

Questions for Cubs

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

Lesson

Giving Thanks for the Gift *and* the Giver

Key Verse

How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.
I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. (Psalm 116:12–14 NIV)

Ear Check (Story Comprehension)

- Q: What does Staci say she could look at all day in the store window?
A: *A hair ribbon*
- Q: What does C. J. think Hugh really wants for Christmas?
A: *To become a Club member*
- Q: Miss Harbor asks the class to be thankful for the gifts they'll receive and to appreciate what?
A: *The giver of the gifts*
- Q: What gift did Hugh give Staci?
A: *A beautiful hair ribbon that belonged to his mother*
- Q: Whom did Paw Paw Chuck make the pie safe for?
A: *His wife, Nana Cindy*

Heart Check (Spiritual Application)

- Q: In what ways do we give incorrectly?
- A: We all have a great capacity to take something wonderful that God has given us and make it into something less than it was intended to be. Giving is like that sometimes. God has given us gifts and has told us to give to others in the same way, but we rarely give to others in a way that reflects the loving way God gives. We often give to others so we will get something back from them, or we give out of a sense of grudging obligation. We make giving and receiving more about the gift than the relationship involved.

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Q: What is God trying to communicate to us through the things He gives us? Why does He command us to give to the church and to others?

A: God's Word teaches that giving is first and foremost an act of love (2 Corinthians 8:3–8). He gives not as an investment, but simply because He loves us. Second, He gives to us with the desire that we will receive it properly, and as a result love Him more deeply (John 14:21). Giving is all about our relationship with the Giver—not the gift itself. It is extremely important that we are able to recognize a gift from God, praise Him for the gift, and draw closer to Him because of it. If we are not in a properly humble state of mind, we will receive a good gift the way Hugh did with greed, indifference, or even contempt.

“I” Check (*Personal Application*)

1. Miss Harbor invited her class to spend as much time being thankful for the people who gave the gifts as they were for the gifts themselves. In what ways do you show your thankfulness to the people who give you gifts? Can you do more to appreciate the people who have given you gifts or shown you kindness?
2. As you think about all God has done for you, what can you do to show gratitude to Him for the gift of our Savior, Jesus Christ? The key verse also gives us three good ways we can show our gratitude to God for His goodness. What do you think these phrases mean: “lift up the cup of salvation,” “call on the name of the Lord,” and “fulfill my vows to the Lord”?
3. Have you ever received a gift you didn't like? How did you respond to the person who gave it? How do you think God feels when someone doesn't accept the gift of His Son? Why do you think someone would reject the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ?

Director's Notes

Among the Paws & Tales creative team, the phrase a “Nathan/David moment” keeps coming up. After David sinned by sleeping with Bathsheba and having her husband killed, David lived in an unrepentant stupor. He knew everything he needed to know. He did not need more data. He had sinned, and he knew it. However, he was not seeing his sin properly, and this lack of clarity caused him to suffer.

God sent the prophet Nathan to speak to David. Nathan knew David well, and he came to him with a story of injustice. In 2 Samuel 12:1–4, Nathan spoke to David:

“There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.
The rich man had a great many flocks and herds.
But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb
Which he bought and nourished;
And it grew up together with him and his children.
It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom,
And was like a daughter to him.
Now a traveler came to the rich man,
And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd,
To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him;
Rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to
him.”

The story continues in verses 5–7:

Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.” Nathan then said to David, “You are the man!”

Nathan got inside of David's defenses with a story of sheep, then turned it around on him so that it pulled his defenses down from the inside. That is a “Nathan/David moment.” Amy Robertson, the writer of this *Paws & Tales* episode, does the same thing. She gets inside us—she makes us get angry with Hugh and feel hurt for C. J. Once we do these things, we see in the end that we often act like Hugh to God. We ignore His gift and toss it into the mud, never even knowing how precious the gift is. This is true with salvation, but it is also true for us as believers with the other gifts God wants to give us. We can get off-center and begin to think of God as mean or uninterested, but in reality He is the Good Shepherd, constantly trying to give us good gifts. It is our job to recognize the gifts He gives and treat them accordingly.



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