

Flashlights & Fireflies

Exploring the bright
faith of five kids in
the Bible!



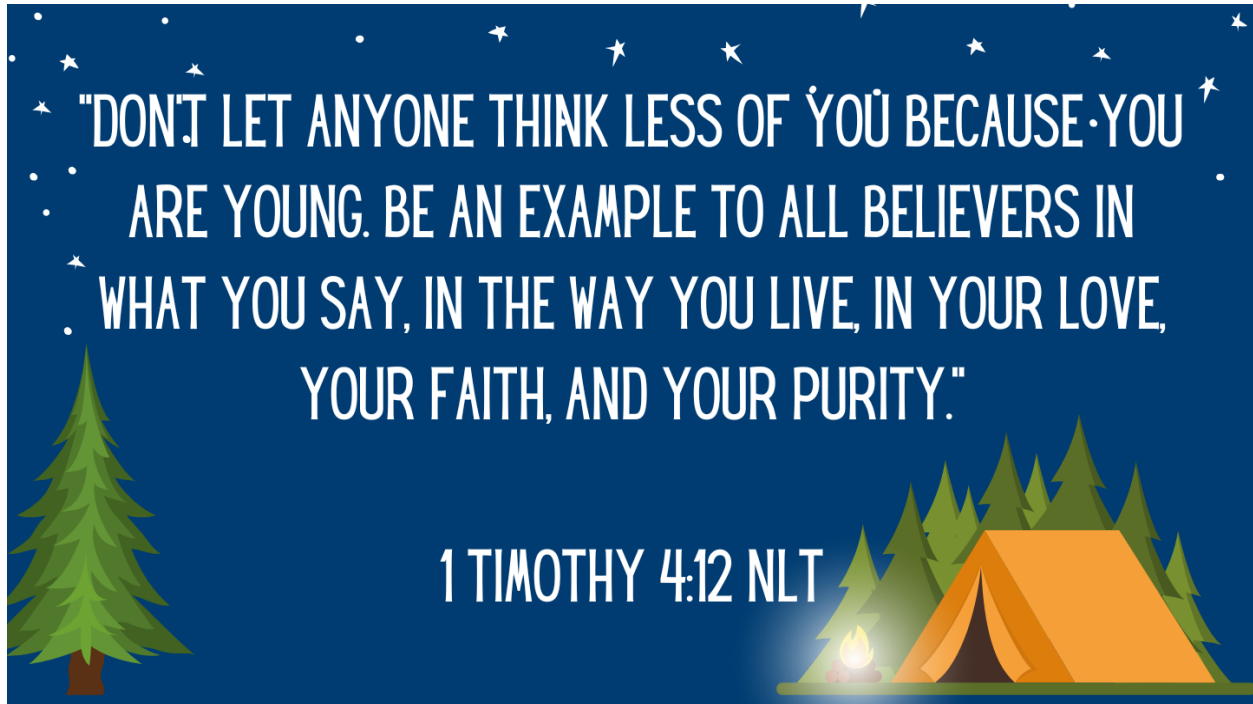
This five-day reading plan is perfect for families at bedtime or summer vacation! Jesus said that kids' faith is an example to grown-ups — why is that? Together we'll discover how the faith of five kids in the Bible shone brightly even in darkness and how that faith in God changed everything!

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DAY 1: A KID WHOSE CURIOUS FAITH SPARKED A SERMON

BIBLE VERSES:

- Matthew 18:1-5
- Matthew 19:14
- 1 Timothy 4:12



ASK EVERYONE:

What is something grown-ups can do better than kids? What are some things that kids can do better than grown-ups?

Right now, would you rather be a kid or a grown-up? Why?

DEVOTIONAL:

How many kids stood on the hill in the sunshine watching the famous teacher? Maybe they were hiding behind their parents, picking at the grass, playing hide and seek with each other. Maybe they were wondering when it would be time to go home or when they could have a snack. Do you ever feel like that when grown-ups are talking?

At least one little kid was near the famous teacher — this was Jesus, of course! — when he started to say something that made all the kids pay attention! Jesus smiled at the little kid near him and waved for them to come on over right in front of where Jesus was standing.

