JESUS LOVES TO SURPRISE ME WITH GOOD THINGS TO GROW MY FAITH.

# No More Grape Juice!



**MEMORY VERSE**

**"Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever: To Him who alone does great wonders" (Psalm 136:3, 4).**

## Word of the Week—Miracle:

A miracle is an extraordinary event or happening caused by God; something people could never ever do or explain. What miracles can you remember from the Bible? Think about the reasons God performs miracles.

This week's lesson is based on John 2:1-11; *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 144-153; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, pp. 920-923. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story,* vol. 7, pp. 129-133.



SUNDAY

# Busy Excitement

Excitement filled the air as busy workers scurried back and forth. There was so much to do. Weddings in Bible times lasted for several days, and they were huge, happy occasions with lots of feasting, music, and singing. One of Jesus' relatives was getting married, so His mother, Mary, was helping with the wedding preparations.

It's fun to look forward to a big celebration. Our caring God loves to see us enjoy happy times with family and friends. What does the Bible say about this? **Read Psalm 133:1.**

Mary was busy, but sometimes her thoughts were far away . . . Jesus was coming to the wedding, and she couldn't wait to see Him! She had missed Him very much since He left home. News of His baptism and His time in the wilderness had reached Mary in Nazareth, and she was both happy and worried.

Mary remembered the angel Gabriel's words: "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). Was it time? She was filled with fresh hope that soon everyone would know that her Son was *God's* Son, the Savior, the promised Messiah!

Mary also knew His life wouldn't be easy. The old prophet Simeon had warned Mary that something would happen to Jesus that would make her very sad (Luke 2:35).

While Mary may have wondered about the future, God was in control. He had shown that He was the God of miracles. As Gabriel had told her: "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Pushing her thoughts aside, Mary smiled. There was so much to do! Jesus would soon be here. What a wonderful time they would have together. She just couldn't wait!

## Think . . . Then talk about it

- *What do you think Jesus will do when He arrives at the wedding?*

**Do:** Imagine you are planning a wedding. Create an invitation for Jesus.

To help you understand how faith grows throughout this week's story, soak some seeds or beans in a clear jar of water overnight. In the morning, drain the water. Leave the jar in your kitchen all week and rinse the seeds/beans every day. Watch what happens to them.

**Pray:** Thank God for the family, friends, and church family God has blessed you with.



☐ MONDAY

# Time To Grow

A few simple words started their adventure: "Follow Me"; "Come and see." Now Andrew, Peter, John, Philip, Nathanael, and the other disciples were walking and talking with the Messiah on their way to a wedding in Cana—the very same wedding Jesus' mother was busy helping to prepare!

The disciples enjoyed walking and talking with their new friend Jesus as they strolled through Galilee toward the wedding. As they watched and listened to Jesus, their faith grew. They began to understand more about who He really was and what He had come to do. They were learning from Jesus by *being with* Jesus. Their friendship deepened as they spent time together as friends, getting to know each other better.

Jesus wants us to learn from Him this way too. As we "walk and talk" with Jesus, we will become close friends with Him and *abide* in Him. This word means to stay, live, and dwell with Jesus, fixed to Him. What does He say will happen to us when we abide with Him? **Read John 15:4, 5.**

Arriving at the wedding, Jesus quickly scanned the crowds, looking for His mother. There she was! With a big smile Jesus went quickly to her side. Mary was thrilled to see her Son again, and to meet His new followers. Her faith grew as they told her what they had seen and heard at Jesus' baptism, and how they believed He was the Messiah. Happiness filled Mary's heart—others now knew that her Son was God's Son too.

**Do:** Trace the journey from the Sea of Galilee to Cana on a Bible map.

The Bible invites us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Spending time with Jesus and sharing stories with each other helped the disciples' and Mary's faith to grow.

## Think . . . Then talk about it

- *How might you "abide" (spend time) with Jesus today to grow closer to Him?*
- *What do you think it means in John 15:4, 5 to produce "fruit" when you're connected to Jesus?*

**Mission Challenge:** Share this week's Bible story or Big Idea with someone you don't often play with and invite them to join you for an activity or game.

