



BIG SPLASH

A guide for families with young children
thinking about baptism.



WELCOME TO BIG SPLASH

Hey Parent/Guardian,

Thanks for picking up this booklet. At Valley Real Life, we say that the first step in your discipleship journey is to ACCEPT Christ—and that's what this is all about.

Following Jesus is lifelong decision and we want to partner with you, teaching your son or daughter what that means and how Jesus changes us.

This booklet isn't about "having all the answers." It's about understanding a few key aspects of who Jesus is. If your son or daughter makes the decision to follow Christ, you still have lifetime of growth to help them through.

We're so excited for you to be having this conversation. While you go through this booklet, we'd love to help any way you need. You can always contact us at kjohnson@vrl.church or tfarris@vrl.church.

We're on your team and always praying for you!

--The VRL KidMin Team





As a family, take some time over the next few weeks and work through this booklet. We have broken this down into six different parts:

- ✓ God is Perfect
- ✓ He Loves
- ✓ Sin: The Problem
- ✓ God's Gift To You
- ✓ Jesus Paid for My Sin
- ✓ Accept. Believe. Choose.

Each section is designed to take about a week, but may take more or less time depending on your situation.

Remember - this is just a tool to help your child understand what the Bible teaches us. This is not a requirement from God and definitely not a prerequisite for baptism. It does not take the place of the Bible.

Above all, have fun working with your child as they grow towards Christ.



GOD IS
PERFECT

FAMILY ACTIVITY

SUPPLIES: Paper, Pencils, Blindfolds

In this activity, each family member is going to draw the best circle that they can. You only have one try. And, you must do it blindfolded. Once everyone has his or her blindfolds on, you can start. After everyone is done, take your blindfolds and compare. See which circle is best. It's impossible to draw a perfect circle. You just can't do it. No matter how much you practice or try, your circle will never be perfect.

What does it mean to be perfect?



FAMILY DEVOTION - The Perfect World

READ: Genesis 1:1-2:3

In the beginning, God created everything. He created the light and the dark. He created the water and everything that swims in it. He created the plants and He created animals. After everything He made, He said it was "good." After God made people, He said it was "very good." He is a perfect God, and He created a perfect world. All we have to do is look at His creation to know this. Think about how beautiful the trees are when they change colors in the fall. Think about waterfalls. Picture the ocean. Take some time today to look in magazines or on the internet and look up pictures about creation. Look pictures of sunsets, birds soaring, or your favorite animal.

Talk about the different days of creation. See if you can figure out what God created each day.

See if you can find a picture (or better yet, go outside) and see if you can find an example from each day of creation



GOD IS PERFECT

DIVE INTO SCRIPTURE

This week we've been talking all about God's perfection. Use the following the questions to jump start your discussions. There are no wrong answers to these questions. They are designed to help create conversation between you and your kids.

When we say, "God is Perfect," what does that mean to you?

Read Psalm 18:30.

What are some things that God created that remind you He is perfect?

Do you think you could ever be perfect? Do you think you could be perfect for a day?



GOD IS PERFECT

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Take a few minutes and talk about your favorite songs. Next pick a few easy songs (Row, row, row your boat; The ABCs; Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star). These songs are pretty easy to sing, but can you sing them backwards?

Decide on a song and see who can sing it backwards perfectly (or more perfectly than anyone else). Of course, the adults have to go first...it's only fair!

And to make it just a little bit easier, keep the tune the same, just reverse the words. If you still need help, write out the words to your song backwards and try to sing them with the words written down. (Hard, isn't it?)

Obviously, God's perfection doesn't just mean that He can sing songs backwards. God is perfect in every way. He has never sinned. He has never messed up. He is perfect!!

Take a few minutes and pray together asking God to show you His perfection. Ask Him to help you understand His perfection just a little bit more.



HE
LOVES

FAMILY ACTIVITY

SUPPLIES: Paper, Art Supplies (crayons, markers, stickers, etc.)

God loves you more than you could ever imagine. He loves you so much He made this huge world we live in...for you!! And He loves everyone in the world this much.

