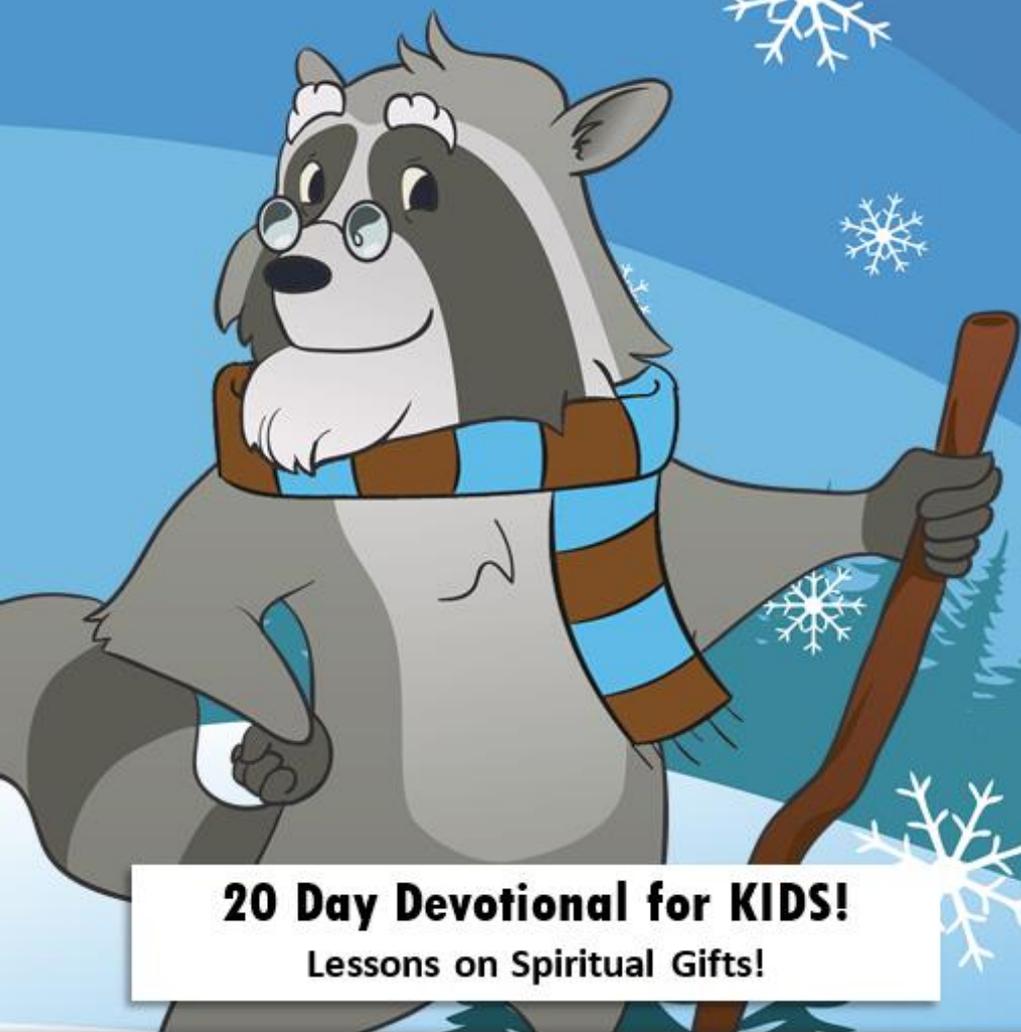


**foundations[®]
for Kidz!**



20 Day Devotional for KIDS!

Lessons on Spiritual Gifts!



**SOUTHLAND
CHURCH**

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Versions of scripture quotations are noted.

Welcome to...

foundations[®] for Kidz!



foundations[®] for Kidz!

Dear Parents,

The short eBook is a devotional tool that we hope will help your children 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. Each week there will be five days’ worth of devotions; the first day is always a story followed by 4 days of activities to reinforce the message.

Our desire is that elementary school children of all ages will *enjoy* the booklet 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.

In Him,



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!

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 is one story and four activities you can do every week. Try them all! The story you read is an adventure with ME! And after that, come four more days of activities you can do to grow closer to Jesus. If you miss a day, don't worry, you can do it on the next day! 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

Memory Verse

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NLT)

Day 1

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!



It was a bright sunny day, a rare thing to have in cold, frosty December, but nonetheless the sun did not fail to shine. Ravi knew it was the perfect day to talk a walk. He walked down the trail as he did every other day. However today he was interrupted by a blur of red fur and a fluffy tail that whizzed past, causing him to gasp in shock. Almost immediately a broad smile crossed his face as he realized exactly who it was.

"Jakob, where are you off to in such a hurry?" Ravi asked as the red chipmunk went speeding past him.

"Oh, sorry Ravi. Didn't see you there," Jakob said as he pulled himself to a screeching halt. "I'm headed off to meet with Daphne Deer. After all that's been going on, she has a lot of questions about the Creator."

"Daphne...why, I don't believe I know who that is," Ravi said thoughtfully, thinking it over as to who Daphne could possibly be.

"Makes sense that you wouldn't know her, she and her family are new to the neighbourhood so-to-speak. Just moved to this part of the woods a little while ago. She's just a young whitetail deer, but she sure has a lot of questions." Jacob paused and then continued in a calmer and more thoughtful tone, "We were going to go meet and talk this very afternoon. She is very confused about the Creator and even though she believes that He exists, she thinks He doesn't make sense."

