

The Dusty Table

READ: JOHN 10:27-28 AND ROMANS 8:35-39

I want to ask you something, Mom,” said Emma hesitantly as her mother tucked her into bed one evening. “I gave my life to Jesus last summer, but it seems like I’m still always doing something wrong—like being mean to Mason tonight. When I do stuff like that, I ask God to forgive me, but what if I forget to ask Him—or what if I don’t even realize I’ve done something wrong?” She paused. “Then am I still saved?”

Mom sat down on the bed. “Jesus’ death paid for all your sins,” she said. “God will never disown you if you’ve put your trust in Him.”

“You’re sure?” asked Emma.

“I’m sure,” said Mom. She pointed to a small blue table in the corner of Emma’s room. “Where did that come from?”

“That’s the table Mrs. Knott found when she was cleaning out her basement last week. She said I could have it—it was old and dirty, and she was just going to throw it away. I cleaned it up, and then Dad showed me how to sand it and paint it.” Emma grinned. “It looks great now, huh?”

“Yes, it does,” said Mom. “It’s beautiful, so enjoy it while you can. Your room sometimes gets pretty dusty, you know. Soon that table will be covered with dust and you’ll have to throw it out.”

“Throw it out!” said Emma. “Are you kidding? It could never look any worse than when I got it! It was covered with dirt and bugs and spiderwebs, but I didn’t throw it away then. I’m definitely not going to get rid of it now after all the work I did to make it look good! I’ll just clean it whenever I need to. I love that table.”

Mom smiled. “I thought you’d say that,” she said. “Emma, don’t you see that God loves you much more than you love that table? Your life was full of sin, but Jesus died to save you from it. When you put your trust in Him, He made you clean, and He’ll continue working throughout your life to make you more like Him. He won’t ever throw you away—not after all He’s done for you.” ♥ SHERRY L. KUYT

SALVATION IS FOREVER

KEY VERSE

NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE...THINGS PRESENT NOR THINGS TO COME...SHALL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD.
ROMANS 8:39



HAVE YOU ASKED JESUS TO BE YOUR SAVIOR? God says that if you trust in Jesus, nothing can ever separate you from His love. If you haven’t put your trust in Him, do it today! (See “Have You Heard the Good News?” on page 14.)

Where Are We?

READ: DEUTERONOMY 7:9; PSALM 105:42-45

"I'm getting mint chocolate chip!" Peyton said as he climbed into the van. Isaac was right behind him. "I'm getting orange sherbet with sprinkles!" "And I," said Dad, "am getting the biggest fudge sundae you've ever seen." "Hey!" said Peyton. "You didn't get a good report card." "No, but I promised everybody ice cream after a good first half of the school year," said Dad. "And since I'm driving, that includes me. Now buckle in, we have a few stops to make first." "Hey! You missed it!" Isaac said later when Dad drove past the ice cream shop. "Dad said a few stops first," Peyton reminded him. But after the grocery store, gas station, and library, Peyton was worried too. When Dad drove by the only other ice cream shop in town, Isaac frowned and crossed his arms. "He broke his promise," he whispered to Peyton. Peyton swallowed. "Um, Dad? Are you mad at us?" Dad met his eyes in the rearview mirror. "Now, why would you think that?" "Well, because you changed your mind about ice cream. There are no more ice cream shops." Peyton looked out his window and nothing looked familiar. "Where are we, anyway?" Dad was about to respond when Isaac spoke up. "Look, a big sign with a cow on it!" he exclaimed. "Ice cream!" Dad pulled in and parked the car. "Best ice cream for miles," he said. "A bit of a drive, but I thought you two deserved something special." "You didn't lie to us!" said Peyton. "And we've never been this way before." Dad smiled. "You know, God also takes us places we've never been. When it seems like it's taking a long time, it's easy to forget His promises too." "Really?" asked Isaac, eyeing a big jar of sprinkles behind the counter. "But God never lies," said Dad. "He will always keep His promise to do what's best for us and take care of us, even when we don't see how it will all work out." Dad led the boys up to the counter. "Now, pick what you want. I promise it'll be some of the best ice cream you've ever had!" ♥

