



JESUS PARTY

A Devotional for
Kids and Families

J A S O N B Y E R L Y

JESUS
PARTY

Jesus Party

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A Note For Parents

Welcome to the Jesus party!

Jesus Party is adapted from the book *Jesus Prom* by Jon Weece. This book was written to get you and your kids talking about faith at home.

Each chapter in *Jesus Party* corresponds to a chapter in *Jesus Prom* to make it easy for you and your kids to talk about the ideas together.

While *Jesus Party* makes sense on its own, it can be an even more helpful tool for your family when the adults in the house are reading *Jesus Prom* at the same time.

Jesus Party would make a great family devotional or could be read by older elementary kids by themselves. Either way, take time as a family to talk about what God's teaching you and your kids along the way.

Jon's absolutely right when he writes, "Life gets fun when you love people like God does." That fun is ten times better when you experience it together as a family.

So, what are you waiting for? Let the party begin!

The Party Starts Here!

What's the best party you've ever been to? Was it a birthday party? A school party? A pizza party?

One thing is for sure. The best parties are never boring. At a great party you're always on the move.

Eat cake. Open presents. Play games. Whack a pinata. Do the limbo. Laugh. Act crazy.

Parties are awesome, but there is one kind of party that blows all of the others away. I call it the Jesus party! Other people call it the church.

I'm not talking about a building. I'm talking about a group of people. The Jesus party is the people of God sharing the love of God everywhere they go.

Sure we come together in a building on the weekend to celebrate together, but what about the rest of the week? The rest of the week, we take the Jesus party to the world.

Why? Because we follow a leader who brings life and joy to the world every day. As His followers, it's our job to do the same.

When we follow Jesus, we will love the way He loves.

When we follow Jesus, we will give the way He gives.

When we follow Jesus, we will party the way He parties.

We belong to Jesus.

He is the leader.

So let's get this party started right now!

One: Faves

Verse to Remember

We love because He first loved us.
1 John 4:19

Bible Story

Bartimaeus Receives His Sight - Mark 10:46-52

What are some things you love? I don't mean things you just sort of like. I mean things that you think are flat out awesome! Pizza? Video games? Krispy Kreme doughnuts? What do you love?

When I was a kid, this was my list of the top three things I loved:

1. My black bike
2. Spiderman comic books
3. Fruit Loops

Pretty cool list, right? What's not to love about that stuff!?! But how about you? What are the things you love the most? What's your top three list?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Guess what? God has a list of what He loves most too. You know what's on His list?

1. People
2. People
3. People

God doesn't love stuff the way people love stuff. Instead God loves people. In fact, God loves you! He's crazy about you!

And you know what He wants you to do with all that love He gives you? He wants you to turn around and give it away to others.

One of Jesus' friends, John, put it this way, "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Jesus went around loving people all the time. Jesus knew people were more important than anything.

There was one time Jesus was leaving a city called Jericho and met a guy named Bartimaeus. You say it like this. Bar. Tih. May. Us. Big name, right? Well, he had an even bigger problem. Bartimaeus was blind. Couldn't see a thing.

Imagine that! Close your eyes for a minute. Think about how hard it would be to play soccer or go to school or ride your bike if you couldn't see. Bartimaeus needed some big help! So when he heard Jesus walking by, he yelled at Him, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!"

People got mad at Bartimaeus. They didn't want him yelling at Jesus so they told him to be quiet. But Bartimaeus didn't care. He knew Jesus could help him, so he kept yelling.

Now Jesus had a choice to make. He could either listen to the crowd or listen to Bartimaeus. He could either keep on going or stop and help the guy. Guess what He did? Jesus did the same thing He always did. He stopped and helped.

Jesus asked Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus told him he wanted to see.

"Go," said Jesus. "Your faith has healed you" (Mark 10:52).

Right then and there, Jesus did something amazing! Jesus healed Bartimaeus' eyes, and Bartimaeus could see as clear as day.

No matter how busy He was, Jesus always had time to love people. How about you?

Get This Party Started

Do you want a top three list that's full of stuff? Or do you want to be like God and have a list that's full of people?

Who is on your list to show love to this week? How can you help them? Maybe they need a friend to hang out with. Maybe they need help with their homework. Maybe they just need to play. Just do what Jesus did and ask, "What can I do for you?"

Prayer

God, thanks for loving me. Help me to share that love with others this week. Amen.

Two: Big Shot

Verse to Remember

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1

Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

John 3:1-4

What do you want to be when you grow up?

A scientist? A cowgirl? An astronaut? How about a lawyer or a famous chef? Do you want to be a rock star and tour the world? Or maybe a veterinarian and help sick animals?

There are all kinds of cool things you can do when you grow up.

Along the way, you can do big things too. You can win ball-games and academic team matches. You can make straight A's. You can learn to play the piano or do crazy stunts on your bike.

Yes, you can do amazing things! When you're big. When you're little. Even when you're somewhere in between.

But I have to warn you. It's really easy to get mixed up when you're doing big things. It's easy to confuse what we do with who we are.

