

2009 Week of Prayer

CHILDREN'S READINGS

General Heading: *Mission Possible*

Sub Heading: *Jesus is the fulfillment of our hope*

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FIRST SABBATH

Dangerous Mission!

Memory Gem

“God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life” (John 3:16).*

Readiness

Show the children pictures or newspaper clippings of daring and risky missions such as climbing Mount Everest or rescuing those trapped in a storm. Then ask, “Would you have joined such a mission? Why?”

Story

Jared was awakened by the telephone at 2:00 a.m. “Yes, sir, I’ll be on my way,” he answered briskly. Putting on his uniform speedily and grabbing his rescue pack, he dashed off to the Army headquarters helicopter unit.

“Let’s go! People are drowning!” shouted his commander.

The helicopter flew off with six of them for a rescue mission. The winds were strong and visibility was poor. They had to battle the storm that was increasing its strength every minute. Jared and his teammates were straining their eyes to look out for people who might be stranded on rooftops, apartments, or treetops.

“Look! Two kids on the roof!” yelled Jared. “Get down close.”

The pilot lowered the chopper and immediately Jared and his teammate Ken jumped down to the rooftop on ropes wound around their waists. Just as they stretched out their hands to reach the children, a strong gust of wind swung them farther away. The chopper tried moving closer again for a second attempt.

“Mommy! Mommy!” cried the little girl, who looked wet and cold under a blanket.

Jared and Ken tried a third time to land on the roof, and they made it!

“You’ll be OK,” Jared told the little girl as he grabbed her waist and together they were lifted up to the chopper. “We’ll find your mommy,” he comforted her.

At the same time Ken grabbed the hand of the older brother, covered his shivering body, and together they were also lifted up to safety. The chopper circled around the house twice before flying off to safety. It was a rough day! It was a dangerous mission! That day Jared and his team rescued more than 150 people. Although they were exhausted, Jared felt happy and satisfied. Though it was a dangerous mission, it had saved many precious lives.

Lesson

Jesus, the Son of God, was sent on a similar mission to this world to save all of us who have disobeyed God and sinned against Him. Even before Jesus was born, the angel Gabriel told His mother, Mary, “You must give him the name Jesus. That is because he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

Isaiah prophesied that Jesus the Messiah would be coming to this earth to bring hope and healing to everyone on earth. “He suffered the things we should have suffered. He took on himself the pain that should have been ours. . . . But the servant was pierced because we had sinned. He was crushed because we had done what was evil. He was punished to make us whole again. His wounds have healed us” (Isa. 53:4, 5).

Yes, Jesus Himself came on a mission of hope to rescue us from this sinful world so as to give us eternal life. This is wonderful news! But we must share such good news with others so that they too can receive this hope. Hence, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission to go and teach others to become His disciples (Matt. 28:19, 20).

This command of sharing the good news with all people is also for us today. The storms of sin and temptation reach hurricane force. Children and families in our world need Jesus to save them from attack. God needs us to go on rescue missions for Him to bring them hope.

Application

Make a list of mission projects kids your age can do to bring the good news to their friends and neighbors. Discuss with your parents or Sabbath school teacher about how they can help you implement some of these project plans.

Discussion

1. What message of hope can you share with a refugee when they and their family have just lost everything in an earthquake?
2. How can Jesus help you in your daily life when you are tempted to cheat in an examination or tell a lie to your parents?
3. Suppose a refugee from Satan's storm of temptation comes to worship in your church. What could kids do that would spoil their mission of hope? What could you do to help the mission?

Activity

Write the phrase **Mission of Hope** on colored paper and decorate it using marker pens, sequins, or other materials. Paste a picture of Jesus at the center of the mission of hope and then paste pictures of people you want to be included in Jesus' mission of hope. Hang the completed work in your room.

SUNDAY

“Save the World Bike-a-thon”

Memory Gem

“So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Readiness

Divide children into groups of three or four. Give each group a different message written on a slip of paper, such as: “Jesus saves!” “Believe in Jesus,” “Be baptized,” “Obey God.” The groups then find different ways to spread their message. Give each group the chance to demonstrate the ways they identified for spreading their message.

Story

“Wake up! Wake up!” yelled 6-year-old Halle as she tugged at her mom and dad.

