

A vibrant illustration of a red gift box with a yellow ribbon, tilted to show its open top. The box is surrounded by a variety of colorful confetti, including stars, squares, and triangles, along with several streamers in shades of blue, pink, yellow, and purple. The entire scene is set against a white background with a blue wavy border.

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Family Discussion Guides

School Year 2023-2024

1: Family Discussion Guide: God Gave Us His Best Gift

Read the Bible passage aloud, and then answer the questions together. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak.

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

Jesus replied, “I assure you; no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

“How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked. Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? I assure you; we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.”

John 3:1-17, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- How do you feel when someone talks to you about something that you do not understand? How is this similar to what Nicodemus experienced when he talked with Jesus?
- Who gives spiritual life?
- Who has come down from heaven? What privileges does such a person have?
- Based on this passage, who will receive eternal life?
- What things did Jesus say to Nicodemus that confused or surprised you?
- What gift did God give to those who believe? Why did he give us this gift?
- What gifts do we receive when we are born again?

2: Family Discussion Guide: The Giver of Good Gifts

Read the Bible passage below from Genesis 1 & 2, and then answer the questions together. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak.

God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So, God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God, he created them, male and female he created them. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground. Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day. So, the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation. This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the Lord God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land. Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden, he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. The Lord God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die. It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." The Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him. The Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. "At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'" This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. The man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

To Discuss

- Can you identify and find all the good gifts that God gave to Adam and Eve?
- Can you identify the rule, command or warning that God gave to Adam? Why can we consider a rule or a command a good gift?
- God provides for his people. What gifts did God give the first human beings that gave them life?
- What was Adam and Eve's role or purpose in the garden? Why do you think God planted a special garden for them?

3: Family Discussion Guide: Depend on God

Read the Bible passage aloud, and then answer the questions together. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak.

Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Luke 18:9-14, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- Why is it important to be obedient? What was the result of Noah’s obedience to God to build an ark?
- Parents: How did Noah’s role as a parent/husband impact his family? Children: Why did Noah’s children experience rescue along with their father? What would have happened if they didn’t listen to their father Noah?
- What did Noah’s family experience because of Noah’s obedience to God?

4: Family Discussion Guide: By Faith We Receive

Read the Bible passage aloud, and then answer the questions together. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak.

Sometime later, the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.” But Abram replied, “O Sovereign Lord, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since you’ve given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.”

Then the Lord said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!” And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith. Then the Lord told him, “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession. But Abram replied, “O Sovereign Lord, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?”

As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. Then the Lord said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end, they will come away with great wealth. (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

So, the Lord made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River— the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

Genesis 15, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- What are the promises God made to Abram? Do you think these promises were easy or difficult for Abram to believe?
- Has someone ever promised you something, you believed them, and it didn’t happen? How did that make you feel?
- Has anyone ever kept a promise to you? How did that make you feel?
- Abram knew that God always tells the truth, and so he was able to believe God would do what he promised. What can happen when we make a promise yet fail to keep it? How is God different than we are when it comes to keeping a promise?
- What promises does God make with you?

5: Family Discussion Guide: Free, Healed, Whole

Read the Bible passage aloud, and then answer the questions together. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked. Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’”

“Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Luke 4:14-30, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- What did Jesus come to do?
- Who did Jesus come to free, heal, and deliver?
- Faith is about trusting and believing what we cannot see. Having faith in God’s ability and desire to heal and make us whole can be difficult. Are you struggling to believe that God can heal you? As a family pray, spend a minute praying and asking God to help you trust and believe that he will heal, deliver, and free you from the things that are troubling you.