A long time ago, there was a man named Nicodemus who'd done lots of amazing things. Nick was one of the richest guys in Jerusalem. He'd gone to the best schools and was super-smart

and super-successful. He ran with the “in” crowd. He was a big deal.

But one night, Nick just couldn't sleep. Maybe he'd eaten too much pizza or had stuffed his face with ice cream. Or maybe not. More likely he just had something on his mind, so he went to talk to Jesus.

Remember all that stuff that made Nick a big deal? Jesus didn't care about that at all. Jesus just cared about Nick. Jesus told him, “Nick, you must be born again.”

Nick was confused. What did it mean to be born again? It meant he got to start over. He got to be a part of a family. God's family.

God would be his Dad. Nick would be God's kid.

That meant all his money and all the important stuff he'd done didn't matter too much. He didn't have to be like everyone else. He didn't have to worry about anything. He just got to enjoy being part of God's family.

And you can too.

Jesus' friend John once wrote, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are” (1 John 3:1).

Do you know what lavished means? It's a fancy word that means pouring out. Not just pouring out a little, but a lot. If your mom lavished cookies on you, she wouldn't just give you a crumb. She'd dump a truckload on your plate. You'd be buried in cookies!

That's how God is with His love. He doesn't just give us a crumb. He pours out truckloads of love. He lavishes it on us! Jesus' love makes it possible to become God's kid.

That's the best thing ever. When you're God's kid, you're free to be you! It doesn't matter if you grow up to be a teacher or a tap dancer, a librarian or a lion tamer.

God loves you no matter what.

Straight A's or straight F's, you're still God's kid. First place or last place, you're still God's kid. A million friends or zero friends. Still. God's. Kid.

A chosen child. Handmade by God. Handpicked by God.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Be God's kid. Be like Jesus. You don't have to wait until you're grown up. You can even start today.

Get This Party Started

Talk to a grown-up about what it means to follow Jesus. Just like Nicodemus, you can start following Jesus at any time. It's not about how good you are or what you do for God. It's about what Jesus has already done for you.

If you're already following Jesus, remember that you're God's kid, and He loves you no matter what.

Prayer

God, thank You for being a perfect Dad. Thank you that I can be your kid. I know that You love me no matter what. Amen!

Three: I Spy

Verse to Remember

We live by believing, not by seeing.
2 Cor. 5:7 (NIRV)

Bible Story

Peter Walks On Water - Matthew 14:22-33

Have you ever played the game I Spy? It works like this. One person picks a secret object nearby and tells everyone the color.

"I spy with my little eye something that is blue!"

Then the other players have to guess what the mysterious blue object is. You can really drive people crazy if you pick something that is hard to see.

Did you know Jesus likes to play I Spy with us too? Not because He's trying to drive us crazy, but because He wants us to see the things He sees.

For example, Jesus had a friend named Peter who started out as a fisherman. But Jesus saw that Peter could become much, much more. Peter could become someone who helped others see Jesus. With Jesus' power, Peter could change the world.

But Peter said, "You don't want me. I'm a sinful man." Just like a game of I Spy, it was tough for Peter to see what Jesus saw.

It can be tough for us too.

When Jesus looks at you, He sees all the great things you can

become. He sees the wonderful talent and personality God put in you to help you share His love with others.

Some days, though, we don't feel so wonderful. Some days we may feel like failures.

Peter sure did.

One night Peter and his friends were out in a boat on a stormy lake. The wind was blowing like crazy. Big waves were pounding the sides of the boat. All of a sudden they looked up and saw something totally freaky. It was a man. Walking on the water.

It was Jesus!

But even crazier than that, Jesus invited Peter to join Him on the water. "Come," He said. And Peter went. For just a minute Peter saw what Jesus saw, that anything is possible with God.

Imagine walking on top of the splashing waves. It was awesome!

But then Peter took his eyes off of Jesus. He looked at the wind. He looked at the waves. He got scared. And he started to sink.

When we take our eyes off of Jesus, we sink too. Why? Because our eyes are on ourselves and not on Jesus.

When I think about things I'm afraid of, my eyes are not on Jesus. When I think about not having enough toys, my eyes are not on Jesus. When I think about how bad I messed up, my eyes are not on Jesus.

Peter messed up plenty of other times too. When Jesus was arrested, Peter told a lie because he was afraid. "I don't know Jesus," he said. Not just once, but three times.

But even when Peter blew it, Jesus didn't see his failure. Jesus saw Peter's future. Jesus saw all the people Peter could help.

That's what Jesus sees in you too. He doesn't see your fear. He doesn't see the bad things you've done. He sees the amazing person you can become with His power. He sees all the people you can help when you take your eyes off of yourself.

I spy with my little eye someone who can help others see Jesus. And that someone is you!

Get This Party Started

God wants you to see the one person you could help today. Who do you know who feels sad? Who do you know who is scared? Who do you know who is sick? Put this book down and go help them. Give them a call. Make them a card. Go play with them. Help them to see Jesus today.

