

foundations[®] for Kidz!



5 Week Devotional for KIDS!

March 2015



SOUTHLAND
CHURCH

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Requests for information regarding Southland Church's ministry should be addressed to:

Southland Church
190 PTH 52 W
Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada
204.326.9020
info@mysouthland.com

Versions of scripture quotations are noted.

WELCOME TO

**foundations[®]
for Kidz!**



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Dear Parents,

***Normally *Foundations for Kidz* follows the weekend curriculum, but this month we are doing things a little bit differently. We still have great stories and devotions for your kids, they just might not line up exactly with what is taught in Kidzland!**

This eBook is a devotional tool that we hope will help your kids to connect with Jesus and develop a regular devotional walk with Him. These devotions are based on stories called “The Animal Underground” which follow Ravi Raccoon and his friends on many adventures. These adventures will have a similar theme to what your kids are learning on the weekend in Kidzland; kind of like a modern day parable to help them understand a Truth in a deeper way. Each week there will be five days’ worth of devotions; the first day is always a story followed by 4 days of exercises and activities to reinforce the message.

Our desire is that elementary school kids of all ages will *enjoy* this and grow to enjoy spending time in the Word, in prayer and with Jesus! Our desire is that, for the younger kids (grades K-2) the stories help create a meaningful family time, and that if your kids are bit older (grades 3-4) they will be able to do the reading and activities on their own as they grow increasingly responsible for their personal walk with Jesus.

Foundations for Kidz will help your kids remember what they learned in Kidzland, but it will also serve as a way of letting YOU know what your kids are learning. There is also a theme verse each week that you can work on together with you kids.

In Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thom Dick', with a stylized, cursive script.

Thom Dick
Pastor of Resource Development
Southland Church

We welcome any ideas you have to make *Foundations for Kidz* better. If you want to offer some feedback or have questions about how to use *Foundations for Kidz* effectively talk to the pastor in your child’s ministry area or email Pastor Thom Dick at thom@mysouthland.com.

Foundations for Kidz is also available for download at www.therenewedfamily.com.

Hey Kids!

My name is Ravi Raccoon and I am looking forward to telling you some of the amazing adventures that I have had with my crazy friends! I hope that as you read these stories you will learn lessons about Creator-God and you will also avoid making some of the silly mistakes that my friends and I made growing up. But MOST of all...I hope that our stories help you meet with Jesus! Jesus is my friend and I have come to love Him so much! He is the most important person in the world and He has a special plan for your life!

We are going to write an eBook like this every month and inside you will find there are five activities you can do every week that will help you remember what you learned at Kidzland and grow closer to Jesus. Try them all!

On Sunday every week you'll have the opportunity to talk with your parents about what we learned on the weekend. Then there is an adventure to read about on Monday (an adventure with ME!) And after Monday, come four more days of activities you can do to grow closer to Jesus. If you miss a day, don't worry! You can either do it on the weekend or just skip it for that week. Remember it's all about getting to know Jesus!

If you want to *read* more stories or *listen* to some of my adventures, your parents can download them at www.therenewedfamily.com. And if you EVER have a question about God that you want to ask someone, ask your parents to help you email me, at RRaccoon@mysouthland.com and I will be sure to email you back!

In Him,

R. Raccoon 

Ravi Raccoon

Theme Verses

Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.

Matthew 6:20 (NLT)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NLT)

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (NLT)

Sunday, March 1

Weekend Review

You can use the following questions as a conversation starter, but feel free to add ones of your own and mix them up from week to week.

1. Who was the story about this weekend?
2. Do you remember what part of the Bible they talked about?
3. What was your favourite part of table time this weekend?
4. What was your favourite song in worship?
5. Did you do any songs with actions? Will you teach them to me?
6. Was there a specific challenge for you to do this week?



Monday, March 2

Not far from here at the end of a dusty road is an old country farm. In almost every way it's a regular farm with animals, gardens, barns and fields; owned by a mean old man named Willy Walters. Lying beyond the farm is a pasture, and beyond the pasture is a fence, and that fence is the boundary between the human world of fields and farms and the animal world of the forest.

If you were to go through the pasture and over the fence into the forest you would find yourself walking into a very different world! It's not that the trees are so different, or the rocks and boulders are different, or the moss or creeks or smells or sounds are all that different from what you would expect, but the animals, well they are just a little bit different. Because this forest world, is the world of the Animal Underground!



Spring came early to the forest, the air was warming up, and the snow was melting. As the snow disappeared, the birds began to return; and if you were completely quiet you could faintly hear the birds singing off in the distance. Luther Lynx was on his way to the secret hideout of the Animal Underground, as there was an important meeting today. Wilberforce Wolf ("Wil" for short) had called the meeting and said that it would be very important.

Luther was going to be at the hideout a little bit earlier than all of his friends, so he took his time and walked a little bit slower than usual, enjoying the sights and the sounds of spring's arrival.

As he walked along the way, he heard a voice calling to him, "Hey there, young lynx, could you help me?"

Luther looked around, but didn't see anybody. He was trying to figure out where the voice was coming from and was starting to think that he was hearing things when he heard the voice again, "I am down here."

Luther still didn't see any other animals around. The voice was higher pitched so it must have been a smaller animal, and the animal sounded a little bit older. After a few more moments of looking around, Luther thought for sure he was going crazy. His friends had jokingly been calling him crazy for quite some time, was it possible that he was starting to imagine things? Could he be crazy? As he was lost in thought about this he heard the voice again, this time it was much closer.

"Hey lynx...over here! I know you can hear me since lynxes have good hearing. Can you help me?"

Luther jumped, as he came back to his senses, when he heard the voice again because he still couldn't see anyone. When he finally saw the animal, it

seemed to have come out of thin air. She was an older looking mole which climbed out of a hole only a few feet away from him.

“Aha, so you finally found me!” she said.

“Uh...yeah, I guess,” Luther stammered, still shaking off his surprise from seeing the mole; he was feeling a bit speechless.

