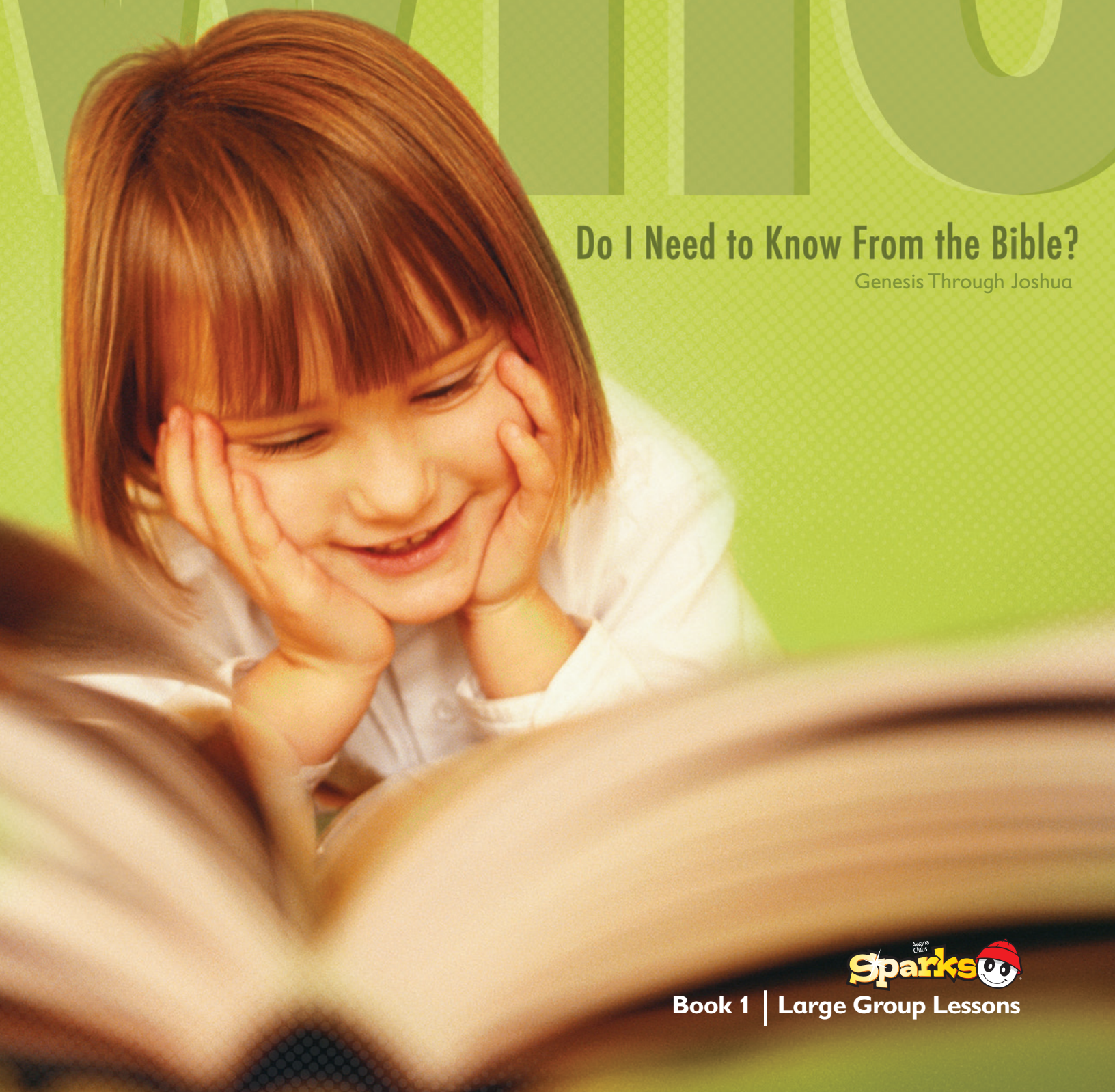


WHO

Do I Need to Know From the Bible?

Genesis Through Joshua



Book 1 | Large Group Lessons

WHO

Do I Need to Know From the Bible?

Genesis Through Joshua



1 East Bode Road
Streamwood, IL 60107-6658 U.S.A.
awana.org
630-213-2000

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WHO Do I Need to Know From the Bible?

Genesis Through Joshua

What Are the Whys of the WHO Book?	2	Joseph Helps His Family, Lesson 6	102
What Is Your Name?	6	Aaron – A Good Servant	108
God Talks to Us Through the Bible	12	Miriam – Another Good Servant	116
We Talk to God Through Prayer	18	What Does a Donkey Say?	124
God Still Loves Us	26	The Tabernacle	130
Sibling Rivalry	32	The Day That Didn't End	136
Get Up and Go, Abraham, Lesson 1	36	Put on Your Walking Shoes	142
Wanting the Best, Abraham, Lesson 2	42	God's Way – All the Way	148
Keeping Promises, Abraham, Lesson 3	50	Not Fair!	156
Jacob and Esau, Lesson 1	56	Be the One Out of Ten	162
Jacob's Dream, Lesson 2	62	A Different Kind of Christmas	168
Jacob Is Tricked, Lesson 3	68	Real or Pretend – Easter	174
Joseph's Background, Lesson 1	72	Mission: M-Possible, Lance Latham, Lesson 1	180
Alone, but Not Lonely, Joseph, Lesson 2	78	Mission: M-Possible, Lance Latham, Lesson 2	186
Joseph's Rules, Lesson 3	84	Family Follow-Up Cards	193
Dreams Come True, Joseph, Lesson 4	90		
Forgiveness Is Sweet! Joseph, Lesson 5	96		

WHAT ARE THE WHYS OF THE WHO BOOK?

How do I use the WHO book?

This *WHO Book* is a resource for your Sparks® Large Group Time. This first *WHO book* corresponds with the *HangGlider*® handbook. We also have *WHO books* corresponding to the other Sparks handbooks.

What do you mean that it corresponds with the specific books?

For instance, the *HangGlider* handbook talks about events that happened from Adam and Eve until Joshua. The first *WHO book* includes Bible biographies from that same time period.

So I have to teach these lessons in order?

No, not necessarily. At any given time, you will have Sparkies in different parts of all three books, so it would be impossible to teach a lesson that would correspond with the exact sections that ALL Sparkies are on. The lessons are stand alone – although we do have several lessons about Bible people such as Abraham and Joseph that build on one another. But you can use them any way you want.

What if I don't have all that much time for Large Group lessons?

Don't feel as if you have to teach the entire lesson in a week. Feel free to spend two or three weeks on a lesson to make sure you get the point across. No one is rushing you.

Are all the lessons in the WHO book Bible biographies?

No, not all of them. We include lessons on missionaries and also a few holiday specials.

What are the different segments in the WHO book?

To help YOU, the leader, understand the lesson, we've divided each one into segments as shown on the next page.

Reading

Where you'll find the lesson in the Bible

Thinking

Some thoughts for you, the leader. These include background information on the biography and also some considerations as you teach it to the Sparkies.

Looking It Up

This is a verse(s) for the children to find in their Bibles. (Have Sparkies turn to the passage before you begin teaching since many children will need help.) Asking the children to find the verse encourages them to bring their Bibles and to learn how to use their Bibles. Often we suggest you have either a leader or Sparkie read the verse during the lesson. Although many Sparkies can't read, they still enjoy having their Bibles open to the verse.