Prayer

God, thank You for helping me to see Your love for me. Please help me to see who needs to see You today. Amen.

Four: You First

Verse to Remember

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.

Phil 2:3 (NLT)

Bible Story

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman - John 4:1-42

Me first! My turn! Give it to me! Out of the way!

Do these words sound familiar? Maybe you heard them when your mom was passing out popsicles. Or maybe it was when you were fighting over who got to play the first video game. Or getting in line for recess. Or racing to grab the best seat.

All of us have heard those words, and all of us have said them. It's the language of selfishness.

But Jesus never spoke that language. He wasn't selfish. He was selfless. To be selfless means you forget about yourself and think about others.

Jesus always put others first. He knew that when we put others first, it gives them life. It shows them how special they are to God.

One day, Jesus was traveling through the land of Samaria. He stopped at a famous place called Jacob's Well. It was kind of like McDonalds without the nuggets. People would go there to

get something to drink and hang out.

That's where Jesus met a woman who needed a friend.

Jacob's Well was busy early in the morning, but Jesus showed up around noon. By that time of day it was super hot and nobody was there.

Except for this one woman.

She came at noon because she didn't want to see anybody. She didn't have any friends, and people made fun of her.

She was lonely, so Jesus started talking to her. She couldn't believe it! No one ever talked to her, especially someone from Jesus' country. People from Jesus' country didn't like Samaritans and Samaritans didn't like them.

But Jesus was different. Jesus didn't treat people like everyone else did. Jesus put the woman first. He told her that He could give her something even better than water to quench her thirst. He could give her life that would fill her up forever.

She was so excited that she went and told everyone about Jesus.

Jesus' friend Paul once wrote, "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3 NLT).

That's hard to do.

Of course, you want to eat the first popsicle, or take the first turn at the game or land the best seat on the bus. But that doesn't change anybody's life. Putting others first does.

Jesus put the Samaritan woman first. He was willing to be her friend and to share God's love with her, and that changed everything.

It can change everything for you too.

Think about what could happen if you treated your brothers and sisters, your parents, your friends and your teachers even better than they treated you. If people are mean or grumpy with you, be kind. If people are loving towards you, be even more loving!

Want to turn an enemy into a friend? Treat them better than they treat you.

What if you made it a contest? What if you started every day by saying, "How can I out-love everybody I meet today?"

Get This Party Started

This week practice using words that put others first. Forget about selfish words like "me first" and "my turn." Replace them with selfless words like "you first" and "your turn." Try "let me help" or "after you." Your selfless words will lead to selfless actions and that will lead people to Jesus.

Prayer

God, thank You for putting me first when Jesus died on the cross. Help me to put others first with my words and my actions. Amen.

Five: Yackety Yack

Verse to Remember

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.
Luke 19:10

Bible Story

Zacchaeus - Luke 19:1-10

Who is your favorite celebrity? It could be an athlete, a movie star or maybe your favorite singer. Which famous person would you be the most excited to meet?

Do you have one? Okay, now imagine that you became best friends with them. You hung out together all the time and got to do all kinds of cool things. Would you keep this celebrity friendship a secret or would you tell others about it?

You'd tell everyone, of course! You'd tell them all about your famous friend. You'd tell them about the amazing places you went together and the fun stuff you did.

You'd talk about how your life had changed because of your special friendship.

In fact, you probably couldn't stop talking about it. I bet you'd be so excited that you'd introduce all of your old friends to your new celebrity friend so they could share in the fun too.

Well, guess what? You do have a famous friend! He's the most famous friend of all time. Jesus isn't just a celebrity. He's a King! He made the universe and everything in it.

And you get to be best friends with Him!

So it just makes sense that you'd want to tell all of your friends about Him. You can tell them how your life has changed because of your special friendship with Jesus.

Being friends with Jesus changes everything. Just ask Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus didn't have any friends. Why? Because he'd done some bad things. He'd cheated people out of a lot of money. So nobody liked Zacchaeus. Nobody wanted to go to his house. Nobody wanted to be his friend.

Except, of course, for Jesus.

Jesus was walking through Zacchaeus' town one day, and all the people crowded the streets to see Him. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus too, but he didn't want Jesus to see him. That's why he climbed up in a tree to get a look at Jesus as He walked by.

But Jesus saw Zacchaeus up in that tree. When Jesus saw Zacchaeus, He didn't see a cheater. He saw someone who needed a friend.

So Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5). Zacchaeus couldn't believe it. Nobody ever wanted to come to his house, but Jesus did.

Being friends with Jesus changed Zacchaeus. He didn't cheat people anymore. In fact, he paid back four times all the money he had taken.

You can bet, from that day on, Zacchaeus told everyone he met about his famous friend Jesus.

You can too.

Get This Party Started

1. Make a list.

Who are the people you know who don't know Jesus? Maybe it's a kid at school. Maybe a teacher. It could be a neighbor or a grandparent or even your own mom or dad. Write them down. Put that list some place you'll see it every day.

