

Jasper

Family Resource Guide

Introduction

If you have *Jasper* in your hands, you are in for a real treat! This book has a very special message for every child of any age. In our home, we have developed a habit of reading before bedtime. Sometimes we read on our own and sometimes we will read a book together. When Dar asked me to read *Jasper*, I decided not to keep it to myself but to read it to my family. It felt very natural to do so. I read a chapter from *Jasper* out loud to my three children each night before bed. We were drawn into this story and fell in love with the characters and the message. It was hard to not keep reading each night because we all wanted to go to the next chapter. But by slowing down, we were able to digest the message of each chapter. As a father, I discovered right away the potential this book possessed to draw my family into deeper discussions about our Christian faith and following Jesus. We would talk about Sandy and her adventure around the dinner table, before bedtime, or at the breakfast the next morning. Sometimes something would happen during the day that would remind us of something Sandy heard or said and life lessons would fall right into our lap. *Jasper* has been a great blessing to us and it will be for you as well.

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How to Use This Resource

God designed family to be the soil in which we are shaped by His Spirit and His Word. The purpose of this resource is to provide something helpful for you to get the most out of reading *Jasper* together. We want to help you to be intentional about entering into spiritually formative conversations with one another. In the pages that follow, you will find Discussion Questions, Scriptures to Read, Family Activities, and Bedtime Prayers for the introductory poem and every chapter of the book. As you read each chapter, refer to the items associated with the place you are in the book. Do not feel that you have to do every question or activity we have offered for you here. In fact, we expect God to move in unexpected ways in your daily lives as you read *Jasper*. The items we have offered are for your consideration. That is all. But please do listen to the Holy Spirit. We have found that sometimes the greatest lessons came when we least expected them. *Jasper* has a way of unlocking some great conversations about God and about the Holy Spirit.

Invitation Into the Story From the Keeper of the Treasure...

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) The poem at the beginning of the book is an invitation. What is the name of the Keeper of the Treasure? What bits of information might we gather about this person?
- 2.) An invitation is given to the reader in this poem. What is the invitation? Are you intrigued?
- 3.) What do you think this book is going to be about?

Scripture to Read:

Sandy was given an invitation, but did you know the Bible is FULL of invitations from God to you? This is just one. See if you can find some more!

Song of Songs 2:10 *My beloved speaks and says to me:*

"Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away..."

Family Activity:

Write a poem describing a story from your life or a story that you would like to tell. Make sure to end your poem with a question that will make people want to know more about your story. Share your poem with your family.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

You are a great storyteller. You always have an adventure for us. Thank You for giving us this book to read and the ability to do so. As we read this story, take us on an adventure with the characters and with You. Help us to learn more about who You are and about who we are in Your eyes. We want to be awake to the way You see things. Amen.

Chapter 1: Asleep In The Wastelands

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Describe the Wastelands where Sandy lives. Would you want to live in the Wastelands? Why or Why not?
- 2.) Sandy has a dream. What do you make of her dream? How is the place Sandy dreams about different from the place where she lives?
- 3.) Sandy's dream follows her when she gets up! Have you ever had a dream that stayed with you? If so, what do you remember about it?
- 4.) Sandy's invitation is real. What would you do if you received an invitation like Sandy's?

Scripture to Read:

Sandy has a dream that has been asleep. Did you know that the dreams in your heart are God's plans to grow His kingdom? Maybe it's time to awaken those dreams!

Proverbs 13:12 *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life.*

Family Activity:

Write a pretend invitation to another family member. Invite them to take an amazing adventure to a wonderful place. Make sure to include a picture in your invitation. Share your invitation with that person.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Sometimes things in the world around us just don't match up to the dreams You have for us. Thank You for giving us an invitation out of the Wastelands and into Your Kingdom. Help us to receive Your surprising invitations and help us to say, "Yes!" when You call. Amen.

Chapter 2: At Work In The City of Excess

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) What do you think it would be like to work at BIG'S Cafe serving some of the most successful people in the city of Excess?
- 2.) What do you think about Sandy's friends Pride and Restless? What are they like? Do you think they are good friends? Why or why not?
- 3.) What do you think about Mr. Big and his customers? Would you want to serve these people? Why or why not?
- 4.) How do you think Sandy felt after her failures in the Cafe? How would you feel if Pride created a problem for you in this way?