KELLY CARLSON

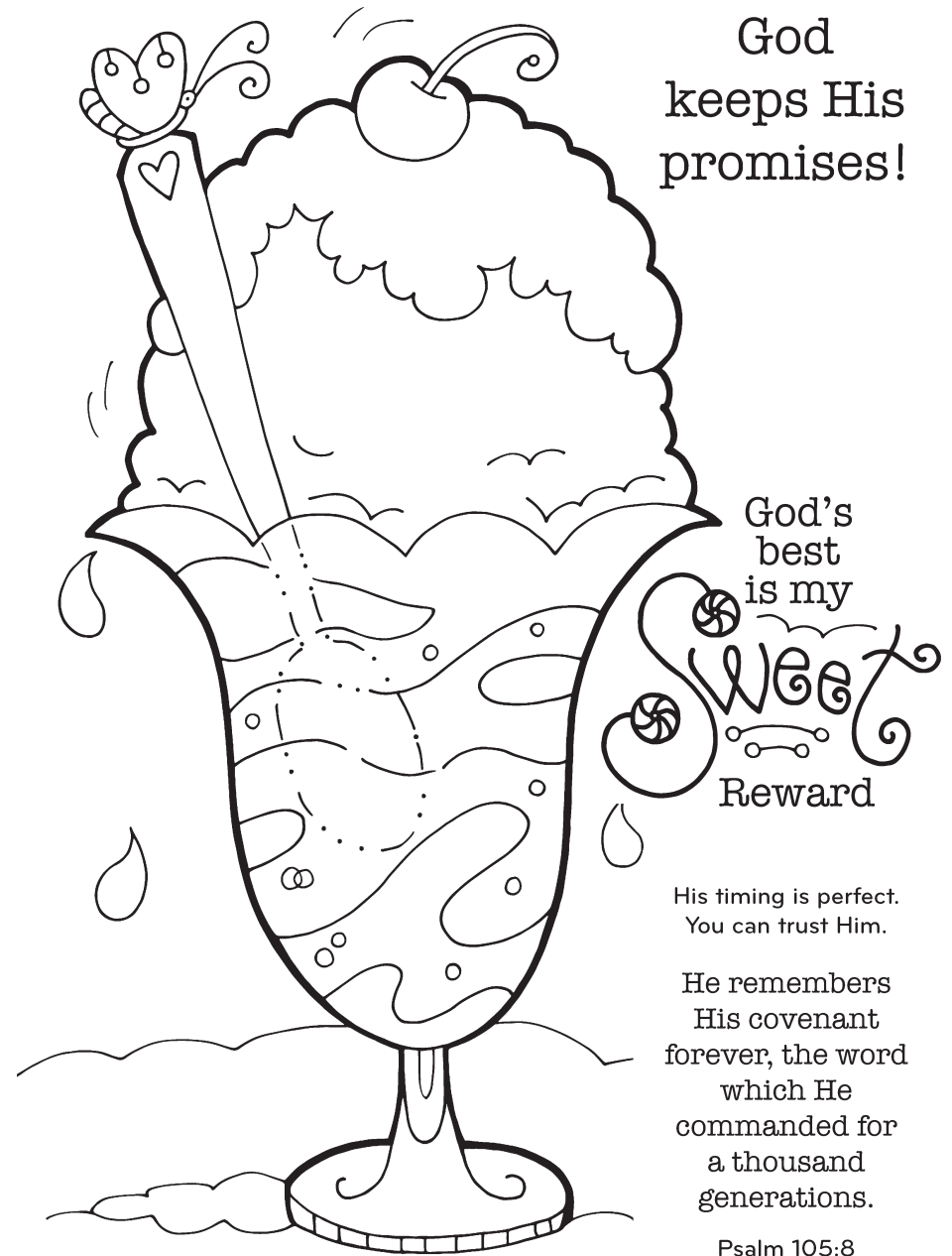
GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

KEY VERSE

HE WILL REMEMBER HIS AGREEMENT FOREVER. HE WILL ALWAYS KEEP THE PROMISES HE MADE TO HIS PEOPLE. PSALM 105:8 (ERV)

DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE GOD IS BREAKING HIS PROMISE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU AND DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU? Maybe you even wonder if God is mad or doesn't love you. No matter what you're going through, you can trust God's Word. God loves you no matter what, and He's leading you where He wants you to go. Be patient and know that He will never let you down.

Color!



Draw and color your favorite toppings on the sundae above.

Ding Dong Ditch

READ: PROVERBS 23:22-26; 1 PETER 5:5

Where are you guys going?” asked Gage when he saw his twin neighbors, Tom and Alan, coming down the sidewalk.

Alan grinned. “Come on. You’ll see.” Curious, Gage walked along with them. He was surprised when they stopped in front of the home of their elderly neighbor, Mrs. Wilson. Alan pointed at some bushes on the side of the house. “Those will make a good hiding place,” he said. Then he and Tom started up the front walk.

“What are you doing?” asked Gage.

“We thought Mrs. Wilson might enjoy a few friendly rounds of Ding Dong Ditch,” said Tom. “You know, when you ring someone’s doorbell and then run and hide.”