“We can’t be late! Uncle John is going on that bike-a-thon,” Halle reminded them.

There was going to be a big send-off at the pier for 50 bikers who would be cycling across the country to spread the message to save the earth. They planned to take one month to complete this trip.

“Mommy, is Uncle John only riding his bike and nothing else?” asked Halle.

“No, dear! Uncle John and the others will ride their bikes into the cities and towns to ask people to save our environment,” Mom explained.

“Can’t he announce that on television? Isn’t it easier?” Halle asked inquisitively.

“Yes, it is easier, but he wants people to know how serious and important this message is. All the bikers want to appear in person to share the good news of saving the forest and the oceans,” Mom explained.

Halle and her parents arrived at the pier in time to see hundreds of people waving green flags and cheering the 50 bikers on their cross-country mission.

“Uncle John is over there!” Halle signaled excitedly to her dad.

“Goodbye, Uncle John! Don’t forget to write,” Halle shouted.

A week went by and at breakfast one morning Mom held up a card.

“A postcard from Uncle John!” she exclaimed.

“Did he spread the good news yet?” Halle wanted to know.

“Yes, Halle! They stopped at Hillsdale and Fernwood and people welcomed them. They passed out flyers and talked to many on how to save the environment,” Mom explained.

“Wonderful! Guess John still has many more towns to cover,” exclaimed Dad.

“It’s a long trip across the country,” Mom sighed.

“Can I go on a bike-a-thon, Mom?” asked Halle eagerly. “I want to tell other children about the good news of Jesus.”

“Definitely! How about starting a bike-a-thon around our neighborhood first?” Mom suggested.

“OK!” Halle exclaimed. “Tomorrow I will ride my bike over to Jenny’s to share Jesus.”

“I support that!” Dad added enthusiastically. “Just as long as Mom rides with you.”

Lesson

We may be too young to cycle across the country or around the world on our own, but we can always go on a neighborhood bike-a-thon for Jesus. Jesus was very clear in His command when He told His disciples, “Then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem. You will be my witnesses in all Judea, and Samaria. And you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other” (Acts 1:8). He was asking them to first start witnessing at home, then move out to their neighborhood, and finally to other areas of the earth.

Jesus’ Great Commission to His disciples is also for us today. He is asking us to go and spread this good news right where we live!

Does it seem too big a task for you? Don’t worry, Jesus has promised us: “My grace is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak” (2 Cor. 12:9).

The apostle Paul went on a walkathon to share the gospel with many nations and people. He also traveled in a boat to Corinth, Thessalonica, and Cyprus to spread the good news of salvation. You too can join a walkathon or bike-a-thon and share Jesus with your neighbors who don’t know Him.

Application

Make three cards with the message “Jesus Loves You.” Decorate the cards and share them with three friends who do not know Jesus.

Discussion

1. What is the good news of Jesus? (that He died in our place for our sin so we can live forever with Him)
2. Is it really possible to spread the good news of Jesus around the world? Is He asking us to do something impossible?
3. Can you suggest a few new ways of sharing the good news? What about a prayer-a-thon?

Activity

Unscramble the following words that relate to Jesus’ Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19, 20.

PBEZATI	STOANIN	LDSIPCEIS
YOLH	PITSIR	RFHETA
YEOB	HECTA	

[Insert answers here upside down.]

Answers: baptize, nations, disciples, Holy, Spirit, Father, obey, teach

MONDAY

A Fair Judge

Memory Gem

“I will sing about your love and fairness. Lord, I will sing praise to you” (Ps. 101:1).

Readiness

Group children into fours and show them five paintings. Ask each group to judge the two best ones for display in the room. Then ask, “Was it easy for you to judge these paintings? Did each group agree with the two best paintings? Was it easy to be fair and unbiased?”

Story

“Hurry up, Kathy! I need to be at the Spring Flower Festival in half an hour,” Mom called out impatiently.

“Come on, put your shoes on in the car,” Mom suggested as she grabbed her bag and headed for the car.

The annual Spring Flower Festival was the highlight of Riversdale. Each spring more than 300 types of flowers would be entered for the competition. There would be tulips, daffodils, azaleas, chrysanthemums, and many more. This year was special because Mom was going to be one of the six judges for the show!