Scripture to Read:

Meek is the opposite of proud, see what God promises for those who behave differently from Sandy's friend, Pride.

Matthew 5:5 *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

Family Activity:

Recreate BIG'S Cafe around a family meal. One of you must pretend to be a server like Sandy and the others must pretend to be one of the customers. See if the server can guess the customer each family member is trying to imitate. Take turns being the server and try not to make a mistake like Sandy did.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Pride is not a very good friend to me. He often trips me up and keeps me from knowing my truest self. Help me to avoid Pride and choose better friends. And when I am restless, help me to ask the Holy Spirit why and follow the Holy Spirit's leading. Thank You for teaching me to be humble and obedient. Amen.

Chapter 3: A Ride In The Lowlands

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 3, Sandy takes a ride with Restless out away from the city into the countryside and toward the shore. As she rides along, stress and tension begin to leave her and she is filled with fresh clean air. Have you ever felt stressed or anxious? What is it like? What do you do to relieve your anxiety or your stress?
- 2.) Even though Sandy's anxiety and stress comes from living so close to Excess, she insists that she will return there and one day be successful. Why do you think she feels this way?
- 3.) It is clear that Restless wants "more" than the city of Excess can give him. But the "more" that Restless wants is different than the "more" that Sandy is chasing? What do you think the difference is?

Scripture to Read:

Restless and Sandy are both worried about trying to discover "more" for their lives. Look what happens when we seek God's way of living first before all other things!

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Psalm 37:4 *Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

Family Activity:

Draw a picture or write a description of the road to the shores. What is along the side of the road? What would you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch as you traveled away from Excess? Put these ideas in your art or your writing. Share them with your family.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Help me to be restless for the things of Your heart, rather than the things of this world. Give me wisdom to know the difference. Help me to know where to go when I experience stress and anxiety and help me to stay in that place. Lord, lead me and guide me into your Kingdom and away from the world. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Chapter 4: Arrival At The Shores

Discussion Questions:

1. In Chapter 4, Sandy meets Kindness and Contentment for the first time. What is her impression of them? What does she think about the Cottage Cafe?
2. The Cottage Cafe is very different from BIG'S isn't it? What sets the two eateries apart from one another? How do each make Sandy feel? Why was it so unusual for her to *receive*?
3. How do you think Sandy's meal at the Cottage Cafe is preparing her for what comes next? What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter?

Scripture to Read:

Our Heavenly Father is an extravagant host for all who accept His invitation!

Psalm 23:5-6

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.*

Family Activity:

If you were either Kindness or Contentment, what would you serve in your Cottage Cafe? Create a menu and name each dish, then share your menu with your family. What will your signature dish be called? How much will you charge for your menu items? How will people feel after eating food on your menu?

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear Lord,

Help me to meet Kindness and Contentment every day. Let them change me from the inside out just like the way the food at the Cottage Cafe does. Help me to be kind and content more each day. Amen.

Chapter 5: The Call Of The Sea

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 5, Sandy meets Jasper for the first time, and He makes quite an impression on her. How did Sandy's meeting with Jasper make you feel? What are your impressions of Jasper? Does He remind you of anyone?
- 2.) Jasper calls Sandy "Princess." Why do you think He calls her that? What does it mean to be royalty? How is Sandy royalty?
- 3.) Sandy has a hard time believing that she is all that Jasper says she is. Jasper gives her something before she leaves. What was it?
- 4.) Jasper tells Sandy, "I am Jasper, and we will never give up in our pursuit of you." How would it make you feel if there was someone like Jasper who promises to never give up pursuing your heart? Would you feel important, valued, loved?

Scripture to Read:

It is comforting to know that we are intimately known, yet perfectly loved and nothing can separate us from the love of our Father God!

Read over Psalm 139: 1-18 and enjoy the truths found in these words!

Family Activity:

Jasper represents the Holy Spirit and His relentless loving pursuit of us and God's will for our lives. In this chapter, Jasper gives Sandy a vial of Hope. If your family were to create a symbol of Hope to place somewhere in your house, what would it look like? Have a creative moment with your family to design a unique symbol of Hope to place somewhere special where everyone will see it on display. It could be a jar of Jelly Beans with Hope written on the outside, or a special photo of the family that means a lot to everyone. Whatever you choose as a family should be unique to you and a reminder of the Holy Spirit's relentless loving pursuit.

