

ALTERNATIVE

Under the Apple Tree Activities

BEAR HUG 1

Option 1: Review Romans 3:23 using the following motions.

All (point at imaginary people in the room)

Have sinned (make a sad face)

Romans 3:23 (hold hands together, palms up, as if you were holding a book).

For added fun, try reciting the verse while whispering, speaking in a high voice, and then speaking in a low voice. As you review the verse, remind your child that *all* means “everybody” and *sin* is “anything we think, say or do that disobeys God.”

Option 2: Use a plastic placemat or cover a section of a table with plastic wrap. Use your fingers to “draw” letter A’s together on the prepared table or placemat with pudding, whipped cream, shaving cream or a similar substance. (Have moistened paper towels handy for wiping your hands.) Review often that A stands for *All* and recite Romans 3:23 together.

Option 3: Sing “O Be Careful Little Eyes.” (The lyrics and tune to this song are easily found online.) Remind your child that we sin with our eyes when we look at something wrong. We sin with our mouths when we say mean and ugly things. We sin with our hands when we use our hands to do unkind things to others, like hitting or taking a toy from them. We sin with our feet when we go places where we shouldn’t go. (If you can name very specific ways your child is often tempted to sin in one of these areas, your teaching will be even more effective! For example, say, “You sin with your feet when you cross the street after Mom said to wait.”) Pray together and ask God to help you choose to be careful and obey.

BEAR HUG 2

Option 1: Sing “Jesus Loves Me” several times together. (Search the Internet for extra verses to learn.) Remind your child that Jesus loves us and died for our sins. Pray and thank God for sending His Son, Jesus, to earth.

Option 2: Help your child make a cross and the letter C out of Play-Doh®. Remind your child that the letter C stands for Christ. Say Romans 5:8, this week’s verse, together two times, using a finger to trace the letter C the first time and the cross the second time.

Option 3: Help your child locate and cut out several letter C’s from old magazines, mail advertisements or newspapers. Write out this week’s verse, Romans 5:8, on a sheet of paper and then glue the letters around it. Hang the artwork on the refrigerator with a magnet or punch a hole in the top and tie a piece of string through the hole to hang it around a door knob. Review the prepared poster each day.

Option 4: Show your child how to form a C with your arms. Then add these motions to this week’s memory verse, Romans 5:8.

While we were still (yet) sinners, (make a sad face)

Christ (form a C with arms)

Died for us (hold arms open in shape of cross).

BEAR HUG 3

Option 1: Play Flashlight Hide-and-Seek. Give each person in your family a flashlight and then turn off all the main lights in the house. Choose a person to be “it” and have everyone else hide with their flashlights on. After counting to 10, the chosen person must search out the others. After the game, read Genesis 1:3 and thank God for creating light.

Option 2: Play Lights On! Choose one day this week to search for different types of lights (Christmas lights, flashlights, candles, traffic lights, turn signals) every place you go. Keep track of how many different types of lights each person finds. If desired, give points for the most lights and the most unusual types of lights.

Option 3: On a cloudy day, let your child go outside or look out a window. Ask her to name three pictures or shapes she sees in the clouds. For example, maybe one cloud looks like a man wearing a hat and another one looks like a kitty. Explain that clouds form interesting shapes and they also make rain to water plants and trees. Pray and thank God for making the sky on Day Two. (If viewing clouds is not possible, look at pictures of the sky and clouds in books, magazines or on the Internet.)

BEAR HUG 4

Option 1: Take your child star-gazing one night or adhere glow-in-the-dark stars to your child’s bedroom ceiling. Ask questions like these to start a conversation: Who made the stars? What do you like best about the stars? What do stars do for us? Do you think anyone could ever count the stars in the sky? Why not? Read Psalm 147:4, which says that God knows the number of stars and the name of each star. Pray together and thank God for creating the beautiful stars.

Option 2: Take your child to the grocery store to pick out fruits and vegetables. Choose a new type of fruit or vegetable to try this week. As you look at all the different types of fruits and vegetables, remind your child that our creator God made all the plants and trees that produce food for us to eat.

Option 3: Help your child plant a seed in a small container. (Marigold, pumpkin or sunflower seeds are good choices. These plants are hardy and grow fairly quickly.) Show your child how to water and care for it according to the seed packet instructions. Or have your child water the houseplants this week. As your child works, discuss all of the ways that plants and trees help us (they give us food, produce oxygen so we can breathe, look pretty, etc.). After the job is complete, thank God for making all the plants and trees. Say, “God is so powerful that He made all the plants and trees just by speaking words.” Repeat Psalm 33:9 together.

Option 4: Have your child pick flowers from a local florist shop or grocery store. Take the flowers to a special family friend and encourage your child to share with the individual that God made the flowers, plants and trees.