Tell someone today that God loves them, but don't do it in a boring way. Let's do it by making a card for them that tells them God loves them. Each person in the family needs to pick a person to make a card for. It can be someone you know (like a friend or a grandparent), or it can be a complete stranger (someone at a nursing home or hospital). Work together as a family to make your cards. Make them as fun as you can! Then, set a date this week to deliver your cards.



HE
LOVES

FAMILY DEVOTION - A Loving Father

READ: Luke 15:11-32

This story is a parable (a story Jesus used to teach us a lesson). He told us this story to teach us about God's love.

How would you feel if you had been the father?

How would you have felt if someone you loved asked you for money, and then left?

How do you think the father felt while the son was away? Do you think he missed him? Do you think he prayed for his son to come home?

Reread verse 20 again. What do you think the father was thinking when he saw his son coming home?

This story shows us a picture of God's love. The father in this story loved his son with his whole heart; God loves us the same. God doesn't care if you've lied before. God doesn't care if you've disobeyed your parents. He loves you, and nothing is going to change that.



HE
LOVES

FAMILY DISCUSSION

This week, we've been talking all about God's love. Use the following questions to jump start your discussions. There are no wrong answers to these questions. They are designed to help create conversation between you and your kids.

.....

Name 5 people you love.

Why do you love those people? Is there anything they do that makes you love them more?

If God was going to tell you how much He loves you, what would He say? How would He say it?

Do you think you could ever do anything that would make God love you less (or not at all)? Hint: The answer is "No!"

.....



DIVE INTO SCRIPTURE

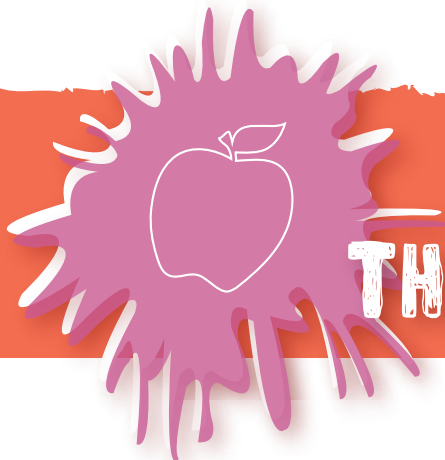
We've been talking all week about how God loves us. The Bible is full of stories and verses that tell us about God's love. Read the verses below, and then write in the white box what all these verses say about God's love.

John 3:16 • John 15:9 • John 15:12-17
Romans 5:8 • 1 John 4:11

It would be impossible to list all the verses about love in this little booklet.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS...

The bible is a story about God's love for us. Take some time today to talk about some Bible stories you have heard or know. How do those stories show God's love?



SIN: THE PROBLEM

FAMILY ACTIVITY

SUPPLIES: Paper, Art Supplies (crayons, markers, stickers, etc.)

Sin is not a fun thing to talk about. It shouldn't be. It's a horrible thing. It's the reason Jesus died for us. Today though, our activity is about sin. It's about helping us understand what sin really is.

When you hear the word sin, what does it make you think of, and what does it look like?

Use your paper and draw what you think "sin" looks like. There is no wrong way to draw it, because sin looks like a lot of things. You might draw a specific sin, or just a picture of how sin makes you feel. Whatever you decide, take a few minutes tonight to draw it, then talk about it with your family and see why each person drew it the way they did. After you've finished talking about it, read Psalm 51:1, 3, and 10.



SIN: THE PROBLEM

FAMILY DEVOTION - The First Sin

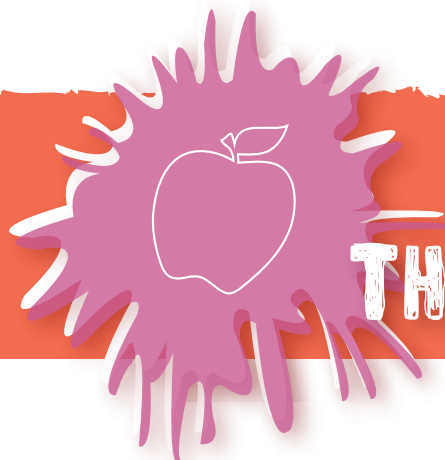
READ: Genesis 3:1-13; 20-24

This is the story of the first sin. Before this happened, there had never been sin in the world. They didn't kill someone. They didn't build a giant idol to worship. They didn't rob a bank. They just ate a piece of fruit. Seems like a big punishment for such a little sin, doesn't it? It doesn't matter what kind of sin we do. Sin is sin. In God's eye, all sin is just as bad as the worst sin. The Bible even tells us that being so mad at someone that you want to kill them is just as bad as actually killing them. God HATES sin...all of it.