Bedtime Prayer:

Holy Spirit,

Help me to receive hope in any circumstance because of my faith in Your presence and Your power in my life. Help me to believe in Your bottomless love for me. Help me to say "Yes" to You every day. Amen.

Chapter 6: Going Back

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Sandy rejected Jasper's invitation at the shores, but she came home different. What do you think happened to her there?
- 2.) Sandy has an uncomfortable and lonely drive back to the Wastelands with Restless. If you can, talk about a time when you felt lonely and uncomfortable like Sandy?
- 3.) When Sandy gets home, she has a discussion with her mother and her mother's friend, Disappointment. Disappointment is a difficult person to talk to, isn't she? But the vial of Hope around Sandy's neck warmed her chest when her mother said something positive in response to her friend's negative comments. How has hope helped you overcome disappointment?

Scripture to Read:

When we fix our thoughts on what is positive in our lives, hope will fill our hearts and disappointment has to flee--guaranteed!

Philippians 4: 8-9 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Romans 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Family Activity:

What do you do with disappointment? Here's an idea. Blow up a balloon and write, "Disappointment" on it with a permanent marker. Do not tie the balloon. Let the air out of the balloon. Write things that have caused your family disappointment on small pieces of paper, fold them up, and put them into the balloon. Now, proclaim out loud the things that bring you hope. Take turns so that everyone says something. With each proclamation, put air back into the balloon. When you are done and the balloon is full again, take a pin and pop the balloon. Make sure to dispose of the "disappointment" afterward.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

Help me to conquer disappointment with the hope I have in You. When I feel lonely, lost, or sad and when life just does not measure up to my expectations, help me to cling to Your promises and Your great love for me. Amen.

Chapter 7: A Surprise Encounter

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 7, Sandy wakes up to worry about her future and an invitation (well really a command) from Pride to meet her at the Hot Shot Cafe. On her way to meet him, she also meets Worry and Doubt. Talk about a time when thinking about the future led you to meetings with Pride, Worry, and Doubt. Are Pride, Worry, and Doubt helpful when thinking about the future?
- 2.) Pride is so self-absorbed and boastful that he doesn't even notice Sandy's sarcasm. Sandy is humiliated by him. What do you think about Sandy's meeting with Pride. Has anyone ever made you feel small? If so, what was it that made you feel that way?
- 3.) Sandy receives a card from Mr. Success. It reads, "YOU plus SUCCESS equals EXCESS." What do you think about this statement? What do you think Mr. Success is offering Sandy?
- 4.) At times in Chapter 7, Sandy recalls the man in purple who called her, "Princess." Who do you think this mysterious man is exactly?

Scripture to Read:

We can trust the words of God to encourage us along our journey and not lead us astray.

Psalm 1:1-3 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Family Activity:

What does success look like for you? Have each member of the family define and describe success in a creative way. They might write a poem, draw a picture, or give a speech. Afterwards, discuss the Kingdom of God. What does success look like in Heaven and how is Heaven's success reflected on earth?

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear Father,

Help me to see success and life from Heaven's perspective. Often I get caught up in the things and ideas of this world and I miss what *You* say is successful. Help me to dream *Your* dreams for me, my family, my friends, my community, and the world. Amen.

Chapter 8: New Beginnings

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 8, Sandy has a nightmare that seems to warn her about her first day of work with Mr. Success. When that day comes, she makes the choice not to start working for Mr. Success. Would you have made the same choice? Why or why not?
- 2.) After leaving Success Headquarters, Sandy runs into Page. What do you think about Page? Who is he anyway? What does he really want for Sandy? How is Page different from Mr. Success?
- 3.) Page asks Sandy to accept her Prince's invitation to the Kingdom. Sandy says, "Yes!" and a new adventure begins. Who is the Prince and what is His Kingdom like?

Scripture to Read:

Sandy's dream uncovered the lies at "Success Headquarters." In His grace and mercy and love, God has promised to do the same for us and lead us in the right direction!

