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Beginning With a Gift

Key References: John 1:1-18; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 1, pp. 19-26; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 73-77; vol. 9, pp. 105-109; Our Beliefs, nos. 1, 10, 11.















power**text**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3, NIV).

power**point**

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of grace to us.

What do you think when you look at your baby pictures or book and see some gifts that people gave you before you were even born? Perhaps your mom has even saved a few of those gifts. Did you know God gave you a gift, a priceless gift, even before you were born? even before the world was born?

I can't believe it! Christmas is almost here again. You know what, Mom? They put up the Christmas display today in the town square," Heather informed her mother as they did the dishes together. Mother smiled as she passed her daughter another pot to dry.

"Speaking of Christmas," Heather continued thoughtfully, "I've heard all my life that Jesus is God's gift to us. But what does that really mean, Mom?" she asked.

"That's a good question, Heather," Mother responded. "A lot of people know that Jesus is God's gift to us. But not everyone understands what that gift really represents and how much it truly cost. In the Bible, though, the first chapter of John helps us to discover the real meaning of God's gift," Mother said as she dried her hands, picked up her Bible, and turned to the book of John.

"Did you know that Jesus was there at the Creation of the world," Mother quizzed Heather, "and that He was actively involved in creating our world?"

"Really?" Heather responded with a look of surprise. "I thought that Jesus' mission was to be born as a baby, to live on earth as our example,

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 89.

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Sunday

READ Read John 1:4, 5 and this week's story, "Beginning With a Gift."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, John 1:1-3.

THINK What is the best gift you ever received? Why?

PRAY Thank God for His wonderful gifts to you.

Monday

READ Read John 1:6-8.

FIND Look up the word "grace" in a dictionary. In your own words, explain how grace relates to these verses.

LIST If showing grace to someone means that somehow you won't get what you deserve, how can you be filled with grace anyway? List ways you can show grace.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to make you a person full of grace toward others.

Tuesday

READ Read John 1:9-18.

THINK What can you do to share the greatest gift to us?

WRITE Write about a time you gave a gift but felt as if the person didn't want it or like it. What did it feel like?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for the gift of Jesus and tell Him you accept and love His gift.

and to die and be resurrected so we could be saved."

"Yes, that's very true," Mother agreed. "But God's plan to save us didn't start there. God and Jesus were closely knit from the very beginning. Together with the Holy Spirit They created the world and every living being. The Bible says that 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' [John 1:1-3, NIV]."

"Wow, that's something to think about," Heather admitted. "So what else did Jesus do besides help to create the world?" She was curious now.

"Well, from the very beginning, before the creation of the human race, God and Jesus agreed that Jesus would give His life to save them if they should sin. No one else could save them. Only Jesus," Mother added.

"Wow, how do you think God felt sending His Son way down here to the earth? God must have missed His Son while He was away," Heather said thoughtfully.

"I'm sure He did. But what was even harder for God was watching the way people treated His Son. Imagine making that kind of sacrifice, to give such a valuable, priceless gift as His only Son, just to have the people He loved respond to Him with hatred and rejection.



Wednesday

READ Read Ephesians 2:8.

WRAP Wrap a small box in Christmas wrapping and put colorful ribbon on it. Then write Ephesians 2:8 on a card and attach it to the gift-wrapped box. Place the box in your room to remind you of God's greatest gift to you.

ASK Ask an adult about baby gifts that were given to you before you were born. How did the people know what to get? How did your mother feel about those gifts?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God for the grace to appreciate His greatest gift and what it cost.

Thursday

READ Read Colossians 1:16, 17.

SHARE Write Ephesians 2:8 on some cardstock. Fold each into a Christmas card of your own design. Draw or paint a Christmas illustration on the cover and mail it to someone who may need encouragement during the holiday season.

PLAY Play a recording of the hymn "Amazing Grace."

THINK The writer of "Amazing Grace" was a former slaveship captain who became converted to Christianity. Why do you think the words of this song were especially meaningful to such a person?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for all those who are slaves to sin and do not understand the gift of grace God has already given them.