Getting It Ready

A list of what you need to prepare the lesson

Showing

An object lesson or skit will catch the children's attention and also help explain the lesson theme.

Telling

The actual lesson or biography

Challenging

The application to life. A few of our lessons have more than one challenge. You can use all the challenges or you can use the one that best meets the needs of your group.

There are some lessons that will necessitate extra prep time. Consider looking ahead a week or two to see if you need to bring extra materials or seek out the assistance of another leader or clubber.

Family Follow Up

This section gives suggestions of activities, discussion starters or other ideas for parents and children to do together in the home.

Teaching Ideas

These are additional ideas for you to use as you present your lesson.

Sparks Activity

A puzzle or other activity that the Sparkies can do in relationship to the lesson.

We pray that you will use this book as a tool to teach young children about the men and women whom God included in His Word, the Bible.

LESSON TIME 101

Have you thought about the Large Group Time for Sparks ... beyond, “Oh, no, what will I talk about this week?” That is, have you ever really contemplated the awesome opportunity of presenting a Bible lesson to children?

Think about it like this:

PRAYER + PREPARATION + OPPORTUNITY

Prayer seems like a no-brainer, but many fail to include this vital component. Whether it's praying for the children who will hear, or asking God to give you peace and wisdom as you prepare and share, Philippians 4:6-7 is an instruction and a comfort: *Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Preparation also seems like an obvious point, but all too often we don't set aside enough time to prepare for the lesson. Think about it: How thoroughly would you prepare if you were asked to speak before a large gathering of adults in church or elsewhere? The opportunity to share Christ with children is equally valuable in God's eyes (see Mark 10:13-16).

Here are a few thoughts on preparation:

Remember, it is God's Word and the Holy Spirit that change lives. Always put more emphasis on the Scripture than on the illustration – both in your preparation and in your lesson.

It is difficult to prepare an effective Bible lesson the night before, or worse, after work on club night. Read your lesson well ahead of time, making notes about what preparations are needed. Of course, you can use the written lesson, but always be prepared enough so that you don't read the lesson to the children.

Some of the lesson concepts are difficult. Be open to splitting a lesson into two or even three parts so you get the point across. It is better to take a couple of weeks to teach a lesson than to hurry it up for the sake of getting through it in one night.

Opportunity can be summed up with one thrilling/sobering thought – this may be the first time some of your visitors have ever heard the gospel. How exciting! What a privilege to share Christ with them! Yet the entire concept of sitting and listening to a Bible lesson is something that may be new to them. We need to be serious about teaching the children in our clubs.

1. Environment

If your group is small enough or your room big enough, arrange the chairs in a circle. Not only does this formation put EVERYONE in the front row, but it also gives more of a “sitting-around-the-fire” feel rather than a structured “school” feel. (We understand, of course, that many of you present the lesson in an area where Sparkies sit in stationary pews or chairs and you can't change the formation.)

Ask the Sparkies to sit so that they're facing a blank or uncluttered wall. If they face an open door or window (with people walking by) or have a variety of pictures to look at, you'll be competing for their attention.

Ask your leaders to sit among the Sparkies (especially if your leaders often gather in the back of the room and exchange small talk or drink coffee during the lesson). Tell them this is especially important because you want them available to help Sparkies find verses in their Bible. Also, be sure your leaders are prepared to meet with Sparkies who indicate they want to trust Christ as Savior.

2. Introduction

Start your lesson by SIMPLY STARTING. Often leaders waste valuable time by telling the Sparkies to “settle down” or “listen up.” If you want to introduce the lesson before you actually start teaching, do so in a positive, rather than a negative, way.

Negative lesson starters:

OK, you’ve had your fun in Game Time, now you need to sit still and listen. ***(In other words – this WON’T be fun, so be prepared to be bored.)***

If you don’t sit still and listen, we won’t have time for games (or snacks or awards). ***(In other words – the lesson is something to suffer through so we can get to the good stuff.)***

Positive lesson starters:

I am SO excited to tell you about _____
_____. The more I learn
about _____, the more I’ve wanted
to tell you about him/her/it. ***(In other words,
you’re excited! Wow! Sparkies watch adults
closely; they notice our excitement. Shouldn’t
they see us excited about God’s Word?
However, beware of stretching the facts in
an attempt to be funny or entertaining.
Remember, your visitors may know nothing
about the Bible ... they are learning from
what you say.)***

How many of you have ever _____
_____? That was hard/
exciting/scary/fun, wasn’t it? Tonight we’ll talk
about _____ and how God
worked in his/her/their life through a situation
that was a lot like that. ***(In other words, you’re
interested in the Sparkies as people and can
relate their real life experiences to Bible***

accounts. When asking a question to open a lesson, however, limit the responses and move on with the lesson in order to create some momentum and establish yourself – not the Sparkies – as the main speaker of the lesson.)

3. Conclusion

Make sure you close your lesson as clearly and decisively as you opened it. While it’s tempting to go on and on in an effort to make sure you’ve covered everything, a clear and energetic closing – restating your lesson’s main point and inviting Sparkies to ask leaders any questions – is more memorable and effective. Of course, presenting the gospel to children in any setting requires us to be clear in our approach and terminology. The *Awana Ministry Catalog* offers resources to help you. Of all the things you want to get right in your lesson, the gospel must be at top of the list.

ALLERGY WARNING

Peanut allergies and lactose intolerance are on the rise and schools are going gluten free. Please be very careful when you incorporate food of any kind into your Theme Night, Game Time or Large Group Time. At the start of the club year, ask parents/guardians to fill out a form listing any allergies/medical conditions that their Sparkie has. Do not allow any Sparkie to participate in a food-related game or event (even candy – diabetic children could have a reaction) until you know for certain that the child can handle it. A good rule of thumb is better safe than sorry.

Reading

Genesis 25-50 (that's a lot of reading, but it is Jacob's complete story);
Joel 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:11

Thinking

The characters in the Sparks books are fictional. The Sparkies know that (or should be told that, if they don't know). Yet we've made them "act" like real kids with some of the same emotions, problems, joys, likes and dislikes real kids have.

We want Sparkies to relate not only to the fictional characters, but more importantly, to the Bible people they will meet in the biographies.

Children this age want information. They are at an age when they memorize quickly, retain facts and desire details.

Use this story at the beginning of the year for a fun introduction to club. Emphasize the REAL people talked about and explain that they will be hearing the biographies of a lot of Bible people during the year.



Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A box with blankets, filled with stuffed animals (kittens)

Showing

Ask your Sparkies why their parents named them what they did. Sometimes parents simply like the name. Sometimes parents give their children a name with meaning, but the Sparkies don't know what that meaning is. But often Sparkies do know what their name means or why their parents chose the name.

Telling

(Choose leaders to “play” each of the Sparks characters. Make sure the Sparkies know that the Sparks character parts are fictional.)

CHLOE: I have something really cool to show you.

JOEL: Did you get a new computer game?

CHLOE: No, cooler and cuter than that!

JACOB: Yuk! I don't like cute!

CHLOE: You'll like this cute.

JOEL (exasperated): Well, show us then!

