



**COMMON GROUND 2023
WORKBOOK**

Series Overview

Jesus had a countercultural view of children. In a culture that said children should be “seen and not heard,” Jesus welcomed children with open arms...and he taught us to both welcome them and learn from them. This fall, let’s turn our eyes toward the children. We’ll start by opening our hearts to a village halfway around the world, giving the children of the village the dignity of choosing us. Then for six weeks, we’ll humble ourselves to learn from the example of children throughout the Bible. And through it all, we’ll allow God to redefine what it means to be truly great in his kingdom.

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Each week, you will find a **Biblical, Personal, Relational,** and **Reinforcement activity** to help you engage with the Common Ground topic. You can use this workbook during your personal quiet time, as well as with your small group. Make a commitment to doing the "heartwork" necessary for your personal growth.

Biblical Activity

DIRECTIONS: Weekly Scripture passages are provided in your booklet. Before reading, spend time in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Use the questions in this section, along with the words of the week, to help you gain a better understanding of the weekly topic.

Personal Activity

DIRECTIONS: In this section, there are personal questions for reflection, as well as rating scales to reveal areas in your life that God might want you to change. Be honest. Take your time! Use the Prayer Journal space to record portions of your prayers. Share with a trusted friend, accountability partner, or with your small group to the degree that you are comfortable so that they can pray, support, and encourage you. Review your prayer journal often and praise God for what He is doing in your life.

Relational Activity

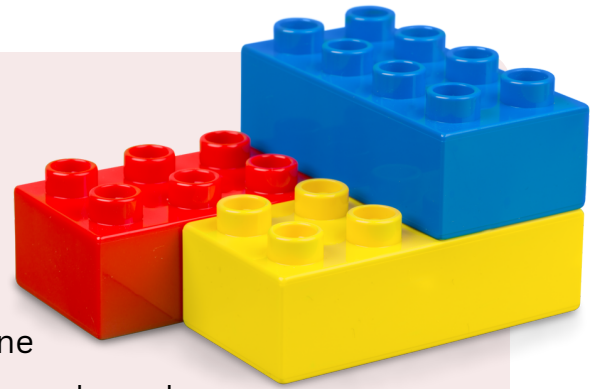
DIRECTIONS: In this section, you will consider how developing key childlike qualities affects your relationship with God and other people. As you pray and plan action steps. Invite His Spirit to empower you to act and obey. Use the Progress Report to record any areas of growth that you notice in your life as you implement your action steps.

Reinforcement

DIRECTIONS: Here, you will find a fun "tool" to help you recall key words and concepts or Bible memory verses from the week. Have fun!

Small Group

Leaders, encourage all of your group members to do their “heartwork” by using the book during their daily quiet time with God. Encourage everyone to bring their completed books with them to group each week.



1. **STARTERS:** Use the provided icebreakers to start your group time. Even if your group has been together for a long time, this is a great way to connect, learn new things about each other, have a few laughs, and get people ready to converse!
2. **STUDY & SHARE:** Each week when you meet, you will go through the Biblical, Personal, and Relational sections together. Invite everyone to share as they are comfortable.
3. **PRAYER:** Consider breaking into smaller sub-groups (men/women) or pairing up with an accountability partner for a more personal time of prayer at the end, middle, or beginning of your meeting. Ask one person from the group to record group requests in the Prayer Journal and give updates each week.
4. **REVIEW SHEET:** Use the Review Sheet on Week 6 to conclude "The Faith of a Child" Series.

Begin your group with a starter question and a LEGO Activity. One is for childlike fun, and the other opens dialogue about the weekly topic. The LEGO Activities can be done individually or in small teams - your call! Feel free to repeat them as time allows. Try to encourage new volunteers each week, so that everyone has at least one chance to be part of the competition during the series. Have fun, and don't forget to award the winners and participants with a "cookie or a sticker" from your prize bag! Give Gold Stars to those who complete the Workbook pages. Leaders, choose a fun person in your group to lead the starters each week.

Week 1: Let the Children Come

Starter: Share an embarrassing moment

LEGO Activity: "Who is the Greatest?" Game. Each player or team gets 1 minute (Use the sand timer) to build the tallest tower. The winner is the one who completes the tallest tower!) to build the tallest tower using the smallest LEGO on the bottom – tower must be standing! The winner is the one who completes the tallest tower! Take a picture of the tower.

