EXPLORING BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®

president Jim Daly
chief operating officer Ken Windebank
publisher Bob DeMoss

editorial director Michael Ridgeway
sr. associate editor Vance Fry
sr. associate editor Andrea Gutierrez

copy chief Scott DeNicola
parenting editor Sheila Seifert

art director Brian Mellema
sr. designer Jody Reiner

written by Vance Fry
illustrated by Brian Mellema

media publishing director Kevin Shirin
editorial assistant Kat Bittner

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AGENTS OF TRUTH™

Brought to you by the creators of *Focus on the Family*® magazine

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Agents of Truth

Thank you for downloading this summer adventure kit from Focus on the Family. Inside this download, your kids will become secret agents tasked with several missions that will help equip them to defend the Christian faith. Agents of Truth will begin each mission with a challenge from one of six contacts, or people who in some way doubt the Christian faith. These people's experiences and personalities may be similar to people your kids encounter at school, after-school activities or around town. The missions, conversations and debriefing will help your kids to be able to respond to these challenges.

Directions:

1. Print this download or open it on your electronic device. Starting on the next page, introduce your family to our six contacts they'll meet while out "in the field." Ask your kids: Do these people remind you of anyone you know?

2. On each mission page, read the question from the contact. Before beginning the mission, talk with your kids about similar objections to the Christian faith that they may have heard.

3. Start the mission! Each mission involves a fun activity that your family can do together. Some missions require parents to do a little prep work, so it's good to read through the mission before you start it with your kids. (You can do missions in any order.)

4. When you're finished with a mission, go to the next page, which includes some questions and a mission debriefing led by Agent X, the Agents of Truth apologetics specialist. Start by responding to the questions. Then read and discuss the debriefing from Agent X.

5. Find the message response section below the debriefing. Read through the message options and have your kids pick the best one. If they want, your children can cut out the mission stamp and affix it to the circle next to the field profile at the beginning of the download.

We hope you enjoy this adventure kit!

AGENTS OF TRUTH™

EXPLORING BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD.

ANSWERS FOR RESPONSES SECTION

01: B	05: C	09: A
02: B	06: B	10: B
03: C	07: C	11: B
04: B	08: B	12: B

05
DESIGN WITH
PURPOSE

09
VIEW FROM
ABOVE

MISSION BADGES

Gavin Hoddy

PROFILE
He comes from a wealthy family, is self-confident with a bit of an ego and thinks his life is great. He sees no real need for God.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION
At the city gym, working on his triceps and chatting up the lady at the counter

02
HALLWAY OF
HAZARDS

08
SPY
GAMES

MISSION BADGES

Jessie Joyfun

PROFILE
She seems happy all the time, loves to hang out with friends and always has a smile on her face. Yet beneath her joyful exterior, Jessie feels something is missing from her life.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION
Shopping at the mall with Liz Kuel

38°57’06”N 77°08’47”W

03
A MATTER OF
PERSPECTIVE

06
PROOF OF
LIFE

Douglas Dowder

MISSION BADGES

PROFILE
He loves video games and science-fiction movies. Douglas has a few close friendships, but is wary of most people. He often thinks religion is a joke.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION
In his basement bedroom, filming a new segment for his Eleet Gamerz YouTube channel

07
VOICES IN THE
DARK

12
CODE
BREAKERS

Liz Kuel

MISSION BADGES

PROFILE
She is a volleyball player and competitive surfer, has an easygoing personality and is liked by most people. Liz finds her identity in her studies and in sports.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION
Shopping at the mall for a dress for the school dance with Jessie Joyfun

01
REMOTE
CONTROL

11
ONE OF A
KIND

Hannah Hertz

MISSION BADGES

PROFILE
She has a couple of close friends, although she mostly considers herself a loner. Hannah is sad a lot of the time and thinks life has been pretty unfair to her. Her home life is dysfunctional and difficult.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION
Unknown

04
AHEAD OF
TIME

10
MIXED
MESSAGES

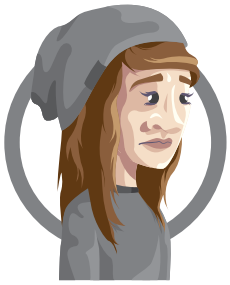
Ian Stein

MISSION BADGES

PROFILE
Ian can't wait to get out of this town and start his studies at Oxford or Harvard, once he gets accepted, which he doesn't see as a problem. Ian is concerned with his achievement in academics, and that's about it.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION
At the library, finishing up his 15-page* research paper for AP Biology.

- Assignment was for 5 pages



Remote Control

01

"If God is really powerful and loves us, why is life so unfair? Why doesn't God stop people from being mean to each other?"

MISSION

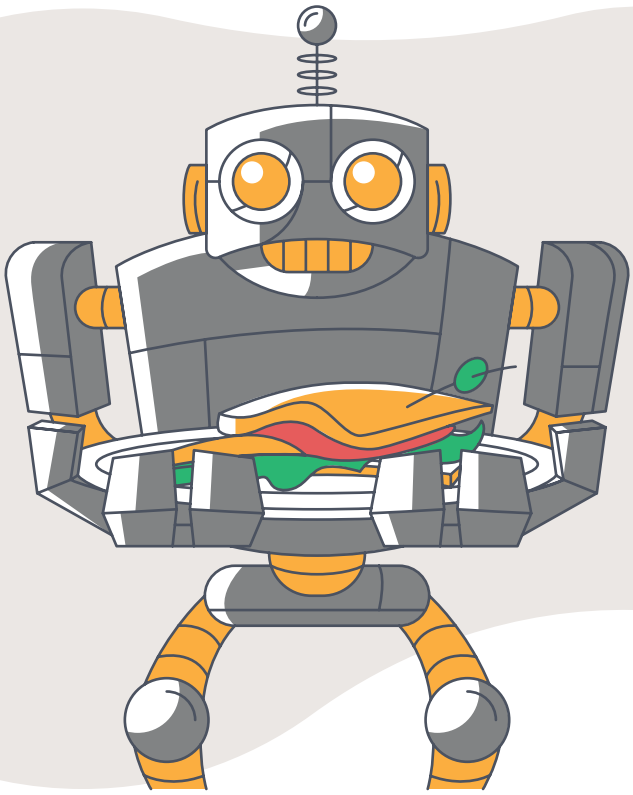
You'll need the basic ingredients for a simple meal, perhaps meat and cheese sandwiches with carrot sticks, apple wedges and a glass of chocolate milk. Select a parent or older child—someone with drama skills who can ham it up—to serve as FoodBot, a mindless, soulless robot who can only follow basic commands.

Tell the others that the objective of this mission is to give FoodBot instructions so it can prepare today's lunch. The robot does not have free will so it will only act on instructions from the kids.