CHLOE (walking toward the box with boys following): Remember I told you my cat, Tempo, was gonna have kittens? Well, she had them. Look! *(She points in the box.)*

JACOB (bending down): Cool! They're so tiny.

JOEL (also bending down): Can I have one?

CHLOE: I think you'd better ask your parents. My dad says not everyone likes cats all that much. But if your parents say it's OK, you can have one. Dad says we have to give all but one of them away.

JACOB: What are their names?

CHLOE: You guys can help me figure that out. I don't have names picked out yet, but I was thinking of naming them after foods. Like this brown one could be Chocolate and this black one could be Licorice.

JOEL: If I get one, I'll name him some big strong name like “Gorilla.”

CHLOE AND JACOB (laughing): A cat named Gorilla?

JOEL: Why not? Maybe he'll be a big, strong cat!

CHLOE (shrugging): Some cats ARE strong. When my mom was a kid, they named their cat after a baseball player.

JACOB (laughing): Could he bat a ball?

CHLOE: No, but this is what's funny. He would play fetch, just like a dog does! They would throw a foil ball into the air and the cat would jump so high he would flip over, catch the ball and bring it back to them.

JOEL: He did what his name said he would do – he became a baseball player.

JACOB: My name is in the Bible.

JOEL: We KNOW that. We learned about Jacob at Sparks.

CHLOE: Right. He tricked his father and his brother Esau.

JOEL: And then later, Laban tricked him. *(Leaders, three lessons detailing Jacob's biography are found later in this book. Most children won't know much about Jacob. Tell the children they will learn more about him in later weeks.)*

CHLOE: And he married Rachel and became the dad of Joseph.

JOEL: My name is in the Bible, too, you know.

JACOB: What did Joel do in the BIBLE?

JOEL: Well, he was a prophet of God. Dad said that prophets tell other people about God. But the Bible doesn't tell us much more about him.

CHLOE: But he did write a book of the Bible – the book of Joel.

JOEL: I know there's a Joel in the Bible and I know there's a Jacob in the Bible, but I don't think there's a Chloe in the Bible.

Telling continued

CHLOE: Oh, yes there is! There's only one verse about her, but she's there.

JOEL AND JACOB (showing surprise): The name Chloe is in the Bible? Really?

CHLOE: Mom said we only know she was a Christian and she knew Paul.

JACOB: Cool! All our names are from the Bible.

JOEL: But there are a lot of Bible people I'm glad my parents DIDN'T name me after: like Jehoshaphat, Bakkarak or Mishmannah. **(Leaders, of course, if you have Sparkies in your club with these names, you would skip this sentence.)**

CHLOE: And even if you aren't named after someone in the Bible, your name is still special.

JOEL: Remember our Sparks leader told us that when we trust Christ as Savior, our name is written in the Book of Life. That means we are going to heaven someday. Yippee!

JACOB: That's cool, to think about our name being written in a big book in heaven. **(Leaders, see Revelation 21:27.)**

CHLOE (picking up one of the stuffed kittens): Meanwhile ... what should we name this kitten?

JOEL: Hmm ... Let me think.



Challenging

God knows us each by name. He created us and He cares for us. He loves us. If we trust Christ as Savior, our name is in the Book of Life. That means someday we will live in heaven for all eternity. And don't worry. God won't get confused if there are a lot of people with the same name. He's in control and He knows exactly who you are.

Maybe your name isn't in the Book of Life because you haven't trusted Christ as Savior. Why not do that tonight?

You see – we were all born sinners and we all sin (think, say and do things that are different from what God wants us to think, say and do).

God is perfect, but our sin makes us NOT perfect. That keeps us apart from God.

God sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for us on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. He did this because He loves us.

Three days later, He once again came alive. The Lord Jesus is now in heaven making a place for us to live with Him forever.

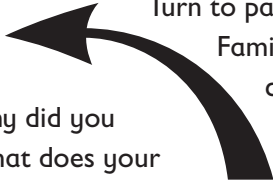
We need to trust the Lord Jesus as Savior. Then our name will be in the Book of Life and someday we will live with Him in heaven.

Family Follow Up

Talk together as a family about your names. Why did you choose the names you did for your children? What does your last name mean? What language is it?

Then talk about God's love. He knows each one of us by name. He never forgets our names or gets us mixed up with other people. As Christians, our names are written in the Book of Life.

Turn to page 193 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!



Teaching Ideas

Theme Ideas

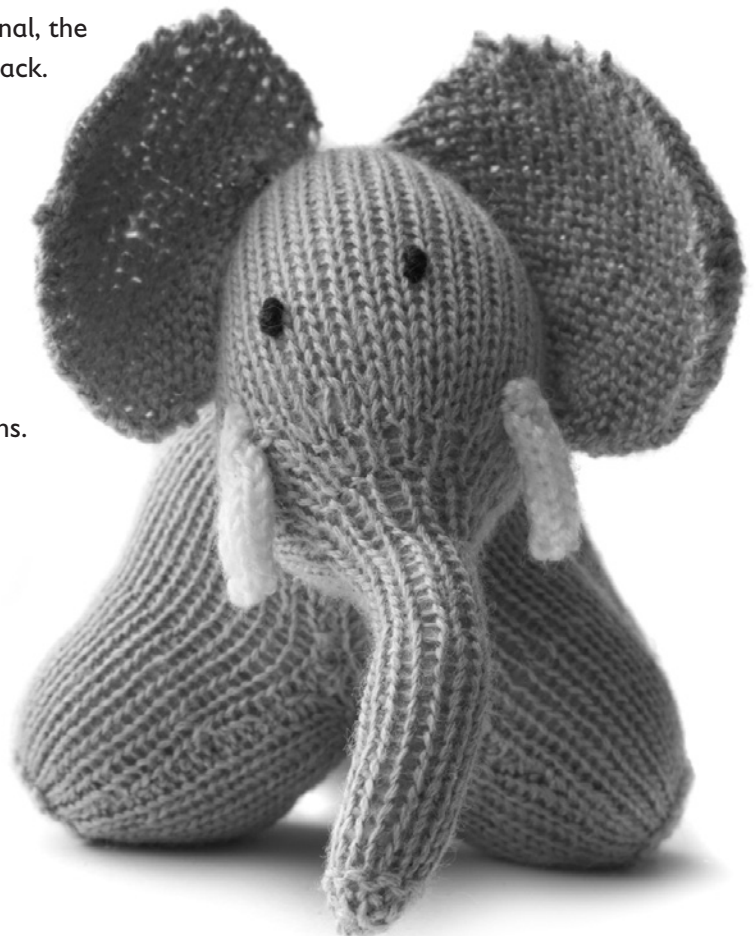
- **Stuffed Animal Night** – Have everyone bring their favorite stuffed animal and take it with them wherever they go. Serve animal crackers, hang pictures of animals around your Large Group Time room and see how many of each kind of animal Sparkies bring. Whichever animal is most represented is the winner and the Sparkies who brought that animal get an extra treat.
- **What Does My Name Mean Night** – The week before this night, ask Sparkies to come the next week knowing what their names mean. Ask them to have it written on a piece of paper. Hang construction paper around the room with Sparkie's names and meanings on them!

