

CHANGEMAKERS LAB



Welcome to

Vacation Bible School (VBS)!

I'm **Sierra Scientist**, and like all scientists, I love to investigate what's going on around me. Look for my picture throughout this book as I help you take a closer look at changes happening in our stories and the world around us. I'm so glad you came to my lab to be a Changemaker this week!



Day 1: How Is This Possible? Nicodemus was supposed to have all the answers, but instead he was full of questions. As it turned out, questions were exactly what he needed to ask Jesus so he could change and grow—and they're where we need to start too.

Day 2: Who Will Fix It? What do you do with a problem that looks too big to solve? Meet five friends who found a creative way to work together and change a problem into an opportunity. Maybe you'll be inspired to change your approach to a problem too.

Day 3: Will There Be Enough? Can you imagine a world where everyone has enough—enough food, enough money, enough love? The early church did more than imagine this. They changed the way they lived to help make sure their neighbors had what they needed. Don't miss this amazing story!

Day 4: What Are We Building? Peter and Cornelius were separated by different languages, religions, and backgrounds. Separated, that is, until God's Holy Spirit built a bridge between them! How can YOU be a bridge-builder? Let's find out together!

Day 5: Can You Imagine? It's time to dream BIG! The prophet Isaiah sure did. God gave him a dream of a world with no crying or sickness, where even wild animals get along with and look out for each other. What kind of world do you dream of?

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 Day 1

How Is This Possible?

John 3:1–17



Nicodemus was an important religious leader and teacher. He was surprised by the things he'd heard Jesus say and seen Jesus do. Nicodemus went to visit Jesus in the middle of the night.

Nicodemus: Teacher, God is with you. I can tell by what you do.

Jesus: If you want to see God's kingdom—the world as the way God meant for it to be—you must be born from above. That is the first step.

Nicodemus: How can a grown-up be born? People can't become babies again, can they?

Jesus: When God's Spirit brings a new start, it is like being born all over again. The Holy Spirit is mysterious—it's like the wind. You can't see the wind, but you know it's there. It changes everything it touches. The Holy Spirit is like that too.

Nicodemus: How is this possible? It's hard to imagine.

Jesus: As a teacher, don't you know? God loves the whole world so much that God sent God's only Son. Now everyone who trusts in him will find a new life.

A Closer Look

Are you curious about what happened to Nicodemus after he met Jesus? Do you think he became a follower of Jesus? Look in the Bible at John 7:43–52 and John 19:38–40, the only other times the Bible mentions Nicodemus. What's your hypothesis (that's a fancy science word for "idea" or "best guess") after reading these?



God Loves the Whole World!

Nicodemus' questions helped him to learn that God loves the world! God wants us all to have a new life as part of God's family. Look at the map and think about how amazing it is that God loves the WHOLE WORLD! We are all connected as part of God's family. In the hearts, write or draw ways you could show God's love to others. Loving others is how we help God change the world!



All Sorts of Questions

Jesus wants us to ask all sorts of questions—that's how we learn, grow, and change! See if you can find six question-starting words in the puzzle below (note: the words can run in any direction). Your teacher has the solution if you get stuck. Then, write a question you'd like to ask Jesus starting with each of those questions words. Remember that no question is too unimportant for Jesus!

H	D	O	Z	I	T	W	R	I	W
V	H	W	H	A	T	H	O	H	E
W	G	W	X	A	H	Y	E	E	R
U	P	F	J	T	B	R	M	Z	D
N	L	F	Z	R	E	I	L	V	X
W	C	Q	B	G	E	C	Y	F	D
U	H	W	O	H	Z	J	W	V	L
J	R	E	U	E	X	L	X	T	E
Z	D	E	N	Z	Z	Y	D	V	M

How _____ ?
What _____ ?
When _____ ?
Where _____ ?
Who _____ ?
Why _____ ?





Day 2 Who Will Fix It?

Mark 2:1–12

What famous person would you be excited to find out is visiting your neighborhood?

In the town of Capernaum, the answer was **Jesus**. Jesus was a popular healer and teacher. People felt God's love when he was near them. So when people heard Jesus was at a house right down the street, everyone crowded into the house and outside its door, just trying to be close to him.