“I was hoping you could help out an old mole, if that wouldn’t be too much trouble?” She wrinkled her nose, sniffed once or twice, and adjusted her little glasses perched on her long snout, then continued with a squint in her eyes, “You see, I am moving, and I could use some help getting to my new home. I don’t have much stuff to bring, but my eyes aren’t all that good. I don’t really want to bother a young lynx, but I might get lost if I don’t have a guide.”

Luther thought about it for a moment, and decided he had time to help. He was going to be at the meeting before the rest of his friends anyway. After a moment, he proudly announced, “I can help you Mrs. Mole.”

“You can call me Grandma Mole, if you like,” she said with a funny little smile. Luther almost laughed at how her nose wrinkled up and her whiskers wiggled up and down when she smiled. “Now if you would be so kind as to help me get to my new home. My husband left last week to dig a new hole because this one floods every spring.”

“If you want, you could have a ride and I could carry your stuff,” Luther said, somewhat surprised at himself for being so generous. He recalled how he usually didn’t like carrying his friend Milton on his back, who was much smaller than this mole, but somehow it felt different helping her. He felt...well, important, needed. It felt good to be needed.

“How kind of you,” Grandma Mole said with a smile, her whiskers bobbing again.

Then they were off and Luther was really excited to help. He kept walking as Grandma Mole kept talking, and Luther tried to listen, he really did. But as Grandma Mole went on and on He started to drift off into his day dreams.

At first Luther felt warm; this helping others felt really great. He was finally getting to use some of the lessons that Ravi Raccoon had taught him and his friends in the Animal Underground. He started to daydream about the rewards that he could get from doing this kind act: he might get a gift from Grandma Mole; maybe Ravi would be proud of him and tell all the other animals in the club to try and do more things like he did. His mind continued to wander and he was imagining how he would tell his parents about this good deed.

Suddenly Grandma Mole called out “Stop!” interrupting his daydreaming, and his mind came back to the forest.

Grandma Mole wrinkled her nose and squinted her eyes, sniffing the air to the left and to the right. “Hmm...I am not sure if we should be going left or to the right. I will need to try and remember. Oh dear, I hope this doesn’t take too long!”

Luther was ok with waiting for Grandma Mole, but he started to wonder if he was going to be late for the meeting and if he was going to have to deal with his friends asking where he had been.

After a few moments, Grandma Mole came to a decision and said, "I think we should go to the left."

Luther was happy that they were moving again so he would still make the meeting. But after a few more moments of walking Grandma Mole told him to stop again.

"We should have gone to the right path," said Grandma Mole. "We will have to go back and then go to the right."

Luther was now slightly annoyed, He backed up and headed back to the other path, all the while listening to more stories from Grandma Mole about all of her children and grandchildren.

She eventually stopped talking for a few minutes, which was a welcome relief to Luther. They went on for a few minutes in silence and then Grandma Mole broke the quiet with, "No, No, No, this is not good! Let's turn around and go back to the other path, this time I know where it is."

Luther craned his neck around to look at her as if to say you can't be serious! Luther let an annoyed sigh escape from his lips, but then immediately felt sorry about it and hoped that she hadn't heard him. He turned around one more time, which wasn't easy since his desire to help was quickly disappearing. He had the thought to leave the mole here, but shook his fur to get that thought out of his head. Seriously Luther? He thought to himself, I can't leave her here! Yikes! What an ugly thought! Oh well, I'm probably going to miss the meeting by now no matter what anyway. So he decided to continue to help out.

As they went on, he suddenly chuckled at the thought that earlier in the day he was sure he had been going crazy, and now he was helping a mole that was making him go a little crazy!

Finally, after a couple more stops with Grandma Mole figuring out her directions, they arrived at the moles' new home. As they arrived Grandpa Mole climbed out of the hole to greet Grandma Mole and Luther. He really didn't look any different than Grandma Mole except he was slightly larger and a little more wrinkled.

"You made it!" Grandpa Mole said. Luther noticed his voice was very deep for such a small animal.

Grandma Mole replied, "I would have never made it without, this young lynx's help." Turning to Luther she said, "It is starting to get close to dark, your parents will be worried about you if you do not leave soon. Here take this, I don't have much but it is the least I can do for you. Thank you so much for your help!"

Grandma Mole pulled out a shiny coin from the few belongings that she was carrying and gave it to Luther. Luther took a look at it but wasn't really sure what it was, but it was solid, heavy and shiny. Whatever it was, it looked valuable! Between his new treasure and the chance to help out Grandma and

Grandpa Mole he felt that missing the Animal Underground meeting had been well worth it.

Luther bounded off for home, then stopped and turned to take one last look at Grandma and Grandpa Mole who were waving their paws. Luther waved and then turned to dash off into the trees. Just wait till the gang hears about this! He thought.

What do you think?

Just like Luther Lynx discovered, it can be very rewarding to help others in need. We may not get paid for helping others, but often there is a good feeling that goes along with it. Ask yourself, "Am I willing to help others even if it is hard and doesn't make me feel good?" This is what Jesus was talking about when He said 'Store up your treasures in heaven' (Matthew 6:20).

Tuesday, March 3

Remember... Store up your treasures in heaven!

Luther discovered that helping others can be very rewarding – especially in how it makes him feel. Many times when we help others we may not feel amazing. We may not get paid for helping others like Luther did. Jesus told His disciples in **Matthew 10:42** *“If you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded.”* Jesus didn’t say that if we feel like we did good, we will be rewarded. He said that if we helped someone even in a small way, He will reward us!

Ask Jesus to show you one small act of kindness you did in the last few days. Then imagine your huge reward and draw a picture of what you think it might look like. Thank and praise Him for seeing every good deed!