Game Ideas

- **Who Am I?** – Have your leaders write the meaning of their names on a piece of paper. Put all the papers in a container. As you pull each piece of paper out, have Sparkies guess which meaning goes with which leader's name. Assign points to teams when they answer correctly.
- **Don't Drop the Animals Relay** – Have each team member hold her stuffed animal. At your signal, the first Sparkie runs to a designated spot and back. She hands her stuffed animal to the second player who runs to the same spot and back carrying the previous player's animal and his own. Each succeeding player repeats the action, carrying his stuffed animal and all the previous stuffed animals. The final player carries all the stuffed animals to the spot and back, then stands on the team line still holding them. The first team to finish wins.

Teaching Option

- When talking through the gospel at the end of the lesson, consider having the *Security CheckPoint* booklet on hand. It's written for Sparks-age children and answers important spiritual questions. It's a great way to walk through the plan of salvation with a Sparkie.



SparksActivity

Leaders, provide sequins, glitter, etc., for the kids to decorate their papers.
Have them fill in the blank with their name.

God Loves

Reading

2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105; Acts 16:1-5

Thinking

Sparkies are just beginning to read, and sometimes we find it difficult to explain to them that the Bible is God's message to them. Most of them hear the message of the Bible from adults rather than understanding it themselves. Our challenge is to show Sparkies that the Bible talks about real life – their real life.

We can tell children that God loves them so much He has a commandment JUST for them – they are to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1).

Children also need to know that the Bible is the complete Word of God. Many people in our society (including preachers) add or subtract from what God says in His Word. We know the Bible is the complete Word of God, but sometimes, we as leaders neglect to teach this priority truth.

Review over and over with your Sparkies –
How does God talk to us? (Through the Bible.)
How do we talk to God? (Through prayer.)

Make sure they understand it.

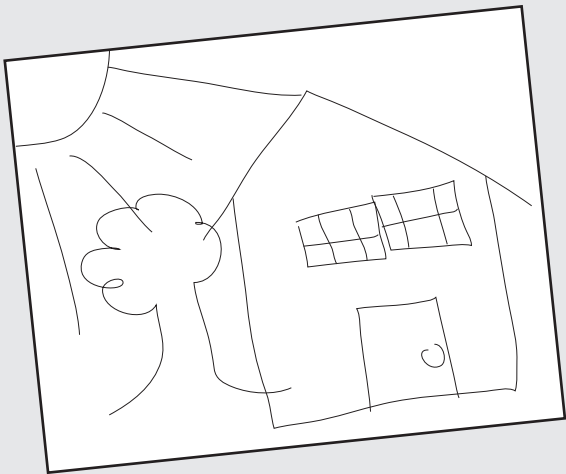
Looking It Up

Psalm 119:105 *(Before you begin the lesson, ask a Sparkie to look up the verse and be ready to read it to the group. You will also need someone to look up 2 Timothy 3:16. Choose an older child who will then stay up front with you and help you with the knife illustration.)*

Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Paper for each child
- Pencil for each child
- Flashlight
- Knife (not sharp – you don't want anyone to get hurt)
- Poster board or PowerPoint® with 2 Timothy 3:16 written large enough for Sparkies to read
- A child to help you during the lesson. You need an older Sparkie who follows instructions well. Explain exactly what you want him or her to do.



Showing

Ask the children to sit on the floor and give each a piece of paper and a pencil. Then, turn off the lights and cover the windows of your room with shades or curtains so it is difficult for children to clearly see. Tell the children to draw a house on their paper. Tell them to draw the sun in the sky and a tree in the yard. You can continue with some more instructions, depending on how the children react. If they're having fun, continue. If you have a few Sparkies more concerned about the darkness than the drawing, you can quit after one or two instructions.

Telling

(Turn on the lights.) Let's look at your pictures. **(Allow some time for children to look at each others' pictures. If you have a small group, you might want to hang them on the wall or bulletin board.)** Was it hard to follow my instructions and draw the pictures? Why? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** Right, there was no light and you couldn't see what you were drawing. Light helps you see.

God tells us in the Bible that we live in darkness. That doesn't mean we live in darkness like a dark, dark night, but it means that we can't see what is right or wrong unless we look at what God tells us. I asked **(child's name)** to read a verse for us. **(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read Psalm 119:105.)** That verse tells us that God's Word is a light. Just like a flashlight can lead us along a dark path, God's Word leads us through life.

Timothy lived a long, long time ago – back in Bible times. When he was a little boy, his mother and grandmother taught him verses from the Old Testament. Who can tell me some of the books of the Old Testament? **(Do this to remind them that the Old Testament is part of the Bible.)** Timothy's mom and grandma wanted him to know about God and he listened to what they said. He did the things he learned about from the verses he memorized.

One day when Timothy was a young man, the apostle Paul visited the town of Lystra where Timothy lived. Many people told Paul that Timothy was a fine young man. Paul decided that Timothy would be a good person to take along as a helper as he went from town to town teaching people about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul often told Timothy not to forget the good things his mother and grandmother had taught him about God.

Paul wrote Timothy two letters, and we can read those letters today. Where do you think we might find them? What are the letters called? **(Allow Sparkies to answer.)** The letters are the books of 1 and 2 Timothy – right here in our Bible! That's kind of special, isn't it? But here is something else you need to know. The letters weren't just for Timothy, they are for US too!

One of the things Paul wrote in his letter was the four reasons God gave us the Bible.

(Child's name), please read 2 Timothy 3:16 for us.

(Call on the child who will help you with the illustration.)

1. First of all, God's Word is for doctrine or teaching.

Let's say the word *doctrine* together. **(Point to doctrine.)** Sometimes people think doctrine is a GREAT BIG word that only preachers or teachers can understand. But that's not true. *Doctrine* means "teaching." Anything we read in the Bible is doctrine. God is teaching us.

I put a knife on that chair over there. Now I will tell you the doctrine (or teaching) of the knife. Knives can be used for good things like cutting food. Knives can also be dangerous. You can get cut by touching a knife. So do not touch the knife.

(Child goes over to the chair and touches the knife, as if he or she is being sneaky.)

1. The Bible teaches us.

2. Second, God's Word teaches us right from wrong.

Now, let's look at the second word of our verse. **(Point to reproof.)** *Reproof* or *rebuke* means "to tell you what you are doing is wrong."

Touching the knife was wrong.

(Child's name), stop touching the knife.

(Child's name), I am your Awana® leader and your dad or mom put you under my care. I told you NOT to touch the knife, but you went ahead and did it anyhow. The Bible says that you are to listen to those who are your teachers (those in authority). What you did was wrong.

And that's exactly what the Bible tells us. God wants us to know when we've done wrong, so He talks to us through the Bible and tells us when we are wrong.

He tells us:

- Not to disobey our parents (Ephesians 6:1).
- Not to whine, grumble and complain (Philippians 2:14).
- Not to lie (Colossians 3:9).

(You can include other commandments, if you would like.)

1. The Bible teaches us.
2. The Bible tells us when we are doing something wrong.



3. *Let's read the next word: correction.*

(Point to correction.) Not only does the Bible tell me what I'm doing wrong, the Bible tells me the right way to do something.

(Child's name), you should have stayed away from the knife and NOT touched it. I told you that if you touched it, you might get hurt. A knife can be dangerous. Stay away from the knife.