Another neighbor wanted to be close to Jesus too. This man could not walk. He could only sit or lie down. How would he get through the crowds to meet Jesus?

Luckily, he had four good friends ready to help. They carried him on his mat through town. But when they arrived the house was too crowded. They could not get inside.

The friends were sad but did not give up. Instead, they got creative. They carried their friend up some outside stairs and onto the roof of the house. No one else had thought to get to Jesus this way! They worked to open a hole in the roof so that their friend could fit through. Then they lowered him on his mat into the house, right in front of Jesus.

Jesus was amazed by these friends. They trusted that Jesus would help and welcome them. Jesus told the man on the mat about God's love for him. Then he told the man to stand up, take his mat, and go home. And he did just that! He walked all the way home while thanking and praising God.

Usually, a hole in the roof is a bad thing . . . but in this story, it was just right!

Problem Solvers Unite

What problems do you see in the pictures below? Work with a partner to come up with as many ways as you can think of to help fix the problems shown. Be creative—try to think of more than the first idea that comes to mind!



Kids to the Rescue!

Check out these stories about real kids solving big problems in their communities. Whose idea do you think is the coolest?



Xóchitl lives in a town high in the mountains of Chiapas, Mexico. Like many in her community, her family often had access only to cold water. Taking baths in cold water can lead to sickness and breathing problems, and Xóchitl wanted to find a solution. So, at the age of eight, she invented a solution! Using recyclable objects like water bottles and a rubber hose, Xóchitl engineered a device she calls "Warm Bath." The solar-powered water heater costs only about \$30—a solution many families can afford!



Going through many surgeries as a child taught **Jen** how lonely being in the hospital can be. After a volunteer's words of kindness encouraged her during a hard hospital stay, Jen was inspired to start Cards for Hospitalized Kids. More than 19,000 kids in 200 different hospitals have been reminded they are not alone because they've received handmade cards from schools, churches, and community groups.

When **Max** was in elementary school, he saw people living under bridges. He decided that one day he would invent something that could change life for those without shelter. A few years later, he invented a simple shelter using Styrofoam packing peanuts stuffed into plastic bags, calling it "the Home Dome." His invention won a national contest seeking new uses for recycled materials! "I believe it is everyone's responsibility to reach out and make a difference," Max says. "All you have to do is just some, one, little thing to improve the life of someone else. No one is too young, too old, or too disadvantaged to make a difference in the world."



A Closer Look

Have a grown-up help you look up websites that share more stories like these. Start by searching for "My Name My Story" and "TIME for Kids." (Do a search for "inventions" on the TIME for Kids magazine's website and you'll be amazed by the results!)



Day 3

Will There Be Enough?

Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–37

In the days and weeks just after he lived on earth, not many people were following Jesus. But after God sent the **Holy Spirit** on a day called Pentecost (check out Acts 2:1–21), the early church began to grow. In just a matter of days, a group of 120 people became a community of thousands!

God's Holy Spirit did more than help the church grow. God's Spirit changed people's hearts and lives. They started to live differently.

They studied Jesus' teachings together.

They helped their community.

They ate meals together often.

They shared their money and their food.

They sold things they owned and used the money to care for others.

They worshiped and praised God all the time.

The early church's joy was contagious. None of them said, "This is mine!" about anything they had. And as they shared their possessions and kept telling the story of Jesus' love, more people kept joining them.

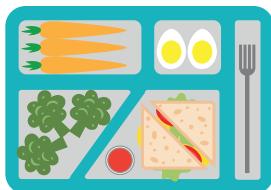


MY NAME IS
BARNABAS, AND I'M
ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO
JOINED THE EARLY CHURCH. I
OWNED SOME LAND. WHEN I SAW
OTHERS LIVING WITHOUT HAVING
THEIR BASIC NEEDS MET, I SOLD
MY LAND AND GAVE THE MONEY
TO THE CHURCH'S LEADERS. I
KNEW THE CHURCH WOULD
MAKE SURE EVERYONE
HAD ENOUGH.

Need . . . or Want?

In today's story, **Barnabas** saw people around him without the things they needed to live a healthy, full life. He sold a piece of land he owned—something he liked but didn't need to have in order to live well—so others could get what they needed.