"Really?" Ravi said with interest.

"Yes, I am actually quite eager to meet with her, hear her ideas and point of view. And then, of course, to explain the Creator to her."

“Well I am glad you are so excited about this, Jakob. I do hope things go well,” Ravi said with his gentle smile.

“Thank you, Ravi. Well I’m off. Pray to the Creator for right words to be spoken. Farewell.” And with those words Jakob was off, racing down the path with all the speed he could muster towards the patch of forest where Mr. and Mrs. Deer lived. You would think that a small chipmunk like Jakob would be intimidated by the size of the white-tailed deer, but Jakob was no ordinary chipmunk. He was fearless. And so, when he reached the thicket of the Deer family, he knocked boldly on the large tree at the entrance and waited for them to come. Several seconds after the knock a tall, graceful white-tailed deer came walking up to the entrance and smiled.

“Why you must be Jakob. Daphne’s been talking all morning about you coming.”

Jakob laughed merrily. “Yes that would be me!”

Daphne’s mother smiled. “Wait here a moment, and I will go get her for you.” With that, she turned and cantered back into the undergrowth. It was but a few minutes before a small, white-tailed deer came bounding up to Jakob with a look of complete excitement upon her face.

Mr. Jakob!” she squealed with excitement.

Jakob smiled kindly and nodded. “Daphne good to see you. I have been very excited to meet with you,” he said with a gleam in his eyes. “Shall we go outside and talk? I am most interested to hear your questions!”

Daphne nodded eagerly and together the chipmunk and young deer walked a little ways into a sunny clearing where they sat together to talk.

“Now then, where would you like to begin?” Jakob asked as he adjusted his seating on a sparse patch of brown grass peeking up through the snow.

“I don’t even really know where to begin,” she said shyly.

“Well then, let’s start with the Creator, do you know Him?” Jakob asked.

“Oh yes! I do know Him, but...well, I don’t fully understand Him,” Daphne sighed.

“What is something you don’t understand?”

“Well for one, how can He use me? I know I am just a simple little deer that makes mistakes, how could the Creator ever use me?” Daphne asked sadly.

Jakob smiled. “Ah, I understand now. Well Daphne, I believe I have just the story to help you understand a little better of how the Creator can use anyone for His glory, and also that He speaks in great and often strange ways.”

“Who’s the story about?” Daphne asked curiously as she scooted a little closer to Jakob.

“Myself, and a flying squirrel named Sebastian. Would you like to hear it?” Jakob asked with a tone of mischievous excitement.

“Oh yes please!” Daphne burst out, “I love stories.”

“Alright,” Jakob took a deep breath. “Once, many years ago when I was a young chipmunk, there was this flying squirrel named Sebastian and he was really mean,” Jakob’s eyes got a starry look as he remembered back to the time when he knew Sebastian Squirrel.



It was a clear, crisp winter night, with a sky full of dazzling stars. The moon was full and the forest was lit up by its beautiful white light. On the surface one could suppose that it was a calm, rather peaceful night. But that was far from reality.

A small shadow darted through the trees, hopping and gliding from branch to branch. Silent and quick it went, clearly on a mission, for it moved with great purpose.

Sebastian Squirrel was making his way swiftly through the night, off to steal food stores from some animals and scare their families too while he was at it. Flying squirrels were quite rare in these parts of the woods making it rather easy for Sebastian to frighten them. Sebastian snickered to himself as he leapt off the branch and coasted upon the air, slowly gliding towards the ground, and his next target. Noiselessly, Sebastian landed on the ground and scampered forwards into the shadows, keen eyes searching for anyone who might be awake at the late hour. Sebastian was good at what he did, but what exactly did he do? He stole things! But he didn’t steal from just anyone. He particularly liked to pick on the people who followed the Creator. *They always seemed to be up to something, and they drove him absolutely crazy! They deserve to be robbed,* he thought to himself, *they are just so...irritating!*

He had just learned of another animal in the forest that believed in the Creator. He was going to go pay him a visit. And visit his winter food storage as well.

He crawled into the shadow of a tree and watched. The burrow was just in front of him now. He only needed a way to get in without being seen...

Just then a rabbit hopped speedily through the bushes, and skidded to a halt outside the burrow.

“Jakob!” the rabbit hollered into the burrow desperately, “Jakob, I need help!”

“What’s wrong?” Jakob called back as he raced to the surface.

“Someone stole all of our winter food!” the rabbit exclaimed in frantic worry.

“We have to find it quickly, before the thief gets too far!”

“Great gooseberries!” Jakob shouted. “Let’s get moving!”

They turned and raced away into the woods together. "I'm glad you came to get me," the chipmunk continued, his voice fading into the distance, "I'll do my best to find his trail..."

Sebastian laughed as they left. He had made a way in all by himself. As they went to investigate his last robbery, he would perform his next one!

He walked calmly and freely into the burrow, helping himself to whatever he liked.



The animals of the forest gathered around the rabbit den. After a quick search for a trail left by the robber they found his tracks. But they scurried up a tree, and it disappeared! Even Jakob's sharp eyes could not find out where he had gone.

"I'm so sorry we couldn't find your food," Jakob told the Rabbit family. "I thought for sure we could catch the thief."