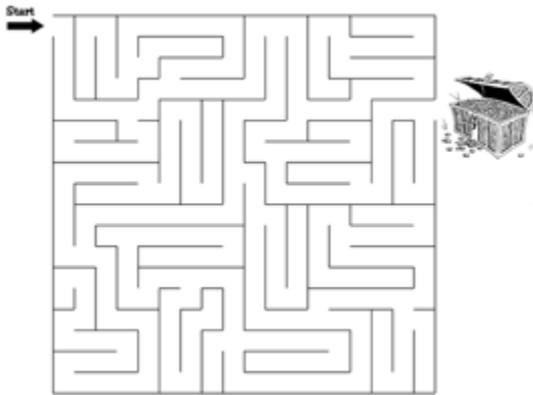
Wednesday, March 4

Do you remember the last time someone did something kind for you? Share it with your mom or dad. Now let's grab a dice and play a small 'treasure in heaven' game with a parent:

- Roll a 1: Run and give someone a hug or a high five.
- Roll a 2: Remember our verse yesterday – run and give a small cup of water.
- Roll a 3: Quickly serve in a small way! Wash one dish, pickup one toy or put away something small, but do it quick. Remember to serve others.
- Roll a 4: Read one verse from Matthew 6:19-21. (next time read the next)
- Roll a 5: Let loose! Go crazy for a few seconds – dance, jumping jacks etc. use your imagination!
- Roll a 6: On a large piece of paper draw a small picture of a way you can help your brother, sister or parents. Leave room for other times that you roll a 6.

Thursday, March 5

Find your way to the treasure!



Repeat the verse for the week:

Matthew 6:20 *Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.*

Friday, March 6

Remember... Store up your treasures in heaven!

The Bible reminds us in many places that the rewards for every good deed that we do when we obey Him will be great. Look up the following verses together with a parent and read them out loud:

- 1 Corinthians 2:9
- Matthew 5.12
- Revelation 22.12
- Matthew 10.41-42

Which one is your favourite verse out of the 4 that you read above? Why is it your favourite?

Sometimes, when we do good things for others, it costs us something. For example, giving money to the church...costs money (you guessed it!). But shoveling a neighbour's driveway will cost you time and energy – time and energy you could spend on other things. But God notices all good things done for others in obedience to Him and makes note of it so that your reward is not lost. Do listening prayer with a parent and ask God to remind you of one thing you did this last week to serve others, no matter how small. Then ask Him to show you how He felt when you did that.

Sunday, March 8

Weekend Review

You can use the following questions as a conversation starter, but feel free to add ones of your own and mix them up from week to week.

1. Who was the story about this weekend?
2. Do you remember what part of the Bible they talked about?
3. What was your favourite part of table time this weekend?
4. What was your favourite song in worship?
5. Did you do any songs with actions? Will you teach them to me?
6. Was there a specific challenge for you to do this week?



Monday, March 9

The next day, Luther felt awfully proud of how he had helped Grandma and Grandpa Mole. He tried to think of the best way to share his story with the gang. As he was thinking of just how amazing he was and how proud his friends in the Animal Underground would be of him, a small object suddenly fell out of a tree in front of him, scaring Luther half to death. Jumping back he barked in surprise as he realized what that object was...it was Milton Mouse! "Milton what were you doing up there?"

"I was trying to practice jumping from branch to branch on the tree, like Simon the squirrel."

Luther stifled a chuckle as he pictured Milton trying to be a squirrel. "Why? You're already good at sneaking around. Remember when you stole the glasses off of Mr. Ravi's nose? Why do you need to be able to jump from tree to tree too?"

Milton looked up at him with a frown. Clearly he wasn't impressed that Luther didn't immediately approve of his new 'skills'. "Well, if you must know, I wanted to practice this so that you guys would be amazed. Because I really am a cool mouse."

Luther let out a laugh and said, "Milton, you don't have to try to impress us, we like you the way that you are." As he said it, Luther realized that he himself actually cared a lot about impressing the other guys too.

Luther and Milton came around the last bend before the hide out. As they walked in they saw that the others had started the meeting without them. Ravi Raccoon was there and so were Calvin Cougar and Wil Wolf. It looked as if they were having an important discussion. The discussion stopped when Ravi saw Luther and Milton.

"Hello Luther, Milton. I was just saying that I have an important job for all of you guys," Ravi said with a smile in his eyes.

"Cool!" Milton and Luther said at the same time.

"I need you four boys to go to Mr. Beaver and give him this." Ravi pulled out a small pouch. As Ravi was handing the pouch to Luther, he told the four of them, "Please, don't look in the pouch! And don't let it get wet!"

Calvin was intrigued by the mystery of the task and the contents of the pouch, and asked, "What are you wanting us to do?"

"I want you to give this pouch to Mr. Beaver," Ravi stated matter-of-factly.

"But what for?" Calvin asked.

"You'll find out when you get there!" Ravi said firmly.

Calvin scowled, "Bah! I hate not knowing." And he turned and marched out of the hideout.

Ravi chuckled at Calvin's impatience. Turning to the rest of the group that remained, he said, "What are you boys waiting for? You should be off! It's urgent!"

Without another word, Milton, Wil and Luther got up and left the hideout to go to Mr. Beaver's pond. Luther was excited to have an urgent job from Ravi. He thought he might even get another treasure...maybe it was in the pouch! Ravi, who was always very patient, made it seem like they should be hurrying and that made it even more exciting! Calvin, who had been waiting for the rest of them outside the hideout, was still annoyed that Ravi hadn't shared what they were going to be doing.

"So what do you think the job is going to be?" Luther asked.

Calvin curtly responded, "Ravi didn't say what it was, so it must have not been that important," his impatience was beginning to show a little bit more.

Luther wanted to calm Calvin down, "Hey you know *Mr.* Ravi always has his reasons for not telling us what is going on."

This response only annoyed Calvin more, so Calvin stomped off a few feet further away and pretended to ignore Luther. In his head Calvin thought, *This is not what I had planned for today. I wanted to have some fun or at least a great adventure, and not worry about working. The least Ravi could do is let us know what it is we are actually doing!* He didn't like it when Luther tried to explain things to him. He was not a little cub after all! Besides, he was still annoyed that Luther had skipped yesterday's important meeting. Luther didn't get the hint and kept trying to explain things to Calvin. Very quickly he had finally had enough. "Luther, you like to joke around, but right now it's bugging me, so can you please stop talking!"

Luther was shocked, why was Calvin so angry? "What's all this about? Is it because Mr. Ravi gave me the pouch?" Luther sarcastically added, "do *you* want to carry the pouch?"