Have the children take turns giving instructions to FoodBot. These commands must be clear and specific. A specific command might be: "Robot, walk over to the refrigerator, open the door and remove the bag of carrots from the bottom shelf."

Remember, avoid vague commands. Instructions must be very clear, or you might confuse FoodBot and get poor results.

To gain important intel that can help Hannah Hertz, complete this mission. !

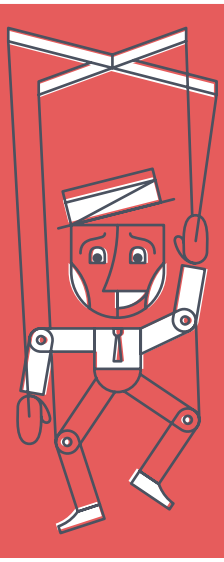


Remote Control

01

How would a human being and a FoodBot make lunch differently? What was the FoodBot missing?

What is good about being able to make choices?



Debriefing:

Have you ever spent time with a controlling person—perhaps a neighbor kid or classmate who insisted on his way? It probably wasn't very fun having your freedom to make decisions or express your thoughts taken away.

God isn't like that. He doesn't want to control a bunch of robots, so He gave us free will. This freedom is a gift, allowing us to give and receive love and kindness. But that same freedom allows us to do things that are not very loving.

You've witnessed times when people have chosen to treat others poorly. Read any news report, and you'll see evidence of people using their freedom to hurt others. When you hear these terrible reports, you might wonder, *If God is really in control, why can't He stop the evil?*

But think for a moment: What would that look like? God could force all people to do only good. But if He did, we would be less like humans and more like robots.

God is not interested in building robots who are forced to love and respect each other and Him. God created humans to freely choose. But having a choice means we can also choose to do evil, which is why life is sometimes unfair.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO HANNAH HERTZ. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A God doesn't have the power to stop everyone from choosing to be unkind.

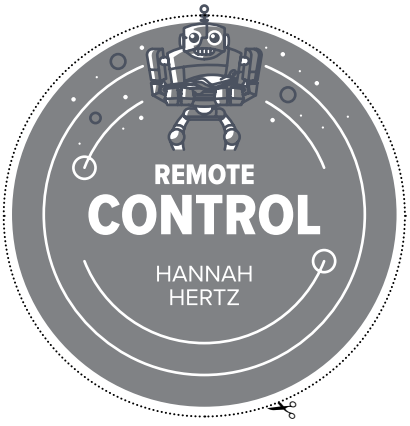
B God gives the choice to do good things or bad things. That freedom is a gift that can be used wisely or poorly.

C God doesn't stop mean people because He enjoys seeing our pain and suffering.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE

John 10:10



Jessie Joyfun

Hallway of Hazards

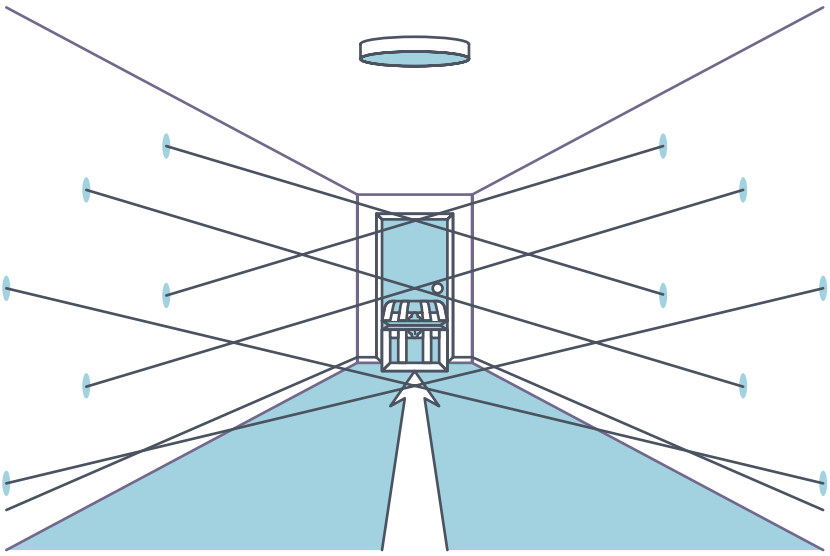
"I've tried reading the Bible, but it doesn't seem very exciting. Isn't it just a bunch of rules that make life boring?"

02

MISSION

Find a long, narrow area that is easy to crisscross with laser beams (yarn). A hallway works well. Pick the start and end points for your maze. At the end point, place a treasure that needs to be recovered. Now begin building the maze backward from the treasure, fixing the yarn at varying heights down the hall. You can use painter's tape to stick the yarn to walls, or you can tie the yarn at natural anchor points such as doorknobs or furniture. (Don't tie it to anything breakable.) Connect high to low and low to high, making a zigzagging maze that's enough of a challenge without being too difficult.

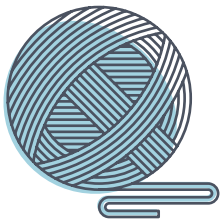
Now take turns climbing, crawling and twisting your way through the maze. Once you get to the treasure, bring it back through the maze. Can you get through the maze, grab the treasure and return to safety without touching a laser beam? Can you recover your treasure in a faster time than the other agents?



To gain important intel that can help Jessie Joyfun, make your way through the laser maze. !

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1



A BALL OF YARN
(or a roll of crepe paper streamers)

2

ROLL OF PAINTER'S TAPE

3

A "TREASURE" TO PLACE AT THE END OF THE MAZE

\+ You've learned how to navigate through the maze. But can you do it with the lights low? How about when the lights are turned off? Take turns attempting to cross the maze with less light.

38°57'06"N 77°08'47"W

Hallway of Hazards

02

What was most difficult about getting through the maze the first time? What made it easier to get through a second or third time?

Why was it more difficult to go through the maze without light? How might the Bible be like a light?

Debriefing:

Think back to a time when you experienced complete darkness—perhaps walking in the woods at night while on a camping trip. Now imagine that moment a little differently: You have a flashlight. When you turn it on, you can see your way through the hazards around you.

God's Word is like a light that can always be with you. Yes, the Bible is a record of past events and an account of God's interest in leading and saving humankind, but it is also a very useful tool for helping you navigate a life full of hazards and obstacles. You probably won't have to navigate many laser mazes, but the decisions you will need to make in life may feel like a maze. Since your choices have consequences, God's Word is a light during challenging times, helping you not get lost.

Reading and knowing God's Word equips you to carry a spiritual flashlight with you at all times, helping you make good choices on dark paths. God gave you the Bible to help you find your way and not stay lost.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO JESSIE JOYFUN. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A Rules are fun! They give us something to do when we're bored.

B God wants what's best for us. His Word is a light, helping us understand the best direction in life.