What do you think the other kids thought at that moment?

Maybe they wondered if their friend was in trouble or if Jesus would tell them to stop making noise while he was teaching the grown-ups. But no! Jesus said something unique instead!

He pointed to this little kid and told all the grown-ups, “be just like this kid! All of you need to be more like kids and less like grownups! In my Kingdom, it is the kids who are the important ones. Listen to them!”

I wonder what the people who had come to hear Jesus teach thought of that? Jesus went on to say that kids would always be welcome around him, just as they are. And kids are great at things that are sometimes hard for grown-ups, like trusting him, having faith, asking for help and receiving gifts.

How about you? Have you ever asked for help? Do you have faith that God can do great things? Do you like receiving gifts?

Jesus was looking for people just like that to join his Kingdom. People who would trust Him would take the gift he offered of belonging to his forever family, and people who would ask him for help. Just like a kid would do, this is because faith is how we join God’s forever family and receive all the good things God has planned.

Have you ever seen a firefly? They are tiny little insects, but at night they can glow, and that light can be seen from far away! They use their light to find their way to one another; it’s also how they talk to each other. Fireflies glow at all the stages of their life (even as eggs and glow-worms, they light up in the dark!) Faith is a little like light too! When one person has faith, it helps others to have faith too! Faith is when we trust that God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will. It changes how we live, how we think and who we are. And kids are great at faith! This is why they are so important in the kingdom of God!

ACTIVITY:

Grab a flashlight (or a phone if that’s what you’ve got) and turn the lights in your room off. Light is pretty powerful — but how powerful? How many blankets will block out all the light? Can the light shine through your hand? Can the light shine under a door? If you have a flashlight for each child in your family, choose a target in a somewhat darkened room with a mirror. Can they hit the object with their light by reflecting it off the mirror?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What would you have thought if Jesus had picked YOU in front of all the grown-ups to tell them who they should be more like? What do you think that kid was thinking about?

Do you think this kid believed in who Jesus was? Why do you think that?

Who do you trust to help you? How does God help us, and how do we know we can trust Him?

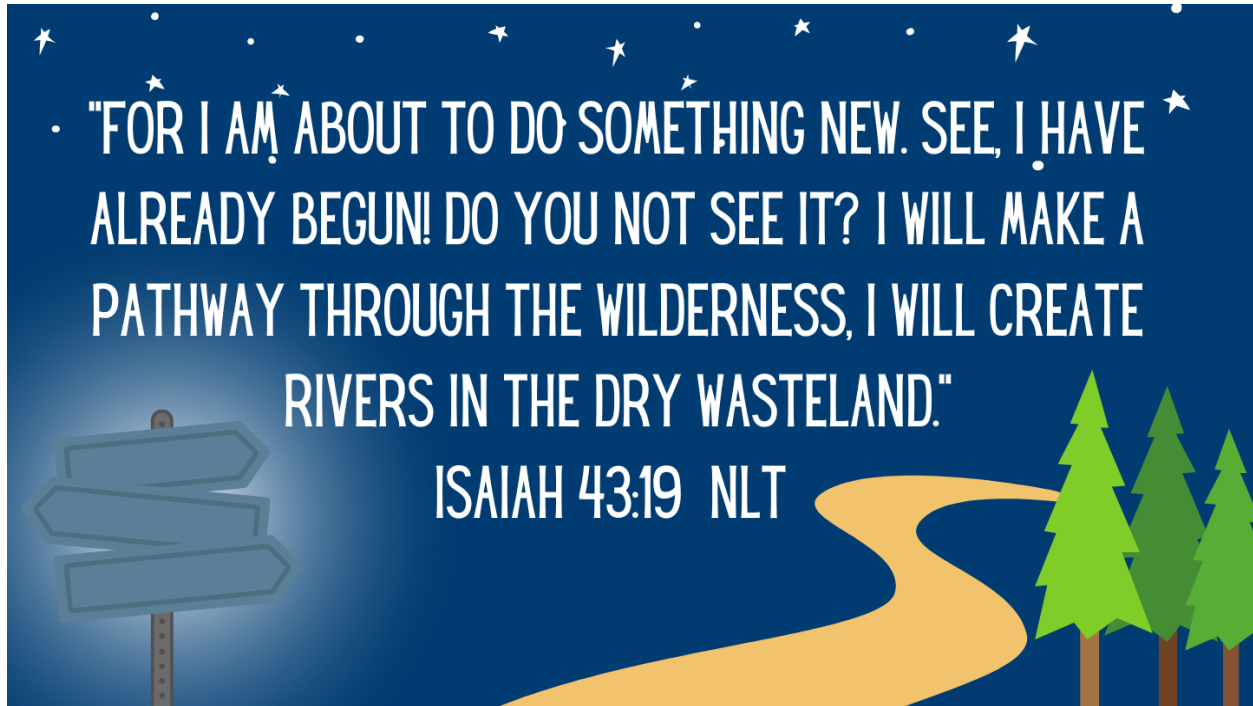
PRAYER:

