

**CHAPTER EIGHT***BIBLE LESSONS*

The lessons in this chapter are straight from the scriptures. These are included because there is a need to teach children the content, the narratives and teachings, which come straight out of the Bible. Also, some of the principles children need to learn are best taught right out of the Bible without any other story. Under some of the titles there is a holiday or other kind of special day listed. Each lesson with such a sub-title can be read on that day of the year so that special days of the year can be used more effectively as training tools. There is an index at the end of the book which will help you locate lessons for special days of the year.

## "INDEPENDENCE DAY"



*Pre-story Note To Parents: Let your children know that this is a true account from Exodus 1-20.*

The book of Exodus tells the story of God's people in the Old Testament--Israel--and how they became slaves to the country called Egypt and how God helped them become free.

Israel had been in Egypt for a long, long time and the king was being very mean to them. He made them work very hard as his slaves and some he even killed. He wouldn't let them go back to Israel, so God sent ten plagues on the country. God did things like turn their water into blood, made so many frogs that they were filling up the houses, sent lots of locusts to eat the crops, made it dark for three straight days, and finally he killed all of the animals and children who were the oldest in their families. If a family killed a lamb and put its blood on their door (like God commanded them), then their oldest animals or children didn't die. It wasn't until God killed the oldest animals and children that the king finally decided he would let Israel leave Egypt.

It was important to the people of Israel that they leave so that they could love and worship God like God wanted them to love him. So, they left. But, after they left, the king decided he was mad at them for leaving and wanted them to come back to be his slaves again. So he had his army chase the people of Israel. Israel came to some water. They couldn't go around and they couldn't go back because the army was chasing them. They were afraid they were going to die. But God made the water part so all the people could walk through to the other side. When the army started to cross where the water was parted, God made all the water come back down and they drowned.

So, God saved his people and set them free because he loved them so much. Then he taught them in the

Ten Commandments and other laws he gave to Moses how he wanted them to live because he did love them and had been so kind to save them. He told them in Exodus 20:2: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

**Note To Parents:** Ask your children: Why did God say to Israel what he did in Exodus 20:2? Answer: He wanted them to love him by obeying what he was about to teach them and he was reminding them what he had done for them. Read Romans 6:17-18: "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." Ask them: What does Paul say God has freed us from? Answer: From having to do things that are sinful and wrong. We can now serve and obey and love God. If you are in the USA, explain to your children that July 4 is Independence Day (and what that means) and that whenever we receive Jesus as our savior is our Independence Day. In other countries you might be able to do the reading on another special day.

**Prayer:** God, thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross for us and to free us from our sins. Thank you that since we have received Jesus as savior, we have been freed from our slavery just like the people of Israel were freed from theirs.

**Activity:** Take two square cake pans (or something similar) and fill them with water. Take some small toy animals and people and help your children recreate the crossing of the Red Sea. They can march the animals and people up to the pans, separate the pans, march them through the water. Reiterate to them again how God miraculously saved them and gave them freedom and how He does the same for everyone who trusts Jesus Christ as their savior.

## "GOD ANSWERS PRAYER"



*Pre-story note to parents: Let your children know that this is a true account from the Bible: 1 Samuel*

*1:1-2:1*

There was once a man named Elkanah who had a wife named Hannah. They lived in a town called Ramah. Even though Hannah wanted to have children very badly, she had not been able to have any. This made her very sad. It was very important for women who lived when Hannah did to be able to have children. If they couldn't and they saw other women who could, it always made them feel bad.

Because Elkanah loved God very much, every year he traveled from his home town of Ramah up to a place called Shiloh. Shiloh had a special place for people to come and worship God (like we do on Sunday mornings). This special place was called the tabernacle. It was only about 15 miles away from Elkanah's home, but since they didn't have cars, trains, or airplanes and had to walk, that was a pretty long trip to take. Elkanah would tell God how thankful he was for all he had done for him and his family. One of the things that people would do in the time of the Old Testament to show God that they loved him, was to offer sacrifices at the tabernacle. Many times this would mean that they killed animals and cooked them. When the animals died this was a reminder that something or someone had to be punished for the sins that the people had done. It also reminded the people that they needed to be forgiven by God of their sins and also that they needed to thank God for his love. (*Ask children: How is Jesus similar to the animals which were sacrificed in the Old Testament?*) Whenever Elkanah went to Shiloh and offered sacrifices he would give a good helping of meat to Hannah too because he loved her so much.