“Oh! Look, Dad, I just love the yellow daffodils!” Kathy exclaimed.

“How is Mom going to judge which is the best? I don’t think I can,” Kathy said seriously.

“You’re right. It’s not easy to be a judge. A judge has to be fair and truthful,” Dad explained.

After what seemed like a long day, Kathy and Dad joined many others in the main hall to wait for the announcement of the competition winners.

“The Blue Ribbon Award for the healthiest variety this year goes to Jeannie Jones,” Mom announced excitedly. “And honorable mention is given to . . .”

Many women gathered around the Blue Ribbon Award flower to admire its beauty. It was a tulip with double petals in three shades of red. Kathy thought the judges were pretty accurate and fair. But as she moved on to other tables to look at other flowers, she overheard a couple of women criticizing the judges’ decision.

“I think Rita Stubb’s tulip should be given the Blue Ribbon Award instead,” the first woman complained.

“Yeah, I agree with you. The judges seem to favor the east side,” agreed the second woman.

“I heard that Jeannie Jones is related to one of the judges,” the first woman insinuated.

That’s not fair, Kathy thought to herself. *How dare they blame Mom for being a poor judge! Dad said it was hard to be a judge.* She must tell this to Mom. Having made up her mind, Kathy ran off to look for her. Mom was indeed a good judge, not the type of judge who played favorites.

Lesson

The Bible tells us that God is going to judge everything we do in our life before Jesus comes again. King Solomon reminds us that “God will judge everything people do. That includes everything they try to hide. He’ll judge everything, whether it’s good or evil” (Eccl. 12:14). All of us have been given lots of time to repent and say we’re sorry for our sins, and Jesus wants to bring us home to heaven with Him soon. So judgment must come, but Jesus loves us so much He will judge us kindly and fairly. Remember the parable of the talents told by Jesus? Matthew 25:19 tells of a master (Jesus) who returns from a long trip to judge the results of his servants’ investments. The one who received five talents and the one who received two were judged to be faithful in multiplying their gifts and were greatly rewarded. The one who was given one talent but who did nothing to multiply and increase it was judged unfaithful, and his one gift was taken away from him. This story teaches that in the end everyone must give an account of what he or she has done.

But judgment is really good news! There is nothing to be frightened about because that is the time Jesus will be coming to take us home with Him. In fact, when Jesus the King comes again, “all the angels will come with him. Then he will sit on his throne in the glory of heaven. All the nations will be gathered in front of him. He will separate the people into two groups. He will be like a shepherd who separates the sheep from the goats” (Matt. 25:31, 32).

The most important thing we need to do is to admit our wrongs to Jesus, telling Him that we are sorry for our sins. The Bible has promised: “If we admit that we have sinned, he will forgive us our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure” (1 John 1:9). So let’s be prepared every day for Jesus to keep our hope bright. And in the judgment He will declare us free from sin forever. Just think! You will live with Jesus forever and not make any more mistakes.

Application

Make a list of ideas on how you can be prepared for the day when Jesus comes to judge this earth. Share it with your friends in your class.

Discussion

1. In what way is judgment a joyful event? How can you calm your friend who views judgment as a “fearful and dreadful day”?
2. Name two parables given by Jesus that talk about judgment taking place when He comes again.

Activity

Write a poem or song about God being a loving and fair judge. Share it with some friends in your class.

TUESDAY

Special Thursday!

Memory Gem

“Come, let us bow down and worship him. Let us fall on our knees in front of the Lord our Maker” (Ps. 95:6).

Readiness

On a flip chart or a chalkboard, write “Our Special Time.” Ask, “If you have a special day with just your mom or your dad, what would you like to do together? Why is it fun to have special times with just Mom or Dad?”

Story

“I’m home, Dad!” Tanada called excitedly as he closed the front door and dashed upstairs to change his clothes. Soon he heard someone closing the kitchen door.

“Hey, son, are you ready?” Dad called out from downstairs. “Just give me a minute to change.”