The Bible tells us not to disobey, but to obey (Psalm 119:4).

The Bible tells us we are to rejoice (Philippians 4:4).

The Bible tells us we are to be honest (Proverbs 16:11).

1. The Bible teaches us.
2. The Bible tells us when we are doing something wrong.
3. The Bible tells us when we are doing something right.

4. *The next truth the Bible teaches us is: training or instruction in righteousness.*

(Point to righteousness.) Righteousness is goodness. The Bible not only tells us what is right, the Bible tells us how to keep on doing right.

(Child's name), next time, you should walk around the chair so you aren't even tempted to touch the knife. Stay away from the chair altogether and you won't be able to touch the knife. You won't even be tempted to touch the knife.

The Bible tells us to think about things that are good (Philippians 4:8).

The Bible tells us to stay away from things that make us think about doing wrong (2 Timothy 2:22).

1. The Bible teaches us.
2. The Bible tells us when we are doing something wrong.
3. The Bible tells us when we are doing something right.
4. The Bible tells us to keep on doing right.

Challenging

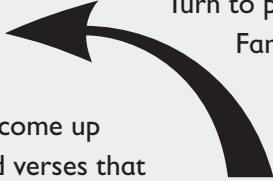
For unsaved Sparkies – the most important truth we learn in the Bible is that God loves us so much, He sent His Son to die for us on the cross. He gave us the gift of His Son so we no longer need to be separated from Him because of our sin – and we are all sinners. We need to understand that we are sinners and that we need a Savior. Then we need to trust Christ to be that Savior. (He is the ONLY Savior.) We do that by believing that He died on the cross and rose again on the third day.

For saved Sparkies – the Bible clearly tells us how to live our lives. God tells us what is right and what is wrong. If there is something you want to do and you aren't sure whether it's right or wrong, ask your parent or leader to help you find where God talks about it in the Bible. The Bible doesn't say the exact words about some of the things in your life, but God still tells us what to do. For instance, you will not find a verse that says: Do not mess with your brother's computer games. But Ephesians 6:1 tells us to obey our parents, so if Mom told you not to touch your brother's computer games, then you shouldn't do it. Ephesians 4:32 says to be kind to each other. If your brother told you not to touch his computer games, then you shouldn't touch them – that's kindness.

Family Follow Up

What are some of the right or wrong issues that have come up in your family recently? Work with your children to find verses that address those subjects. Perhaps your children could help you write out the verses on poster board and then decorate them – so you can hang them up in your house as reminders as to what the Bible tells us to do.

Turn to page 193 for Family Follow-Up cards that you can copy and distribute!



Teaching Ideas

Theme Ideas

- **Silent Night** – At the start of Large Group Time, give each Sparkie five shares. Through Large Group Time, any vocal noise they make results in the forfeit of one share. Each Sparkie who manages to keep all five shares earns another five at the end of the evening.
- **Blackout Night** – The week before, ask Sparkies to bring flashlights to club. Be sure to have extra flashlights on hand for Sparkies who forget to bring one. Find a black light and use it at various times during club.

Game Ideas

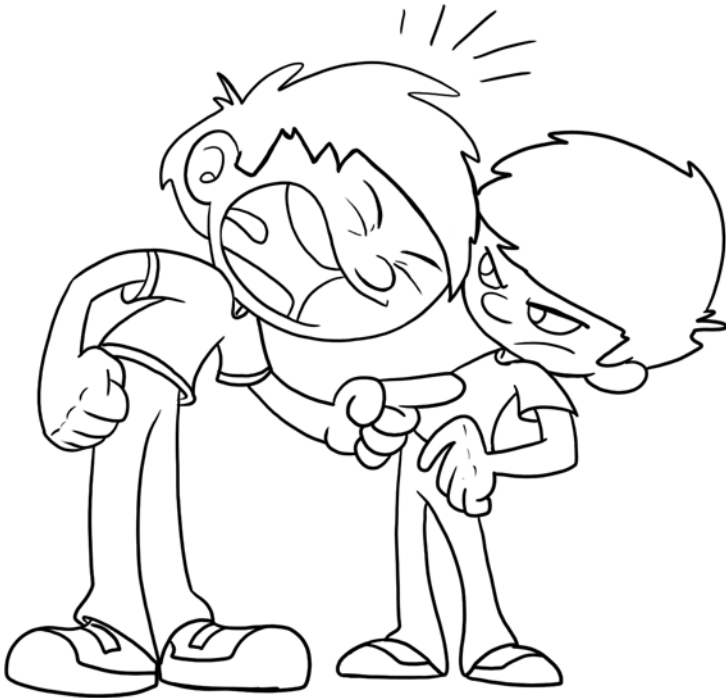
- **Play typical Awana games using only flashlights or a black light.**
- **Beanbag Baseball** – Each team has a beanbag for each player. A bucket is set some distance away from the team (as appropriate for Sparks-aged children). At the signal, the Sparkies each try to toss their beanbag into the bucket. If Sparkies miss, they can retrieve their beanbag for another try. The first team to get all their beanbags in the bucket wins.

Teaching Options

- After Sparkies have finished looking at each other's pictures, teach the rest of Large Group Time with the only light being leaders' flashlights to follow with the blackout theme.
- You know your Sparkies best – if you think they will react negatively to having all the lights turned off, ask them to close their eyes while drawing their pictures, or have blindfolds available.

SparksActivity

Color the pictures. Then draw a circle around the kids who are acting the way God wants them to.



Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

Thinking

Sparkies are learning to pray on their own. Adults have the responsibility to teach kids the privilege of talking to their heavenly Father at any moment of any day.

Unfortunately, many adults do a disservice to children by teaching that prayer is similar to making out a Christmas wish list. Sometimes adults even set kids up. The child wants a puppy and the parent knows the child will be getting a puppy for his birthday. So the parent tells the child to pray for the puppy. When the puppy shows up on birthday morning, the parent tells the child “Isn’t it wonderful that God answered your prayer?”

Or the child wants to visit Grandma and the parents are planning to go to Grandma’s for a week’s vacation. So Dad and Mom encourage their child to pray about it and then they announce they are going to Grandma’s – because God answered their child’s prayer (even though the trip was already planned).

The problem comes when we associate God’s hearing us with getting tangible things. Because there comes a time in a child’s life (and in an adult’s life) when we don’t get that thing we want. You’ve heard kids say, “I prayed I would make the team, but God didn’t answer my prayer.” Or, “God stopped listening to me. I prayed Aunt Karen would get well, but she didn’t.”

Adults aren’t immune to such thinking. “I don’t know why I didn’t get the job. I prayed about it and I felt sure that God would answer my prayer.” Or “We bought the new house, but couldn’t sell our old house. We prayed about it, but I guess, God wasn’t listening.”



Too often we hear people say things like this.

Is this a correct approach? Does God stop listening?

No. God hears us when we pray. He promises that. He tells us He cares about the sparrows and flowers – and that He cares about us even more.

He wants us to talk to Him all day long. He wants us to have a continual conversation with Him. What are we supposed to talk about? Anything. How are we to pray? With thanksgiving and asking everything to be done according to His will.

God answers prayer – we need to accept those answers and not be more focused on what we “think” the answer should be rather than what God desires the answer to be.