Friday

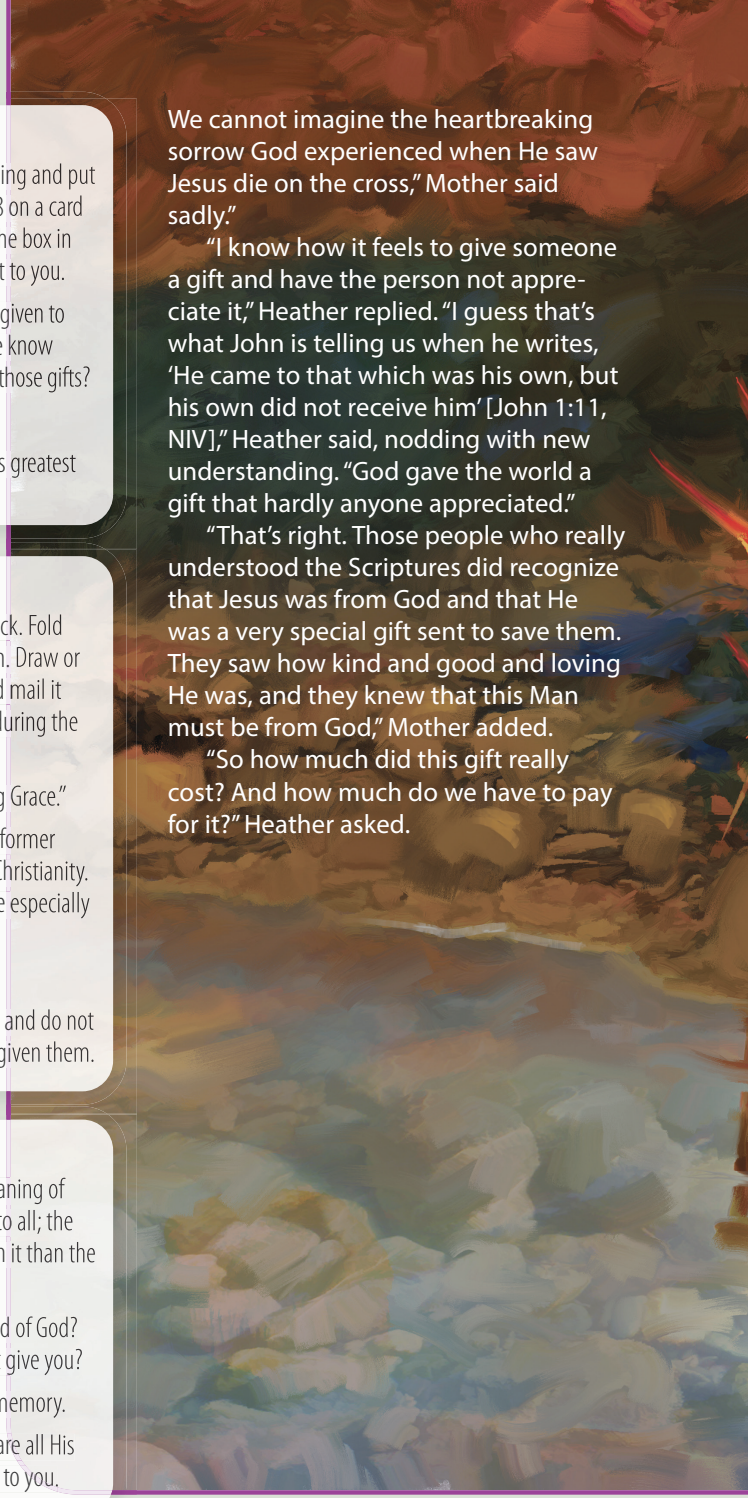
READ Read John 3:16.

EXPLAIN Explain in your own words the meaning of the following quotation: "The gospel is open to all; the most respectable sinner has no more claim on it than the worst" (Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

DISCUSS How does it feel being called a child of God? What responsibilities and privileges does that give you?

SAY Repeat the power text, John 1:1-3, by memory.

PRAY With your family, thank God that you are all His children, and thank Him together for His gifts to you.



We cannot imagine the heartbreaking sorrow God experienced when He saw Jesus die on the cross," Mother said sadly."

"I know how it feels to give someone a gift and have the person not appreciate it," Heather replied. "I guess that's what John is telling us when he writes, 'He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him' [John 1:11, NIV]," Heather said, nodding with new understanding. "God gave the world a gift that hardly anyone appreciated."

