

Questions for Cubs

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

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

Lesson

God Has Given Us Gifts

Key Verse

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10 NIV)

Ear Check (Story Comprehension)

- Q: What did C.J. and Ned see behind the General Store?
A: *Hugh, Mange, and Motley painting something on the wall*
- Q: What did Hugh threaten to do to The Club?
A: *To get revenge*
- Q: What happened to C.J. during the fight?
A: *He was hit in his good eye and then began to sense things with his bad eye.*
- Q: What did C.J. say is one of Gooz's gifts?
A: *He said that she knows when something has a deeper meaning.*
- Q: What did Paw Paw Chuck say C.J.'s gift was?
A: *Discernment*

Heart Check (Spiritual Application)

- Q: When God gives a special gift, doesn't He just "zap" us with it, and then we suddenly have it at full strength?
- A: No. God usually gives a special ability or gift as a small thing—a beginning. Our responsibility then is to practice it, to get better at using it, and hopefully to gain wisdom as we go. Even Jesus's disciples started small. They failed, tried again, and finally became great men of God. They struggled, but they grew the gifts with which God had blessed them. We should do the same (1 Corinthians 9:24–27).

Questions for Cubs Page 2

Q: When people have something “wrong” with them, like C.J.’s eye, is it a sign that they did something wrong or that their parents did something wrong? Is it a punishment?

A: Absolutely not!! Read the following passage from John 9:2–3:

And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

From these verses we see that God wanted to bless this man even before he was born. There was a reason for his blindness; it was not a curse. C.J. has a weak eye that is an embarrassment to him. But C.J. will continue to be blessed through this “handicap” if he will allow it. In the real world, our shortcomings and handicaps will also be used by God to bless us and others if we allow Him to use them for His glory. That is the challenge. Will we humbly embrace a gift that hurts but blesses?

“I” Check (*Personal Application*)

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12. Make a list of the gifts that Paul mentions here. Can you think of any other spiritual gifts not mentioned in Paul’s list?
2. Why do you think the Holy Spirit gives many different kinds of spiritual gifts? What image does Paul use to describe all Christians?
3. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and the other God-given talents or abilities we may have?
4. Faith Challenge: According to the Bible, if you’re a Christian, the Holy Spirit has given you at least one spiritual gift. Your responsibility is to use that gift to glorify God and build up the body of Christ. Do you know what your spiritual gift(s) is (are)? A “spiritual-gifts inventory” is a good way to help you determine what your gifts are.

PARENTS: Ask a church leader if your church offers a spiritual-gifts inventory that your child can take. If your church doesn’t have one, several are available online for free. Simply type “spiritual gifts inventory” into a search engine. Most are not formatted for children, so you will want to take the test with your child. Make it a family activity and have every family member take one and discuss the results. Then find ways to use your gifts in your church!

Director's Notes

This episode marks a turning point for *Paws & Tales*. In it we use a new level of allegory to explore deeper spiritual truths. Several issues are touched on in "The Gift," one of which questions the role we play in the development and use of our gifts.

When my dad planted a garden, he sometimes planted seeds and sometimes seedlings. When God gives a gift, it may come as a seed or a seedling. It begins small, much smaller at the beginning than what it will be years later. I think the less we understand a particular gift, the more likely we are to think that others just got "zapped" with it rather than developing it over time. When we are given a gift by God, He expects us to exercise it, use it, and become practiced in it. Just as this is true with athletic ability, it is also true with wisdom, discernment, and other spiritual gifts. We can choose to use our gifts in a selfish manner or ignore them and let them atrophy into uselessness. It is our responsibility to make good use of what God gives us.

Another theme present in this episode concerns C.J.'s bad eye. In addition to his strong, brown eye, he has a bright blue, weak eye. Yet God chooses to bless him through it. You might think that this is a rare bit of irony, but I am convinced that it is actually the way God wants us to handle difficulties all the time. I want to be careful here; I do not want to be glib or insensitive. Sometimes gifts come as good things given to us, and sometimes they come as bad things withheld from us. And sometimes God gives us good things as we endure tough things.

In the Bible, Jacob was touched on his hip by the angel of the Lord, and he was crippled for the rest of his life (Genesis 32:24–32). Paul prayed three times that his "thorn in the flesh" would be removed, and it was not (2 Corinthians 12:7–9). Jacob's limp was a lifelong reminder that God had done a great work in his life. Maybe Paul needed to be protected from pride, and his thorn in the flesh was a gift that did just that. Now these are not gifts that anyone really wants, but they accomplished a beautiful work in these men that they were deeply thankful for later in their lives.

C.J.'s considers his bad eye an embarrassing handicap that he does not want and would not wish on his worst enemy, but in this episode he learns that through this handicap he is able to understand things that others cannot. He will have to decide every day whether he will accept this gift as a blessing and use it the way God meant him to or become embittered and angry with God for "punishing" him with this "curse." By his actions and attitude, C.J. alone will decide whether his weak eye is a gift or a curse.



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