

Gospel Light's

GRADES 1-6

# BIG BOOK OF TIME FILLERS



Bible-based activities to enrich kids' learning

Make good use of unscheduled time

Discussion games, riddles, activity ideas and more!



**Reproducible!**



**Linda Massey Weddle**

# GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOCOPYING PAGES

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# How to Use This Book

## If you are the children's pastor,

1. Read "Introduction" on pages 5-6 and briefly skim through several sections to get an overview of *The Big Book of Time Fillers*.
2. Collect and store in each classroom or in a central location the supplies suggested on page 6.
3. Make copies of this book and provide to teachers. Tip: Rather than distributing all the sections at once, provide a different section every month or so. You may also choose to select and distribute sections that you think would be most usable for a particular class or program.



## If you are a teacher or small-group leader,

1. Read "Introduction" on pages 5-6 and briefly skim through several sections to get an overview of *The Big Book of Time Fillers*.
2. If the supplies listed on page 6 are not readily available to you, collect and store in a convenient location.
3. Use activities as needed to enrich or extend your teaching.



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# Introduction

We love children's ministry, but there are those moments in all our lives, when things don't go exactly the way we planned—

- The teacher assigned to the lesson calls on her cell phone to tell you she has a flat tire.
- ALL your regular teachers come down with the flu—on the same night.
- Your well-planned 20-minute lesson only takes 10.
- The DVD is a perfect discussion starter, but the DVD player isn't working (or was snagged by the youth pastor).
- The pastor, special speaker or guest musicians are going WAY over time.
- Your well-prepared plan isn't working and the kids are growing more restless by the minute.

We've all been there. We've all had those moments when we wish we had an instantaneous emergency plan.

That's what this book is all about. Ideas, quizzes, riddles, mini-teaching plans and more to bring value to those otherwise empty (and probably chaotic) minutes.

So, look through the book and choose some ideas to have ready for the next time this happens to you.

## Be Ready

Work with at least one other teacher, so when those moments happen, you can keep talking to the class, while the other teacher automatically gathers whatever you need for one of the activities. While waiting for the teacher to get ready, share a fun fact or riddle, play a game or tell a story. You don't want nothing-going-on time. Teachers panic. Children take advantage of the inactivity and start talking, running around the room, poking each other and whatever else they can think of to do.

We suggest you copy (and laminate, if you'd like) the pages provided for use in Letters in the Lines (see p. 140), Sketching a Scene (see p. 143) and Bible Story Charades (see p. 148). Cut apart the pages and store in individual containers. Children get excited about these games and excited about having a turn. Sometimes, however, when they're actually chosen, they freeze. They can't think of a word or Bible event to use. Meanwhile, other children are wildly waving their arms around to have a turn and things quickly can get out of hand. Or, the child who is chosen uses a word (for Letters in the Lines) that he doesn't know how to spell. That means a whispered conversation with a teacher between every guess ("Is the letter in the word? Where do I put it?"). Having the children choose the word or event from the container keeps the game moving and provides the correct spelling.

Collect the supplies, make copies of the quizzes . . . and you'll be ready to go at a moment's notice!