Thank you, Jesus, for loving kids, and for our family. Help us to have faith that you can help us, and help us all to be able to trust you like little kids trust their parents. Help us all to have faith and let that faith spread to others like a beautiful campfire. Amen.

DAY 2: A KID WHOSE COURAGEOUS FAITH SPARKED A RESCUE

BIBLE VERSES:

- Jeremiah 1:7-8
- Exodus 2:7
- Isaiah 43:19



ASK EVERYONE:

If you could turn invisible any time you wanted, what would you do? Where would you go?

What does a spy do? What does a detective do? Would you ever want either of these jobs?

DEVOTIONAL:

There once was a family that had a little girl — a sneaky spy named Miriam — and a little boy too.

The family lived in Egypt, and they belonged to a people who loved and followed God. But the King in Egypt did not like their people. He made a rule to stop the families from growing; the rule was: every baby boy had to be thrown into the river!

Miriam's family hid the baby as long as possible, but eventually had to follow the rule. So they made a little basket that floated like a boat and placed the baby safely in the water. They prayed to God that, somehow, he would survive.

What do you think the baby boy's big sister did? What would you do if this was your brother?

Well, Miriam trusted that God would do something amazing, so she hid near the water to watch. She had faith and also much courage! And this is what she saw.

The King's daughter went to the river to wash her hair and heard a baby crying. And because Miriam was spying, she could see the princess was sad and wanted to rescue the baby. Miriam quickly thought of a plan.

The little girl ran over to the princess — a brave thing to do, even for a spy! — and said to her, “The baby needs a mom to take care of him and feed him! As a princess, you’re probably much too busy. Do you want me to find a mom to care for the baby?”

No grown-up would have the courage to talk to a princess like this! But Miriam did, and the Princess thought this was a great idea! And who do you think she found? The baby’s own mom, of course! And the Princess protected the baby always and even brought him to live in the palace when he was older.

That baby boy grew up to be Moses — maybe you know the story? How Moses rescued all of the people who loved and followed God from Egypt?

Miriam trusted that God was going to do something, it seemed like there was only dark in this situation, but Miriam’s faith meant she was looking for the light, no matter how small it seemed! When she saw the princess, she saw an opportunity and trusted that God might do something unique. Her faith at that moment saved her brother and eventually her people! Remember, fireflies don’t stop shining when it gets dark — that’s when we can see them shine! Sometimes, whole fields of fireflies will begin to blink in unison; they are all watching each other and shining on rhythm. Isn’t that amazing? Together — we can shine even in dark, scary times, because together, we can put our faith in God.

ACTIVITY:

Play a game of “Eye Spy” as a family. Take turns finding something you can see with the bit of light around you as your family members guess what you are thinking of. They can ask yes or no questions only.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What do you think Miriam was watching for when spying on her little brother in the river?

Why do you think Miriam was the perfect person to save her little brother?

When have you seen someone who needed help? What can kids do to help others?

Do you think Miriam had the kind of faith that Jesus said he was looking for? Why or why not?