Look at the pictures below. There are some things we need in order to live. Other things are nice to have, but we can live without them. Circle the things on this page you think people cannot live without. Compare your answers with a friend's and talk about why you might have circled different things. How can we make sure everyone has the things you circled?



A Closer Look

A family therapist named Virginia Satir found that people need four hugs a day for survival, eight hugs a day to stay as well as we are, and twelve hugs a day to grow. Hugs are something we all need . . . and something we can ALL help make sure everyone has enough of!

Jesus' (Not-So-Secret) Message

Jesus came to show people it was time for the world to change and look more like the kingdom of God. But this meant folks would have to change their hearts and lives so they could take care of each other.

This puzzle has a hidden message in it. First, find the 10 words and phrases in the list below. Words can go in any direction and share letters as well as cross over each other. Each of these is something Jesus came to change and something that the early church worked to change by how they lived together. So, as you find a word, instead of circling it—cross it out! To these things, Jesus and the early church said NO!

Once you find all the words, copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner into the blanks to reveal the hidden message. This message tells us what Jesus and the early church said YES to. The hidden message is something we're still working on today!

Division	Fear	Greed	Hunger	Left out
Loneliness	Rich and poor	Selfishness	Too much stuff	Wastefulness



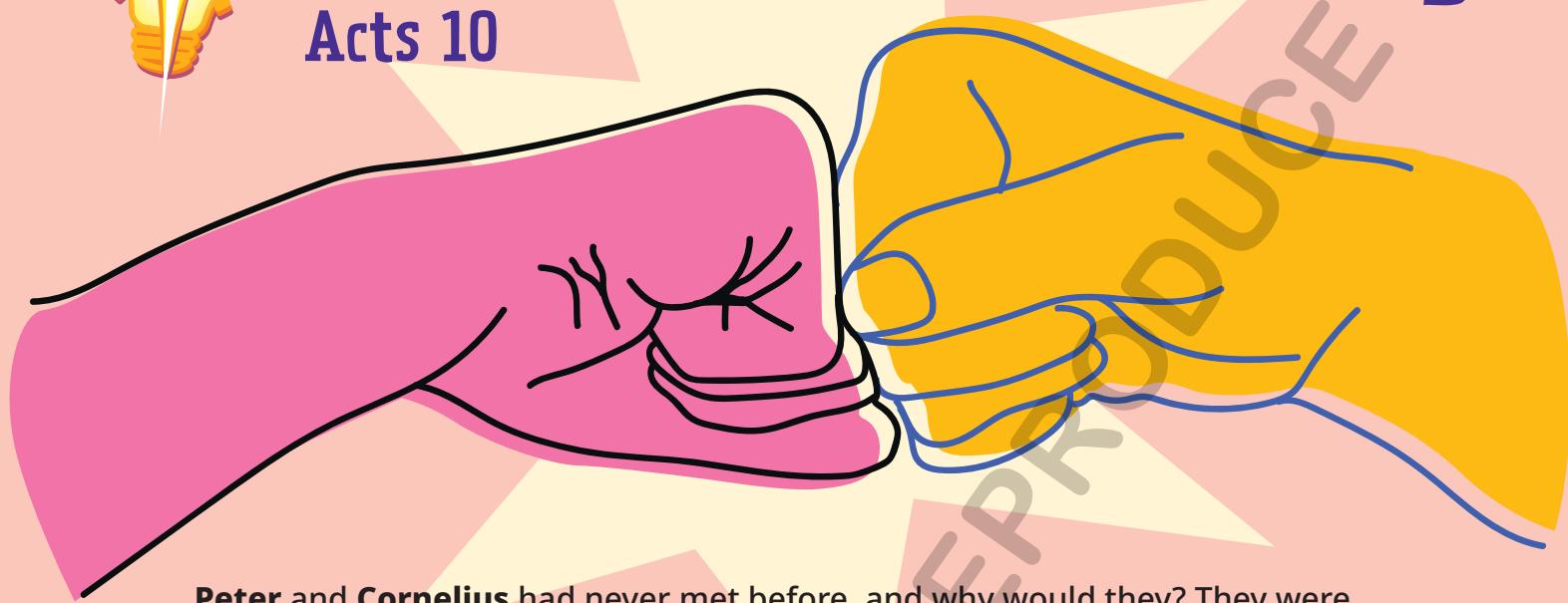
Jesus wanted us to help create:



Day 4

What Are We Building?