**Pray:** Ask God to help you spend more time with Him this week.

☐ TUESDAY

# An Embarrassing Problem



Quiet whispers spread across the crowd. People stopped, turned, and stared. Jesus—the one they had heard strange things about—was in the room! The man John the Baptist had called the "Lamb of God" was right among them, mingling and chatting.

The wedding was off to a very exciting start. Then something embarrassing happened. The wine (grape juice) ran out before the feast had ended. Oh, no! The host and the groom's family would look bad. The party would end. The guests would go home . . . Whatever could be done?

When Mary heard, she knew exactly what to do. She hurried over to Jesus and spoke quietly. What did she say? **Read John 2:3**.

"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4). To us, Jesus' answer may seem rude. But it was a respectful way to talk in Jesus' day. His mother's words had suggested to Jesus that He could solve the problem, and that she wanted Him to because He was her son. His reply gently reminded Mary that He was God's Son too, and that she couldn't expect Him to do anything unless it was God's will.

**Do:** Create a poster with just these two words: Problem? Pray!

Decorate and display it to remind you and your family.



Mary was not put off by Jesus' words. She confidently told the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5). Mary's instruction was filled with faith. She didn't know what Jesus would do; maybe He wouldn't work a miracle as she had hoped He would. But faith was growing in her heart, and she trusted Him to solve the problem somehow.

God can grow our faith when we trust Him to help us, with our problems, as Mary did. **Read Philippians 4:6**. Often our biggest blessings come after something has gone wrong.

**Pray:** Do you have a problem in your life at the moment? Talk to God about it.

## Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Look at your seeds/beans. What is happening to them?*
- *How do they remind you of what is happening in Mary's heart?*

WEDNESDAY

# Wedding Surprise



The servants nodded and looked eagerly toward Jesus. Mary had told them very clearly, "Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5).

Thinking quickly, Jesus looked around and saw six large stone jars that stood empty beside the door. A smile pulled at the corners of His mouth. Here was a chance to help the bride and groom, honor His mother's faith, and grow the faith of His disciples. What did Jesus tell the servants to do? *Read John 2:7.* Without a word, they obeyed.

Then Jesus told the servants to dip a ladle into one of the jars, fill a cup, and take it to the host of the feast. Imagine the servant's surprise! They expected a cup of water but got a cup of wine (grape juice) instead. It was a miracle!

Speechless, they took the wine (grape juice) to the host. As he drank it, he was amazed too. It was the sweetest wine he had ever tasted!

The host didn't know that the wine had run out or that Jesus had performed a miracle. He took some to the bridegroom and exclaimed, "People always serve the best wine first. Later, after the guests have been drinking a lot, they serve the cheaper wine. But you have saved the best wine till now" (John 2:10, ICB).

*Do:* Work out this math puzzle. Have a grown-up with a calculator help you. Altogether, the six jars held about 87 gallons (330 liters). There are 16 cups per gallon (about four cups in a liter). How many cups of grape juice did Jesus' miracle provide?

Before the host and the groom even knew they had a problem, Jesus had quietly solved it with the very best grape juice ever.

*Do:* Surprise a friend or family member by doing something kind for them. Think about giving your best, as Jesus did.

Jesus is always interested in us and our happiness, and He loves to surprise us with the very best He can give. He quietly grows our faith and solves our problems in surprising and wonderful ways, sometimes even before we know we have a problem!

*Pray:* Thank God for something surprising in nature, such as a rainbow.

## Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Who do you think got the biggest surprise in this story?*
- *Who was least surprised?*
- *How has this story helped to grow your faith?*



☐ THURSDAY

# Faith Shared

News of the water-to-wine miracle traveled fast. From the servants to the host, from the host to the groom, from the groom to the guests—soon the whole wedding was abuzz. People tried to understand it, but they couldn't. They shook their heads in wonder and tasted the wine again.

Jesus looked on with delight. Then He quietly slipped out the door, not wanting to become the center of attention. By the time the wedding guests began looking for the miracle worker, Jesus was nowhere to be found. So they turned to the disciples for answers to their questions.

