

ALTERNATIVE

Under the Apple Tree Activities

BEAR HUG 1

Option 1: Draw a large letter A on a sheet of paper. Hang the paper on the refrigerator or in another prominent place in your house. Encourage your child to trace the letter at least once each day. Remind him that in Cubbies, A is for All and recite Romans 3:23 together.

Option 2: Review this definition of sin with your child and include the motions: a sin is anything we think (point to your head), say (point to your mouth) or do (hit your fist on your palm) that disobeys God. Repeat the definition and motions several times until your child can say and do them with you. Share about a time you sinned when you were a child and discuss common sins of preschoolers (e.g., disobeying Mom or Dad, hitting a sibling or friend, fighting over a toy). Remind your Cubbie that ALL have sinned (Romans 3:23).

Option 3: Go on a letter A search in your house or at the store. You could also look for A's on signs or license tags while you drive. Each time you see the letter A, say "A is for All" and recite Romans 3:23.

BEAR HUG 2

Option 1: Use the following action rhyme to review the Cubbies Motto, Jesus loves me, with your child.

Whom does Jesus love? (Hold arms in front of you and shrug your shoulders as if you are asking a question.)

Jesus loves me! (Point to self.)

Yes! Jesus loves me. (Point to self.)

Whom does Jesus love? (Hold arms in front of you and shrug your shoulders as if you are asking a question.)

Jesus loves me! (Point to self.)

I know in my head, (Point to your head.)

And I know in my heart (Trace a heart on your chest with both pointer fingers.)

That Jesus loves ME! (Point to self.)

Option 2: Make a cross shape using two pretzel rods (break one rod in half to make the horizontal cross beam). Then make the shape of a C out of string licorice or a thick strand of string cheese. (If you do not have pretzels, licorice or cheese, use Play-Doh® or another type of food in your kitchen. Be creative!) Show the snack to your child and ask, "What does C stand for in Cubbies?" Review that C is for Christ. As your child enjoys the snack, recite Romans 5:8 together, and explain that Christ died on the cross for our sins.

Option 3: Help your child remember that C is for Christ by singing the following words to the tune of "Old McDonald Had a Farm" or another tune you make up.

Do you see my letter C? (Make a C with your hand by slightly curving your fingers and your thumb.)

Christ died for me. (Point to self.)

Do you see my letter C? (Make a C with your hand by slightly curving your fingers and your thumb.)

Christ died for me. (Point to self.)

He died for sin (Stretch your hands out to the sides to represent Jesus hanging on the cross.)

And He rose again. (Point to the sky.)

He loves you, and He loves me too. (Point to someone else, and then point to yourself.)

Do you see my letter C? (Make a C with your hand by slightly curving your fingers and your thumb.)

Christ died for me. (Point to self.)

BEAR HUG 3

Option 1: Collect items from around your house that represent things God created. (Items may include a yellow bouncy ball to represent the sun; small, plastic fish, birds or other animals; plastic glow-in-the-dark stars; real or toy fruits and vegetables; leaves from a plant; a toy tree or a picture of a tree; photos of people or your family; silk flowers.) Place the items in a container, such as a bag or a bin. For fun, you could pour uncooked rice or oatmeal over the items in the bin to hide them. Let your child choose one item at a time from the container and say how the item reminds them of something God created. They could also name the day on which God created it. After your child has examined an item, say together, “God made all things!”

Option 2: Gather sheets of yellow, blue, red, green, brown, gray and white construction paper. (You could also hold up crayons to represent each color.) Hold up each sheet or crayon and help your Cubbie think of something that color that God made. Examples might include:

Yellow (the sun, a tiger or a bird)

White (light, snow or a sheep)

Red (flowers, strawberries, the sunset)

Green (trees or plants)

Pray together and thank God for being the mighty Creator.

Option 3: Play a guessing game with your child by making the sound of an animal and having your child guess the animal that makes that sound. For older preschoolers, encourage them to make sounds and let you guess what animal makes that sound. At the end of the game, remind your child that our wonderful and powerful God created all things just by speaking words.