BEAR HUG 5

Option 1: Visit a local zoo, petting zoo, pet store or animal shelter with your child. Look at the different animals. Think together of ways the animals are similar and different. Afterwards, praise God for making such a variety of animals for us to enjoy.

Option 2: Encourage your child to pretend to be different sea creatures during bath time or while at a pool. Afterwards, review together that God created the sea and the sea creatures.

Option 3: Enjoy a snack of animal crackers or cookies. As your child eats, go through the alphabet and try to think of an animal that begins with each letter. (You'll probably be the one naming most of the animals, but you can help your child by emphasizing the sound each letter makes. Your child can think of animals that begin with the same sound.) Praise God for creating animals.

Option 4: Collect several of the following items: a white bath towel; an empty paper towel roll; a brown, black, gray or white sweater or shirt. Place the items in the middle of the floor. Using these items as props, encourage your child to dress up as an animal. For example, a gray sweater could be worn for an elephant or a koala bear; the paper towel roll could be an elephant's trunk or a horse's tail.

BEAR HUG 6

Option 1: Go on a creation walk at a local park, beach or garden. Starting with Day One, review what God created on each of the six days, and then try to find an item outside that fits each day. If the weather is unsuitable for a walk, watch a nature documentary to review the days of creation.

Option 2: Make a creation sensory bin by placing items that God made in a large, open box or plastic tub or storage bin. (Items may include plastic toy fruit, toy animals and people, toy trees, a container of dirt, a sealed jar of water, rocks, etc.) Review together Bear Hugs 3–5 as your child touches and plays with the items.

Option 3: Make a creation memory game using images of the days of creation from magazines or mail advertisements, personal photos, stickers or creation coloring pages. (These pages are easily found online and several websites give permission to print out images.) (See Bear Hugs 3–6 to review what God made on each day.) Then write the numbers one through six on separate sheets of paper (each sheet should have one number on it). Place the six numbered sheets and the six image sheets (12 sheets total) face down in random order. Have your child flip over two sheets at a time. The goal is to flip over a matching pair — when the number matches the image of an item that was made on that day of creation. When your child makes a match, he or she can remove the two sheets. To make this game easier, keep the sheets facing up or write the correct day number above each image.

Option 4: On each day of the week, have your child draw or find a picture that represents what God made on that day of the creation week. (The day you start is considered the first day.) Thank God for each item He made. On the seventh day, set aside time to rest and enjoy God's creation. Recite Genesis 1:31 (Bear Hug 5) and Genesis 1:1 (Bear Hug 6) together. (Since children at this age are just learning to draw, don't worry if images are not recognizable. You could also let your child try to trace or copy a drawing you create.)

BEAR HUG 7

Option 1: Make a garden of Eden by placing stuffed animals or toy animals on a green or brown blanket or sheet. (You may also add houseplants or artificial flowers.) Pretend with your child that he or she is Adam or Eve in the garden of Eden. Explain that the garden was a beautiful and good place. Adam and Eve were happy and safe, and they could talk to God anytime!

Option 2: Sing “The B-I-B-L-E” together each day this week. (Song lyrics and tune are easily found online.) Remind your child that *everything* the Bible says is true. (If your child has trouble understanding what *true* means, say one false statement (e.g., “Our family lives on the moon.”) and one true statement (e.g., “You go to Cubbies® club.”) and ask your child to identify the true statement. Thank God for giving us His true Word, and ask for His help to always listen and obey the Word of God.

Option 3: Look up images of gardens, or spend an afternoon at a local garden. Remind your child that God placed Adam and Eve in the most beautiful garden of all, the garden of Eden. Review the events of Genesis 2:4-25 together, highlighting that everything God told Adam and Eve was true.

Option 4: Choose one meal or snack time this week to be a Garden Meal. Clean and cut up a variety of fruits and veggies. Set them out, along with animal and fish crackers. As your child enjoys his meal, discuss what it would be like for Adam and Eve to live in the garden of Eden.

BEAR HUG 8

Option 1: Pray for your child this week, asking God to help him or her understand the concept of sin. When your child sins, gently point out the error, and review together that *sin* is “anything we think, say or do that disobeys God.” Explain that God tells us how to obey Him in the Bible, and share why your child’s particular sin is disobedience to God. For example, if your child has disobeyed you, say, “In the Bible, God tells children to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1), so when you disobey me, that is a sin.” If your child has been unkind, say, “In the Bible God tells us to be kind (Ephesians 4:32), so being unkind is a sin.” Review Romans 3:23 (Bear Hug 1) and Romans 5:8 (Bear Hug 2) as a simple explanation of the gospel. Thank God for sending His Son, Jesus Christ, so we could be forgiven and saved from our sin.