Yes, Thursday was Tanada and Dad’s special day together at the volleyball court! Dad would get home around 4:00, and then father and son would spend time doing fun things together. Their favorite game was playing volleyball at the local community center with several other family teams. After an exciting game they usually stopped by the ice-cream parlor. Some Thursdays were spent shopping for bicycle parts or visiting a music store. The best thing for Tanada was that he had Dad all to himself every Thursday afternoon! Just the two of them!

Last Thursday after their volleyball game, they visited Dad’s friend who was hospitalized with pneumonia. Dad promised to fix his broken window the following week. Every Thursday Tanada and Dad would think of something interesting to do together.

“This is just like the Sabbath,” Dad remarked once when they were together.

“Sabbath?” Tanada asked in surprise. “I thought Sabbath is on Saturday!”

“You’re correct,” Dad continued, “but Sabbath is like our special time with God. We worship Him, sing songs to praise Him, and do things that will please Him. We do this every week at the same time . . . on Sabbath!”

Oh, yes, Tanada loves to sing at Sabbath school, have special prayers for his friends, and enjoy a story at Children’s Church. Worshipping God is exciting!

Can you imagine? Now Tanada has *two* “special times” each week—one on Thursday with his dad, the other on Sabbath with Jesus. He looks forward to both of them!

Lesson

When Jesus was on earth, He enjoyed His “special time” with God. He went to the synagogue to worship. He loved to read from the big Scripture scrolls. Luke 4:16 tells us that “Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. On the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue as he usually did. And he stood up to read.” His disciples Peter, James, John, and others went to the Temple to worship God, too. The apostle Paul met with many believers in the church each Sabbath. It was a wonderful time to sing and praise God together and to listen to Paul preach about Jesus.

Apart from the Sabbath, Jesus also loved to talk to God alone during His special time with Him. The Bible recorded that “on one of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray. He spent the night praying to God” (Luke 6:12). Just think, Jesus enjoyed talking to His Father the whole night. It was a special time for Father and Son!

Don’t you want to raise your voices to praise God too? The psalmist urges us “Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good. His faithful love continues forever” (Ps. 106:1). Isaiah the prophet reminded us when he asked, “Don’t you know who made everything? Haven’t you heard about him? The Lord is the God who lives forever. He created everything on earth. He won’t become worn out or get tired. No one will ever know how great his understanding is” (Isa. 40:28).

Yes, our hope rests on the day when we will be able to enjoy “our special time” with Jesus and God forever. It won’t be just on Sabbath, or on Thursday. It will be every day forever!

Application

Make a list of things you would like to do with the special time you will have with Jesus in heaven. What would you like to ask Him?

Discussion

1. What in this lesson can you try out to make your “special time” with Jesus an important one?
2. Do you always have to carve out a special day with Jesus besides Sabbath? Does He require a specific time and date?

3. Why did Tanada's dad set a time each week to do things with his son? Why is it good to set a time each day to start the day with Jesus?

Activity

Look up the following Bible verses to discover a key requirement for spending our special time with God in eternity.

1 Samuel 15:22

Isaiah 1:19

Acts 5:29

Exodus 19:5

WEDNESDAY

Reunited at Last!

Memory Gem

“Be strong, all of you who put your hope in the Lord. Never give up” (Ps. 31:24).

Readiness

Show the children pictures of children and adults with sad expressions. Then ask: “What is the common expression seen on the faces in all these pictures? Fearful? Hopeless? Sad? What does it mean to feel hopeless or lost?”

Story

“Mama, Mama, where are you?” cried 6-year-old Karli as she clasped tightly to her dirty blanket.

Everyone seemed to be running everywhere, some carrying bags, clothes, and whatever they could find. Karli remembered following her mother and two brothers out of the door to get onto a bus when suddenly a loud bang was heard across the street. She turned around to see what the matter was, but forgot to hang on to Mama’s hands.

“Casto, Casto!” Karli called anxiously for her brother.

But there was no Mama or Casto. It was simply too confusing to know what to do. Everybody seemed to be running. So where could Mama be? Fear gripped Karli as she was crying and running to look for Mama. She walked and walked till she couldn’t walk anymore. All hope of finding Mama was dashed. Suddenly, she fell to the ground and fainted.

“Wake up, wake up!” Karli felt someone gently tapping her face.

“Mama! Casto!” Karli cried loudly as she regained consciousness. Looking around her, she realized that she was on the lap of a strange woman.

