

FORMATION

FORMATION

KidCity Formation Journal | Summer 2022



At Church of the City and in KidCity, we believe Jesus is the most important person and we want to do what He does, say what He says and think like He thinks. Here are some of the important things to Jesus, which means they're important to us.

VISION

To see the fame & deeds of God renewed
& known in our time.

MISSION

Practicing the way of Jesus.

PRESENCE OF GOD

We pursue the presence of God through individual & communal spiritual practices.

Psalm 16:11 & John 15:9

FORMATION OF PEOPLE

We pursue deep change through transformational discipleship focusing on growth & healing.

Romans 12:2 & 1 Peter 2:2

UNITY OF THE CHURCH

We pursue the unity of the church family across racial, political, generational & economic divides.

Psalm 133 & Mark 11:17

FLOURISHING OF THE CITY

We pursue the spiritual, social & cultural flourishing of our city.

Jeremiah 29:7 & 1 Timothy 6

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Hi friend!

This summer we are excited to go on this journey with you—reading our Bibles and thinking about what God wants us to do with what we read.

The Bible is like a love letter from God to us. It tells us what God wants us to know and how He wants us to live. Because God sent Jesus to die on the cross for us, and give us a way to live with Him forever, when we trust in Him we get to know Him, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. When you love someone, you want to know everything there is to know about them.

We hope you'll enjoy this journey so much that it makes you want to read your Bible, pray, and spend time with Jesus every day. The adults in our church are reading their Bibles and have a journal too, and they'll read the same Bible verses as you every day. We hope you'll talk to an adult in your life about what you're learning so they can be praying for you. We're going to learn about five people: Nehemiah, Daniel, Esther, Joshua, and Joseph, and how each of them lived BY FAITH.

We are cheering for you! Okay, let's get started...

BY FAITH

(June 6 - August 5)

SCRIPTURE: *The priests made repairs above the Horse Gate. Each priest repaired the part of the wall that was in front of his own house. Next to them, Zadok made repairs across from his house. He was the son of Immer. Next to Zadok, Shemaiah made some repairs. He was the son of Shekaniah. Shemaiah guarded the East Gate. Next to him, Hananiah and Hanun repaired another part of the wall. Hananiah was the son of Shelemiah. Hanun was the sixth son of Zalaph. Next to Hananiah and Hanun, Meshullam made some repairs. He was the son of Berekiah. Meshullam repaired the part that was across from where he lived. Next to him, Malkijah made some repairs. He made his living by working with gold. He repaired the wall up to the house of the temple servants and the traders. It was across from the Inspection Gate. He also repaired the wall as far as the room above the corner. The traders and those who made their living by working with gold made some repairs. They repaired the wall from the room above the corner to the Sheep Gate.*
Nehemiah 3:28-32 (NirV)

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever put together a Lego™ set? What did you build?

A Lego™ box comes with a picture on the outside showing what you are going to build, how many and what kind of pieces are inside, and instructions for how to build the Lego™ set. Sometimes the instructions are easy to understand, and sometimes we need a little help understanding what to do next! When you read through Nehemiah 3:28-32, imagine that Nehemiah and the Israelites were given a giant box of Legos and instructions on how to rebuild the wall that had been destroyed in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah knew he could not build the wall by himself, but he knew God would help him. And God did! God provided the right people to help Nehemiah rebuild the wall. Each person had a job and they did their job well.

Sometimes when things get broken, we want to fix them ourselves. But God wants us to ask for help so we don't have to do it alone!

How can you ask God for help the next time you have a problem? Who is an adult in your life that you can go to when you need help? Write a prayer thanking God that he is powerful enough to help you!

[illegible]

TUESDAY, JUNE 7
A GREAT WORK

SCRIPTURE: *And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?” Nehemiah 6:3 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Can I tell you a secret? Well, it's not really a secret. But it's good news you might not know. Here it is. God has a great work for you!

Yes, just like Nehemiah (we can call him “Ne”) was tasked with building the wall around Jerusalem, God has something great he wants to do in and through your life. God has created you and prepared you for a specific work He wants to do in your life and He doesn’t want you to wait until you’re grown to begin thinking about it. It’s something that will fulfill you, but also help others around you.

But just because God made you for a specific work doesn't mean it will be easy. You have a real enemy, Satan, and He constantly wants to frustrate, intimidate, and distract you. He wants you to give up on the work God has for you because he really doesn't want that work to happen!

You may feel young and unprepared but just remember one thing. God is fighting for you, just like he was fighting for Ne!

The enemy may distract you by making you sad. Or he may distract you by making you afraid in class, at school or even in church. He may even intimidate you by telling you God can't use you unless you're smarter or better or older.

But there is one thing I want to encourage you to do when the enemy tries to distract, frustrate or intimidate you. In fact, let's say it together. Here, let's try it:

"I am doing a great work and cannot come down."

Whenever you feel frustrated or discouraged, I want you to say this. Maybe write it on your bathroom mirror (make sure you use a dry erase marker!) or on a note you can put in your pocket. However you can, make sure you remind yourself, just like Ne reminded himself and his enemies that God has a plan for your life that you will not give up on. And neither will He!

TUESDAY, JUNE 7
A GREAT WORK

What great work does God have for you? Is there a dream in your heart that feels great? How does Satan try to stop you from doing God's work? Look up Ephesians 2:10 and write it down here:

[illegible]

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE

DEVOTIONAL: It's time to party! Whether it's a holiday, birthday, milestone event, or other special occasion, we all love a good celebration. Do you remember a party or celebration that was memorable for you?

After Nehemiah and the Israelites finished rebuilding the wall, they took time to remember and celebrate the goodness and faithfulness of God. First, a man named Ezra who was a great teacher, read God's word out loud and explained it to the Israelites. Next, all the people confessed their sin and worshiped the Lord. They enjoyed "choice food and sweet drink" and, the Bible tells us, "their joy was very great!" (Nehemiah 8) Sounds like a great party! As a part of their celebration, the Israelites declared and remembered all that God had done for them and praised Him for His faithfulness.

In our own lives we can take time to remember and celebrate God, too! In these verses, God's people had just overcome great trials and obstacles and successfully rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem. After, they paused to "stand up and praise the Lord." You can celebrate God anytime, not just after you face difficult circumstances. How can you remember and celebrate God today? If we look at our verses from Nehemiah, we see a great plan for celebration! Start by gathering your friends and family and taking a moment to read God's word together. Think about and share stories of how you have seen God's goodness in your life. Taking the time to remember how God has been at work in your life is a great way to celebrate Him! Pray together thanking God for who He is and His love for you! And don't forget the "choice food and sweet drink!"

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DEVOTIONAL: What's the first thing you do when you get up in the morning? Do you eat breakfast? Or get dressed? Or use the bathroom? Or sneak into your parents' room to wake them up with a hug? What's the first thing you do when you get home from school? Grab a snack? Start your homework? Say hi to your mom or dad? If you get an allowance, what's the first thing you do? Think about what you might buy? Ask a parent to drive you to Target? Put some in a jar to save or give? The first things we do can show what's most important to us.

God wants our “first things” ... He wants us to think of Him first, to worship Him first, to honor Him first. With our time, with our money, with our attention, and with everything else He gives us. And there are lots of ways to do this.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

FRIDAY, JUNE 10
FOR GOD & FROM GOD

SCRIPTURE: *For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. Nehemiah 12:46 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever worked really hard on an important project? You know, the kind of project you finish and you can't believe you are finally done? Maybe you've helped put something special together or finished a really challenging assignment for school.

Can you think of your own example?

When you've worked on something that's taken a lot of time and effort, you probably feel proud and thankful you're finished. You also might be wondering, "what's the best way to celebrate?" Some of us would say going for ice cream or to our favorite restaurant is the first thing we think of. What if I told you the first and best way to celebrate might be to sing? That might not be the answer you were thinking, but it's something people did all throughout the Bible.

In the story of Nehemiah, we know there was a really big and important project taking place. The building of the wall was a MAJOR accomplishment and cause for celebration. When they were finished, they sang songs thanking God for the ability to finish and to dedicate the work they did to Him. This is a great example of how we should live as we follow God.

When we sing songs of praise to God, it reminds of two things:
Everything we do is FOR GOD. Our ability to do it is FROM GOD.

Singing helps us to express and understand what we are feeling. Happy songs, sad songs, and even silly songs can communicate what's going on in our hearts. Don't ever be afraid to sing a song that expresses your heart and gratitude toward God!