Option 2: Play Hide-and-Seek together. After several rounds, remind your child that Adam and Eve hid in the garden because they had disobeyed God’s command. Ask, “Can we ever hide from God?” (No. God knows all things, and God is everywhere. There is nowhere we could EVER hide from God.) Take a few minutes to review this week’s Bible lesson and verse.

Option 3: Help your child draw or cut out a tree from brown or green construction paper and then tear or cut out small red and yellow circles and glue them to the tree to represent fruit. Review what happened when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit: they felt bad about what they did, they were afraid, and they hid from God.

BEAR HUG 9

Option 1: Look together at current and past pictures of your child’s grandparents. (Try to show past pictures of the grandparents looking much younger — even pictures from their childhood or infancy.) Review Bear Hug 9, and discuss that all people grow old because of Adam and Eve’s sin.

Option 2: Review the sad news of Adam and Eve’s choice to sin and the consequences. Then make a letter C out of pasta or dried beans. (Make sure your child does not put any pasta or beans in her mouth, since small, hard pieces can be a choking hazard.) Review Romans 5:8 and C is for Christ from Bear Hug 2, and tell your child that even though we are sinners, God still loves us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us so that we can be saved from sin. Those who believe in Christ will be alive forever — they have eternal (everlasting) life. Recite John 3:36 together and explain that *eternal (everlasting) life* is “life with the Lord Jesus, both now and forever.”

Option 3: Let your child make a tissue or bandage holder by decorating a plastic, sealable sandwich bag with stickers. Place clean tissues or several bandages and antibiotic ointment in the bag. Place the bag in your purse or your child’s “going out” bag. Ask your child why we need tissues (to blow our noses when we’re sick or wipe away tears when we’re sad). Ask your child why we need bandages (to help us heal when we get a sore). Review Genesis 3:8-24 and Bear Hug 9 and explain that sickness and sadness came to the world after Adam and Eve sinned. Sin brought many bad things to the world.

BEAR HUG 10

Option 1: Memorize John 17:17 as a family and review the verse each morning at breakfast. Then, encourage your child to follow God’s truth throughout the day by being kind to others (Ephesians 4:32) and being obedient (Ephesians 6:1). At the end of the day, discuss together how your child chose to follow God’s truth that day.

Option 2: Make a banner out of construction paper, butcher paper or poster board. Write John 17:17 on the banner and decorate it with drawings, paints or stickers. Hang the banner in your child’s room as a reminder that God’s Word is truth.

Option 3: Play the Question Game. Let your child ask you any questions she wants to about the Adam and Eve lessons or the Bible in general. (You may need to get her started by asking a few questions of your own.) If you don’t know an answer, search the answer out together. Many times, kids will ask questions that have no answer. Explain that we can’t ever know everything about God or the Bible. God is much bigger and wiser than we are.

BEAR HUG 11

Option 1: Review these promises from God together this week.

I am with you always (Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 28:20).

I made you My child when you believed in Jesus (John 1:12).

I love you (Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 3:1).

I will come again (John 14:2, 3).

Share with each other why you are glad for each promise and thank God for these promises.

Option 2: Discuss with your child ways God is faithful to you and your family (e.g., providing food, shelter, a church community, opportunities to learn about Him). As an idea is mentioned, write it on a slip of paper and place it in a jar. This week, whenever a family member is sad or is having a hard time trusting and obeying God, ask your Cubbie child to choose a slip from the jar. Read it aloud and thank God for His faithfulness.

Option 3: Watch an animal nature documentary, visit a zoo or search images from a local zoo's website. Discuss how God was faithful and made a way to keep Noah and all the animals safe on the ark.

BEAR HUG 12

Option 1: Encourage your child to care for the family pet this week, or arrange for your child to help care for a friend's pet one day this week. Review how God used Noah to care for the animals in the ark. Remind your child of God's great faithfulness to all who were in the ark.

Option 2: Make an ark for dinner as a way to review Bear Hug 12. Bake a pizza according to directions, and then cut the pizza in half and place one half on a cutting board or serving tray. (This will be the boat part of the ark.) Cut two cooked hot dogs in half and place the four halves at the top of the pizza half to form a square. (This is the top part of the ark.) Then place slices of cut red and yellow pepper over the top of the pizza ark to represent a rainbow. As you serve the dinner, discuss how God used the ark to keep Noah and his family safe. Explain that in the next Bear Hug, you will learn that God sent the rainbow as His special promise. (To prevent choking hazards, be sure to cut the hot dogs into 1/4- or 1/2-inch pieces for children aged four and under.)

Option 3: Make an ark from a large cardboard box, or drape a large sheet or blanket over a table. Encourage your child to pretend to "build" the ark and gather his favorite toy animals to take into the ark. Pretend to shut the door of the ark and review that God shut the door of Noah's ark. Make sounds of wind and rain, and then talk about how God kept Noah, his family and the animals in the ark safe until the ground was dry again.