C Well, you should read the Bible. It sounds like you could use it.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
Psalm 119:105

A Matter of Perspective

03

"Doesn't the Bible have a lot of contradictions? How can you trust when it's telling the truth?"

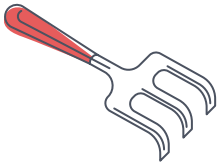
OBJECTIVE

Round up a few cameras or phones from around your home. Agents have a half-hour to take a picture of each item on this list.

To gain important intel that can help Douglas Dowder, complete this photo scavenger hunt. !

FLYING BIRD

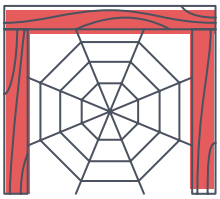
BIRD NEST



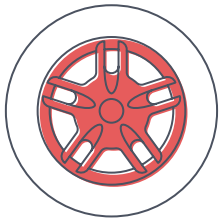
YARD TOOL

BIKE

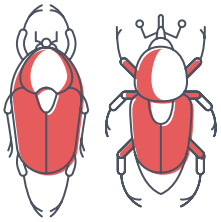
A FLOWER



SPIDER WEB



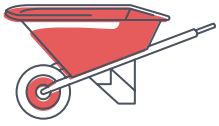
HUBCAP



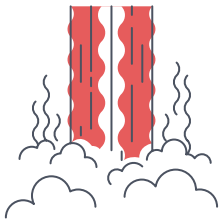
2 INSECTS

A LARGE LEAF

BALL IN MIDAIR



WHEELBARROW OR WAGON



MOVING WATER

INTERESTING ROCK

+ When the scavenger hunt is done, look through the photos together. Notice how photos of the same item may look quite different from one another.

A Matter of Perspective

03

How were pictures of the same item similar? How were they different?

What caused these differences? Talk about how perspective, lighting and details made objects look different.

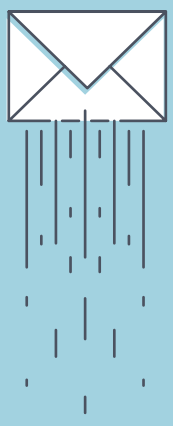
Debriefing:

Different people always have different perspectives when viewing the same object or events. Consider the Bible. It isn't just one book—it's a collection of many authors' writings over the course of about 1,500 years. Writers addressed different cultures using different styles and techniques. It is not surprising that there are differences in these accounts.

Do differences among the versions of a story mean the overall story isn't true? That's not how ancient people narrated events. It was appropriate to mix the core events from a main story with different details that people had noticed.

When police interview witnesses of a crime, they hear various testimonies. Police are naturally suspicious of testimonies that are too similar, especially if stories are exactly the same. Perfectly matching testimonies suggests that people worked together to create a false story.

Everyone has a different perspective, depending on where you view events. Like police, we should wonder if there's something fishy when stories match exactly. It shows integrity and authenticity on the part of the Bible to include these differences.



SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO DOUGLAS DOWDER. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

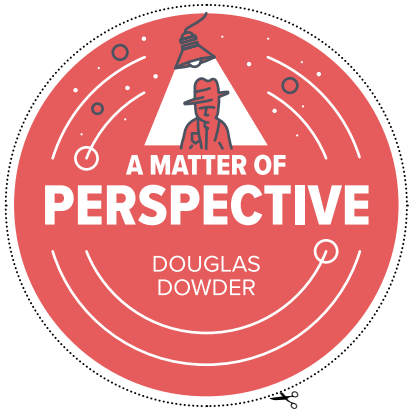
A The Bible's minor differences never affect the main story.

B I'm actually glad the Bible's accounts aren't exactly the same. It's authentic that some differences are included.

C Both of the above.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
2 Timothy 3:16



Ahead of Time

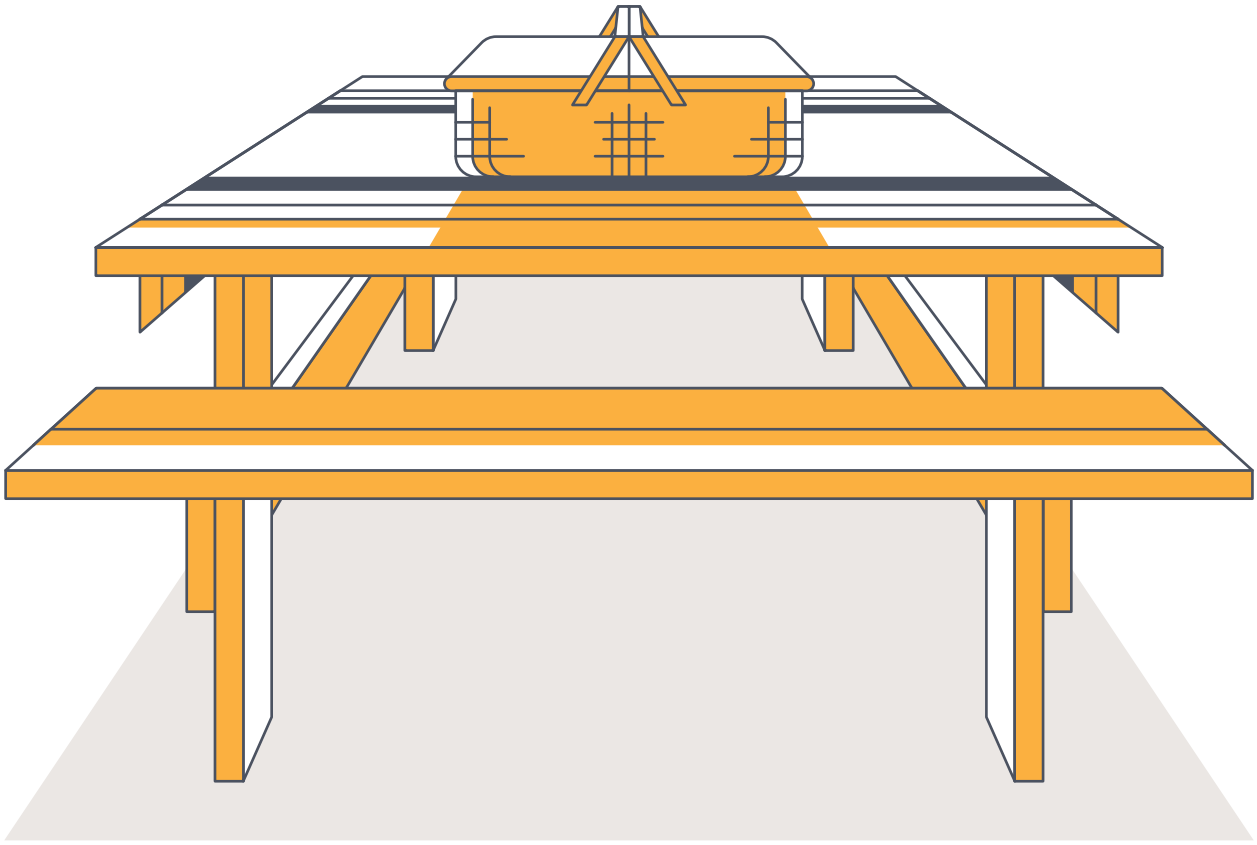
04

"Scientists say the universe exploded into existence billions of years ago. Doesn't that prove that God didn't create our universe?"