Acts 10



Peter and Cornelius had never met before, and why would they? They were different in almost every way.

Peter was from Israel while Cornelius was from a foreign country. Peter was a fisherman and a preacher, while Cornelius was a soldier. Peter was a Jew who followed Jesus, while Cornelius was not Jewish—though he loved and served God.

One day, God decided to bring these two together.

Cornelius had a dream where God asked him to send messengers to bring Peter to his house. At the same time, **Peter had a dream** where God told him that Peter's ideas about what's good and what's not are not important. What is important is who or what GOD has said is good! Then God told Peter to go with Cornelius' messengers when they arrived at his door.

Both Peter and Cornelius listened to God. And when they met, they realized God's love and God's Holy Spirit had come to both of them. What they shared was more important than what made them different. They shared the visions God gave them.

"I am learning," Peter said, "that God doesn't play favorites." This was a big change for Peter! Cornelius was baptized and became a follower of Jesus. This was a big change for Cornelius!

And the early church began to change, too. More and more people from different backgrounds began to come together to follow Jesus. It wasn't always easy, but they could see the truth: God's love is for everyone!

Bring Them Together!

It took a lot of things to bring **Peter**  and **Cornelius**  together! They had to **listen**  to God and each other, **walk**  to a far-off place, **grow**  to think differently, and **love**  someone new.

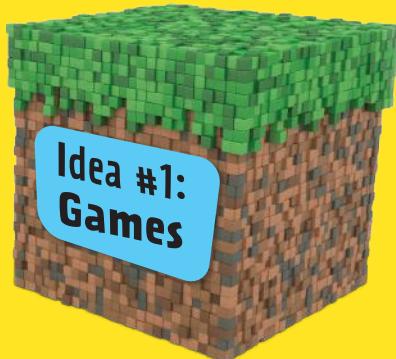
Help Peter get to Cornelius through this maze by following a path where he listens, walks, grows, and loves. Move from square to square in this order:                                                                             

Remember to follow this pattern:



Change-Making Ideas!

Check out some creative ways people are working to bring kids who are different together to build relationships. Which idea sounds the most interesting to you? Use the final space to draw or write your own idea about what might bring different people together at your school or in your neighborhood.



Idea #1:
Games

Who doesn't love playing games—especially video games? An organization called “Games for Peace” uses online video games to bring together children and teenagers from **Israel** and **Palestine**, countries that have been involved in a long conflict with each other. Playing cooperative games that focus on building and working together can help kids learn to communicate with each other and trust each other. In an online world, differences can be bridged more quickly—especially as kids are caught up in something they love!



Idea #2:
Art, Drama, Music!

The African country of **Nigeria** is made up of more than 200 different ethnic groups. “Creative Youth Boot Camp” brings together youth from these different groups. These youth may speak different languages or have different histories, but they all love art, music, dance, acting, or other creative arts. They spend a week learning more about these pursuits as a way to discuss and work for change together.



What's **something you love** that could help bring different kids together to become friends? Draw or write about it below. No idea is a bad idea.

A Closer Look

Want to investigate these ideas more closely?

With the help of an adult, go to YouTube and look up videos about these amazing projects: “Games for Peace - Play2Talk” by urimishol and “Creative Youth Boot Camp: Art for Social Transformation – Street Project Foundation (Nigeria)” by unaocvideos.