Week 2: Childlike Listening

Starter: Who is a person that you are sure to listen to whenever they speak? Why?

LEGO Activity: "Listen Up" One person uses only words to help another build an object of their choice. Others guess what it is. Don't forget to take a picture.

Week 3: Childlike Courage

Starter: Fear in a Hat – Have everyone write down a fear on a strip of paper. Collect them in a hat (or bowl), then have everyone randomly pick one from the hat and share it with the group.

LEGO Activity: Divide the LEGOS equally between 2 people. Each builds their best "Goliath". When the timer runs out, have the rest of the group vote on the scariest Goliath. Take a picture of the winning Goliath and its designer.

Week 4: Childlike Boldness

Starter: Share a defining moment in your life (graduation, marriage, kids, loss, illness, etc).

LEGO Activity: Three people depict their defining moment using LEGOS. Others guess what they have made. Send a picture with a caption.

Week 5: Childlike Purity

Starter: Share a time when you faced consequences for doing the right thing.

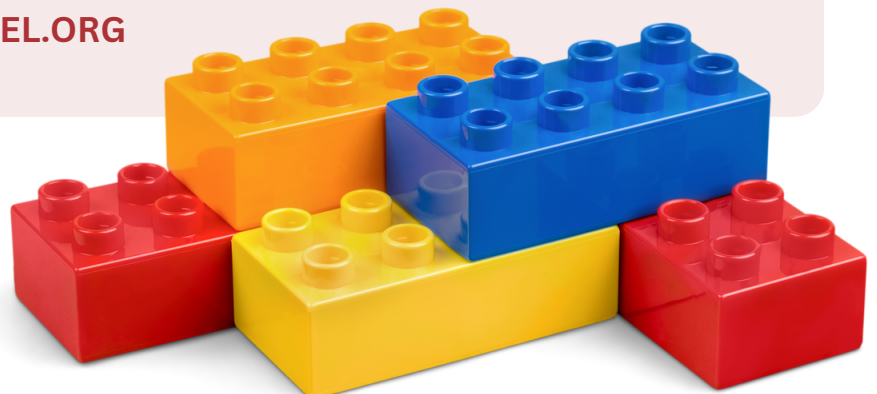
LEGO Activity: Have 3 people construct their "choice food" (favorite) out of LEGOS. Take pictures. Add captions. Send.

Week 6: Childlike Curiosity

Starter: Have you ever accidentally left someone behind during a trip or activity, or gotten lost as a child? Share your story briefly!

LEGO Activity: Use all the LEGOS to build a "temple". Each person places one brick on the structure until all the bricks are used. Take a picture of your temple. Send in the picture, along with the description.

PLEASE SEND PHOTOS OF YOUR LEGO EXPERIENCES TO
SMALLGROUPS@THECHAPEL.ORG



Scripture Passages

MATTHEW 18:1-5

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

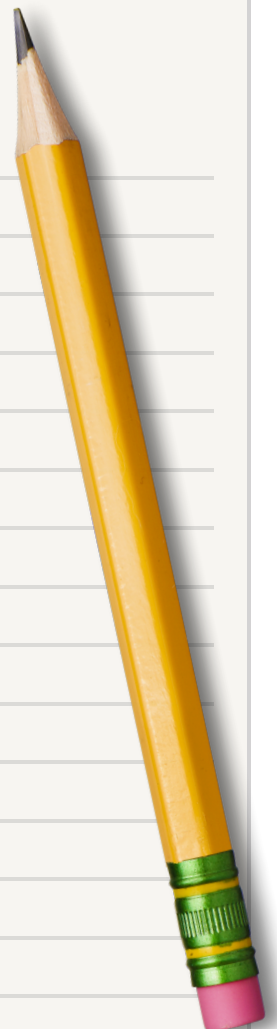
2 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. 3 And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

MATTHEW 19:13-15

13 Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

14 Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” 15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Sermon Notes



Biblical Activity

1. Find these repeated words in the passages.
Note how many times you find each.

<input type="text"/>	Kingdom of heaven	<input type="text"/>	Child/Children
<input type="text"/>	Greatest	<input type="text"/>	Welcomes