One time when Elkanah and Hannah went on their trip to Shiloh Hannah got very sad and began praying to God. She prayed: "Lord of heaven's armies, see how bad I feel. Remember me! Don't forget me. If you will give me a son, I will give him back to you all his life." (1 Samuel 1:11) Hannah asked God to help her have a son. She promised to God that she would have this son serve God in a very special way all his life. While she was praying silently and moving her mouth, Eli, the priest (the person who helped with the sacrifices) saw her and thought something was wrong. He even thought that she might be drunk. Hannah answered him, "Oh no, sir!" she replied. "I haven't been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the LORD. Don't think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow." (1 Samuel 1:15-16, NLT) Eli then told her that he hoped God answered her prayer.

Well, Hannah and Elkanah went back to their home and God answered Hannah's prayer with a "yes". God helped her to become pregnant and she had a son. She named him Samuel. When Samuel was old enough to eat food Hannah took him to Shiloh and she worshipped God and thanked him for answering her prayers and giving her a son. Here's what Hannah told Eli when she brought him to Shiloh: "Sir, do you remember me?" Hannah asked. "I am the woman who stood here several years ago praying to the LORD. I asked the LORD to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. Now I am giving him to the LORD, and he will belong to the LORD his whole life." And they worshiped the LORD there. (1 Samuel 1:26-28)

Samuel lived in Shiloh and served God by helping at the tabernacle. He grew up to be a man who loved God and a very important person who helped God's people.

**Note To Parents:** Read 1 Samuel 2:1: "And Hannah prayed and said, 'My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.'"

Ask your children: What does the story of Hannah and Elkanah teach us about prayer? Answer: That God hears and answers our prayers. When God answers our prayers, what should we do? Answer: Thank him.

**Prayer:** God, thank you that you hear and answer our prayers. Help us always to remember to pray to you when we have needs. Help us also remember to pray to you when we just want to let you know how much we love you or how great you are.

**Activity:** In this activity you will make a tube talker with your children. Take 2 cardboard inserts out of

some gift wrapping paper and stick one of them about an inch into the end of the other. Then speak softly (perhaps even whisper) through one end while a child has his ear up to the other end. They will notice how clear they can hear you even when others standing nearby cannot. For fun you might even bend the tube talker around a corner so that you or a couple of children can talk to each other without seeing the other person. \*Emphasize that just as we can hear each other and answer one another through the tube talker, even when others can't hear, so God hears and answers our prayers when others may not hear us. \*\*If you don't have the wrapping paper rolls, some other ideas of what you could use would be paper towel and/or toilet paper rolls, rolled up poster board, or plastic pipe.

## "WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?"

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—January (USA)



*Pre-story note to parents: Let your children know that you are telling them a true account from Luke 10:25-37.*

Many of the religious leaders in Jesus' day did not like Jesus. Since he sometimes showed people how the leaders did not do the things that God wanted them to do, they were mad at him. Sometimes they even tried to trick Jesus and make him say things when he was in public that would get him in trouble with people so that the people wouldn't like him.

That's what happened one time when a teacher of the law talked to Jesus. He wanted to ask Jesus some tricky questions to see what Jesus would say--maybe he'd say the wrong thing! "Teacher," the man asked Jesus, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responded by asking the man a question: "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" The teacher of the law knew that the Bible taught we are supposed to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. So, that's how he answered. Jesus told him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." Jesus knew that the man could not love other people like God wanted him to, unless he had been changed by God. So, Jesus wasn't saying that only that would make him a Christian. But, if he were a Christian, he would love his neighbor.

When Jesus talked about neighbors he didn't just mean the person who lived next door. He meant whomever we would meet. The teacher of the law and many of his friends, though, only wanted to love people who were just like them. They didn't want to love people from other places or who were different. So, he asked Jesus another question, "Who is my neighbor?" The only reason he asked this is that he was

hoping Jesus would say that he only had to love people like him. The man hoped to hear this so he wouldn't have to love those who look or act differently.