Looking It Up

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 (*Ask a Sparkie to look up the verses and be ready to read them to the group.*)

Getting It Ready

You will need:

- Whiteboard or blackboard
- Markers or chalk
- Write 1 Thessalonians 5:17 in large letters on top of the board.
- Write the alphabet under the verse, one letter on a line.



Showing

Start the class by telling the children you will be working together to write a “thanks” psalm. (You could explain that *psalm* is the Hebrew word for “song.”) Then together list something you’re thankful for under each letter of the alphabet.

Additional option: Ask a leader to write the completed psalm on paper. Make a computer copy of it, adding a decorative border and putting the name of your group and the date written. (Written by the Sparkies at Village Community Church on November 12, 20__). Make a copy for each child.

Telling

(Leaders, tell this story in your own words.)

“Hey, Chloe, Jacob! Look! Mr. Anderson is walking Muffie. Let’s go see him.” Joel ran down the street to the Anderson’s house and Chloe and Jacob followed.

“Muffie is so white and fluffy.” Chloe hugged the tiny dog. Muffie wagged her tail and barked at Chloe.

“She sure likes you.” Mr. Anderson patted his dog on the head. “Of course, she likes all people as long as they aren’t mean to her. She likes to be around people more than she likes to be around other dogs.”

Chloe sighed. “I wish we could get a dog. Dad and Mom said we can’t because of my brother’s allergies.”



“Allergies can be a problem,” Mr. Anderson agreed.

“Well, MY parents say we can’t get a dog until I’m older because they’re a lot of work.” Jacob stomped his foot.

“Your parents are right, Jacob. You need to feed them and let them out and take them to the vet. Not only are they a lot of work, but they can be expensive.” Mr. Anderson looked at Muffie. “Right, Muff? You cost lots of money.”

Muffie kept wagging her tail as if to say, “But I’m worth it.”

“I’m getting a dog,” Joel announced.

Chloe and Jacob looked at their friend. “Joel, you NEVER told us you’re getting a dog.”

“What kind are you getting?” Mr. Anderson asked.

“Don’t know yet. But my birthday is coming up and I decided that’s what I wanted.”

Mr. Anderson laughed. “You DECIDED that’s what you wanted so you know that’s what you’re getting?”

“Well, yeah. I’m praying about it and Mom always says God answers prayers.”

“Do your parents know you’re praying for a dog?” Mr. Anderson sat down on his front steps.

“Yes. They said they didn’t want to get a dog right now, but I figure if I pray hard enough, I can get one anyway, right?”

“That’s NOT the way God works.” Chloe shook her head at her friend. “Mom says we’re to pray that God does what’s best for us in all things.”



“Chloe’s right, Joel. God isn’t in the business of wish granting. He wants what’s best for us and He wants us to be happy in any situation.” Mr. Anderson paused. “Remember when that missionary family visited church a few weeks ago?”

“I do,” said Jacob. “They came to our house for lunch. I liked them. At lunch they told us even more missionary adventures.”

“Remember they told us about the village they visited? The people weren’t even allowed to have a Bible. Someone snuck one in and they tore the pages from the binding so all the Christians could have at least a few pages of God’s Word.”

“And they sang praises to God because they had at least ONE complete Bible – even though the pages were shared by all the families,” Joel said.

“Right, the Bible was the most valued thing they owned. They’re poor and live in shacks, yet the Bible is more important to them than anything else.”

“Hmm ... if I can’t pray for a dog, what CAN I pray for?” Joel asked.

“No one said you shouldn’t pray for a puppy,” Mr. Anderson slapped his leg and Muffie jumped into his arms. “You can thank God for puppies, but also tell Him you know that your dad and mom don’t want you to have one right now and that you’re OK with that.”

“And,” said Jacob, “you can thank God that the Andersons live on our street and they let us play with Muffie.”

Muffie barked as if to say, “Good idea.”



Challenging

What ARE we to pray about? *(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18. Talk about the verses for a few minutes.)*

Let's look up some verses and see what God has to say.

(You could divide into small groups for this and have one leader work with a small group of kids on each verse, explaining what the verse means. You could hand out the verses the week before you do this lesson, so the leader has time to think about the meaning of the verse. If you do this all together, assign leaders to look up the

verses before club starts so you don't have a lot of "empty air," giving kids time to start talking to each other. You want your readers to be ready.)

Here are five important things we can pray about any time. *(If you have a younger group of Sparkies or Sparkies who don't know that much about the Bible – only talk about one or two points.)*

We are to pray about:

1. Staying away from sin (2 Corinthians 13:7)
2. Living the way God wants me to live (Colossians 1:10)
3. Telling others about Christ (Philemon 1:6)
4. Being courageous to live for the Lord (Ephesians 6:10)
5. Praying for each other, leaders, parents, etc. (Ephesians 6:18)

For unsaved Sparkies – Maybe you have never talked to God, because you don't know Him as your Savior. The most important truth we learn in the Bible is that God loves us so much, He sent His Son to die for us on the cross. He gave us the gift of His Son so we no longer need to be separated from Him because of our sin – and we are all sinners. We need to understand that we are sinners and that we need a Savior. Then we need to trust Christ to be that Savior. (He is the ONLY Savior.) We do that by believing that He died on the cross and rose again on the third day.

For saved Sparkies – Remember, we can pray anywhere, anytime and about any thing. We should always pray that we want what God wants for us. We call that "asking for His will." God does hear us. God cares about us. He knows what is best; we should trust in Him. Remember, too, that we are to be thankful.



Family FollowUp

In club, we've been talking about the importance of being thankful to God, our heavenly Father, in EVERY situation. Each night at the supper table, list, with your children, five "thanks" that your family has for that day. At first, children will probably choose the obvious: my parents, my house, my pet, etc. As you continue to do this, encourage them to develop a thankful attitude for the not-so-obvious; "I'm sorry Aunt Karen is sick, but I am thankful we were able to make cards for her today;" "I'm sorry I didn't get to go to Trevor's birthday party, but I'm thankful I got to play a game with Dad here at home."

Turn to page 193 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!

Teaching Ideas

Theme Idea

- **Mission Night** – Does your church support Adopt-a-Club®? In which country? Discuss aspects of the culture of that country. Draw a big chalk outline of the country on the parking lot (or chalkboard if going to the parking lot doesn't work) and have Sparkies chalk in mountains, rivers and cities. Draw and explain the flag. Eat food from the country. Pray for the people in that country.

Game Ideas

- **Telephone** – Play Telephone within the teams. One leader starts by whispering a message in the first Sparkie's ear. One by one the Sparkies whisper the message into the next Sparkie's ear. Then the last Sparkie tells the first leader the message. If the message at the end is the same as when it started, award points.
- **Rat Race** – This works particularly well on those nights you're having trouble settling Sparkies down. Yell "Rat Race" in a loud voice. At that call, all Sparkies and leaders on every team must run around the game circle once. The first team to have all its members (including leaders) standing at attention and quiet on its own team line earns points.

Teaching Options

- If you play Telephone, use it as a teaching option. We may not hear everything perfectly because we're human, but God always hears EXACTLY what we say when we pray.
- Tell Sparkies that next week, anyone who can tell you three things they prayed about and what days they prayed will get a surprise.