BEAR HUG 4

Option 1: Plan a meal when everyone in your home will be there. During the meal, discuss different physical traits of your family members, such as height, hair color and eye color. Point out the differences of each family member to your preschooler. Then read or recite Psalm 139:14 together as a family.

Option 2: Teach your child the following action rhyme to help him remember that God made his physical features. Repeat the rhyme several times together.

God made my wrinkly nose.
(Have your child wrinkle his nose.)

God made my wiggly toes.
(Have your child wiggle his toes.)

God gave me eyes to see.
(Have your child point to and blink his eyes.)

I’m so glad that God made me.
(Have your child clap twice and point to himself.)

Option 3: Play this game to help your child recognize the different physical traits of your family members. (You could also play this game with your child and a few of her friends.) Choose a person to be the leader. Have all family members stand in a circle. The leader will call out a simple command based on a specific physical trait. For example, the leader might say, “If you have green eyes, jump three times” or “If you are a boy, take two big steps.” Play the game until each person has had several turns. Remind your child that God made the people in your family and loves them just the way they are.

BEAR HUG 5

Option 1: Place a small, empty jar in an area where your preschooler will see it often. Place a bag of cotton balls nearby. Each time your preschooler obeys, praise him by saying, “Hooray! You obeyed!” Let your child put a cotton ball in the jar. If your child obeys cheerfully and quickly, you could let him put two cotton balls in the jar. When the jar is full (or when your child has placed a predetermined number of cotton balls in the jar), do something special with or for your child. (For example, you could enjoy a special treat together or read an extra book together at bedtime.)

Option 2: Use the following activity to help your child practice obedience and review her verse. Choose a simple chore that your child can complete with you (such as picking up toys or sorting laundry). See how many times you can say this week’s verse, Ephesians 6:1, together as you work.

Option 3: Help your child choose one way to show kindness to another family member today. (Ideas might include allowing a sibling to choose a TV show or movie to watch, drawing a picture for a parent or grandparent, completing a sibling’s chore, etc.) As your child completes the chosen activity, remind him that God wants us to love and show kindness to other people in our families.

Option 4: Work with your child to make a family collage. Include a photo or a simple drawing of each family member; or instead, you could trace each family member’s hand or foot. Include pictures or items that represent things you like to do together. You could glue pictures under categories like these: “My family likes to eat ...” or “My family likes going to ...” or “My family likes to play ...” Pray together and thank God for your family. Your child can bring the collage to Cubbies and share it with her handbook group.

BEAR HUG 6

Option 1: Go on a nature walk with your child in the forest, in your backyard, at the beach, on a farm, or in a nearby park. Identify various items that God created as you walk. If the weather makes walking impractical, watch a nature video or check out nature books from your local library. After the activity, thank God for being our Creator.

Option 2: Review some of the things that God created by singing the following lyrics (or making up your own!) to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

God made the sun that shines so bright
Shines so bright
Shines so bright
God made the sun that shines so bright
Our God made all things.

God made cows that moo, moo, moo
Moo, moo, moo.
Moo, moo moo.
God made cows that moo, moo, moo.
Our God made all things.

God made fish that swim, swim, swim
God made dogs that bark, bark, bark

Option 3: Arrange a visit with a family friend or relative. Encourage your child to share three of her favorite things that God made with the friend or relative. For an extra review, challenge your Cubbie to recite this week’s memory verse, Revelation 4:11, during the visit.

Option 4: Help your child make a nature scrapbook. Your child can search old issues of gardening or outdoor magazines for pictures of nature. (You could also take your own pictures of nature and wildlife with a camera.) Help your child cut out the pictures and glue them onto white paper. Staple the papers together to make a book. As you look through your child’s nature scrapbook, praise God for creating all things.