FRIDAY, JUNE 10
FOR GOD & FROM GOD

Do you have a favorite song to sing to God? If so, write it here.

Write down some things you can think of that are worth celebrating.

[illegible]

Sometimes we can be guilty of doing the same thing. We can take the actions of one person and assume it about an entire group of people. Maybe someone that looks different than you makes a bad choice. We can be tempted to think that everyone that looks like that person makes the same choices. Maybe a kid in your class with red hair gets angry easily. We might then assume that all kids with red hair get angry easily. But that's not true. It's important to remember each of us is responsible for our own actions and to not place stereotypes on an entire group based on how they look, where they live, or what they do.



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TUESDAY, JUNE 14
NOT A COINCIDENCE

SCRIPTURE: *Then he sent back an answer. He said, "You live in the king's palace. But don't think that just because you are there you will be the only Jew who will escape. What if you don't say anything at this time? Then help for the Jews will come from another place. But you and your family will die. Who knows? It's possible that you became queen for a time just like this."*
Esther 4:13-14 (NIRV)

DEVOTIONAL: A coincidence is when two things happen that seem to be connected, but aren't. For example, it would be a strange coincidence if you went to the first day of school and everyone in your class had the same name as you. When we notice coincidences, we start to ask questions. Why does everyone have the same name? Did someone plan this? Was it an accident? What's going on?!

In this story, Esther—a Jewish woman—is married to the King of Persia, when suddenly all of the Jewish people of the kingdom are in danger. Today's verses are the words of Mordecai, Esther's uncle. Mordecai doesn't name God, but is telling Esther that she has a responsibility to make a difference because of her relationship with the king, and that God can work through her if she is willing. Will she trust God and be obedient with the position and relationships she has? Will she go to the King and ask him to save her and her people? YES! Esther realizes that she DOES have a responsibility and that she can pray for courage to help her people by influencing the King to change his mind.

We don't always have control over what happens in our lives, but God can always work through us, right where we are! Take some time to pray and ask God if there is something special you are supposed to do this week.

TUESDAY, JUNE 14
NOT A COINCIDENCE

If Esther had decided not to do anything, where do you think help for the Jewish people would have come from?

Have you experienced a time when you felt afraid or were in danger? Who did God work through to help you?

What is something you have a responsibility to speak up about?

How have you seen God work this week?

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15
OLDER AND WISER

SCRIPTURE: *Then the king asked "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom will be given to you. Esther 5:3 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: The book of Esther is a great one. There are a lot of themes that run through it, and one of them is that Esther was the right person for the job and she found herself in the right place at the right time. She was in a position of influence and able to help her people. She found favor with the king in a time when that was not always guaranteed. Back then, the king was like God—what he said was true and was law. What he thought carried a lot of weight. So Esther had to be wise in how she went about helping her people.

The king told her that what he had would be given to her, that sounds pretty good, right? If you could ask for something from a king what would you ask for?

Esther was trying to find a way to ask for the King to help her people because they were in danger. Haman was scheming to have them destroyed. That is what mattered most to her. She was willing to risk everything to help them. Esther had a gift in Mordecai, he was like a friend and a coach to her. He loved her, challenged her, and spoke what was true to her. gratitude toward God!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15
OLDER AND WISER

What are some things that matter most to you?

Have you asked God to help you with them?

How has God answered your prayers?

Do you have someone like Mordecai who is older and wiser that can help you?

THURSDAY, JUNE 16
ROLES REVERSED

SCRIPTURE: *That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther everything Haman had owned. Haman had been the enemy of the Jews. Esther had told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. So Mordecai came to see the king. The king took his ring off. It had his royal mark on it. He had taken it back from Haman. Now he gave it to Mordecai. And Esther put Mordecai in charge of everything Haman had owned. Esther made another appeal to the king. She fell at his feet and wept. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman, the Agagite. He had decided to kill the Jews. Esther 8: 1-3 (NirV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Even when they couldn't see Him working. It may seem like he's absent, but He is always at work, even behind the scenes. God is fulfilling His promise He made to Abraham and the people of Israel. God will always reveal Himself at just the right time according to His purpose in our lives, just like He did for Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews.

What is something in your current situation where you need God to rescue you from or answer a prayer for? Write that prayer down. Take some time to write down a prayer to God thanking Him for the ways He has provided for you in past situations. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you in this current situation and prayer request. Finally, ask him to give you strength and trust when you may not see Him working immediately in your situation.

THURSDAY, JUNE 16
ROLES REVERSED

There are so many Superhero movies to watch these days. The Incredibles, Star Wars, Batman, and Spiderman to name a few. If you had to pick, what would be your favorite Superhero movie?

The characters and the plot may be different from one another, but almost all of them have the same story line. The superhero is getting attacked by the villain and all doesn't look good for the superhero and the people he or she is trying to save. But, at the very last minute, the superhero is able to save the day and the villain is defeated.

This is kind of like what we read in the book of Esther. It's not looking good for Mordecai and the Jews. Haman, the villain, had made plans for the Jews, the people of God, to be killed in 9 months and for Mordecai to be killed the next morning. Esther, who is Mordecai's niece & the Queen of Persia, holds a banquet for the King of Persia. She tells him about Haman's plans to kill the Jews and Mordecai. Esther also tells the king for the first time that she is Jewish.

The King of Persia orders Haman to be killed instead of Mordecai. He also gives Mordecai the king's signet ring. This puts Mordecai second in command and gives him the power to write orders in the king's name. Both Esther and Mordecai work together to create a new order to save the Jews from being killed.

God's name is not mentioned one time in the book of Esther, but you can see God at work throughout the entire story, even in the very little details. For most of the story it did not look promising for the Jews or Mordecai, but God was still at work.

DEVOTIONAL: The Jews were given a letter from Mordecai who served under King Xerxes that they were to celebrate the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar every year. This was a time when the Lord gave them rest from their enemies. The Bible says, “That was the month when their sadness was turned into joy. It was when their sobbing turned into a day for celebration.” (Esther 9:22)

Is there a time you can think of when you were sad, but God turned that sadness into a reason for celebration?

Spend some time today creating your own day of celebration where you remember God's goodness in your life. Bring out the confetti, create a homemade card, cook your favorite meal with your parents or anything else that means celebration to you! Then write it on your calendar so that you'll remember to celebrate this day every year. You can include other family members and their reasons to celebrate God's wonderful works in their lives. God wants us to remember how much He loves us and sees us through hard times. He wants us to celebrate with gladness and joy!

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

MONDAY, JUNE 20
EAT YOUR VEGGIES

SCRIPTURE: *But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. Daniel 1:8 (NLT)*

DEVOTIONAL: Courage is having bravery to do the right thing. This means you make the right choice even when you're afraid or things seem hard. Firefighters need courage every time a house is on fire. They might be scared to go into a burning house, and sure it's hard, but they make the choice to save others with the skills they have.

Do you remember a time you used courage? You probably do this more often than you think. Try thinking about this past week. Was there a time you used courage at home with your sibling, with a friend at school, or on the field playing a sport? List a time you were courageous.

Daniel made the choice to only eat certain foods and did not want to eat food sacrificed to other gods. When the King of Babylon ordered him to eat his food and drink his wine, Daniel took courage and asked for permission not to eat it. This could have gotten Daniel into a lot of trouble, even death, by not obeying the king's orders. Daniel did the right thing, even though he was afraid, and God blessed him.

God wants you and I to use courage, just like Daniel, when we know the right choice we need to make. But how do we know what's right? Our parents help us make right decisions. God will always tell us what is right as we read the Bible and pray to Him. Church leaders can help us understand what is right also! Once we know what's right, we trust God will be with us to make the right choice even when it is scary or hard. He will be with you just like he was for Daniel when he used courage in front of the king.

MONDAY, JUNE 20
EAT YOUR VEGGIES

Who in your life can you go to when you need help making the right decision?

What area of your life can you ask God for more courage?

Write a prayer asking God to help you have the courage to do the right thing when it's hard.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21
FOLLOW THE LEADER

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever played the game Follow The Leader? One player sets an example with their actions and the rest of the players must follow. Anything the leader does, the others must also do. The players who don't follow are out of the game and the last person standing becomes the new leader.

Who are some leaders you know? Write their names here:

But unlike the others, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the statue because they were devoted to following God and worshiping Him only. They chose to trust God and keep his commands, knowing they would be thrown into the furnace for doing so. And they were.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21
FOLLOW THE LEADER

Just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we can be leaders and choose to follow God and set an example for others, even when it might cost us something.