“It’s OK! We’ll help you find your mama!” the stranger assured Karli.

“Really?” Karli gasped. “Thank you, ma’am.”

“I’m from the Red Cross and we have sent someone to look for your mama,” the stranger reassured Karli again.

“Can I pray to Jesus to help me find Mama?” Karli asked shyly.

“Definitely! Jesus knows where your mama is,” the woman replied, smiling.

After saying a short prayer, Karli got up and ate some food. Even after a full meal she felt lonely, frightened, and hopeless. Was there any hope of ever seeing Mama again? Clutching her dirty blanket, Karli cried herself to sleep that night.

Everything around her looked so unfamiliar. Next morning she could hear people shouting and running outside. Cars and trucks were honking endlessly. But Karli felt lost and without hope!

Suddenly, she heard some familiar voices coming into her room. Her heart started to beat faster and faster. Could it be? Was she imagining things? Would her hope come true? The voices got louder and closer.

“Mama! Mama!” Karli shouted excitedly as she ran out to see for herself.

“Karli, Karli, my girl,” Mama cried as she rushed forward to hug her little lost girl.

“I thought I would never see you again,” Mama cried softly as she lifted Karli and held her close. “Thank God!”

“Mama, I am so happy! I didn’t lose hope of finding you!” added Karli with a smile as she held on to Mama’s hand.

Lesson

Just think—people like you and me are lost in this world. Storms of sin, disease, and temptation blot out any hope of a future. People hate each other; there are wars and killing. In fact, Jesus told us that before He comes again, “nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. People will go hungry. There will be earthquakes in many places” (Matt. 24:7).

Look at the disasters that have killed thousands of people these past years—the tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, Cyclone Nargis, and earthquakes in China. Look at the Iran and Iraq wars, the fear of terrorism and other bad things people do to other people. No one seems to have solutions. People everywhere are looking for something better, but they don’t seem to know where to find it.

But we do. The Bible reminds us that true hope is found only in Jesus. The apostle Paul agreed wholeheartedly when he said, “God has chosen to make known to them the glorious riches of that mystery. He has made it known among those who aren’t Jews. And here is what it is. Christ is in you. He is your hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). This is the hope we can share with our friends and neighbors when they are depressed and discouraged over life and its many problems. Invite them to church to find this hope in Jesus that gives them peace.

Remember, “Blessed are those who depend on the God of Jacob for help. Blessed are those who put their hope in the Lord their God” (Ps. 146:5). That’s what Karli did when she placed her hope in Jesus to help her find her mama.

Application

Have children make special cards in the shape of hearts and decorate them with a picture of Jesus. Write in the verse: “Christ is in you. He is your hope of glory!” Encourage them to share their cards with children in the hospital, neighbors, or seniors in a nursing home.

Discussion

1. What does it mean to feel hopeless? Identify some “feeling” words.
2. Can you think of any time in your life when you felt lost or hopeless? Share it with your class.
3. We place our hope in Jesus when we give Him our worries and stop worrying ourselves. Can you tell of a time when you did that?

Activity

Play this fun game by guessing the names of the following individuals who placed their hopes in Jesus despite difficult circumstances.

- a. Suddenly he lost everything including his wealth, property, and family members.

- b. She had lost all hope of healing after seeking many doctors for 12 years.

- c. Though he was enslaved in a foreign land, he never lost hope in God and was rewarded with high positions in the king’s court. _____
- d. She placed her hope in God to save her and her people from being destroyed by a wicked officer of the court. _____
- e. He preached fervently about hope in Jesus throughout his missionary journeys.

THURSDAY

Loyal Till the End

Memory Gem

“Be faithful, even if it means you must die. Then I will give you a crown. The crown is life itself” (Rev. 2:10).

Readiness

Prepare five to six cards, each listing a different loyal or disloyal behavior such as criticizing, encouraging, lying, honesty, gossiping, defending. Draw a line in the middle of the room and mark one side LOYAL, and the other side DISLOYAL. Read out each behavior, and if the children think that the behavior represents loyalty, they are to move to the LOYAL side. If they think the behavior illustrates a disloyal act, they should move to the DISLOYAL side. After all the cards have been read, discuss briefly what loyalty means.

