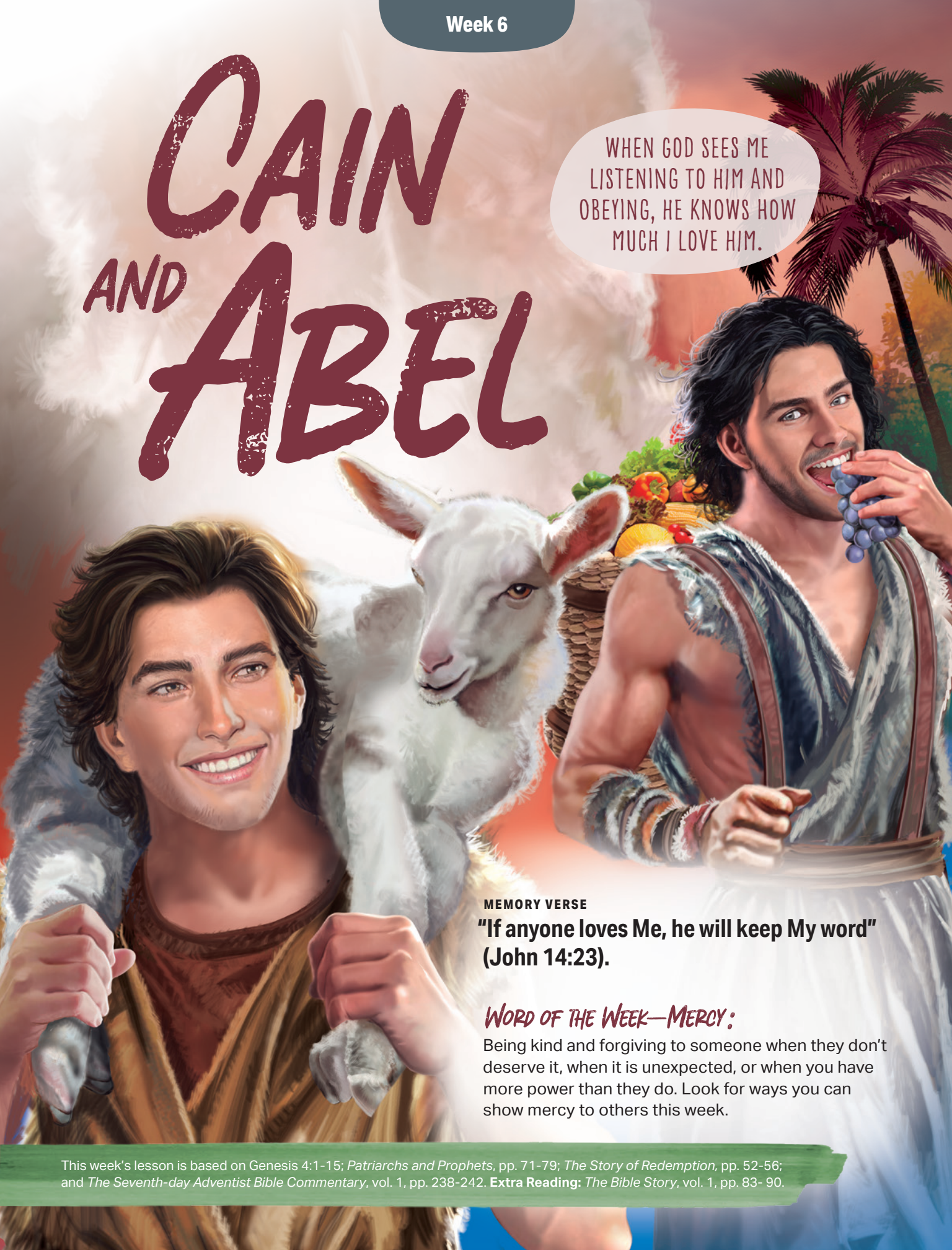
Cain and Abel



MEMORY VERSE

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word" (John 14:23).