2. What did the disciples ask Jesus?

3. What is His answer?

4. What 4 things did Jesus **tell the disciples to do** in these passages? What did He mean by each?

- _____ : _____

- _____ : _____

- _____ : _____

- _____ : _____

5. How did **Jesus demonstrate** his instructions?

- _____

- _____

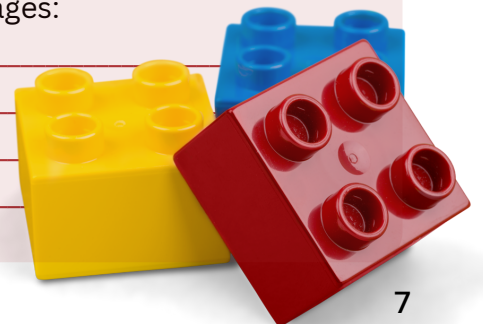
MAIN IDEA: Write a sentence that explains the main idea of these passages:

Words of the Week

Define the following words:

HUMILITY:

WELCOME:



Personal Activity

1. Jesus told the disciples they needed to change and become **humble (lowly)** like a child. How humble are you?



2. **Welcoming** is receiving someone with grace, making them feel accepted. How often do you demonstrate welcoming behaviors?



What keeps you from being a "4"?

Prayer Journal

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas of pride in your life. Write them here.

Now ask Him to soften your heart and replace the pride with humility. Write a portion of your prayer here.

Hinder means to get in the way of or frustrate. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any of your attitudes or actions that may be hindering a child (or anyone) from knowing Jesus. Write your prayer here. Add to it during the week.



Relational Activity

How will developing the qualities of humility and welcoming improve your relationships with both children and adults?

Jesus called a child to himself.

- Who might God be asking you to invite into a relationship with you? _____

- Who might He be asking you to invite into a relationship with Jesus? _____

Jesus put his hands on the child.

- What child (your child, grandchild, World Vision child, student, etc...) or adult is God asking you to embrace in a more loving and personal way?

- What is your action step? _____

Jesus prayed for the children.

- What child or adult in your life needs prayer this week? _____

- What time of day will you commit to pray for them each day this week? _____

Progress Report



Record any action steps you took in each subject.

Subject: *Humility*
Grade:
Improvement:

Subject: *welcoming*
Grade:
Improvement:

Reinforcement

Find the keyword in the puzzle.
Words can go in any direction.

CHANGE CHILDREN DISCIPLES

GREATEST HEAVEN HUMBLE

KINGDOM LOWLY PRAY

WELCOME

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B O W S E S R H V Y N N H R H
E P B R L G G H X G E M N E H
F E L O B V W T Z R J L A V F
U C X L M S L P D S Y V Q Y O
F Q H A U T W L Y S E A O B T
S L G A H I I H T N X V R X G
S E M N N H M R S A I M H P J
Q V L B C G Y A E L O W L Y K
F F U P C Q E V T B Y K S K I
A J N T I F U I A E N M K A N
M V C L X C G E E S Y P O T G
M J C O H H S E R Y E Y S G D
E M O C L E W I G O B N M Y O
U N T K P U U W D Q Z Z E B M
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Scripture Passages

1 SAMUEL 3

The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

6 Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

8 A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

11 And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. 12 At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. 13 For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. 14 Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'"

15 Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, 16 but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son."

Samuel answered, "Here I am."

17 "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you."

18 So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes."

19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. 21 The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.



Biblical Activity

DIRECTIONS: Begin with prayer.

Read the weekly Scripture passage.

What did Samuel **say** and **do** the first 3 times he heard the voice of the Lord?

Samuel said: “ _____ ”

Samuel did: _____

List the childlike qualities Samuel demonstrated in verses 2-10. _____

Word of the Week

Define the following word:

PROPHET:

Read verses 15-18, then mark each statement as **TRUE OR FALSE**. Correct the false statements so that they are true.

_____ Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision the Lord had given to him.

_____ Eli threatened Samuel to encourage him to tell the truth.

_____ Samuel sugarcoated the story to make it more pleasing to Eli.

_____ Eli was angry when he heard what the Lord was going to do to his family.

Read and highlight verse 19, then fill in the blanks:

The LORD _____ Samuel as he _____, and he let _____ of Samuel’s words fall to the ground.

COMPARE: verse 1 and verse 21. What dynamic change has occurred? _____

EXPLAIN: Why do you think God continued to powerfully use Samuel? Cite what you learned in your study _____



EXTRA CREDIT

In 1 Samuel 3:1 it says that Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli.