BEAR HUG 13

Option 1: Sing a praise song or hymn together as a family. Worship God like Noah did, remembering that God keeps His promises. For example, you could sing the chorus of the hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

Option 2: As you travel on an errand this week, remind your child how God kept His promise to Noah. God kept the people and animals on the ark safe, even though all the people and animals that weren’t in the ark died. Then look with your child for each of the colors in the rainbow. For example, maybe you will see an orange bus or a man wearing a red shirt. Discuss the rainbow God sent and the wonderful promise God made to never destroy the whole earth with a flood again.

Option 3: Read Genesis 9:13 and discuss God’s promise to never again destroy the whole earth with a flood of water. Then think together of other promises of God in the Bible, such as God’s promise to never leave us (Hebrews 13:5), God’s promise to forgive our sins (1 John 1:9) and God’s promise to supply our needs (Philippians 4:19). Cut or tear strips of yellow, red and blue construction paper (or paper in other rainbow colors). Write on each strip a promise from God or a favorite verse that describes a truth about God. Help your child staple or tape the strips together in a rainbow band and hang the band above a window in your home. As you look at this rainbow reminder, review together with your family God’s faithfulness.

BEAR HUG 14

Option 1: Start a promise journal as a family. Store the journal within easy reach, and each time you find a verse in the Bible that contains a promise of God, record that verse in your family journal. Whenever your child is frustrated or fearful, review the journal together and thank God for always keeping His promises.

Option 2: Choose one day this week to be Promise Day. At breakfast, have everyone in your family make a promise (e.g., I will not fight with my sister; I will finish my homework without complaining; I will go to bed when I am told). At the end of the day, discuss how everyone did at keeping their promises. Remind family members that it is never hard for God to keep His promises to us. He is faithful!

Option 3: Help your child make a fruit rainbow dessert with raspberries, cut strawberries, blueberries, orange wedges, pineapple chunks and sliced bananas. Arrange the fruit in the shape of a rainbow. As you enjoy this treat, encourage your family to think about a precious promise of God.

BEAR HUG 15

Option 1: Take your child on a nighttime walk to gaze at the stars (or search the Internet for images of starry skies). Try to count all the stars you see, and then explain that it is impossible to count, or even see, every star in the sky. Remind your child that our mighty God made the stars and made a promise to Abraham that the people in his family would be as many as the stars. Only our mighty God could do that!

Option 2: For an extra challenge, your child can memorize Psalm 147:4, which is the verse right before the memory verse for this week (Psalm 147:5). This verse tells us that God decides the number of stars and calls them each by name. Express some “wow” about God with your child: only God knows how many stars there are and the name of each star! He knows our names too! Take a few moments to pray and praise God together. Your child can practice reciting both verses together.

Option 3: Look at your child’s baby book together. Share several of your favorite memories. Remind your child that God gave Abraham and Sarah a baby when they did not think they could have one. God can do anything — nothing is too hard for Him! Thank God for His mighty works.

Option 4: Make a promise to your child to do something special with her (e.g., read a favorite book together, get a special treat from the store). Wait several days, and then fulfill the promise. When you do, ask, “Was it hard to wait for me to keep my promise?” Remind your child that God keeps His promises at the perfect time. Abraham and Sarah waited a long time before the baby God promised to them was born, but God is faithful and mighty and will ALWAYS keep His promises.

BEAR HUG 16

Option 1: Complete the following action rhyme with your child to review Bear Hug 16.

God is mighty (flex right arm).

God is strong (flex left arm).

God is with me (point to self)

All day long (make a circle in the air).

God is mighty (flex right arm).

God is strong (flex left arm).

God keeps me safe (fold arms across chest)

All night long (lay head on hands).

Option 2: Set out building blocks or Legos and encourage your child to pretend to work like the Israelites. Explain that Pharaoh made the Israelites his slaves. A slave is someone who is forced to work very hard for someone else without getting paid. As your child plays, review the events from Bear Hug 16 (Exodus 1-10). Remind your child that our mighty God showed His great power to the Egyptians and the Israelites.

Option 3: When your child becomes frustrated or cries for help this week, take a moment to talk with your child about how God’s people, the Israelites, felt when they were in Egypt. They cried out to God, and God helped them. Remind your child that God is mighty, and that we can ask Him to help us with our biggest and littlest needs. He may not help us when or how WE think He should help us, but He will help us in the way that’s best for us.