[illegible]

SCRIPTURE: “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living in my palace in comfort and prosperity. But one night I had a dream that frightened me; I saw visions that terrified me as I lay in my bed. So I issued an order calling in all the wise men of Babylon, so they could tell me what my dream meant.”
Daniel 4:4-6 (NLT)

DEVOTIONAL: King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to tell everyone in the whole wide world about what God was doing in his life. This all started with a frightening dream he had. He knew this dream was very important so he should pay attention to what happened in it.

When we put our faith and trust in Jesus He gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to us as a helper to remember to do the things God has asked us to do. Sometimes the Holy Spirit helps us to remember NOT to do things God has asked us NOT to do. Did you know sometimes God can speak to us through our dreams? But not all our dreams are from God. Sometimes we have the silliest dreams like riding on unicorns underwater. Those dreams are ok to laugh about and move right along with your day.

But King Nebuchadnezzar's dream seemed important so he brought all kinds of men in to help him understand what it meant. No one could help him until finally, Daniel was able to understand his dream. Just like God speaks to us sometimes through our dreams, God also speaks to us sometimes through other people. Daniel put his faith and trust in Jesus so he had the Holy Spirit as his helper. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Daniel understood King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Daniel told the king that he must "stop sinning and do what is right." These words are not just Daniel's words, these words are God's words.

It took time, but King Nebuchadnezzar eventually listened to God's words, spoken through a dream and through Daniel, to "stop sinning and do what is right." God is speaking to us all the time through other people, nature, the Bible, thoughts in our minds, maybe even our dreams! When we ask God into our hearts to be our Lord He will give us the Holy Spirit as our helper to understand His words. It's not always clear or easy, but God will always help us.

What is one dream you can remember (silly or serious)?

Write a prayer to God to ask Him to help you see and hear when He is speaking to you.

[illegible]

THURSDAY, JUNE 23
THE MESSENGER

SCRIPTURE: *“I have heard that you are able to explain things and solve hard problems. I hope you can read this writing and tell me what it means. If you can, you will be dressed in purple clothes. A gold chain will be put around your neck. And you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.” Then Daniel answered the king. He said, “You can keep your gifts for yourself. You can give your rewards to someone else. But I will read the writing for you. I’ll tell you what it means.” Daniel 5: 16-17 (NIRV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever had a friend who was sad that you helped cheer them up? Or maybe your friend did something wrong and you wanted to help them do the next right thing. Maybe you have a friend or sibling who was afraid and you helped them calm down. When you speak up and help someone, you are being God's messenger. Do you remember a time when you were God's messenger to someone? Write their name here:

In today's verses Daniel was God's messenger. The king of Babylon, Belshazzar, who was Nebuchadnezzar's son, received a message he couldn't understand. He was very afraid. Belshazzar knew about Daniel. Daniel was the one who interpreted his dad's dreams. So he sent for Daniel to come and read the message. Daniel was a man of God, and he was able to interpret the message. The message wasn't a happy one; it was that King Belshazzar had not honored and glorified God, and that Belshazzar's time as the King was coming to an end.

In this story, being God's messenger was probably scary for Daniel, but by sharing the message he became the 3rd highest ruler! Sharing a message is not scary all the time. It can be really exciting to share the news of Jesus with your friends and tell them what you know about how much God loves us. We can pray and ask God to help us with our words. God is always with us and wants to help us. The next time we have a friend who is sad, afraid, or disobedient - we can pray and ask God to give us the right words to encourage our friends and show them how much God loves them.

THURSDAY, JUNE 23
THE MESSENGER

We can pray to ask God to help us with our words when we have to be God's messenger. Let's write a prayer to ask for help the next time we have to share God's love.

[illegible]

FRIDAY, JUNE 24
LIONS, KINGS, AND PRAYERS

SCRIPTURE: *When he got near it, he called out to Daniel. His voice was filled with great concern. He said, “Daniel! You serve the living God. You always serve him faithfully. So has he been able to save you from the lions?” Daniel answered, “Your Majesty, may you live forever! My God sent his angel. And his angel shut the mouths of the lions. They haven’t hurt me at all. That’s because I haven’t done anything wrong in God’s sight. I’ve never done anything wrong to you either, Your Majesty.” The king was filled with joy. He ordered his servants to lift Daniel out of the den. So they did. They didn’t see any wounds on him. That’s because he had trusted in his God. Daniel 6:20–23 (NirV)*

DEVOTIONAL: At the end of the last chapter, Daniel was appointed the third highest ruler of all the land. As we read in verse 3 here, he was really really good at his job - he was about to get put in charge of the WHOLE kingdom. Woah! Unfortunately, he was so good at his job that some of the other guys were a bit jealous that he was getting the big job instead of them.

Because of their jealousy, these two other leaders tricked the king into creating a rule that said no one can pray to any other god or human being other than him, the king. Daniel wasn’t going to do that, so he still prayed to God multiple times a day and these guys turned him in for it! Daniel was well liked by the king, but there was no way to get Daniel out of getting thrown into the lion’s den. The king couldn’t even sleep, he was so worried! He rushed to the lion’s den first thing in the morning to see what had happened. As the king approached, he yelled “Daniel! You serve the living God. You always serve him faithfully. So has he been able to save you from the lions?” (Daniel 6:20)

To everyone’s surprise, Daniel yelled back! “Your Majesty, may you live forever! My God sent his angel. And his angel shut the mouths of the lions. They haven’t hurt me at all. That’s because I haven’t done anything wrong in God’s sight. I’ve never done anything wrong to you either, Your Majesty.”

FRIDAY, JUNE 24
LIONS, KINGS, AND PRAYERS

Daniel was completely UNTOUCHED! What?! People couldn’t believe their eyes as Daniel was lifted out of the den. Not a single scratch was on his body! Daniel believed in God, and was such a faithful servant that God blessed him and closed the mouths of lions to keep him safe. Because of God’s faithfulness to Daniel, the king ordered everyone in the land to respect and honor God moving forward.

Is this how you expected the story to turn out? The king completely shifted the rule to be directed at God, instead of on himself, the king. What a change in the king’s heart. Again, Daniel was rewarded for his faithfulness and God continued to look after him.

What are some things that you think God can keep you safe from?

Daniel chose to disobey the king’s new rule of “only pray to the king,” and chose to continue to obey God and pray to only God. Can you think of a time where it was easier to fit in with the crowd than to trust in what God has told you?

MONDAY, JUNE 27
ASKING FOR HELP

SCRIPTURE: *My spirit was troubled. The visions that passed through my mind upset me. I approached an angel who was standing there. I asked him what all these things really meant. So he explained to me what everything meant. Daniel 7: 15-16 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Who helped you first learn to read? A teacher? A parent? A grandparent? A friend?

Write that person's name here: _____

When you first learn to read you start reading with picture books. Most picture books start with a picture of a red apple with the word "Apple" written beside it. Soon enough those picture books become easy to read, and so you get to move on to bigger books with harder words and longer sentences. As you start reading the harder books, you can run into a few words that you don't know. If you read the word "comprehend" and didn't know what it meant, you could ask somebody to help you learn what it means. "Comprehend" means to understand something.

Did you know when Daniel had a dream that he didn't understand, he asked for help in understanding what it meant? He could have easily made up what his dream meant, but instead he asked for help in understanding what it really meant. Daniel knew asking for help was the best thing to do when you don't understand something!

Have you ever had to ask God to help you understand something that was confusing? Write down a time where you where you were confused and had to ask for God's help to understand:

MONDAY, JUNE 27
ASKING FOR HELP

God is always available to help, all we have to do is ask him! If you need help understanding something at school, ask God for help! If you need help with saying the right thing to a friend who has hurt your feelings, ask God for understanding on how to respond with love.

Write about a time when you needed help understanding something.

Write a prayer asking God to remind you that he is always there for you when you need help understanding!

TUESDAY, JUNE 28
KINGS AND KINGDOMS

DEVOTIONAL: If you can, read all of Daniel 8. The whole thing. It's a little hard to understand, but God wants you to find good news in the story. It may seem weird and scary but it's hopeful. First, Daniel has a vision. A vision is like a dream but while you're awake. In his vision Daniel sees a ram with horns that beats up all the other animals, and then a goat with horns that beats up the ram and seems all powerful. It can even fly! The whole thing sounds weird, right? An angel explained the dream to Daniel. The animals represent different kingdoms, and their horns represent leaders of those kingdoms. The animals could represent past kingdoms like Assyria and Rome but could also represent future kingdoms to come.