MISSION:

Send an adult (or an older child) to your backyard or to a nearby park to secretly set up a picnic lunch. Include favorite food items and add a few other touches like labeled seating places and personalized cups. Your goal is to make one message clear: *This picnic has been prepared for you and your family*.

To gain important intel that can help Ian Stein, complete this covert operation. !



\+ When ready, take your children to the picnic lunch and enjoy it with them.

Ahead of Time

04

How do you know this lunch was not a coincidence or that it didn't happen by accident?

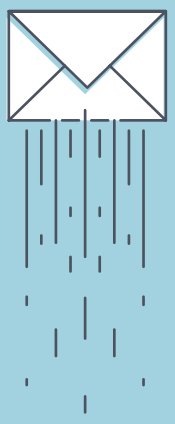
Who do you think set up this lunch? Explain why you feel this person set it up.

Debriefing:

When our universe exploded into existence, did it do so by accident? Or was it the work of a Creator? How can we know for sure? Scientists have been discovering what they call the "fine-tuning of the universe." There are over 40 precisely measured "ingredients" necessary for a universe to have life in it. These ingredients include the laws governing the force of gravity, the speed of light and the mass density of the universe.

Scientists calculate that the odds of these precise ingredients all happening by accident to be so astronomically low that it's virtually impossible. Such a finely tuned universe simply could not have happened by chance. The only rational explanation for our universe is that it was carefully designed by an intelligent Creator. So rather than disproving God, science actually provides strong evidence for His existence.

Just like your picnic in the park, the precise ingredients necessary for life didn't happen by accident, but were fine-tuned that way by a Fine-Tuner.



SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO IAN STEIN. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A I guess we should just trust everything scientists say about an event no one has ever seen.

B Our universe couldn't have happened by accident. It has been specialized and fine-tuned for our life.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
Psalm 19:1

Design With Purpose

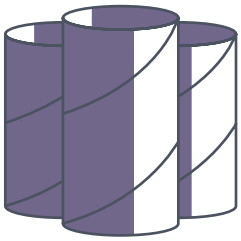
05

"Scientists say humans came from ape-like creatures millions of years ago. Don't you agree that we look a lot like them?"

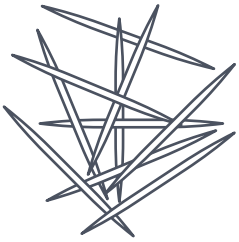
MISSION

Every secret agent needs a vehicle for round-the-world missions—whether on land, on water or in the sky. Round up the following components, and send each of your kids off on a mission to design his or her own spymobile:

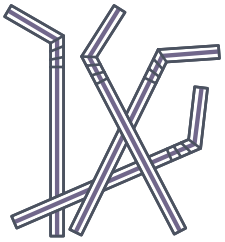
To gain important intel that can help Gavin Hoddy, complete this mission. !



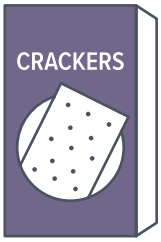
CARDBOARD TUBES



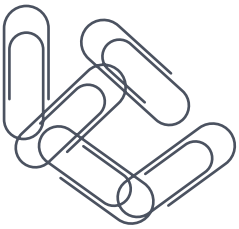
TOOTHPICKS



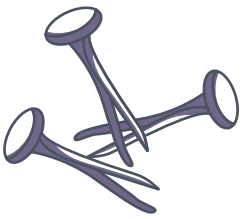
PLASTIC STRAWS



INDEX CARDS OR STURDY CRACKER BOX CARDBOARD



PAPER CLIPS



BRAD FASTENERS

COLORED CONSTRUCTION PAPER

PAINTS WITH BRUSHES OR MARKERS

SCISSORS

WHITE GLUE

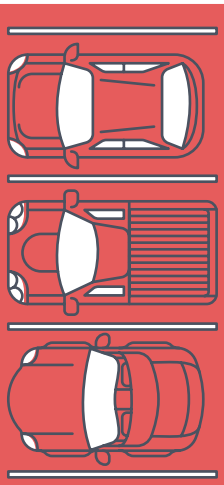
+ Give your kids suggestions on how they can use these materials to create their vehicle. As they work together, helping each other cut, paste and color, help them understand that their vehicles need to fulfill certain design requirements of a secret agent: It needs to travel roads, through clouds and over water.

Design With Purpose

05

What do your vehicles have in common? Why do you think these similarities exist?

Do humans share similarities with other creatures? What similarities and differences have you seen?



Debriefing:

Next time you cross a parking lot, notice the variety of vehicle designs. Now notice how much they have in common: four wheels, windows on all sides and a hood covering the engine. These shared traits make sense. While vehicles may have different strengths and abilities, they are all used to transport passengers from one place to another.

Think of the differences you see in creation. Notice how different birds and fish look from human beings—and from each other. But look closer at how much they have in common with each other, and with us. Most have eyes with a mouth or beak underneath. Just as different vehicles have some common tasks they need to accomplish, so do fish, birds and humans. We all need to eat—and to see what we eat!

Similarity between designs doesn't mean that one creation came from another. It just means they have some things in common. Christians believe God is responsible for these common design traits, just like a human designer who uses the same techniques and styles across multiple works.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO GAVIN HODDY. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION.

A God created all living things, and many of those creations share similar design traits.

B Humans have so many more abilities than animals. And only people can have a relationship with God.

C Both of the above

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
Genesis 1:26

Proof of Life

"I personally only believe stuff that can be proven scientifically. I mean, do Christians really believe that a dead guy came back to life?"

