learned nor could understand. So how could this be and what was its purpose?



This miracle of being able to speak in another language was done by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. He did what was impossible. But what was the purpose of this amazing miracle?

There were many Jews from all over the world who were present in Jerusalem that day. They came to celebrate the day of Pentecost. These Jews knew how to speak the common international language during their time called common Greek. They also knew how to speak the language spoken by the Jews in Jerusalem. However, they also spoke the language of the nations where they lived.

When the disciples, who were mostly from the province of Galilee, spoke in the different languages of the nations without having learned them, these Jews from all over were amazed. It was very unthinkable that these simple Jews from the province would know how to speak the different languages from far away nations. This was indeed a miracle. This miracle gave an opportunity for Peter to preach the good news about Jesus to the crowd

gathered there. Over 3,000 people put their faith in Jesus and became part of the church.

It is amazing what the Holy Spirit can do! God the Holy Spirit is God's gift to believers. He, in turn, gives gifts to believers and he also does miracles to help us tell other people about Jesus. In a world populated by 7.75 billion people, a huge number of men, women, and children from other nations have not heard about Jesus Christ. Would you like to take the challenge of being a witness for Christ to them? If so, ask the Holy Spirit to give you the power to do so. The gift that was available to the disciples back then is the same gift available to us today.

HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

2–6 years old

- ▶ Who made the disciples speak in a different tongue or language?
- ▶ Do you think the Holy Spirit is powerful?

7–12 years old

- ▶ How do you feel about knowing that there are still people around the world who do not know about God?
- ▶ Would you like to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? Why?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ Have you experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- ▶ As a family, how can we become effective witnesses for Jesus to those around us?

God gave us the Holy Spirit to empower us to do what we cannot on our own. In what way do you want him to help you? Be bold and ask God!

PRAY

Dear God, thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to empower the disciples thousands of years ago. Like them, we ask for the Holy Spirit to come upon us and empower us to be effective witnesses for Jesus to other people, especially to those we encounter in the future who may not speak the same language as ours. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

Did you know that aside from this marvelous power of some believers to speak in a different tongue, the Holy Spirit can also bestow other spiritual gifts for God's followers who desire to have them? First Corinthians 12:18–20 mentions that the Holy Spirit can likewise give the spiritual gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous power, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, and interpretation of tongues. These gifts are given to us, so we can fulfill our God-given mission of advancing his kingdom in the world. It is the Holy Spirit who chooses to give which gifts to give to different people. We can ask him for spiritual gifts and if it is his will, we can give them to us.



Answers to the Connect activity: China, Italy, Spain, South Korea, Thailand, India

Day 2

Healing

CONNECT

Prepare:

- ▶ A band-aid
- ▶ A picture of an animal, a cartoon character, or a person
- ▶ An eye cover

What to do:

- ▶ Place a big picture of an animal, a cartoon character, or a person on a wall.
- ▶ Pin the band-aid on the heart of the animal or person in the image.
- ▶ Stand five feet or about five arm spans away from the starting point.
- ▶ Blindfold one child at a time and hand them a band-aid.
- ▶ See who can get closest to attaching the band-aid to a designated spot on the picture.



Things like medicine and band-aids help us get better, but ultimately, it is God who heals us. He not only heals our bodies; he heals our hearts, too. Let's read this story about how he healed a crippled man.

READ THE WORD

In today's story, we will see how God uses people to bring healing and show his love to his beloved children. Let's read Acts 3:1–10:

*¹One day Peter and John were going up to the temple. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. It was the time for prayer. ²A man unable to walk was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. He had been that way since he was born. Every day someone put him near the gate. There he would beg from people going into the temple courtyards. ³He saw that Peter and John were about to enter. So he asked them for money. ⁴Peter looked straight at him, and so did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵So the man watched them closely. He expected to get something from them. ⁶Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold. But I'll give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk." ⁷Then Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up. At once the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸He jumped to his feet and began to walk. He went with Peter and John into the temple courtyards. He walked and jumped and praised God. ⁹All the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰They recognized him as the same man who used to sit and beg at the temple gate called Beautiful. They were filled with wonder. They were amazed at what had happened to him. **Acts 3:1–10***

The man was crippled from birth. Can you imagine not being able to walk your whole life? When he met Peter and John, everything changed. For the first time, he could walk! God used Peter and John to heal the crippled man's body. But do you know that more than him being able to walk, something greater also took place? Many people came to know about God, who loves and heals us and wants to bless us!



HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

2–6 years old

- ▶ Who takes care of you when you are sick or hurt?