BEAR HUG 7

Option 1: Plan a shopping trip with your child. On the way, review how the Israelites gave their very best to God. Explain that one way we can give God our best is to do kind things for others. At the store, allow your child to choose three of his favorite snacks. Purchase an inexpensive gift bag and place the snacks inside. Then tell your child to choose a person to whom they wish to give the bag. If possible, deliver the bag that day. Remind your child that he is giving his best to God by giving to others.

Option 2: Explain to your child that worship is showing love and respect to God because of how awesome He is. One way to love and respect God is to obey His words in the Bible. When your child disobeys you or sins in another way this week, take a moment to ask, “Are you choosing to obey God right now?” Remind your child that we show God love and respect when we choose to obey Him. Discuss with your child a way to change her attitude or actions into attitudes or actions that show love and respect to God. Tell your child that it is often hard for us to obey God, because we were all born sinners (Romans 3:23, 5:12). Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for our sin, and then He came alive again. When we trust what Jesus did for us, our sins are forgiven. God sends His Spirit to live in us and help us to love and obey Him (Romans 8:5-14).

Option 3: Sing the following lyrics to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.”

I choose to serve the Lord,
I choose to serve the Lord.
I will obey
Every day.
I choose to serve the Lord.

Encourage your child to sing this song as he helps you in the house or picks up his toys.

BEAR HUG 8

Option 1: Tell your child a simple but true story about how God has answered prayer in your life. Then choose a specific, short-term request that you can pray for, such as an opportunity to tell a friend about what he learned in Cubbies. Pray with your child about the request. Remind your Cubbie that God tells us what He wants us to do in the Bible. Praise God that He is the one true God.

What if you pray for safety and you have an accident on the way to school? We should always pray for God’s will (1 John 5:14-15), which He has taught us in the Bible. God does not choose to protect us from every bad consequence of living in a sinful, broken world. However, He does promise to love us and be with us. He gives us the future hope of heaven, where there will be no danger or suffering (Revelation 21).

Option 2: Help your Cubbie make a collage of items that represent God’s goodness to your family. Search old magazines or mail advertisements for pictures of items such as food, a house, toys, clothes, a car. Help your child tear out the pictures and then glue them to a sheet of paper. As you are working together, remind your child of all the good things that God has done for your family. Do not forget His many spiritual blessings, such as salvation, His Word, His Church and the hope of heaven! As your child sees all the things God does for him, he will begin to understand that God is the one true God.

Option 3: Take your child on a walk in the woods, in your yard, at a local park, or at the beach. On the walk, you and your child should point out anything that is alive, such as animals, plants or people. Talk about the ways we can tell something is alive. Ask your child, “Is God alive? How do we know?” Recite Jeremiah 10:10 together and explain that the verse says God is a living God, who is the King forever. No other gods are alive but Him. God is the one true God.

BEAR HUG 9

Option 1: Tell your child that we can trust in God at all times, even when we are afraid. Discuss some times that your preschooler might be afraid (for example, when they are left with a babysitter, when they go to the doctor.) Remind your child that just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego trusted God in a scary time (they were thrown into a fiery furnace!), she can always trust God.

Option 2: Each time you review this week's Bible verse, emphasize the last phrase, "*Thou art MY God.*" Have your Cubbie point to himself each time he repeats the phrase. Then encourage your Cubbie to pray and say, "God, You are MY God, and I love You!"

Option 3: Give your child strips of yellow and orange construction paper and a sheet of black construction paper. Have him tear the yellow and orange paper, and then glue those pieces onto a sheet of black construction paper to make a "fiery furnace." Review with your child how God kept Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego safe in the furnace. Praise God for being the one true God.

Option 4: Memorize Psalm 56:3 together as a family. Remind your child that God is the one true God and that we can ALWAYS trust Him.

BEAR HUG 10

Option 1: Remind your child that you can worship God by loving and helping others. Make or purchase a special treat. Have your child choose a family friend or neighbor to whom they can give the treat, and help your child make a card for that person. Take your Cubbie with you to deliver the treat and card, and encourage your child to tell the friend or neighbor, "We love you!" On the way home, remind your child that they worshiped God by showing love to others.