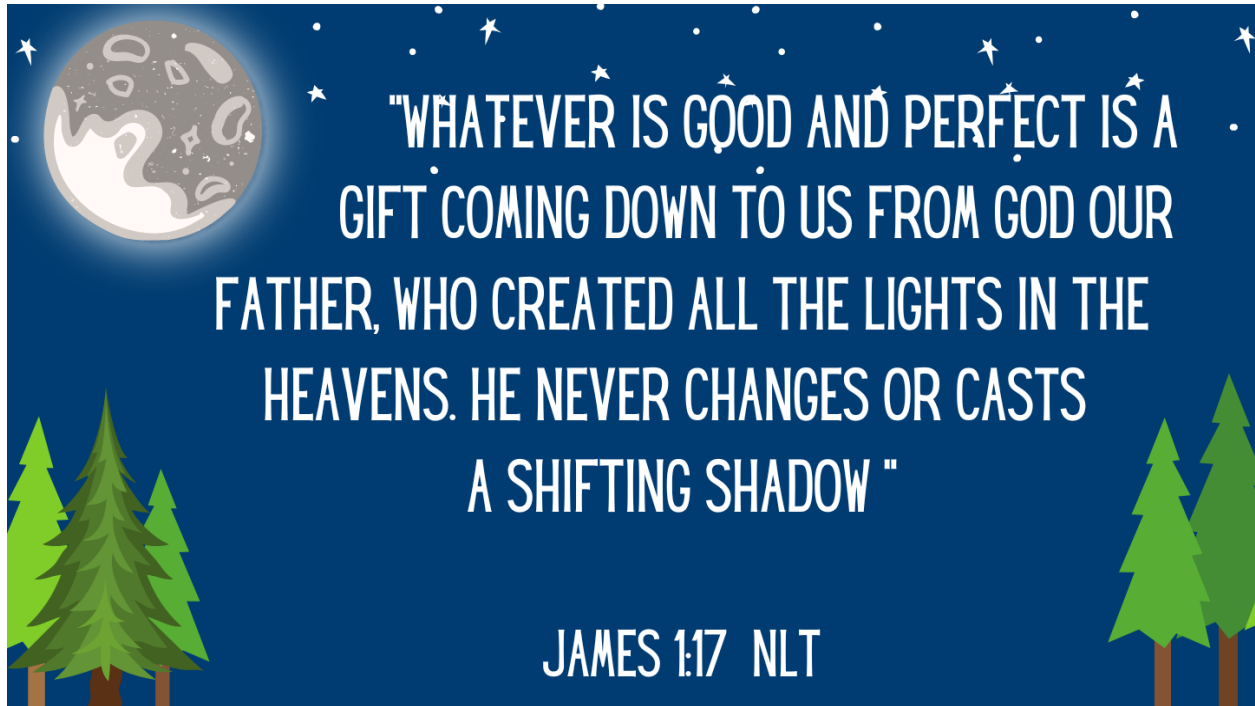
PRAYER:

Thank you, God that you rescue us from some of our scary times and are with us during other scary times. We know you are always with us. Help us be like Miriam, who was watching for your help and rescue to come, and to have the courage when we need it to do something new. Amen.

DAY 3: A KID WHOSE FAITH SAVED A LIFE

BIBLE VERSES:

- 2 Kings 5:1-3
- Ephesians 2:8
- James 1:17



ASK EVERYONE:

Do you like to know secrets? How good at you at keeping them?

Have you ever told someone about God who didn't know about Him? What would you want to tell them?

DEVOTIONAL:

Once there was a little girl who had a secret. She was so full of secrets; even her name was a secret. The Bible never tells us what she was called!

What do you think her name could have been?

This little girl lived far from her home and didn't have her family anymore. Even far from home, she kept her faith in God and remembered how her people loved Him. She was a house helper for a man named Naaman, the army commander for the King of Aram. Naaman was very good at his job but also very sick — he had a disease called leprosy.

In those days, no medicines or cures could help someone with leprosy — they just grew rashes on their skin, lost the ability to feel until their fingers or toes would get hurt, and other parts of them too. While he was a brave person, Naaman was afraid he would die from his disease.