7–12 years old

- ▶ When you are not feeling well, what are the things that help you feel better?
- ▶ Have you ever helped take care of someone who was sick or hurt?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ When was the last time that Jesus healed you or a member of our family from a sickness? How did he do it?

Many of us know that God can heal. We come to him in prayer when we or the people we love are sick, and we praise him when he heals us. But we should not let the healing end with us. Our healing should prompt us to share the miracle with others so that they may know Jesus, too!



PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us and healing us from sickness. Help me to always remember that you are powerful and faithful, and help me to share about your goodness and love to others. In Jesus' name, amen.



DISCOVER

Since we are talking about healing, what do you normally do when you get a wound?

The best way to clean a wound or a cut is to apply a mild soap and hold it under a slow stream of cool or cold running water. Leave it there

for at least five minutes. This gently cleanses the wound, and the cool water temperature causes the capillaries to constrict, which helps to slow bleeding. By doing this, you accomplish the first step of caring for a cut—or any type of wound—which is to stop the bleeding.²

While we treat our wound, we can also pray and ask God to heal it.

So, next time you get a cut or wound, you know what to do.



² Eve Glazier and Elizabeth Ko, “Ask the Doctors: No need to use rubbing alcohol on cuts,” The Spokesman Review, February 8, 2020, <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/feb/08/ask-the-doctors-no-need-to-use-rubbing-alcohol-on-/?amp-content=amp>.

Day 3

Provision

CONNECT

Pass the Baton

In this game, instead of a baton, you may use any object from your home. Let everyone form a circle. Play any song and once it starts, pass the object to the next person. Keep passing the object until the song ends. The person holding the object at the end of the song will be out of the game. Keep playing until there's only one person standing. He or she is the winner.



Our goal in the game was to give away the object to others. In our lesson today, we will read about people who gave away or shared their belongings to others.

READ THE WORD

The early believers probably had the best way of teaching what generosity is all about.

Let us read:

³²All the believers were agreed in heart and mind. They didn't claim that anything they had was their own. Instead, they shared everything they owned. ³³With great power the apostles continued their teaching. They were telling people that the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead. And God's grace was working powerfully in all of them. ³⁴So there

were no needy persons among them. From time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them. They brought the money from the sales.³⁵ They put it down at the apostles' feet. It was then given out to anyone who needed it.³⁶ Joseph was a Levite from Cyprus. The apostles called him Barnabas. The name Barnabas means Son of Help.³⁷ Barnabas sold a field he owned. He brought the money from the sale. He put it down at the apostles' feet. Acts 4:32-37

The early believers were so generous that they were sharing their things with everyone. And because of that, nobody lacked anything! Can you believe that a community like that can exist—that no one needed anything because all their needs were met? That could only happen because they understood that everything belongs to God. The community also believed deep down that God provided for them. As a result, they willingly blessed others.



HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

2–6 years old

- ▶ What was the newest gift you received?
- ▶ How many of your toys do you think you can share with others? Why?

7–12 years old

- ▶ How do you feel whenever you share what you have? Why do you feel that way?
- ▶ Do you remember to go to God whenever you need something?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ What is your idea of provision?
- ▶ What will happen if I share what God has provided for me?
- ▶ How have we been generous as a family? How did it make you feel?

God is truly our provider. And the amazing thing is he provided for our greatest need—a Savior. He sent Jesus to die on the cross so our sins can be forgiven and we can be reconciled back to him. You see, God knows our every need. Do you believe he will provide? Romans 8:32 points it out clearly:

God did not spare his own Son. He gave him up for us all. Then won't he also freely give us everything else? **Romans 8:32**



PRAY

Dear God, thank you for your provision. Thank you because we know you own everything, and by knowing that, we can fully trust in you. Mold us to be a channel of blessings to others. This we pray, in Jesus' name, amen!

DISCOVER

Did you know that since the time of Genesis, God has been graciously providing for mankind?

- ▶ In Genesis 1 and 2, God provided the proper environment and food for Adam and Eve by creating the world out of nothing.
- ▶ In Genesis 3:21, God provided animal skins to clothe Adam and Eve.
- ▶ In Genesis 22:13, God provided a ram for Abraham to complete his sacrifice.
- ▶ In Exodus 16, God provided manna and quail for the Israelites.
- ▶ In 1 Kings 17, God provided ravens to feed Elijah.

These are just a few of the many stories of God's provision. Do you know of any others?

Day 4

Guidance

CONNECT

Do you know that God can guide us through difficult times? Even if we cannot see what is going on, he sees what is happening and can lead us in the right direction.

Let's play a game!