"It's alright..." the father rabbit assured him. But his voice was thin and gloomy. "Thank you for your help."

"What are we going to do?" One of the little rabbits asked her mother in honest concern. "What will we eat?"

Her mother opened her mouth to reply, but no words came. She turned to her husband, looking for an answer.

Before he could give his hopeless reply, Jakob spoke up, "I will help. I will give as much food as I can to help you."

"So will we," said Wesley Weasel.

Soon all the animals in the clearing were offering to help donate food to help.

The rabbits were stunned. "But none of you have enough food as it is! You all need the food you have!"

"Yes. That is true," Jakob agreed, "but the Creator tells us to share with those in need. He will provide. Besides..." Jakob shouted with a nutty grin, recapturing everyone's attention, "I have lived off of tree bark before, and worse things! I will be just fine!"

Now everyone had to laugh, and joy found its way back into their hearts again. Even in this hard time the Creator would look after them.

What do you think?

In this part of the story, Jakob selflessly exercised a gift of hospitality and giving by offering his food stores to the rabbits when they couldn't find the thief. That is exactly what God calls us to do. We are to help the poor and those less

fortunate than us. Jakob then exercised a gift of encouragement when he encouraged the family of rabbits by saying that God will provide and watch over them. Wow! Jakob sure has a lot of faith to say that. Did you know that God has given each of us special gifts to help us show God's love to others?

Day 2

Read: Read Acts 8:1-3 and Acts 9:1-2

Summary: The Bible tells of a man named Saul who hated those who called themselves followers of 'The Way' (or Christians). He even went house to house to drag the Christians off to put them in prison! Turns out he wasn't happy just doing this in Jerusalem, but he planned to go to Damascus as well to do the same thing there. Wow, what an evil man!

Questions to ponder / discussion questions (choose one of the following)

- What would you do if you heard about a violent man taking Christians to prison, and then you looked out your living room window and saw that man next door dragging your neighbours out of the house to throw them in prison? Maybe you're next! What would you do?
- Discuss with your parents: What do you think made Jakob such a giving animal, willing to share the last of his food with others? Was it a special gift? Was it just what he was like? Was it a result of decades of growing in his relationship with the Creator? Or maybe was it some of each of those?

Day 3

Ask your parents to go online to the Voice of the Martyr's website at www.persecution.com and pick one story to read through together. Spend some time discussing it and praying for the Christians and their families affected in the story. Discuss this together – it wasn't just in the Bible times that people were hurting Christians. (Note for parents: exercise discretion and pre-read the stories as some of them may be too intense for your children).

Day 4

The Bible says that God gave special gifts to all His people. That includes you! But God didn't give you special gifts just to spend on yourself. No, He says in Ephesians 4:15 *He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part*

does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing full of love. So then, we all are to love others as we love ourselves, but we have some special abilities that help us love others in a special way. For example, some people find it easier to show hospitality while others find it easier to give lots of money to the church; we all are supposed to give and be hospitable to others, but some have a special ability in those areas. Ask Jesus to show you if you have a special way that you are very good at loving others.

Prayer: “Dear Jesus, You made me special and unique. You also gave me special abilities to love and serve others. What is one special way that I am good at showing love to others?”

Day 5

Work on memorizing 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

Day 6

Jakob continued his walk home through the snow. It sure was cold outside tonight! But his fur kept him warm enough. Again he thought about the rabbits, and how all of their winter food had been taken. It made him angry inside seeing animals doing such terrible things to others.

But he knew in his heart that getting angry would not fix the problem. So he prayed instead, “Creator, You are good. And You have a plan for all of us. I don’t know where we are going to get enough food, but I trust You to provide. You have never let us down. Thank You for watching over us. I love You. Amen.”

Jakob finished his walk home in silence, but he felt peace coming into his heart. The Creator would take care of them. He always had and always would. Even if it was hard at times.

As he arrived back at his home he was looking forward to getting some sleep. It was now very late, and the moon was directly overhead. It was a full moon, and very bright, lighting up the forest as though it was almost daytime.

Then he saw the tracks.

He saw the rabbit’s wide footprints from when he had come bounding up to Jakob’s home. The tracks left in the direction where they had gone to search for the robber. But there was another set of tracks; tracks he could not recognize,

leading from the forest into his home!

Just then a head popped up out of his burrow! There was a squirrel he did not know in his home!

“What are you doing in my house?” Jakob demanded.

The squirrel jumped out of the hole in the ground and took off running into the forest. Now Jakob saw that the squirrel’s mouth was full of acorns, and it had a satchel full of food hanging from his shoulder.

Jakob had just been robbed!

“Come back here thief!” Jakob shouted chasing after the squirrel.

The squirrel raced this way and that between the forest trees. Jakob ran hard behind him to keep up.

Jumping like only a squirrel can do, the robber bounced through the snow, leaving far spread holes behind him. Jakob jumped from hole to hole, keeping his eyes locked on the squirrel just ahead of him.

The squirrel looked back, shocked to see that the chipmunk was gaining on him. And before he could get out of the way, Jakob jumped upon his back and tackled him into the snow.

For a moment all that could be seen was white powder snow being thrown in the air, and a flurry of fluffy tails as the two rodents fought. Then the squirrel jumped away, racing up a tree to safety.

But Jakob kept on chasing. He was glad for his training in Raccoonjitsu. If he caught the squirrel one more time he was sure he could capture him.