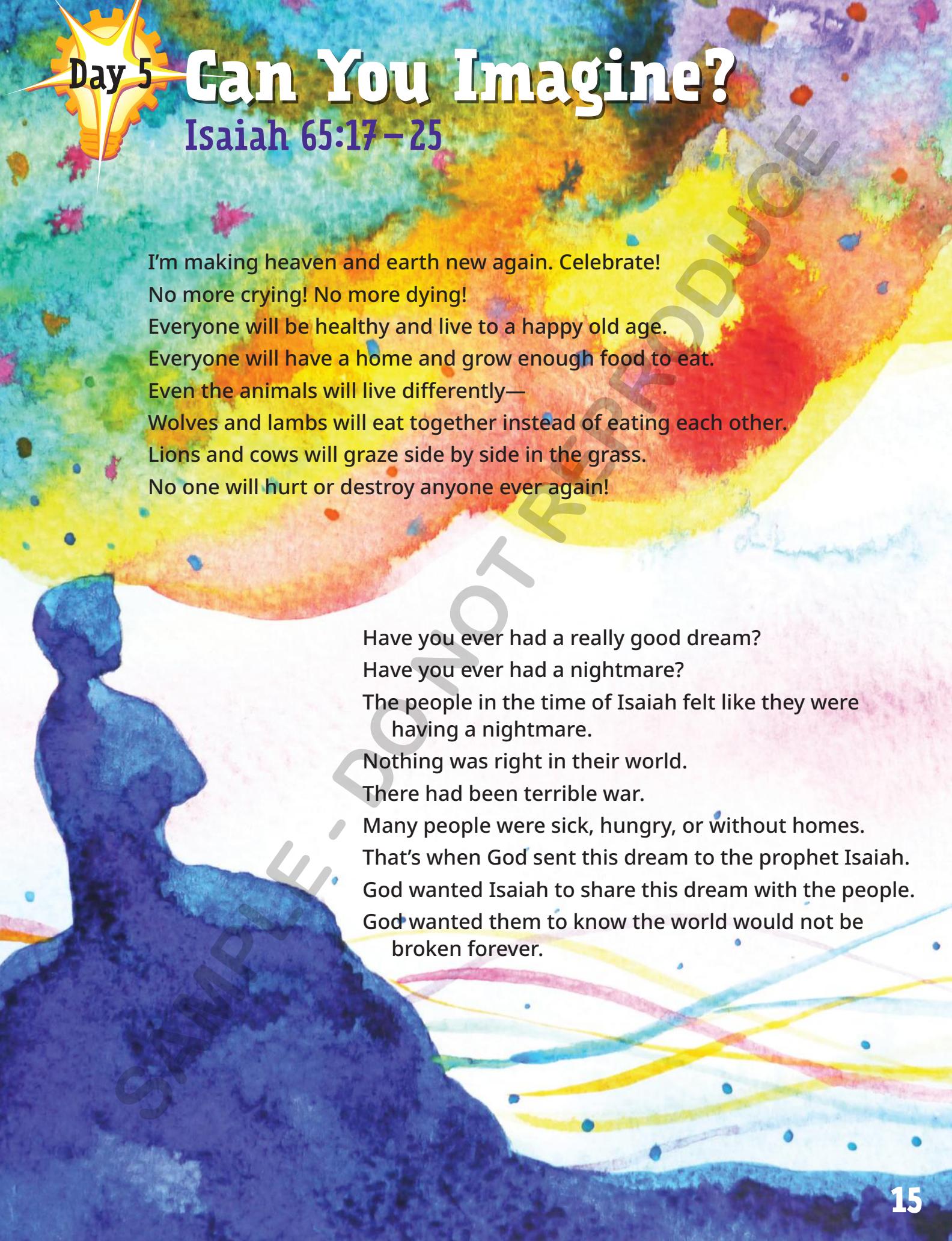




Day 5

Can You Imagine?

Isaiah 65:17–25

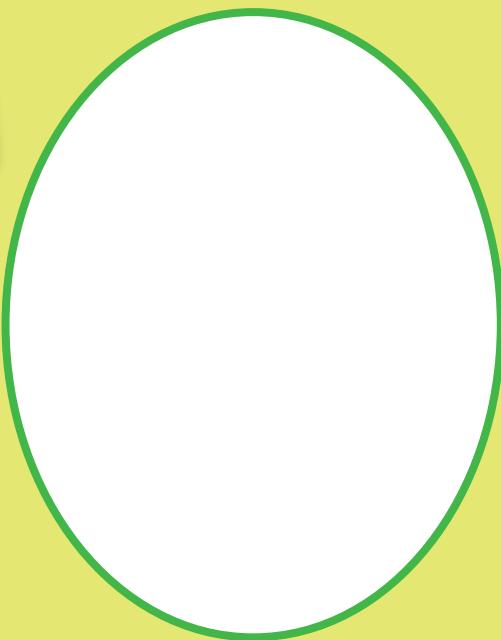


I'm making heaven and earth new again. Celebrate!
No more crying! No more dying!
Everyone will be healthy and live to a happy old age.
Everyone will have a home and grow enough food to eat.
Even the animals will live differently—
Wolves and lambs will eat together instead of eating each other.
Lions and cows will graze side by side in the grass.
No one will hurt or destroy anyone ever again!