Option 2: Discuss ways that a person can worship God. Examples include praying to Him, reading the Bible, singing a special song to Him. Help your child choose three ways to worship God this week and complete the actions together.

Option 3: Play Hide-and-Seek with your child. After several rounds, remind your child that God is the one true God. We can NEVER hide from Him because He knows all things and He sees all things. Thank God for being the one true God.

BEAR HUG 11

Option 1: Make a sheep snack for your child by cutting a slice of bread into a circle. Cover the bread with butter and grated mozzarella cheese. Add pretzel sticks for legs, and a black olive for the head. As your child enjoys the snack, review the Bible lesson from Bear Hug 11. Thank God for Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Option 2: Give your child a black paper plate (or a circle cut from black construction paper), cotton balls and a glue stick. Encourage your child to glue cotton balls to the plate to represent a sheep. (Older preschoolers could draw a face on a piece of paper and glue that to the plate as well.) Use a hole punch to punch two holes in the top of the plate, and then run a small piece of ribbon or string through the holes and tie the ends. Hang the sheep on the door of your child's room. Each time you see the sheep, ask your child, "Who is the Good Shepherd?" Remind your child that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, loves His sheep.

Option 3: Dress up your child like a shepherd using a bathrobe, sheet or towel. Make several "sheep" by taking a pair of white tube socks and folding the cuff of one sock down over both socks. Place a rubber band around one section of each sock to represent the heads of the sheep. Place the sheep on a brown towel and have your shepherd pretend to watch over the sheep while they sleep. Remind your shepherd that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who always watches over us.

BEAR HUG 12

Option 1: As you review the lesson from Bear Hug 12, encourage your child to make the sound effects as you retell the story. For example, have him make sounds of the shepherd calling for his sheep, and then have him make sounds of the sheep.

Option 2: Search your local library for books or a short video of sheep. (Or if you prefer, search online for a short, educational video of sheep.) Read the books or watch the video together. Discuss how the sheep obey the person who cares for them. Remind your child that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and that we need to obey Him.

Option 3: Review the definition of sin with your Cubbie: a sin is anything we think (point to your head), say (point to your mouth) or do (put your fist in your hand) that disobeys God. Remind your child that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to take the punishment for sin.

BEAR HUG 13

Option 1: Play a game with your child to help her remember to follow the Good Shepherd. Assign a member of your family to be the shepherd. Have that member make a special sound to call the sheep. Have your child and another person pretend to be the sheep. Remind them that as soon as they hear that special sound to run to their shepherd. Have the shepherd hide nearby. After a few seconds, have the shepherd make the special sound and call the sheep. Praise the sheep for following their shepherd. Play the game several times, and then remind your Cubbie that they can choose to follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd, when they obey what He says in His Word.

Option 2: Have pretzel rods as a snack. Remind your Cubbie that the pretzel rod looks like the rod that shepherds used to keep the sheep safe. Before you enjoy the snack together, pray and thank God that Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

Option 3: Play this new twist of Hide-and-Seek with your child. Play a song on your phone or digital player and hide it in a room. (Make sure the volume is loud enough to be heard from another room.) Then send your child on a search to find the phone or digital player before the song ends. Play the game several times, then remind your child that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, searched for and found His sheep. Thank God for Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

BEAR HUG 14

Option 1: Remind your child that the Good Shepherd is ALWAYS with His sheep. Discuss situations in which your child might be afraid, such as going to the doctor or dentist, going to preschool, staying with a babysitter. Talk with your child about his fears, and remind him that the Good Shepherd is always with him.

Option 2: Sing the following words to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.”

Jesus is with me
Jesus is with me
Jesus is with me
Wherever I may go.

Repeat this song several times this week with your Cubbie to remind him that Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

Option 3: Make a path in your backyard (or basement) by laying a rope on the ground. If possible, make sure that the end of the path is not visible from the beginning of the path. At the end of the path, place a special snack and a bottle of water. Tell your child to follow the path. When your child has reached the end of the path, praise him for his obedience to follow the path. Remind your child that he can obey Jesus, the Good Shepherd by obeying His words in the Bible.