Story

“Keeping His holy day! What nonsense is this?” Major Park barked loudly.

“Sir, Private Brown takes his religion seriously,” Sergeant Caldwell explained, “and he doesn’t carry arms either.”

“No guns! No Saturdays! What’s he doing in the army?” Major Park shouted.

Melvin Brown wrestled through the night in a corner of his bunk, praying that Jesus would give him strength to get through this trial. At 18 Melvin had to be conscripted into the army for two years. There were no exceptions.

His parents prayed with him before he left and read him many Bible texts that could help him through tough times. Yes, he remembered Matthew 19:26: “With man, that is impossible. But with God, all things are possible.” He was definitely counting on God to work the impossible right there in the camp!

“Don’t worry about being faithful in the army. God will understand!” Melvin turned around to see who was talking to him, but could see nobody. But he was certain that he heard that voice loud and clear across the room. Could it be . . . ?

“Jesus, help me through today. I want to be loyal and faithful to You,” Melvin whispered as he fell into line for the morning roll call.

“Private Brown, report to the camp commander!” Sergeant Caldwell’s order came through loud and clear. There was no escape now!

Melvin’s heart pounded rapidly as he knocked on Major Park’s door.

“You’ve got bad records, my boy! You have been thrown out of two camps within one month,” the major snarled. “Who do you think you are? You refuse to train on Saturdays and refuse to carry guns. You have violated the law of the land! It means court-martial!”

“Sir, the Bible teaches us to keep Saturday holy,” Melvin answered boldly.

“Be prepared for court-martial tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.,” Major Park commanded.

A court-martial is a military court. It can determine severe punishment for soldiers. Wow! Melvin had never been to a court before, not to mention being tried in one.

It was the worst night Melvin had ever experienced. He called Mom and Dad, who prayed with him on the phone. They continued to encourage him to trust God to do the impossible.

“Remember Isaiah 40:31, son,” his mother said quietly over the phone.

Isaiah 40:31 kept surfacing through Melvin’s mind all night long. “Those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.”

“Lord, I urgently need those eagle’s wings! I am depending on Your promise,” Melvin prayed.

Several military officers were seated in the room when Melvin arrived for his trial.

“Private, are you willing to go to jail for your faith?” Lieutenant Lee asked scornfully.

“Yes, sir! I want to be faithful to God,” Melvin replied boldly.

“Faith—that’s not worth dying for!” Major Park retorted. “Faith does not exist today!”

After a half hour of questions, Major Park delivered the sentence. “Three weeks in jail and \$250 fine!”

Soon everyone left the room and Colonel Brandt, shaking his head, came up to Melvin.

“I can’t believe we still have modern chaps like you who would be loyal to their God—even at the risk of going to prison,” the colonel exclaimed. “Beginning tomorrow I am the new officer in command of your camp. I admire your loyalty. Our country needs people like you who stand for what they believe.” The colonel smiled as he gave Melvin a strong handshake.

“I’m going to let you off on Saturdays, but you must work every Sunday to make up for it. As for guns, you are assigned to pick up all those blanks after the others have practiced their shooting every day.”

Tears streamed down Melvin's cheeks even before the colonel had finished. How could it be? He heard the jail sentence, yet God turned it into something good!

"Mom! Dad! I've received wings of eagles! With God all things are possible!" Melvin exclaimed excitedly on the phone.

Lesson

God wants us to be loyal and faithful to Him in everything we do. Time and time again He calls His people to come back to Him. In the time of Elijah, God called His people out of idolatry to get rid of Baal and worship Him as the one true God. In Revelation 14 God again calls to us: "Have respect for God. Give him glory. The hour has come for God to judge. Worship him who made the heavens and the earth. Worship him who made the sea and the springs of water" (Rev. 14:7). He wants us to worship and be loyal to Him.

The world offers us many attractive things—money, fame, clothes, computer games, and lots of stuff! But Jesus reminds us: "Put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all of those things will also be given to you" (Matt. 6:33). Yes, don't put your faith in the money and wealth of this world, for they can all disappear overnight.