Word of the Week—Mercy:

Being kind and forgiving to someone when they don't deserve it, when it is unexpected, or when you have more power than they do. Look for ways you can show mercy to others this week.

This week's lesson is based on Genesis 4:1-15; *Patriarchs and Prophets,* pp. 71-79; *The Story of Redemption,* pp. 52-56; and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 238-242. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 1, pp. 83- 90.

SUNDAY

A Baby Brings Happiness

No longer able to live in Eden, Adam and Eve must have worked hard to make a new home, clothing, tools, a farm, and gardens. New seasons went by. As leaves dropped off the trees for the first time, Adam and Eve may have felt deep sorrow once more. The whole world was changed by their choices. But God was still with them. Spring came, and new leaves and baby animals appeared.

One day the first two people on earth were joined by a third: the first-ever baby was born into the world! Eve cuddled him close while Adam gazed in awe at this brand-new person. The Bible says, "Children are a gift from the Lord. Babies are a reward" (Psalm 127:3, ICB). God wanted families on earth—like this one—to show His love to others. Oh, how they must have thanked God for this gift! With hearts full of warmth and happiness, they named their sweet boy Cain.

Soon baby Abel joined the family. These two bundles of cuteness filled their parents' lives with love as they grew into strong healthy boys. They helped Adam and Eve work in the fields and at home. Each boy had his own likes, dislikes, and personality. God had made them, as He made you, unique. What work did Cain and Abel like to do? *Read Genesis 4:2.*

No doubt they both loved hearing stories from their parents. Nestled close, they learned about the Garden of Eden, the first Sabbath, and face-to-face talks with God. They learned that God loved them very much and how to love Him back.

PRAY: Thank God for al you have learned about Him and the people who have taught you.

DO: Make a list of all the things you like doing, and create a symbol for each. Do you like to care for animals, as Abel did, or garden, as Cain did? How about drawing, building, playing sports, or singing? Thank God that He has made you YOU.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT

- *Who has helped you love and trust God?*



PARENT FAITH TALK:
You may like to affirm your child for the ways they have brought happiness to your life and for the special interests they are starting to develop. Consider sharing some photos of when they were cuddled close as a baby.



MONDAY

Reminder of God's Promise



God taught Adam more about His amazing promise to save, sometimes called the plan of salvation. And then Adam taught his children. He taught them well. How sad it would be if they made a bad choice, as he had.

Teaching by example, Adam took Cain and Abel out to find a perfect little lamb—the best one in the flock. Adam shared how this lamb was a reminder of God's Son, Jesus, who would one day come to the earth to die for their sins. How do we know the lamb is a reminder of Jesus? **Read John 1:29.**

Then the bleating lamb was gently placed on a stone altar. The family said they were sorry for their sins, and asked God to show His mercy. And then came the saddest part. With falling tears, Adam killed the little lamb. Sorrow filled the boys' hearts as they looked away in horror. It was a sad reminder that they were sinners who needed a Savior to die for them.

Fire flashed down from heaven to burn up the little lamb offering. God was saying thank you for doing this hard thing to show they knew Jesus would one day die for them. So the family saw God's great love and His mercy. They were truly grateful.

Abel grew up to be a strong young man who loved God very much. He happily chose to follow God's instructions to sacrifice a lamb. How did God feel about Abel's offering? **Read Genesis 4:4.**

God loved Abel, and Abel loved God . . . Abel loved God, and God loved Abel . . . It was like a beautiful circle of love.

PRAY: Hold hands with your family to make a circle of love. Thank God for His promise to send a Savior, and that Jesus kept the promise and died for our sins.

DO: Make a circle out of something unexpected! Try rocks, leaves, flowers, balls, mini cars, or pencils. Remember, God loves you, and you love Him.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Why was God pleased with Abel's offering? How do you know?*
- *What can you do to show God how much you love Him?*

TUESDAY

Cain's Sad Choices

While Abel grew up to love God and follow His plan, Cain did not. He let selfishness grow until there was little room left in his heart for God. Instead, like flourishing weeds, bad things took root and grew there. Thistles in the field annoyed him, his younger brother irritated him, his parents' choice in Eden made him angry. He was angry even with God. Then one day he stubbornly disobeyed by not bringing a lamb as an offering. What did Cain bring to God as an offering instead? **Read Genesis 4:3.**

Cain saw God's instructions through selfish eyes, and he thought he could do things his own way. After all, wasn't *his* fruit from *his* garden that *he* had grown good enough for God?