Calvin didn't answer Luther's question but just started grumbling, "First you miss the important meeting yesterday, and now Ravi gives *you* the pouch. What makes you think you're such a big shot, huh?!" Calvin growled at him.

Milton, who had been listening in quietly, detected a hint of jealousy in Calvin's voice, but he didn't say anything. He was just happy that he wasn't being teased for once. Saying something might make both Luther and Calvin ticked off at him. When both Luther and Calvin put their minds together, they knew how create to more than their share of trouble, so Milton just kept quiet.

Wil asked Luther what was so important that he missed yesterday's meeting. Luther was more than eager to share the story of helping Grandma Mole. He pulled out the shiny coin and added, "And look at what she gave me! I'm not sure what it is, but I can tell it's very valuable!"

Wil and Milton quickly gathered around and looked at it, taking turns touching the shiny surface. Calvin, on the other hand, was a little miffed at Luther's good fortune and sudden popularity –first with a needy forest animal, then with Ravi who let him carry the pouch and now with Wil and Milton. He stayed further back, but he did have a curious eye on the shiny coin they were looking at.

Calvin started walking away, he turned his head back to the others and shouted, “Guys! We need to get going!” Luther put the coin away and they trotted to catch up with Calvin.

The beaver pond was located on a stream which ran through a long ravine on the north side of Mount Guardian. The long trip to the beaver pond seemed to take much longer than it normally would; the sun was shining and the air was warm, but there was a chill in the group. Milton normally would have preferred to ride on Calvin’s back, but he had climbed onto Wil’s back instead; there was no way Milton was going near Calvin with his mood being the way it was! Besides arguing, Luther was far too preoccupied with staring at his shiny coin every chance he got. Wil and Milton often exchanged concerned glances as they listened to Calvin’s bickering and Luther’s attempts to give “wise” advice. Both Wil and Milton wished the other boys would just quit talking already.

Wil had finally had enough of his friends fighting, “Stop it! Both of you stop it!” he barked.

Both Calvin and Luther went quiet. When Wil raised his voice like this they knew that they shouldn’t test his patience.

Calvin, a little startled by Wil’s outburst, finally broke the silence. “I’m not complaining Wil-ber-force!” He added Wil’s full name because he knew Wil didn’t like it. “But you can’t seriously say that it doesn’t bug you that Ravi doesn’t trust us??”

“Okay, Calvin, don’t start that again!” Luther groaned.

Wil, held up a paw to quiet Luther down and he asked, “Fine, Calvin, explain what you mean.”

Calvin replied with a grinning sneer at Luther, “Well, we’re carrying something for Ravi to the Beavers, and he didn’t tell us what it is. And he didn’t tell us what we are doing once we get there! So doesn’t that seem a little suspicious to you?”

Luther thought it was a bit ridiculous that Calvin was questioning Ravi, “Really, Calvin? Don’t be a baby! Do you really think that Mr. Ravi is making us do something that is bad for us?”

Calvin’s anger came back and he was almost about to pounce on Luther and start a fight, when suddenly there was a vaguely familiar voice that came from the tree tops. “Allo cubs, are you going to continue to fight, or are you going to do what Ravi asked you to do?”

Milton recognized the voice, it belonged to a squirrel. For the first time during the hike to the beaver pond, Milton smiled happily, as he almost shouted “Simon!”

What do you think?

Luther and Calvin were arguing a lot, both were struggling with pride. Milton and Wil both saw that it wasn’t good. In your own life can you see some areas that “aren’t good”? Spend some time with Jesus and ask Him to show you a

problem in how you treated a friend, a brother or sister, or a mom or dad. Confess it to God and if you have a journal, write it down.

Tuesday, March 10

Calvin was having a hard time trusting his leader, Ravi, but we know that Calvin will be better off if he obeys what he was asked to do.

Repeat the verse for this week: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.* **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Sometime this week, if your activities allow it, have your parents let you try to give the directions to get home. For example, if you are going to the store, or to sports practice, ask them to let you try to direct your way home – do you know your way around well enough? Do you need to depend on your parents' understanding sometimes? If that's too easy, maybe your parents can drive somewhere unfamiliar and have you try it again.

Wednesday, March 11

Discuss the following list of Bible characters – each of them did things that made absolutely no sense to the people around them. How did they follow Proverbs 3:5-6 by ‘trusting in the Lord’ and not ‘depending on their own understanding’?

- Noah (building the ark)
- Joshua (marching around Jericho)
- Gideon (sending all but 300 warriors home)

Thursday, March 12

Repeat the verse: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.* **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Thank Jesus that He will always be with you and that He knows best! As you pray, ask Jesus to help you imagine a special place that you can be with Jesus – maybe you imagine Him having a picnic with you, maybe you imagine Him doing something really cool like mountain climbing! Take a piece of paper and write on the top “He is with me!” and draw the picture of you and Jesus that you imagined.

Friday, March 13

Get out your Bible, see if you can find Romans 8:38-39. Practice finding it a couple of times and then challenge your mom or dad to see if they can find it as quickly as you! No cheating...you can't use bookmarks to hold your place!

Read it together with your mom or dad. The Bible says that *nothing* can separate us from God's love. Imagine all the things you can that are very big and very strong – can any of them keep God's love from you? We can trust Him, even if the entire world was against you and God, He is still bigger!

Pray a prayer committing your weekend to God and ask Him to help you to trust Him more. You know that He is **for** you, not against you, so you can trust Him more than anything else.

Sunday, March 15

Weekend Review

You can use the following questions as a conversation starter, but feel free to add ones of your own and mix them up from week to week.

1. Who was the story about this weekend?
2. Do you remember what part of the Bible they talked about?
3. What was your favourite part of table time this weekend?
4. What was your favourite song in worship?
5. Did you do any songs with actions? Will you teach them to me?
6. Was there a specific challenge for you to do this week?



Monday, March 16

“Simon!” the four of them exclaimed.

“What are you doing here?” asked Milton.

“I was in the area, and I heard you guys arguing so I followed you for a bit,” Simon replied as He ran down the tree.

