

TOOLS FOR PARENTS



The Road to Christmas

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

LESSON

Finding the abundant life

KEY VERSE

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (Jn. 10:10)

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: On the way to Modesty, what happens to The Club, Paw Paw Chuck, and Miss Harbor?
A: *The Cannonball is snowed in*
- Q: Who greets Miss Harbor and The Club at the mansion?
A: *Chester Range and later, his father, Nathan*
- Q: What does Miss Harbor have The Club rehearse in the Range library?
A: *Their Christmas program*
- Q: What is the reason Nathan gives Paw Paw Chuck for not celebrating Christmas?
A: *He says it would be too painful for Chester to remember his mother at Christmastime*
- Q: What happens to Chester as he tries to get boxes down?
A: *He falls and dislocates his shoulder*

HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: In this episode, Nathan chose to cut himself off from any joy Christmas might bring. Why would anyone do that?

A: *Nathan would not allow himself to heal from his wife's death. His highest goal was simply to avoid pain. Typically we don't have the capacity to imagine the wonderful, deep things that God wants to give us, and this was certainly true for Nathan. God wanted him to experience joy, hope, and freedom, but Nathan could not imagine that these things were possible for him. It is a great irony, but often the greatest gifts God has for us are only available when we give up the small but familiar things to which we are clinging.*



QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

Q: If Jesus offers Christians the opportunity to have an abundant life, why do so many of us live our lives so miserably?

A: Most of us are confused about what an abundant life looks like. And we can't begin to understand how to receive it. If we refuse to obey God's Word, if we live selfishly, if we do not strive to be Christlike, we will not be able to experience abundant life. God is not holding it back until we behave well. But only through obedience, in the act of serving others, and by longing to be in the very presence of God, will we find the fullest life imaginable blooming around us. The more we become transformed into the image of Christ, the more we will be able to take part in the blessings and the abundant life God wants to give us (2 Cor. 9:6-15).

“I” CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. Make a list of the things that you think would make your life happy and fulfilling. Now take a moment and read John 10:10-14. Jesus calls himself a shepherd, saying that those who believe in Him are the sheep. He says that He came so that we might have an abundant life. What do you think it means to have an abundant life? Now read Psalm 23. Make a list of all of the good things that the Shepherd does for His sheep. Compare this list with the one you made first. What differences do you see between the lists? In the long run, do you think you would be better off with the things from your list or the things the Shepherd gives His sheep? Why?

2. Christmas Activity: Creating Fruit of the Spirit Ornaments

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul teaches us more benefits of what it means to live abundantly in Christ. He calls these benefits “fruit of the Spirit.” Make a list of each of the fruit of the Spirit. Then using different colours of construction paper, scissors, markers, and ribbon—draw and cut out the shapes of nine of your favourite kinds of fruit. On each one, use a marker to write one of the fruit of the Spirit from your list. Decorate each ornament, then punch a hole through the top and tie a loop of ribbon through the hole. Then hang your fruit of the Spirit ornaments on your Christmas tree to remind you of the abundant life Jesus came to give us.

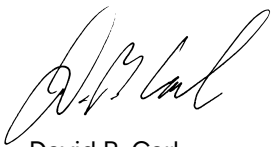
The Road to Christmas

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

There are robbers within our midst. They take our most precious things from us, and we let them. Anger and bitterness are far worse than any nighttime thief. Instead of being alarmed and chasing these robbers away, we ask them in, provide for them, and even defend them to our friends and family. That's what happened in this episode. Bitterness is simply anger that has festered. And this cannot happen without our permission. We either allow it in or it does not get in. Once it is inside us, the infection begins to spread. If it's not stopped, it alters how we view the world. Life becomes a dark and foreboding place full of injustice and forces that are holding us down, frustrating our ability to move on and heal. With this kind of sad prognosis, we should fight bitterness on all sides, but there is an insidious side of bitterness that actually feels good.

When a loved one has died—as in this episode—it seems so wrong, random, and senseless. Sometimes, the chaos that follows threatens to overtake us. Bitterness gives us a framework that helps us to contain the chaos. This framework is blame. We are tempted to blame someone for the chaos and the pain. Often if we can't find anyone else to blame, we blame God. Deciding "God is mean and doesn't care" helps organize our thoughts. This is a wrong and corrupt thought, but it does bring a twisted order to our confusion. Often along with this train of thought comes the decision, "I'm never going to let anything hurt me this badly again." At this point, we are on a serious downward spiral that will isolate us from everything good in life. We have now allowed bitterness to rob us of joy, hope, peace, meaningful relationships . . . the list could go on.

Like Nathan in the story, we must realize that bitterness is our enemy. Next, we must concede that we need help to heal. We need other caring people to help heal the things that they can, and we need Christ to heal the things that only He can. We must give up the twisted "order" that bitterness offers because it is a lie. We must let go of it and allow God to show us His order for our lives. Why did God allow us to lose a loved one who was young and vibrant? How do we make sense of this? We may have to simply rest in the faith that God knows more than we do. Our loving heavenly Father would not allow this kind of tragedy in our lives without a very good reason. We may not be able to fully understand His purpose until we are face to face with Him in Heaven. When we do understand, when we are capable of grasping what we now cannot, I think we will thank Him for everything. But for now He is offering us healing, joy, peace, hope, and the opportunity to live an abundant life. That is how much He loves us.



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