It wasn't what God had asked for, so fire didn't fall from heaven. When fire burned up the lamb Abel had offered, a knot of anger tightened in Cain's heart.

Abel saw the anger and tried to calmly encourage his brother to choose to do what was right. Abel reminded Cain of how God had forgiven their parents, how He had promised to save, and how the sacrifices pointed to Jesus. Abel really hoped Cain would listen. But Cain did not.

God saw the anger and spoke pleading words of encouragement. "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" God said (Genesis 4:7). But Cain wasn't sorry, and he didn't listen.

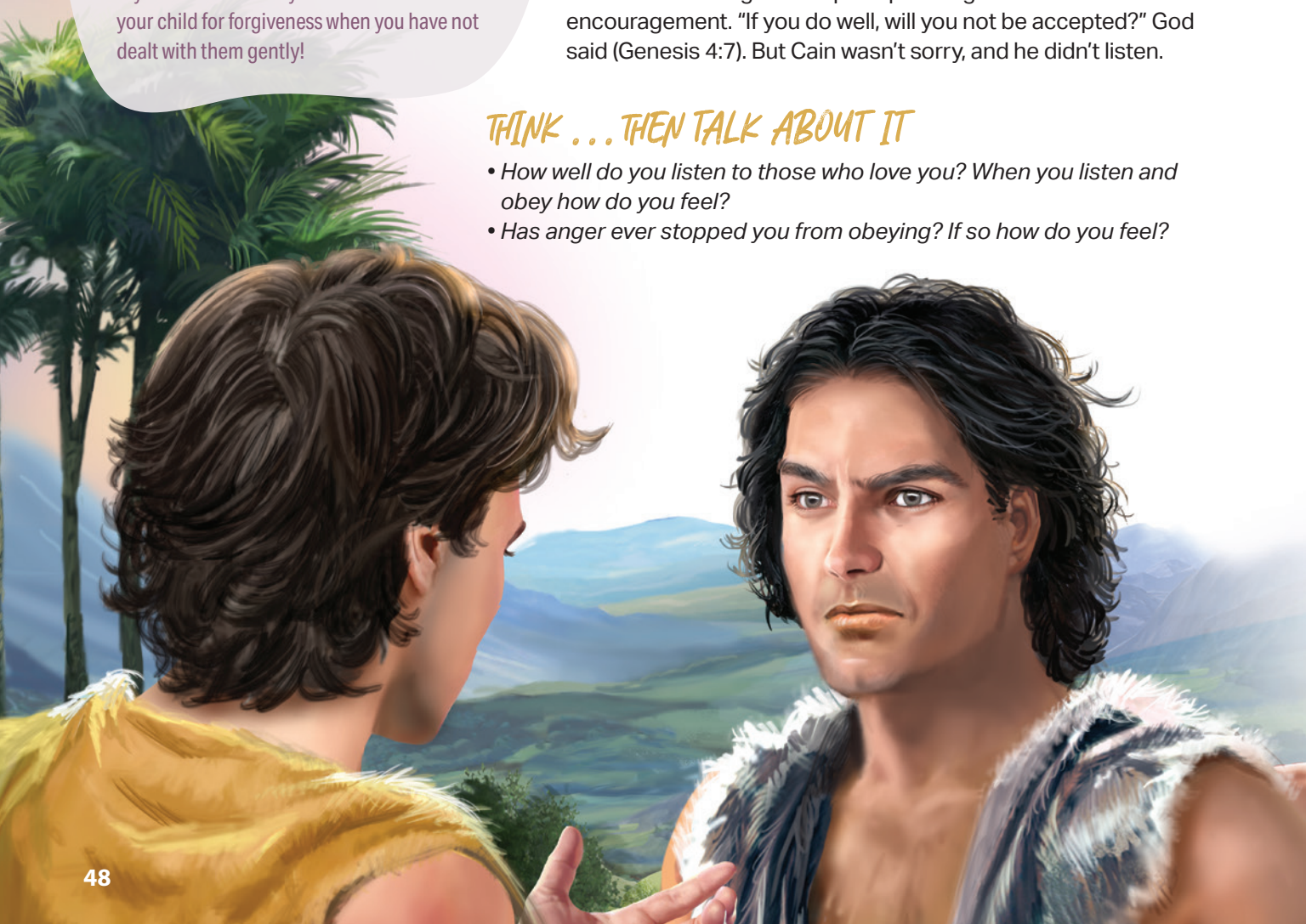
Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *How well do you listen to those who love you? When you listen and obey how do you feel?*
- *Has anger ever stopped you from obeying? If so how do you feel?*