“How long have you been following us?” asked Milton. As he was asking this, Milton was almost drooling at the sight of his hero. Simon had been the best in the Animal Underground at sneaking around and moving silently through the trees. Milton was almost in complete shock.

“Long enough to know what is going on,” replied Simon with a twinkle in his eyes. He turned his gaze on Calvin, who turned away and mumbled, “So you heard all of that?”

“Yes, I did. For your sake, I’m glad I did,” Simon said with a slight frown on his face. Calvin glanced up at Simon, just in time to see a smile starting on Simon’s face. The crazy, old squirrel dashed up Calvin’s legs and in a flash was sitting on Calvin’s nose staring him right in the eyes. Calvin yelped a little in surprise and stumbled back a little.

Simon pointed a claw at Calvin’s face and said “Sit!” Calvin did just that, dumbfounded at this crazy little animal.

Simon hopped off Calvin’s nose and glanced around at all of them, “Boys, fortunately for you I have something that can make it better.”

Calvin’s ears perked up a little and he risked a sideways glance at the nutty little animal. He mumbled just loud enough for everyone to hear, “What is that?”

“I will tell you a story of a time when I did not trust the Creator, or Ravi. Calvin I know you have heard this story, but I want to share it with your friends.”

“YOU HAVE HEARD THIS STORY?!” Milton was shocked that Calvin had been able to hear this from Simon before he had the chance.

“Quite a few years ago when I was a little older than you cubs, I was given an important job. I was asked to go up the ravine – right up there where the creek starts – to tell a pack of wolves that they were in danger. You have to remember, the forest animals and the wolves, we were not friends at that time. But I was clever, I didn’t want to *really* disobey my orders, so I just decided I would go, but I would take the *long* way around so that I wouldn’t get there in time to warn them.”

As Simon was speaking the whole group fell quiet, you could even hear a leaf drop from a nearby tree, if you listened closely enough. Simon continued, “Here is what I did not tell you last time, Calvin, I disobeyed. And because I choose the long way, I almost died. The long way was by going on Mount Guardian. Yes, going over the mountain was *shorter*, but it took way *longer* to get to the other side of the forest. While I was on the mountain, I found myself injured and stuck on a tree that was hanging over the edge of a cliff, all because

of my disobedience. I did not trust the Creator, or Ravi. I wanted to do things my way, and that is how I ended up in the tree. I could have died on that tree, if it weren't for the Creator hearing my prayers and sending Sophie the Great White Owl to save my life."

The boys let those words sink in for a moment. Simon just sat there observing their silence, twitching his tail and whiskers every few seconds. Milton was the first to break the silence as he thoughtfully responded, "Wow! That was amazing."

"You have to trust the Creator's plans, and the plans of your leaders. If you don't, you cannot be obedient to what they are asking of you. Well, you boys should be off; you don't want to keep Ravi waiting."

"Where are you going?" asked Calvin.

"I need to head out if I am going to be able to do more spying."

Milton perked up and eagerly responded, "You are spying? Can I come with you? I have been practicing my tree jumping!"

Wil stood up and stepped beside Milton and lowered his head beside the eager little mouse, "Milton, we need to get to the beaver dam, we have been taking too long already."

"Come on Wil! How cool is it that we got to talk with Simon the Squirrel?" Milton whined.

But there really was no arguing with Wil, it was true, they had to get going; the time was getting late. Besides that, Simon had disappeared up a tree as fast as a bolt of furry lightning and was gone anyway. So with that, the four animals were off to the mouth of the ravine. All of them were excited to have seen Simon the squirrel, though Calvin was a little subdued in the conversation.

Finally Calvin moved over beside Luther and hung his head in shame. He was silent for a minute while he searched for the words to say. Finally he managed to say what was on his heart, "I am sorry Luther for being in a rotten mood today. I didn't like that Ravi trusted you with the pouch, because you missed the meeting yesterday. I now know you were helping someone in need, but I was still upset at you."

"Hey Calvin, you are not the only one that should apologize, I am sorry that I was trying to get under your fur. I shouldn't have been trying to make you mad."

Just as they finished apologizing, they looked and saw that they were atop of the hill that overlooked the dam.

"We made it," exclaimed Milton.

Indeed they had, just ahead of them was a tidy beaver dam and a very comfortable looking beaver lodge attached to it. The boys all began to wonder if they would finally discover the true purpose of their mission.

What do you think?

Life with Jesus is a daily adventure. He doesn't always tell us everything we want to know each day (in fact, He rarely does), but He still asks us to obey Him,

obey our teachers, obey our moms and dads – even if what they ask doesn't always make sense.

In our story, Calvin had an especially hard time trusting Ravi because a lot of what he asked the boys to do didn't make sense. Thankfully Simon was there to set them straight! Can you think of something in your own life that doesn't make sense? Ask your parents for a story from their life about something that didn't make sense to them, but when they trusted God, they found out that He knows best.

Tuesday, March 17

In our story, the boys met an odd little squirrel named Simon. Simon was very close to God and was extremely wise, but as we learned from his story, he was not always wise but acted selfishly. Calvin and Luther were convicted by his story, which prompted them to make things right with each other. This was an act of faith – and because it was an act of faith, it pleased God!

Your mom and dad aren't perfect, but no doubt they have learned a lot from their own mistakes. Ask them to share one story of a mistake they made which taught them a valuable lesson. Take a moment to pray and thank God for the lessons we can learn from others' mistakes!

Wednesday, March 18

Repeat the verse for this week: *And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.* **Hebrews 11:6**

Make an encouragement card for someone in your family. Pray and ask God who you should make a card for. Start making the card, **but do not give it to that person yet**. Say a simple prayer for that person today and the next 2 days.

Thursday, March 19

Take some chairs, cushions and blankets and build a fort. Have some fun! Decide on what kind of fort you are building. Is it a palace? Is it a fortress? Discuss what kind of rooms you are building in your fort. Make it an adventure.

When you are done, get together under the fort with your mom or dad and talk about how building each room and laying down each blanket is like growing our faith. Sometimes the blankets fall down and the fort collapses, but we keep working and don't give up. If we keep at it, we get to enjoy a fort well built or a life well lived! Pray together for the person you will be giving your encouragement card to. Ask God to show you something that you can encourage that person with.