Have you ever had a really good dream?
Have you ever had a nightmare?
The people in the time of Isaiah felt like they were
having a nightmare.
Nothing was right in their world.
There had been terrible war.
Many people were sick, hungry, or without homes.
That's when God sent this dream to the prophet Isaiah.
God wanted Isaiah to share this dream with the people.
God wanted them to know the world would not be
broken forever.

Yes or No?

In today's story, God said no to the things that hurt God's world and yes to the things that help it. Look at the pictures below. With a green marker, circle the things God would say yes to. Put a red X through the things God would say no to. Which pictures make you sad? Which pictures make you the happiest? In the extra green circles, draw what you dream of being true in our world.



Broken But Beautiful

What do you do when something is broken? If a toy is broken, do you try to fix it? If you can't fix it, do you throw it away?

For over 400 years, people in Japan have been practicing an art called *kintsugi*. *Kintsugi* is a Japanese word that means "golden joinery." Instead of throwing out pottery when it is broken, artists take the broken pieces and glue them back together using expensive liquid gold, silver, or platinum. This creates something new from that which was broken—something even more valuable and special than the item was before!

Check out these pictures. Which is your favorite? Which picture surprises you?

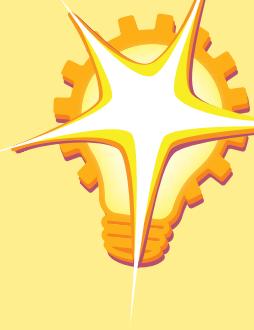


Imagine if those broken pieces had just been thrown away instead of being made into something new and beautiful! Think about Isaiah's dream. How could the parts of our world that are broken now be changed into something beautiful?

A Closer Look

Want to see *kintsugi* in action? Check out the video "The Japanese Art of Fixing Broken Pottery" by BBC Reel on YouTube. You could also check out the book *The Kintsugi Kid* by Allison Jones.





Bible Memory Chart

Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)



Day 1

How Is This Possible? John 3:1-17

CHANGEMAKERS
CHALLENGE



Today, we listened in on a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Even though Nicodemus was supposed to be an expert about God, he had a LOT of questions. Sometimes grown-ups may become tired of all the questions children ask . . . but Nicodemus reminds us that Jesus *never* does!

Each day, this at-home card will present a **simple experiment** that can help your family develop changemaker skills. The card will provide three ways to turn your home into a **LAB** where you work for change as you Learn, Act, and Breathe!



A Simple Experiment

Take an old shoebox and decorate it together as a family. Write "The Question Box" on it and place slips of paper next to it with a pencil. Encourage family members to write any question that comes up during the day on a slip of paper and put it in the box.

Make it a habit to check the box before dinner each night and talk about the questions together as a family. No question is too hard or too silly! See what you can learn about the world and each other through this simple experiment in communication and openness.



Day 2

Who Will Fix It? Mark 2:1-12

CHANGEMAKERS
CHALLENGE



Today, we met five friends who worked together creatively to solve a problem. Jesus loved how creatively they worked to make sure no one was left out or left behind! How does your family work together? How do you help each other to think outside of the box?

Check out a **simple experiment** to help your family develop creative thinking skills. Then flip the card over to find three more ways to turn your home into a **LAB** where you practice cooperation as you Learn, Act, and Breathe!



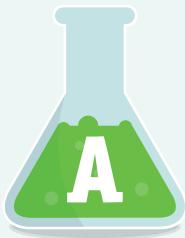
A Simple Experiment

Take a walk outside or around your house and have each person choose a different random object that will fit inside a pillowcase, such as a newspaper, rubber band, balloon, stick, or rock. Pull each object out of the pillowcase one at a time and have your family talk about how many different ways they can think of to use that object. See which object generates the most ideas, and then try to come up with the same number of ideas about each of the objects! Let your creativity run wild!