BEAR HUG 15

Option 1: Build a house with Legos or wooden blocks. Help your child act out the story from Bear Hug 15 by using action figures or small dolls. As you act out the story, remind your child that Jesus is God. Only God can forgive sin and heal those who cannot walk.

Option 2: Play a simple game of Follow-the-Leader with your preschooler. Focus on different activities you can do with your legs, such as running, jumping, skipping, taking big or little steps. After you finish your game, review the lesson from Bear Hug 15. Discuss how Jesus healed the man's hurt legs and forgave his sin.

Option 3: Help your child practice some basic math skills as you review this week's lesson. Give your child a small tote or basket. Then have your child search the house and gather items in groups of four. For example, they could gather four crayons, four shirts, four action figures, four dolls and so on. After several minutes, review the Bible story from Bear Hug 15 with your child. Point to the four friends in the picture and count them out loud. Discuss how the four friends believed that Jesus could heal their hurt friend. Remind your child that Jesus healed the man by forgiving his sin AND helping him walk again.

BEAR HUG 16

Option 1: Give your child a paper plate and various craft supplies such as yarn, felt, construction paper, wiggly eyes, pom-poms. Help your child make a girl's face on the paper plate. Hang the face in the child's room. Each time you see the plate, remind your child that Jesus made Jairus' daughter alive again. Only Jesus has the power to make dead people alive again. He gives those who believe in Him eternal life, which is life with the Lord Jesus, both now and forever. One day we will be alive with Jesus forever in heaven. Recite 1 John 5:11 together.

Option 2: Give your child a bandage and ask, "Where do you put bandages?" Point out small bruises or scratches on you or your child, and remind him that when Jesus was on earth, He showed His love for others by healing their bodies and forgiving their sin. Thank God that He has the power to heal.

Option 3: Choose one of the following examples of when Jesus healed a person in the Bible. Study the Scripture so you are prepared to retell the account to your child.

Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

The 10 lepers (Luke 17:11-19)

The man born blind (John 9:1-38)

Choose a fun way to tell the story to your child. (For example, you could act the story out.) Remind him that Jesus loves all people and showed His love by healing them. But the greatest way He showed His love was by dying on the cross to take the punishment for sin.

BEAR HUG 17

Option 1: Help your child make a small basket out of brown Play Doh, or use a brown plate or napkin to represent a basket. Have your child place two fish crackers and five croutons inside the basket to represent the five loaves of bread and the two fish from the biblical account of John 6:1-16. (Make sure you have some fish crackers and croutons to eat!) Review how Jesus fed 5,000 people with a small amount of food. Thank God for taking care of you and for providing for your needs.

Option 2: Gather items of things that God provides for us. (Items might include a picture of a home, food, a Bible, medicine.) Place items in a tote or a basket. Encourage your child to pull out one item at a time and discuss how your family uses that item. Remind your child that Jesus showed His love to the crowds of people by providing food for them. Then pray and thank God that Jesus loves you and shows His love by providing for your physical and spiritual needs.

Option 3: Each night this week, have one member of your family share one way that God provides for your family. They will likely think of physical things. Encourage them to think of spiritual provision also. Examples might include your home, food, a special toy or favorite item, your church, the Bible, salvation, heaven, etc. Write each of the ideas on a slip of paper and place the papers in a jar. Choose one night to read each of the items together, and then thank God for providing for your family.

BEAR HUG 18

Option 1: Sing your child's or your favorite worship song that describes Jesus' love. Some older favorites are "Oh How He Loves You and Me" or the chorus of "My Savior's Love" (the lyrics and melody are easily searchable online). Have your child thank Jesus for His great love for us.

Option 2: Choose one of the following activities to do with your child:

Donate food to a food pantry.

Drop off needed supplies to a local shelter.

Donate new or gently used clothes to a crisis pregnancy center.