Isaiah 30:19b-21 How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more: with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Family Activity:

Sandy almost makes a wrong choice. Her dream warned her and helps her see things as they really are. Play a game together using a noise maker of some sort and a blindfold. Blindfold a member of the family and have them walk from one side of the house to the other and back again. Use the noise makers to warn them that they are going in the wrong direction or are about to run into something. Talk about how we need to help each other make good life choices.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

You are so good to us. As we sleep tonight, give us dreams that will direct us well. Speak to us about our future with You and give us hope and wisdom for the journey ahead. Amen.

Chapter 9: The Way of the River

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Sandy had to trust Page as He led her into a new and transformed way of living. Who are the people in your life that you trust to help guide you?
- 2.) Sandy meets Caretaker by the river and learns to talk to the prince. Who taught you to pray? When was the last time you prayed out loud with someone? Do like to pray? Why or why not?
- 3.) Sandy talked to her Prince, acknowledging her wrong ways of living in a world that was nothing like the Kingdom of Love to which she now belonged. Confession is an important part of being a Christian. What role does confession and repentance play in your life?
- 4.) Sandy does a brave thing by letting her new friends baptize her in the river. It was a day that she would never forget. Have you been baptized? If so and you can remember it, what was that day like for you?

Scripture to Read:

The Bible is full of stories about people who really messed up their lives, yet, God still loves them, and chooses to use them when they turn from their sin. It often takes them hitting rock bottom before they realize what they have done and how much they need God's forgiveness and love. Read or recall the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11. Then read Psalm 51. This is David's heartfelt confession. We can borrow some of his words when we find that we, too, need to unload a heavy burden.

Psalm 51: 17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Family Activity:

This might be a good time to talk about sin, confession, repentance, and forgiveness with your family. Explain how just *saying*, "I'm sorry" afterwards may not be enough. How true repentance involves a "turning" of the heart, followed by a change in our behaviors.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

Search my heart. If there is any unpleasing way in me, please tell me so that I can confess and repent and receive Your forgiveness. i want to be completely Yours tonight. Amen.

Chapter 10: Going Back

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Sandy is so excited about returning to the shores. Carry gives her a few things that she will need. What are those things and why do you think they are so important?
- 2.) Sandy takes a journey down the river with Page, but then has to say goodbye. Page has to leave so that Sandy can meet up with Jasper. How important was Page's role in bringing her to Jasper? Has anyone played the role of Page in your life? If so, talk about it.
- 3.) Jasper meets Sandy and the reunion is sweet. What is it like to come back to God after being away for some time? Can you share a time when you were far from God and you came back to meet Him again?

Scripture to Read:

Sandy receives a spiritual makeover in this chapter! She gets a new look and a new song in her heart! And the Good News is...we get to experience that, too!

Isaiah 61:1a,3b *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me...*

*to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.*

Psalm 96:1-2 *Oh sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth!*

*Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.*

Family Activity:

Reunions are sweet. What family members do you miss? Take some time to pray for those loved ones that you have not seen in awhile. Consider writing a letter or making a phone call to remind them that they are loved and missed.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

I never want to be far away from You and I want to see others coming Home, also. Please help me be like Page for others and please send a Page to me when I need it. I want to be close to You always. Thank You for always drawing me to come Home. Amen.

Chapter 11: A Surprise in the Sand

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Jasper proclaims, "The surprises of the kingdom are never ending!" How can this be true?
- 2.) Jasper gives Sandy a Map Book, which will help her along on the journey she must take. What do you suppose is written in this Map Book? Who do you suppose wrote it? Why do you think it is considered the most valuable of the treasures?
- 3.) Sandy goes out into the surf of the Great Sea with Jasper and waves of love washed over her. How does it feel to be loved by God? Describe the love of God as best you can. Would you describe the love of God as an ocean's waves or would you use a different description?

Scripture to Read:

Sandy receives a treasure chest full of all the supplies she would need on her journey, and has promised us the same!

Philippians 4:19 *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

Family Activity:

God's love is often shared in the affirmations given by those who are closest to us. Take some time to wash over each member of the family with words of affirmation and love. Take turns letting the family members express their love for each other. Use index cards to write out words of affirmation, love, and praise for each member and read them out loud.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Help me to receive your love for me and to give love away generously. You are so generous. Help me to be generous. Amen.