- There are many kingdoms and kings that don't recognize God.
- Not recognizing God eventually leads kingdoms and kings to do bad and evil things.
- Bad and evil will show up even in your world, but you don't need to be afraid if you are living in the only kingdom under the only King who is perfectly just and good. That's the kingdom of God and our King Jesus!

Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

The angel was reminding Daniel that God's power would destroy evil and the same is true for us! God wins in the end and that is why we should trust him, no matter what we are facing.

TUESDAY, JUNE 28
KINGS AND KINGDOMS

What bad thing do you need to trust God to fix in your life today?

[illegible]

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29
CONFESS IT

SCRIPTURE: *So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. Daniel 9:3 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever disobeyed your parents or broken a rule at school? Maybe you wanted to stay up late when your parents asked you to go to bed. Or maybe during a test at school you took a quick peek at another student's answer. Sometimes we make bad decisions even when we know they're wrong. In the book of Daniel we see that God's people made very bad decisions. They were wicked, broke the Lord's commands and even rebelled against Him. Daniel knew the only way to make things right was to pray and confess to God about all their mistakes.

We don't hear much about sackcloth and ashes today, but in the Bible they are mentioned a lot. Sackcloth is an itchy material that people would put on to show sadness or that they were sorry. In our verse above we see that Daniel was pleading to the Lord in sackcloth and ashes. This was a way to show God that they were leaving behind their bad choices and committing to obey what God commands. Daniel asked for forgiveness for all God's people and says in verse 18 "we do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy." God is merciful! Because of His great love for us He shows us compassion and forgiveness.

Is there something in your life you need to confess to God? As humans we mess up all the time. The good news is that He loves you and hears your prayers. You can trust that God wants to hear from you about anything and everything!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29
CONFESS IT

Think of a bad habit or attitude that you might need to change. Write it down here:

How does it make you feel that God forgives you even when you make bad choices? Spend time talking to God about a bad choice or habit that you may need to leave behind. Ask Him to help you make good choices and thank Him for His love and mercy!

THURSDAY, JUNE 30
IMAGINE THAT!

SCRIPTURE: *The one who looked like a man touched me again. He gave me strength. "Do not be afraid," he said. "You are highly respected. May peace be with you! Be strong now. Be strong."* Daniel 10:18-19 (NirV)

DEVOTIONAL: What are some of your favorite things to imagine? Maybe you like to imagine being a superhero, a princess, a knight, or a ballerina. Or maybe you like to imagine going to other places or doing super fun things. Who made you? God made you. And who made your imagination? God made that, too. And God wants us to use our imaginations when we read the Bible to help us understand what's happening and to know Him more.

As we've been learning, Daniel and God's people are living in a strange land as foreigners. They are far from home, in a place they've never been. How would you feel if you were by yourself in a strange place? It's important to remember that as we read today's Scripture.

In today's reading, some pretty incredible things happen. And we can use our imaginations to help us better understand the story and what God is up to. Read Daniel 10 slowly, and try to imagine YOU are Daniel and these things are happening to you. Try to imagine all the details Daniel mentions. If you're reading with a parent, you could ask them to read it out loud so you can close your eyes and unleash your full imagination. We suggest reading a modern translation of the Bible, like the NirV or The Message.

THURSDAY, JUNE 30
IMAGINE THAT!

What was it like to imagine being Daniel and seeing the things described?

What do you think God was trying to say to Daniel?

What do you think God might want you to know after reading this passage with your imagination?

FRIDAY, JULY 1
HEAR & UNDERSTAND

SCRIPTURE: *I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" Daniel 12:8*

DEVOTIONAL: When I was a kid, I wasn't always the most patient person. Because of this, sometimes it would lead to me making mistakes in different situations. One way I would get into trouble was by not following instructions properly. Usually, this was because I wasn't clear about what I was being instructed to do.

What does it mean to you to have patience? Are you a patient person?

Sometimes, my mom, or my teacher, would tell me something I needed to do, and I would rush off to try to get it done as fast as possible. Because of my hope to get it done quickly, I would hear with my ears the words they were saying to me, but not understand what they were actually wanting me to do. So whenever I didn't really understand what I was being told to do, I would just make up my own way to do whatever I thought was best. That means that I never actually did what they were hoping for me to do.

Sometimes, we can be this way with God. For example, we might hear what the Bible says about how we are supposed to live or treat other people, but we might not understand what this means or how to do it. We end up trying to do it all on our own. God wants us to take the time to understand what He means.

In the Scripture for today, Daniel didn't guess or just go with the idea that made the most sense when he heard from God. He decided to ask God to make things clear. When we need to understand what God is saying, maybe this means we stop, pray, and ask God to help us. Maybe we ask someone we trust to help explain the Bible so we are clear in what we are to do.

FRIDAY, JULY 1
HEAR & UNDERSTAND

What's the difference between hearing and understanding?

What are some ways that you can be more patient?

MONDAY, JULY 4
BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

SCRIPTURE: *"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

DEVOTIONAL: After the death of Moses, God made Joshua the leader of the Israelite people. Joshua had a big task ahead of him. He not only had to fill Moses's shoes as a leader, but he also had to get the Israelites across the Jordan River and take over the land God had promised to them. This was a HUGE task, but God gave Joshua all of the instructions he would need in order to complete it. God assured Joshua that he had the ability to be strong and courageous because He will always be with him. Did you catch that? Joshua's ability to take on this challenge was not based on his own strengths and abilities. God said to lean into His Words everyday and He would always be with him.

This promise applies to each of us today. God has given us all we need to be confident in the tasks that He has given us to do. We don't have to be afraid or discouraged-God is always with us. God never asks us to do something that He hasn't already got a plan for. He has given us the same resources He gave Joshua - His Word and His presence. This doesn't mean that we won't face challenges along the way. This means that we don't have to be afraid, and God will be with us every step of the way.

MONDAY, JULY 4
BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

What are you facing right now where you feel afraid or discouraged?

After reminding yourself that God is always with you, what is the next step you can take toward this task?

TUESDAY, JULY 5
A STRONG REPUTATION

SCRIPTURE: *We've heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt. We've heard what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings. They ruled east of the Jordan River. You completely destroyed them. When we heard about it, we were terrified. Because of you, we aren't brave anymore. The Lord your God is the God who rules in heaven above and on the earth below. Joshua 2:10-11 (NirV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever known about someone before you met them? Maybe you heard about your teacher from other students or parents before you met them. From what you heard, you might have expected them to be really nice, or strict, or funny, or mean, or caring. What did you know about your teacher before you met them?

What do you know about them now that is different from what you heard?

What we know about someone before we meet them is called a reputation. There are a lot of places in the Bible in which we learn that GOD has a reputation. Read today's verses again. What does it tell us about God's reputation?

In today's reading, Rahab - a woman who lives in the city of Jericho—is helping some spies sent from the people of Israel (God's chosen people). She knows that they are there to spy on the city and report back to Joshua so that the Israelites can capture Jericho. However, she hides them away to keep them from being found by the soldiers of her king. She chooses to help the spies instead of her own people! Why does Rahab do this?

TUESDAY, JULY 5
A STRONG REPUTATION

Remember: God has a reputation! Rahab had heard about what God had done! She had heard that he opened the sea so that the Israelites could escape Egypt. She heard how God had won battles for them, provided them with food, and more! Rahab knew that this God was the God who had created everything—and she chose to be on God's side, no matter what.

It sure did take a lot of courage for Rahab to choose faith in God over her king, her city, and her people. Her obedience to help the spies is recounted later in Scripture when the writer of Hebrews says that her faith is what saved her! Rahab's part of God's story continues to show people how amazing God is, even now.

Write a few things that you know about God.

Rahab likely learned about God from stories people told her through her work. How have you learned about God?

Rahab put herself in danger to help the Israelite spies. Have you ever helped someone else? What did you do for them? Why did you want to help? How can you help someone this week?

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6
BIG THINGS

SCRIPTURE: *The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground. Joshua 3:17 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Do you know what the ark of the covenant of the Lord is? It's described in Exodus as having two tablets of the 10 Commandments and is often pictured as a golden box. It's very fancy and very special.