Friday, March 20

Finish the encouragement card and hand it to the person you made it for. Give the card with a hug!

Take a few minutes and think of 5 things that you are thankful for about that person and tell God about those things. And finally, review the verse one more time!

*And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. **Hebrews 11:6***

Sunday, March 22

Weekend Review

You can use the following questions as a conversation starter, but feel free to add ones of your own and mix them up from week to week.

1. Who was the story about this weekend?
2. Do you remember what part of the Bible they talked about?
3. What was your favourite part of table time this weekend?
4. What was your favourite song in worship?
5. Did you do any songs with actions? Will you teach them to me?
6. Was there a specific challenge for you to do this week?



Monday, March 23

Wil led the way with Milton still riding on his back, followed by Calvin. In the back was Luther, who had his shiny coin out *yet again*, and was admiring it as they walked. Luther thought about how good it felt to be rewarded for doing a good deed.

They finally arrived at the Beaver's dam, and everyone was tingling with anticipation as to what their mission would end up being about. Calvin glanced at the pouch that Luther was carrying and wondered to himself what it might hold. Luther saw Calvin looking at him and quickly put away his coin.

Wil knocked on the door and a few seconds later they heard a bit of shuffling of paws inside the lodge and at last the door was opened by Mr. Beaver.

"Ahh, the Animal Underground has graciously paid me a visit!" Mr. Beaver said with a twinkle in his eye. "Come in! Come in! I have a special guest inside who is awaiting your arrival."

The boys glanced at each other, wondering what he might mean. Wil shrugged his shoulders and lowered his head to get through the low opening – in fact, all the boys (except Milton, of course) had to drop their heads down; beaver dams weren't built for wolves, lynxes and cougars after all.

Inside the cozy space, Mrs. Beaver was busy pouring tea for a rather old looking raccoon. Wil (who normally didn't get too surprised about anything) dropped open his jaw in shock. "Ravi?!" All the boys froze in surprise, not quite sure what to say or do.

A wry smile crossed Ravi's face as he said, "Hey, you finally made it. What took you so long?"

The boys thought he must be joking, but he said that as calmly as if he was commenting about the weather outside.

Calvin whispered to Luther and Milton, "How does such an old raccoon, move so fast?" He made sure to whisper really quietly so that there would be no way Ravi could hear him.

Ravi paused and with a bit of a smile asked, "Do you have something that you want to say?"

Luther responded to Calvin's whisper with his own comment, "Busted!"

Ravi stood up, grabbed his walking stick and continued speaking, "Thank you very much for the tea, Brighton and Mrs. Beaver. It was a pleasure; we have not been able to talk for a long time. Sorry that I am going to have to cut this short, but I really must be going. Perhaps next time I will not leave it so long before dropping by."

Mr. and Mrs. Beaver said farewell to Ravi and the boys. They reminded him that he was welcome to come by their new dam anytime he wished. With a wave, Ravi closed the door gently behind him. Turning to the boys he said, "I am so glad you boys made it here." Looking around at the boys he added, "Did you bring the pouch?"

“Here it is.” Luther stepped forward with the pouch and let Ravi lift it off his neck. Ravi opened the pouch and inspected it for a moment.

“Well we ought to be on the move if we are going to finish our mission and get back home before dark.” The boys all agreed and started to follow Ravi. Ravi started walking away from the dam while pointing his walking stick to a part of the forest and asked, “Do you know what is over there?”

Calvin was the first to answer, “My mom and dad have told me not to go into that part of the forest because there are traps.”

“You are exactly right!” replied Ravi, “the hunters who live next to Willy Walters’ farm often head over there to set traps for larger animals, such as bears.” Ravi became quiet, and all the boys wanted to ask him what they were doing out in this area, but everyone sensed that Ravi was about to say something quite important, so they held their tongues.

Ravi stopped, sighed, took his glasses off his nose and wiped them on his sleeve. It took him a minute to clean them, squint and look through them a couple of times and clean them again. It was driving them nuts waiting to hear what Ravi had to say to them. Finally he was satisfied with his glasses, placed them back on his nose and said, “I know I did not tell you what we were doing today; I guess it’s about time you find out what we are doing all the way out in this part of the forest.” Pointing off into the thick trees he continued, “There is an animal that got trapped today and I needed you boys to help.”

“Is that why Simon was in this part of the forest today, did he find this poor animal in the trap?” Milton squeaked.

Ravi raised his eyebrows, “Oh, so you met Simon on the way to the Beaver’s, did you? I had asked him to watch you on the way over.” Ravi motioned for them to follow him into the thick cluster of trees that he had pointed to. As Ravi and the four adventurers started getting close to the trap, they could hear an animal whimpering. When the four boys heard this they started to feel a little bit sick at the thought of having a leg get caught in a trap. Even Wil winced at the thought of it. “Just around this group of trees and we will be there. I must warn you of who is in the trap before we get there. He is one of the farmer’s hunting dogs. You might have met him before,” Ravi paused and took a breath and continued, “...his name is Warwick.”

The boys froze at the sound of that name. Ravi turned around, seeing that the boys had stopped in their tracks. “What’s the matter?”

Luther stammered, “Are you serious? You know who this is right? I mean, he, well, that’s...” Luther’s voice trailed off as he searched for the right words.

Milton jumped in and squeaked, “We just can’t, Ravi! After all that he has done to us!”

Ravi raised a paw to silence them. The group fell silent. “How many of you know the story of the Creator’s Son?”

The boys slowly lifted their paws a little off the ground. They had all heard the story several times from Ravi.

“I wonder,” Ravi mused, “what He would have done if His enemies were trapped? Would He have come to earth to rescue them? Hmmm?” Ravi’s piercing gaze searched each of their eyes. As his eyes met with each of them, they looked away, it was very hard to look Ravi in the eyes.

Ravi turned and faced Wil, “What do you think Wil? Should we show compassion to our enemies?”