Option 4: Choose one of the first nine plagues to review each day. (The Bible describes each plague in Exodus 7-10.) Together, find an object in your home (or view images from the Internet) that reminds you of that plague (e.g., a glass of water with three drops of red food coloring in it to symbolize the Nile River turned to blood; a picture of flies, gnats or locusts; a toy frog; a picture of hailstones or large cotton balls or ice cubes that remind you of hail). If possible, place one or two of these objects on a special shelf or table. At various points during the week, look at the items on the shelf or table and remind your child of God’s mighty power. Be sensitive as you describe the plagues to your young child. Reassure your child that we don’t have to worry about any of the plagues happening to us. This was something God did a long time ago to show His power to Pharaoh and the Israelites. God is mighty!

BEAR HUG 17

Option 1: Write the number 10 on a piece of paper. Have your child trace the number or glue dried pasta or pieces of colored paper on the number. (Make sure your child does not put the pasta in her mouth, since hard, small food pieces can be a choking hazard.) Remind your child that God sent 10 plagues to show His great might to Pharaoh.

Option 2: Review Bear Hug 17, and then have your Cubbie find a picture of a lamb or choose a stuffed animal lamb to place on his or her dresser as a reminder that God wanted the Israelites to use a lamb to keep them safe from the 10th plague. Explain that we don't need a lamb to keep us safe now. Jesus Christ is our Lamb. He shed His blood for us on the cross. When we trust Him as Savior, we are safe from the punishment for our sin.

Option 3: Have one evening where the family eats dinner like the Israelites did in Exodus 12:11. Everyone should be dressed with their shoes on and a packed bag nearby, ready to leave at a moment's notice. You could serve matzah bread (unleavened cracker-like bread sold in the ethnic section of the supermarket) and talk about how the Israelites didn't have time to finish making their bread dough before they left Egypt (Exodus 12:34, 39). On their journey, they ate flat bread like the matzah. Encourage your Cubbie to tell some of the events of Bear Hugs 16 and 17 to your family. As he or she does so, praise God for showing His might through the plagues of Egypt.

Option 4: Read Psalm 150 aloud. Each time you say the word praise, clap your hands. Discuss the ways that the psalmist praised God. If desired, make musical instruments and use them to accompany your reading or sing praises to our mighty God. Recite the memory verse, Exodus 15:2, which is a praise the Israelites sang to God after God helped them cross the Red Sea.

BEAR HUG 18

Option 1: Make blue or red Jell-O® and place it in clear containers. The blue or red color represents the water of the Red Sea. (Sometimes the Red Sea, which looks more like a lake, appears reddish-brown because of a type of algae found in the water.) As you eat this snack, remind your child that our mighty God parted the Red Sea so the Israelites could walk safely across.

Option 2: Take your Cubbie to a local park or an indoor play area, or play together in a large room. Encourage your child to show you some great things he or she can do (running, jumping, climbing, etc.). If your child has limited physical ability, plan for other activities, such as art or music. Then recite Psalm 147:5 together and discuss how our great things do not compare with the great and wonderful things our God can do.

Option 3: Place two sheets of blue construction paper side by side over a piece of brown construction paper. Help your child gather toy people and pretend they are the Israelites. Act out the story of God parting the Red Sea by gently pulling apart the two blue sheets of paper, revealing the brown "dry ground" below. Encourage your child to "walk" the people across the dry land. As you play, remind your child of God's great power and might.

Option 4: Play the Question Game. Let your child ask you any questions he wants to about the lessons in Unit 4 or God or the Bible in general. (You may need to get him started by asking a few questions of your own.) If you don't know an answer, search the answer out together. Many times kids will ask questions that have no answer. Explain that we can't ever know everything about God or the Bible. God is much bigger and wiser than we are.

BEAR HUG 19

Option 1: Help your child think of rules adults have to obey. Discuss the consequences of people who choose to not obey those rules. Remind your Cubbie that God is in charge of everyone. In His special plan, He has placed some people in charge of us to help keep us safe and happy. Name some of the people God has placed in charge of you and your child. Pray that you and your child would both obey God and the people He puts in charge of you.

Option 2: Take your child to a local indoor or outdoor play area or pool. Look for a list of rules for the pool or play area and read them together. Ask, “Why is it important for us to have these rules?” (So everyone is safe and happy.) Remind your child that God is in charge. Recite the memory verse, Psalm 47:7, together. Explain that God wants us to obey Him and His words in the Bible. Sometimes it is hard to obey God, but it is always best for us when we do.

Option 3: Sing “Obedience.” (This is a Christian song that’s been used in church children’s programs over the years. The lyrics and tune are easily found online. In the song, kids spell the word *obedience*.) Remind your child that being obedient to those in charge of us, and doing it quickly and cheerfully, shows that we are being obedient to God. God is in charge of everyone!

Option 4: Arrange a visit to a local police station or fire department, or search the Internet for information about a fire or police station. As you learn more about local authorities, remind your child that God expects even adults to obey those that He puts in charge.