“I know what Ding Dong Ditch is,” said Gage. “And Mrs. Wilson would definitely not enjoy it.”

“Aw, come on, it’s just a game. And even if she sees us, she doesn’t know who we are,” said Tom. “Don’t be such a wimp!”

“It doesn’t matter if she knows who we are or not,” said Gage. “God wants us to treat elderly people with respect.”

But Tom and Alan didn’t listen. They tip-toed up the porch steps, and Alan punched the bell. Then they ran for the bushes. Gage quickly looked around and, seeing a newspaper lying on the walk, picked it up and then ran up the steps to the front door.

A moment later, the door swung open, and there stood Mrs. Wilson, squinting out of the dark hallway. “Yes?” she said in a quivering voice.

“Excuse me, Mrs. Wilson,” said Gage, holding out the paper. “You didn’t pick up your newspaper this morning, so I thought I’d bring it to you.”

“Oh, thank you!” said Mrs. Wilson. “Aren’t you kind! Do I know you?”

“I’m Gage.” He turned and motioned to the other boys, and they hesitantly stepped forward. “And this is Tom and Alan. We all live on this street.”

“Oh, yes. Tom and Alan Newton. I know your parents.” The twins’ eyebrows shot up in alarm. “Well, the next time I see them I’ll tell them how much I appreciate your thoughtfulness. Kids aren’t always so nice around here, you know.”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Gage. “We know.”

Mrs. Wilson said goodbye and closed her front door. Gage turned to the twins and grinned. “You’re welcome.” ♥ SAM L. SULLIVAN

RESPECT ELDERLY PEOPLE

KEY VERSE

HONOR THE PRESENCE OF AN OLD MAN (OR WOMAN),
AND FEAR YOUR GOD. LEVITICUS 19:32



DO YOU TREAT ELDERLY PEOPLE WITH RESPECT? God loves old people as much as He loves young ones, and He wants you to show them honor and kindness. What can you do for elderly people you know? Maybe you can help them with errands or chores, or ask them to tell you about their lives. See what you can do to show them God’s love.

Watch Your Walk

READ: PHILIPPIANS 3:16-18

What are these clothes for?” asked Addy. She was at her friend Kara Johnson’s house, and Mrs. Johnson had the dining room covered with dresses, pants, and some items of clothing Addy didn’t even recognize.

Kara laughed. “Mom helps the drama department over at the high school with costumes for their plays. She’s going through old costumes to see which ones can be used again.” Kara picked up a red dress. “Hey, Addy,” she said. “You want to try some on? Mom will let us, won’t you, Mom?”

“If you girls are careful,” said Mrs. Johnson.

For the next hour or so, the girls went from being ladies from the 1700s to aliens from outer space. Their favorites were the animal costumes. Addy was a zebra and Kara was a lion. The costumes completely covered them except for air holes and a slit for their eyes. “Mrs. Johnson, my dad is out mowing the lawn. Can we walk past my house in our costumes? He’ll never know who we are, and I can’t wait to see the look on his face!”

Mrs. Johnson laughed. “Sure,” she said.

The girls giggled as they quietly went out the back door and then behind some trees to the sidewalk. They didn’t want Addy’s dad to see them coming from the Johnson house. They waited until he turned the mower toward the sidewalk, then they hurriedly walked past him.

Addy’s dad turned off the mower. “Oh no! My daughter has turned into a zebra and her friend is a lion! What shall I do?”

Addy removed the zebra head. “Da-a-ad! How did you know it was us?”

He laughed. “Your walk, Addy. I knew who you were by the way you were walking.”

The family had a good laugh about Addy’s costume over supper that night. Then Addy had a thought. “This is kind of like what we were talking about last week, Dad, when I was having problems with some friends at school. You said people should know I’m a Christian by the way I live my life—that I needed to walk the Christian walk.”

“Exactly right,” said Dad. “The Bible tells us that others should know we belong to God by the way we walk. Every step we take should honor Him.” ♥

LINDA WEDDLE

WALK LIKE A CHRISTIAN

KEY VERSE

THAT YOU MAY WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD, FULLY PLEASING HIM,
BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK AND INCREASING IN THE
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. COLOSSIANS 1:10



DO OTHERS KNOW YOU’RE A CHRISTIAN BY THE WAY YOU WALK? That doesn’t mean whether you tiptoe or march, but how you live your life. Could someone tell you’re a Christian by your kindness, patience, and joy? Or do you walk the same as everyone else? Ask God to give you the wisdom to walk in a way that honors Him.