The squirrel ran up and up the tree, to the very top branches. Then at full speed he jumped to the next tree. Jakob was right behind him, leaping to the tree as well.

But across the tree the squirrel ran, and leapt for the next tree. But it was too far away! He would never make it across! But as Jakob watched, the squirrel spread out his arms and legs and glided to the next tree. It was a flying squirrel! So that’s why Jakob hadn’t recognized its tracks.

The squirrel landed on the next tree and stopped. Then he turned around and watched Jakob climb as he began to eat an acorn; he was mocking him because he knew Jakob couldn’t jump that far.

But Jakob ran further up the tree to a higher branch. And running as fast as he could he jumped off the tree!

He sailed through the air for a second, turned a front flip in the air, and dove down towards the branch.

And he made it! The whole branch shook as he landed, but he made it across!

The squirrel’s eyes grew big in surprise, and he dropped the acorn, turned, and ran again.

Again Jakob chased the squirrel through the tree’s branches. Up and down.

Left and right. Around and around the trunk of the tree.

“I almost have him!” Jakob told himself. “I’m going to catch him now!” he was so close he could almost catch the squirrel’s tail in his mouth!

But just as he was about to grab the squirrel, the squirrel jumped, spread its limbs, and glided away.

And poor Jakob ran right off the tree branch. He had been so focused on catching the squirrel that he had not noticed the branch ended!

He hugged himself, and prayed to the Creator as he fell. Down he plummeted, thirty feet into the snow. He landed in deep powder snow with a loud “POOF!”

The snow was deep enough that he was not hurt. And no sooner had he disappeared into the snow than he raced away, up the tree that the squirrel had jumped to. Up the tree he went, right up to the top, his eyes peeled for the squirrel. However, he found no sign of him. The thief had disappeared.

“Sweet pinecones!” Jakob exclaimed in disbelief, where had the squirrel gone? With a sigh of defeat he turned and quickly scampered back to his burrow, deciding that he may as well go look at the damage and see what needed to be fixed or replaced. There was, however, a slight niggles of fear within his chest, as if he knew that what had been stolen could not be replaced anytime soon. Hopping quickly through the trees the chipmunk made his way towards his home anticipating the damage that he would find. Soon the burrow came into view and so hesitantly Jakob entered and looked around. Aside from almost everything being thrown across the floor and the entire place looking like a mess, Jakob could not find anything missing or severely damaged; that is, not until he went into his kitchen. His food store door was wide open!

“Oh no!” Jakob breathed as he raced to the storeroom door. Jakob took in a sharp breath as he discovered that his food store was mostly empty! The thief had stolen almost all of his food!

“Oh Creator! No, this cannot happen! The others need food too, and now there isn’t even enough for myself!” Jakob pleaded as he slowly reorganized the damaged room. It was a long night for Jakob, one of cleaning and fixing, and praying. Jakob trusted the Creator to provide for them in some way, but tonight he felt a little more than worried. The rabbit family had a lot of mouths to feed, and he knew that even if the animals pulled their stores together they still would not have enough food for them all.



Silently the squirrel snickered as he sat up in the high branches of the tree, watching as the chipmunk below gave up the chase.

Sebastian felt pretty smug with himself, he had heard rumors that Jakob chipmunk was way too skilled to ever allow himself to be robbed, but he had shown everyone now that those followers of the Creator had something to fear.

“Ha! Let’s see who will take care of them now, not some silly Creator, that’s for sure!” Sebastian said with a laugh as he took off running through the branches and quickly glided down from the trees. Hopping and gliding, Sebastian made away with his treasure from Jakob’s store house to his own place where he would plan his next attack. Sebastian was feeling pretty good about himself, and so because of that he decided to take a huge leap across from one tree to the next, knowing that he was now skilled enough to take such a big leap. Up into the air he went, practically flying across the gap between the trees. However when he was directly in the middle a brilliant white light flashed from the sky! Sebastian cried out as he closed his eyes, causing him to miss his branch and fall to the ground. Sebastian hit the snow with a soft “poof,” but just as quickly he was getting onto his feet, looking around for what had caused the bright light. It was to his surprise and horror that it actually had not been a light, but an owl that had flown straight into him. But this owl was so different from all other owls Sebastian had ever encountered. This owl was perfect, pure white, her eyes shining like a blue sea, just staring at him and watching. Sebastian’s eyes widened in fear as he remembered that owls ate small critters like him and quickly he made a move to dart away. However, as he turned to run, the owl let out a terrible screech and immediately Sebastian stumbled and fell to the snow in fear.

“Sebastian, I come with a message; why are you persecuting Me?”

Sebastian again turned and bolted, trying to get away, but found himself caught gently, yet forcefully, in the owl’s claws.

“LET ME GO!” Sebastian cried as he struggled in the owl’s grip.

“Not until you have heard my message!” the owl insisted.

Seeing that he couldn’t escape Sebastian replied in a trebling voice, “Who is this message from?”

“From your Creator, and the One who made all things, the trees and the earth. The maker of all peoples and creatures, and even you Sebastian Squirrel.”

“How do you know my name?” Sebastian asked in shock.

“The Creator knows all things, Sebastian, even the things you’ve done to His creation. All the food you’ve stolen and every family you’ve scared. He has seen it all Sebastian, and He is not pleased.”

“But....I don’t even believe in the Creator!” Sebastian retorted.