In this section of reading the Israelites are traveling with the ark. They are told that the Lord will do great things among them. They begin passing the ark towards the front of the line as people are walking and God said to Joshua, "When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river." So Joshua shares that word with the Israelites, and as soon as they get to the river (which was at a flood stage, meaning it was very full), the water stopped flowing. Can you imagine? That would be incredible to see. It was just as the Lord said-when they stood in the river, the water stopped and all the Israelites who were traveling together were able to cross on dry ground. That's pretty amazing.

Have you ever experienced anything like that, that only God could do?

It might look different than drying up a river, but it could be something like healing someone who is sick or bringing peace to a relationship. It could be sending protection or joy when we feel vulnerable or need help.

God can do big huge things like drying up rivers and God can also move in ways that might not be as noticeable to everyone, but you know God is moving. God isn't always big and loud, sometimes he moves quietly and softly, but still powerfully. God is faithful in the promises He makes and is able to do more than we can imagine. He can stop a rushing river, what do you think God can do for you?

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6
BIG THINGS

Are there any areas of your life that you need God to show up and do something that only God can do?

Do you have a hard time believing that this is possible today or even that God can really do things like this?

DEVOTIONAL: Our memory helps make us who we are. Whether you're remembering how to tie your shoes or the great family vacation you took last summer, our memory plays a vital role in every aspect of our lives. Studies show the earliest memories that people can recall are as early as two and a half years. What is your earliest memory you can remember? How old were you?

This memorial was a special reminder for the Israelites to remember how God parted the waters at the Jordan, just like he had done previously for their parents at the Red Sea when they left Egypt. This memorial would be a reminder to not only the Israelites who crossed, but to their children's children, and the other nations. It would be a lasting reminder of what God had done and His power. When we read this story and other scriptures in the Bible, it reminds us that God is faithful.

Has God answered any prayers in your life? Where have you seen God's power on display? Write down all the ways you can think that God has been good to you. Write a prayer thanking God for each of these good things and pray that God can help you remember. You can go back to your prayer if you ever start to forget the ways that God has provided and shown His love for you.

[illegible]

DEVOTIONAL: Imagine if every day for 40 years you had only broccoli to eat. Then all of the sudden, you had the choice of tacos, pizza, chicken, donuts, and ice cream! What food would you choose to eat first?

We also read that the Israelites were grateful to God for His faithfulness in their journey to the Promised Land. To show their gratitude they celebrated the Passover Feast. List some things you are grateful to God for and a way you can show God your gratefulness:

Dear God, thank You that you are a faithful God. Thank You that You always do what You say You will do. Thank You that You are the same loving God who never changes and who provides good things for me. Today I praise you for:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

MONDAY, JULY 11
AROUND AND AROUND

SCRIPTURE: *But the Lord said to Joshua, "I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors. You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days. Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns." Joshua 6:2-4 NLT*

DEVOTIONAL: Remember when we talked about the game Follow the Leader? Everyone must follow the exact movements, steps, and motions of the leader. If you mess up or get behind, you're out! This is similar to Simon Says and Red Light, Green Light. You have to do exactly what the leader says or you're out. Circle your favorite of these three games below.

Follow the Leader Simon Says Red Light, Green Light

God gave Joshua some pretty crazy instructions for him to follow as well. God wanted to give the Israelites the town of Jericho. Read the verse above and fill in these blanks as you continue to read. God tells Joshua that His great military strategy for defeating Jericho was to _____ silently around the town for _____ days. _____ priests would carry a _____,s _____, but not be able to blow it until the _____th day when they would defeat Jericho.

That must have sounded very strange. Instead of a sneak attack or clever battle plan, Joshua was going to have to tell the people of Israel they would defeat Jericho by walking silently in circles. That must have been hard for the people to believe. But you know what they did? Even though they couldn't see God and didn't have any proof that his plan would work, they had faith and obeyed God's instructions.

God asks us to do the same thing. He asks us to obey Him even when we don't understand and cannot see the end result. This is what we call faith. We follow the leader, God, even though we can't see Him. God always has the best plan for our lives. He has given us clear instructions in the Bible. He just asks us to follow Him to experience the victories He has ready for us. Even though you can't see everything, will you trust God and follow Him with what He asks you to do?

MONDAY, JULY 11
AROUND AND AROUND

What are some things God instructs us to do?

What is difficult for you to follow that God asks of you?

Write down one way you are going to trust God this week and follow His instruction.

TUESDAY, JULY 12
KEEPING COMMANDS

SCRIPTURE: *The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.” Joshua 7:10-12 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: In today’s verses, we read that the Israelites had a pretty tough time keeping God’s commands and following His instructions. After God was faithful to them and they won the battle of Jericho, they were supposed to stay away from the things they had devoted to God. Instead, they sinned and lied and kept the devoted things for themselves. God was angry because the Israelites disobeyed Him and He knew their sin would lead to destruction and consequences.

Are there rules you don’t really like to follow? Maybe you don’t like eating your veggies before dessert, wearing your helmet while you ride your bike, or doing your homework. Write down a rule that’s hard for you to follow:

Even though some rules may be hard for us to follow, there are reasons it is good for us to follow them. Eating vegetables helps us to grow healthy and strong, wearing a helmet keeps us safe, and we learn from doing our homework. These rules protect us and benefit us. When we don’t follow them, we may face some consequences.

God’s commands work the same way. The Israelites learned this the hard way. Had they listened to God and kept His commands, they would have been able to stand against their enemies in battle, feel safe, and avoid the negative consequences of their sin. Instead, they faced many struggles because of their disobedience.

TUESDAY, JULY 12
KEEPING COMMANDS

Just like the Israelites, we are challenged daily to keep God’s commands. God wants us to listen to His instruction because He loves us, He created us, and He knows what is best for us. When we put our trust in Him, He is faithful to help us do this, even when it is hard. His commands protect us, keep us from sin, and help us to live the best life we possibly can!

Why does God want us to keep his commands?

Earlier in our reading you wrote down a rule that is hard for you to follow. Write a prayer asking God to help you follow this rule.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13
WAIT FOR IT

SCRIPTURE: *So Joshua and all the fighting men set out to attack Ai. Joshua chose 30,000 of his best warriors and sent them out at night with these orders: "Hide in ambush close behind the town and be ready for action. Joshua 8:3-4 (NLT)*

DEVOTIONAL: Joshua was a very smart leader. It's a good thing because he was responsible for leading an army of thousands and thousands of men. Could you imagine having that much responsibility? With that many men, it was important to give them clear instructions so that the plan Joshua made would actually work out. When you are in a battle like this and your plan does not work well, many lives could be in danger.

Joshua cared about his men, so he chose the very best of his warriors to execute his plan. These men were probably pumped up and ready to fight, but the plan didn't call for fighting just yet. The plan called for them to first hide and wait. This probably took some self-control and patience as they waited for the perfect time. If they moved too soon, the plan would not work out well. If they waited too long, the attack would not even matter.

Waiting can be really hard sometimes, but when our plan calls for waiting, it will result in the best possible outcome for our battle. That battle might be something as small as waiting while you save up enough money to buy the perfect baseball bat, or something as big as waiting until you are healthy enough to play baseball after surgery. There will always be battles we face in our lives. There will always be moments where we have to wait, ready for action before we can do the thing we really want to do. Next time you have to wait, remember Joshua and his warriors. Remember that waiting is sometimes the best way to win a battle.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13
WAIT FOR IT

What is something that you have waited for that was totally worth the wait?

What is a battle you are facing right now that you need some help making a plan for?

THURSDAY, JULY 14
ASK GOD

SCRIPTURE: *The Israelites looked over the supplies those people had brought. But they didn't ask the Lord what they should do. Joshua 9:14 (NirV)*

DEVOTIONAL: When was the last time you made a choice? Maybe it's a small decision like what cereal to have for breakfast. Or maybe it was a big choice like obeying the first time and right away. Did you know that you make over 3,000 choices every day? That is a lot of choices. Today our Bible story is full of choices. Some of the choices were bad, and some were good. What was the last decision you made, no matter how big or small?

Our verses today are all about Joshua and the Israelites when they are tricked by the people of the land of Gibeon. The people of Gibeon were afraid that Joshua and his army would attack them. They decided that they would pretend to be from a really far away land and trick Joshua into making a peace treaty with them. A treaty is like an agreement that people make so that fighting won't happen between them. When Joshua met with them, he was suspicious at first and questioned who they were. But then, Joshua believed them without asking God first. A few days later, Joshua found out they were being lied to. Even though the people of Gibeon lied, Joshua made a promise to not attack them, so he kept that promise.