Just think! It is more lasting to place our loyalty in God, who says: "I am the First and the Last. I am the one and only God" (Isa. 44:6). God is calling us out of all these false worships in the world to accept His eternal seal. This seal signifies we belong to His special group. When we accept His invitation to be loyal to Him, we accept His gift of life forever. We are His chosen people when we make that choice!

Application

Think of some ways you could be loyal and faithful to Jesus till the end. Share your ideas with two friends and pray together that God will help you be loyal to Him so that you will receive His eternal seal.

Discussion

1. What does it mean to receive God's seal?
2. Do you have a special friend who has not accepted Jesus? How can that person accept God's invitation to be His chosen one?

Activity

Have the students form small groups and develop a skit or drama that illustrates loyalty to God. Then have them act it out for the entire class.

FRIDAY

A Merciful Teacher

Memory Gem

“But Lord, you are a God who is tender and kind. You are gracious. You are slow to get angry. You are faithful and full of love” (Ps. 86:15).

Readiness

On a flip chart write the word “Merciful.” Ask the children to help you list the characteristics of a merciful person. Discuss each briefly.

Story

“Carina, see me at the counselor’s room right before lunch,” demanded Mrs. Garcia, who had just collected the final set of exam papers from her fifth-grade class.

“Carina, you acted strangely this morning during the science exam,” Mrs. Garcia remarked.

“No, I didn’t do anything different!” Carina replied.

“Are you sure you have nothing to tell me?” Mrs. Garcia prodded further.

“Nothing! Nothing!” Carina replied emphatically.

“I will be very sad if you aren’t telling me the truth,” replied Mrs. Garcia.

While Carina and her teacher sat silently for a minute, Carina nervously and incessantly twirled the corner of her jacket. Soon Mrs. Garcia broke the silence.

“Carina, please take off your cap now,” Mrs. Garcia quietly asked.

“No! No! No! You can’t ask me to remove my cap!” Carina retorted angrily.

“I believe you have something in there that I should see,” the teacher explained.

After two more requests from her teacher, Carina just broke down and sobbed loudly. Finally she spoke.

“I’m so sorry, Mrs. Garcia, I cheated!” Carina confessed as she removed her cap to reveal a piece of paper with lots of answers on it.

“You deserve to get an F on your exam,” Mrs. Garcia gasped, “but I know this is the first time you have done such a thing.”

“I’m so ashamed of myself. Can Jesus forgive me for such a terrible sin?” Carina asked sadly.

“Yes, He can. Jesus always forgives our sins as long as we confess them and ask for His forgiveness,” Mrs. Garcia reassured Carina. “I’ll forgive you, too, Carina, but you have to bear the consequences.”

“I’ll give you a second science exam next week, but it will be a new set of questions,” Mrs. Garcia promised.

“Thank you, Mrs. Garcia. I will make sure I won’t mess up again!” Carina replied gratefully. “I will also tell my mom and dad about this tonight. Thanks for being kind and merciful!”

Lesson

Yes, we don’t deserve God’s mercy and kindness when we do wrong things that hurt our friends or parents, but David tells us in Psalm 78:38: “He was full of tender love. He forgave their sins and didn’t destroy his people.” John the apostle tells us: “God is faithful and fair. If we admit that we have sinned, he will forgive us our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure” (1 John 1:9). Isn’t this a wonderful promise of love?

Do you remember how many times Israel forgot God’s leading in their lives, leaving Him to worship idols and foreign gods? Time and time again the Israelites grumbled, complained, and left God, yet He still chose to forgive them and show them kindness. God said to them: “‘Israel, you have not been faithful. . . . Return to me. Then I will look on you with favor again. My love is faithful,’ announces the Lord. ‘I will not be angry with you forever’” (Jer. 3:12).

Yes, God is a just and merciful God and He is calling us to choose Him. Jesus’ mission to this earth was to help us see God’s loving, kind, and forgiving character. If we choose God, we will live forever with Him in heaven.

Application

On a sheet of paper write a letter to God telling Him how you feel, knowing He forgives you and shows you mercy. Read your prayer to a friend.

Discussion

1. How is being merciful related to forgiveness? Do these two always go together?
2. Can you think of any time in your life when someone showed you mercy? How did you feel at the time?

Activity

Sing the song “God Is So Good!” Illustrate this song with pictures or your own drawing and be ready to share it with your class.