“Whether you believe or not does not change the reality of His existence, if you would only open your eyes and look around you would see Him in all

creation.”

“B-but I can’t see!” Sebastian breathed, suddenly realizing that he couldn’t actually see! He looked up at the owl with confusion and fear for she was the only thing he could see, but all else remained dark.

This shook Sebastian to his core, what was happening? Why could he see nothing but her?! He watched as she released him and then spread her wings to fly, taking off into the air with an eerie grace.

“Wait don’t leave me here I can’t see anything!” Sebastian cried after the owl as he stumbled blindly through the snow after her.

“The Creator is trying to get a hold of you, Sebastian, and if this is the only way for Him to do it, then that is what He will do,” the owl called back.

“But what must I do to regain my sight?!” Sebastian pleaded.

The owl called back in a fading voice from the distance, “Pray Sebastian, just pray.”

What do you think?

God is always at work in our lives, trying to gain our attention and bring us closer to Him. But like Sebastian, we don’t always hear Him because we don’t want to or we just aren’t listening. But God loves us so much that He will go to extreme measure to get us to come to Him.

Day 7

Read: Acts 9:3-7

Summary: Saul was very eager to get to Damascus to throw believers into jail there, just like he had done in Jerusalem. But it turns out that God had a different plan. With a bright flash of light and a loud voice, Jesus spoke to Saul. When He was done, Saul was blind! He had to be led by the hand to Damascus. For three whole days he stayed in his house and had nothing to eat or drink. It seems he had a lot to think about!

Questions to ponder / discussion questions (choose one of the following)

- Try and imagine what Saul was thinking about those three days that he was blind. What would you be thinking about if that had just happened to you?
- Jesus told Saul that he was persecuting Him. Jesus was in heaven, how could He be persecuted? What do you think? Discuss with a parent.

Day 8

Build a paper airplane and decorate it. Can you make it fly better by folding it a different way? As you make the airplane, imagine how creative God must be to make an animal like Sebastian, the flying squirrel. It takes a lot of creativity to make a creature like that. Imagine how much more creativity it takes to make a complex creature like you – not just your body, but your mind and emotions with all the talents, abilities and “gifts” that you have!

Just for fun, have a paper airplane contest with a brother or sister. Whose flies further? Why do you think it flew further? In the same way, God makes each person unique and different. What you do good, someone else can't, but someone else can do something else better – and that's OK! God made you just the way He wants you!

Day 9

Sebastian had a special ability (or gift) that God had given him, he had the ability to fly for a long distance. But Sebastian used the gift he got from God on himself. Everyone has special talents and abilities, but most of the time we use them to help make our own lives better for ourselves – not for others. Sebastian's selfish use of his gifts finally caught up with him. I wonder if you have any abilities that you are spending on yourself instead of using them to help others? Pray the following prayer and write down what God shows you.

Prayer: “Jesus, would You remind me of one special talent I have? Have I been using it to serve You and help others?”

Day 10

Work on memorizing 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.*

Day 11

Sebastian lay in the snow for a moment trembling; what was he to do? He couldn't see anything! Who knew what kinds of creatures could be lurking

around out there where he couldn't see them! With his heart racing, Sebastian got to his feet and began stumbling forwards through the snow, but only wound up walking head first into a tree. Out of desperation for safety, Sebastian began to climb, awkwardly and unsteadily, but nonetheless he moved slowly up the tree till he reached the first branch. Once there he settled on the branch and sat in silence, trembling in fear as tears began to fall down his cheeks. "Creator," he whispered, his voice thin and weak, "I don't even know if You want to hear me, o-or if I even have the right to speak. But please help me, I'm terrified!" He curled himself into a ball and began to cry and pray, absolute desperation taking hold of him.



Jakob sighed as he slowly picked up a chair and stood it back up on its feet. It had taken him almost three hours to finish cleaning, but now he was finally done. Thankfully, there had not been much damage. Once the chair was straightened Jakob let himself flop into it and placed his head in his paws.

"Creator, what are we to do? We don't have enough food to last us a month. Too many families are starving already. Please help us," Jakob pleaded weakly as he stared blankly forwards. His heart was heavy, he trusted the Creator, but he could not stop the fear that tried to creep into his heart.

"What are we going to do?" Jakob moaned as he buried his head in his hands again.

"Go find him Jakob," A voice whispered into Jakob's head.

"What?" Jakob said in confusion as he sat up straight.

"Go find him," the voice whispered again.

"Who?" Jakob asked slowly, hoping that he would not hear the answer he knew the Creator's voice would say.

"You need to find the thief, his name is Sebastian," the Creator's voice whispered.

"Why do I need to find him? Will he give the food back?" Jakob asked hopefully.

"Not necessarily, but he is praying and waiting for you to come and speak to him," the small voice whispered again.

"WHAT?! No way! I can't go to him for that, look what he did to us, why should I go to him?" Jakob protested as he began to pace around the room.

"Because I love him, and I will make a great move of my presence and power through him," the Creator whispered.

"B-but Lord, You know what he's done! Why me?! He might get violent, he

has been known to!" Jakob cried.

"Trust me Jakob. He is blind right now, and will be healed when you pray for him, and then from there he will be ready to receive Me and spread My kingdom," the Creator said calmly. Jakob stood stiff for a moment before he sighed in defeat.