The people of Gibeon made the unwise choice by lying to Joshua and the Israelites because they were afraid. Joshua made the choice to believe the Gibeonites before asking God for wisdom, and because of that he found out he was being tricked. You can always pray and ask God for wisdom to make the next right choice. After finding out he was tricked and lied to, Joshua made the decision to keep his promise to the people of Gibeon by not attacking them. Just like God keeps His promises to us.

THURSDAY, JULY 14
ASK GOD

Write about a time when you didn't ask for wisdom from God and you made an unwise choice. What could you have changed? Let this encourage you to ask for wisdom from God.

[illegible]

FRIDAY, JULY 15
SUN STAND STILL

SCRIPTURE: *So the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel. On that day Joshua spoke to the Lord while the Israelites were listening. He said, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon. And you, moon, stand still over the Valley of Aijalon." So the sun stood still. The moon stopped. They didn't move again until the nation won the battle over its enemies. You can read about it in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky. It didn't go down for about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since. It was a day when the Lord listened to a mere human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel! Joshua 10:12-14 (NIRV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Hey there! Wow, what a passage today was! I wanted to read this chapter a couple times to get a full picture of all that God did, because He did A LOT.

These verses made me think about how much God cares for His children. The sun and moon STOPPED. In the sky. Just stopped in the middle of the day, and "didn't move again until the nation won the battle over its enemies." Do you know why Joshua asked God to stop the sun? Can you think of any reasons why that would be something he asked?

It was so Joshua and his team could continue to fight in daylight! And God chose to stop the sun and the moon so he could shine a light on what they were fighting. I love what verse 14 says: "There has never been a day like it before or since. It was a day when the Lord listened to a mere human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!"

Friends, this is exactly how He fights for you and for me! Joshua asked a really big prayer—for the sun to stand still. Joshua was a part of God's battle plan, and you and I are the same. Just like God helped Joshua defeat the enemy kings and conquer the land, He also defeated the sin in our lives by sending Jesus. He shines a light on our sin so that we can continue to fight against it each day! Joshua wouldn't have been able to conquer the land without God on his side.

You can see in verse 8 where God says "Do not be afraid of them. I have handed them over to you. Not one of them will be able to fight against you and win."

FRIDAY, JULY 15
SUN STAND STILL

I have to remind myself of this often - so many times I try to fight my sin and battles on my own, but God doesn't want it to be that way! He is fighting for us and will do big things for his children. Even stopping the sun!

One of the common themes in Joshua is "Do not be _____". God tells Joshua this a couple times in this chapter—look at verse 8 and verse 25.

God sent Jesus as the battle plan for our sin—how are you fighting sin in your life?

Joshua prays a really big prayer for the sun to stop in the sky! What can you ask God for help with today?

MONDAY, JULY 18
BUILDING WITH BLOCKS

SCRIPTURE: *Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. That's because Joseph had been born to him when he was old. Israel made him a beautiful robe. Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them. So they hated Joseph. They couldn't even speak one kind word to him. Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. Genesis 37:3-5 (NIRV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever had a friend that you felt got all the attention? Maybe they were really good at a sport or they made the best grades at school, or maybe a teacher really liked this friend and it made you feel jealous. Jealousy means wanting something that you don't have or feeling upset that a friend has something you think you deserve.

Joseph's brothers were really jealous because they knew Joseph was special. Here are a few things that made Joseph special:

1. He was born when his parents were super old, which wasn't very common.
2. He had lots of special dreams (and those dreams came true!).
3. He was really loved by his dad.

(I'd probably be jealous too if I were one of Joseph's brothers—he sounds awesome!). But here is the truth: Joseph's brothers weren't unloved by their dad, they were actually really loved by their dad. Joseph's brothers were so busy seeing all of the ways that Joseph was special that they forgot to remember their own special gifts. And not only that, they forgot how much their dad loved each of them! Jealousy makes us forget, but love helps us remember.

Fill in the blanks:

Jealousy makes us _____, but love helps us _____.

Next time you are with a friend and you start to feel jealous, remind yourself that you are special and that God makes every person special in their own way.

MONDAY, JULY 18
BUILDING WITH BLOCKS

Write down 3 things that you are good at.

Write down a prayer asking God to help you remember how loved you are the next time you get jealous of somebody else.

TUESDAY, JULY 19
CLOSER THAN A BROTHER

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever thought that you were doing the right thing only to get in trouble for it? Has your brother, sister, or best friend ever treated you unkindly or mean and you didn't know why?

It's easy to blame Joseph's brothers. And it's easy to be tempted to want to be mad at them. After all, they did say this: "'Here comes that dreamer!' they said to each other. 'Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams.'" Genesis 37:19-20

Listen to what Peter said in the Bible: “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8.

The enemy wants to destroy any life he can, and he will use anyone's words and jealousy including your brother, sister, and best friend as part of his plan. And he will use our unkind words and actions to hurt others also. We have to remember that just like God has a plan for our lives, the enemy has a plan too and we don't want to be part of it! Be on the lookout for the enemy's tricks and schemes and make sure he has nothing unkind or mean to work with!

TUESDAY, JULY 19
CLOSER THAN A BROTHER

Are there any attitudes or actions that you need to confess to God and ask Him to make right?

Are you thinking or saying anything unkind about someone else? Ask God to help you see ways to love others and help them know how much God loves them, too.

[illegible]

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20
GOD WITH US

SCRIPTURE: *The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. Genesis 39:2-4 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Ok, imagine this... your brothers steal your favorite robe and then sell you to be a slave in a far away land! Sounds pretty awful right? Joseph was treated horribly by his brothers and ended up as a slave in Egypt. In fact, Joseph ended up in prison after he lived in Potiphar's house for a while because Potiphar's wife accused him of doing something wrong. Prison! I bet that would have been pretty scary. Have you ever been in a tough situation or unfamiliar place that made you feel lonely or scared? Write about it here:

Even though Joseph was in an awful situation, Genesis 39 tells us that the Lord was with him and he prospered! When we face difficult circumstances, God is with us. He watches over and guides us wherever we go.

Each of us is given a name when we are born but sometimes we are called more than one name. Your parents, for example, have first names but you may call them Mom and Dad. Jesus had other names, too. One of the names Jesus was given is the name Emmanuel. Emmanuel means "God with us." It has always been God's desire to have a relationship with us! There may be times in your life where you may not feel God with you, but you can trust that He is there.

Our focus verses for today tell us that Joseph's master "saw that the Lord was with him." I wonder what the master saw in Joseph that made him know the Lord was with Joseph? Maybe Joseph was displaying the fruit of the spirit that we read about in Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." We can build and strengthen our relationship with God by spending time with Him in prayer, worship, or reading the Bible.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20
GOD WITH US

Using the letters of the name Emmanuel, write words or phrases that describe God.

E _____
M _____
M _____
A _____
N _____
U _____
E _____
L _____

How does it make you feel to know that God is always with you?

Which fruit of the Spirit is most difficult for you? Practice showing that difficult "fruit" this week!

DEVOTIONAL: Where was Joseph when we left off yesterday?
He was in prison! What other bad things have happened to Joseph so far?
How would you feel if those things happened to you?

As we look at today's Scripture, the very first thing we read is exactly what we talked about yesterday: "The Lord was with Joseph." Say that out loud three times: The Lord was with Joseph. When Joseph was made a servant to Potiphar, what are we told about him? (Hint: see Genesis 39:2 from yesterday). Even then, the Lord was with Joseph.

And because God was with Joseph, we see in the rest of today's Scripture that good things began to happen for Joseph. Because God was with Joseph, he found success is all he did.

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FRIDAY, JULY 22
REMEMBER ME

SCRIPTURE: *"But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison... The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him."*
Genesis 40:14 & 23 (NIV)

DEVOTIONAL: Joseph had been wrongly imprisoned. While he was there, two of the king's servants were sent to prison as well. One was the chief cupbearer and one was the chief baker. Both of the servants had dreams they asked Joseph to explain. While not all our dreams are meant to show us something that will happen in the future, God used both the servant's dreams to tell of things to come. Joseph was kind and explained both dreams.

The dream of the chief cupbearer was a good dream with good things to come in real life. Joseph told him that he would soon be out of prison and restored to his position as the king's chief cupbearer! Our Scripture tells us when Joseph interpreted the dream, he asked the chief cupbearer to remember him when things went well. He was hoping when the chief cupbearer was restored to his position with the king, he would tell the king about Joseph's kindness and hopefully Joseph would also get out of prison. However, this story ends with all the good things happening to the chief cupbearer just as Joseph had said, but he did not remember Joseph.