But my favorite part of this story is the end. Even after they sinned, everything God did for Adam and Eve shows us that He still loved them. He loved them despite their sin, and he loves you too. He knows you have sinned. We all have. But God's love for you doesn't change. He loves you, and He always will.

Have you ever been punished for breaking a rule? What did it feel like?

Don't ever forget that God loves you. He hates sin, but He loves you. And that won't change, no matter how many bad things you do.



SIN: THE PROBLEM

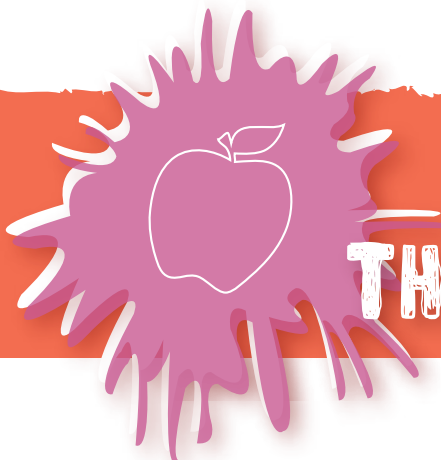
FAMILY DISCUSSION

This week, we've been talking all about sin. Use the following questions to jump start your discussions. There are no wrong answers to these questions. They are designed to help create conversation between you and your kids.

What do you think it would be like to live in a world with no sin? What would the world be like? (Think about the Garden of Eden.)

Even though they knew it was wrong, why do you think Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the garden?

Why do you sin even though you know it's wrong? Why do you lie? Why do you disobey parents and rules?



SIN: THE PROBLEM

DIVE INTO SCRIPTURE

We've been talking all week about sin and how God sees it. There are lots of verses that deal with sin, but the best place to start is in Exodus 20:1-17. These are the 10 Commandments, the first rules (after the Garden of Eden) given in the Bible. Read them and think about which of these rules you have broken.

OTHER VERSES TO READ:

Matthew 5:21-22 • Romans 6:23 • Ecclesiastes 7:20

There are quite a few verses that talk about sin in the Bible, but none get to the point quite like Romans 3:23-24. Read this verse. Then rewrite it in your own words.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS...



GOD'S GIFT TO YOU

FAMILY ACTIVITY

SUPPLIES: Wrapping Paper (or Old Newspapers)

Today you are going to give someone in your family a gift. Have everyone in your family put his/her name in a bowl and draw names. No one should have his/her own name after the draw. You have one day to come up with a gift for the person whose name you have.

There are only 2 rules: you cannot spend any money on this gift and it has to be something that the other person will like. You could make something. You might look through your things and give them something of yours that they would like. Whatever you give them, make it special. This same time tomorrow, exchange your gifts!

As you look for gifts, remember that God's gift to us costs no money, but it was the most valuable gift ever given. He gave up his own son ... for you.



GOD'S GIFT TO YOU

FAMILY DEVOTION - The Biggest Gift

READ: Mark 12:41-44

This is a very short story. But it's a short story with a big gift in it. If you have ever seen people give their offering at church, you can picture what's going on in this story. People are walking into the temple (their church) and giving their offerings to God. The problem is many of the people who are giving money are giving A LOT of money. That doesn't really sound like a bad thing, does it?

It wouldn't be a bad thing except they were giving a lot of money so everyone would think they were great people. You see, they wanted everyone to see them give their money because they weren't giving to honor God—they were giving to get attention.

Then a poor woman came in and gave 2 copper pieces—two pennies. Other people gave thousands of dollars, and she gave 2 pennies. But those two pennies were all she had, and she gave it to God because she loved and trusted Him. She was giving a HUGE gift! Her gift was more valuable to God than any gift that was given that day.