"Alright," Jakob whispered. With hesitation in his chest he moved to the door and slowly plodded through the snow.

"Creator where am I even going?" Jakob whispered as he plucked his way through the snow in the same direction he had gone to chase Sebastian earlier.

"Just keep going straight, he is in a clearing ahead." Jakob sighed and began to pick up his pace through the snow.



Sebastian shivered in the wind. He could no longer tell which direction it blew from. He could barely tell which way was up anymore.

He pushed himself up on his hind legs, and lifted his paws over his head. Then he prayed out loud: "Creator, please! Don't leave me here! I am sorry! I am so sorry for what I did! I was wrong..." Just then Sebastian's foot slipped, he fell on his side and tumbled off the branch.

He fell into the deep snow again. But this time he did not bother to rise. He lay there defeated and crying. He had turned against the Creator and now he was being punished. He had been so wrong about it all. If only he could have another chance...

"Creator please... don't forget about me..."

"I have grace."

Sebastian sat up at once. "Is that you, Lord?" Sebastian called out. But he heard only silence.

Just when his hope was about to fail again, he felt a hand on his shoulder. He searched earnestly to see who was touching him. "Who is there? Is it You, Creator?"

"No," a different voice replied. "Just one of His faithful creatures."

"Can you please help me?" Sebastian asked. "I want to tell the Creator I am sorry. But...I don't know how to do it right."

"Just repeat the words I say," the voice reassured him. "Creator, I am sorry for my sins. I know I have been living the wrong way. Please forgive me and renew my heart."

Sebastian repeated after him, word for word. He prayed from his heart, meaning every word he said.

When they had finished, Sebastian let out a deep breath. His heart felt strangely at peace now. And so with that peace he opened his eyes.

"My eyes!" Sebastian cried in shock. "My eyes-I...I can see! I can see! Oh thank you thank y-" Sebastian cut himself off as he turned around and saw none other than Jakob Chipmunk himself. Sebastian's eyes bulged and his mouth dropped open in fear.

"Y-you.....I-I-" Sebastian stammered in fear, what would he say? What could he say? This was the chipmunk he had stolen from and led on a merry chase for his stolen possessions. But hadn't this chipmunk just prayed for him and even restored his sight?

"Why did you do it?" Sebastian asked still fearful.

Jakob smiled slightly. "I did it because it doesn't matter who you are and what you've done; the Creator loves you and He has called you to a greater purpose. And if that's what He says then I am inclined to follow His belief," Jakob said smoothly.

"B-but how did you heal my sight?" Sebastian asked.

"That, my friend, is the power of our Creator! He has the power to raise the dead and heal the sick. And when we follow Him closely, He gives us that same power. His Spirit works through us and can perform miracles to bring glory to His name and to reveal His love to His creatures," Jakob said wisely as he sat down in the snow in front of Sebastian.

Sebastian was amazed by this. The Creator had the power to heal? How great did this Creator have to be if He could heal animals? But what shocked Sebastian even more than this was what Jakob had said after all that: The Creator loved him! How could the Creator love him after all he had done? If the Creator was so powerful surely He knew all the things he had stolen and all the families he had frightened. He had been specifically picking on the animals who called themselves followers of the Creator, so how could that same God love Him?

"Would you like to know the Creator Sebastian?" Jakob asked kindly, abruptly drawing Sebastian out of his thoughts. The squirrel answered before his mind could even catch up with his words.

"Yes." Sebastian said firmly. He knew that this was what he needed, and he knew that this was something he wanted.

"Then pray with me one more time."

What do you think?

Isn't our God amazing?! Not only does He forgive us but He wants to use us and He actively seeks us out because He is jealously in love with us. He gives us the tools we need to be used by Him for His kingdom. Jakob was given the ability to

lay paws on Sebastian and have the Holy Spirit heal him. That may seem like an incredible gift, but the bigger gift was that Jakob was able to show love and kindness to his enemy. Isn't that incredible? God loves us so much that He gives us His Holy Spirit who can move with great power in us.

Day 12

Read: Acts 9:8-18

Summary: Saul was blinded by the light of Jesus. For three days he was blind and didn't eat or drink anything! God had a plan, however, and chose a man named Ananias to go to Saul and heal him of his blindness. Ananias questioned God at first, but then he obeyed and afterwards, Saul could see! Saul gave his life to Jesus when he saw His incredible power.

Questions to ponder / discussion questions (choose one of the following)

- If you were blind for three days and nights, what would you think about? How do you think Saul felt? How do you think Sebastian felt?
- Think of your worst enemy, maybe a bully at school? Imagine if God asked you to go lay your hands on that enemy and pray for them. How would you feel?

Day 13

Make a special 'coupon book' of gifts for others. Maybe it will be one coupon, maybe it will have two or three. Each coupon is a special gift of your time that you will give to someone else. For example, you might have one coupon that says 'Sweep kitchen floor' or another one that says, 'Play with my little brother for one hour'. Can you think of special gifts that you can give to others? Make it meaningful. The gifts of your time won't always be easy for you to give, but they should be special.

Take your time and colour it in nicely and give it to someone in your family.

Day 14

A gift is something that is not earned. You wouldn't mow lawns or walk a neighbour's dog to earn money to give to our mom or dad to buy you a gift – how silly would that be? No, a gift is given to you simply because the giver loves

you and wants to bless you. It is the same with Saul and Sebastian. Both of them did not deserve the gift of God's kindness. They did not deserve the gift of healing from blindness. Yet God loved them and gave it to them anyway.