Journal It!

knew who you were by the way you were walking.” –Dad in today’s story

In today’s story, Addy and Kara try to play a joke on Addy’s dad with Mrs. Johnson’s animal costumes. How does Dad know it’s them? By their walk!

Make a list of your favorite animals. How do you think they might walk? If you want, get creative! Act it out or draw a picture. _____



God’s Word repeatedly tells Christians to walk with God. Basically, this means living the way God wants you to and looking to Him for guidance. But that’s a big idea! Let’s break it down a bit.

How do we walk with God? Addy’s dad knew her by her walk, and we can learn to walk like Jesus by getting to know Him. We get to know Him by praying and spending time in His Word, the best place to hear God speak.

Read Ephesians 5:1-2, 2 John 6, and Colossians 2:6-7. How do the truths of these verses help you think about walking with God? _____

Read Galatians 5:16-17 and 22-24. These verses list the traits of someone who is walking with God. These traits are called the fruits of the Spirit. What fruits do you have in your life that show that you are walking with God? _____

As we get to know God better, we start practicing what we’ve learned from Jesus because getting to know Him changes us. He helps us understand our relationship with Him in deeper and deeper ways (Colossians 1:9-10). He promises to be with us, giving us everything we need as we learn to walk with Him (Matthew 28:20; 2 Peter 1:2-4; Psalm 119:133).



DAY
5

A Lesson from the Bees

READ: PROVERBS 10:4-5; 12:24

Jacob’s heart beat faster as he climbed into the blue SUV. He dreaded the thought of facing his saxophone teacher, Mr. Burk.

“Are you okay?” asked Mom. “You seem upset.”

“I don’t want to go to my lesson, Mom. I’ll do a rotten job of playing today.”

“Jacob, you’ll do fine if you practiced. Don’t worry. Just do your best.”

But that was the problem. He hadn’t practiced this week—Mom just hadn’t noticed.

Mom turned the car into Mr. Burk’s driveway. Scooping his books into his arms, Jacob pushed the door open and shuffled out. Mr. Burk greeted him, leaning his six-foot frame against the wooden gate.

“Hi, Jacob,” he said. “I’ve got a surprise for you!”

Jacob’s eyes brightened as he followed his teacher into his backyard. A low hum echoed from the almond tree and grew into a buzzing roar as Jacob got closer. Thousands of honeybees swarmed around the trunk near a hive cradled in the tree’s branches.

“Guess what bees are doing when they land on flowers?” asked Mr. Burk. “They suck the flower’s juice—called nectar—and carry it to the hive to make it into honey. They make about sixty trips to a flower just to make one tablespoon of honey!”

“Do all bees have jobs?” asked Jacob.

“They sure do,” replied Mr. Burk. “Every bee works hard. Worker bees build the honeycombs, and sentries watch for enemies and sting them. Other bees flap their wings to keep the temperature in the hive close to 95 degrees so the honey won’t spoil. Isn’t that amazing?” Jacob nodded. “Well, we’d better go start our saxophone lesson,” said Mr. Burk.

“Yeah,” Jacob replied. As he followed his teacher inside, he thought of the bees and how hard they worked. They did their best and he hadn’t. His parents often talked about how the Bible encouraged hard work and doing your best for the Lord. Did that include the saxophone?

“I’m sorry, Mr. Burk,” said Jacob as he got out his saxophone. “I didn’t practice. But I promise, this week I’ll work hard. I’ll be as busy as a bee!” ♥

LINDA CHAMPAGNE

DO YOUR BEST FOR GOD

KEY VERSE

AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY, AS TO THE LORD
AND NOT TO MEN. COLOSSIANS 3:23



DO YOU WORK HARD AT THE THINGS GOD HAS GIVEN YOU TO DO? It can be tempting to only do as much as you can get away with, but hard work helps you develop your talents and skills—and one day God may want you to use them in a bigger way than you are now. Bring glory to God by doing your best in your schoolwork and whatever else you do.

Safe in Every Sky

READ: DEUTERONOMY 31:4-6

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS STORY'S SUBJECT MATTER MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

Melissa's heart was pounding. She walked slowly down the jetway to the plane, clutching her mother's hand. "It'll be okay," Mom told her gently. "I know you're scared, but everything will be all right."

Melissa looked up at Mom with her big round eyes, then snapped them back to the open door of the plane. Just a week ago, a bomb went off at an airport in another country, and Melissa had seen nothing but wrecked planes on the news since then. She shuddered as those images flashed into her mind again. She definitely didn't want anything like that to happen to her and her mom!

They finally crossed from the jetway to the plane, and the flight attendant greeted them with a warm smile as they began shuffling down the aisle. Mom pointed out their seats. "Row 27, seat F. That's you, Melissa. I'll be in the seat right in front of you."