Stick the Smile on the Child

(This is essentially pin the tail on the donkey but instead of a donkey and a tail, it's a smile on the child.)

Prepare:

- ▶ Two sheets of paper
- ▶ A pin or tape
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ A blindfold
- ▶ Coloring materials (optional)

What to do:

1. Take two sheets of paper. On one sheet, draw a face without a mouth. On the second sheet, draw a smile.
2. Cut along the outline of the smile.
3. Attach a pin or a piece of tape to the back part of the smile.
4. Ask a child to put on the blindfold.
5. Spin the child around three times.



6. Give the child instructions on how he or she can stick the smile on the face.
7. Play again or color the face while discussing the story.

Make it fun by giving everybody a turn and letting each player draw his or her own smile!

In our activity, we were guided by the voice of a loved one. Even if we could not see, this voice helped us win the game. In the same way, God guides us in our situations even if we do not know where to go or what to do.

READ THE WORD

In our story today, we will see how God guides us in different ways. God can use our lives to make a difference if we listen to him and obey him.

²⁶An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. “Go south to the desert road,” he said. “It’s the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”

²⁷So Philip started out. On his way he met an Ethiopian official. The man had an important position in charge of all the wealth of the Kandake. Kandake means queen of Ethiopia. This official had gone to Jerusalem to worship. ²⁸On his way home he was sitting in his chariot. He was reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹The Holy Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot. Stay near it.” ³⁰So Philip ran up to the chariot. He heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you’re reading?” Philip asked. ³¹“How can I?” he said. “I need someone to explain it to me.” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Here is the part of Scripture the official was reading. It says, “He was led like a sheep to be killed. Just as lambs are silent while their wool is being cut off, he did not open his mouth. ³³When he was treated badly, he was refused a fair trial. Who can say anything about his children? His life was cut off from the earth.” ³⁴The official said to Philip, “Tell me, please. Who is the prophet talking about? Himself, or someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began with that same part of Scripture. He told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶⁻³⁷As they traveled along the road, they came to some water. The official said, “Look! Here is water! What can stop me from being baptized?” ³⁸He gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the official went down into the water. Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of

the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away. The official did not see him again. He went on his way full of joy. ⁴⁰Philip was seen next at Azotus. From there he traveled all around. He preached the good news in all the towns. Finally he arrived in Caesarea. Acts 8:26-40

Would Philip have known to take this road if God did not direct him? Probably not. It was, after all, a desert road. Yet, he obeyed God's direction. And the result? People from far away Africa came to know Jesus! Indeed, that is a miracle.



How many times do we listen to and obey what God says to us? If we open our ears to Jesus' guidance, we too can be witnesses of miracles like this. It may not be something as big as what happened to Philip, but trust that when you follow God's guidance, he will make things happen in ways beyond your imagination.

HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

2–6 years old

- ▶ How does God talk to us?

7–12 years old

- ▶ In our Bible story for today, how did God guide both Philip and the Ethiopian minister?
- ▶ How has God guided you in your own life?
- ▶ Is there a situation in your life that needs God's guidance?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ Did you ever ask God for guidance? What happened?
- ▶ How has God guided you?

In the countless decisions we face every day, for how many of them have you sought guidance from God? Big or small, we can always go to God. Let us learn to lean in and be sensitive to where he leads us. And as you obey, God can do mighty things through you.

PRAY

Dear God, thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to guide us and teach us where to go, especially when we do not know. Give us the ability to recognize, listen to, and obey your voice. Please guide me every day. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

Did you know that God loves you so much that he delights in every detail of your life?

It says in Psalm 37:23:

The LORD makes secure the footsteps of the person who delights in him . . . **Psalm 37:23**

People in the Bible and believers who have looked to God for guidance have experienced their lives being changed, and God has used them to change the world:



Gladys Aylward was a maid in England. But God wanted her to go to China to bring the gospel to the Chinese people. She listened to God's calling and today she is known for many things, including saving the lives of over 100 orphans during World War II.³

Another example is **Corrie Ten Boom** and her family. During the German invasion of the Netherlands in World War II, they decided to protect the Jews because they were God's people. Corrie and her family hid Jews in their home and helped them escape the country.⁴



We also have **Bruce Olson**. He is lovingly known as "Bruchko" by the Motilone Bari Indians. Originally, these people were known to be brutal killers, as they would murder people working in the forest. But God called him to share his faith with these tribes. Today, over 70% of the Bari people are Christians.⁵

These are just a few of the people called by God to do big things for him. Don't be afraid to ask God for guidance with the big things and the little things because he delights in you!