2. Pray.

Before we talk to people about God, we need to talk to God about people. That's called prayer. Talk to God about the people on your list. Ask God for the chance to tell one of them about Him today.

3. Tell your story.

Keep it simple. Just be yourself, and tell your story. Without Jesus, my life was like this (then tell them what your life was like without Jesus). With Jesus, my life is like this (then tell them how your life with Jesus is different). Tell them one of your favorite things about Jesus, like how He helps you when you're scared or makes you feel special when you're lonely. Just tell them about your famous friend!

Prayer

God, thank You that I get to be friends with You. Please give me the chance to tell somebody on my list about You today. Amen.

Six: Chillax

Verse to Remember

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Psalm 23:2

Bible Story

The Lord Is My Shepherd - Psalm 23

Have you ever been to a lazy river at a water park? At every lazy river, you'll see two types of kids, kids who are chilling out, just floating downstream, and kids who are running through the water like maniacs. These are the kids who turn the lazy river into a crazy river.

When it comes to water parks, it doesn't matter if you're lazy or crazy. But in real life, we all need time to run, and we all need time to relax. There's nothing lazy about that.

Sure, God made us to go and do big things, but He also made us to stop. To rest. To recharge our batteries. To enjoy Him.

Sometimes, though, taking a break is harder than it looks.

Think about all the things you and your family might do in a week. School. Homework. Church. Soccer practice. Baseball games. Dance recitals. Piano lessons. Academic team. Family trips.

Whew! Just thinking about all that stuff can make you tired.

There are so many fun things to do. We don't want to miss out on anything. But too much busyness can be dangerous. It's like

riding your bike down a big hill. If you go too fast, you're going to crash.

You'll end up tired, cranky and totally stressed out.

Think of it like this. What happens if you don't charge up a cell phone or a video game? It goes dead. What if your dad doesn't put gas in the car? It's going to break down.

In the same way, if we don't stop and let God fill us up, we'll break down too. We get mad. We throw fits. We worry too much.

That's why God wants us to recharge, refuel and relax.

Right in the middle of the Bible there's a poem called Psalm 23. It's kind of like the lazy river in the middle of the water park. A peaceful place to chill out and rest.

Psalm 23 was written by a guy named David who knew that he needed God to take care of him. "The Lord is my shepherd," David wrote (Psalm 23:1). A shepherd's job was to take care of his sheep.

A good shepherd protects his sheep and keeps them safe. He leads them to the best grass and clean water. He makes sure they get plenty of rest. He even fights off lions and bears who stop by for a sheep sandwich.

David wrote this poem because he knew that just like those sheep, we need a shepherd to take care of us. Jesus is that Good Shepherd. He gives us everything we need. Including rest.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures," David wrote (Psalm 23:2). God doesn't ask us to rest. He doesn't just say it's a good idea. He makes us rest.

God loves us enough to say, “Stop! You’re doing too much. Take a break and rest.”

Get This Party Started

1. Talk to your family about all the things you guys do in a month. Is there something you need to stop doing? Plan some down time this week. Plan some time just to hang out and relax.

2. Think about how you can help others relax too. Look for people you know who are too busy. Is there something you can do for them so they can catch a break? Maybe rake a neighbor’s leaves or tell your mom to put up her feet while you load the dishwasher. What can you do to help other people rest too?

Prayer

God, thanks for being a Good Shepherd and giving me everything I need. Please help me to rest and help me to help others rest too. Amen.

Seven: 180

Verse to Remember

So turn away from your sins. Turn to God. Then your sins will be wiped away. The time will come when the Lord will make everything new.

Acts 3:19 (NirV)

Bible Story

Jesus Helps a Woman Start Over - John 8:7-11

Have you ever wrecked your bike? How did you do it? Maybe you hit a bump on the sidewalk or crashed into a friend. Maybe you were trying a crazy stunt like ramping over a ditch. Did you see the danger coming or did it catch you by surprise?

Imagine what would have happened if you'd known the crash was coming. What if you had time to turn away? By steering yourself in a different direction, you could have avoided all kinds of trouble.

Sometimes we all need to change directions. We all need to make a turn. Not just when we're on our bikes but in everyday life.

The Bible uses a fancy word called "repent" to talk about turning your life around. It means to walk in a new direction. Away from bad stuff and towards Jesus.

For example, what if your mom asks you who broke her lamp, but you don't want to tell her the truth? You're headed for a lie, and you need to turn around.

Or what if you're at a sleepover and a friend puts on a scary movie you're not allowed to watch? You don't want to say anything and look like a baby. You're headed for disobedience, and you need to turn around.

Or what if a kid leaves a dollar on his desk at school and you want to take it? You're headed for stealing, and you need to turn around.

There was a woman in the Bible who needed to turn around. She'd done some bad stuff too. Everybody was so mad at her that they wanted to throw rocks at her. Some men brought her to Jesus to ask Him what He thought they should do.

Instead of answering them, Jesus did something funny. He got down on the ground and started writing with His finger in the dirt. We don't know what He wrote for sure. It could have been a list of the bad things the men had done. That would have reminded them they were no different than the woman.