On your way to the activity, remind your child that Jesus showed His love by helping others and that he can be like Jesus by helping others.

Option 3: Remind your child that Jesus loved all people and that the greatest way He showed His love was by forgiving sin. Review the definition of sin (anything we think, say or do that disobeys God). Give your child an example of a sin that he struggles with (such as disobeying, getting angry and hitting a sibling). Remind your child that Jesus died for sin and that Jesus will forgive all his sin when he trusts Jesus as Savior.

BEAR HUG 19

Option 1: Have your child close his eyes as you count to 10. Remind your child how hard it would be if he could not see ANYTHING. Review the story of Bartimaeus together and thank God for giving Bartimaeus his sight.

Option 2: Give your child a small, empty basket. Assign a color to your child, and have your child find and put in the basket five things that begin with that color. For older children, set a timer for three minutes and see if they can collect five items of the same color before the timer runs out. Discuss with your child how their eyes help them see and recognize different things. Remind your child that Bartimaeus could not see, but Jesus healed Him. Thank God for sending Jesus to earth to save us.

Option 3: Act out this week's story together. Place a brown towel, sheet or rug on the floor to represent a road. Give your child a cup with some coins inside. Have your child sit by the "road" and pretend to be Bartimaeus. Enlist the help of other family members or friends, and assign one of them to be Jesus. After you have finished acting out the story, thank God for sending Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

Option 4: Remind your child that the GREATEST thing that Jesus did for Bartimaeus was to forgive his sins. Tell your child that Jesus wants to forgive his sins as well. As the Holy Spirit leads, share the plan of salvation with your child. Keep it simple. Explain that every person has sinned. The punishment for sin is death and being away from God forever, but that Jesus Christ died to take our punishment for sin and came alive again. When we trust Him, we are saved and can know that we will be with Him in heaven forever. Remember, preschoolers are old enough to understand and trust Jesus as Savior!

BEAR HUG 20

Option 1: Trace your child's hand and forearm on brown construction paper, and then cut out the shape. Show your child the tree trunk and branches he made. To the top of your tree glue a green paper plate or a circle cut from green construction paper or felt. Display your child's tree on the refrigerator. Each time your child sees his tree, review the story of Zacchaeus together. Remind your child that Jesus loved Zacchaeus and that Jesus loves him too!

Option 2: Remind your child that Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house. Pretend with your child that you are having Jesus over to your house. Ask, "What special things could we do to get ready for Jesus?" Encourage your child to think of one thing to do (ideas might include making cookies or a special treat, making a welcome sign or banner.) Work on that project together, then thank God that Jesus loved Zacchaeus and that He loves you too!

Option 3: Have your child help make a tree snack. Use one pretzel rod for the trunk. Place pretzel sticks along the top of the pretzel rod to represent branches. Put green grape halves along the pretzel sticks to represent leaves. As your child eats his snack, review the story of Zacchaeus together.

BEAR HUG 21

Option 1: Help your child explore the sense of smell with the following activity. Choose several items with a strong odor. (Ideas might include a cotton ball dipped in perfume, a rose, vinegar, a warm cookie or muffin, a candle.) Blindfold your child. One at a time, hold up one of the items for your child to smell. Ask, “Does it smell good?” For older preschoolers, have them guess the item based on its smell. When you have finished the activity, remind your child that Mary used a sweet-smelling oil and put it on Jesus to show Jesus how much she loved Him.

Option 2: Help your child use a scented lotion or body oil after bath time. Remind your child that Mary washed Jesus’ feet with a sweet-smelling oil. By doing so, she showed Jesus how much she loved Him.

Option 3: Remind your child that Mary and her family had Jesus over for a special dinner. Ask your child to think of someone they could invite over for dinner or for dessert. Involve your child in the preparation. As you plan and prepare for your guest, review with your child how Mary loved Jesus and gave her very best to Him. Tell your child that we show Jesus we love Him when we love and serve others.