³ James E. Kiefer, "Gladys Aylward, Missionary To China," Biographical sketches of memorable Christians of the past, The Society of Archbishop Justus, <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/73.html>.

⁴ "Corrie ten Boom Biography," The Biography.com website, last updated June 5, 2020, <https://www.biography.com/activist/corrie-ten-boom>.

⁵ Bruce Olson, *Bruchko: The Astonishing True Story of a 19-Year-Old American, His Capture by the Motilone Indians and His Adventures in Christianizing the Stone Age Tribe* (Charisma House, 2006).

Day 5

Deliverance

CONNECT

Here is what it means when a prisoner is in stocks:



Prisoners who are in stocks will have their feet locked in a device. Movement of the lower part of the body is almost impossible and the prisoner would have to endure and sit the whole time. The purpose of the stocks is to make it impossible for prisoners to escape.

Imagine if you were a prisoner. What would you feel? Do you think you will still be able to go around as you please? This is where we find Paul and Silas in our lesson today. Let's check out what happened.

READ THE WORD

In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were in Philippi. There, they met a slave girl who was possessed by a demon which enabled her to tell fortunes. Her owners used her to make a lot of money. Paul cast out the demon in the name of Jesus and the girl was delivered from its control. However, this act led him and Silas to be beaten and thrown into jail, with their hands and feet bound and locked.

*²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷The jailer woke up. He saw that the prison doors were open. He pulled out his sword and was going to kill himself. He thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸"Don't harm yourself!" Paul shouted. "We are all here!" ²⁹The jailer called out for some lights. He rushed in, shaking with fear. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out. He asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and everyone living in your house will be saved." ³²They spoke the word of the Lord to him. They also spoke to all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night, the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Right away he and everyone who lived with him were baptized. ³⁴The jailer brought them into his house. He set a meal in front of them. He and everyone who lived with him were filled with joy. They had become believers in God. **Acts 16:25-34***

In the middle of the night, in the deep dungeons, God delivered Paul and Silas from imprisonment and probably harsh judgment by opening the prison doors and unfastening their stocks. By itself, this was already a miracle, but it did not end there. The jailer who feared to be punished physically was delivered spiritually. He and his entire family came to know Jesus and were baptized!



This story speaks of the limitless power of God to deliver or free his people from any form of bondage. First, the servant girl was delivered from her bondage to the evil spirit. Then, Paul and Silas were delivered physically from their prison cell. And lastly, the jailer and his family were delivered spiritually. Knowing this, we can be assured that God sees our needs and he can deliver us from our situations.

HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

2–6 years old

- ▶ What part of the story did you like the most?

7–12 years old

- ▶ What is an area of your life where you think you are not free and you want God to deliver you from? (Some examples are spending too much time on the internet or on social media, seeking approval from others all the time, or needing attention from other people.)

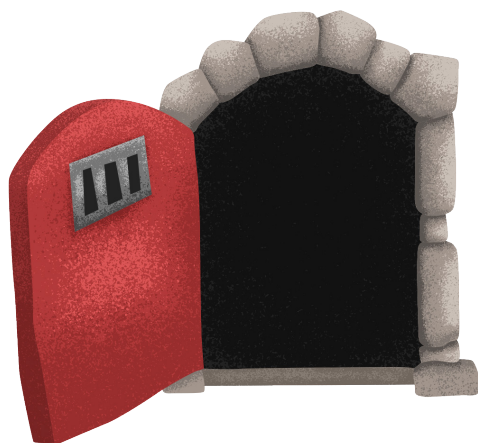
Kids to Parents

- ▶ Have you experienced God's deliverance in your life? Tell us about it.
- ▶ Is there any area in your life where you need deliverance? Will you share it with us?

Nothing is impossible for God. Armed with this knowledge, we can trust God in all situations, whether light or difficult.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you because we can trust you. Thank you for your promise of deliverance, for setting us free from any kind of bondage we are in. Give us strength to overcome any fear in our hearts. Please help us trust you and your plans for us always. In Jesus' name, amen.



DISCOVER

Here are some interesting facts about Roman prisons:

“One was called ‘Communiara’ which had light and fresh air. The second was called ‘Interiora.’ This was shut off by strong iron bars and locks. Paul and Silas were in the ‘Tullainium’ which is a dungeon where people were placed to die. This was top security. Their feet were placed in stocks which were a heavy piece of wood with holes similar to the medieval British stocks into which the prisoner’s feet were placed and stretched in such a way as to cause constant agonizing pain.”⁶

⁶ “Apostle Paul Life, Teaching & Theology,” Christian Pilgrimage Journeys, https://www.christian-pilgrimage-journeys.com/biblical-sources/apostle-paul-life-teaching-theology/paul-the-conversion-of-philippian-jailer/?fbclid=IwAR23Vl2Lzlv8w_fYccW5UPfs1E9bV6YJcHth6lFspSsLrEpnvGwai-EUf4Q.