In order to answer his question, Jesus told a parable (a story that taught a truth). Here's the story he told. A man went down the road from Jerusalem to the city of Jericho. *Jesus probably made this road part of the story because it was a dangerous road and people often were attacked and robbed.* This man was attacked by some mean men. They robbed him, hurt him, and then left him along the side of the road, almost dead. Two very religious people passed by the man--one after the other. *Each of these men were the same type of person as the man to whom Jesus was telling the story (they were Jews).* Because they were religious leaders, many thought that they were very good people. They must be ones who really loved God and others. But, they did not help this man who was hurt.

Then a third man came. This man was from Samaria. He was different than the man to whom Jesus was telling the story. Since Jesus probably meant that the hurt man in his story was Jewish, the Samaritan was different than him also. The Jews didn't like the Samaritans. Someone like this teacher of the law would have especially thought that the Samaritans were not as good as Jews. Yet, the Samaritan stopped, took care of the hurt man, put him on his donkey, and took him to an inn (like a hotel). The Samaritan also paid the bill for the hurt man to the innkeeper.

Jesus then asked the teacher of the law, "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" (*Ask your children: Why did Jesus use the word neighbor? Answer: Because earlier in the story, Jesus and the teacher were talking about loving neighbors. Jesus wanted to know which one was being a neighbor and loving the hurt man*) The teacher of the law answered, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." Jesus wanted this teacher of the law to see that just like the Samaritan loved the hurt man, even though he was different, so too this teacher of the law should love all people--no matter who they are and no matter how different they are. All kinds of people are his neighbor. And, if he truly is a Christian and loves Jesus and is on his way to heaven, he will want to love them all.

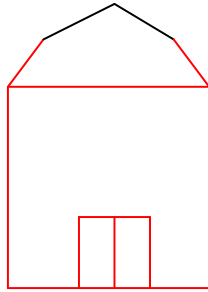
**Note To Parents:** Ask your children: What does this story teach us? Answer: That we should love people no matter how different they are from us. Why is this important? Answer: Because God wants us

to do this. If we don't, then we may not truly be a person who has received Jesus as savior. Does this mean that we love people who have different skins colors? Answer: Yes.

**Prayer:** God, help us to love other people, no matter how different they are from us. Help us be thankful that not all people are like us. Help us understand that just because people are different does not mean that they are more important than us and it doesn't mean we are more important than them.

**Activity:** Have your children play *Love Your Neighbor, Twenty Questions*. Each person in the family gets a chance to be *it* and thinks of someone else. It can be a family member, friend, or anyone that everyone playing the game knows. Each of the other players then takes turns asking the person *it* yes or no questions to try and guess whom they have on their mind. Each player can ask questions of the one who is *it* as long as he gets yes answers. Once he gets a no, it is the next person's turn. Only twenty total questions can be asked for each time a person is *it*. At the end of each round focus on the different characteristics of that one who was on the mind of the person *it* and how we can appreciate those characteristics or love them in spite of bad characteristics. This can help children learn that we can love others even with differences.

## "BARNS AND GREED"



*Pre-story note to parents: Please let your children know that this true account is from Luke 12:13-21.*

One time a large crowd of people had gathered to hear Jesus teach. Someone who was among the crowd spoke up and said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." This man recognized that Jesus was a teacher and therefore thought that he would have the authority and desire to help him and his brother settle their difference (much like other teachers of the same time would have done). But Jesus didn't want to settle an issue where the real problem was why this man wanted the money, so he said that he wouldn't do it: "Who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" Jesus asked. He went on to tell the man, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Jesus must have known that this man wanted the property because he thought having more things is what would make him happy and would provide for all he needed. So that Jesus could help this man see that it is not things that make us happy and not things that let us know we are taken care of, he told him the following parable (a story that teaches a truth).

"The land of a rich man produced plentifully." Jesus is telling about a man who had lots of things--lots of crops which would give him enough to eat and money to buy what he needed--even more than what he needed. "And he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'"

This man thought that the way he could be sure all his needs were met was that he would get lots of things. He could work hard, make a lot of money and he would never be in need. The problem was that he wanted the things more than he wanted God (they were more important to him) and he was trusting in things and not God. "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'" In Jesus' story the rich farmer dies before he gets to enjoy all his riches that he was trusting in to make him happy. By this Jesus is reminding the man to whom he was telling the story that the one who decides what happens in our life and how much or how little we will have is God. We should try to please him more than getting things.

Jesus ends by saying, "So is the one who lays up treasures for himself and is not rich toward God."