06

MISSION

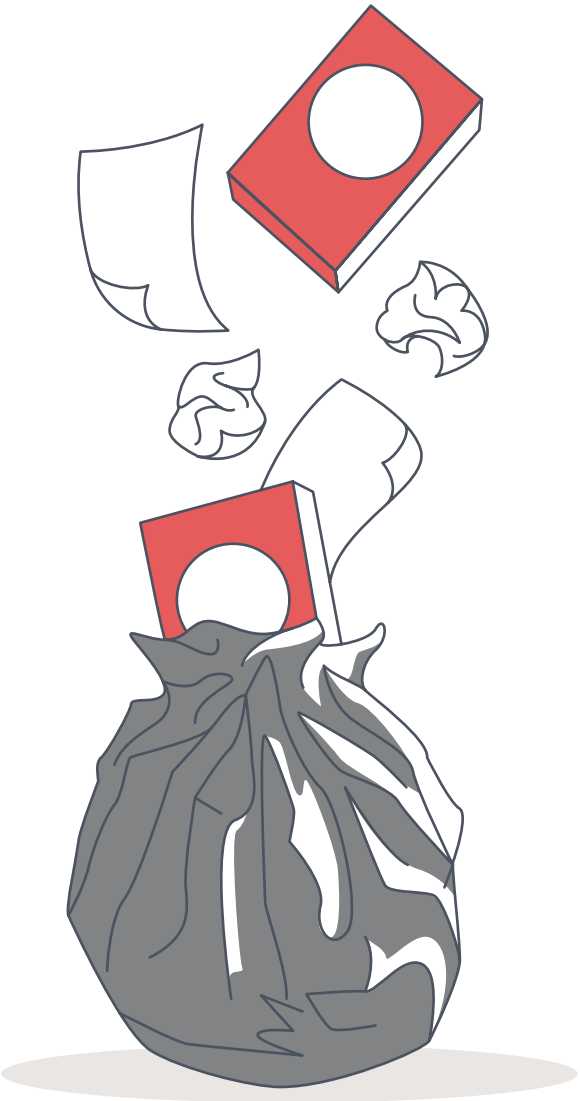
Several days before this activity, without your kids observing you, start collecting a bag full of rubbish from around your house. Obviously, avoid dirty materials like old tissues or cans that have food particles in them, but try to gather a reasonable variety of the "cleaner" trash and recyclable packages that a family might generate over a week. If possible, gather unfamiliar items or wrappers that your kids cannot immediately identify as coming from your family.

Explain to your kids that there is a "mystery" family that you'd like to learn more about, and you're going to do some old-fashioned intelligence work to see what you can discover. Next let your kids sort through the discarded sports magazines, cereal boxes, grocery store flyers, receipts from the home improvement store, Dad's old toothbrush, broken toys, etc.

Now give each of your children a piece of lined paper. On the left side, have them identify each piece of trash. On the right side, ask them to write down one thing they can learn about the family from that item. (For example, an empty dishwasher detergent box means the family has a dishwasher, and the pet store receipt for flea shampoo and kibble means the family owns a dog.)

When you're done, discuss together the type of family they are observing.

Gain important intel that can help Douglas Dowder, by doing some old-fashioned intelligence gathering. !

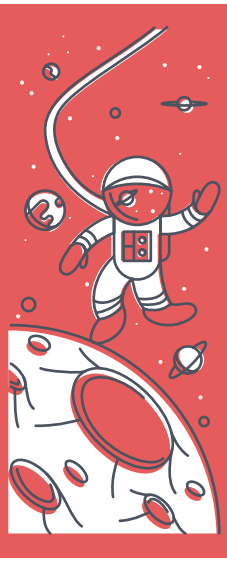


Proof of Life

06

What could people learn about you from your trash?

What other types of evidence might help someone learn more about you?



Debriefing:

Ever combine baking soda and vinegar together? The mixture generates carbon dioxide—with a fun, bubbling, explosive effect. This is something that can be demonstrated scientifically—the act of repeating an event in an unchanging environment.

Some say that if you can't prove something scientifically, it's not true. But science isn't the only way to demonstrate whether something is true. For example, it's scientifically impossible to prove a historical event because it's impossible to repeat that event. We can also prove past events using the *evidential method*. This method examines different sorts of evidence, including personal testimonies, written accounts and physical clues. This is the type of proof that police detectives use.

It's true: science can't prove the Resurrection. But like other historical events, Christ's resurrection is tested by examining the evidence of oral and written testimonies. The many eyewitness testimonies to the resurrection of Jesus, along with the explosive spread of new believers shortly after the event, help confirm that Jesus left His grave and never went back. We believe He rose from the dead because many, many people saw Him alive after He died.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO DOUGLAS DOWDER. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

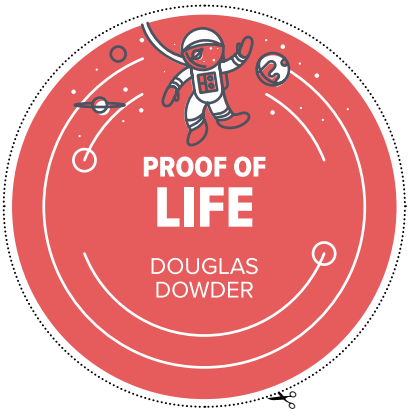
A If Jesus could raise Lazarus, He can raise himself.

B I believe Jesus rose because of the eyewitness testimonies and the explosion of new believers afterward.

C Jesus is alive. I just know it's true!

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
1 Corinthians 15:3-17



Liz Kuel

Voices in the Dark

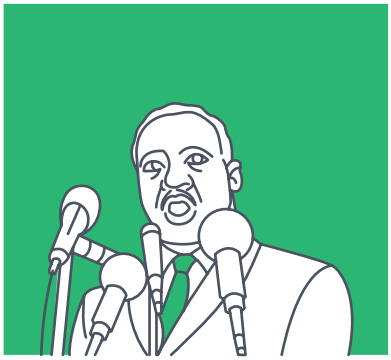
07

"I've tried praying, but I didn't get an answer. If God is there, why can't I see or hear Him?"

MISSION

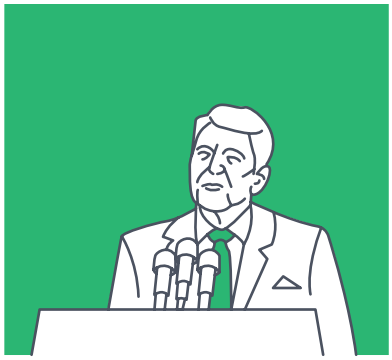
Look up the following historical audio recordings on **archive.org**. Play a minute of each recording, not in the order of the list. Have your agents try to identify them. Then allow each child to reference the list below and play through the clips again.

To gain important intel that can help Liz Kuel, sharpen your listening skills with this mission. !

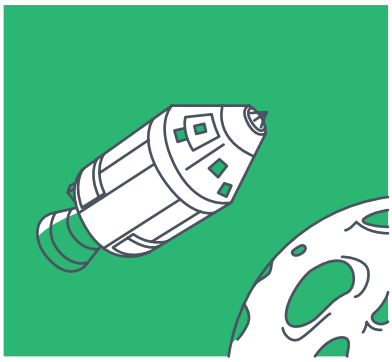


"I HAVE A DREAM"
by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS, JUNE 10, 1963"
by John F. Kennedy



"SPEECH AT WEST BERLIN"
by Ronald Reagan



"READING OF GENESIS BY APOLLO 8"
by Frank Borman, William Anders and Jim Lovell

"ONE SMALL STEP"
by Neil Armstrong

"ROOSEVELT'S ADDRESS TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES"
by Franklin Delano Roosevelt

+ When you're finished, talk about which recordings you identified and how you were able to do so.