What could you give to God? What has God given you? You could never give God enough to pay back the huge gift He's given you, but God's not asking you to do that. We need to thank Him for giving us such a wonderful gift ... a God-sized gift!



GOD'S GIFT TO YOU

FAMILY DISCUSSION

This week we've been talking all about gifts. Use the following questions to jump start your discussions. There are no wrong answers to these questions. They are designed to help create conversation between you and your kids.

What is the best gift you have ever opened? Was it at Christmas? Your birthday? What made it so cool?

Think about all the gifts you have given. Which one was your favorite to give? Who did you give it to?

Many people don't accept God's gift. How would you feel if you gave someone a very special gift and they said they didn't want it?

How does it make you feel to know God gave you such a big gift?



GOD'S GIFT TO YOU

DIVE INTO SCRIPTURE

We've been talking all week about the greatest gift ever. There are a lot of verses and stories in the Bible that deal with gifts. But the gift we're talking about is the best gift ever—God's Son!

Read John 3:16, Romans 6:23, and Ephesians 2:8

Rewrite one of these verses below in your own words.

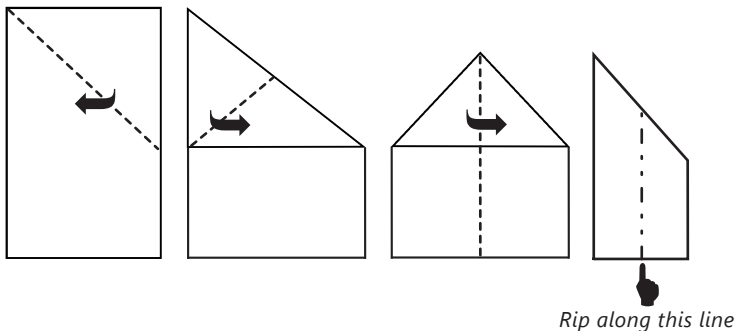
IN YOUR OWN WORDS...

JESUS PAID FOR MY SIN

FAMILY ACTIVITY

SUPPLIES: Paper, Pencil or Pen

Everyone take a piece of paper and start writing sins. They can be sins that you have done or they can be generic sins. If your child doesn't write too well, have them draw things that remind them of sins. Give everyone a few minutes to finish this, and wait for everyone until you go to the next step. When everyone is finished, take your paper (writing side up) and fold it like the diagrams below.



After you've finished folding your paper, open up the last fold and rip along the fold line. Open up all your pieces of ripped paper and you'll see a reminder of both your sins and what Jesus did to pay for them.



JESUS PAID FOR MY SIN

FAMILY DEVOTION - The Sacrifice

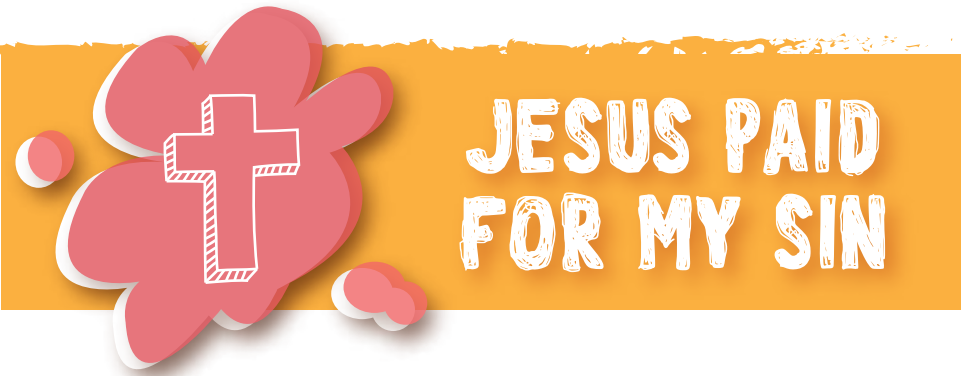
READ: Genesis 22:1-13

Before Jesus died and was sacrificed for all our sins, people needed to sacrifice animals to pay for their sins. They did it because they knew they had broken God's rules. In this story, God told Abraham not to sacrifice an animal, but his only son, and Abraham was willing to do it. At the very last moment, God stopped him. He showed Abraham a ram in the bushes to sacrifice instead. God provided a sacrifice for Abraham.