**Note To Parents:** Ask your children these questions:

1. What was Jesus trying to teach the man and us by this story? Answer: That we should not think things will make us happy. Nor should we trust in things or money to take care of us, instead of God. Loving him and serving him should be more important to us than getting things.
2. Why is it important that we not trust things instead of God? Answer: Because God doesn't want us to love anything or anyone else more than him (Exodus 20:3). If we trust in money or things to provide for us, instead of God, we are saying they are more important--like they are our god.

**Prayer:** God, thank you for the home we live in, our clothes, our car, our family, and our food. Help us to realize that you have provided all these things for us. We have not done it on our own. Help us to love you more than anything or anyone else.

**Activity:** Have your children make a frieze of the rich farmer story. A frieze is a number of pictures -- each one telling a different part of the story. They can then be taped together--similar to a comic strip-- and it will retell Luke 12:13-21.

## "A TIME FOR CHANGE"



*Pre-story Note To Parents: Let your children know that this is a true account from Luke 19:1-10.*

At the beginning of January many adults decide what things they want to change about themselves for the new year. Some say that they are going to lose weight because they might think that they are fat. Others decide that they are going to exercise everyday--maybe they will walk or jog. Still other people might decide they will spend more time with their family or try to make more money. This is a good time to think about what needs to be changed because the old year has just ended and this causes people to think about things that they might have messed up on over the last 12 months. And it is also a good time to think about change because so much is changing: We have a new year, a new calendar, many have new toys or clothes from Christmas. And a lot of us just hope we can do some things better than we have. But how can we change the things that are really important? How can we be a better person or become a follower of Jesus? How can we begin to do the things that God wants us to do?

To answer that, let's look at a man in the Bible by the name of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a man who lived in the town called Jericho. He had a lot of money. But he didn't get it the right way. You see, his job was to collect money from the people, the amount required by the government. Zacchaeus, though, took more than he really should've. So, he became richer (because he kept much of the extra for himself) and many of the people became poorer. Do you think that was right? (Give children an opportunity to respond) Because Zacchaeus did this, many of the people thought he was a very bad and mean man. They never thought that he could love God or be a follower of Jesus.

One day Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to Jericho and he wanted to see Jesus. Because he was a short man, he decided to climb up in a tree so that he could see over the crowd. When Jesus got to the spot where Zacchaeus was in the tree, guess what happened? Jesus surprised Zacchaeus and all the people

standing around him by stopping and talking to the mean man who had taken so much money from people. Do you think that some of the people who saw Jesus stop and talk to Zacchaeus thought that he should talk to this tax collector? Why? (Give children an opportunity to respond). Those people thought that Zacchaeus would never go to the synagogue (like church) or love God. They certainly never thought that he'd change! And they didn't expect that Jesus would have anything to do with him. After all, wouldn't Jesus just want to spend time with the people who appeared to be good by going to the synagogue all the time and doing the right things?

But Jesus knew that Zacchaeus needed to change. He knew that this man who took people's money didn't love God and had done many bad things. So Jesus had him come out of the tree and went to Zacchaeus' house and spent time with him. Jesus changed his heart so that Zacchaeus received Jesus as his savior and became His friend. He changed Zacchaeus so that he no longer wanted to rob people of their money. He now wanted to give back the money he had stolen--in fact he was going to give more back than what he had stolen! He was no longer selfish and hateful, now he loved God and other people. Zacchaeus had really been changed! Now, read the actual text to your children. Luke 19:1-10:

“He entered Jericho and was passing through. [2] And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. [3] And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. [4] So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. [5] And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.’ [6] So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. [7] And when they saw it, they all grumbled, ‘He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.’ [8] And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.’ [9] And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. [10] For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’

**Note To Parents:** Ask your children these questions: What changed about Zacchaeus? How did he change? What does this teach us about how we can change things in this new year? Did the changes by Zacchaeus make him a follower of Christ or did he change because he became a follower of Christ (*Make*

*sure that your children understand it was the latter)*

**Prayer:** Dear God, I know that I have done some bad things in this past year and have not always done what you wanted me to do. Help me to change the things I need to change.

