

Puzzled: Believe there's a bigger picture

PARENT GUIDE
Elementary



First, watch this week's video!

Hope: Believing that something good can come out of something bad

Memory Verse

"In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world."
John 16:33b, NIV

Bible Story

Lazarus Raised
John 11:1-45

Bottom Line

Whatever happens, remember how powerful God is.

Use this guide to help your family learn about hope.

Activity

Puzzle Play

What You Need:

Two sheets of paper, marker, and scissors

What You Do:

Write "LAZARUS" in large letters on two separate sheets of paper. Choose one of those sheets of paper and cut out each letter, one by one. Then hide those letters all around the room. (Keep track of where you've put them!)

Tell your child they're going to go hunting for puzzle pieces. Let your child use the intact sheet of paper to know which letters they should be looking for.

As your child moves around the room, tell them when they're "hotter" or "colder" based on how close they are to the puzzle pieces.

When your child has found all the pieces, have them put their puzzle together.

Talk About the Bible Story

What's another meaning for the word "puzzling?" (*confusing, hard to understand*)

What was puzzling in our story today? (*Jesus didn't leave right away to heal Lazarus.*)

What happened a few days later, after Jesus said that Lazarus wasn't going to die? (*Lazarus died.*)

What did Jesus do next? (*He returned to where Lazarus lived.*)

What did Jesus do when He arrived to be with His friends? (*He was sad, but He prayed and thanked God. Then He called Lazarus out of the tomb, raising him from the dead.*)

Parent: Share an age-appropriate story about a time when you faced a seemingly impossible situation. Were you able to see and feel God's presence at the time? How?

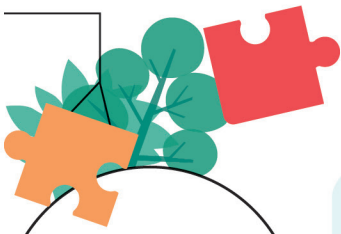
Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"Dear God, thank You for this time when we can come together and learn more about You and what Your power looks like in our lives. Thank You that even though there are times we face big, hard things, You give us a reason to have hope! Please help us remember the truth we learned today. Help us remember that whatever happens, You are so powerful. In Your name we pray, amen."

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John 16:33b, NIV

Bible Story

Palm Sunday
John 12:9-16

Bottom Line

Whatever happens,
remember God is
still working.

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learn about hope.



Activity

Boss for a Day

What You Need:

Paper and markers

What You Do:

Ask your child to dream up what they'd do if they could be the boss of the house for the day. Let them create a list of rules. (They can draw pictures if spelling is a challenge.)

Then, let your child be "the boss" (within reason) for a limited amount of time. Or choose another time in the near future when you can let them "rule" for a few hours.

Wrap up by asking/saying:

- What kinds of things is a boss in charge of? Think of a teacher, coach, or parent. What are they in charge of?
- God is kind of like a "boss" that never quits! God loves us like a perfect Father. And God is always working in our lives, no matter what's happening. God's plan is always good!

Talk About the Bible Story

How did Jesus arrive in Jerusalem? (*On a donkey's back, with people placing down palm branches for Him to walk on*)

Why were the people so excited to see Jesus come to town? (*They believed He was the promised Savior.*)

Read Zechariah 9:9. How did Jesus fulfill these words when He arrived in Jerusalem?

We all have to face tough situations sometimes, when we don't know how things will work out. In those times, how can we remind ourselves that God is still working? (*Pray, talk with family/friends, read in the Bible about how God is always faithful and good.*)

Parent: Share an age-appropriate story about a time when you asked God for something and you waited a long time—or are still waiting. Explain how you remained hopeful.

Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"God, thank You for the good news that You never stop working. You don't ever pause, break down, or forget about us. When we feel anxious about things that aren't happening right away, please help us remember the hope we have in Jesus. He came to be our Savior, just like You promised long ago! We ask that Your Spirit would interrupt our worries this week and encourage us that whatever happens, You are still working. Amen."

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Bible Story

Crucifixion and Resurrection
John 18:1–20:18

Bottom Line

Whatever happens, remember Jesus is alive.

Activity

Egg-stray Prayers

What You Need:

Two plastic eggs, two strips of paper, two writing utensils, and a Bible or Bible app

What You Do:

Give your child one egg, one strip of paper, and a pen. Take the same for yourself. Ask your child to write out the memory verse, John 16:33b, on the strip of paper. (They can reference the Bible as needed.) You do the same.

Then, both of you choose one thing—person or situation—you'd like to pray about. Both of you write your prayer request on the other side of your strip of paper, roll it up, and place it inside your egg.

Say, "Jesus died on the cross so that we could have a relationship with God that will last forever. Whatever happens, we can remember that Jesus is still alive! We know that God loved us enough to send Jesus for us . . . and we can talk to God about anything, anytime."

Talk About the Bible Story

Why did Jesus die? *(To pay the price for our sins, so that we could have a relationship with God now and forever)*

Why does that give us hope? *(Because nothing can separate us from God's love)*

Who is someone we could share that hope with this week?

Parent: Share about when you first understood what Jesus did for you. How did it make you feel? How did you respond? (If you're not sure how you feel about the story of Jesus, share about where you are in your journey.)

Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"Dear God, it's amazing to celebrate Easter and remember the reason we can have hope: because Jesus is alive! We pray that this hope You've given us will encourage us to bring hope to others. Help us show the people around us that whatever happens, Jesus is alive . . . and that nothing can take away the hope we have in Him. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."

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Bible Story

Jesus Appears to Thomas
John 20:19-29

Bottom Line

Whatever happens, remember God is bigger than your questions.

Activity

Sink or Swim

What You Need:

Bathtub or sink (or large, clear storage tub), and items that will sink or float (examples: coins, cups, toys, etc.). Be sure to include some large items that will float (empty gallon milk jug, piece of wood).

What You Do:

Pour water into the tub until it's about two-thirds full. Hand your child one item at a time, and let them guess whether it will sink or float. After your child guesses, let them drop the object in the tub of water. Continue until you've tried all the items.

Wrap up by saying: "You'd think some of those objects would sink because of how big they were, but they ended up floating! Sometimes our questions seem really big . . . when, in reality, they aren't that big to God. After all, God is bigger than everything, because God *created* everything."

Talk About the Bible Story

How do you think Jesus' friends felt when they heard that Jesus' body was gone?

Why was Thomas doubting, even after his friends confirmed that Jesus was really alive? (*Thomas needed to see Jesus' wounds with his own eyes and touch Jesus himself.*)

Read what Jesus said in John 20:29. How is that true of us today?

Did Jesus make Thomas feel badly about doubting and asking if He was really alive? (*no*)

How does this make you feel about asking God your own questions?

Parent: Share about a time when you had a big question for or about God. How did that change or shape your faith?



Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"Dear God, thank You for caring about our questions. You are so big and powerful, but You care about every concern, every doubt, and every worry we have. When we have questions, please help us trust You, and remind us to go to You and to other wise people who trust You. We want You to be our source of truth when we feel uncertain. Please remind us that whatever happens, You are bigger than our questions. Amen."