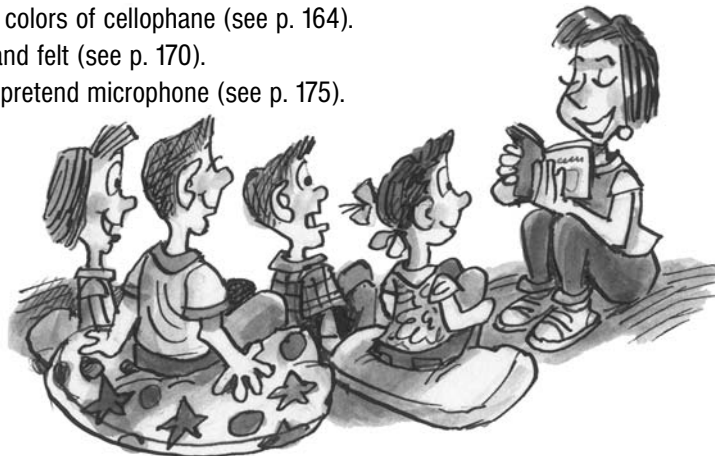


## Basic Supplies to Have on Hand

1. Bibles, Bible dictionary and Bible concordance.
2. Paper—all kinds, including construction paper, white copy paper, plain postcards, newsprint and butcher paper. (You can now purchase Post-it sketch pads and banner paper which are perfect for displaying some of the artwork the children make.)
3. Pencils, pens, crayons and markers. Make sure the markers actually work! Fresh ones will produce bright colors.
4. Glue, masking tape, scissors, stapler and hole punch.
5. Whiteboard and/or chalkboard. If possible, have a couple of these (or more) on hand for when you divide your class into teams.
6. One or more digital cameras. Many companies make digital cameras which are designed for children to use. Because you can use cameras in many activities, they are a good addition to your classroom. (Kids can take as many pictures as they want and save them to a computer. The cost will come in the printing.)
7. Game supplies (soft or foam balls, tennis balls, beanbags, large containers, paper cups, coins for each child).
8. Prizes. Keep your eyes open for small prizes (inexpensive party favors or bite-size wrapped pieces of candy) you can keep on hand to reward winning individuals or teams. Keep the prizes in a prize box and store in a convenient place.
9. Church information (names of staff members and shut-ins, church events, etc.) and missions resources (globe or world map, prayer cards or other information about the missionaries your church or denomination supports, children's missionary biographies, a CD of children's music from another country).
10. Clear Con-Tact paper or access to a laminator.
11. Children's music CD and player.

## Supplies for Specific Activities

1. Samples of ads from magazines (see p. 32).
2. Plastic page protectors and three-ring binders (see p. 82).
3. Play dough (see p. 94).
4. Wooden blocks (see p. 99).
5. Stopwatch (or watch with second hand) (see p. 119).
6. Knife-sharpener and knife from home or church kitchen (see p. 128).
7. Plastic containers to store word cards (see pp. 141, 143, 149).
8. Props such as classroom objects, preschool toys, etc. (see p. 146).
9. Child-safe cleaning supplies (see p. 159).
10. Various colors of cellophane (see p. 164).
11. Fabric and felt (see p. 170).
12. Real or pretend microphone (see p. 175).



# Leading a Child to Christ

Many adult Christians look back to their childhood years as the time when they accepted Christ as Savior. As children mature, they will grow in their understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They will also develop a sense of their own need for forgiveness and feel a growing desire to have a personal relationship with God.

However, the younger the child is the more limited he or she will be in understanding abstract terms. Children of all ages are likely to be inconsistent in following through on their intentions and commitments. Therefore, they need thoughtful, patient guidance in coming to know Christ personally and continuing to grow in Him.

## Pray

Ask God to prepare the students in your group to receive the good news about Jesus and prepare you to communicate effectively with them.

## Present the Good News

Use words and phrases that students understand. Avoid symbolism that will confuse these literal-minded thinkers. Remember that each child's learning will be at different places on the spectrum of understanding. Discuss these points slowly enough to allow time for thinking and comprehending.

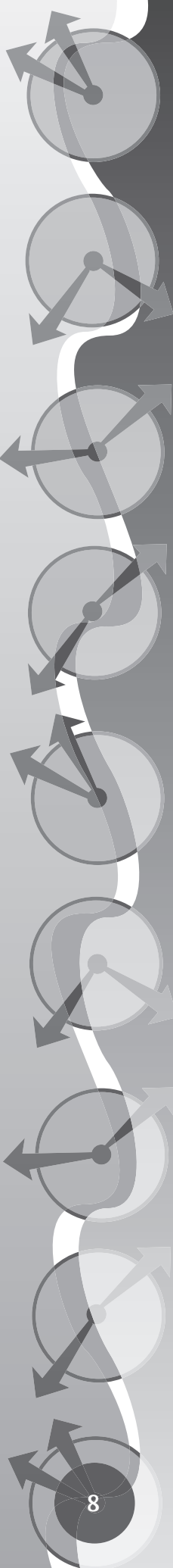
- a. God wants you to become His child. Do you know why God wants you in His family? (See 1 John 3:1.)
- b. You and I and all the people in the world have done wrong things. The Bible word for doing wrong is "sin." What do you think should happen to us when we sin? (See Romans 6:23.)
- c. God loves you so much, He sent His Son to die on the cross for your sins. Because Jesus never sinned, He is the only One who can take the punishment for your sins. On the third day after Jesus died, God brought Him back to life. (See 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 John 4:14.)
- d. Are you sorry for your sins? Tell God that you are. Do you believe Jesus died to take the punishment for your sins and that He rose again? Tell God that, too. If you tell God you are sorry for your sins and tell Him you do believe and accept Jesus' death to take away your sins—God forgives all your sin. (See 1 John 1:9.)
- e. The Bible says that when you believe that Jesus is God's Son and that He is alive today, you receive God's gift of eternal life. This gift makes you a child of God. This means God is with you now and forever. (See John 1:12; 3:16.)