38°57'06"N 77°08'47"W

Voices in the Dark

07

In the recordings, what prevented you from recognizing some voices?

What do you think keeps you from recognizing God's voice?

Debriefing:

What might prevent you from recognizing someone's voice? Maybe distractions or loud noises. But sometimes you may not recognize voices because you're not familiar with how others speak.

It's tempting to believe that because you can't audibly hear God's voice with your ears, He isn't speaking to you. But you may not recognize God's voice because you are unfamiliar with His way of communicating.

Long ago, God spoke directly to people with instructions and inspiration. These people were tasked with communicating God's words to others. That is how we got the Bible, a letter from the Creator of the universe. Sure, God is able to talk to you directly through speech, but He often chooses to give you His direction through His written Word.

The Bible isn't the only way God speaks. God also speaks through His creation, showing us His power and creativity through the things He made. God also inspires other believers to speak with us, giving us encouragement, conviction and instruction when we need it. He also speaks through circumstances, helping us understand His love and direction through the influence of His Spirit.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO LIZ KUEL. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A I hear God all the time. I wonder why you don't. Too bad for you!

B God sometimes doesn't speak to people because He doesn't want to talk to them.

C If we learn how to listen to God's way of speaking, we can better hear His voice.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
Psalm 50:1

Spy Games

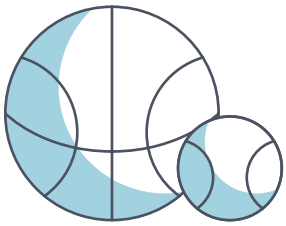
08

"Isn't religion just a bunch of invented rules to help people behave? I don't believe in God, and I'm a pretty good person."

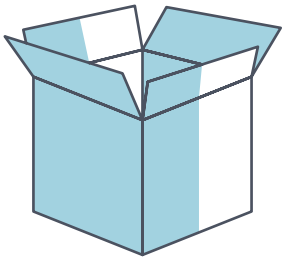
MISSION

Create a new game. Provide a mix of random or unrelated sport and game equipment, with a few unexpected items to spark creativity. Here are a few suggestions:

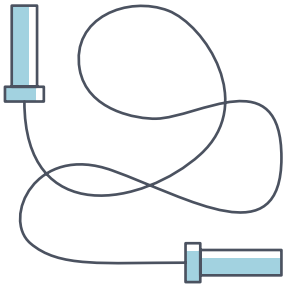
To gain important intel that can help Jessie Joyfun, invent your own backyard game. !



BALLS, DISCS OR PUCKS OF DIFFERENT SIZES AND SHAPES

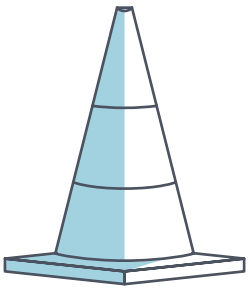


AN EMPTY BOX OR A PLASTIC TUB FULL OF WATER

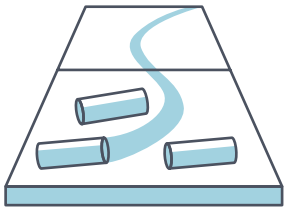


GLOW STICKS, JUMP ROPES, HULA HOOPS

BROOMS, HOCKEY STICKS OR STYROFOAM POOL NOODLES



CONES OR OTHER MARKERS TO DEFINE BOUNDARIES



SIDEWALK CHALK FOR HARD SURFACES

Once the items are gathered, work together to decide:

What equipment to use. Choose items from the equipment you've gathered. How can you use them to create an interesting game?

The rules. What's the objective? How do you score? What is allowed and not allowed? Be sure each player contributes in some way to the game. Make sure to create a few general rules to discourage danger—for example, no rough contact.

Where you'll play. Decide what would make the best playing surface: a grassy area, a concrete patio, a swimming pool or something else.

A name for your sport. Good names are short and say something about the game. "Basketball" involves shooting a ball through a basket.

What you'll wear. Does this game involve extensive safety gear, or can you get away with T-shirts and bare feet? If you could have a uniform and a mascot, what would they look like?

Spy Games

08

When you were creating your game, what might have happened if you skipped the most important step—and didn't establish any rules?

Would life be easier or more difficult if there were no rules or boundaries in our interactions with other people? What problems would arise if you lived in a world without rules?

Debriefing:

In a way, sports are a miniature version of what goes on in the world around you: There are certain rules we're all expected to follow. Our government hires police officers, lawyers and judges to enforce these rules.

But what if the laws we live by are also just a miniature version of something bigger, an important part of how God made us? Consider: Why would different cultures around the world outlaw stealing if they didn't have a larger understanding of the wrongness of taking someone else's stuff? Where did this inner understanding of rightness come from?

If this standard wasn't built into us by our Creator, wouldn't we all just behave however we wanted, doing the things that are convenient, pleasurable and comfortable and that give us the most money, power and fame? In other words, without a Creator who made us to understand morality, morality could not exist. We'd just have a bunch of opinions enforced by the strongest and loudest people. But God loves us, and He wired us with an understanding of His goodness.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO JESSIE JOYFUN. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A I don't think you're that good. You certainly aren't as good as me.

B How would goodness exist without God? Our ability to understand right and wrong comes from the God who made us.

C You can't be good if you don't obey God's rules.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
Romans 2:14-15