Melissa's stomach lurched. "But Mom, I want you right next to me! I can't ride the whole way by myself. What if I lose you?"

"Don't worry, honey," Mom said as she slid into her row and pointed to the seat behind her. "I'm not going anywhere. I'll be right here with you the whole way."

Melissa climbed into her seat, buckled her belt, and stared out the window. Soon the plane rolled into position on the runway. The engines began to roar, and she felt the pressure of the plane building up. She thought about her mother's words, and remembered a Bible verse she had learned in church. "The Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." She realized that even if flying on a plane seemed really scary to her, Jesus would be there to comfort her, just like Mom was with her on the plane. He would never leave her. Even if something horrible did happen and the plane crashed, He would still be with her, and she'd go to heaven to be with Him there.

She smiled as she sat back in the seat, feeling more comfortable. She spoke up so Mom could hear her. "Thanks for being here with me, Mom. I know that Jesus will be with both of us too!" ♥ DYLAN KRAAYENBRINK

GOD COMFORTS HIS CHILDREN**KEY VERSE**

BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE. DEUTERONOMY 31:7



DO YOU OFTEN SEE SCARY THINGS ON THE NEWS? It's hard not to worry about the bad things that happen in the world. But remember that if you trust in Jesus, He'll always be with you to comfort you and carry you through every situation. No matter what happens, Jesus will never leave you. Your future is safe with Him.

Something Special

READ: 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17

Wow," said Jackson as he stared at his cousin Cody's backyard. "Two tree forts—with a rope bridge between them!" He shook his head. "You've got everything!"

Cody shrugged.

Jackson climbed up the ladder. "Do you come here all the time?" He coughed and batted the air. "Ugh. I guess not. I just ran into a cobweb."

Cody scrambled up the ladder, twisted the cobweb on a stick, and threw it out the window. "I haven't been up here in months."

"What?" exclaimed Jackson. "If I had this, I'd be up here all the time!"

Cody shrugged again. "It's always been here. The people before us built it." Jackson leaned on the rope bridge gate. "I wish we could stay longer," he said. "I wanted to stay until tomorrow, but Dad wants to drive home tonight so we can go to church in the morning."

"What did your pastor talk about last Sunday?" asked Cody.

Jackson shrugged. "I don't know. I was finishing my cartoon drawing." "Your cartoon?" said Cody. "You're the one who doesn't know how good you have it!"

"Huh?" Jackson was confused. "What do you mean?"

"I can only go to church when the neighbors take me. But now Dad says I can't go anymore because he's tired of hearing me talk about Jesus." Cody sighed. "I guess he had a bad experience at church as a kid."

Jackson was quiet.

Cody ran his hand over the gate. "I know this is a nice tree fort. But I'm so used to it, I don't care much about it. I don't think you know how nice it is to hear about Jesus because you've always heard about Him. I wish I had your place."

Jackson drew a big breath. "I never thought about it like that. Going to church and learning about Jesus was just something our family always did." He was quiet a moment, then snapped his fingers. "I know! How about I listen to the sermon in church each week, then send you an email on what it was about?"

"Really?" said Cody. "That would be great!"

"Yeah," said Jackson. "And I have an extra Bible I'll give you so you can learn about Jesus during the week too." ♥ LAURA RABORN

APPRECIATE LEARNING ABOUT JESUS**KEY VERSE**MAKE ME WALK IN THE PATH OF YOUR COMMANDMENTS,
FOR I DELIGHT IN IT. PSALM 119:35**DO YOUR PARENTS TAKE YOU TO CHURCH AND DO FAMILY DEVOTIONS?**

Do you pay attention and learn all you can about God? Growing up with the opportunity to learn about God and worship Him with others is a privilege—something many people don't have. If God has put people in your life who want you to learn about Jesus, thank Him for it and learn all you can!

Fingerprints

READ: COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

Thea turned a page and showed a picture of Papa Bear to her little sister, then continued to read the story out loud. “Who’s been eating my porridge?” Papa Bear growled.”

Their brother, Eamon, spoke up. “Papa Bear could have found out who ate it if he had lifted fingerprints from his spoon. Everybody has a different set of prints. No two are alike—ever. Match the prints and you’ve got the criminal.”

“That’s great, Eamon,” said Thea. “Now let us finish the story.”

But Eamon grabbed his magnifying glass and held it above Thea’s fingers. “See those ridges? They leave a mark on everything you touch. Police investigators use special powders to dust for fingerprints. The powder sticks to the invisible ridge marks. The investigator carefully brushes away the dust between the ridges and takes a picture of it.” Eamon sat back. “The print can be lifted with a print-lifting tape, too.”