Give students many opportunities to think about what it means to be a Christian; expose them to a variety of lessons and descriptions of the meaning of salvation to aid their understanding.

## Talk Personally with the Student

Talking about salvation one-on-one creates the opportunity to ask and answer questions. Ask questions that move the student beyond simple yes or no answers or recitation of memorized information. Ask open-ended, what-do-you-think questions such as:

- "Why do you think it's important to . . . ?"
- "What are some things you really like about Jesus?"
- "Why do you think that Jesus had to die because of wrong things you and I have done?"
- "What difference do you think it makes for a person to be forgiven?"



When students use abstract terms or phrases they have learned previously, such as “accepting Christ into my heart,” ask them to tell you what the term or phrase means in different words. Answers to these open-ended questions will help you discern how much the student does or does not understand.

## Offer Opportunities Without Pressure

Children normally desire to please adults. This characteristic makes them vulnerable to being unintentionally manipulated by well-meaning adults. A good way to guard against coercing a student’s response is to simply pause periodically and ask, “Would you like to hear more about this now or at another time?” Loving acceptance of the student, even when he or she is not fully interested in pursuing the matter, is crucial in building and maintaining positive attitudes toward becoming part of God’s family.

## Give Time to Think and Pray

There is great value in encouraging a student to think and pray about what you have said before making a response. Also allow moments for quiet thinking about questions you have asked.

## Respect the Student’s Response

Whether or not a student declares faith in Jesus Christ, there is a need for adults to accept the student’s action. There is also a need to realize that a student’s initial responses to Jesus are just the beginning of a lifelong process of growing in the faith.

## Guide the Student in Further Growth

There are several important parts in the nurturing process.

- a. Talk regularly about your relationship with God. As you talk about your relationship, the student will begin to feel that it’s OK to talk about such things. Then you can comfortably ask the student to share his or her thoughts and feelings, and you can encourage the student to ask questions of you.
- b. Prepare the student to deal with doubts. Emphasize that certainty about salvation is not dependent on our feelings or doing enough good deeds. Show the student places in God’s Word that clearly declare that salvation comes by grace through faith. (See John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:11.)
- c. Teach the student to confess all sins. This means agreeing with God that we really have sinned. Assure the student that confession always results in forgiveness. (See 1 John 1:9.)

## The Preschool Child and Salvation

- The young child is easily attracted to Jesus. Jesus is a warm, sympathetic person who obviously likes children, and children readily like Him. These early perceptions prepare the foundation for the child to receive Christ as Savior and to desire to follow His example in godly living. While some preschoolers may indeed pray to become a member of God’s family, accepting Jesus as their Savior, expect wide variation in children’s readiness for this important step. Allow the Holy Spirit room to work within His own timetable.
- Talk simply. Phrases such as “born again” or “Jesus in my heart” are symbolic and far beyond a young child’s understanding. Focus on how God makes people a part of His family.
- Present the love of Jesus by both your actions and your words in order to lay a foundation for a child to receive Christ as Savior. Look for opportunities in every lesson to talk with a young child who wants to know more about Jesus.





**Goal:** To provide a fun, active way for children to answer and discuss questions about Bible truths.

## What Do I Need?

- Bible
- One of the discussion activities from pages 10-14
- A copy of one set of Discussion Cards (see pp. 15-31)
- Scissors
- Materials as listed for the activity

## How Do I Do It?

- The activities in this section require few, if any, materials, are easy to set up and are a fun way to review the Bible truth of any lesson.
- Cut apart one set of Discussion Cards (see pp. 15-31).
- Lead children in the discussion activity you chose.

## Take It Another Step

Invite children to make up their own questions after hearing a Bible story or reading a Bible passage.

## Answering the Questions

# Behind-the-Back Toss

### What Do I Need?

- Soft ball or beanbag

### How Do I Do It?

- Children stand in a group. A volunteer stands in front of the group with back facing the group. Children in group mix themselves up. Volunteer tosses soft ball or beanbag over shoulder. Child in group who catches the ball or beanbag answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Repeat with other volunteers.