BEAR HUG 22

Option 1: Gather different items that represent Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. Items might include a small cross, a thorn or a crown (to represent the crown of thorns), a piece of white cloth (to represent the linen that Jesus’ body was wrapped in), a rock (to represent the stone in front of the tomb) a small empty box (to represent the empty tomb). Place the items in a bag or basket. As you review this week’s lesson, encourage your child to pull out an item from the bag. Discuss how that item represents what Jesus did to show how much He loves us.

Option 2: Preschoolers love to pretend! Help your child pretend to be a Sunday school or Awana leader. (For extra fun, have your child dress up in grown-up clothes!) Encourage your child to tell the story of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection to you or the whole family.

Option 3: Choose a favorite hymn or chorus that describes Jesus’ love for us, such as “Jesus Loves Me” or “Jesus Loves Even Me” (the lyrics and melody are easily searchable online). Sing the song together and thank God for sending Jesus to take the punishment for sin.

BEAR HUG 23

Option 1: Use the following motions to help your child memorize this week's verse. Mark 16:15

... *Go* (Yell the word *Go* and put your fist high in the air.)

Ye into all the world, (Make a big circle in the air with your finger to represent the earth.)

And preach the gospel (Hold hands in front of you, palms up, as if you were holding a book.)

To every creature. (Point in front of you, as if you are pointing to many people.)

Mark 16:15. (Hold hands in front of you, palms up, as if you were holding a book.)

Option 2: Help your child choose a missionary to pray for. (You can choose a missionary your church supports, or search online for a mission agency and choose one of their missionaries.) Give your child the missionary's prayer card, or visit the missionary's website. Tell your child that the missionary is obeying God by telling the good news. Pray for that missionary each night this week.

Option 3: Review the Bible lesson from Bear Hug 23. Then help your child wrap an empty box with wrapping paper of his choice. As you are wrapping the box, remind your child that God gave the disciples and all Christians a very special gift: the person of the Holy Spirit. Place the box in an area of your house where your child will see it often. Then, thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

BEAR HUG 24

Option 1: Choose a tract (a booklet with the gospel message written inside) from your church. Explain to your child that we can share the good news with others by giving them a tract that tells the good news. Have your child choose a relative, neighbor or friend to send the tract to. Help your child draw or color a picture, address the envelope, and send the picture and tract to that person.

Option 2: Trace your child's feet onto card stock or poster board. Help your child cut them out. Have your child hold up the pattern of the feet as you review the Bible verse from Bear Hug 24 together.

Option 3: Show your child the picture of the Ethiopian man holding the scroll on page 100 of her handbook. Cut the bottom off a brown paper lunch bag and then cut the bag in half lengthwise. Write out this week's Bible verse on one side of the bag. Then roll each end of the bag toward the middle. Have your child decorate his scroll with stickers. Each time you review this week's Bible verse and story with your child, have him hold the scroll.

BEAR HUG 25

Option 1: Help your child pretend to be Paul or Silas in prison. For extra fun, make a prison out of a large cardboard box, or have your child sit under a table. Choose a favorite song to sing together, such as “Jesus Loves Me” or “This Little Light of Mine” (the lyrics and melody are easily searchable online). Retell the story as your child acts it out, being sure to gently shake the box or the table during the earthquake. After you have acted out the story, thank God for brave men like Paul and Silas who shared the good news with others.

Option 2: Help your child sing this song, which is based on Acts 16:31. Sing it to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush.”

If we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ,
If we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
We shall be saved.

Option 3: Review the definition of good news with your child using the following action rhyme. Make up your own motions, or use the ones provided.

Good news! Good news! (Cup hands around your mouth as if you are shouting.)
I’ll shout today.
Jesus died for sin (Stretch arms out at sides to represent Jesus on the cross.)
And then rose again. (Hold hands in front of you, palms up. Lift hands in the air.)
He lives in heaven today! (Point to the sky.)

Repeat the action rhyme two times. Then pray together, thanking God that you can share the good news with others.