SECOND SABBATH

My Special Club

Memory Gem

“God’s people need to be very patient. They are the ones who obey God’s commands. They remain faithful to Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

Readiness

Show pictures of the different clubs one can belong to—such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Pathfinders, etc. Ask, “What are the requirements to belong to such clubs?” “What’s so special about belonging to a club?” List their answers on a flip chart.

Story

“Hey, Paul! Do you have your uniform yet?” Prakash asked excitedly as the scouts marched in formation on the blacktop.

“Not yet! I hope to soon,” Paul replied in a loud whisper.

“Guess what? Our club has been chosen to participate in the parade on National Day!” Prakash said.

“Really? Wow! That’s an honor!” Paul exclaimed.

The District 4 Boy Scouts had been practicing twice a week for a month now on their marching drills and group formations. Every move had to be perfect, for each boy represented what the club was known for. All members were instructed to have their uniforms washed and ironed, accompanied by clean shiny boots, well pressed neckerchiefs, sash, and beret.

“Everyone in line . . . left, right, left . . .” Scoutmaster Lee drilled the boys at their midweek meeting.

“No talking! Heads to the front!” he yelled, signaling to a few boys who seemed out of line with the rest.

“Forward march . . . two, three, four; left, two, three, four . . .” the Scoutmaster continued to command and blow his whistle.

“Halt!” Scoutmaster Lee finally shouted and gave a blast on his whistle.

“What do you boys think you’re doing?” He signaled to Kenny, Karl, and Raj to come forward.

“Do you boys want to be in the parade? Do you belong to our club?” the Scoutmaster demanded.

The three boys apologized for not cooperating and begged to be included in the special event of the club.

“Boys, what do Boy Scouts promise to do?” the Scoutmaster asked. “Everyone, let’s say together . . .”

Immediately, all the Boy Scouts of District 4 repeated their promise loudly and proudly:

“On my honor I will do my best

To do my duty to God and my country

and to obey the Scout Law;

To help other people at all times;

To keep myself physically strong, mentally

awake, and morally straight.”

“Excellent! Yes, we are members of this special club and you are special people!” the Scoutmaster emphasized. And turning to Kenny, Karl, and Raj, he frowned. “So, are you boys in or out of the club? Remember, if you are in, a Scout promises to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent,” Scoutmaster Lee reiterated.

“Sorry, Sir, it will never happen again!” the three boys replied, saluting smartly.

“Let’s continue with our practice. There isn’t much time left before National Day,” the Scoutmaster reminded everyone. “OK, forward march, two, three, four; left, two, three, four . . .”

Lesson

Do you know we all belong to an even more special club? That is the “Remnant Club!”

When Jesus comes again, He’ll be looking for people who’ve decided not to get mad or complain when others do evil things to them. He’ll be looking for those who try to be patient when wrongly accused, who’ve kept the commandments of God, and who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

He’ll be looking for those who pray for others and who share this good news with them. The Bible says it will be a small group, but each member will be welcome in heaven.

The apostle John tells us: “Look! He is coming with the clouds! Every eye will see him. Even those who pierced him will see him” (Rev. 1:7). Jesus’ mission of hope to this earth will be fulfilled. It seemed a Mission Impossible! Who can imagine the Son of God becoming a little baby on this earth to save you and me from our sins? It is now Mission Possible! Jesus has conquered sin, and our hope in Him will be realized with a permanent reunion with loved ones. So make your choice and determine to belong to this special club!

Application

Just think for a moment. Mission Possible! Mission Accomplished! Yes, Jesus’ mission to die for us at Calvary gives us hope to look forward to when He will come in glory. So share this with a friend at school who does not know Jesus. Tell them they can belong to Jesus’ special club too!

Discussion

1. Can we buy our way into this special “Remnant Club”? How do we get in? Is it open to all?
2. What three character traits must be found in those who belong to this special remnant club? (Read Rev. 14:12.)

Activity

Have children make a paper crown and decorate it with glitter, gold, etc. Label it “Jesus’ Special Club.” On each point of the crown, stick a star with a characteristic of those who belong to this special club, such as believing in Jesus, keeping the commandments of God. Suggest that they hang it in their room and pray for power to develop those characteristics.

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