## Ball Toss

### What Do I Need?

- Large container (wastepaper basket, bucket, etc.)
- Soft ball or beanbag

### How Do I Do It?

- Place large container in the center of the room.
- Children stand about 4 feet (1.2 m) from container. Children take turns tossing ball or beanbag into the container. When a ball or beanbag lands in the container, child answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Continue as time permits.

## Chair Trade

### What Do I Need?

- Chairs

### How Do I Do It?

- Arrange chairs in circle. Children sit in chairs.
- Close your eyes. While you count slowly to three, children randomly trade chairs. Keeping your eyes closed, call out the name of one of your children. The child sitting to the right of the child whose name you called answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Repeat, calling other children's names.

## Answering the Questions

# Circle Spin

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Children stand in a circle. Volunteer stands in the middle of the circle with eyes closed. Volunteer spins around several times, stops and points. Whichever child the volunteer is pointing at answers a question from the Discussion Cards.

## Coin Cups

### What Do I Need?

- Paper cups
- Coins

### How Do I Do It?

- Divide class into pairs. Give each child a cup and a coin. Ask a question. Children place coins in cups. Call “Heads” or “Tails.” Children turn cups over so that coins fall out onto table or floor. Each child whose coin shows the side called tells his or her partner how he or she would answer the question from the Discussion Cards. If both children’s coins are showing the named side, both children tell answers. If neither children’s coins are showing the named side, children place coins into cups and play again. Invite several volunteers to tell answers to the whole class. Repeat with other questions.



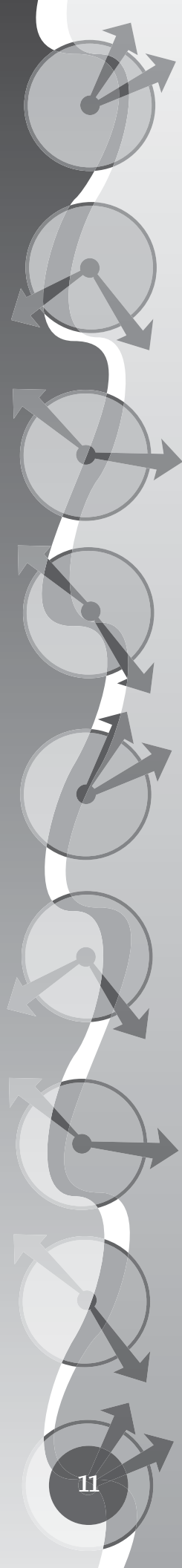
## Discussion Dots

### What Do I Need?

- Marker
- Large sheet of paper

### How Do I Do It?

- Draw a row of 15 dots across a large sheet of paper.
- Children take turns crossing off either one or two dots. (It is not necessary for the dots to be next to each other.) Child who crosses off the last dot answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Repeat the activity with another row of dots, answering questions as time permits.



## Answering the Questions

# Draw Straws

### What Do I Need?

- Straws or paper strips
- Scissors

### How Do I Do It?

- Cut straws or paper strips into equal lengths, one for each child. Cut one again so that it is shorter than the others.
- Hold straws or papers in your hand so that they look even. Each child takes a straw or paper. Child with the shorter straw or paper answers a question from the Discussion Cards.

## Group and Regroup

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Children walk around the room. Call out a number (from two to five). Group divides into groups of the number called. For example, if the number two is called, children stand in groups of two. Any child left without a group answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Repeat as time permits.

## Handy Pileup

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Form groups of three or four children. One child puts a hand palm-down on table or floor. The other children add their own hands one at a time to the pile. The hand on the bottom is withdrawn and added to the top of the pile. Continue until you signal stop. Child whose hand is on the bottom of the pile answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Repeat as time permits.



## Answering the Questions

# Number Guess

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Secretly choose a number from zero to five. Children stand with hands behind their backs. At your signal, children guess number by showing number of fingers. Each child whose guess matches that of the teacher answers a question from the Discussion Cards.

## Odd or Even

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Divide class into pairs. One child chooses “odd” and the other chooses “even.” Each child puts a hand behind his or her back and together they count “One, two, three.” On “three,” both children thrust a hand in front of them with one to five fingers showing. If the total number of fingers is odd, the player who chose “odd” answers a question. If the total is even, the other player answers a question from the Discussion Cards.