Conclusion

Protection



CONNECT

Let's try an experiment.

Prepare:

- ▶ A half-filled bowl of water
- ▶ An empty glass
- ▶ Two pieces of tissue paper

First, put one tissue paper in the water. You can see that it will soak up the water and become wet.



Next, put the dry tissue paper inside the bottom of the glass. Turn the glass upside down and put it in the water. Did the tissue paper get wet? It should not get wet. If it did, try again.

This is an illustration of how God protects his people. Without God's protection, we are open to the dangers of the world just like the soaked tissue paper. But with God's protection (the glass), we can be safe even if there is danger around us.⁷

Let's read about what happened to Paul when he was in a dangerous situation.

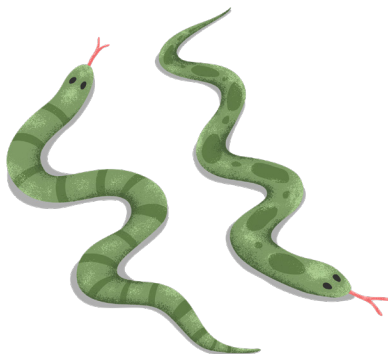
⁷ "Lesson 51 - Protection of God (Kleenex version)," Apostolic Children's Ministry, November 10, 2015, Youtube video, 2:16, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ5vcrnCE84>.

READ THE WORD

¹When we were safe on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. ²The people of the island were unusually kind. It was raining and cold. So they built a fire and welcomed all of us. ³Paul gathered some sticks and put them on the fire. A poisonous snake was driven out by the heat. It fastened itself on Paul's hand. ⁴The people of the island saw the snake hanging from his hand. They said to one another, "This man must be a murderer. He escaped from the sea. But the female god Justice won't let him live." ⁵Paul shook the snake off into the fire. He was not harmed. ⁶The people expected him to swell up. They thought he would suddenly fall dead. They waited for a long time. But they didn't see anything unusual happen to him. So they changed their minds. They said he was a god. **Acts 28:1-6**

Imagine being bitten by a snake! The people living on the island saw what happened to Paul. He was bitten by a snake and they expected him to die. But miraculously, Paul did not die and was not even harmed. And the miracle does not end there. Paul met some local people, and the father of one of them was sick. When Paul prayed for him, he was healed! This led to the healing of many other sick people on the island.

God is able to protect those who follow him. His protection can come in different forms. This does not mean that no harm can fall upon us. Paul was still shipwrecked and was bitten by a snake. In this case, he was protected from the snake's venom. There are times when God will rescue us from physical harm, but there are also times when he allows certain things to come upon us, and he protects us in other ways. The best news is that he protects those who put their faith in Jesus Christ for their forgiveness from judgment and hell. Even if God chooses not to protect us from physical harm, he protects believers from eternal harm. Do you believe this?



HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

2–6 years old

- ▶ Do you believe God will protect you? Why?

7–12 years old

- ▶ Has God ever protected you? Tell us about it. (As the kids share, it also becomes an exercise for them to remember and declare God's mighty work in their lives.)

Kids to Parents

- ▶ Think of a time when God protected you from harm or any form of danger. Share this with us.

We have been studying about how God can work miraculously in our lives. God meets us in supernatural ways and as his children, we can open our lives to him for him to work his miracles through us. But let us always remember that his miracles are not meant to just end with us. They are meant to draw people to him, to know him and to experience his love for them. Just as Paul did not let the miracle end with him but used the miracle to share God's message with others, let us ask the Holy Spirit to keep our eyes open for God's miracles and through them, to help us share his love with others.

PRAY

Dear God, thank you for your supernatural work in our lives. Thank you for first transforming us and then blessing us with spiritual blessings so we can also bless others. Help us to always be open and be bold in telling others about you. In Jesus' name, amen!

DISCOVER

Did you know that aside from Paul's story, there are many other stories of how God miraculously protected his people in the Bible?

- ▶ David killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17)
- ▶ The three young men and the fiery furnace (Daniel 3)
- ▶ Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6)
- ▶ Baby Moses in the river Nile (Exodus 2)

In every one of these stories, God miraculously protected his people. But the miracle did not end with them. The miracles eventually led the people around them to know God and worship him.



Miracles



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