Option 5: Help your child dress up as a local authority figure (e.g., firefighter, police officer, school principal or teacher). As your child plays, remind her that God is in charge of everyone. We all need to obey God. But explain that we can’t always obey God, even if we try hard. We need God’s help! Encourage your child to pray and ask God to help her be obedient to Him and those He puts in charge of her.

BEAR HUG 20

Option 1: Reinforce the concept that we love God by loving others. Help your child make a card or color a picture to send to a special friend to share God’s love with that person.

Option 2: Worship God by singing a song of love to Him. You can sing the chorus to the hymns “Oh, How I Love Jesus” or “Trust and Obey.” Remind your child that we are happiest when we realize that God is in charge and choose to obey His Word.

Option 3: Choose a family board game to play together. After the board game is set up, announce that the first three minutes of the game will be played with no rules. Set the timer and begin to play; then after three minutes, discuss with your Cubbie how hard and unpleasant it is to play a game without rules. Remind your child that we have rules in our lives to help us be safe and happy. Explain that God is in charge and He wants us to obey Him and His Words in the Bible. Sometimes it is hard to obey God, but it is always best for us when we do.

BEAR HUG 21

Option 1: If your child likes drawing, have her draw a picture of something that makes her afraid. (It's okay if the picture is barely recognizable. Children are just learning to draw at this age.) Review the memory verse, Psalm 56:11, together, and then have the child draw a red X over the picture as a reminder that God is in charge and we do not need to be afraid.

Option 2: Review characters in the Bible who went through scary situations (see the list below for ideas). Talk to your child about how God helped the people in the Bible, and remind your child that God is always in charge, even when things seem scary.

Esther (Esther 1-10)

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel 3)

Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6)

Option 3: Use the following action rhyme to help your child remember that God is in charge and always with us.

God is with me every day (point to the sky)
When I eat (pretend to eat)
And when I play (hop in place).

God is with me when I go (walk in place)
To places that I do not know (hold hands out at sides as if you are saying, "I don't know").

God is with me every night (point to sky)
When I sleep (lay head on hands)
With my eyes closed tight (close eyes tightly).

God is with me (point to sky)
I know it's true (open your palms next to each other as if you are opening a Bible).

God's in charge (hold hands on hips)
Of me and you (point to self, then others).

Option 4: Think of someone who is going through a potentially scary situation. (It could be a friend who has a serious illness, someone from church who has to have surgery, someone who is out of work or someone whose family is moving.) Encourage your

child to pray for that person and situation and then think of something you and your child can do for that person to encourage him or her, like sending a card or flowers, or hand-delivering a special treat.

BEAR HUG 22

Option 1: Find pictures of people who are in charge of your family and work to love and protect your family. Consider people such as:

The president

Governors/mayors

Pastors

Elders/deacons

Sunday school teachers

Display the pictures in a prominent place in your home so you and your child can be reminded to pray for them this week.

Option 2: Help your child make a crown out of gold or yellow construction paper. Your child can decorate the crown with jewel or other stickers, paintings or drawings. Tape the ends of the crown together and stand the crown on your child's dresser or nightstand. Each day, remind him or her that God is the King of all the earth and recite the memory verse, Psalm 47:7.

Option 3: Read Psalm 47 to your child several times this week. Define any difficult words. (For your reference, verses 3 and 4 are talking about the Canaanite nations. God helped the Israelites to defeat them in the land of Canaan — the land He promised to give them as their home, or heritage.) Using the Psalm as an example, help him or her create a simple psalm of praise to the King of all the earth. You can write down the verses you and your child create. Be sure to add motions!

BEAR HUG 23

Option 1: Find a coloring picture of a sheep, or encourage your child to draw a sheep and then glue cotton balls to the sheep. Review this week's verse, John 1:29. Remind your child that Jesus, God's Son, is the Lamb of God. Review the lesson and Bible verse from Bear Hug 17 together, and discuss how the lamb in that lesson had to die. Jesus, the Lamb of God, also had to die. Jesus died for the sins of all people. Jesus chose to die for us because He loved us so much.

Option 2: Sing together "Jesus Loves Me" or "Oh How He Loves You and Me" (the lyrics and tune of this song are easily found online). Thank God for sending Jesus, the Lamb of God, to die for sin.

Option 3: Make a sheep from your child's handprint. To make the handprint, cover your child's hand with brown or black washable paint or press your child's hand on a washable black ink pad. Have your child make his or her handprint on a white sheet of construction paper. Allow to dry completely. Turn the handprint upside down, so the fingers look like the lamb's legs and the thumb looks like the lamb's head. Glue cotton balls onto the palm of your child's handprint, and then use markers to draw a face on the thumb print. Under your child's lamb, write this week's verse, John 1:29. Hang it in your child's room as a reminder that Jesus is the Lamb of God, the Savior who died for us.