## Over/Under

### What Do I Need?

- Small object to pass around (marker, eraser, etc.)
- Children’s music CD and player

### How Do I Do It?

- Children stand in a line. As you play music, the first child passes object over his or her head, the second child passes it between his or her legs, and so on to the end of the line. Last child in line brings object to the front of the line and continues passing object. When the music stops, child holding the object answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Continue as time permits.

## Answering the Questions

# Telephone

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Divide class into groups of no more than six to eight. Each group forms a circle. Whisper a question from the Discussion Cards to one child in each circle. Child passes the question to the next person by whispering it to him or her. The last person to receive the question in each circle says it aloud (clarify as needed). Volunteers answer the question. Repeat with other questions as time permits, each time beginning with a different child in the circle.

## The Most

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Children stand in groups of three or four. Ask a question. In each group, child with the most letters in his or her last name answers a question from the Discussion Cards. Repeat as time permits, asking new questions, changing groups and using other categories such as fewest letters in name, nearest birthday, wearing the most green, etc.

## Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down

### What Do I Need?

- No supplies needed for this activity

### How Do I Do It?

- Count "One, two, three." On "three" all children make a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down motion with both hands. Without looking at children, call "Thumbs-up" or "Thumbs-down." Volunteer from child holding thumbs in position called answers a question from the Discussion Cards.



## Answering the Questions

# Discussion Cards - Psalm 23

What do you know about how a shepherd cares for sheep? What do you learn about God from Psalm 23?

### Psalm 23

What tough times does Psalm 23 talk about? How did the writer say God helped him in those tough times?

### Psalm 23

In what ways does the writer of Psalm 23 describe God's help and comfort in verses 1-4? When have you experienced God's help and comfort in these ways?

### Psalm 23

When you think about the hard situations described in Psalm 23, which descriptions of God's help are most appealing to you? Why?

### Psalm 23

The writer of Psalm 23 describes a green pasture and quiet waters. What scene would you choose to describe times when God has comforted you?

### Psalm 23

In Psalm 23:4-6, what do you think is the writer's attitude about the future?

### Psalm 23

Answering the Questions

## Discussion Cards - Psalm 51:1-4,10-12

What words does the writer of Psalm 51:1 use to describe God?  
What ideas about God do you get from those words?

**Psalm 51:1-4,10-12**

In Psalm 51:10, what do you think might be different between the two requests (“a pure heart” and “a steadfast spirit”)? What might be the same about them?

**Psalm 51:1-4,10-12**

What does the writer of Psalm 51 ask God to do in verses 1-4?  
Why? When are some times kids your age might want to say words like these to God?

**Psalm 51:1-4,10-12**

In Psalm 51:1-4, what words refer to wrong things a person has done? If you were explaining these verses to a younger child, what words might you use instead?

**Psalm 51:1-4,10-12**

How does the writer of Psalm 51 ask God to help him in verses 10-12? Choose one request and tell why a person who sins needs that from God.

**Psalm 51:1-4,10-12**

How would you say Psalm 51:10, 11 or 12 in simpler words?

**Psalm 51:1-4,10-12**



Answering the Questions

# Discussion Cards - Psalm 139:1-3,13-16

In Psalm 139:1-3, what words are used that mean the same as "know"? What are some specific things God knows about us?

**Psalm 139:1-3,13-16**



If Psalm 139:1-3,13-16 was everything you knew about God, how would you describe Him?

**Psalm 139:1-3,13-16**



You have been asked to design a bumper sticker that states a main idea from Psalm 139:1-3. What would your bumper sticker say?

**Psalm 139:1-3,13-16**



When you read about how well God knows us in Psalm 139:1-3,13-16, how do you feel?

**Psalm 139:1-3,13-16**



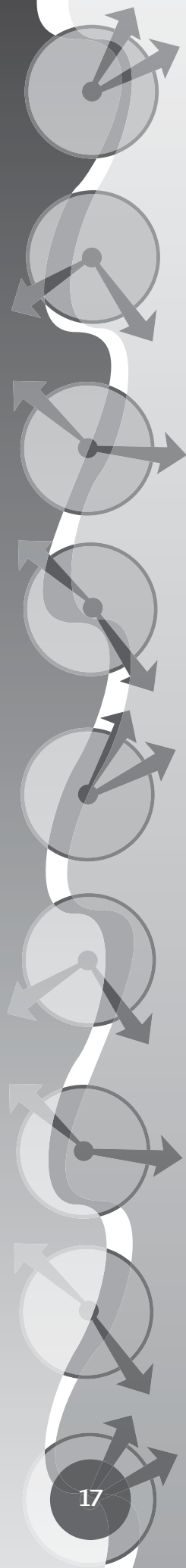
What are some reasons Psalm 139:13-16 might help kids your age trust God?