This story is very much like the story of Jesus, with one exception. God didn't stop like Abraham did. He willingly let his own Son die because He knew it was the only way. He knew there was nothing else that could take His place. Jesus died for you!

Have you ever had to give up something you liked? What did it feel like? What do you think God felt like while Jesus was sacrificed?

God loves you so much that He was willing to let Jesus die for you. Don't ever forget that. Don't ever doubt how much God loves you.



JESUS PAID FOR MY SIN

FAMILY DISCUSSION

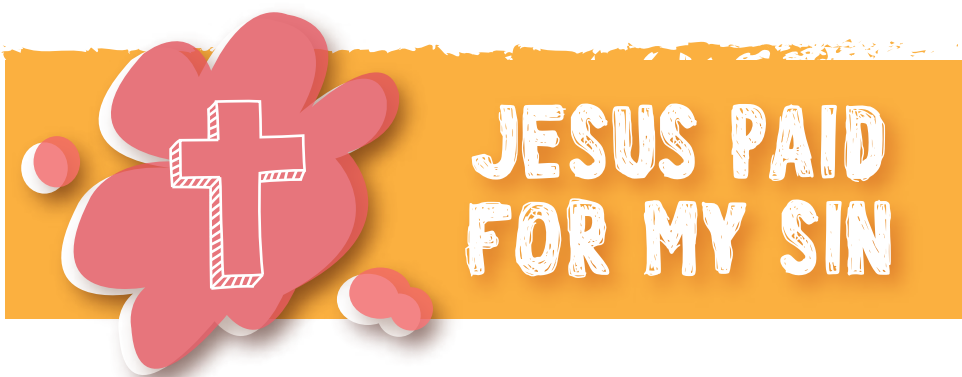
This week we've been talking all about Jesus' sacrifice. Use the following questions to jump start your discussions. There are no wrong answers to these questions. They are designed to help create conversation between you and your kids.

What is your most valuable possession? What is the one thing you own that is the most important to you?

Is there anyone that you would be willing to give this possession up for? (It's okay if there isn't; no one is asking you to.)

Jesus died for all our sins. God sacrificed what He loved most (His only Son) for you. Why do you think He did this?

Knowing that God gave up Jesus for you, what should you do differently now? How should you live your life differently?



JESUS PAID FOR MY SIN

JESUS PAID FOR MY SIN

Jesus died for our sins ... all of them.

We've been talking all week about what Jesus did for us. Jesus willingly died on the cross for you!! That's incredible! In fact, it's so amazingly wonderful; it's what the entire New Testament of the Bible is all about. Take a look at a few verses that talk about it.

John 3:16-17 • Romans 6:8-10 • Romans 5:8

Pray, thanking God for this amazing gift that He gave all of us. Ask God to forgive you for the sins that you have committed, and let God know you don't want to sin anymore.



ADMIT.
BELIEVE.
CHOOSE.

WHAT NOW?

ADMIT YOUR SIN

We have all done things that we aren't proud of. We have lied to our parents, disobeyed teachers, made fun of other kids. The Bible calls all those things "sin." Admitting our sins means telling God that we know we have sinned and messed up, and asking Him for forgiveness. God will forgive your sins if you simply ask him and tell Him you are sorry. (You must actually be sorry!) Tell Him what you're sorry for now.

BELIEVE IN JESUS

Believe that Jesus died for your sin. Believe that Jesus is God's Son and that He loved you enough to die on the cross for you. If you believe in Jesus and that He died for you, tell Him. Talk to Him right now. (Talking to God is also called "prayer.")

CHOOSE HIM

God wants you to follow Him, but He won't make you. You have to decide on your own to follow Him. This is the biggest choice you will ever make in your life, and it's a choice that is completely up to you. Your family can't make it for you. Your friends can't choose it for you. You have to choose for yourself. Will you choose to follow Jesus for the rest of your life?