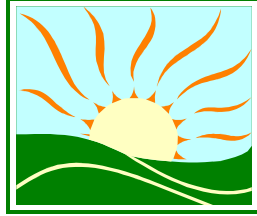
**Activity:** Have your children find the words in this word search which tell them about some changes they might need to make this year. Circle them. Older children (jr. high on up) might want to look up passages of scripture which go along with each word or phrase. Discuss these possible changes with your children.

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Words and phrases in the word search: 1. Read the Bible. 2. Go to church. 3. Worship God. 4. Receive Jesus. 5. Confess sins. 6. Obey God. 7. Pray. 8. Tell Friends about Jesus.

# "HE HAS RISEN FROM DEATH!"

## EASTER



*Pre-story note to parents: Tell your children that this is a true account from Luke 24.*

Jesus died on the cross on a Friday. When he was dead a friend and follower of Jesus, Joseph from Arimathea, took Jesus' body and placed it in a tomb he owned. It was like a cave cut in the side of a hill. Once Jesus' body had been prepared by wrapping it with spices and cloth (weighing probably 70 lbs. or more), a large stone was lodged in front of the opening by rolling it down a hill. Jewish temple police then sealed the stone around and placed an official wax seal on it. They did this because some of the religious leaders knew that Jesus had taught he would come back to life and they didn't want the disciples to come and steal his body to make it look like this happened. So, the seal was placed on the stone which let anyone know that they would be in big trouble, if they tried to move the stone. Also, these temple police were placed there to make sure no one could get close to the body (Matthew 27:62-66). After all this had been done, this is what happened on the next Sunday morning. Luke 24:1-12:  
 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. [2] And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, [3] but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4] While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. [5] And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? [6] He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, [7] that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." [8] And they remembered his words, [9] and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. [10] Now it was Mary Magdalene

and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, [11] but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. [12] But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

**Note To Parents:** Explain to your children that many people have not believed that Jesus was truly raised from death. They do not believe this can happen, so they have tried to explain what happened in other ways, such as the disciples stole his body or that Jesus really didn't die; instead he was unconscious when put in the tomb (like he was asleep) and then woke up and walked out himself.

**Activity:** This is *The Resurrection Game*. Choose someone (preferably a parent) to be the question asker. Take turns answering. A right answer is worth one point (if you want to keep score). If you want to give hints on the answers, read the scripture passages listed and see if children can figure out the answers. Don't hesitate to give them more hints, if needed. The key is to help them learn the truth about the resurrection. It may help to act out each question with little toy people and by constructing a tomb (use an empty margarine dish, etc.) just so kids can visualize what is being said in the question.

1. Some people say that maybe Jesus' body was stolen from the tomb. Why was this not what happened?

*Take turns--each answer is worth one point. Answers:*

- a. The guards saw an angel at the tomb and knew that something special had happened. Matthew 28:2-4.
- b. The ones who first started spreading the rumor that his body had been stolen knew it had not. They made up the story, because they didn't want people to believe. Matthew 28:11-15.
- c. Jesus' followers were so afraid when he was arrested that they all ran away and some denied even knowing him. Mark 14:50; 66-72. They were not brave enough to try and get past the guards and steal his body.
- d. If his body had been stolen, the religious leaders would have eventually found out who did it because they would not want people believing Jesus was alive again.
- e. Because of the seal on the tomb, if the temple police messed up and let someone steal the body, they may have been put to death. They would have been guarding it very closely.

- f. All eleven of the remaining disciples (except for John) were killed because they preached about Jesus. If they had stolen his body and knew that all Jesus said about rising from death was a lie, they would not have been willing to die for preaching about Jesus.
2. Some people have said that Jesus' body was placed in one tomb on Friday and then his followers forgot which tomb he was in and they went to the wrong tomb on Sunday and said that he had risen from death. Why was this not what happened? *Take turns--each answer is worth one point.* Answers:
- The tomb belonged to Joseph from Arimathea. All people would have to do is go ask him where the body was. Matthew 27:57-61.
  - Other followers or friends of Jesus were there when he was buried and would probably not forget where it was. The tomb would be very important to them. Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47.
  - If the followers of Jesus went to the wrong tomb, it would have been easy for religious leaders to show where Jesus was truly buried to prove that he was still dead.
3. Some people have said that Jesus' followers just made up the story of his being raised from death to encourage one another and make each other feel better. Why was this not what happened? *Take turns--each answer is worth one point.* Answers:
- Jesus was seen by over 500 people after he was raised and before he went back to heaven. Could 500 different people have made up the story? No. They all saw him. I Corinthians 15:1-6.
  - Jesus' disciples saw him, ate with him, and touched him. Luke 24:36-43.
  - If they had made up the story and wanted people to believe it, they would not have said that women were the first ones to see him alive. Most people did not think women could be trusted to tell what happened in a trial-type situation (as an eyewitness). Luke 24:4-8; Matthew 28:8-10.
4. Some people have said that Jesus didn't really die on the cross. Instead he went unconscious and then woke up in the cool tomb, got up, and walked out. *Take turns--each answer is worth one point.* Answers:
- It is said in John 19:34 that a soldier stuck a spear in Jesus side and out came blood mixed with water. Some physicians have suggested that for this to happen, Jesus would have to be dead.
  - The Romans were experts at crucifixion. They knew when people were dead or not. Also, the