Chapter 12: Refreshment in Friends

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 12, Sandy is reunited with Kindness and Contentment and meets new friends, Joy, Passion, Peace, and Wisdom. Has the Holy Spirit introduced new friends to you? If so, who are they? How have your friendships been changed by your relationship with God?
- 2.) The people in our lives bring us nourishment that sustains us in difficult times. Sandy is about to go on a journey. How do you suppose these new friends will be helping her along the way?
- 3.) Sandy is led out the back door of the Cottage Cafe. What do you suppose she will find back there?

Scripture to Read:

God designed the body of Christ, the church, to be one *together*--notice the friends Jasper brings to Sandy's life to help her in her journey! Friendship supports, encourages, and makes us whole!

Proverbs 27:9b *a sweet friendship refreshes the soul...*

Family Activity:

How do we choose our friends? How do our friends influence us? Take some time to talk about friendship and the importance of choosing good friends. Have each family member write a list of the characteristics they look for when they choose their friends. Talk about those characteristics. To have good friends, we must be a good friend. Based on your list of friendship character traits, rate yourself as a friend. Are there areas you would like to improve on with God's help?

Bedtime Prayer:

Jesus,

You call us friends (John 15:15). I love You for that. Help me to be both, a good friend to others, and help me to choose good friends. Most of all, help me to be a good friend to You, Jesus. Amen.

Chapter 13: Garden Path

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Jasper tells Sandy that the Garden Path is the perfect place to practice listening and loving. What do you suppose He means by this? Should a garden be a place of hiding or a place of seeking?
- 2.) Sandy asks a good question. She wants to know how she will recognize the voice of the King and the Prince when they speak to her. Jasper tells her that by studying her Map Book she will learn to know their voices. How does being on the Garden Path help Sandy study the Map Book?
- 3.) Doubt and Worry begin to make an appearance once Jasper leaves, but a friend shows up to help her understand her Map Book. Who is that friend and how does he help? What story does he tell? Re-tell it the best way that you can. Is this story familiar to you?

Scripture to Read:

Sandy has been washed through baptism, and now she receives the key to her growth-- Devotion. It is through spending time with Jasper and in the Map Book that Sandy will grow the fruit intended for her life...and so it is with us.

John 15:3-5 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Family Activity:

Have each member of the family describe the perfect place for meeting with God. What would it look like, smell like, feel like? What sounds if any would there be? Would there be anything to eat? Draw a picture or write a poem to describe your perfect meeting place for you and God.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Help us to hear Your voice more often and more clearly, Help us to meet with You regularly and to listen to Your Word and learn from it. Send us Wisdom to help us along the way. Keep us in Your garden tonight, tomorrow and forever. Amen.

Chapter 14: The Flatlands

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 14, Sandy learns about devotion. What is it? What are some reasons that people do not have it?
- 2.) On the path, Sandy meets Bored and Lazy. What problems do they have and what do they try to do to Sandy?
- 3.) What do you think makes Sandy decide to stay on the Safe Path? What words from the Map Book seem to guide her?

Scripture to Read:

As children of God, there are blessings when we obey our Heavenly Father's directions found in His Word.

Proverbs 4:10-11 *Listen, my son, accept what I say,
and the years of your life will be many.
I instruct you in the way of wisdom
and lead you along straight paths.*

Family Activity:

There are moments, even days, when each of us succumbs to the temptations of "Bored" and "Lazy." Learning to guard one's heart from the temptations of these two is an important life lesson. At the root of this deception is the belief that we always need to be entertained. Learning to rejoice in the Lord in all circumstances is a good way to dispel this wrong belief. God is enough. Brainstorm, as a family, healthy ways to rejoice in the Lord when "Boredom" and "Laziness" strike.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Help me to rejoice in You no matter the circumstances I find myself in. Help me to persevere in times of temptation and struggle. I want to stay on the path You have set before me. Let my feet walk it well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Chapter 15: Side Roads and Sidetracked

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Sandy continues along her journey in Chapter 15, *becoming* all the way. This journey to the Prince is shaping her. What changes do you notice?
- 2.) Sandy runs into two creatures in colorful dresses named, Distraction and Diversion. These two have ropes at the ready, but Sandy never found herself in a snare. Why?
- 3.) Those who have been snared by various creatures are led down different paths than the one that Sandy is walking. What are some of their names and the roads that they take their captives?
- 4.) It is scary to think that we can be snared and led astray so easily. What are Wisdom's words about how these other travelers can get free?

