

heartfelt Newsletter

February 2009

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:29-39

THEME: A Mid-Winter Picnic

family
'round
the
table



Decorations: Picnic Tablecloth and Napkins, Paper Cups and Plates, Plastic Cutlery

MENU

Grilled Hotdogs and Buns, Condiments, Coleslaw, Chips, Popsicles

*Note: Prepare and serve the meal outdoors around your grill or in a nearby park where grilling is possible. If the situation requires that you stay inside, serve the meal on a tablecloth spread on the floor. The family sits on the floor around the tablecloth to eat.

Blessing:

Oh God, creator of our world and of us. We thank you for promising to always be with us. Thank you for this opportunity to eat and play together. Amen.



PLAYING TOGETHER

Activity One: Family Silhouettes

Materials:

large sheets of newsprint (one for each family member), large sheets of black construction paper, charcoal pencil, scissors, masking tape, glue stick, slide projector or lamp with powerful bulb.

Directions:

1. Place a straight-back chair so that person seated will be in profile when the shadow is cast on the wall, about 18 inches to two feet away from a bare wall. Some adjustment may be required to create an image of a manageable size.
2. Tape a large sheet of paper on the wall so that it will reflect the head and shoulders of the person sitting in the chair.
3. Invite a family member to sit in the chair. Adjust the distance so that the shadow is a manageable size.
4. Trace around the shadow with the charcoal pencil. The “shadow” needs to sit still!
5. Use tape loops to secure the shadow outline to black construction paper.
6. Cut around the silhouette and glue the cutout silhouette to white paper.
7. Display the silhouettes in a place where the family will enjoy them.

Activity Two: Playing With Shadows

Materials:

a strong light source, white sheet, strong packaging tape or duct tape.

Directions:

1. Tape a white sheet across a doorway.
2. Place a strong light source behind the sheet.
3. Have fun creating shadow figures by standing between the light and the sheet so that shadows are cast on the sheet.

Activity Three: Fun in the Snow

Materials: snow, clothing appropriate for a snowperson

Directions: Build and dress a snow man or a snow woman.

Activity Four: By the Light of the Stars

Materials: a clear night sky, computer with internet access

Directions:

1. Check out what to look for this week by using the internet to access www.stardate.org/nightsky/almanac.
2. Take a nighttime walk and listen for the night sounds.



STUDYING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

- Introduce Mark 1:29-39 by sharing this information: Although Matthew appears first in the New Testament, Mark is considered the oldest of the Gospels. It was written down less than 100 years after the Resurrection. It tells of Jesus' life in simple, direct language. Many of the stories contain details that lead the reader to believe the writer witnessed, or at least talked to people who were actually present when the events occurred.

- Invite family members to look for maps in the back of the Bible and find Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee, or use a favorite search engine to access Bible maps. Jesus began his teaching and healing ministry in Capernaum. Trade caravans passed through it, Roman troops were stationed there, and taxes were collected there. Capernaum was a very busy seacoast city.
- Explain that for the next several weeks the family will look at the way Jesus helped people who were sick. It may help to children understand that the healing Jesus did was very different from the others who claimed to be able to heal the sick. The healings they offered often involved going to in a special place and doing some specific things that would bring the healing. Jesus did not give orders about what a person had to do and where a person had to go. He just healed the sick person right where they were.
- Invite a family member to find and read Mark 1:29-39 aloud. Ask listeners to watch for where Jesus is in the story and what Jesus does. You may read the passage from the Bible and/or tell the story in your own words. Or read the following story:

After a busy morning in the synagogue where he taught and healed a very sick man, Jesus and his friends went to Simon's house. When they arrived Jesus' friends told him that Simon's mother was very sick with a high fever. Jesus went to her, touched her and helped her sit up. Her fever went away at once and she was well enough to welcome them and serve them a meal.

The story of how Jesus healed the very sick man during the worship service spread through the town quickly and that evening a crowd of people filled the street outside Simon's house. All of them had some kind of sickness. Jesus touched them and they were immediately healed.

Very early on the next morning—while it was still dark—Jesus went off by himself to pray. The disciples went to find him. They told him that many people were searching for him. Jesus told them it was time to go to other nearby towns so he could teach the people and heal those who were sick.

Reflection Questions for the Family

1. What does this story tell us about where Jesus was when he healed people?
2. What does this story tell us about the people Jesus healed?
3. Why do you think Jesus' friends (Simon, Andrew, James, and John) told Jesus that Simon's mother was too sick to get out of bed?
4. After Jesus touched Simon's mother and she got well, what did she do? After Jesus healed the sick people who came to see him that evening, what do you think they did?
5. Why do you think that early in the morning Jesus went off to a quiet place to pray?
6. Why do you think Jesus left Capernaum? Why do you think he did not go on teaching and healing people there?



PRAYING TOGETHER

- Place an open Bible and a lighted candle in the center of the table to create a family worship center.
- Open a time of sharing by explaining that Jesus' friends talked to him about people who were important to them. Point out that Jesus did not just help friends, like Simon's mother, he helped crowds of people he didn't even know. And, Jesus knew that it was important to find a quiet time to pray to God.
- Suggest that family members to use this time to talk to Jesus about things that are troubling them and about the people they want Jesus to help.
- After a time of sharing, conclude with a prayer of your own choosing or you may use this prayer: *Good and gracious God, help us remember that when we are worried you are ready to listen to our prayers. Thank you for promising to stay with us when we are worried about something or someone. Amen*