Read 1 Samuel 1 to find out how that came to be. Why did Hannah dedicate Samuel to the Lord, and what effect do you think it had on his life? _____

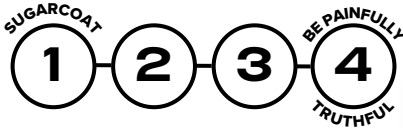
MAIN IDEA: Use your answers on this page to write a sentence that explains the main idea of these passages: _____

Personal Activity

1. When you read Scripture, do you most often read to:

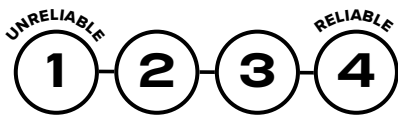
- Learn
- Obey
- Both

2. When faced with communicating bad news, are you more likely to:



Why is complete truth so important? _____

3. Would you consider yourself to be:



What keeps you from being a "4"? _____

Prayer Journal

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you listen carefully to His word with the intent to obey it.

Ask God to help you be a truthful communicator like young Samuel, even when you are faced with a difficult situation.

Samuel ran toward God each time he heard His voice. He immediately and effectively handled the words spoken by the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be a faithful and truthful worker and messenger so that you may be most useful to Him.

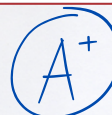
Relational Activity

1. What area of disobedience is causing tension in an important relationship? (poor listening, telling partial truth, anger, resentment, jealousy)? Spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you and transform you. Think about the next time you will see that person and pray for the interaction.

2. What person in your life is most often the recipient of your “partial listening”? Write a prayer of commitment to give your full attention to that person when he or she speaks.

3. Where do you often “drop the ball?” (paperwork, bills, timeliness, canceling commitments, deadlines, returning calls, RSVPs). Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to these situations. Ask Him to help you become a more reliable person so that He can trust you to be a faithful messenger of the gospel.

Progress Report



Record any action steps you took in each subject.

Subject: **Obedience**

Grade:

Improvement:

Subject: **Truthfulness**

Grade:

Improvement:

Reinforcement

Help Samuel follow the voice of the Lord.



Scripture Passages

1 SAMUEL 17

4-16: A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span. 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; 6 on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. 7 His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him. 8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." 11 On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

21-26: 21 Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. 22 David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. 23 As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. 24 Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear. 25 Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel."

26 David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

32-50: 32 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." 33 Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you." 38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. 41 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!" 45 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 49 Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. 50 So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

Biblical Activity

DIRECTIONS: Begin with prayer.

Read the weekly Scripture passage.

This week, only key parts are provided. Use your Bible to read the entire passage of 1 Samuel 17.

1. **Read 1 Samuel 17:4-11.** Record some characteristics about Goliath. Put a star next to the thing you find most intimidating. _____

2. In verse 11, what two words describe the emotional response of the Israelites, including King Saul, when they saw Goliath (verse 11) _____
According to verse 24, what did their emotions cause them to do? _____

3. From the entire passage, record what you learn about David. What childlike qualities do you see in his life? _____

4. How does David respond to Goliath's defiance? Contrast it with the response of Israel. _____

5. **Read and highlight verse 45, then fill in the blanks:**

"You come against me with _____ and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the _____, the God of the armies of _____, whom you have _____."

According to the verse above, what is the source of David's confidence? _____

6. Ultimately, David's life and courage point us to something greater – Jesus - the ultimate David, who courageously faced the cross and conquered death through His death and resurrection. How can fixing your eyes on Jesus give you greater courage and help in the midst of life's battles?

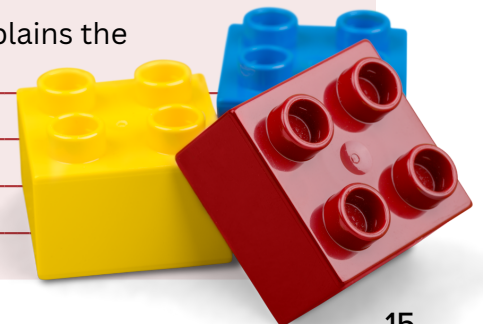
MAIN IDEA: Use your answers on this page to write a sentence that explains the main idea of these passages: _____

Words of the Week

Define the following words:

COURAGE:

SUPERIORITY:



Relational Activity

Read verses 45-47. David was a humble servant who was confident in the Lord. His personal relationship with “the living God” was the source of his courage. David had personally experienced the Lord’s rescuing power, and he was confident that the Lord would help him against Goliath. It’s important to note that Daniel’s courage wasn’t just for himself – there was a much bigger purpose! As you consider a challenge in your life, consider the following:

- What larger missionary purpose could be accomplished for God if you would look to Him for strength and courage? _____

- What do we demonstrate to those around us when we stand up to our challenges in God’s strength? _____

- What can you do to encourage others who are facing their own unique challenges, to take courage in God’s strength for their battle? List specific people in your life who are going through challenges, and record a specific action step you will take.