What is a special gift that God has given you that you did not deserve? Was it forgiveness for a wrong, healing from sickness, help through a tough time?

Prayer: "Holy Spirit, please remind me of a special gift that You have given me!"

Write that down or draw a picture of what He reminded you about. Show it to a parent when you are done.

Day 15

Work on memorizing 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.*

Day 16

Sebastian smiled as he reopened his eyes when Jakob finished praying with him. His heart felt so light and so full! He looked around and saw a new beauty in the world. It was just like the owl had said. Looking at it now he could see the Creator in everything around him! In the trees, in the stars above, even in the freezing cold snow. The Creator's presence was everywhere, and he knew now that he needed to tell others and open their eyes to see the Creator!

"Jakob," Sebastian breathed in shock and excitement, "thank you. You had no reason at all to come out here and find me, but the Creator truly is great in your life!" Sebastian hugged Jakob as he spoke and a smile touched the chipmunk's face.

"But I feel as though I must apologize to you Jakob," Sebastian said a little more seriously. "I have stolen your winter stores and made a mess of your home. I do hope someday you could forgive me."

Jakob smiled again as he moved out of Sebastian's hug.

"I have forgiven you, but now I have an idea of how you can make things right with the other families you've hurt," Jakob said graciously. At this, Sebastian's ears perked up and instantly he was listening attentively.

"What, what do you have in mind?" Sebastian practically pleaded, eager for any way he could ever repay the people he had harmed and make things right

with them.

“We take the food you have stolen and return it to the families you stole it from. And then you can apologize to them in person. And I will go with you to help you,” Jakob offered. At this Sebastian’s face lit up with excitement and quickly he nodded his head

“Yes, yes. Jakob that is a marvelous idea, we must go right away, right now!” Sebastian exclaimed as he took Jakob’s hand and took off running towards the place he stored his food.

Jakob simply smiled as he ran after the squirrel, sending up a silent prayer to the Creator, *“Lord, thank You that each day you are teaching me as well. Thank You for Your forgiveness and Your strength that You give us each day.”*

Jakob glanced up at the sky, his smile broadening as he saw a large white owl sail across the sky and off into the horizon.

“Thank you.”



And so, Daphne, that’s the story of Sebastian. We went around all that night giving back everything that he had stolen and from there I took him under my wing and taught him more about the Creator for a while. However, he eventually felt a strong call from the Creator to go to all the distant reaches of the forest and teach the animals about the Creator. So after several of us spent time in prayer it was confirmed,” Jakob said with a thoughtful smile as he peered off into the distance.

“But...then where is Sebastian now?” Daphne asked softly as she looked into the thoughtful brown eyes of the chipmunk.

“Who knows? Somewhere in the forest maybe? Last time I saw him was many years ago. I haven’t seen him more than just a few times since we prayed over him and sent him out with his mission to bring the creatures of the forest to the Creator. He could be anywhere right now,” Jakob said calmly.

“Wow, can the Creator really use someone like Sebastian?” Daphne asked questionably.

“Oh yes, once the Creator shook Sebastian up a little bit, he was willing to receive the Creator’s love, and that was when the Creator softened Sebastian’s heart,” Jakob said seriously as he looked into Daphne’s eyes.

“But does the Creator talk to him?”

“Yes Daphne, in fact I have never met anyone who hears the Creator as clearly as Sebastian does. Nor have I ever met anyone that the Holy Spirit moves so strongly through.”

“So, do you think that the Creator could use me then?” Daphne asked sweetly.

The hidden hope in her voice was like music to Jakob’s ears. “Daphne, the Creator can use anyone.”

“Really?” she asked with excitement.

“Yes Daphne.”

“Then, Mr. Jakob, would you pray with me. I want to hear the Creator and I would love to be used by Him and grow in the spiritual gifts you’re talking about,” the little deer said seriously.

“Yes Daphne, I would love to pray for you,” Jakob said calmly as he moved a little closer to the fawn.

“Here, repeat after me,” Jakob said gently. Daphne quickly nodded her head and waited.

“Dear Creator, I ask that You send Your Spirit to come live inside of me. Please speak to me and open my ears to hear Your voice and my heart to obey. Thank You for Your love, amen.” Jakob smiled as Daphne repeated the prayer with all sincerity.

When the prayer was finished, Daphne smiled and looked up at Jakob. “I can feel Him in my heart,” Daphne said with a sparkle in her eyes.

“That’s because He *is* in your heart Daphne, and the more time you spend with the Creator and grow in your relationship with Him, the more clearly you’ll know His voice,” Jakob replied.

“Don’t you mean ‘hear His voice,’ Mr. Jakob? The more clearly you’ll hear his voice?” Daphne asked softly, slightly confused.

“No, I meant the more clearly you’ll know His voice, because often we can hear more than one voice. Sometimes it’s ourselves and sometimes it’s the Creator speaking truth, or the enemy whispering lies to us. The more you grow your relationship with the Creator, the more you will know His voice, the easier it will be to discern His will and the less we will follow the enemy,” Jakob replied.

“Oh I see,” Daphne said. She was feeling a growing desire for what Jakob was talking about rising up inside her heart, “I just need to start building a relationship with the Creator and I’ll know His voice better?” Jakob nodded.