Option 4: Make a sheep snack with cauliflower for the sheep's body and black olives for the eyes, nose and mouth. As your child eats the snack, remind him that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

Option 5: Make a lamb treat by covering an iced cupcake with mini marshmallows. Use chocolate chips to represent the eyes, nose and mouth. As you eat your snacks, review this week's Bible lesson and verse. Remind your child that Jesus, the Lamb of God, came to earth to be our Savior.

BEAR HUG 24

Option 1: Place toy fish in a plastic container or bathtub filled with water (have a towel nearby). Give your child a net or colander. Act out the Bible story of Jesus helping His first disciples to catch an amazing amount of fish by having your child gather the fish with the net or colander.

Option 2: Enjoy a special snack to review Bear Hug 24. Place fish crackers in a shallow dish. Give your child a pretzel stick dipped in peanut butter or cheese spread and have your child use the pretzel stick to touch the fish and "catch" them as the cheese or peanut butter sticks to the fish. As you eat, review the Bible lesson and verse from Bear Hug 24 and sing together, "I Will Make You Fishers of Men." (The lyrics and tune for the song are easily found online.)

Option 3: Play a simple game to review Bear Hug 24. Cut fish shapes out of construction paper and place them on a table. Give your child a drinking straw and have him try to "catch" fish by suctioning the paper. To make the game more interesting, you could time your child to see how fast he or she can catch the fish! Remind your child how Jesus called His special helpers to tell others about the Savior, Jesus, who loves them and saves them from sin.

BEAR HUG 25

Option 1: Play the sounds of a stormy sea (howling wind and rough, splashing waves) from a CD or iPod®. As you listen to the storm sounds, remind your child how Jesus, God’s Son, was able to calm the storm (actually a windstorm, not a thunderstorm) on the Sea of Galilee. Review the memory verse, Mark 4:41, together. Explain that Jesus is not only God’s Son — He is God. He created the sea (Colossians 1:13-17). Though the concept of the Trinity (God as three persons: Father, Son and Spirit) is difficult to understand, it’s not too early to start teaching it to your child.

Option 2: Make the sounds of a thunderstorm with your Cubbie. First, snap your fingers, and then gently pat your hands on your legs. Gradually snap and pat faster and faster. Clap hands together occasionally to make the sounds of thunder. Begin to slow snaps and leg pats, as if the storm is passing. After your “thunderstorm” has passed, review how Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee (though it was a windstorm, not a thunderstorm).

Option 3: Make a boat snack to enjoy together. Cut a triangle from a square of American cheese and carefully poke a pretzel stick through the cheese to represent the sail of a ship. Stand the pretzel stick inside an apple slice. As you eat, review this week’s Bear Hug and verse with your child.

Option 4: Act out Bear Hug 25 by placing a large empty storage bin or laundry basket on a blue blanket or towel. Encourage your child to sit in the bin or basket and pretend it is a boat. He or she can act out the fear of the disciples and Jesus’ calming power over the sea. As your child sits in the boat, say this week’s verse, Mark 4:41, together and say, “Jesus is the Savior.”

BEAR HUG 26

Option 1: Search online or in Bible story coloring books for the following images: a nativity scene, Jesus’ baptism, Jesus performing a miracle, the crucifixion, the resurrection. Print or tear out each image. Help your child place the images in the correct order of Jesus’ life.

Option 2: Play Bible Charades to review Bear Hugs 23–26. Silently act out each Bible lesson and encourage your child to guess which of the true events of Jesus’ life you are acting out. Every time your child guesses correctly, say the Core Truth: God sent the Savior. Then encourage your child to act out one of the events of Jesus’ life.

Option 3: Review Bear Hugs 23–26 by singing the following song to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” Add motions as desired.

Jesus came to earth one day
Earth one day
Earth one day
Jesus came to earth one day
Yes, He is the Savior.

Jesus’ friends caught lots of fish,
Lots of fish
Lots of fish
Jesus’ friends caught lots of fish
Yes, He is the Savior.

Jesus calmed the stormy sea
Stormy sea
Stormy sea
Jesus calmed the stormy sea
Yes, He is the Savior.

Jesus died for you and me
You and me
You and me
Jesus died for you and me
Yes, He is the Savior.

Jesus is alive today
Alive today
Alive today
Jesus is alive today
Yes, He is the Savior.

Jesus will come back again
Back again
Back again
Jesus will come back again
Yes, He is the Savior.

SPECIAL DAY 1

Option 1: Make a Thanksgiving mobile to hang in your child's room. Help your child look through magazines or mail advertisements and cut out images of things he or she is thankful for. You could also use stickers or pictures from old coloring books for images. Hang the images on a coat hanger with string. Hang the mobile in your child's room as a reminder of the many good things God has given to him or her.