PRAY: Ask the Lord to fill you with courage in the face of your challenges. Declare the name of the Lord Almighty, so that the whole earth will know it is the Lord, who is your source of help. Write your prayer here: _____

Progress Report



Record any action steps you took in each subject.

Subject: **courage**
Grade:
Improvement:

Subject: **Dependence on God**
Grade:
Improvement:

Subject: **MISSION Focus**
Grade:
Improvement:

Reinforcement

Unscramble the keywords below.

ltihoGa _____

iietsnilPh _____

fdye _____

dviaD _____

rphseedh _____

alttbe _____

iilvgn odG _____

otesn _____

Scripture Passages

ESTHER 1-10

2:10 Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so.

2:15-18 When the turn came for Esther (the young woman Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail) to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested. And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her. 16 She was taken to King Xerxes in the royal residence in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17 Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18 And the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality.

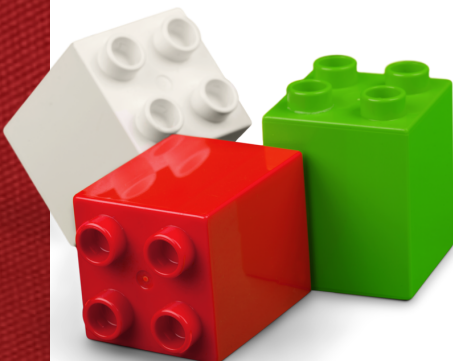
4:14-16 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this? 15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

5:2 When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

8:3-6 Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews. 4 Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him. 5 "If it pleases the king," she said, "and if he regards me with favor and thinks it the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces. 6 For how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?"

8:17 In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them

9:1 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them.



Biblical Activity

DIRECTIONS: Begin with prayer.
Read the weekly Scripture passage.

1. What childlike qualities does Esther demonstrate in the following passages? How did each contribute to her boldness?

a) 2:10, 2:15 _____

b) 4:16 _____

c) 8:3-6 _____

What does 8:6 reveal about the motivation behind Esther's boldness? _____

2. How is God's sovereignty evident in the following passages?

a) 2:15-18 _____

b) 4:14 _____

c) 5:2 _____

d) 8:17 _____

e) 9:1 _____

3. God is not specifically mentioned in the book of Esther. Why do you think this book is included in Scripture? _____

4. Write the name of the person with the following roles:

CHARACTER IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER

THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE

KING _____

FATHER FIGURE _____

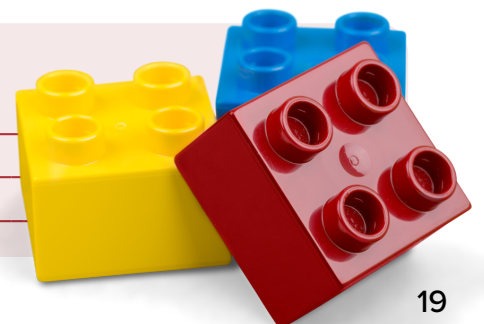
SAVIOR _____

MAIN IDEA: Use your answers on this page to write a sentence that explains the main idea of these passages: _____

Word of the Week

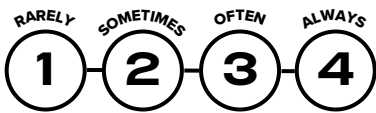
Define the following word:

CALLING (BIBLICAL / SPIRITUAL):



Personal Activity

1. Esther sought and obeyed the advice of those who were trusted and more experienced. When faced with a difficult decision or situation, how often do you seek and obey advice from someone wiser?



2. How often do you ask others to join you in prayer or fasting for an important decision or situation?



3. Asking others to do things is a part of life. Read Esther 8:3-6. Describe Esther's demeanor and words when she stood before the king. How do you think Esther's approach affected the king's response?