Wil was silent for a moment while the rest of the boys just stared at the ground in shame after being reminded of God’s Son. After taking his time to think Wil responded, “I don’t want to help Warwick, but I know that this is what we should do. The Creator’s Son would have done no less.”

After hearing this Milton, the smallest of the bunch, agreed. Then Calvin agreed with Wil, but Luther needed a little more convincing yet. He looked up at Ravi and met his gaze for a moment, “Are we really going to help Warwick?” His eyes weren’t defiant, but pleading. “I mean, what if something bad happens to us when we help him?” Luther was expecting Ravi to try to correct his bad attitude for saying these things. But there was a moment of silence.

Ravi hobbled over to Luther and stood level with his chin. Ravi reached out his paw and lifted Luther’s drooping head so he could look him in the eyes. Luther was surprised at the look on Ravi’s face, the raccoon had a gentle and loving look in his eyes. Then, just barely loud enough for the others to hear, he spoke up softly, “Just because something bad might happen for doing what is right, doesn’t mean we can ignore doing what is right.”

Luther felt shame wash over him again. A large tear formed in his eye and ran down his snout and dropped to the ground. A small paw reached out and wiped his cheek. Ravi’s eyes were tender when they met up with Luther’s gaze again. This time Luther did not look away and Luther stood up a little taller because of the courage that he saw in Ravi’s eyes. He sniffled, cleared his throat and said, “Ok, let’s help him.” He paused and then added, “But can we pray first before we begin? I think we are going to need God’s help with this.” Everyone nodded in agreement.

Ravi sat down and the boys lay down on the ground. Ravi lifted his paws to the sky and prayed, “Creator God, thank You for this opportunity to show love to an enemy, just like You showed Your love to us when we were Your enemies. Please give us Your love for Warwick and please watch over us as we try to help him. Amen.”

The boys followed Ravi with renewed courage for the task at hand. As they arrived they saw Warwick with one of his hind legs stuck in the trap. As the group entered the small clearing where he was trapped he looked up and a scowl crossed his face. Warwick let out a deep growl and bared his teeth. It was easy to see that he was not impressed by this turn of events. As he was growling he noticed Ravi, “So...you are that raccoon that Stark tried to get rid of for so many years.” Warwick looked as if he forgot that his back leg was trapped because he crouched as if ready to pounce and attack Ravi. “Why are you here?”

Ravi spoke softly, "We are here to help you."

The dog let out a howl, then barked angrily, "You are here to gloat and brag. If I wasn't caught in this trap, you wouldn't be so bold!"

Ravi did not seem to mind that the dog was angry at him. As he moved closer he spoke gently, "Can I help you out of the trap?"

Warwick snarled at this comment and snapped his teeth at Ravi, pulling at the trap which sent shooting pain through his leg. Warwick howled in pain and backed up a little from Ravi. Warwick was confused. He didn't know how he would get free from the trap and he would eventually die without help. Warwick was a hunting dog and he knew all too well how traps worked. Slowly it dawned on him that this was likely going to be his only chance to get out. After a few moments of madly trying to come up with another solution to this situation, and finding none, he figured he'd better take this chance. He growled at Ravi, "You better make it quick."

What do you think?

Can you think of someone in your life that you really don't like? Maybe a bully at school, maybe your brother or sister sometimes when they are mean to you?

Ravi challenged the boys in the story by reminding them about how Jesus was willing to help His enemies, even at the risk of getting hurt (which He did). As a small step towards loving your enemies, ask Jesus to show you one enemy you have in your life and start praying for that person this week. What is a good prayer you can pray for that person? Share that prayer with someone.

Tuesday, March 24

Ravi was the wisest and kindest animal of the group, but even he still needed God's power to help Warwick. Calvin, Luther, Wil and Milton needed God's power to show God's love to their enemy.

Showing love to your enemy is not easy. Even something as simple as saying a quick prayer for your enemy can often be very hard. Ask God to help you to pray for the enemy that God showed you yesterday. Take a few moments and ask God to show you as many good things as possible that you can pray for your enemy.

Wednesday, March 25

Read the verse for the week: *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen* **Ephesians 3:20-21**

Let your imagination run wild, what would be the wildest dream that you could possibly have for your life. Is there some HUGE prayer request that you don't even dare to pray because it's just too big? But what does this verse say? It says that God can accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

Write or draw out your prayer request on a slip of paper and keep it in your Bible as a reminder to keep praying about it every time you see it. Also, pray for the enemy you identified on Monday.

Thursday, March 26

Play a little game. Take a paper and a pen and write down as many names of people or places or things that you can remember in the Bible that start with the letter “__” (have one of your parents give you a letter). For example, if they say “J”, then you might write down things like “Jesus, Jerusalem, John, Jericho...etc.”

Remember the enemy that you were going to pray for? Ask God to show you one thing that you can thank Him for that person.

Friday, March 27

God is a BIG God and He can do MIGHTY things! With a parent start naming off the smallest things you can think of and each of you take turns naming something a bit larger than what the other one just said. How big can you go with this game?

Listen in prayer about a big thing that you want answered. Picture Jesus in the prayer request. What is He doing? What is He telling you? Write down what you hear and see!

Pray for the enemy you identified on Monday.

Sunday, March 29

Weekend Review

You can use the following questions as a conversation starter, but feel free to add ones of your own and mix them up from week to week.

1. Who was the story about this weekend?
2. Do you remember what part of the Bible they talked about?
3. What was your favourite part of table time this weekend?
4. What was your favourite song in worship?
5. Did you do any songs with actions? Will you teach them to me?
6. Was there a specific challenge for you to do this week?



Monday, March 30

Ravi approached Warwick slowly and calmly. As he got closer, Ravi called to Wil to help him out by placing his paw on a lever on the other side of the trap. Wil gulped, he started to have second thoughts about this, but he slowly walked forward to help. Getting Warwick out of the trap only took a couple of seconds. Once Warwick was free from the trap, he limped away a couple of steps and collapsed on the ground.

Ravi tried to approach Warwick, but Warwick saw Ravi approaching and growled at him, "You've had your chance to help me, now leave."

"There is one more thing that I would like to do for you," Ravi replied, reaching for the pouch.

