

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

Showing Mercy

Key Verse

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:15–16)

Ear Check (Story Comprehension)

Q: What do the kids cry out when they catch Smit?

A: *"No mercy!"*

Q: What is the shoemaker on trial for?

A: *Hitting Madam Squeen*

Q: What is the customary punishment for the shoemaker's crime?

A: *Death*

Q: What does Goliath do to the tower he had built?

A: *He sets it on fire*

Q: Who does Dr. Labauch say Goliath is supposed to find when he escapes from Shadow Valley?

A: *The One who is supposed to free them*

Heart Check (Spiritual Application)

Q: Goliath showed mercy to Smit, the shoemaker, by declaring him "not guilty" even though he committed the crime for which he was charged—something that had never been done before in Shadow Valley. What is the definition of mercy? In what ways are we shown mercy by God?

A: *Mercy and grace are two words we tend to use synonymously, but they are not the same. Grace is getting something we don't deserve, but mercy is not getting something we do deserve. We do not deserve God's blessings, but He gives them to us anyway. That's grace. We do deserve God's judgment and eternity in hell, but if we are followers of Christ, He will save us from these (Ephesians 2:4–5). That's mercy.*

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When Goliath showed mercy to the shoemaker, it shook all of Shadow Valley. The act of mercy was a blow to the power of sin. It is the same for us in our lives—we have no hope without God’s mercy, and then He gives us the ability to show mercy to others as well.

Q: Dr. Labauch explains to Goliath that, no matter what we’ve done, God can forgive us and offer us the gift of salvation. Goliath had many sins to be forgiven. But do we need to be forgiven even if we live a pretty good life?

A: Many people think, “I’ve lived a pretty good life, I think it’ll all work out in heaven when I get there.” This is a dangerous deception. It certainly *is* better to live good lives than lawless, selfish ones, but this only makes us better citizens—it doesn’t save us.

If we have sinned even once, we are infected with a fatal spiritual virus called “sin.” If left untreated, we will die a spiritual death and spend an eternity separated from God. Think of it this way: If we are infected with cancer, living a “pretty good life” will have no effect on the cancer itself. The real culprit—the cancerous cells—must be destroyed. Because we are all infected with sin, we need total healing from the only One who is without the disease—nothing else will do. Healing from sin is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 5:8–10).

Q: Goliath passed through the labyrinth unharmed even though he was told monsters would surely kill him if he attempted it. Satan regularly tries to deceive us to keep us from doing God’s will. What are some ways humankind has been deceived by Satan?

A: Humankind has always had to deal with the lies and temptations of Satan. From the serpent’s lies to Eve in the Garden of Eden to Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, the devil is always trying to turn our hearts against God.

The Bible says that Satan is a liar (John 8:44) and a deceiver (Revelation 20:10). The Scriptures also say that he hinders the work of God’s servants (1 Thessalonians 2:18), blinds men to the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4), and promotes false doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1–3). But Christians are not powerless over Satan! The best way to combat lies and deceptions is to know the truth (Psalm 119:11). The more we know God, know His Word, and obey His commandments, the easier it becomes to know a lie when we hear one (2 Corinthians 4:1–6).

“I” Check (*Personal Application*)

1. You don’t need to be a king to show mercy to someone. In what ways have you been shown mercy or been merciful to others?
2. God forgives all who ask Him and repent from their sinful ways. What are some sins for which you have asked forgiveness? Are there other sins in your life that you need to ask God to forgive? Do it now.
3. Satan’s lies can be big or small, but all are designed to draw you away from God or mislead the way you think about Him. Some lies can even change the way we think of ourselves. Can you give any examples from your own experience?

Director's Notes

When a person approaches the reality of God, many concepts need to be addressed. Sin is one. Most folks have a pretty good handle on it, but it may be a significant hurdle for others. The need for forgiveness is another concept we must face. Most of us have a fairly good grasp on this one, too. If we come to grips with sin, forgiveness will be much less than a hurdle and perhaps no more than a speed bump. For many, though, forgiveness and redemption are a mountain range. I think instinctively, way down deep inside, we do understand the depth of our corruption and rebellion against God. That is why we struggle so much with accepting that salvation is a free gift. We might argue, "It's not fair!" or "It doesn't add up!" I agree. What we must understand is that while salvation is free to us, it is not without cost. Salvation is free to us because the sinless, innocent Son of God gave Himself to die in our place. Once we open ourselves up to this truth, heaven will open up to us, literally. This is the nature of salvation. It is free to us.

Salvation is the first and most important part of redemption, but there is more. Do Christians occasionally cheat, steal, and lie? Of course! Once we are saved from hell, we need to be saved from a thousand other things that we may not even be aware of. We retain our sin nature even after we are saved. Christ came not only to offer salvation but also to offer us abundant life. I personally have seen people accept salvation but show only the slightest interest in the rest of the blessings that have been prepared for them. We can be saved and live wounded. It's just not the way God wants us to live.

Once Goliath was saved, he needed to do some things so that God would complete the transformation . . . "That's the way it works, Dear." He needed to face some of his fears, to allow others to help him, and much more. That's what the path to abundant life looks like. The Bible never says the Christian life will be easy. On the contrary, we are promised difficulty and suffering—even death. Goliath died in the labyrinth of his fears. There he chose to become who he was meant to be. When he let others care for him, his healing began, and he was transformed into Paw Paw Chuck. Even then, his difficulties and suffering continued. After all, the goal of pursuing abundant life is not about being comfortable, it's about becoming Christlike. Transformation is a serious and messy business.



David B. Carl
Creative Director
Paws & Tales