Think about the way you most often request help and ask people to do things. Rate your attitude:



Prayer Journal

Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a situation where you need wisdom. Ask Him to show you a trusted person or Godly people who are wiser and more experienced than you are. Record any names He reveals:

Ask Him to give you ears to hear and a willingness to act on good and Godly advice.

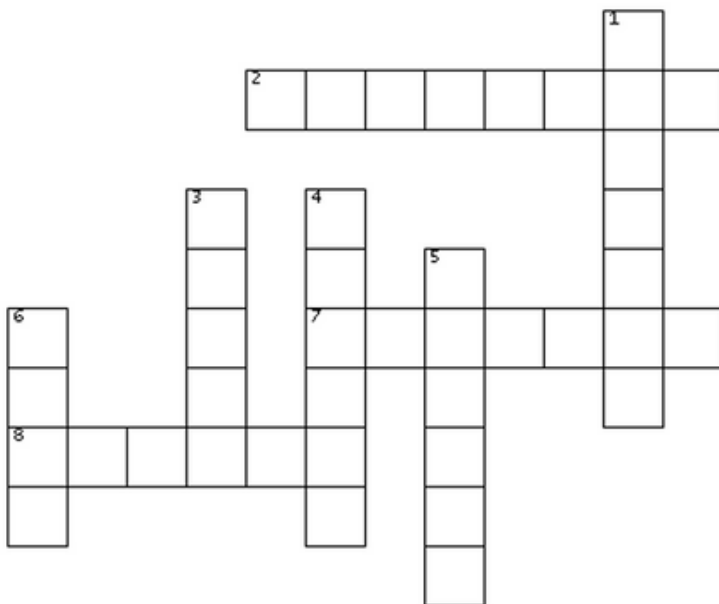
What heavy weight are you attempting to carry alone? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the boldness and humility to invite the body of Christ to pray for you, and even fast with you. Write a portion of the prayer here:

Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you when you are being harsh and demanding. Ask Him to infuse you with an attitude of gentleness and respect when making requests of others.

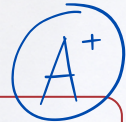
Relational Activity

1. Difficult conversations come with risk. What might God be calling you to have in order to bring salvation to others? What are the risks? What is the reward?

2. Is there someone who you find it difficult to approach? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an attitude of gentleness and respect toward that person. Notice the person's response when you adopt Esther's characteristics! Share it with a friend or your small group!



Progress Report



Record any action steps you took in each subject.

Subject: *Seeking advice*
 Grade:
 Improvement:

Subject: *Enlisting prayer support*
 Grade:
 Improvement:

Subject: *Gentleness and Respect*
 Grade:
 Improvement:

Reinforcement

ACROSS

- 2. Esther's uncle
- 7. staff held as a sign of sovereignty
- 8. a seal used instead of a signature

DOWN

- 1. a party with plentiful food
- 3. convinced the king to have the Jews killed
- 4. the queen who preceded Esther
- 5. official order or command
- 6. the capital of the Persian Empire

Scripture Passages

DANIEL 1

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia[a] and put in the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility — 4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. 5 The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

6 Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. 9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, 10 but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." 14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. 16 So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

18 At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. 20 In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. 21 And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Biblical Activity

DIRECTIONS: Begin with prayer.
Read the weekly Scripture passage

1. As you read Daniel 1, look for and underline what the author specifically credits God with. What does this teach us about God? _____

1. **Highlight Daniel 1:8.** What does Daniel's decision and actions demonstrate about his relationship with God? _____

2. Daniel's actions demonstrated his desire to please God above men. Why is obedience and purity such a big deal to God? _____

3. Read verses 8-16, then mark each statement as true or false. Correct the statements that are false so that they are true.

- ___ Daniel arrogantly demanded that he get his own choice of food.
- ___ Daniel was persistent and appealed to the guard for his help in this matter.
- ___ It was only because of Daniel the guard agreed to help.
- ___ Daniel was willing to be tested.