possibility of someone living through a crucifixion was almost none.

c. Even if Jesus had not died on the cross, how could he have gotten out of the 70+lbs. of wrappings and spices, rolled the stone away and gotten out when he had lost so much blood and fluids from the resurrection and would have been weak? He could not have done this.

\*\*Parents you might also mention to your children that two other proofs for the resurrection of Jesus are that the disciples changed so powerfully after the resurrection (Compare Mark 14:50 and Acts 2-4); and believers began to worship on Sunday in celebration of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor.16:2).

## "WHO JESUS IS"

JOHN 5:1-18



*Pre-story note to parents: Tell your children that this is a true account from John 5.*

One day Jesus went up to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate a special holiday. It was a time to worship God and many people who thought that was important went there. He went past a place where there was a small pool of water. It was called Bethesda and was north of the temple. Many sick people would come to the pool and try to get in it because they thought it could make them well. There may have been an underground spring that fed into the pool which would make the water sometimes move or bubble. These people, many of whom were blind, crippled, or paralyzed, thought that the water was being moved by God or one of his angels and that it might make them well.

When Jesus went by the pool he saw a man who had been sick for 38 years. He was waiting by the pool hoping to get in when the water moved, because that might make him better. He had a small mat under him. Jesus went up to the man and asked him, "Do you want to be healed?" The man went on to tell Jesus that there was no one to help him get into the water when it moves. This man didn't know who Jesus was or that he could make him well. All he could think of was that the water was his only chance to get better. Jesus didn't ask him if he had faith and he didn't even tell the man that he was Jesus. He just said. "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." Immediately the man was well. He took his mat and began to walk.

There is only one in all the world who could be powerful enough to make someone well by just speaking and that is God. God made the world just by what he said. Jesus, who is God, was able to take away this man's sickness by what he said.

The day that Jesus did this was a Saturday. Saturdays (called the Sabbath) in the Bible were days of rest. Many of the Jewish people had taken the day of rest so far that they didn't even think that a person should

help out or do good for someone else. They also didn't even think that the man should be carrying his mat on this day, so they said, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." He answered them by saying, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" This made the Jewish people curious, so they wanted to know who told him to carry his mat. They didn't even care that the man was better. They were upset that someone had told him to break their laws. The man still didn't know who had made him better.

Later in the day Jesus found the man at the temple. He told him to stop sinning so that something worse than what he had experienced with the sickness would not come upon him. Jesus did not only care about this man's physical health, but he wanted him to love God and obey God so that worse things would not happen to him. The man found out that it was Jesus who had healed him. He went and told the Jewish people who had been upset with him earlier.

This made these Jewish people mad at Jesus and they wanted to hurt him. But Jesus said, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." This made them even angrier at Jesus because not only had he broken their law about the Sabbath day, but now he is saying that he is equal to God by saying he is God's son. John 5:18 reads: "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

**Note To Parents:** Ask your children these questions:

1. What do we learn about how to deal with our problems from Jesus being able to help this man?

Answer: That we should ask Jesus to help us and trust in him.

2. What does this story teach us about who Jesus is? Answer: That he is God's son and that means he is equal with God the Father.

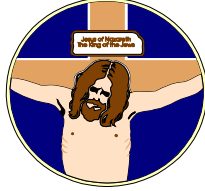
**Prayer:** God help us to remember to turn to you when we have problems. Help us also to understand what it means that Jesus is your son.