After Jesus finished writing, he told the men that any of them who had never sinned could throw the first rock. But nobody could do it because everyone has done bad things. Everyone except for Jesus.

So they dropped their rocks and left.

Jesus forgave the woman. She could change directions now. She could leave the bad stuff she'd done behind. Jesus could help her to live a brand new kind of life.

Jesus can lead us away from bad choices before we make them. But what about when we do mess up? Jesus loves us just the same. He forgives us and helps to start over in a new direction.

Get This Party Started

Is there anything bad you need to turn away from today? Maybe it's something you keep doing over and over again, like

fighting with your brother, talking back to your parents or being greedy with your stuff? Write it down.

Ask Jesus to help you change. Now, rip up that list and throw it away. Remember, that's what Jesus does with our sin. Choose a new direction with Jesus today.

Prayer

God, help me to turn away from the bad stuff in my life. Help me to start over and turn towards You. Amen.

Eight: Just Dance

Verse to Remember

Praise his name with dancing.
Psalm 149:3a (NLT)

Bible Story

Peter Heals a Disabled Man - Acts 3:1-8

Have you ever been invited to a birthday party? It feels good to be included, doesn't it? It's fun to know that someone wants you to come and celebrate with them. It's fun to be a part of the "in" crowd.

But imagine if everyone at your school got invited to a party except for you. How would that feel? Pretty lousy, right? You would feel left out. Sad. Alone.

There are all kinds of people around us who feel like that. They don't just get left out at birthday parties, but in everyday life. Maybe it's because they're new. Or they dress a little different. Or look different. Or are in a wheelchair or have some other kind of special need.

But Jesus doesn't want anyone to feel left out. Jesus loves to include people. Especially people who everyone else overlooks.

If you were going to throw the ultimate birthday party, who would you invite? Your best friend? Your favorite actor? Maybe a singer or a famous athlete?

Jesus' guest list looks a little different than that.

Here's who Jesus said to invite to our parties:

“Do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, or your relatives, or your rich neighbors. If you do, they may invite you to eat with them. So you will be paid back. But when you give a big dinner, invite those who are poor. Also invite those who can’t walk, the disabled and the blind” (Luke 14:12-13 NIV).

Jesus said when you do this, God will reward you for loving His people! Jesus wants us to include the people who others would never invite.

One day Jesus’ friends Peter and John did this. They saw a man who couldn’t walk. His legs didn’t work. They could have walked right past him. But they didn’t. They stopped. They talked to him. They even used Jesus’ power to heal him.

And guess what he did? He went away walking, leaping and praising God! He danced off down the street.

That’s what happens when we include people who everyone else leaves out. Even if Jesus doesn’t heal their legs or their shyness or whatever else they struggle with, He can heal their hearts and fill them with joy.

Get This Party Started

Who can you include today who normally gets left out? Are there kids at school who never have anyone to play with at recess? Do you know someone who has a special need? Maybe they’re in a wheelchair or have trouble learning. How could you include them this week? Remember, even the smallest act of kindness can show someone they are special to God and make them want to dance.

Prayer

God, thanks for including me in Your family. Thanks that I have a place to belong with You. Please show me the people who get left out so I can invite them to be my friend. Amen.

Nine: Cha-Ching!

Verse to Remember

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.
Galatians 5:6

Bible Story

Jesus and the Expensive Perfume - Matthew 26:6-13

Do you like to get gifts? Who doesn't? Big gifts. Little gifts. Medium gifts. It doesn't matter what size. It's always fun to receive a gift.

Of course, some gifts are better than others. Some gifts are bigger than others. And some gifts are more expensive than others.

What's the most expensive gift you can imagine? What gift would cost your parents a whole lot of money to buy? A video game? A fancy doll? A pony? A motorcycle?

Imagine if someone bought you a really expensive gift like that for Christmas. Imagine if that gift cost as much money as your parents made in a whole year! Now, imagine if you turned around and gave that gift away.

Sounds crazy, right? Who would do that? A Jesus follower would.

One day Jesus was having dinner with some friends. There was a woman there who wanted to show Jesus how special He was to her. Guess what she did?

She got out the most expensive thing she owned. It wasn't a video game or a pony or a motorcycle. It was a bottle of per-

fume. We're not just talking about any perfume here. This stuff was called nard, and it was super-pricey. It cost as much as someone would make in a whole year of work!

The woman took the nard, broke the jar open and poured her expensive treasure all over Jesus' feet. Whoa! What a generous gift! She did an awesome thing for Jesus, but Jesus' friends didn't think it was so awesome. Everyone freaked out.

"We can't believe it!" they said. "Why did you waste that?"

But Jesus told them to leave her alone. He said, "Why are you bothering this woman? She's done a beautiful thing to me" (Matt. 26:10 NIV). He told them that she would be famous some day because of her generosity.

This woman understood that giving is better than getting. She gave her best away for Jesus, and we can too.

It doesn't matter if you're a kid or a grown-up. We can all give from what we have to show God's love to others. Jesus isn't here in His body right now, but He said whatever we do for people in need, we're really doing for Him.