“Eamon! We don’t care about fingerprints right now. We just want to read the story.”

“Well, I just thought you should know in case you get any ideas about going into my room and messing with my stuff,” Eamon said. “I know how to lift prints with the detective kit I got for my birthday, so you’ll be sorry if you do!”

“Don’t be rude, Eamon,” said Mom, who had come into the room. “I think you need to be more concerned about the kind of prints you’re leaving on other people’s lives.

“Prints on people’s lives?” asked Eamon. “What does that mean?”

“I’m talking about the impressions we make on others,” said Mom. “Like fingerprints, they identify us—not by ridges, but by how we make others feel. Our words and actions leave behind impressions that affect what others think about us—and about what we say we believe.”

“So if we say we’re Christians but give people bad impressions, they might get the wrong idea of what it means to be a Christian?” asked Thea.

“Right,” said Mom. “We need to speak and act in a way that points people to the gospel. When others lift the prints we leave on their lives, we want them to look like the fingerprints of Jesus.” ♥ LUCIDA J. ROLLINGS

LEAVE GOOD IMPRESSIONS

KEY VERSE

AND WHATEVER YOU DO OR SAY, DO IT AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LORD JESUS. COLOSSIANS 3:17



WHAT KIND OF PRINTS, OR IMPRESSIONS, DO YOU LEAVE BEHIND ON OTHERS?

Are the things you do and say kind and uplifting or selfish and hurtful?

If you’re a Christian, the impressions you leave on others should point to Jesus.

Treat everyone in a way that the impressions you give them are identical to the ones Jesus would leave behind.



Activity! Lifting Prints

When others lift the prints we leave on their lives, we want them to look just like the fingerprints of Jesus.” –Mom in today’s story

In today’s story, Eamon talked about how detectives lift fingerprints to solve crimes. In this activity, you’ll learn about lifting prints yourself. This will get a little messy, so make sure you have an adult’s permission and supervision.

Things you’ll need:

- Some kind of powder (baby powder or cornstarch works well)
- Clear tape
- A soft, bushy brush (such as one used to apply makeup)
- Dark construction paper



What you’ll need to do:

1. Press your fingertips on a surface (such as a glass, a sink, or a counter).
2. After you lift your finger, sprinkle some of your powder on the surface.
3. Carefully dust off the powder with your brush until you see a fingerprint shape.
4. Take a piece of clear tape and gently put it on top of the fingerprint.
5. Lift off the tape carefully and put it on the dark construction paper.
6. Now you have lifted a fingerprint!



Note: This project works better if your hands are a little oily. You can make them oilier by pressing them on your forehead or by applying lotion before you put down your prints.

Ask an Adult: What sort of things can Christians do to leave prints on other people’s lives that look like those of Jesus? _____

Did you ever lift any Jesus prints from your life that someone left behind? What were they? _____

Natalie glanced at her phone. *Twenty minutes.* Twenty minutes to change and eat something before she had to leave for dance. *Gotta move.* She grabbed some mac and cheese and popped it into the microwave. As she bounded up the stairs, she passed her little brother, Kevin, sitting in time-out. Minutes later, the microwave dinged. Natalie tugged her leotard into place and pushed one more bobby pin into her bun. She rushed downstairs and retrieved her food. Stirring her mac and cheese, she glanced at Kevin sitting on the bottom step with his elbows on his knees, fists digging into his chubby cheeks.

“What did you do this time, sport?” Natalie plopped beside her brother.

“Yelled at Mommy. I hate time-out.”

Natalie patted his back. “Mom doesn’t stick you here just because you’re in trouble. It’s to help you settle down and get under control. Are you still mad?”

Kevin sighed. “No.” He paused. “Nat? Does sitting help you too?”

Natalie paused mid-chew. Sitting didn’t happen much. Rushing to school and dance left her feeling anything but in control. “I’m too big for time-outs now,” she said.

“You’re never home.” Kevin’s eyes were sad. “I miss you.”

Natalie licked the cheese from her spoon. She loved dance company, though it meant she practically lived at the studio. What happened to family time? What happened to time with God?

She looked at the shelf where she put her Bible. *Maybe I need a time-out too.*

Natalie glanced at her phone. *Five minutes.* She squeezed Kevin, then walked over and picked up her Bible. A highlighted verse caught her attention: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Rest. *Sounds great, God.* Natalie remembered learning that this verse meant those who trusted in Jesus didn’t have to strive to earn God’s favor, because Jesus earned it for them. *I need to stop to remember that more often. Remember He’s in control.* She took a deep breath and continued to read.