The little girl who helped in Naaman's house decided to tell him a secret she knew — and it was a good thing she did! She told him — “there is someone in the place I came from named Elisha who is a prophet of God. God does miracles through him; he can cure you.” She must have been a very good and helpful girl because Naaman believed her and went right away!

But because Naaman was a very important grown-up, he wasn't used to people helping him or giving him gifts, and only Kings were more powerful than him! So instead of going to the prophet Elisha, Naaman went first to the King of Samaria! And he brought all the gold he could carry to pay for his healing miracle.

Bringing all that gold to pay for a miracle — is that the kind of thing a kid would do or a grown-up? Why?

But as powerful as the King of Israel was, he couldn't do a thing to help Naaman. Elisha, on the other hand, could. He was set apart by God to be a prophet and sometimes did miracles when God told him to. These miracles showed people what God was like.

And Elisha told Naaman what he had to do to be healed. Forget the gold, forget being very important and grown up; go swimming seven times in the Jordan River instead! Do a cannonball! Make a splash!

At first, Naaman wouldn't believe it. This all seemed too silly to him. It couldn't be this simple, could it?

Eventually, Naaman was persuaded. Once he was healed, he decided that he would only worship this God who had healed him. The faith of his little house helper was now his faith too!

God changes people when they put their faith in Him, and religion can spread like light through the darkness. Jesus taught that children's faith can even change adults — and that's no secret!

ACTIVITY:

If you can access a firepit, consider choosing tonight to roast marshmallows (or slices of pineapple sprinkled with a little cinnamon!) Talk about the way that light changes things. Plants and trees take a new shape as they grow towards the light; shining a flashlight on your face at different angles can make your face look different — try it out!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Does God ask us to pay for His gifts to us? What does God give us?

How does faith spread to other people?

How does faith change people? (this is a great time for adults to share how faith has changed them or tell the story of family or friends)

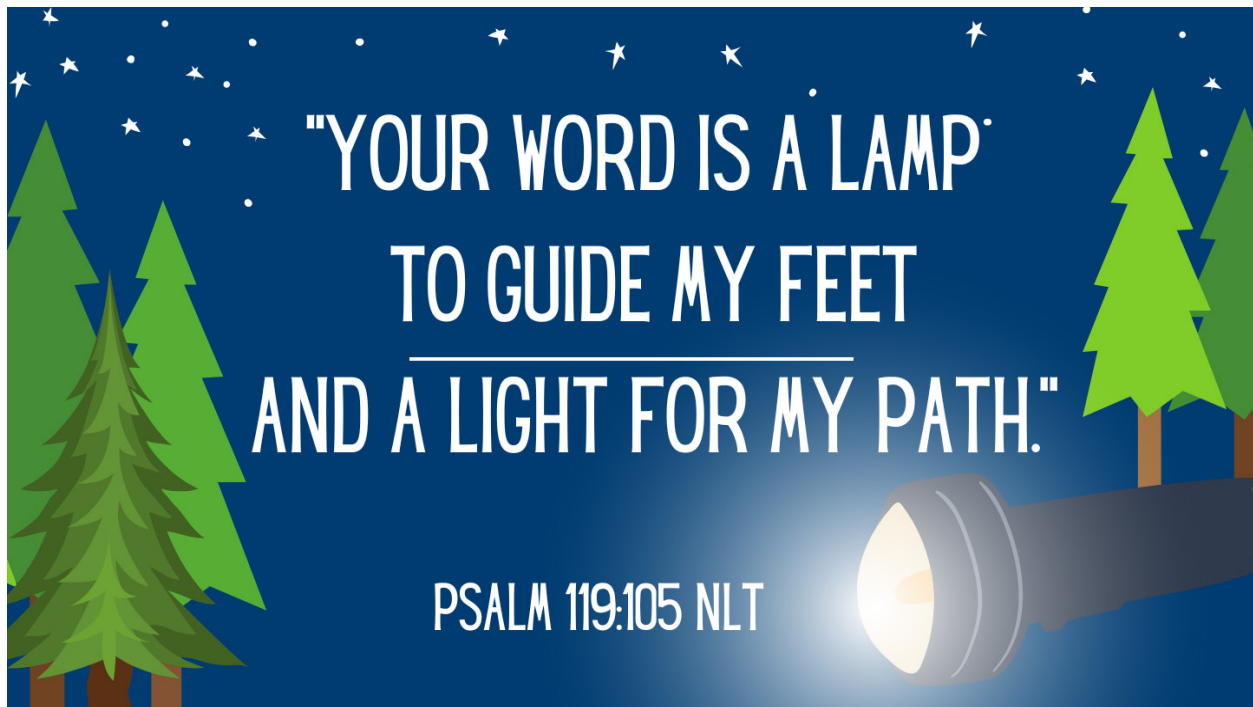
PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for giving us faith in you and your power. Thank you that you can help us to trust you, and receive your gifts, just like Naaman had to rely that his miracle was free. Help us to share who you are, and how faith in you has changed us so that others can be changed too. Amen.