Scripture to Read:

There are lots of ways we can get sidetracked. But when we follow the example set by Jesus, we can avoid the traps set by the enemy!

Hebrews 12:1b-3 *Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Family Activity:

As a family, describe some of the creatures that Sandy sees in Chapter 15 and the roads that they travel. When you close your eyes, how does your imagination create them in your mind. What do they look like? When they talk, what do they say? How do they lasso their victims? Now, how would someone avoid their snares? Talk about the creatures that seem to get you off track as a family, and make a plan to avoid their rope.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

I want to be captured by just one person and that's You Jesus. I don't want to be led around by anxiety, envy, anger, and many others. I want to stay on Your Path of Life. Help me to continue to become more like You every day. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Chapter 16: At The Crossroads of Broad and Narrow

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 15, we learned that Sandy's journey was not a safe one. We learned that there are dangers along the way, but she can avoid them. Chapter 16 brought dangers of its own. What dangers did Sandy run into in chapter 16? How did she handle these dangers in the end?
- 2.) The sight of the City of Excess startled Sandy. Her heart was left unguarded when she saw it. As a result, Sandy was vulnerable. If you were standing beside Sandy at that moment, what might you have said to her?
- 3.) Sandy ran into her old friend, Restless. What is Restless doing? What does he offer Sandy? Why is this a perfect spot for Restless to set up his stand?
- 4.) Sandy does not continue on her journey. Instead, she sits at the intersection of Narrow and Broad--the crossroads where she meets another character named, Self-Pity. Was this a good idea? Why or Why not? What does she "uncover" about Self-Pity?

Scripture to Read:

Just like Sandy, when we feel ourselves sliding into a "pit-ty party" of despair, we will be raised up when we raise our voices in thanksgiving!

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Family Activity:

Sandy almost fell into a very big pit didn't she? Her Map Book helped her to unmask Pride's plan and avoid the danger. Jasper led her to just the right words. What are some of the verses from the Bible that are most important to you and to your family? Take an afternoon to write out these important verses and post them like road signs around your home. Let these be reminders to follow God's path.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear Father,

Help me to know when I have reached a dangerous intersection in my life, and help me to walk in Your ways and not in the wrong way. Help me to take the narrow path that leads to life and not the broad path that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14). And let me recognize the deceptions of the enemy that will lead me away from you. I want to guard my heart. Teach me how. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Chapter 17: The Lodge at Love's Way

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In the morning, Sandy is visited by a friend. What is her name and does she come visit you in the morning, too?
- 2.) The results of Restless' tonic stand were scattered all around Broad Way. What were the differences between the way Sandy greeted the morning and the way the travelers along this road must have met the morning?
- 3.) Joy explains Grace to Sandy? What does she say? What does her explanation of Grace reveal about the Kingdom of the King and His children? Who does Sandy meet after Joy's lesson?
- 4.) Sandy meets Ruby at The Lodge at Love's Way. What happens when they meet? Ruby becomes a mentor for Sandy. What does Ruby teach her?

Scripture to Read:

Grace is a mystery...but oh what a freeing truth to know that it is a GIFT through faith in the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ!

Ephesians 2:4-8 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

Family Activity:

What does the Lodge at Love's Way look like to you? Spend a moment describing it to each other. Now, imagine that your home could become another Lodge at Love's Way. What changes would you need to make in order to make your home a safe haven for weary, yet growing travelers? Could you endeavor to make some of these changes? Talk about it as a family.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Thank you for your grace! I do not always make the right choices, but Your way of love is teaching me and molding to be like You. Help mentor me in the ways of love for Your namesake and for Your kingdom! I have a great calling because of Your amazing grace! Amen!

Chapter 18: The Gated Community

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) In Chapter 18, Ruby sends Sandy on her way. The next part of her journey is about to get much more challenging. Who does Ruby send with Sandy to help her up the steep path ahead of her? Why do you think these friends are chosen to accompany Sandy?
- 2.) Sandy begins to meet some more interesting characters, and the first is named, Grudge. Grudge is in pain and going nowhere. What do you suppose is keeping him from continuing the journey? Why couldn't Sandy help him?
- 3.) Sandy meets Jasper and a new friend named, "Digger"-- the Teacher who gives them something to drink from her well. How does she know where to dig? Do you think that she is the only one who can dig a well?
- 4.) Jasper gives Sandy the Key of Discipline, but before she can find the place where she needs to use it she runs into an entire community of people camped at the base of the mountain. Who are these curious people and how do they present a hindrance to Sandy and her companions?