Soon, Mom was calling. Time for dance. Natalie checked her phone. Her five minutes were gone. Somehow God had stretched them, and she sensed His peace. She grinned and grabbed her brother’s hand. “Race you to the car!” ♥

GAYLE VEITENHEIMER

TAKE A TIME-OUT WITH GOD

KEY VERSE

COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN,
AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. MATTHEW 11:28



IS YOUR LIFE OVERSCHEDULED AND BUSY? You need a spiritual time-out. Not because you’re in trouble, but to build your relationship with God and get strength and wisdom to navigate the road ahead. Make sure you leave time in your busy schedule to pray, read your Bible, and worship with other Christians. Stop the frenzy for a moment and take a time-out with Jesus.

Within a few minutes of getting home from school, Miles talked back to his mother, hit his brother, and gave the dog table food even though Mom had told him not to. He was promptly sent to his room with no electronics.

Miles collapsed onto his bed and groaned. What’s up with me today? he thought. Why am I acting like this? He sighed and lowered himself to the floor where a vast city was taking shape. He grabbed a container of loose connecting blocks and started adding a bridge between two of the skyscrapers. This city’s gonna look so cool once I’m finished, he thought. It’ll probably take up half the room! I can’t wait to see what people say when I post a picture online.

Pretty soon Mom walked in. “Hmm,” she said when she saw Miles working on his city. “I forgot you had this in here. I guess next time you get in trouble I should send you to the storage room where there’s nothing fun for you to do.”

Miles put down the blocks he was holding. “I’m sorry, Mom—I don’t know why I did all that stuff.” He leaned his head back against his bed. “I thought I’d be different by now.”

“What do you mean?” asked Mom.

“Well, I thought becoming a Christian meant I wouldn’t sin anymore, but I still do bad things!”

Mom sat down at the city’s edge. “This is looking pretty good,” she said. “Why don’t I go get my phone so you can post it online?”

“No!” said Miles. “I don’t want to post it until it’s totally finished.”

Mom picked up a block person lying on the floor. “Well, you’re not finished yet either. God is still working on you as He patiently teaches you to turn away from sin and live the way He wants you to. It’s a process that will take the rest of your life, but it’s worth the wait.” She stuck the person on top of the bridge Miles had just built. “Jesus saved you from sin in an instant, but the new person He’s making you to be won’t be complete until you have a perfect body in heaven someday. Then you’ll be totally finished—and you’ll never sin again!” ♥ COURTNEY LASATER

GOD’S STILL WORKING ON YOU

KEY VERSE

AND I AM CERTAIN THAT GOD, WHO BEGAN THE GOOD WORK WITHIN
YOU, WILL CONTINUE HIS WORK UNTIL IT IS FINALLY FINISHED ON THE
DAY WHEN CHRIST JESUS RETURNS. PHILIPPIANS 1:6 (NLT)



DO YOU GET FRUSTRATED WHEN YOU DO THINGS YOU KNOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULDN’T DO? Do you wonder why it seems so hard to live the way God wants you to? Deciding to trust in Jesus only takes a moment, but learning to be like Him and live the way He wants you to takes a lifetime. Be patient and trust God to complete the work He’s started in you.

Have You Heard the Good News?

GOD LOVES YOU SO MUCH HE DID SOMETHING AMAZING FOR YOU!
THE BIBLE—GOD'S MESSAGE TO ALL PEOPLE—TELLS THE WHOLE STORY.

GOD MADE YOU AND LOVES YOU

God created everything there is—including you! He loves you more than any person could ever love you. He loves all people and created them to live in a perfect relationship with Him.

The Bible says:

SO GOD CREATED HUMAN BEINGS IN HIS OWN IMAGE. IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED THEM; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM. (GENESIS 1:27, NLT)

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

The first people God created—Adam and Eve—disobeyed Him. This caused sin to enter the world, breaking the perfect relationship they had with God. We sin by doing things God says are wrong and making ourselves the center of our lives instead of Him. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed, every person is born a sinner—no matter how good we try to be, we can't help but disobey and do wrong. Our sin separates us from God, and because He is perfect, He must punish sin—and the punishment for sin is death. Not just death of the body, but separation from God that lasts forever.

The Bible says:

EVERYONE HAS SINNED; WE ALL FALL SHORT OF GOD'S GLORIOUS STANDARD. (ROMANS 3:23, NLT)

IT IS YOUR SINS THAT SEPARATE YOU FROM YOUR GOD. HE TURNS AWAY FROM YOU WHEN HE SEES THEM. (ISAIAH 59:2, ERV)

GOD'S PERFECT PLAN

Because every person—including you—has sinned, every person deserves to be punished by death. But God loves us so much He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to take the punishment for our sin. He lived a perfect life on earth and then died on a cross in our place, even though He didn't deserve it. But it didn't end there—God raised Him back to life! Through Jesus' death and resurrection, the punishment for sin was paid so we could be forgiven and have a relationship with God.