Learn: Find a suggested reading list online like “Book List for Asking Questions” by This Reading Mama or “40 Picture Books for Teaching Children to Ask Questions” by Children’s Library Lady. Choose two or three books from the list that suit your family’s reading level(s) so that you can learn together to ask more or better questions. Get the books from your local library and curl up to read them together—asking lots of questions about what you read, of course!



Act: Watch the video “3 Questions That Could Change the World from Kid President” on YouTube. Together as a family, answer the three questions Kid President poses. How do your answers to these questions inspire you to act in some way to bring change in your family, neighborhood, or the world?



Breathe: Before eating dinner or going to bed, try praying a simple breath prayer together. A breath prayer is where you say one word or phrase silently while taking a slow deep breath in and another part of the word or phrase while breathing out. Repeat this process several times over a one- or two-minute period. Breathing in, repeat: *God, help us*; breathing out, repeat: *ask big questions*.



Learn: Most families know how to play games where one player wins and others lose, like Uno or Monopoly. As a family, learn to play a cooperative game, which is a game where all players work together to accomplish a common goal! If you have younger children, “Outfoxed” by Gamewright and “Friends and Neighbors: The Helping Game” by Peaceable Kingdom are great choices. If your children are older, try “Space Escape” by Peaceable Kingdom or “Forbidden Island” by Gamewright.



Act: Do your usual chores around the house this week in buddy teams. Try to come up with new ways to complete the chores that are easier or more effective. What’s fun about working together? What’s more challenging?



Breathe: Before eating dinner or going to bed, try praying a simple breath prayer together. A breath prayer is where you say one word or phrase silently while taking a slow deep breath in and another part of the word or phrase while breathing out. Repeat this process several times over a one- or two-minute period. Breathing in, repeat: *God, help us*; breathing out, repeat: *work together*.





Day 3

Will There Be Enough? Acts 2:42–47, 4:32–37

CHANGEMAKERS
CHALLENGE



Today, we learned how the early church worked together to make sure everyone had enough. We read stories from Acts 2 and 4 that described how they shared **EVERYTHING**. This is an idea that's hard for children to wrap their minds around, let alone grown-ups! Yet others were so amazed at how the Christians took care of each other that they wanted to be part of their community.

Check out a **simple experiment** done to learn about sharing. Then flip the card over to find three more ways to turn your home into a **LAB** where you practice making sure everyone has enough as you Learn, Act, and Breathe!

A Simple Experiment

Is sharing natural? A group in Spain conducted a simple experiment to see if children will naturally share food when they realize that another child doesn't have enough. Amazingly, all 20 children who participated in the experiment chose to share their food. Watch the video "The Sharing Experiment" by Action Against Hunger on Vimeo to see the experiment depicted and talk about it together as a family.



Day 4

What Are We Building? Acts 10

CHANGEMAKERS
CHALLENGE



Today, we heard the story of Peter and Cornelius. They are two people who couldn't have been more different but who became friends. Peter and Cornelius learned from each other when both were willing to listen to God's Holy Spirit. God built a bridge between these two strangers long ago, and still calls us to connect with people who are different today!

Learn about bridge-building experiments by trying the **simple experiment** below. Then flip the card over to find three more ways to turn your home into a **LAB** where you learn openness to different people as you Learn, Act, and Breathe!

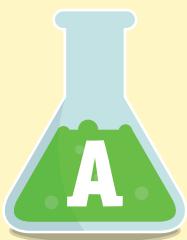
A Simple Experiment

Watch "What Makes Bridges So Strong?" video by SciShow Kids to see how people have experimented to learn to build strong bridges. The video shares that a triangle is one of the strongest shapes to use for building a bridge. Have every person in your family cut out a triangle and write on each of its three sides a way to build strong friendships with others. Hang these triangles somewhere you'll see them as a reminder!





Learn: Call a local food pantry and learn what kind of food or items they need most right now. Lots of people donate their leftovers, and there are certain things food pantries never have enough of when neighbors ask for them! Take a family trip to the store to buy the most-needed items to share with neighbors who don't have enough.