The disciples were so excited to tell everyone about the things they had seen and heard at the Jordan River. Sharing stories about Jesus strengthened their own faith. People saw and caught their enthusiasm. Hope grew, and many believed in their hearts that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

In a way, the disciples were inviting the wedding guests to follow Jesus and experience Him for themselves. They wanted the people to "taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (Psalm 34:8). The disciples had tasted and seen that the Lord is good; now they wanted everyone else to do the same!

Jesus loves to grow our faith as we share with others. As our faith strengthens, we will want to invite others to "taste and see that the Lord is good" too (Psalm 34:8).

**Parent Faith Talk:** Share about a time you shared your faith with someone. Alternatively, share a miracle Jesus has worked in your life.

**Do:** If possible, ask your parents or caregivers if you could drink grape juice, or something similar, during Friday night worship.

**Fast Fact:** In ancient times, fresh grape juice was made in huge vats. Workers with clean, bare feet trampled on grapes to squish out the juice. Imagine what it felt like between their toes! It was then strained to get rid of the skins and seeds. Grape juice was made out of a syrup to which was added water. A syrup could be stored and preserved much better than fresh grape juice. (This of course did not taste as good as the fresh grape juice that Jesus made in this miracle.)

## Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *What is something "sweet" you know about Jesus that you could share with a friend?*
- *What might the disciples have hoped would happen next? Read* ***2 Peter 3:18.***

**Pray:** Ask Jesus to help you recognize an opportunity to share your faith with someone.



☐ **FRIDAY**

# Open Hearts, Closed Hearts

Like ripples in a pond, the news of the wedding miracle spread out to the streets of Cana. Then it spread all the way down to Jerusalem and into the temple courts. When the priests and rulers heard it, they were curious. They searched the Scriptures about the Messiah, trying to understand what was happening.

Here was a chance for the leaders to discover who Jesus was. But they couldn't get over their pride. The old priests shook their heads. The young priests and rulers put their noses in the air. *Surely the Messiah would turn up in Jerusalem and perform miracles for them. Not at some simple wedding in a village!* Their hearts were not open to Jesus.

Jesus could have worked a miracle in Jerusalem to show off His power to the priests and rulers. He didn't, because He could see they wouldn't believe that His authority came from God. Did they prove Him right? **Read Mark 11:27, 28.**

So instead, Jesus chose to use His power to add happiness to a wedding in a small town. That way, common people with open hearts would know that He was interested in them and that He loved them very much.

Jesus loves you *very* much too. Every day He longs to do a miracle in your life by forgiving your sins and changing your heart to be like His. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! . . . To Him who alone does great wonders" (Psalm 136:3, 4).

## Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Whose faith do you think will grow in this story?*
- *Whose faith won't grow?*

# Friday Night

## Share and Praise

- Serve your family some grape juice or water. Share the water-to-wine miracle story with them.
- Show your family the sprouted seeds/beans and talk about how faith grows.
- Discuss what Jesus says about a tiny mustard seed in Matthew 17:20: "I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, . . . nothing will be impossible for you."
- Listen to or sing the hymn "This Is My Father's World" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,* no. 92). Talk about how nature helps your faith in God grow stronger.