SparksActivity



Color the poster and hang it in your room so you remember to thank God in every situation.

Reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Thinking

Explaining to kids how much God truly loves us is difficult because in one sense, we ourselves can't comprehend the magnitude of God's care for us. We've done nothing to deserve God's love, but He desires to give it to us – He has done so much to show us how much He cares.

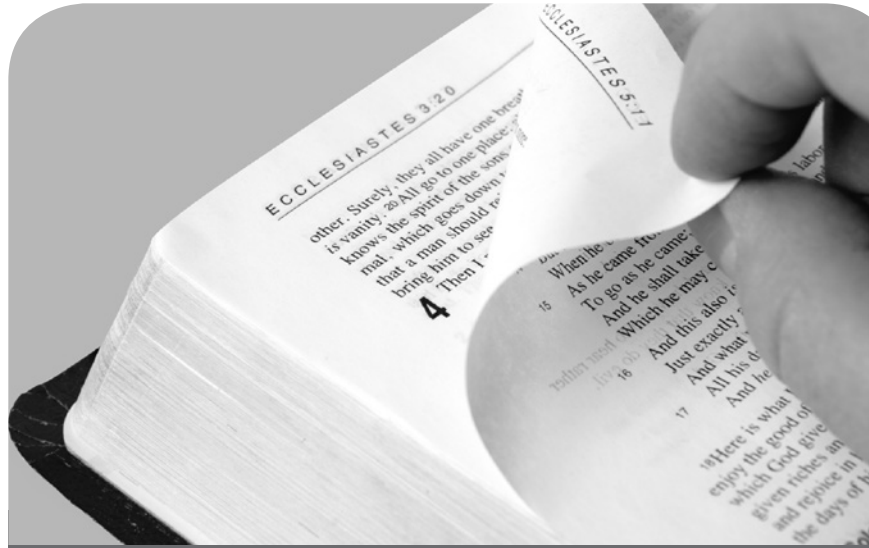
That God became flesh, dwelt among humanity, was crucified and then resurrected are huge concepts that have boggled theological minds for years.

Coming to grips with why God bothered to do all this is equally baffling. This lesson stresses our sinful condition and how great it is that God still loves us. Why does He insist on loving us?

Showing

(Call on your volunteer who can make paper airplanes. [Preferably a Sparkie, but it can be a leader.] If it's a Sparkie, let him know his plane will be ruined so he's not surprised. Place the container of water in front of you.)

I've asked **(Sparkie's name)** to help me in this lesson by making a paper airplane. **(You and the Sparkies watch as the airplane is made.)** Looks like she's done. Let's see how well her plane flies. **(Have Sparkie throw her airplane.)** Not bad at all. Thank you. **(Take the airplane and have Sparkie sit down.)**



Looking It Up

1 John 4:19 *(Ask a Sparkie to look up this verse and be ready to read it to the group.)*

Getting It Ready

You will need:

- A piece of paper
- Someone who knows how to make paper airplanes, preferably a Sparkie
- Something with water in it, big enough to dunk the paper airplane a few times

Telling

Here we have a paper airplane that **(Sparkie's name)** made for us. She makes a good airplane but let's pretend that she's even better at airplane making. Let's pretend that she was able to not only make this airplane but also give it a brain. Our airplane can now think and even fly by itself! Our airplane can decide to fly left or right or up or down, wherever it wants.

In order for our plane to be able to fly around it has to know some things to keep it safe. Airplanes with brains start out pretty silly, so you have to tell them things. What are some rules we might want **(Sparkie's name)** to tell her airplane to keep it safe? **(Let Sparkies give rules.)**

Those are all very good rules and I have one more. You may have noticed this tub of water up here. Is it good for paper airplanes to fly into water? **(Sparkies may have already brought this one up; if so, bring it back up or stop when they mention the water.)** No, paper doesn't last too long when it gets wet. **(Sparkie's name)** should tell her airplane that wherever it goes, it should avoid water.

But let's say that our paper airplane has an attitude! It doesn't think water will hurt it at all. **(Use a paper airplane voice! No, WE don't know what an airplane voice sounds like, either. Just make it up.)** "I'm not scared of water. It won't hurt me. Oh sure, **(Sparkie's name)** told me to

stay out of water, but she's always telling me what to do. I'm my own plane, and I can go where I want." **(Hold the paper airplane and have it "fly" into the container of water.)** "Look at that! I'm fine, water won't hurt me!" **(Throw the airplane again after it is wet. The airplane will probably fly better after it is wet at first, or it may flop on the ground, depending on your paper.)** "I fly just fine. I knew she was trying to keep me from having fun. In fact, I can probably go back into the water again."

(At this point, continue to have the airplane go into the water and then throw it against the wall or hit the floor. The plane will get floppy. Eventually be a little rough with it so it balls up or falls apart. Then still use "airplane voice.") "I don't have to listen to any rules. I can get wet. I can fly into walls and even hit the floor over and over and I don't care . . . Oh no! I'm falling apart! My nose is all bent. I can't fly well anymore. What happened?"

Well, getting wet didn't help our paper airplane did it? That's probably why **(Sparkie's name)** told it to stay out of the water. **(Sparkie's name)** is the person who made the airplane, but do you think she wants the airplane back now? **(Show kids the soaking wet ball of paper that used to be the airplane.)** What good is a wet ball of paper? It can't fly like an airplane anymore; you can't even tell that it was an airplane.

But **(Sparkie's name)** really loves her airplane because she made it and she feels sorry for it. Maybe she could take it home and unroll it, flatten it out, let it dry, and start all over again. That might work! **(Sparkie's name)** is the airplane's owner; she is the one who made it. She wants to see her airplane fly again and enjoy being the great airplane she made it to be in the first place.

God is our Creator. He made you and me, and He made us with brains! He knew that we would get ourselves into trouble, so He wrote out some rules for us so we could know what to do. But, like **(Sparkie's name's)** airplane, we can do silly and wrong things. Even though God tells us not to lie, sometimes we do. Even though God tells us not to take stuff from other people, sometimes we do. We're just like this airplane – we fly right into what God told us to stay away from.

Do you think God wants to throw away what He created? No, if He loved us enough to make us to begin with, I'm sure He loves us even when we sin and hurt ourselves. God sent Jesus Christ to die for our sins. He did this so He could forgive us, and the Bible even says that He makes us a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). **(Make sure your Sparkies understand this – you don't want them to be afraid that they'll become an entirely different human person. Yet, they can understand that they'll become a new creation in Christ.)**



Telling continued

He wants to help us stay out of the punishment that sin brings. He wants to clean us up, straighten us out and get us flying again! God shows that He loves us by wanting to do all these things for us.

(Ask the pre-chosen Sparkie to read 1 John 4:19.) God showed His love to you long before you were even born. Because God loves us so much, we can love Him back. How great it is to know that our Creator loves us, the people He made, so much that He wants to make us brand-new again! He even gave us a list of rules (in the Bible) so we can live our lives the best way possible. He wants to take away our sin, and one day have us all be in heaven with Him, where we will stay new forever!