The Right Route

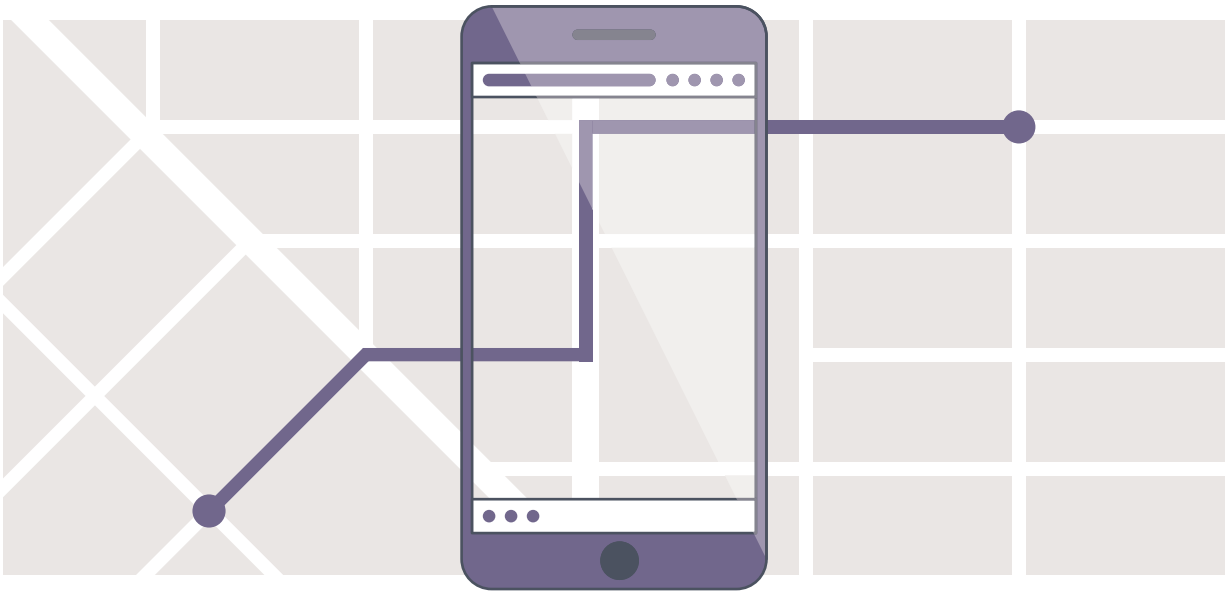
09

"Yeah, your religion is cool. But don't all religions point to the same God?"

MISSION

Next time you need to run some errands around town, let your kids chart the day's course. Give them the use of an online map program. Let them practice navigating for a few minutes, giving them several locations to find, such as your neighborhood and house, city schools, parks, libraries or your favorite restaurants.

To gain important intel that can help Gavin Hoddy, navigate this mission. !



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Now give them the names of the day's specific destinations, along with a fun park or ice-cream shop to end the mission. Have them write down or print out a clear and specific route for completing the errands.

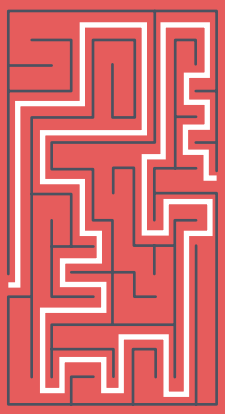
As you travel about town, try not to be in charge of directions. Your kids are the navigators! No left or right turns without a child's instruction to do so.

The Right Route

09

Is it easy to find your way to the different locations when you have a map that shows how things really are?

What would your journey look like if you were following a map that was for a different city?



Debriefing:

There really is a right way—and many wrong ways—to a destination. Not all routes lead the same way. The same is true of religions. Completely different viewpoints can't all point to God because they will inevitably arrive at different conclusions. And it doesn't take long studying the world's religions to see some major differences. While there is some overlapping agreement on various moral teachings, there are big differences on the major questions of redemption and salvation.

The Bible tells us about the creation of everything, who we are as humans and how we can be saved from our sin. No other religion has a living Savior. No other religion acknowledges that humans are incapable of their own salvation—that only God can rescue people from their sin.

Remember Jesus' words? "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). There is only one road to God—and that road is Jesus.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO GAVIN HODDY. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A If two religions disagree on major points, they can't both point to the same God.

B Jesus is just a nicer guy than the leaders of other faiths.

C Well, just choose a religion then, if they're all the same to you.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE

Acts 4:12;
Matthew 7:14

Mixed Messages

10

"What an old book! The Bible was written thousands of years ago, so it must have been changed throughout the years. How can you trust what the Bible says?"

MISSION

To set up the game, make simple paper booklets by folding sheets of paper in half horizontally (folded size = 8.5" x 5.5"), then folding them again vertically (4.25" x 5.5"). Cut along the two short (4.25") folded edges to separate the pages. You'll need one booklet per player, and each book must have at least twice as many pages as you have total players. (If you have a large family, you might stack three or four sheets to make a 12- or 16-page book.) Staple the spine to hold the pages together.

To gain important intel that can help Ian Stein, play this spy game. !

THE RULES

STEP #1

Sit around a table and give each player a book and pencil. Secretly assign each player one of the sample phrases below. They are to write that phrase on the cover of the booklet. When they are done, everyone passes their booklet to the person on their left.

STEP #2

Each person will quietly read the phrase on the cover of their new book. They should fold the cover open. On the first page, they should draw a picture that best represents that phrase. When players have finished, have them pass the open book to the left.

STEP #3

Each person should examine the picture, but not the phrase on the cover. Then each player opens to the next page and writes a short phrase describing the drawing.

STEP #4

Repeat the drawing, writing and passing process until players have their original book back. Sometimes the game ends on a drawing, and sometimes it ends on a phrase, depending on whether you have an odd or even number of players. Read aloud the last phrase. Have fun comparing it to the original phrase and showing off the pictures.

STEP #5

Now close the books to their cover, and pass them to the left again. This time, each person is to look at the cover before carefully copying the phrase or drawing a picture to the next available blank page in the book. When the books take another lap, note how accurate the last page's message is this time.

STARTING PHRASES:

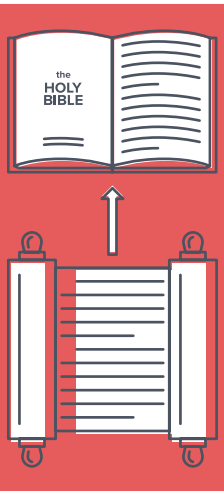
EGGS IN ONE BASKET
KING OF THE WORLD
UNDER THE WEATHER
MISSED THE BOAT
THE LAST STRAW
ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS
GONE FISHING
OUT OF THIS WORLD
TAKE A HIKE
WHEN PIGS FLY
HIT THE ROAD
A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

Mixed Messages

10

If you were asked to make a handwritten copy of a one-page story, how long would it take you? Would there be mistakes?

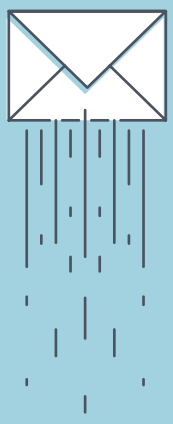
How might your copy be different if you were given a $1,000 gift card to your favorite store for a perfect handmade copy of the story? How long might it take you?



Debriefing:

Have you ever played the telephone game? You sit in a circle, passing along a rapidly mutating phrase by whispering in each other's ears. The game is often used to show the importance of making sure we get a message right before passing it on. Many suggest the Bible went through a similar message-morphing process.

It's worth understanding the great care that went into preserving and copying Scripture. Scribes felt every word was from God. The Old Testament was copied with such precision that one tiny mistake meant an entire scroll had to be destroyed and started over. As for the New Testament, there was such a high level of accuracy involved in these manuscripts that it sets the bar for reliability in ancient historical documents. History scholars would love it if the copies of the works by ancient Greeks and Romans exhibited the same level of reliability as the Bible. No other ancient document approaches the New Testament in the number of ancient copies found, and today's copies are essentially the same as those ancient manuscripts. The Bible is the most verifiable ancient manuscript ever written.



SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO IAN STEIN. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

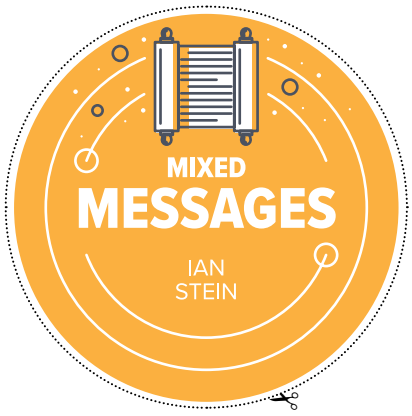
A God wrote the Bible, so I trust it.

B Compared to other historical documents, the Bible is the most accurate and verifiable document ever written.

C I bet you trust a lot of other old books. The Bible is just as accurate.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
Isaiah 40:8



One of a Kind

11

"I'm always hearing that God loves us because we are His unique creation. I sure don't feel special or unique. Just another kid in a huge school. How can I know I'm special?"

MISSION

Make fingerprints by using a graphite pencil to heavily shade a patch in the middle of a sheet of white paper. This creates a large, dark "ink pad." Press each person's index fingers to the graphite pad, and then cover the fingers with a short length of clear packing tape. Carefully peel the tape off and stick it on a small, white card. Now you have a clear copy of your fingerprint. Label each card with that person's name.

To gain important intel that can help Hannah Hertz, sharpen your powers of observation with this mission.

!

GAVIN HODDY

HANNAH HERTZ

LIZ KUEL

When everyone's fingerprints are done, compare the patterns. Can you see how different each print is?

Now, using the same technique, have kids place a new copy of their fingerprint against something washable or disposable in your home, such as a white appliance, window or light-colored magazine or food package. Roam the house together with labeled fingerprint cards. Can you identify each print?

One of a Kind

11

Were you able to identify our family's fingerprints? What stood out on your own fingerprint that helped others recognize it?

In what ways do you feel that God has made you one of a kind?

Debriefing:

The general patterns on a fingertip—the big patterns—can appear as arches, loops or whirlwind-shaped "whorls." Each finger can have one of these patterns or a blend of them. When a baby is growing inside his mother, the edges of these patterns can develop in different ways. These lead to unique ridges in each person and on each finger.

Fingerprints are a good way to tell people apart, since they are so unique. Even identical twins have different patterns!

What's more, our fingerprints stay the same over time. Other ways of identifying people—weight, height, hair color—can change over the years, but our fingerprints bear the same unique patterns.

No one else is like you. Your appearance, your interests and personality traits all make you one of a kind. God made you unique, desiring you to enjoy and share in His creation and recognize Jesus as your Savior. God knew every one of us even before we were born. He knows us today, too, and has a special design for our lives.

SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO HANNAH HERTZ. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A You are special because you're the best friend I've ever had.

B God made you with unique interests and abilities. He loves you and has a great plan for your life.

C I also don't feel very special. Maybe we can feel miserable together.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE

Psalm 139:14

Code Breakers

12

"It's cool that you like Jesus. He seems like a good teacher. But why do people have to say Jesus is the 'Son of God'?"

MISSION

The following messages are encoded in hidden anagrams. To decipher the messages, first notice the numbers and separate them from each line of letters. Next, counting from left to right, use those numbers to divide the string of letters into scrambled words. Then unscramble each word to discover the sentence. For example,

To gain important intel that can help Liz Kuel, crack the secret code. !

EXAMPLE

gibqti3onu9essa5oubtG3do
3953 gibqtionuessaoubtGdo
gib | qtionuess | aoubt | Gdo
big questions about God

1 1l2m3ateh3yawte3h5tthur3dn3ahetf4ile

_ __ ____ ____ ____ _____ ____ ____ _____.

2 lal3ayut9tihro3sah4neeb5nevi2g2ot2eMn6ivenh3eadn1anothe5ar

___ _____ ____ _____ _____ __ __ __ _____ ___ __ _____.

3 l1adnt3eh3aeFth6rra3en3eo

_ ____ ____ _____ ____ ____.

4 ve8ery3ne5o2how3ko3o3ls8ot2he3tnoSdnaliebev5esniiHmal4lshh7eavnalrete4file

_____ ____ _____ __ ____ ____ _____ __ ____ _____ _____ _____.

Answers: 1. I am the way, the truth, and the life. 2. All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 3. I and the Father are one. 4. Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life.

Code Breakers

12

Once you cracked the code, what was the theme of the messages you revealed?

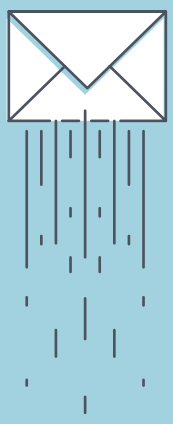
Would a good teacher ever lie to his students?

Debriefing:

Most people can find something to like in Jesus' teachings. Love and kindness are good things. People all over the world admire Jesus' concern for the poor and the sick. But agreeing that Jesus is a good man and a good teacher is completely different from agreeing that Jesus is superior to the world's other religious leaders, that He is actually God's Son.

Jesus Christ did not communicate through encrypted codes. He spoke plainly. He told audiences that He came from God and that He was God. He clearly communicated this to His followers. In other words, these can't be the words of a good teacher unless they are true. Good teachers don't lie to their students!

Scripture affirms that Jesus was more than a good leader. His arrival on Earth was prophesied hundreds of years before His birth. His life was filled with the miraculous, and His teachings and actions reinforced His divine claims. But most important was His resurrection. What other religious leaders have conquered death? No mystery here. Only Jesus!

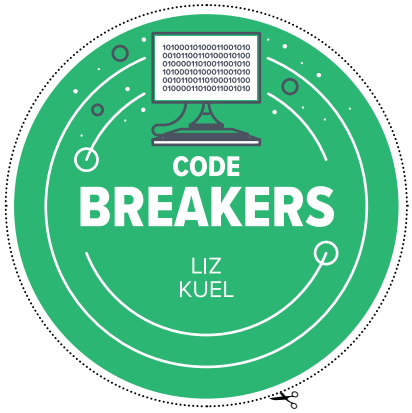


SEND AN ENCODED RESPONSE TO LIZ KUEL. CHOOSE THE BEST TRANSMISSION:

A Isn't it enough to be a good teacher? That's why I follow Jesus!

B Jesus said He was the Son of God. A good teacher would not say this if it weren't true.

C We're all children of God. "Son of God" is just a nice way for us to understand that Jesus is like us.

GO TO THE DIRECTIONS PAGE FOR THE ANSWER.

BIBLE VERSE
John 10:36-38