## Family Journal

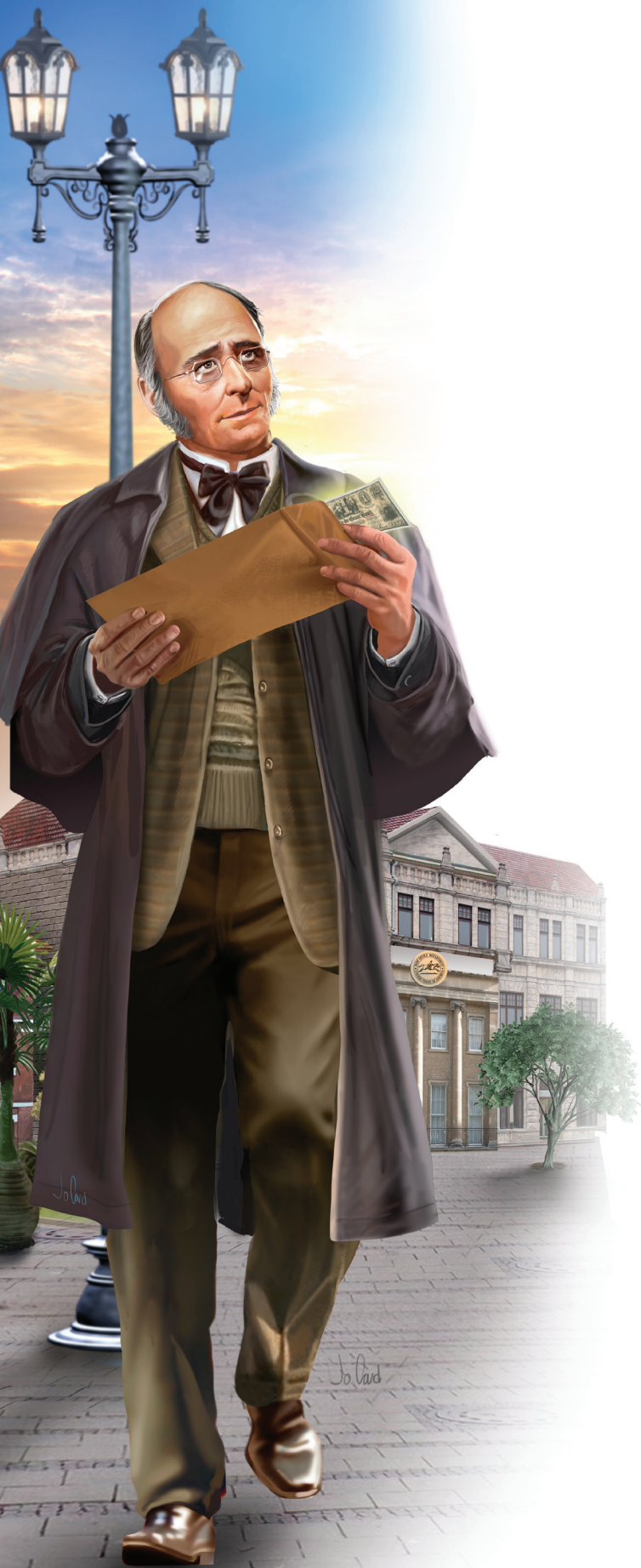
- What have you learned about miracles this week?
- If you could put yourself in the story, who would you be?

## Pray

Give family members a sprouted seed/bean to hold as you pray and thank God for the surprising things He does for you to grow your faith.

## For You, Parents

As you nurture your child's faith and pray for it to grow, be encouraged by the promise "The Lord will be your helper; He will work with your efforts. . . . Mothers, remember that in your work the Creator of the universe will give you help" (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 172).



SABBATH

# The Miracle Groceries

Retired sea captain Joseph Bates had been a very wealthy man, but by 1846 he had used up all his money spreading the news of Jesus' return.

One morning his wife, Prudence, asked him to buy some flour so that she could finish her baking. So Joseph Bates went out and spent his last money buying four pounds of flour.

When Prudence found out that they had no more money, she burst into tears, sobbing, "What are we going to do?"

"I'm going to write a book and spread the Sabbath truth," Bates replied.

Prudence stared at him—shocked—while Joseph tried to reassure her by saying, "The Lord will provide."

"That's what you always say," Prudence cried, "but what are we going to live on?"

Prudence left the room, and Joseph Bates sat down at his desk to work on his book about the Sabbath. Joseph believed that when he put Jesus first, everything else would fall into place, and God would provide for all the other things that they needed.

And God did provide. A half hour later, Joseph Bates had an impression that he should go to the post office. That same day a letter containing a $10 bill arrived from someone who felt impressed that Bates needed money. That was a lot of money in those days. What a wonderful miracle at just the right time!

With the money Joseph Bates was able to buy a barrel of flour, potatoes, and other needed items and still have more left over to work on his book. Joseph Bates had the groceries delivered to his house while he went off to talk to the printer about his book.

When the groceries were delivered, Prudence thought that there must be some mistake and tried to get the deliveryman to take the stuff back. Only when Joseph came home with the letter did she realize that God had worked a miracle to provide for their needs.

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