**Activity:** To try and understand the trinity--that God consists of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that these three are one God, the same in what they are and equal in their power and greatness--get an egg and use it as an illustration. Tell your children that an egg is one thing (it is an egg), yet it is also three--it has a shell, the egg white, and also the yoke. Though this is an imperfect illustration because all

the parts of the egg can be separated so that they are no longer a one thing and God the trinity cannot, it is a good starting point for understanding the trinity.

# "JESUS ON THE CROSS"

EASTER



*Pre-story note to parents: Let your children know that this is a true account from John 19.*

Some of the religious leaders and other people among the Jews got so mad at Jesus that they wanted to kill him. Since they couldn't find out anything that Jesus had done wrong, they tried to make things up as they took him to appear before some of the government leaders. They took him to Pilate, the Roman governor, because he had the authority to say that Jesus should be killed. This was like a trial. They finally talked Pilate into allowing Jesus to be killed. Here is what happened after that (*Read John 19:1-42*).

**Note To Parents:** Ask your children: Why did Jesus really die upon the cross? Was it just because these people were mad at him or was it for other reasons? Answer: It was for other reasons. God, because he loved the world sent Jesus to die in place of those who would receive Jesus as savior so that they would not have to take the punishment for their sins themselves (Isaiah 53:5: John 3:16: 1 Peter 3:18). What does it mean to receive Jesus as savior? To answer this...

**Activity:** Parent(s): tell your children of when you received Jesus as your savior. If you want more help in how to explain salvation to children, see the discussion on this subject (pages 16-22 of Part 1).

**Prayer:** God, thank you for sending your son to die for us. Help us to know whether or not we have received Jesus as our savior. Help us also to tell other people how they can receive Jesus.

## "GOD'S HELPING SPIRITS"



*Pre-story note to parents: Let your children know that this is a true account from Acts 12.*

One time way back when Jesus' special followers and friends (the disciples) were still alive and after Jesus had gone back to heaven, a king by the name of Herod decided that he wanted to hurt some of the people who loved Jesus. He killed one of the disciples named James. James was the brother of John -- the same John who was one of the disciples and the one who wrote the book of John in the Bible. Herod also had Peter arrested and they put him in jail. Herod didn't want Peter to escape so he had sixteen soldiers guarding him.

The night before Herod was going to bring Peter to trial--hoping to get him in trouble or maybe even kill him--Peter was sleeping between two soldiers and he was tied up with chains. There were also other soldiers guarding the door of the jail. During the night an angel came into the jail cell where Peter was. No one saw him come in, he was just there all of a sudden. He woke Peter up by tapping him on the side. Then he said, "Get up quickly." After saying this, the chains just fell off of Peter. Peter got dressed before the angel told him to follow him. They went past both of the guards at the door and it just opened by itself and they left the jail.

After this happened, Peter went to the home of Mary who was the mother of Mark (the one who wrote the book of Mark in the Bible). Many Christians were there praying. Peter knocked on the door and a servant girl by the name of Rhoda answered. When she saw who it was she was so excited that she forgot to let him in and ran to tell the others Peter was there. Many of them didn't believe her, but she kept on saying that he really was. Peter knocked on the door again and they finally let him inside. Everyone was excited to see him. Once he got them quieted down, he told them how God had rescued him from the jail by an angel. He then left the house.

The next day the soldiers were very upset because Peter had somehow escaped. They didn't have any idea how he got out or where he went. Herod was so mad because he thought the guards hadn't done their jobs that he ordered they be killed.

**Note To Parents:** Ask your children: How did Peter get out of the jail? Answer: God sent an angel to help him escape. Are there really such beings as angels? Answer: Yes, because the Bible says there are. What are angels? Answer: Read Hebrews 1:14 to see what angels are-- "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" Can God's angels help us? Answer: According to Hebrews 1:14 and the account of Peter in Acts, yes! Why is it important to know about angels? Answer: Because we know that God many times has angels to protect us and help us--even when we can't see them.

**Prayer:** God, thank you so much for loving us enough to always be with us and take care of us. Thank you also for sending your good angels to help us.

**Activity:** Have your children color the following angel picture. Also have them look up Genesis 18:1-2; 19:1; and Luke 24:4. Ask them, what do angels often look like to people? Answer: As men, not as creatures with wings and halos.