Scripture to Read:

Our power to change the lives of others is found in prayer--lifting them up to The One who can literally open the eyes of the blind, and bring the dead to life!

Ephesians 1:17-19 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Family Activity:

If we are determined to walk Love's Narrow Way, we will eventually get hurt. It's an unavoidable fact. When you are hurt, how do you like to be comforted? Spend some time talking about what helps you come to a place of forgiveness when someone has said or done something that has hurt you? Think about a strategy that will help you stay off of Grudge's Bench along Love's Narrow Way. Draw a picture to represent your strategy.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

People can be hurtful sometimes. I want to stay on Love's Narrow Way with you. Help me to not get distracted by the hurtful or imperfect ways of others, and instead focus on Your perfect ways of love. Help me to forgive quickly and keep short accounts with people so that I will not get trapped by disappointment or my own woundedness. Thank You for helping me walk in Your way of love, Amen.

Chapter 19: Trail of Trial

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) The Key of Discipline opened the gate to the Trail of Trial. Why was this appropriate and why is it right that the trail be hard and steep?
- 2.) Sandy and her companions meet some very confident young boys who are practicing? What are they practicing for and why?
- 3.) Sandy calls on a friend she met at the Cottage Cafe for help on the Trail of Trial. Who is he and how does he help her?
- 4.) When Sandy comes to a beautiful overlook, she makes a new Friend named, Long-Suffering. What does she learn from her new friend? What words of advice does she give? Is this sound advice?

Scripture to Read:

Have you ever considered that your trials are actually part of the tools God is giving you to build His Kingdom, and without them, we would be lacking?

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Family Activity:

Long-suffering is hard to learn, but when we understand the suffering that Christ endured for us, it helps us to learn the lesson. One activity that can help us to learn about what Christ endured for us is the ice cube test. It is hard, but it can be rewarding! Buy everyone in the family their favorite candy bar. Now, all they have to do to receive the candy bar is hold an ice cube in their hand until it melts. If they give up, then they don't get the candy bar. This is a hard trial, but Christ endured much more for us. To add a twist, see who in your family would hold the ice cube so that someone else could have the candy bar of their choice.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Help me to see the trials of life as lessons and blessings instead of curses of pain. Help me to persevere and overcome. Restore my passion for You and for the Kingdom when I falter, and let me see the view from higher places so that I will keep climbing. You are my adventure! Amen.

Chapter 20: Fear, Fights, and Freedom

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) At night in her tent, Sandy encounters Fear. What does Fear look like? What does she do to “cast out” Fear?
- 2.) In chapter 20, Sandy rediscovers a word from her past. What word does she rediscover? What do you suppose this word looks like in the King’s Kingdom?
- 3.) Sandy and her companions run into a band of thugs and thieves who took her precious bag of gifts. What does she do that gets her bag of belongings back? Who comes to her rescue? Why is this important?
- 4.) What does Sandy find at the top of the mountain? What does Sandy do when she gets there? What can real love do?

Scripture to Read:

We can think of God as our super hero! In fact, He wants so much to reassure us of His strength and ability, that the words, “Fear not” are in the Bible 365 times—one time for every day of the year! (See if you can find a few!)

Psalm 27:1 *The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?*

*The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?*

Family Activity:

Have you ever felt scared, overwhelmed, bound up, imprisoned? Family is a place where we are supposed to experience love that breaks through our fears and our bondage. Take turns talking about the things that make you scared or make you feel small and unimportant. After each family member shares, take turns telling that person how *much* you love them and all the things that you love *about* them.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Fear is not a welcome friend! You are a welcome friend and Your love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Help me Jesus to live in Your perfect love and be brave in the face of fear. Help me to fight evil and show people the freedom that is only available by grace through faith in You, Jesus! I want to be a hope-bringer and a bondage-breaker! Amen!