Pray: Thank God for helping you choose to do the right thing. Ask God to live in your heart so that love can grow there.

Do: Imagine what it would have been like to be Abel. What might you have said to Cain, and how might you have said it? Tell a family member. Together thank God that He cares so much for your family.

For You, Parents: Sometimes we may speak in anger to our children. Then comes guilt and regret. But take heart; just as God sought to encourage Cain, He knows your situation and He encourages you. His promise in Isaiah 49:16 is yours to claim today. And don't hesitate to ask your child for forgiveness when you have not dealt with them gently!



WEDNESDAY

A Very Sad Day

PRAY: Thank God that He is with you when you are sad and hurting. Ask Him to help you control your feelings so that your choices won't hurt others.

DO: Write Psalm 147:3 in a card and share it with someone who is sad.

After God's words of love and encouragement to an angry Cain, He spoke a warning. God knew that Cain's angry feelings were controlling him and that he needed to control them instead. Otherwise, sin (hurtful thoughts and actions that come when we turn away from God's way of love) would take over, and Cain would make a bad choice. God said to Cain, "But if you do not do good, sin is ready to attack you. Sin wants you. But you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7, ICB).

But still Cain didn't listen. What did Cain do? **Read Genesis 4:8.**

What an awful, sad day! Out in the field where nobody saw, Cain did this terrible thing to his younger brother—his loving, innocent brother.

God must have hung His head in sorrow. Adam and Eve sobbed with grief. It reached down into the bottom of their hearts and weighed them down. They had lost their beautiful boy! God had taught them of death in the Garden of Eden, and now they *really* understood.

In his grief Adam blamed himself for the terrible thing Cain had done. If only he hadn't sinned in the garden. If only He'd listened to God. But God didn't leave Adam alone with his grief and guilt, just as He never leaves any of His children. God says in His Word that "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

Cain's angry choices caused so much hurt, but God was there to comfort and heal. He loves and comforts us when we are sad too.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Proverbs 15:18 tells us that an angry person stirs up conflict, but one who is patient can calm a quarrel.*
- *Which words in this verse make you think of Cain? Why? Which words make you think of what Abel tried to do? Why?*

PARENT FAITH TALK: You may like to gently share about a time you have lost a loved one and how it made you feel. Share how God helped you through that time.



THURSDAY

God Responds

Out in the field, nobody saw the terrible thing Cain had done to his brother, but God knew. How did God know? **Read Psalm 139:1-3.**

God had seen what was in Cain's heart, and He saw what Cain had done. But God's love could easily grow in Cain's heart—if only he would let it. So God gave Cain a chance.

God's kind voice rang out to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?"

Cain angrily replied, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9).

God was sadly disappointed. Cain had now added lying to his string of bad choices. Cain didn't want a new heart; he'd chosen to keep his selfish one instead.

Because Cain wouldn't admit what he'd done and say he was sorry, there would now be very sad consequences. First, God told Cain he would have to work much harder to grow food in the ground, because he had killed his brother there.