Get This Party Started

What can you give away this week to help someone else? Who do you know who is in need? Can you do some chores to earn money to share? Can you take birthday or Christmas money and give some of that to buy a coat or shoes for someone who can't afford them? Could you bake cookies and give those away? Maybe make a card? Or give your time by hanging out with someone who is lonely?

Whether you have a little or a lot, you can give it to Jesus by giving to those in need.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for giving me so much. Help me to have fun loving others by giving my stuff away. Amen.

Ten: Go Time

Verse to Remember

So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19 (NIRV)

Bible Story

The Great Commission - Matthew 28:16-20

Have you ever played the game Red Light, Green Light? It's pretty simple. Everybody lines up one side of the room except for one person. They get to be the stoplight. Being the stoplight is pretty awesome because you get to tell everyone else what to do.

If the stoplight yells "green light," guess what everyone does? They go! Walk, run, jump, swim. Doesn't matter how they go, just as long as they go.

If the stoplight yells "red light," guess what everyone has to do? Stop! Then everyone puts on the brakes and stops as fast as possible.

I bet you didn't know it, but Jesus started the ultimate game of Red Light, Green Light about 2,000 years ago.

Soon after Jesus died on the cross and came back to life, He was hanging out with some of His followers and He said, "Green light!"

Okay, so He didn't use those words. He actually said:

“So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end” (Matthew 28:19-20 NIRV).

Did you catch that word near the beginning? So you must GO! That’s a green light! It doesn’t matter how you go, just go!

Think of all the ways we go places in this world. Bicycle. Uni-cycle. Roller skates. Scooter. Car. Airplane. Helicopter. Pogo stick. Skateboard. Segway. Escalator. Elevator. Blimp. Rocket. Submarine. Jet ski. Snow skis. Water skis. School bus. Walk. Run. Skip. Jump. Crawl. Roll. And probably a whole lot more.

But Jesus doesn’t care how you go. He just wants you to go. Go where? To wherever there are people who need Jesus.

Go into the whole world and make disciples. That means showing people Jesus so they can become forever friends with Him just like you are. It means loving people and helping people so that they will want to know about the hope you have.

The Bible tells us that some day, maybe even today, Jesus is coming back. And when He does, He’s going to yell, “Red Light!”

Then it will be time to stop. Then we will gather for the biggest Jesus party of all time. Heaven will come to earth, and we will celebrate forever with Jesus.

But until that day, we get to invite as many people to the party as possible. So, what are you waiting for? Jesus has given you a green light.

Now, go!

Get This Party Started

Take your list from the “Get This Party Started” section from

Chapter 5. Have you been praying for those people? Have you been serving them?

If not, maybe it's time to go. Go serve them. Go love them. Go tell them about Jesus.

But don't just go. Show. Show them what Jesus is like so they will want to come to His party and enjoy the life we have.

Prayer

God, thank You for the people who told me about You and Your love. Please help me to go and invite everyone I know to Your party. Amen.

Eleven: Heavy Duty

Verse to Remember

Share each other's troubles and problems.
Galatians 2:5 (TLB)

Bible Story

Jesus Heals a Sick Woman - Mark 5:25-34

Have you ever had trouble carrying all of your stuff to school? A lunchbox? A backpack? A musical instrument, maybe? What if you had a special project one day, like a big piece of poster-board? Or what if you had to bring snacks for a class party?

It might be tough to carry all that by yourself. You might need an extra hand.

Most days kids can carry their stuff all by themselves, but sometimes our load is just too big to carry alone. Sometimes we all need some help.

Life is like that too. Some days you don't just have a heavy backpack. You have a heavy heart. Maybe someone you love is sick or has died. Or maybe your parents are fighting. Or maybe you're worried about something at school.

Whatever it is, sometimes the hard stuff in life makes our hearts feel heavy, and we need someone to help us to carry that heavy load. We need a friend to encourage us and remind of us God's power and love.

There was a woman in the Bible who had been carrying a heavy load for 12 years. The Bible says she had a disease that made

her bleed a lot. She'd gone to all kinds of doctors, but no one was able to help her.

Until she met Jesus.

One day she saw Jesus squeezing through a crowd of people. He was on His way to help someone else. But this woman knew if she could just reach out and touch Him, He could help her with her problem.

The Bible says, "She came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His clothes. She thought, 'I just need to touch His clothes. Then I will be healed.' Right away her bleeding stopped. She felt in her body that her suffering was over" (Mark 5:27-29 NIV)

Jesus felt His power go out of Him to help the woman. That's how it is when we spend time with people who are suffering. We may not heal their bodies like Jesus did, but we can give them strength to help them through their day.

We can encourage them. We can love them. We can remind them that God has a great plan for their lives.

The Bible says that at the end of time, "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17). Someday Jesus will return to earth and take all the bad stuff away.

There will be no more sickness or sadness. No one will be scared. No one will worry. No one will die. No one will get divorced. No one will have to say goodbye to their friends and move away to a new town. No pets will run away from home.

