

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

Exercising Faith to Experience What God Has for Us

Key Verse

"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12 NIV)

Ear Check (Story Comprehension)

- Q: What do Staci, Marsha, and Gooz decide to do for a project?
A: *Start a free soup dinner service*
- Q: What machine do C.J. and Ned find that they want Alex to keep?
A: *A machine that makes peppermint sticks*
- Q: What does Theo find that will help Alex hire workers and repair the machines?
A: *Over a million dollars in the manager's account*
- Q: Who shows up to the factory when the factory whistle blows?
A: *Some men who used to work there*
- Q: What happens to the girls' sign-up lists?
A: *People in the town take them and make soup and bread for others*

Heart Check (Spiritual Application)

- Q: If I had a factory or a lot of money, I would do something really amazing for God. Why was it so hard for Alex?

A: Don't be too hard on Alex; it's very hard to take a risk with what we have. Most people think that if they have more money, if they are more popular, or if they are more successful, things would be great and life would be easy. It is very easy to get scared and use all of our time and energy to protect what we have instead of risking it and using it for God's kingdom. Think about it. Are you willing to talk to your friends about Jesus? Scary, isn't it. Are you willing to invite some kids over to your party who are a little difficult to be with? Tough stuff. Whatever you have—friends, toys, popularity, or an ability of some kind—are you willing to take a risk and let God use it?

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Q: Alex had all kinds of stuff to work with, I don't have anything. How can I serve God when He hasn't given me a factory or a lot of money?

A: It is easy to see what others have and believe that we don't have enough. Yes, Alex had a lot of stuff. But he didn't see it that way. You have a lot too—but maybe you can't see it. Do you have time to spend with someone who needs a friend? That is more valuable than a treasure to a lonely person. God has given you abilities and resources that are desperately needed by those around you. It's really tempting to only use our gifts to try to become popular, safe, or important. That's just like making bad candies. Take the risk, and let God use the things you have right now. Then you'll see what He can do.

"I" Check (*Personal Application*)

1. Alma encouraged the girls to take a step of faith and do a service project. Staci, Marsha, and Gooz learned that a lot of people were blessed because they exercised their faith. Have you ever been a part of a mission trip or service project? What good things did you accomplish? Can you think of other ways that you can put your faith into action?
2. Read John 14 and Matthew 17:14–20. Jesus did some amazing things while He was here on earth. He performed miracles, healed the sick, cast out demons, and even brought the dead back to life. But even Jesus's disciples struggled with their faith, and they saw His miracles firsthand. Be encouraged; though exercising your faith is hard, you're not alone. Keep trying. What "mountains" do you have in your life that you would like to overcome? Pray and ask God to give you the faith to overcome them, and then consider taking a step toward facing them.
3. Pretend you desperately want to be like a great ballplayer or performer. What things would you do to try to become that type of athlete or artist? Wouldn't you study everything you could about him or her, his background, how she got her start, and what tips he could give for being successful in his field? You would even want to know what she eats for breakfast! Now, instead of pretending to be just like a great ballplayer or performer, imagine that you desperately want to be like Jesus. What would you do? As Christians, we are called by God to become more like Christ in every way, and the Holy Spirit works in us to make that happen. What changes do you think the Holy Spirit wants to make in you to make you more like Jesus?

Director's Notes

Risk Management is a huge business. It evaluates the things a company does, the policies they hold, and the kinds of clients they serve, all with the intention of eliminating anything that represents a costly risk. Self protection only makes sense—unless we are talking about our Christian walk. Great risk is involved in following Christ. I don't think it would be an overstatement to say that we can gauge our Christian walk by how little or how much risk we're willing to take. The safe thing is to do what we have always done. The safe thing is for us to raise our kids with an eye toward financial and social success. The safe thing is for us to eliminate all the things that represent too much of a risk to ourselves and our families. This is a recipe for materialistic mediocrity. In other words, we will never become like Christ without accepting a fairly high level of risk.

We are told to give tithes and offerings. Frankly, this is counterintuitive. Risk Management would tell us to create as large a financial buffer as possible before choosing to give our hard-earned cash away. The only way this command to give makes sense is with the faith that God will take care of us. It is an unreasonable risk, but one that is an actual command from God. We are commanded to use our gifts for the furthering of His kingdom and not for our own glorification. And we're afraid—if we do not draw glory to ourselves, who will? If God wants us to have glory, He'll see that it happens. Humility is the apex of risk. Will I actually make God more important in my life than myself? Will I believe the things He says over what is common practice in this culture? Will I believe that my current idea of success is corrupt and that I need to be healed from it by God? Can I allow vengeance to belong to God and forgive those who have hurt me? These all seem very risky. The irony is that when I go with my gut, when I make money my singular focus, when I do what I want and take vengeance on those who deserve it, these things will cause me harm. In fact, some of them will probably destroy me. God is not holding back something good here; He is trying to protect me, if only I will listen.

The truth of the matter is that God has much better, bigger plans for us than we do. He wants us to have peace, and we will settle for a mirage of security. He wants us to love and be loved, and we want fame—a cheap imitation of love. God wants to give us Himself to guide us and grow us, and we want to be masters of our own destiny. The cruel joke is on us, and we keep repeating it like a mantra until it sounds true.

Forget risk management; engage in some soul management instead. Take the risk, and teach your kids to do the same.



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