But even sadder, God had to send him away from his home and family to wander around the earth. Adam and Eve wept as they watched their son walk away. No Abel, and now no Cain. Their hearts and their home felt so empty. Like a dark cave filled with gloom.

Only God's love could fill the gap their precious sons had left.

PRAY: That God will grow His love in your heart. Thank Him that He knows everything, so He knows how best to help you have a heart like His.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *If you could have comforted Adam and Eve, what would you have said and done?*
- *How does it make you feel to know that God knows everything?*

Because God sees and knows everything, He knows how to help and encourage us to choose Him and His way, even after we have done something wrong.

DO: Look around your home for something soft to represent Abel's heart, and something hard to represent Cain's. Place the soft thing by your bed to remind you to pray for a soft, kind heart like Abel's.



☐ FRIDAY

Grumbling and God's Mercy

Even after what Cain had done, God did something wonderful for him. God listened quietly while Cain complained that He wasn't being fair. Cain grumbled that he didn't want to work harder in the field, or roam the earth, or be hidden from God's face. But more than that, he really didn't want someone to kill him. And he was very scared they would, for hadn't he just killed his brother? He didn't even realize God had sent him to roam the earth to help protect him!

Imagine complaining to God like that! God wants us to be honest when we talk to Him, but we also need to be respectful. How did Jesus teach His friends to start their prayer to God?

Read Matthew 6:9.

Even after listening to all that grumbling, God replied with great kindness. He put a mark of protection on Cain so that he would not be attacked. If anyone did try to kill Cain, they would be punished.

How loving is our God! We call that special kind of love "mercy," for God was kind and forgiving when Cain wasn't sorry, or honest, or respectful. Cain surely didn't deserve God's mercy. But God gave it anyway.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Think of a time someone showed you mercy. How thankful were you?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

As a family, brainstorm words to describe God in this story. Turn your words into a wordle or word cloud (a graphic arrangement of words to make a shape) using an online tool or paper. Check out: *www.wordclouds.com.*

Family Journal

Hebrews 11:4 says, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

- What made Abel's sacrifice more excellent? "Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 541).
- How did God show mercy and reveal His love in this story?

Pray

Thank God for the mercy He has shown you. You may like to begin your prayer with the words of Matthew 6:9, or sing hymn no. 289, "The Savior Is Waiting," from *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal.*

Do

Is there someone in your life that you need to forgive? Pray about it first, then create a smiley face with heart eyes and give it to them.

How to Deal With Anger in the Family

Just as Cain did, if we let our anger control us, it can hurt others and ourselves. What can start with a grumble can lead to a mean remark, a shout, a slammed door, or worse! If this happens in your family, everyone can feel miserable. God wants our homes and our families to be happy, healthy, loving, and safe. The Bible teaches us that we need to learn how to deal with anger, putting out the first flames before a fire starts. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath." And Ephesians 4:26 says, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath . . ."

Here are a few simple steps you can try next time when someone in your home is angry:

1. Sit down together. Ask each other if everything feels all right or not, and ask, "When you are feeling yucky, frustrated, or angry, what's the first thing you need to do for that to change?" Let each person share their thoughts: a. We need to want to change and to decide that what is going on is not OK. b. Being selfish is at the root of everything. c. We can't change ourselves; we need to ask Jesus to help change us. Then we can say we're sorry and forgive.
2. Together, sing a familiar song that you all know (for example: "Into My Heart," "Jesus Loves Me," or another simple song).
3. Ask everyone to close their eyes for a few minutes and sit quietly and talk to God about what is in their hearts. (When each person has finished their silent prayer, invite them to say "Amen" out loud.)
4. Then allow some time for each person to say "I'm sorry" to someone else for something they have done that has been hurtful or mean. This may take some time. (It may be best for an adult to start this.) After each person has said what they are sorry for, invite the other person to say, "I forgive you."
5. Finally, pray together as a family. Starting with the oldest person and ending with the youngest, ask for God's forgiveness and for Him to be part of your family and fill you with the Holy Spirit's power to be like Him.
6. Give each other a hug!