ALL IN

CANNONBALL: BEING BAPTIZED

Following God is an “all in” decision kind of like a cannonball. You don’t dip your toe in and gently cannonball, do you? NO! You jump as high as you can to make as big a splash as possible. That’s how following God is. After you’ve made the choice to follow God, there’s a physical thing we do that shows what’s happening inside our hearts. It’s called “baptism.” Baptism is where someone goes down in the water, then comes right back up. It’s a really cool picture of what is going on inside of our hearts. It symbolizes our old self dying and coming out of the water with new life, just like when Jesus was buried in the tomb. We come out of the water like a new person, and we get to live our new lives as a part of Jesus’ family!

If you are ready to take this step, contact Valley Real Life’s KidMin team at (509) 232-0840, tfarris@vrl.church, or simply go forward at one of VRL’s weekend services. We would love to help you any way we can, and can’t wait to celebrate with you!



THE JESUS LETTER

Take some time with your child to help write a “Jesus letter” as they prepare to make a decision to follow Him. As they grow older, this will be a powerful reminder of what God was doing in their hearts when they began a relationship with Him. It will also help them share their faith and their story with others.

Sit down some place quiet with your child, grab a pen and paper, and tell them you’re going to write a letter to Jesus together.

-
- *Write the date at the top of the page.*
 - *Begin with “Dear Jesus, you are...” and ask them to write who Jesus is to them.*
 - *Continue with “I love you because...” and encourage them to tell Him what they love about Him.*
 - *Then write, “I’m sorry for the time I...” and write out what they want Jesus to change in their lives.*
 - *Finish with “I want to follow you because...” and have them tell Jesus why they are making this decision.*
 - *Have them sign their name. Put this letter some place you can find years later to encourage them in their faith.*
-



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS


How Do I Know My Child Is Ready?

This is the most frequently asked question our Kid's Ministry team gets from parents. Most parents struggle because they don't want to rush their child into a decision they're not yet prepared for, but at the same time they don't want to hinder what God is doing in their child's life.

Here are a few questions to help you assess the readiness of your child to make a decision to be baptized and follow Jesus.

- 1. How does your child answer the questions, "Who is Jesus? What did He do for us?"*
- 2. Does your child have an awareness of personal sin? Does your child express that there are specific things in their lives for which they need to be forgiven?*
- 3. Does your child possess not just the head knowledge, but the emotional maturity to understand that this decision isn't just a one-time thing but a life change?*
- 4. Is this decision coming from you or your child?*

We believe that ultimately parents are the experts on their children. As the most significant influence in your child's life, you know them better than anyone else. Pray and trust the Spirit to help you, help them, make the right decision at the right time.




FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What About Infant Baptism?

We believe the Bible teaches that baptism is a choice made by a believer to express their own decision to enter into a relationship with Christ through faith in Him and His sacrifice on the cross. Since this is a personal choice and not a “by proxy” choice, Valley Real Life does not practice infant baptism.

However, most churches that practice infant baptism are intending this to be more of a parental commitment to teach their child to know God. We do not see in Scripture how this commitment is connected to baptism, but we at Valley Real Life celebrate a ceremonial commitment called “Child Dedications.” This commitment is a parent-led public commitment, to join with the Church to raise your child to follow Jesus.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How Old Is Old Enough?

There is no age for baptism. However, children under the age of 6 who expresses their desire to be baptized are taken on a case by case basis. It is typically not common that a child under 6 years of age adequately understand this decision. If your child is under the age of 6 and expresses the desire to be baptized, we ask that you contact our Kid's Ministry staff to set up an appointment to discuss this together with the staff member, the parents and the child.

It is our strong belief that children are safe and covered under the grace of God until they come to a point in their spiritual maturity when they understand the eternal consequences of sin and can freely decide whether they will choose to follow Jesus or not. It is our desire that children truly understand their decision to be baptized so that it will lead to a fruitful spiritual life of knowing, loving and serving God.

Each child is unique and develops at his or her own pace - mentally and spiritually. Parents, though well-intentioned, may not be helping their child by rushing them into making a decision which they may later discount, not remember, or feel was done out of guilt or obligation.



Valley Real Life Ministries
1831 S. Barker Road
Greenacres, WA 99016
509.232.0840
valleyreallife.church