“But how do I do that? I mean I can’t see the Creator, it’s not like we can go out to play or anything,” Daphne said with slight disappointment at this thought.

“Ah you might not be able to see Him, but He is certainly all around you and He loves to be involved with your everyday life. You grow in relationship by intentionally spending time in His presence. Go for a walk and pray, or invite Him to come and be with you as you play or do your chores. He loves to spend

time with us and if you just listen and practice hearing His voice you come to hear that from His own mouth.”

“Wow, that’s really cool. The Creator of everything wants to spend time with me?! That makes me feel very special,” Daphne said with a soft blush.

“That is because you are special, to Him, you were worth dying for. We all are! That is just how much He loves us,” Jakob said as he smiled at the little deer.

“Thank you Mr. Jakob, I think I understand Him better now,” Daphne said with soft confidence.

“Well I’m glad. And certainly keep asking questions. That is the best way to get to know the Creator better: ask others you trust questions and ask the Creator Himself.”

“I will Mr. Jakob,” Daphne said assuringly.

“Now that’s a good girl,” Jakob said with his normal exuberance, his voice full of energy and excitement making Daphne giggle.

“Well I really should be off Daphne, it has been a lot of fun speaking with you, but an old chipmunk like me has many places to go and many things to do,” Jakob remarked as he stood to his feet, Daphne also rising up, standing significantly taller than the chipmunk.

“Goodbye Mr. Jakob, thank you again for your help. I know I will be able to grow in the Creator now that you’ve helped me!” Daphne called as she waved goodbye to the chipmunk.

“You’re welcome Daphne, take care and the Creator’s blessings to you,” Jakob called as he disappeared into the woods.

“Ah,” Jakob sighed, “thank You, Creator, that another young critter has come to know Your heart a little more today. Bless Daphne, Father, as she grows more in Your Spirit.” Jakob fell silent pondering this for several moments before he remembered an old friend and smiled, “And be with Sebastian too, wherever he may be. Hold him close to You and continue to expand Your kingdom through him.”

“You know Jakob, I always loved it when you prayed for me!” a voice called from behind Jakob forcing the chipmunk to gasp in shock and spin around. Jakob’s eyes opened wide in surprise as he found himself looking up at none other than Sebastian the flying squirrel.

“Sebastian!” Jakob cried as he rushed forwards and lunged into the squirrel’s arms.

“I have missed you, my friend, truly it has been a long time since I’ve seen you and your bushy tail,” Jakob said with a laugh.

“Well, I was in the area and thought I would stop by for a visit before I left again tomorrow,” Sebastian said with a broad smile as he hugged the chipmunk close.

“What have you been up too?” Jakob inquired as he pulled out of the squirrels arms and looked up into his eyes.

“The Creator’s will. I have been following His voice into the many deep places of the forest, bringing His light into the darkest places,” Sebastian replied.

“What do you think has been the greatest impact on you in your travels?” Jakob asked curiously.

“My friend, it would have to be the Creator’s goodness, truly His nearness and His love is like no other.”

What do you think?

God can give us many special gifts to us that help us love others better and those are important. But the absolutely BEST spiritual gift is the gift of Himself. Without Jesus giving Himself to us *every single day*, the rest of the gifts are absolutely meaningless! I think Jakob was way more thrilled that the Creator loved him than the fact that he got the chance to heal Sebastian.

Day 17

Read: Acts 9:20-31

Summary: After Saul became a Christian, he began preaching and teaching others about Jesus. He was so good at proving that Jesus is the Son of God that people he used to work for (the Jews and the Pharisees) began to make plans to kill him. But Saul escaped from them and continued to grow closer and closer to Jesus.

Questions to ponder / discussion questions (choose one of the following)

- Seems like this story has a happy ending, doesn’t it? Verse 31 says the church had a time of peace. Remember our activity from week 1? How peaceful do you think it is for Christians around the world today? Discuss with your parents.
- What kind of adventures do you think Sebastian has had in his many years of serving the Creator? Can you come up with an imaginary adventure he might have had while serving Him?

Day 18

It’s important, with the busyness of life, to make sure that we are finding time to just ‘be still’ in God’s presence. Jakob would certainly have needed that after

chasing down Sebastian and dealing with all the robberies that were taking place! It is in the stillness that God changes us and helps us to remember who He is.

Just for fun, play a few 'stillness' games with a sibling or a parent. Who can be the most still? Try doing it while lying down, but also while standing in weird positions (like on one leg with your arms stretched out to either side).

Now, set an alarm and challenge yourself. Read your favourite verse in the Bible (or ask your parents for one of theirs). Then go, lie down on your bed with no one else around and set an alarm for 2 minutes. See if you can lie still simply breathing deep and thinking about that verse. It's only 2 minutes, you can do it! How did you feel afterwards?

Day 19

Remember the stillness activity you did yesterday? Do it again today, except this time you are going to lie down and be still while you ask Jesus a question and listen for His answer. It's more fun if you do it with someone. Have your mom or dad lie down with you and do this together. See what you both hear from God! Pray the following prayer and then listen and be still, let God's answer just soak into Your heart. Don't move around, don't have a bunch of other thoughts keeping your mind busy. Just take some time, relax and pray this prayer when you've calmed down:

Prayer: "Dear Jesus, when You think about me, what do You feel?"

Day 20

Work on memorizing 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.*