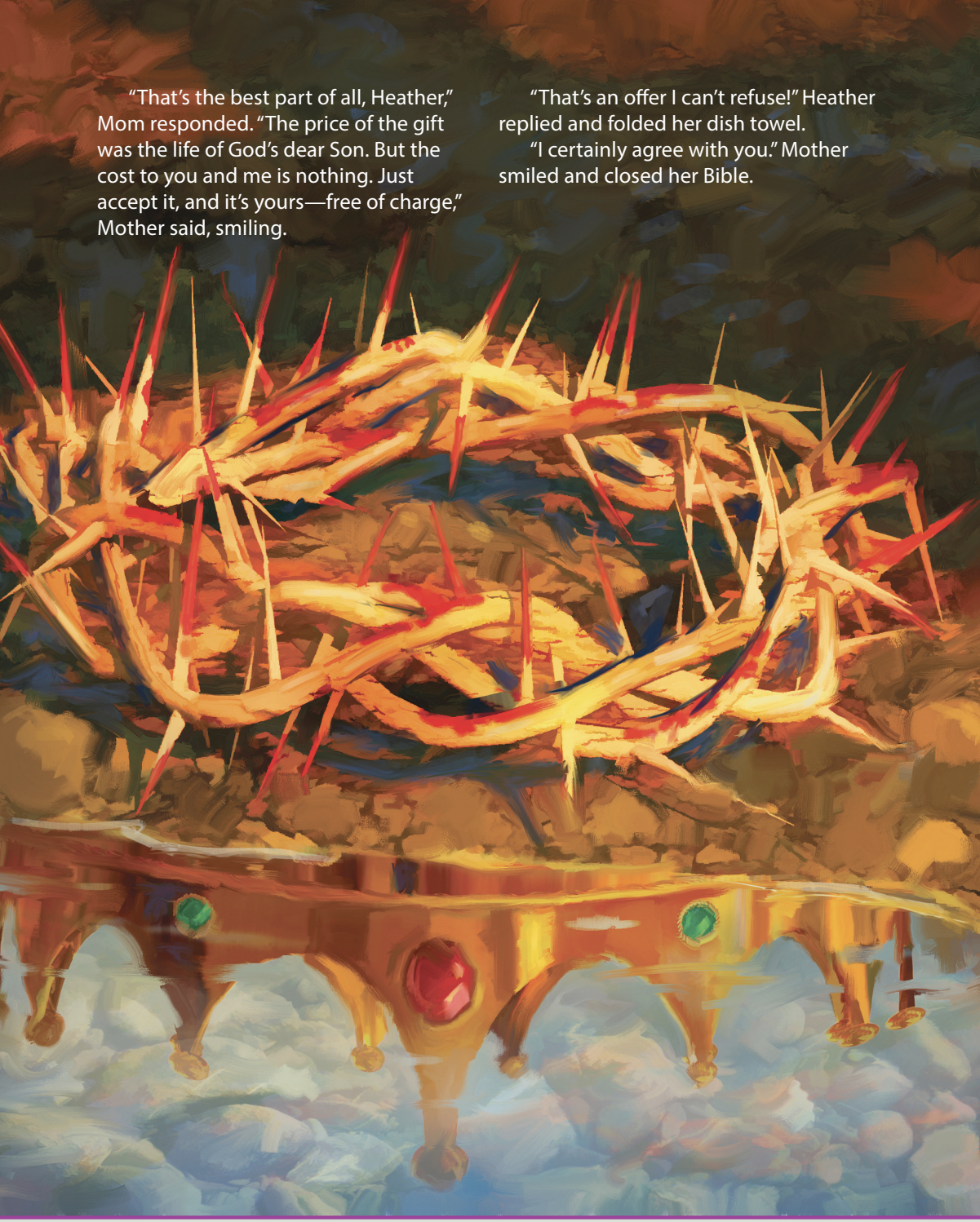
"That's right. Those people who really understood the Scriptures did recognize that Jesus was from God and that He was a very special gift sent to save them. They saw how kind and good and loving He was, and they knew that this Man must be from God," Mother added.

"So how much did this gift really cost? And how much do we have to pay for it?" Heather asked.

"That's the best part of all, Heather," Mom responded. "The price of the gift was the life of God's dear Son. But the cost to you and me is nothing. Just accept it, and it's yours—free of charge," Mother said, smiling.

"That's an offer I can't refuse!" Heather replied and folded her dish towel.

"I certainly agree with you." Mother smiled and closed her Bible.



GOD GAVE HIMSELF TO US

Instructions: Strike out words in the table below according to the instructions. When you are finished, the words that remain in the table will spell out a Bible verse when you read them from left to right, top to bottom.

STRIKE OUT:
All proper names in column D and row 9
All words that begin with the letters "d" and "e"
All words that rhyme with "eye"
All words that begin with the letters "m" and "p"

	A	B	C	D
1	Do	I	many	Thanks
2	why	be	die	Martha
3	to	doves	myself	events
4	disciple	lie	God	many
5	play	for	door	John
6	his	plenty	my	does
7	mine	meager	indescribable	Mary
8	each	does	people	meek
9	James	every	Paul	gift