Challenging

For unsaved Sparkies – God is our Creator and He loves us very much. We know He loves us because He died for us. He tells us in the Bible what to do and what not to do to be safe. He wants us to stay away from things that can hurt us. But sometimes we do those things anyway. We all sin; we sometimes do what God tells us not to do. Sometimes we can sin so much that we end up really hurting ourselves and others, but God still loves us. Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again so He can take care of our sin problem and make us new. How do you get that forgiveness and become a new creation in Christ? By trusting Christ as Savior.

For saved Sparkies – Once you are saved, do you think you should keep doing things you know are wrong? If God loved us so much that He would die for us, we can know that what He tells us in the Bible is for our own good. Because we know that He loves us so much, we can trust what He tells us and willingly obey His words. When we love God, we want to know what the Bible says and we can go do it. If we do mess up, we know that God still loves us and nothing can separate us from God's love. We're His and He will keep us forever!

Family FollowUp

Turn to page 193 for
Family Follow-Up
cards that you
can copy and
distribute!

Parents were here before kids! Parents love their kids, so they make rules and tell kids how to do things to help them out. Parents make rules to help kids just like God makes rules to help us. What are some family rules that your parents made to help protect you? How do these rules show that your parents love you?

Parents, is there a rule your child has a difficult time understanding? Discuss why you made the rule and how the rule helps your child.



Teaching Ideas

Theme Ideas

- **BARF Night** – Be a Real Friend and then Bring a Real Friend. Kids will love the name and when they love a theme, they'll want to bring their friends! Hand out snacks like dog food (Chex® mix) and worm stew (gummy worms and crumpled Oreos®). This is a good night to bring friends as we talk about the gospel message and God's love for us!
- **Love Night** – God loves us even though we sin. Use hearts and other Valentine's Day decorations to enhance the love theme.

Game Ideas

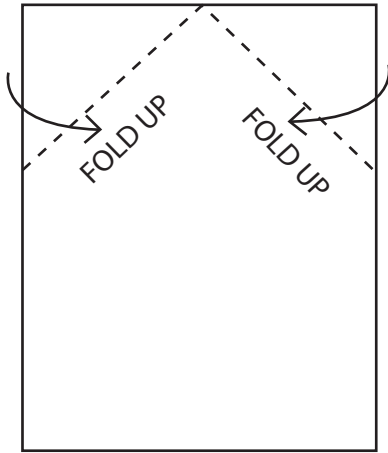
- **Airplane-Making Contest** – Give Sparkies paper to make airplanes. See whose airplane flies the farthest. Or make it a team challenge. Whichever team's airplane goes the farthest wins team points.
- **Whatever You Do, Don't Smile** – Have Sparkies sit in a circle. One person starts as "it" in the middle. He walks up to a Sparkie and says, "Whatever you do, don't smile!" in his funniest, goofiest voice and with a funny face. If the Sparkie he is talking to smiles, she is it. If not, he goes on to try to make another Sparkie smile.

Teaching Options

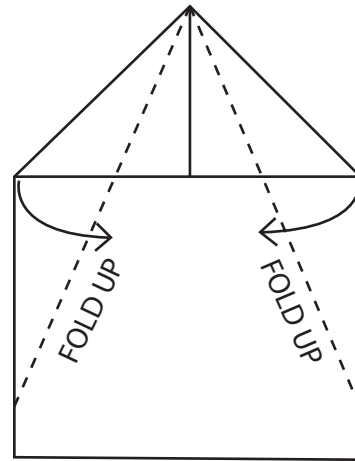
- Dress up as a pilot for the lesson.
- Have leaders serve snacks dressed as flight attendants or acting like flight attendants.



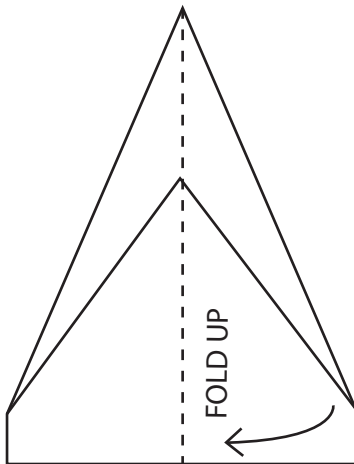
SparksActivity



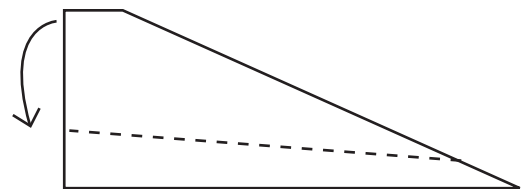
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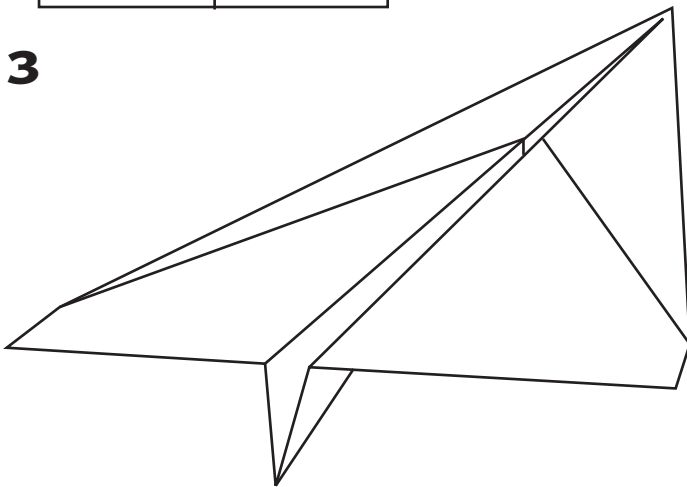


3



FOLD SIDES DOWN
(IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS)

4



Follow the directions to make a paper airplane, then write or draw rules that God gives us in His Word on the airplane – such as obeying our parents, not lying, not whining, being kind, etc.

Family Follow Up

What Is Your Name?

Talk together as a family about your names. Why did you choose the names you did for your children? What does your last name mean? What language is it?

Then talk about God's love. He knows each one of us by name. He never forgets our names or gets us mixed up with other people. As Christians, our names are written in the Book of Life.

Family Follow Up

God Talks to Us Through the Bible

What are some of the right or wrong issues that have come up in your family recently? Work with your children to find verses that address those subjects. Perhaps your children could help you write out the verses on poster board and then decorate them – so you can hang them up in your house as reminders as to what the Bible tells us to do.

Family Follow Up

We Talk to God Through Prayer

In club, we've been talking about the importance of being thankful to God, our heavenly Father, in EVERY situation. Each night at the supper table, list, with your children, five "thanks" that your family has for that day. At first, children will probably choose the obvious: my parents, my house, my pet, etc. As you continue to do this, encourage them to develop a thankful attitude for the not-so-obvious: "I'm sorry Aunt Karen is sick, but I am thankful we were able to make cards for her today;" "I'm sorry I didn't get to go to Trevor's birthday party, but I'm thankful I got to play a game with Dad here at home."

Family Follow Up

God Still Loves Us

Parents were here before kids! Parents love their kids, so they make rules and tell kids how to do things to help them out. Parents make rules to help kids just like God makes rules to help us. What are some family rules that your parents made to help protect you? How do these rules show that your parents love you?

Parents, is there a rule your child has a difficult time understanding? Discuss why you made the rule and how the rule helps your child.

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