Act: Take a "following Jesus" inventory as a family. How many of the things named in Acts 2 and 4 do you do as a family? Here's a list to consider: study Jesus' teachings together; pray together; help our community; eat together; share our money; share our food; sell things we own to help care for others; worship and praise God together; be one in heart and mind. Which one of these that you DON'T currently do could you try doing as a family? How would that change the way your family lives?



Breathe: Before eating dinner or going to bed, try praying a simple breath prayer together. A breath prayer is where you say one word or phrase silently while taking a slow deep breath in and another part of the word or phrase while breathing out. Repeat this process several times over a one- or two-minute period. Breathing in, repeat: *God, help us*; breathing out, repeat: *share with others*.



Learn: Read a children's book that introduces children to people who live in a different part of the world than your family. Great choices are DK's *Children Just Like Me: A New Celebration of Children around the World*, *This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from around the World* by Matt Lamothe, or *Africa Is Not a Country* by Margy Burns Knight. Many books are available as read-alouds on YouTube as well. Discuss together what things you might have in common with a child you read about, and how you might become friends with that child if you met in person.



Act: In today's story, Peter was afraid to eat foods that he'd never eaten. Make a new food together as a family that you might feel nervous to try! Check out "Kid-Friendly Recipes from around the World" on the bonvoyagewithkids.com website or "15 International Recipes to Expand Your Kids' Palates" on theeverymom.com.



Breathe: Before eating dinner or going to bed, try praying a simple breath prayer together. A breath prayer is where you say one word or phrase silently while taking a slow deep breath in and another part of the word or phrase while breathing out. Repeat this process several times over a one- or two-minute period. Breathing in, repeat: *God, help us*; breathing out, repeat: *reach out to others*.





The Science of Laughter

Did you know that scientists in Norway found that people who laugh more tend to live longer? Wow! Many experiments have found that laughter improves our health, our moods, and our relationships with others. Learn some science jokes as you connect the questions around the page with their silly answers. Then, share the jokes with others to improve their lives by making them laugh!



How do scientists freshen their breath?

With Experi-Mints!

Why did the germ cross the microscope?

To get to the other slide!

Why did the scientist take out her doorbell?

She wanted to win the No-Bell prize!

Why are chemists so good at solving problems?

They're always working with solutions.

Where did the chemist have his lunch?

On a periodic table.

What did the thermometer say to the graduated cylinder?

You may have graduated, but I have more degrees.

What did the science book say to the math book?

You've got problems.

This booklet belongs to _____



Day 5

Can You Imagine? Isaiah 65:17 – 25

CHANGEMAKERS
CHALLENGE

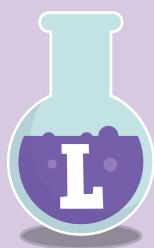
In our last day, we were challenged to dream big—to imagine ways God might want to make the world new. What is amazing in our world? What feels broken? How might God be bringing a new world into being through US?

Try a **simple experiment** and turn something old into something new. Then enter the **LAB** to help make your home a space full of imagination as you learn, act, and breathe!



A Simple Experiment

Visit your family's recycling bin and choose a few clean, dry items. Work together as a family to fashion those old items into something new. Maybe an empty cereal box could be cut into a toy airplane, or a milk carton could be reshaped into a bird feeder. Experiment with different ideas and let your imaginations run wild! How can your inventions help make our world a better place?



Learn: Explore another famous dream—that of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. You can find clips of his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on YouTube. Talk as a family about how you see Dr. King's dream coming true, and how you could help the parts of his dreams that are not yet true become reality.



Act: Part of Isaiah's vision for a new world was one where no one would be sick or sad. Make cards to bring a bit of joy to people in your family, church, or community (perhaps check with a local hospital) who feel stuck in sickness and sadness today.



Breathe: Before eating dinner or going to bed, try praying a simple breath prayer together. A breath prayer is where you say one word or phrase silently while taking a slow deep breath in and another part of the word or phrase while breathing out. Repeat this process several times over a one- or two-minute period. Breathing in, repeat: *God, help us*; breathing out, repeat: *imagine a better world*.