DAY 4: A KID WHOSE FAITH FOUND A TREASURE

BIBLE VERSES:

- 2 Kings 22:3
- Jeremiah 29:13
- 2 Kings 22: 1–3
- 2 Kings 23:25



ASK EVERYONE:

Where would be the best hiding place in the space you're in right now?

What objects are easy to hide? What are harder to hide?

What if you hid a flashlight that was turned off? How difficult is it to hide a flashlight when it is turned on? (Try it and see!)

DEVOTIONAL:

Josiah looked like any other eight-year-old boy, if that eight-year-old boy lived in a palace and had a crown on his head! When he was just a little kid, he was made King of his whole country!

Would you like to be the King or Queen of your country?

What would you tell everyone to do if they HAD to listen to you?

Josiah was King of a country called Judah; they were once a part of Israel — the family nation that belonged to God, but now they were off on their own. And they had forgotten about God and did terrible things all the time.

Josiah didn't want to be a King of a place like that. He decided to be a different kind of King that follows God's way because they trust in Him!

After a few years, he made a rule that the temple where people came to worship God had to be fixed up. It was broken, and no one was using it anymore! That's because the whole country forgot that God loved them and God's way of doing things would help everyone. But Josiah had faith that God cared about him, and he wanted to show everyone how great God was. The first part of that was fixing the place where people came to learn about God and worship Him.

Being a king while he was just a kid wasn't the only amazing thing that happened to Josiah — no, he also found incredible treasure hiding in a dark place!

What would you hope to find if you found treasure?

In the broken-down ruins of the temple, under all the dust and rubble, was something that no one expected to find! It was a book that had been forgotten for so long that no one knew what it was! At least not at first.

But as Josiah and his helpers read the secret book, they discovered that this was a part of God's book — what we call the Bible today! No wonder people forgot about it! But now that Josiah had found part of it, he got right to work making sure everyone heard what was in it and that they followed everything it said!

Josiah's faith in God spread to other people too — and while he was King, nothing bad happened to his country, and many grown-ups had faith in God! You know — even though fireflies are little, they get much attention! They aren't all that great at hide and seek, but they aren't trying to hide at all. They don't have many enemies — other creatures don't like how they taste. Fireflies don't bite, sting or carry diseases, and some even pollinate flowers! They are some of the most helpful and friendly bugs around.

When we let our faith in God shine like Josiah, we can also discover amazing things. The Bible tells us that God's words to us are like lamps — or flashlights! God's Word helps us know God, hear about all He has done and put our faith in Him to help and love us.

ACTIVITY:

Play a few rounds of a game where you take turns hiding an object nearby and trying to find it. If you can, try hiding a flashlight or an object that glows in the dark if you have it. Light in the dark is hard to hide!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What do you think would happen if people now forgot all about God and his love for them and all about God's Word, the Bible?

What do you like best about God? Do you know where we learn that in the Bible?

What can you do to know what's in the Bible more and help others from forgetting God's love for them?