Option 2: Write on a poster board or large sheet of construction paper, "God is ..." Each day this week, read a verse from Psalms that contains a truth about who God is. Below are some suggestions. After you read each verse, help your child identify and understand what the verse is saying about God. Write your findings on the prepared paper.

Psalms 18:2

Psalms 23:1

Psalms 27:1

Psalms 28:7

Psalms 118:29 (This is the week's memory verse.)

Thank God for being all of these wonderful things in your life.

Option 3: Sing a song of praise and thanksgiving to God. Pick a song that both you and your child know either from church, Christian radio or your family's Christian music collection. Pick a song that focuses on God's character and works. Encourage your child to remember all the wonderful things that God has done.

SPECIAL DAY 2

Option 1: Help your child bake or purchase a birthday cake or a cupcake. Read Luke 2:1–20 and review the birth of Jesus. Add a candle and sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus.

Option 2: Review with your child the Bible account of the wise men who brought gifts to Jesus (Matthew 2:1–11). (Note that the wise men did not visit Jesus at the manger; rather, they visited Him up to two years later, when the family lived in a house in Bethlehem.) Then discuss how important it is to give to others, just as Jesus gave the most important gift to us (the gift of saving us from sin so we could live forever with Him). Take your child to pick out gifts for a family in need. Plan to deliver the gifts together as a family, along with a Bible and information about your church.

Option 3: Play "Who Am I?" with your child by taking turns acting out the different characters in the story of Jesus' birth. Review together Luke 2:11, and then thank God for sending Jesus to be the Savior.

Option 4: Choose a Christmas carol to teach your child. (Consider "Away in a Manger" or "Silent Night.") Make up motions that go along with the song and sing it together each night this week to help your child remember that Jesus was God's great gift to us.

Option 5: Help your child glue craft sticks on a piece of paper in a box shape to look like a manger. You can break sticks in half to form the legs of the manger. Use broken uncooked spaghetti noodles for hay. Read together a children's book about Christ's birth. Pick a book that stays fairly close to the biblical accounts in Matthew 1:18–25 and Luke 1:26–38, 2:1–20.

SPECIAL DAY 3

Option 1: Before you do this activity with your child, read the biblical account of the crucifixion and resurrection in Matthew 26:27-28:6 so you can explain it well to your child. Gather the following items that represent an object in the biblical account:

Small cross

Nail (the nails used on the cross)

Piece of white cloth (represents the material used to wrap Jesus' body for burial)

Small rock (stone rolled in front of the tomb)

Place each item in a plastic egg. Have one extra empty egg to represent the empty tomb. Place the eggs in the order listed above, with the empty egg to be opened last. Have your child open the eggs one at a time and discuss together how that item ties in with the crucifixion or resurrection. As your child opens the empty egg, rejoice together that Jesus is not dead; He has risen!

Option 2: Make a tomb by cutting a heavy paper plate in half. Cut a small opening in one of the halves to be the tomb door. Tape or staple the two plate halves together to form a tomb and stand the tomb upright. Crumple a brown paper bag into a ball to represent the tomb's stone. Set the stone in front of the door and then let your child roll it away. After the stone is rolled away, recite together the memory verse, 1 Corinthians 15:4.

Option 3: Plan a celebration party, complete with balloons, noise makers and other party supplies. Review the story of Christ's death. Then as you tell about the resurrection, encourage family members and friends to joyously celebrate. Shout together, "He is not here; He has risen!"

SPECIAL DAY 4

Option 1: Review with your child that believers are witnesses when they tell others about Jesus Christ and what He has done for them. Gather a tract (booklet with the gospel message printed inside) or a card containing your church's information. Bake or purchase a dessert or bakery item. With your child, deliver the baked good to a friend or neighbor and allow your child to tell the person that Jesus loves him or her. (Sometimes people will more readily listen to a child than an adult.) You can give the person the tract and offer to read it with him or her, or invite the person to attend a church service with your family.

Option 2: Remind your child that he or she can be a witness by inviting a friend to Cubbies. Prepare for the friend's visit by having your child draw a picture or use crayons to decorate a card. Write on the card or picture "Jesus loves you." Place the card or picture, Awana® information and a special treat inside a bag. Arrange for you and your child to deliver the bag a day or two before the scheduled visit to Awana.

Option 3: Show your child the website of a missionary or missions agency sponsored by your local church. Discover together the work that missionary does. Make a poster about that missionary by gluing their prayer card or photo on a sheet of construction paper. Encourage your child to decorate the poster with stickers. Place the poster where you and your child will see it every day to help you remember to pray for that missionary.