Warwick unsteadily got to his feet and bared his teeth menacingly, "There is nothing more that you can do for me. Leave now!"

But Ravi insisted, "I have plants in my pouch that will help your leg heal."

Warwick was thinking that he might have a chance to fight Ravi. Warwick had heard the stories of Stark's battles with Ravi and the Animal Underground. He knew if he could defeat the raccoon that he would be top dog for miles around. All of the other dogs would respect him. If he beat Ravi, he would have finished what Stark had unsuccessfully tried to do for many years. Warwick became more defensive, "You think I am weak? I can still fight you."

Upon hearing this the four boys all stood behind Ravi, ready to jump if Warwick would even try to lay a paw on Ravi. Ravi just stood there, he didn't take any defensive stance. All that Ravi did was lift his walking stick, and motion for the boys to stand down. The four boys did not like being told to back off, but they trusted Ravi.

"If you want me, here I am," was all Ravi said.

Upon hearing these words from Ravi, Luther was the first to protest. "BUT RAVI..."

Ravi growled slightly, he was not joking around, he meant business, "Boys not now, if you are going to fight you need to leave."

Wil started to try to talk Ravi out of these harsh words, "BUT RAVI..."

"Wil, I need you and the boys to go back."

"Ravi..."

"Boys, this is between me and Warwick now."

The four boys started to walk away. They did not want to leave Ravi, so instead they hid so that Ravi could not see them, but they could still hear Ravi and Warwick.

Warwick was the first to break the silence, "How do I know that you are not going to trick me. Stark has told me about all of the mean things you have done."

Ravi responded unshaken, "I am not going to trick you, do you want my help or not?"

"I do not trust you, you are a trickster."

“I do not have any tricks. I am here to help you.”

It took Warwick more than a moment to decide what he should do. He took one more look at Ravi, and snarled, “This is your lucky day raccoon, I’ll let you off this time. If I see you or your friends again, I will not be as nice.” Warwick snatched the pouch of plants from Ravi and limped off.

Ravi stood there for some time after Warwick had hobbled off. “Boys you can come out now,” Ravi called. The boys one by one slowly climbed out from the bush that they were hiding behind. “I knew you boys would be hiding.”

Wil was the first to ask, what they had all been thinking, “How come you stood there and you didn’t defend yourself? He said mean things about you. He could have attacked you!”

“Wil, remember even if you could be hurt for doing the right thing, you still should do it. Being kind to Warwick was the right thing to do, even if he would have attacked me.”

After Ravi said these words, he came up to each of the boys and gave them a hug. “I am so proud of each of you, you were all able to make the right choices today.”

Luther felt shame come over him again. He shook his head and replied, “We did not make all of the right choices today, we fought on the way here, we did not want to help Warwick, and we had trouble doing what you wanted us to do.”

Ravi looked at Luther with compassion, put his hands on his hips and asked a very strange question, “Luther, yesterday when you missed the meeting, did you happen to meet up with dear old Grandma Mole?”

Luther was a little surprised at this question. “Uh, yeah...why?”

“She and her husband are old friends of mine. I stopped by their new hole later that day and she told me about your kind deed.”

Luther wasn’t sure where this was going and just stared at Ravi, dumbfounded.

“Luther, what did she give you for helping her?”

Luther hesitated, and then slowly pulled out the shiny coin and held it out in his open paw.

Ravi picked it up and held it in the sun. The shimmering beam of light glinted off the gold coloured coin, making it sparkle. Then he said, “Luther, you did what was right yesterday and in return you were rewarded with this small treasure.” He paused and then continued, looking Luther straight in the eyes, “Would you still have done it, even if you knew you would not get rewarded?”

Luther thought for a moment and said, “Well, yes, I didn’t know she was going to give me that coin when I agreed to help.”

“And you were right to help, even without the promise of reward. But...” Ravi appeared thoughtful for a moment and put the coin down and pointed to the trap where Warwick had been, “would you be willing to do a kind deed if you knew that doing so would be harmful to you?”

Luther hung his head, all he could manage was a stammering reply, “I...I don’t...know...probably not.”

Ravi turned and looked at all of them, “You see, it’s easy to do good things for good animals. It’s easy to do good when there is a reward. But the Creator showed how much better He is than we are when He did good for everyone, good and bad, and he knew it would hurt Him badly.” He paused for a moment to let those words sink in, then continued, “I remember words that Simon Squirrel taught me many years ago; words that he learned from man’s book about the Creator. The book said ‘For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as the Creator’s Son suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in His steps.’”

“Luther you were brave, and even if you have made mistakes, ultimately you made the right choices today. Come on boys let’s go home.”

What do you think?

In our story, Ravi wasn’t sure if Warwick would hurt him or not, but he was willing to take that chance. In real life, Jesus didn’t just take a chance, He knew He would get hurt – but He did it to set us free from the trap of sin which would eventually kill us forever. Thank Jesus today for sacrificing His life to rescue you from sin. As you thank Him, see if you can name at least one sin that He has saved you from.

Tuesday, March 31

In our story, no one was hurt (except Warwick), but in reality – Jesus was hurt. The price He paid to get us free from our trap was His own blood, His own life. Take a moment and think about just how expensive your sin really is – it cost Jesus His life! Don't take your sin lightly.

Sit down with a parent and read the Easter story together, part 1: Matthew 26:1-35

Wednesday, April 1

Sit down with a parent and read the Easter story together, part 2: Matthew 26:36-75

Just like Jesus, we will go through very hard times in our lives and we need God's help to get through them. Pray and ask God to help you to remain strong in Him during hard times.

Thursday, April 2

Sit down with a parent and read the Easter story together, part 3: Matthew 27:1-56

Ask Jesus to reveal sin that you need to confess and repent of. In your journal, write down what He brings to mind. Now make a choice to ask His forgiveness and repent of them. Remember: God is not mad at you, but He is delighted when His children repent of their sins.

Friday, April 3

Sit down with a parent and read the Easter story together, part 4: Matthew 27:56-28:20

Take a moment and give thanks and praise to Jesus for sacrificing His life for you and also for raising from the dead so that you, too, may have new life!