There will be no more bad stuff at all. It will be one big Jesus party forever!

But until that day, we get to stand in for Jesus. We get to bring a little bit of heaven to earth wherever we go.

Is someone sad? Let's go cheer them up. Is someone worried? Let's go hang out with them and tell them it's going to be all right. Is someone sick? Let's pray for them and give them a card. Is someone scared? Let's remind them of God's power.

Jesus' friend Paul said, "Share each other's troubles and problems" (Galatians 6:2 TLB). In other words, we can help people carry the stuff they can never carry on their own. Whether it's a heavy backpack or a heavy heart, we can help them carry it today.

Get This Party Started

Who do you know who has a heavy heart right now? Do you know anyone who is sick or sad? Are there any new kids in your class? Or maybe someone who's scared or worried? What can you do this week to encourage them? How can you bring a little bit of heaven to their life today?

Prayer

God, thank You for helping me when life is hard. Please help me to help other people when they have problems too. Amen.

Twelve: Squeaky Clean

Verse to Remember

Remember Jesus Christ. He came from David's family line. He was raised from the dead. That is my good news.

2 Timothy 2:8 (NirV)

Bible Story

Jesus Dies On the Cross - Mark 15:21-31

Do you think you have a good memory? We're going to find out! We're going to play a game today called the Mighty Monstrous Memory Challenge! Here's how it works. We'll play two rounds.

Round 1

Answer these three questions:

What did you have for breakfast this morning?

What is one thing you got for Christmas last year?

What color shirt are you wearing (no peeking)?

Was that hard? How'd you do? Give yourself 100 points for each one you got right. Okay, on to the next round.

Round 2

I'm going to give you a list of seven objects. You can read them ONCE! Only once! Then, close this book and see how many you can remember. Ready? Here we go.

panda
toothbrush
hot dog
porcupine

skateboard
Statue of Liberty
scissors

Close the book and see how many can you name.

So, how many did you get? Was it easy or hard? Give yourself 100 points for each one you got right. Do you still think you have a good memory?

Sometimes it's tough to remember things. We might forget our homework or a friend's birthday. We might forget to brush our teeth or where we put our shoes.

Though all of those things are important to remember, there's one thing that is so important, we should never forget it.

Jesus.

We should never forget who Jesus is and what He did for us.

The reason we can have so much fun loving people like God does is that God loved us first. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because He first loved us." He showed His love for us by sending Jesus to rescue us from sin.

Sin is the only thing that can stand in the way of our friendship with God. Sin is when we do things our way instead of God's way.

Greed. Selfishness. Disobedience. Lying. Mean words. All of this is sin. The Bible says everyone has sinned. Sin stains our hearts like mud stains a shirt.

Have you ever ruined a shirt with mud or maybe chocolate or grape juice? No matter how hard you try, you just can't get it clean. Same thing is true for our hearts. Sin makes our hearts so dirty we can't get them clean no matter how hard we try.

But Jesus can. He died on the cross to scrub the sin away.

God forgives our sin. God forgets our sin. Don't forget that God forgets.

If we're friends with Jesus, we don't have to hide or feel embarrassed or ashamed ever again. Our hearts are clean because of Jesus.

We're forgiven. We're free. Free to go share the love Jesus gave us with the world.

Do you remember that list of seven objects from our game? Doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is that you remember Jesus!

Get This Party Started

Take some time today to draw a picture of Jesus. Be creative and make it as awesome as you can. Hang it someplace you will see it every day so that you never forget who Jesus is and what He has done for you.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for scrubbing my heart clean from sin. Please help me to never forget how much You love me! Amen.

Thirteen: Big Gift

Verse to Remember

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God
John 1:12

Bible Story

The Story of the Lost Son - Luke 15:11-32

Since this is a book about parties, I need to ask you a birthday question. When does a gift become yours? Hold on! Before you answer that, let me tell you a story.

Okay, let's pretend like it's your birthday. Your house is decorated for a huge party with all of your friends. Suddenly, you hear the doorbell ring. It's your first guest of the day.

You open the door and your best friend is there with a big, shiny present that has a bow on top. Your friend offers you the present and says, "Happy Birthday!" You just stand there and do nothing.

So, back to my question. When does the gift become yours? Is it yours yet? Nope! Not yet.

Let's say you invite your friend into your house. He follows you into the kitchen where your cake is sitting. He walks up to you and tries to hand you the present again and says, "Happy Birthday." Again, you stand there and do nothing.

Is the gift yours yet? No way.

Then, let's say you blow out your birthday candles and everybody stuffs their faces with cake. After you get done eating, your friend comes over to you with the present one more time. He holds it out again and says, "Happy Birthday!"

Is it yours yet? No. Not happening.

When does the gift become yours? What do you have to do?

You have to reach out and take it.

Your friend can offer you the gift all day long, but the gift doesn't become yours until you reach out to him and receive it for yourself.

The same thing is true for God's gift.