4. What does God do because of Daniel's faithfulness and purity? _____

5. Jesus is the ultimate example of remaining pure and faithful. He willingly came to this world, remained completely loyal and faithful to God; lived a sinless life despite temptations; and never withdrew in the face of opposition. He lovingly, obediently, and sacrificially went on to save the world. How might Jesus' own example and his work on your behalf give you confidence as you live in this world? _____

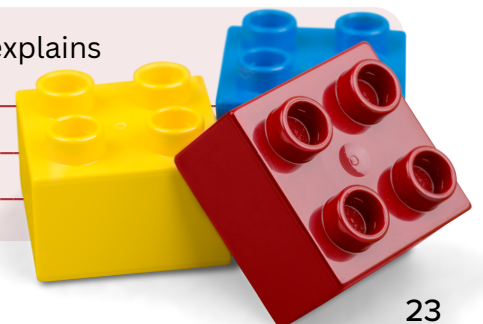
MAIN IDEA: Use your answers on this page to write a sentence that explains the main idea of these passages: _____

Words of the Week

Define the following words:

RESOLVED:

DEFILED:



Personal Activity

1. As exiles, Daniel and his friends were able to remain pure in their faith. What does this teach you about being “in the world but not of it”?

2. Do you intentionally choose to not defile yourself; to live by your strong faith-conviction – even when it’s risky?



Think back to when you first became a Christian -- was it easier for you to remain pure, stand up to your convictions – even if it was risky and difficult? What happened that made it harder for you to live with those qualities?

Are there specific places where you find yourself compromising; “playing it safe” and blending in with the world?

3. Record one specific action step you will take to eliminate an area listed above.

Prayer Journal

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the things of the world and places that compromise your faith and/or witness to God. Write what God reveals here:

Now ask the Spirit to renew your commitment to God. Ask for the grace and power to eliminate areas listed above, so that you remain pure in your commitment to God. Record your prayer here:



Relational Activity

Daniel responded to the situation and those around him with a childlike purity.

- When faced with situations or people that you disagree with, how likely do you respond with the childlike purity of Daniel?



- Name your typical response: _____

- What makes it hard for you to respond with childlike purity (a “4”) in those situations?

- What are the implications of the way you respond? _____

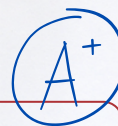
PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to help you respond to these situations with a childlike purity.

Daniel was willing to take a risk and be tested, to demonstrate his faithfulness to God.

- Look back to the action step you recorded in the personal section. Are you willing to take a risk, to be tested to demonstrate your faithfulness to God?

- Share your action step with a trusted friend and ask them to pray for your obedience and purity this week. _____

Progress Report



Record any action steps you took in each subject.

Subject: *Desire to please God*

Grade:

Improvement:

Subject: *Resisting temptation*

Grade:

Improvement:

Subject: *Resolve to obey*

Grade:

Improvement:

Reinforcement

Read Daniel 1:8 (fill in the blanks)

_____ not to _____

himself with the _____

_____ and _____,

and he _____ the

for _____ not to

_____ himself this _____.”

Scripture Passages

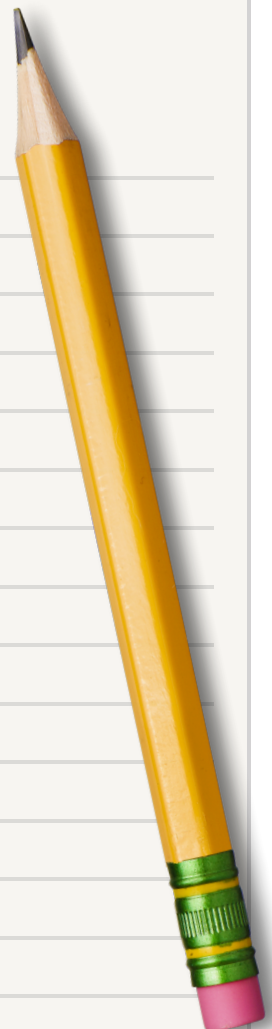
LUKE 2:41-52

41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. 43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Sermon Notes



Biblical Activity

DIRECTIONS: Begin with prayer.
Read the weekly Scripture passage.

1. According to vv. 41-42, why was Jesus & his family in Jerusalem? What does this reveal about them?

2. What is the significance of Jesus being 12?

3. How did Jesus' parents notice that he was missing and what did they do (43-45)? When and where did they find Jesus? _____

4. What was Jesus doing while he was off on his own? How do his actions demonstrate his childlike curiosity?

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

5. **Circle the correct word:** Everyone who heard young Jesus was _____ at his understanding and answers.

a. Puzzled b. Proud of c. Confused d. Amazed

Why do you think Jesus had this impact? _____

6. **Read verses 48-49 and explain** what Jesus is revealing to us in his statement, "I had to be in my Father's House." _____

7. How does Jesus respond to his earthly parents in verse 51? What can we learn from his example? Note any differences between verses 49 & 51. _____

8. **Highlight verse 52 then fill in the blanks:** "And Jesus _____ in _____ and stature, and in favor with God and _____."