**Psalm 139:1-3,13-16**



According to Psalm 139:14, what should be our response when we think about how God has made us?

**Psalm 139:1-3,13-16**



Answering the Questions

# Discussion Cards - Psalm 146:7-10

In Psalm 146:7-10, what different actions of God are described? What do you learn about God from these actions?

**Psalm 146:7-10**



How might the words in Psalm 146:7-10 be comforting to someone who is discouraged by big problems?

**Psalm 146:7-10**



What ways to treat other people are described in Psalm 146:7-10? What words would you use to describe someone who treated people in these ways?

**Psalm 146:7-10**



What kinds of situations are described in these verses? Why might a person facing one of the situations in Psalm 146:7-10 want to praise God?

**Psalm 146:7-10**



Psalm 146:7-10 describes some ways that God helps people in difficult situations. When have you known or heard of someone in a difficult situation? What could a kid your age do to help a person in that situation?

**Psalm 146:7-10**



What are some ways kids your age could show compassion to people like those described in Psalm 146:7-10?

**Psalm 146:7-10**



## Answering the Questions

# Discussion Cards - Proverbs 3:3-6

Proverbs 3:3 says that we should keep love and faithfulness close to us. What do you think is the difference between love and faithfulness? Why do you think they should be so important to us?

**Proverbs 3:3-6**

Proverbs 3:3,4 says that showing love and faithfulness will give us a good name, or reputation. Why do you think it is important to have a good name, or reputation, in God's sight? Who are some people you have heard of who have good reputations?

**Proverbs 3:3-6**

Proverbs 3:3-6 tells us to show love and faithfulness constantly. What can we do to remember to show God's love and faithfulness to others?

**Proverbs 3:3-6**

Following Proverbs 3:3,4, what can people do to develop good names, or reputations, for themselves?

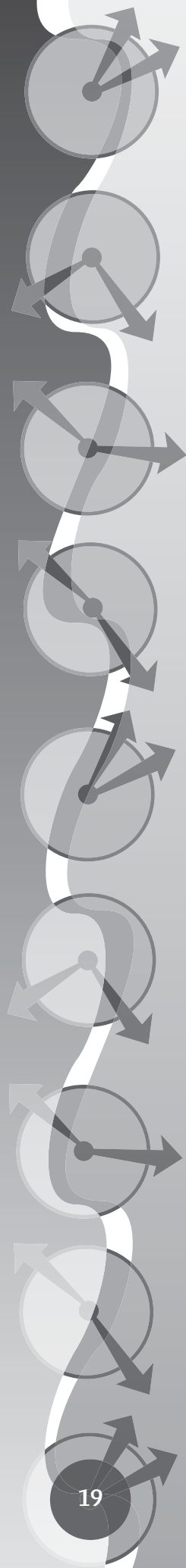
**Proverbs 3:3-6**

What are some things you can do to obey Proverbs 3:3 by showing love or faithfulness to a friend?  
To a family member?

**Proverbs 3:3-6**

Proverbs 3:5,6 tells us that when we trust in God's Word, He will make our paths straight. What are some other ways to describe what happens if we trust in God's Word?

**Proverbs 3:3-6**



## Answering the Questions

# Discussion Cards - Matthew 5:3-9

Seven times in Matthew 5:3-9 Jesus uses the word "blessed." What does it mean for someone to be blessed? What are some other words that communicate a similar idea?

**Matthew 5:3-9**

Read Matthew 5:6. What might a person who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, or goodness, do?

**Matthew 5:3-9**

According to Matthew 5:5, Jesus says that meek, or humble, people will inherit the earth. What do you think that means?

**Matthew 5:3-9**

In Matthew 5:7, Jesus talked about showing mercy. What's so great about being shown mercy? How can you show mercy to others?

**Matthew 5:3-9**

Read Matthew 5:5. Who do you know that is humble? Why do you think this person is humble? How can kids your age show meekness?

**Matthew 5:3-9**

Read Matthew 5:8. How many different ways can you think of to say that someone is sincere, or pure in heart?

**Matthew 5:3-9**