God wants to give you the big gift called eternal life. This means you get adopted into God's family. God becomes your Dad in heaven, the perfect Dad. You become a kid of the King. You get to join the family business and go on an adventure with God to save the world!

Eternal life means your sin is wiped away. It means some day you get to live with a perfect God in that perfect place called heaven, but you also get to be best friends with God right here and now.

Not because you're perfect, but because God loves you.

But here's the deal. No one can reach out and take that big gift of eternal life for you. Not your mom. Not your dad. Not me. To receive God's gift, you have to choose to take it for yourself.

Jesus once told a great story about this kid who ran away from home and wasted all of his dad's money. You know what that dad did when the kid came home begging for help? He didn't punish him. He didn't yell at him. He didn't even say, "I told you

so.”

He threw a party! A party! The dad rented out Chuck-E-Cheese because he was so happy his son had finally come home. God feels the same way about us.

The Bible says that God throws a party every time someone reaches out and takes His big gift.

And here’s the best part. Once you get the big gift, it’s your job to give it away to everyone you meet!

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Jesus’ friend Paul wrote, “God loves a cheerful giver.” When our hearts are full of God’s love, we can’t help but to give it away!

Get This Party Started

How about you? Have you received God’s big gift yet? Have you reached out to take it for yourself? If not, ask a grown-up about baptism.

At our church we have a cool thing called the KidSplash Home Experience. It’s a video and workbook to help you understand how to receive God’s big gift.

Just have a grown up email us at childrens@southlandchristian.org to get a KidSplash Home Experience for yourself.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for the big gift of eternal life! Please help me to give it away to everyone I meet. Amen.

Fourteen: Copycats

Verse to Remember

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Bible Story

Saul Becomes a Believer - Acts 9:1-18

Have you ever seen someone who's really good at impressions? They can change their voice to sound like just about anyone. Maybe it's a kid in your class who can sound just like your teacher or even like a famous celebrity or the President.

How about you? Let's see how good you are at doing impressions. I'm going to give you something to imitate and then let's see how well you can do it. Ready? Here it goes.

Chicken. C'mon, let's hear your best imitation of a chicken. Go for it! Get clucking. Did you do it? Nice!

Surfer Dude. Can you say, "surf's up" or "whoa!" just like a surfer dude? Let's hear ya. Great!

Cowboy. Give me your best, "Giddyup" or "Yee-haw" or "Get along, little doggy!" Well, I declare, that was some mighty fine cowboy imitating.

Wow, those impressions were incredible. But today we're not talking about imitating a chicken, a surfer dude or a cowboy. We're talking about imitating Jesus.

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children,” Paul said, “and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us” (Eph. 5:1-2).

Paul knew what he was talking about here. He used to be known as Saul. His job was to hunt down people who followed Jesus, beat them up, throw them in prison or kill them. He was one bad guy.

But then one day, he met Jesus in a flash of light, and Jesus turned Saul’s life around. He became a follower of Jesus, and everywhere he went, he tried to copy Jesus so other people could copy Him too.

Now it’s your turn. Your job as a follower of Jesus is to copy His life with the power He gives you. So, what does that look like?

Well, imagine if Jesus were your age. What if He went to your school and was in your class? What if He lived in your house and was related to your family? What if He were you?

What would He spend His time doing? What wouldn’t He do?

How would He treat your brother or sister? How would He treat your parents, your friends and your enemies? How would He treat people in need or people who said mean things to Him?

If Jesus were living your life in your house, in your school, in your body, with your talents and abilities, what would His life look like?

Now, go do that.

I don’t mean all at once. But just pray about it and ask God to show you one thing today Jesus would do if He were living your life. Then ask for God’s help to do it. When you do that, you’re imitating Jesus and becoming more like Him.

Spend time with Jesus. Get to know Him. The more you get to know Jesus, the easier it will be to copy Him. Practice every day and watch God begin to change your life and change the world through you.

Listen to what Jesus' friend John wrote in 1 John 2:6, "Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did."

In other words, friends of Jesus do what Jesus did.

It's a lot of fun to copy chickens, surfer dudes and cowboys, but if you want to live an amazing life, copy Jesus. Imitate Him.

Get This Party Started

Ask God to show you one thing today that Jesus would do if He were living your life. It could be a little thing or a big thing. Just make sure it's a Jesus thing and ask for God to help you actually do it.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for giving me the perfect example to copy. Help me to become exactly like You so the world can see how awesome You are. Amen.

PARTY ON

What's the longest party you've ever been to?

Was it a birthday party that lasted a couple of hours? A slumber party that lasted all night? How about a dance marathon that lasted for days?

Believe it or not there was a couple in Mexico who once danced together for 35 hours straight! Now that's a long party!

But even the longest party eventually has to come to an end.

No more cake. No more presents. No more pinata.

The party's over. The fun is done.

Unless it's a Jesus party.

The people of God sharing the love of God? That party never ends. In fact, it's just getting started.

Wherever Jesus leads you, you take the party with you - loving, giving, encouraging and changing the world.

So go share the joy God has given you and party on!



SOUTHLAND