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for Your Word, the Bible! Thank you that in it, we learn who you are, how you love us, how we are your children and how we can follow God's ways. Help us to have faith in you even when things are dark, and let our light shine in the darkness.

DAY 5: A KID WHOSE FAITH AND GENEROSITY SPARKED A MIRACLE

BIBLE VERSES:

- Matthew 5:16
- Isaiah 42:16
- John 6: 1–15



ASK EVERYONE:

What is something you wish people would share more often. Why?

What is a snack you wish you would never run out of?

DEVOTIONAL:

Light is something that is hard to keep to yourself — it spreads to the people near us, it helps us and others, and faith is one of God’s great gifts! Don’t you love it when people share a gift?

There is one kid in the Bible who decided to share something he had because he had faith in Jesus! You know, real faith in God always leads to actions. Faith isn’t just wishing; it isn’t imagining that God is really there. No, faith happens when we hear about who God is and what He has done for others, like when we read the Bible. Once we know who God is and about His love for us, we trust that He can help us today too. That’s faith. Actions are proof that faith is real.

Jesus and all of the people who had come to hear Him teach were far from towns. Jesus had been teaching a long time, and the people were starting to get hungry. When Jesus’s disciples told Jesus — it’s lunchtime! How are we going to feed everyone? Jesus told them, “You should give everyone something to eat! After all, these people are our guests!”

Well, if you were the disciples of Jesus, what would you do? It wasn't just one family on the hill; it wasn't just ten families on the mountain — can you imagine how much food you would need for ten families? No! This was 5,000 families!

What would you do if you were there with the disciples?

They looked at each other and they looked at the people. They worried and added up the costs to feed everyone. They were thinking about what they had, not what God could do.

Just then, a little boy who maybe overheard what they were talking about (kids are great at overhearing grown-ups, aren't they?) thought he could maybe help. He offered his lunch.

He had faith that even though his lunch was small, maybe Jesus could use it anyway!

And he did! While most grown-ups would laugh at the little lunch, Jesus gratefully accepted the gift and broke the bread into pieces. He also began to hand out fish to everyone there. Now, the boy only had two pieces of bread and five little fish! But after Jesus and the disciples were done handing out the food to everyone, everyone had eaten so much they could hardly move! And all over the field were crumbs and crusts left over!

Jesus had turned the little gift into more than enough. But it started with one child who didn't keep what they had all to themselves.

This story isn't about sharing our snacks, but about living like people who trust that God loves us and will provide what we need. Faith looks at God, not at ourselves. Faith trusts God and what He is doing in the world, and looks for ways to help.

A firefly has a light like nothing else on earth — it converts 100% energy to light. No lightbulb made by people can do that! It never over-heats, doesn't need batteries or electricity, and can even glow in different colours! God made fireflies with an incredible light!

And He made kids like you to have world-changing faith in Him! When you have faith in God, that faith shines bright and affects everyone and everything around you. Keep shining your light just like these kids did, and who knows what will happen!

ACTIVITY:

What can you make with just your hands? Shine a flashlight against a wall or curtain. What shapes can you make with your hands before the flashlight to create a shadow? Try making a bunny, a snail, a turkey or a bird! How would you tell someone you loved them with just your hands?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What miracles can you name in the Bible? What do they teach us about God?

How can you help God with what He is doing in the world?

When do things sometimes seem dark and scary for you? How can you have faith in God to be with you in those times?

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you that you are with us, and love us always. When we face dark or scary times, help us to trust that you are good and you love us. The dark times don't last forever, and in the middle of them there is light that comes from faith in you. Please help us to grow in faith and shine our faith brightly for others! Amen.

Thank you for reading this plan, we hope you benefited from this topic. To see more resources available from Compassion Canada please visit <http://cmpsn.ca/YV>



WHAT IS COMPASSION?

As one of the world's leading child development organizations, Compassion partners with the local church around the world to end poverty in the lives of children and their families.

Today, more than two million children and their families are discovering lives full of promise and purpose as they develop in all aspects of their lives—minds, bodies and relationships—while discovering God's love for them in the gospel of Jesus Christ.



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