

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 word "RECEIVED!" is written in large, bold, black capital letters across the center of the image.

RECEIVED!

Family Discussion Guides

School Year 2023-2024

11: Family Discussion Guide: Our Perfect Representative

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

When the people saw how long it was taking Moses to come back down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. "Come on," they said, "make us some gods who can lead us. We don't know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt." So Aaron said, "Take the gold rings from the ears of your wives and sons and daughters, and bring them to me." All the people took the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they exclaimed, "O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!" Aaron saw how excited the people were, so he built an altar in front of the calf. Then he announced, "Tomorrow will be a festival to the Lord!"

The Lord told Moses, "Quick! Go down the mountain! Your people whom you brought from the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. How quickly they have turned away from the way I commanded them to live! They have melted down gold and made a calf, and they have bowed down and sacrificed to it. They are saying, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.'"

Then the Lord said, "I have seen how stubborn and rebellious these people are. Now leave me alone so my fierce anger can blaze against them, and I will destroy them. Then I will make you, Moses, into a great nation."

But Moses tried to pacify the Lord his God. "O Lord!" he said. "Why are you so angry with your own people whom you brought from the land of Egypt with such great power and such a strong hand? Why let the Egyptians say, 'Their God rescued them with the evil intention of slaughtering them in the mountains and wiping them from the face of the earth'? Turn away from your fierce anger. Change your mind about this terrible disaster you have threatened against your people! Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You bound yourself with an oath to them, saying, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven. And I will give them all of this land that I have promised to your descendants, and they will possess it forever.'" So the Lord changed his mind about the terrible disaster he had threatened to bring on his people.

Exodus 32:1-14, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- Why was God upset with the Israelites?
- What punishment did God tell Moses that He cast upon the Israelites?
- Moses interceded on the behalf of the Israelites, petitioning God not to bring his wrath of anger on the people. Have you ever petitioned on behalf of a loved one not to receive the punishment they deserved? This petition could have been to God, a parent, teacher, coach, manager, or anyone with authority. Why did you petition on the person's behalf?
- Sometimes we take our attention away from God and begin to cherish people and things more than we do God. Have you ever put a person or thing above God? (Think about the things you give your time, money, attention, and talents to). As a family, pray that God delivers you from those idols and shows you how to worship Him.

12: Family Discussion Guide: Victory!

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

Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was over nine feet tall! He wore a bronze helmet, and his bronze coat of mail weighed 125 pounds. He also wore bronze leg armor, and he carried a bronze javelin on his shoulder. The shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a weaver's beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 15 pounds. His armor bearer walked ahead of him carrying a shield. Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. "Why are you all coming out to fight?" he called. "I am the Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul. Choose one man to come down here and fight me! If he kills me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

"Don't worry about this Philistine," David told Saul. "I'll go fight him!" "Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth." But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!" Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the Lord be with you!" Then Saul gave David his own armor—a bronze helmet and a coat of mail. David put it on, strapped the sword over it, and took a step or two to see what it was like, for he had never worn such things before. "I can't go in these," he protested to Saul. "I'm not used to them." So David took them off again. He picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine.

Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. "Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his gods. "Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled. David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!" As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. Reaching into his shepherd's bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with only a sling and a stone, for he had no sword. Then David ran over and pulled Goliath's sword from its sheath. David used it to kill him and cut off his head.

To Discuss

- How did the Israelite king and army respond to Goliath's challenge?
- What gave David the confidence to go up against Goliath?
- How did David win the victory against Goliath? What do you think God is trying to tell you with this detail?
- What did God use David to accomplish for the Israelite army? What did he save them from?
- Whose battle did David say it was? Why is this important?
- What battles can God win for your family that seem impossible? Talk about this as a family and pray together.

13: Family Discussion Guide: Love Your Enemies

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

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 10:25-37, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- Have you ever been like the injured man—in need of help from someone? Who helped you?
- Why do you think the priest and the Temple assistant did not help the injured man? Do you think these were good reasons?
- When have you been like the priest or the Temple assistant and chosen not to help someone in need?
- What specific things did the Samaritan do to help the man in need?
- Why do you think the Samaritan did the things he did?
- Who are your neighbors that God wants you to love? Is there someone you know who has a need? How can you help them?

14: Family Discussion Guide: Patience is Rewarded

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

After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David had gone into the wilderness of En-gedi. So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats. At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave! “Now’s your opportunity!” David’s men whispered to him. “Today the Lord is telling you, ‘I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.’” So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul’s robe. But then David’s conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul’s robe. He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn’t attack the Lord’s anointed one, for the Lord himself has chosen him.” So David restrained his men and did not let them kill Saul. After Saul had left the cave and gone on his way, David came out and shouted after him, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked around, David bowed low before him. Then he shouted to Saul, “Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn’t true. For the Lord placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, ‘I will never harm the king—he is the Lord’s anointed one.’ Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn’t kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me. “May the Lord judge between us. Perhaps the Lord will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you. As that old proverb says, ‘From evil people come evil deeds.’ So you can be sure I will never harm you. Who is the king of Israel trying to catch anyway? Should he spend his time chasing one who is as worthless as a dead dog or a single flea? May the Lord therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power!” When David had finished speaking, Saul called back, “Is that really you, my son David?” Then he began to cry. And he said to David, “You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil. Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for when the Lord put me in a place where you could have killed me, you didn’t do it. Who else would let his enemy get away when he had him in his power? May the Lord reward you well for the kindness you have shown me today. And now I realize that you are surely going to be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will flourish under your rule. Now swear to me by the Lord that when that happens you will not kill my family and destroy my line of descendants!”

1 Samuel 24, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- What did David do to Saul to let Saul know that he could have killed him, but he spared his life?
- Why did David spare Saul’s life?
- When was the last time you got upset with your family? How did you respond in those moments? How did you see God working in your heart?
- Revenge can feel good in the moment, but later leaves us feeling guilty. Discuss as a family some productive or positive ways you can handle your anger in the moment.
- Take some time and pray as a family and ask God to give you self-control in moments when you are angry or want to take revenge against someone who has wronged you.

15: Family Discussion Guide: Pure Hearts See God

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

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

Luke 19:1-10, New Living Translation

To Discuss

- Who was Zacchaeus and what did he do to see Jesus as Jesus passed through Jericho?
- What did Jesus command Zacchaeus to do when He saw him? Why?
- What did Zacchaeus promise Jesus that he would do with his fortune?
- Zacchaeus was a sinner, yet Jesus saw his pure heart. Have you ever felt like you couldn't or shouldn't be used by Jesus because of something you did? Has Zacchaeus's story changed these feelings? Why or why not?
- Take a moment and each family either share or write down one ungodly thing or sin that they struggle with. Think about some ways that you can overcome this. As a family, pray and ask God to purify your heart and help you overcome this thing or sin.