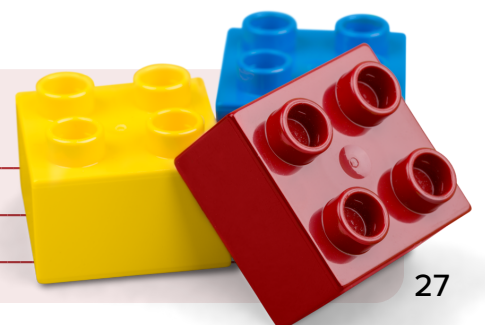
MAIN IDEA: Use your answers on this page to write a sentence that explains the main idea of these passages: _____

Words of the Week

Define the following words:

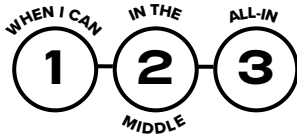
CURIOSITY:

WISDOM:



Personal Activity

1. At the young age of 12, Jesus demonstrated a strong sense of commitment to God. How committed to God and His work are you today?

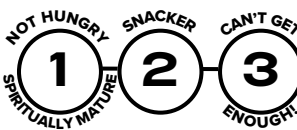


Would your response to the above question have been different when you first became a Christian? Why do you think that has that changed? _____

What keeps you from being a "3?" _____

2. Jesus was fully God, and yet He still sought to grow spiritually. List specific ways that you are currently engaged in growing spiritually. _____

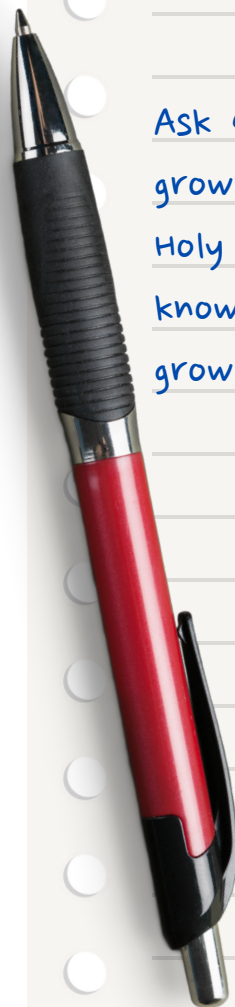
How would you describe your hunger for learning?



Prayer Journal

Be inspired by the life of Jesus! Ask God to reveal how you might dwell in God's presence and serve Him more continuously. Ask the Holy Spirit to renew your passion and commitment to God. Record what the Holy Spirit reveals here:

Ask God to show you areas where you have grown comfortable and complacent. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you hungry for more knowledge and understanding, in order to grow and flourish.



Relational Activity

1. **Read Luke 2:52.** How can being curious about God's word help you better love God and others?

What worldly things distract you from this pursuit?

2. When you are curious about spiritual things, who are wise people you can consult?

From this passage, what can you learn about the importance of interaction between older and younger generations? _____

How can you foster this type of relationship in your life?

Progress Report



Record any action steps you took in each subject.

Subject: *Desire for God's word*

Grade:

Improvement:

Subject: *commitment to God's word*

Grade:

Improvement:

Subject: *commitment to learn from others*

Grade:

Improvement:

Reinforcement

Unscramble key words from the Luke 2 passage.

EMPELT CTROUS _____

TNTIIGS _____

ETIINGSLN _____

SUSEJ GRWE _____

NSGKIA USIOTQNSE _____

IN YM SF'ERHAT ESOUH _____

1. Progress Report

- Look through your Common Ground workbook.
- Which child in the Bible had the most impact on your growth during the past 6 weeks?
- Refer to your Progress Report.

2. Prayer Journal

- Review your Personal and Group Prayer Journals.
- Where have you seen God work individually and as a group?
- Spend time praising God for His goodness.

3. Child Sponsorship Stories

- Share a story about your "Chosen" World Vision Child or another child you are continuing to support.
- How has the series influenced your prayers for this child?
- How do you plan to communicate with this child in the future?
- How have you been changed or inspired by your sponsored child or another child in your life?