The Bible says:

GOD LOVED THE WORLD SO MUCH THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WOULD NOT BE LOST BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. (JOHN 3:16, ERV)

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

It means you don't have to pay the price of death for your sin—Jesus paid it for you! When you trust in Jesus by believing He died and rose from the dead to save you from sin and choose to make Him the center of your life instead of yourself, your sin is forgiven and you receive a new life as God's child that lasts forever.

ARE YOU READY TO TRUST IN JESUS?

GO TO THE NEXT PAGE AND ANSWER THE KEY QUESTIONS!

Key Questions to Understanding God's Good News

1. **Do you know that you have sinned (lived your own way instead of God's way) and that because God is holy and perfect, you can't have a relationship with Him in your present condition?**
2. **Do you know God loves you so much that He has provided a way for you to be forgiven of your sins and have a relationship with Him?**
3. **Do you believe that Jesus, the Son of God, died and rose again to save you from sin?**
4. **Are you willing to trust Jesus to forgive your sin and free you from the power sin has over you that makes you live for yourself instead of Him?**
5. **Are you ready to obey Jesus and follow Him as the ruler and Lord of your life?**

If you can honestly answer yes to these questions, then talk to Jesus and tell Him you know that only He can save you from sin and that you want to begin a wonderful relationship with Him. Thank Him for what He has done for you, and know that because you trust Him, your sins have been forgiven and you now have a new life with Jesus that starts here on earth and will one day continue in heaven forever.

Now that's Good News!

If you can't answer yes to these questions, we hope you will go back and read the Bible verses on the previous page as well as the ones below. Ask God to help you understand them so you can trust Him to save you from sin and give you a new life with Him.

The Bible says:

THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON WHO IS RIGHT WITH GOD...THERE IS NOT ONE WHO TRIES TO FIND GOD. EVERYONE HAS TURNED AWAY FROM GOD. THEY HAVE ALL DONE WRONG. NOT ONE OF THEM DOES WHAT IS GOOD. NO, NOT EVEN ONE! (ROMANS 3:10-12, NLT)

BUT CHRIST DIED FOR US WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, AND BY THIS GOD SHOWED HOW MUCH HE LOVES US. (ROMANS 5:8, ERV)

IF YOU OPENLY DECLARE THAT JESUS IS LORD AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED. (ROMANS 10:9, NLT)

HE GAVE THE RIGHT AND THE POWER TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD TO THOSE WHO RECEIVED HIM. HE GAVE THIS TO THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIS NAME. (JOHN 1:12, NLT)

EVERYONE WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD WILL BE SAVED. (ROMANS 10:13, ERV)

Smart Like a Fox

CREATURE FEATURE: ARCTIC FOX



Arctic foxes may look cute, but they are clever, tough little creatures. They live in the Arctic, a land of towering icebergs and brutal sub-zero winds. Their beautiful white fur camouflages them and protects them from the cold. To keep warm, Arctic foxes lie down and curl their fluffy tails over their faces like scarves. They even have fur growing on their feet that keeps their paws from freezing to the ice. They have their own fur boots!

Arctic foxes hunt alone, but they know that survival depends on sticking together



The only relief an Arctic fox gets from the cold is in summer, which lasts between fifty and sixty days. They shed their white fur coats in favor of a cooler gray undercoat. As the snow melts, their summer look helps them blend in with newly exposed rocks and plants. Arctic foxes hunt and store food underground in summer to dig up in winter. Researchers found one fox had hidden forty birds and more than thirty eggs in one spot!

Arctic foxes hunt alone, but they know that survival depends on sticking together. They mate for life and live in small groups in a den. Dens can be passed down and used by the same family for over a hundred years. Often one grown pup, usually female, will stay behind when her brothers and sisters move out to help her parents raise the next litter of pups. Now that's one dedicated big sister!

Did you know that you can be like an Arctic fox? In good seasons and tough seasons, God provides all you need to thrive. Dig deep into His Word every day and hide Scripture in your heart so you'll remember it when you face adversity. And don't go it alone—talk to God in prayer, and ask others to pray for you too. Along the way, be a big brother or sister to a younger believer and share what you've learned with them.

You can be smart like the Arctic fox and thrive with God's help! ♥

CHRISTA C. HOGAN