Remember to be watchful of those people that God has put in your day that are kind to you. Remember them. Don't focus so much on yourself and your busyness that you forget to return the kindness to others. Take the time to remember others!

FRIDAY, JULY 22
REMEMBER ME

Ask God to help you remember someone that has shown you kindness.
Write their name.

How can you show them kindness today?

How can you show them kindness today?

MONDAY, JULY 25
DREAM ON

SCRIPTURE: *Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream. No one can tell me what it means. But I've heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it." "I can't do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh. "But God will give Pharaoh the answer he wants." Genesis 41:15-16 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Remember when we talked about dreams a few weeks ago? Have you ever had a dream and wondered what it meant? Maybe in your dream you were flying, or you were shooting the winning shot of the game, or you got to have dinner with someone you look up to. What is a dream you've had that you remember?

In today's reading, Pharaoh—the King of Egypt—had a really upsetting dream and he wants to know what it means. He asked all of the smartest advisers, and none of them have any ideas. If the internet had been invented, Pharaoh probably would have asked, "Alexa! What does it mean when you have a dream about seven fat cows and seven starving cows?!" (Spoiler alert: if you ask that now, she'll just tell you about this story in the Bible!)

Then someone remembers a man named Joseph who has a special talent for knowing what dreams mean! Joseph is just the man they need! He's brought before Pharaoh and when he's asked if he can interpret the dream, what does he say? Write it here:

Wow! Joseph could have made himself a really big deal. He could have felt proud and he could have really showed off. Instead, Joseph says that _____ is the one who will give the answer.

MONDAY, JULY 25
DREAM ON

Whether we are amazing singers, genius spellers, creative inventors, talented artists, or still figuring out what we like and what we're good at, we can learn from Joseph that our talents are given to us by God and can help show others who God is.

A gift or talent that God has given me is...

I can use my gift for God by...

A time God used my talents to help or encourage others was:

TUESDAY, JULY 26
SOMETHING SPECIAL

SCRIPTURE: *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you." Genesis 41:37-57 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Pharaoh recognized that there was something special about Joseph and that God had made him wise. Because of this Pharaoh trusted him. And Pharaoh was POWERFUL. To be the second in command was a big deal. Joseph was wise and throughout the seven years that the land was producing a lot of crops he collected the food and stored it throughout the area. It says that the amount of crops was like the sand of the sea. That is a lot of crops!

When the famine came, food was very hard to find and people were going hungry. Because of Joseph's diligence and wisdom, he was able to help people with the food that was stored away.

Has there ever been a time where your wisdom has paid off, or when you were able to experience the reward of making a good decision?

Most of us would prefer to have access to something rather than a shortage. We like options and choices. In a famine, access and choices are very limited. But because of Joseph's excellent leadership, the people of Egypt were able to make it through the famine—the whole land had food. His preparation and discipline offered safety and survival for the people of Egypt. Being faithful and disciplined when times are good pays off when difficult times come.

Joseph led a unique and difficult life that allowed him to be led by God and used by God in powerful ways. Often, it is in the difficult times that we are prepared for more opportunities that God has for us.

TUESDAY, JULY 26
SOMETHING SPECIAL

Who is someone you trust and why do you trust them?

What do you know about Joseph and what do you think prepared him for this level of responsibility?

What are some qualities that you think make a great leader?

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27
GUESS WHO?

SCRIPTURE: *Joseph was the governor of the land. He was the one who sold grain to all its people. When Joseph's brothers arrived they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them. But he pretended to be a stranger. He spoke to them in a mean way. "Where do you come from?" He asked. "From the land of Canaan." they replied. "We've come to buy food." ... Then Joseph remembered his dreams about them, so he said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the places where our land isn't guarded very well." Genesis 42: 6-7,9 (NirV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever played the game Guess Who for family game night? You are trying to be the first person to guess the other player's hidden character through asking yes or no questions about what you see. When you decide to play the game, sometimes you will end up as the winner and other times as the one who lost. How did you feel when you were the one on the winning side? How did you feel when you were the one who lost? Write how you felt for both outcomes here:

In today's verses, we read that Joseph's 10 oldest brothers come face to face with Joseph for the first time in 20 years. 20 years!!! Even though that's a long time, you would still probably recognize one of your family members, right?? Well, Joseph immediately recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Joseph was in another country, about 450 miles away from where his family lived, given a new name by Pharoah, dressed in fine linens, a gold chain, and spoke to them in Egyptian. Joseph was immediately on the winning side because he recognized immediately who his brothers were, but they had no idea that the governor was their brother that they had harmed so many years before.

You may be wondering: why did Joseph pretend to be a stranger to his brothers? Why didn't he immediately tell them who he was? When his 10 older brothers came to him to receive food, they bowed down before Joseph. It was here that Joseph remembered his dreams and realized for the first time the meaning of those dreams.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27
GUESS WHO?

After suffering for 13 years through slavery and being kept in prison, he now knew God was using him to save not only Egypt, but his very own family and Abraham's descendants. At first, Joseph is mean to his brothers. He wants to see if his brothers have changed. Joseph tested them. He witnessed them confessing their guilt and remorse for what they did to his brother all those years ago right before his eyes.

Joseph's story was beginning to come full circle. Joseph is seeing for the first time how God has taken his suffering of 13 years to bring hope and provision to his family and friends. While Joseph was in his suffering, God saw to the other side. Is there a time in your life when God turned something hard in your life to good?

Joseph could have easily used his position as second in command to Pharaoh as his opportunity to punish his brothers for how they had wronged him and didn't treat him fairly. Instead, he chose to see how God was using their sins and Joseph's misfortune to show God's goodness and mercy.

Is there a time in your life where someone has hurt your feelings and treated you unfairly? If so, write down what happened and write a prayer asking God to help you love and forgive this person, and to show you how He is using what happened to bring about good.

DEVOTIONAL: In Genesis 43, we read that Joseph's brothers ran out of food. They begged their father to let them return to Egypt to buy more food. And this time they would need to bring Benjamin, the youngest brother, with them. Their father didn't want Benjamin to go with them because he was scared to lose him like he lost Joseph. Finally, knowing the whole family needed food to survive, he let Benjamin go with them. The Bible tells us that when Joseph saw Benjamin, it moved him deeply and he went to his room to cry. I'm sure Joseph had mixed feelings of sadness and joy over seeing his brother. He missed all those years of knowing his brother, but now Benjamin stood in front of him. Joseph could not control his emotions and he went away to cry. When have you felt this way? Was there a time when you needed to go to your room and cry?

One of God's names is El Roi, the God who sees, and He sees you always. He sees you when you are crying in your calm place. He loves you and He cares.

Dear God, thank You that You see me and You love me always. Thank You that it's ok to cry and that You care about me. Thank You for the example of Joseph and that having a place to cry and calm down is a good thing. Help me to bring the things that make me cry to You in prayer. Today I bring...

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FRIDAY, JULY 29
I PROMISE

SCRIPTURE: *"My lord, I guaranteed to my father that I would take care of the boy. I told him, 'If I don't bring him back to you, I will bear the blame forever.' So please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers." Genesis 44:32-33 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: Have you ever made a promise to someone and did not follow through with your promise? Sometimes we forget. We don't mean to, but we don't always follow through with doing the things we say we are going to do. It could be simple things like "I'll clean my room", "I'll finish my homework first", "I'll take the dog for a walk", or simply "I'll throw my trash away." What is the hardest thing for you to follow through on? Write it down below.

None of us are perfect, but God wants us to follow through with doing the things we say we are going to do. In Matthew, Jesus said "let your yes be yes and your no be no." That means do what you say you are going to do. God made many promises to His people and followed through with every single one of them. Whether they seemed like big promises or small, He always did what He said He was going to do.

The verses above are from the story of Joseph. It had been a long time since Joseph had seen his brothers. They even thought he was dead. Joseph was made governor of Egypt and his brothers came to get grain from him. Judah, one of Joseph's brothers, was speaking to Joseph, but didn't even know it. Joseph wanted to keep Benjamin, the youngest brother, in Egypt. In today's verse we see Judah talking about a promise he made to his father to bring back Benjamin.