BEAR HUG 26

Option 1: Search your church’s library or online for a famous missionary or evangelist who shared the good news with others. Share their story with your preschooler. Remind your child that even though it was not always easy, that missionary told others the good news. Pray and ask God to help you share the good news with others.

Option 2: Share with your preschooler a time when you shared the good news with someone. Explain that while it is sometimes scary, the Holy Spirit helps us share the good news of Jesus with others.

Option 3: Have your child line up his stuffed animals, toys or action figures on a sofa or chair. Then have your child wear his Cubbie vest and practice sharing the good news with the toys or stuffed animals. Encourage your child to review what the A and C on the vest stand for, as well as share the Cubbie motto, Jesus Loves Me, and the Bible verse from Bear Hug 2, Romans 5:8.

SPECIAL DAY 1

Option 1: Make a family “Thank You, Jesus” jar. Have each person in the family choose one thing that they are thankful for. Record each thing on a slip of paper. Have your child place the papers in a jar. Then each day this week, have your Cubbie choose one slip of paper from the jar. Read the paper aloud, and together say, “Thank You, Jesus!”

Option 2: Together with your child, think of three things that you can be thankful for. Then act out those things together. Choose one evening to act out these three things in front of your family and have them guess what you and your child are thankful for.

Option 3: Choose a favorite hymn or chorus of thanksgiving, such as “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” or “Jesus, We Just Want to Thank You.” (The lyrics and melody are easily searchable online.) Teach the song to your child. Sing this song together each evening before bedtime, and then thank God for all He has done.

SPECIAL DAY 2

Option 1: Plan a nativity play date with several of your child’s friends. Assign each guest a character in the nativity story and ask each of them to come dressed as that character. Using the Cubbies lesson and Luke 2:1-20 as a guide, narrate the Christmas story and have the children “perform” the story together.

Option 2: Visit a local home for the elderly or disabled with your child. If possible, take some small gifts or treats to share with the residents. Encourage your child to recite this week’s memory verse with two or three residents and to remind them that God sent Jesus to be our Savior.

Option 3: Make an angel quesadilla for your child’s lunch or snack by cutting a triangle, a small circle, and a small half-circle from a tortilla. Spread each piece of the tortilla with cream cheese or icing. Use the triangle for the body of the angel. Place the half-circle behind the top part of the angel’s body to represent the wings, and use the circle to represent the angel’s face. As your child eats the snack, discuss how the angel Gabriel came to tell Mary that she would be Jesus’ mommy.

SPECIAL DAY 3

Option 1: Using your phone or a hand held recorder, record your child saying “Jesus loves you!” Have your child choose a friend or a relative to whom you can send the message. Remind your child that Jesus wants us to tell others that He loves them.

Option 2: Choose one family member each day this week to have a special day. Encourage your child to think of something special he can do for the person on his special day. (For example, on Monday, your child could help Dad by picking up sticks in the yard.) Remind your child that when we do kind things for others, we show that we love them.

Option 3: Plan an “I love you” meal where every part of the meal is either red or is in the shape of a heart. (For example, the meal might include spaghetti, sandwiches cut in the shape of a heart, red Jell-O® or strawberries for dessert, fruit punch or cherry Kool-Aid® to drink.) Have your child make and decorate placemats or a table runner from butcher paper, and then have him help with the meal. After you serve the dinner, have each person in your family share one reason why he or she loves Jesus.

SPECIAL DAY 4

Option 1: Invite three Cubbie friends over. Help the Cubbies act out this week’s story together, and then, praise God that Jesus died and came alive again.

Option 2: Help your child make an empty tomb by cutting a paper plate in half. Out of one half of the plate, cut a semicircle (to represent the stone.) Have your child color each piece of the plate gray. Then tape or staple the edges of the two halves of the plate together. Stand the “tomb” on a table or a counter and let your child pretend to roll the “stone” in front of the “tomb.”

Option 3: For an extra challenge, help your preschooler memorize Psalm 150:2. Remind your child of Jesus’ greatness when He came alive again. Praise God for Jesus and His great and mighty act of the resurrection.