I bet it was hard for Judah to keep this promise. He was willing to take his brother's place in order to follow through with the promise he made to his father. It would have been easier for him to not follow through or make up a story when things got difficult. But, do you know what happened next? Joseph revealed who he was to Judah because of the love he saw in Judah for his brothers and his father. All the brothers were reunited! This may not have happened if Judah did not follow through with his promise.

FRIDAY, JULY 29
I PROMISE

What are some promises you are good at following through with?

Write down a time when you had to sacrifice doing something you wanted to do in order to follow through with a promise you made.

Write a prayer to God asking Him to give you the courage to follow through with the promises you've made.

MONDAY, AUGUST 1
PERFECT PLAN

SCRIPTURE: *Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” So they did. Then he said, “I am your brother Joseph. I’m the one you sold into Egypt. But don’t be upset. And don’t be angry with yourselves because you sold me here. God sent me ahead of you to save many lives. So then, it wasn’t you who sent me here. It was God. He made me like a father to Pharaoh. He made me master of Pharaoh’s entire house. God made me ruler of the whole land of Egypt. Genesis 45:4-5, 8 (NirV)*

DEVOTIONAL: What if you planned a trip to Florida, but when it was time to get off the plane, you had actually landed in New York? That would be an unexpected change of plans! How do you think you would feel if your trip didn’t go according to plan? Write about that here:

Over the past several days, we’ve read that Joseph has been walking through A LOT of unexpected situations. His brothers betrayed him, he was accused of things he didn’t do, and he interpreted many dreams.

In the same way we plan a trip, Joseph may have had an idea of where he wanted to go and what he wanted to happen in his life. Joseph probably never expected that some of these things would happen to him, and he went through some very tough situations!

Today’s verses describe Joseph’s experience after he has been put in charge of Egypt and spends time with his brothers for the first time in a really long time. He finally reveals his identity to them and explains that God had a perfect plan for him the whole time, even when it seemed like everything had gone wrong.

God is sovereign over all things, which means He has everything perfectly under control. When unexpected things happen to us, God is not surprised. God used Joseph’s hardship to make him the ruler of Egypt, save many lives, and even forgive his brothers for their betrayal! This was all a part of God’s plan.

MONDAY, AUGUST 1
PERFECT PLAN

Do you have any plans in mind for the future? Write about those here.

Write a prayer to God thanking Him for having a perfect plan for your life.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 2
DO NOT BE AFRAID

SCRIPTURE: *"I am God, the God of your father," the voice said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make your family into a great nation." Genesis 46:3 (NLT)*

DEVOTIONAL: Jacob was on this great big journey to Egypt, bringing all of his family members along with him. Wow, can you imagine that kind of trip? Everything their family owned, including flocks and herds of animals had to be walked across the land. This sounds like a scary adventure, especially when you think about traveling while it's dark and in places you have never been before. Even though Jacob was excited to arrive in Egypt where he was promised the very best land, he probably felt afraid. Wouldn't you?

The good news is that Jacob had a relationship with God. Jacob knew God and God knew Jacob. God is many, many great things, but He is especially kind and caring. We can see this in Jacob's story. God spoke to Jacob in a dream, telling him not to be afraid because He has great plans for Jacob's family in Egypt. I don't know about you, but if our mighty and powerful God spoke promises to me, I would be filled with peace and comfort knowing He would take care of me.

Sometimes, even though we know God is taking care of us, we still feel afraid. If this happens to you, like it does to me, that is ok. It is a good practice to remember the times that God has taken care of us, even when we were really, really afraid. This helps us remember that if God was with us in the past, then He will be with us again and again and again when we need Him in the future. You can have the same relationship with God that Jacob did. God is always with you and always wants to hear about the things that make you afraid.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 2
DO NOT BE AFRAID

What is something that makes you feel afraid?

When has God taken care of you when you were afraid?

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3
CHOOSING FORGIVENESS

SCRIPTURE: *Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is open to you. Let your father and brothers live in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. Do any of them have special skills? If they do, put them in charge of my own livestock."*
Genesis 47:5 (NIRV)

DEVOTIONAL: We have been learning about Joseph and his story. Joseph has had severe hardships in his life. We have learned about how his brothers were so jealous of him they hated him and threw him in a pit. We read about how Joseph was sent to prison. Through all of the hard times, Joseph never gave up his faith in God. Different people tried to hurt Joseph, but through it all he remained close to God.

After all of the bad things that Joseph's brothers did to him, Joseph decided he would forgive them. Have you ever forgiven someone? What did you forgive them for?

Through all of that God was always with Joseph, and God gave Joseph the strength to forgive his brothers, and then God gave him the strength to care for them and help them find a place to live and work to do. In our verses today, we learn that Joseph went to Pharaoh on behalf of his family, to let them live in the land of Egypt because there was not enough food for everyone. Even after all the harm they did, Joseph forgave and wanted to care for his brothers.

Did you know that the same strength God gave Joseph, He gives you, too! God is always with us. You can pray and ask God to give you the strength to forgive the person you need to forgive; even to care for them after that.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3
CHOOSING FORGIVENESS

What has stuck out to you about Joseph's life so far?

Is it easy for you to forgive others?

Let's write a prayer and ask God to help us be quick to forgive.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4
GIVE THANKS

DEVOTIONAL: As we come towards the end of Genesis, we find ourselves at the end of Jacob's life. He is about to give his final blessings to each of his children, and we get a small picture of who they are. (P.S. - when you see "blessing" written in these chapters, this is what it means: in the Old Testament, God gives "blessings" to man as a gift for obedience to His commandments.) Before Jacob starts though, he does something that is a mark of who Jacob is as a man. Read Genesis 48:3-4 again: "Jacob said to Joseph, 'The Mighty God appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. He blessed me there. He said to me, 'I am going to give you children. I will make your family very large. I will make you a community of nations. And I will give this land to your children after you. It will belong to them forever.'"

Before Jacob poured out the blessings, he remembered what God had done for him throughout his life, and looked back at the promise God had given him and his family. Jacob chose to give thanks for what God had graciously given him, and from thanksgiving, Jacob blessed his sons! This is a reminder to us to give thanks for what God has done for us before we try to pour out to other people! Giving thanks is something that we should do on a daily basis, not just once a year at Thanksgiving. God has been so good to us, and it is important that we remember what He has done for us and our families! We can be thankful for so much—from the little things like our favorite pair of shoes and our toys, to really big things, like our families and school and the life we have!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4
GIVE THANKS

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 5
WHAT IF?

SCRIPTURE: *When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept. Genesis 50:15-17 (NIV)*

DEVOTIONAL: We've seen in the story of Joseph that his brothers were cruel, unkind, and definitely made some bad choices in the way they treated Joseph. Sometimes when we hurt someone else, we are afraid that they will be mad at us and may even decide to treat us unkindly in return. After their father died, Joseph's brothers were worried that Joseph would hold a grudge against them or pay them back for the wrongs they had done. Have you ever made a bad decision that hurt someone you care about?

Write about a time you made a bad decision or hurt someone's feelings:

When your words or actions hurt someone else, it may make you feel like you want to hide or run away; it may even make your stomach hurt! But there's good news! We talked about forgiveness a couple of days ago. The Bible tells us that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us. This means that even if you mess up big time, God will forgive you and love you! God also asks us to forgive one another. Colossians 3:13 says, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

In Genesis 50, Joseph's brothers sent a letter to Joseph asking for forgiveness. Not only did Joseph forgive them but he also said, "you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Sometimes it is hard to ask for forgiveness, sometimes it is even harder to forgive others. When we are faced with a situation where we have to ask for or receive forgiveness, we can always remember that God forgives us no matter what!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 5
WHAT IF?

Fill in the blanks using Ephesians 4:32 (NIV): Be _____ to one another, tenderhearted, _____ one another, as God in Christ _____ you.

Is there someone you need to forgive or ask for forgiveness? Write their name here:

Challenge yourself to contact that person and either forgive them or ask them to forgive you. Share with them the good news about God's forgiveness!

It's hard to believe that summer is over, school is starting, and our journey learning about Nehemiah, Daniel, Esther, Joshua, and Joseph has come to an end.

These and so many other people in the pages of our Bibles lived BY FAITH. They trusted what they couldn't see because of what they could see! They trusted that even though they couldn't see God, He was working in their lives and in the situations all around them.

We hope you'll continue spending time in your Bible every day, learning more about who God is and how He works in your life, how much He loves you, and that He sent Jesus to make a way for you to be with Him forever. There's nothing better you can do for your heart than hide God's Word in it.

See you next time!