Chapter 21:

Discussion Questions:

1.) In Chapter 21, Sandy gets to have a big celebration with all the people she helped set free. She gets to go even higher, and when she gets to the top she is rewarded with a great view. Did Sandy deserve the celebration and the view that she received? What does success really look like?

2.) Just when Sandy gets to the top and finds a place of great beauty and accomplishment on top of the mountain, she is told to go back down. How does this make Sandy feel and why?

3.) Sandy gets to fly to the bottom. What would it feel like to fly? What would it take to do so? Are you made to fly?

Scripture to Read:

When we continue to *remain in* (or *hope in*) God, we get to go to higher levels of understanding and see beauty like we have never imagined!

Isaiah 40:31 *but those who hope in the LORD*

will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles

Family Activity:

It's time to fly as a family. Make capes out of any material you have on hand. What does your cape represent? If you could fly, where would you go? Why would you go there? Take this opportunity to talk about your dreams as a family.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

I was made to fly free like a bird. You have great heights for me to see and a great wind to blow on me and lift me up into Your presence. You are so very good to me, and I am meant for great things. Help me to believe this when my circumstances tell me something different. Amen.

Chapter 22: The Wastelands Revisited

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) After coming down from the heights, Sandy meets humility. What is he like? Why do you think that Sandy needs him at this particular time in her journey?
- 2.) Upon seeing the Wastelands, Sandy makes a hasty and ill-thought decision. Where does she end up? What should she have done that might have prevented her from making this mistake?
- 3.) When Sandy gets back to her old home, who does she come into contact with first? What was the result of Sandy's meeting with her mother? What happened in Sandy's heart?
- 4.) Flattery invites her back to the City of Excess and Sandy, smelling regret everywhere, goes into the City and runs into her old acquaintances. What was the result of these run-ins?
- 5) Who shows up to help Sandy and why? If this person had not shown up, what do you think might have become of poor Sandy?

Scripture to Read:

God can even use our mistakes to help us develop in important ways--that's why it's so important to place our worries in His capable hands!

Romans 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

1 Peter 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

Family Activity:

Even our good intentions can sometimes get us off the path. Regret can keep us there. Children can sometimes have a hard time seeing past their mistakes. It's important that children have adults in their lives who are not afraid to talk about their regrets and model healthy ways of handling mistakes. Chapter 22 provides a unique opportunity for parents to talk about mistakes they have made and regrets they have. It takes a lot of courage to admit that you are not always right and that you have regrets, but it will help children to develop the essential humility they will need to learn from their mistakes and to grow. Ask God what to share with them.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

We are not perfect people yet. We make many mistakes, but deep down we want to do what is right. Help me to turn to You quickly when I make a mistake, and help me not to make the same mistake twice. I want to be transformed by Your loving hands when You call. Just say the word. Amen.

Chapter 23: A Stay In Simplicity

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Chapter 23 starts with another word from Sandy's past. What word is it, and how does Jasper's understanding of this word differ from the one she grew up with in the Wastelands?
- 2.) Humility and Gentleness take Sandy into their home in the lovely small village of Simplicity. What is so special about this place and this family, and why is it the perfect place for Sandy to find a new home?
- 3.) Humility and Gentleness tell the story of their transformation, their walk as parents, and the key to humility. What is the key to humility called? Why is this appropriate?
- 4.) Sandy has changed a lot since Chapter 1. Recount some of those changes and revisit the journey she has taken.

Scripture to Read:

Just like Sandy's transformation is a process, so is ours--shaped and molded in the Master's hands with grace and love. And we can count on our Creator finishing what He started!

Philippians 1:6 *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*

Philippians 3:12 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

Family Activity:

Photo albums are visual reminders of physical as well as spiritual growth. Take a night to revisit some old family photos and talk about your journey. Recount the many lessons and milestones each member of the family has experienced. Take time to thank God for the journey. Pray for the lessons to come.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Life is not a sprint. It is a marathon. Help me to run the race well and trust in You as I do so. Help refine me every step of the race and run into Your arms in the end and all along the way. Amen.

Chapter 24: A Glimpse of the Kingdom

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Sandy has a dream in Chapter 24. What is the dream about? Where is Sandy going now?
- 2.) Sandy is no longer Sandy. What is her name going to be now and why? What is Sandy's new mission?
- 3.) Everyone is going on a new journey together to celebrate Sandy's transformation. What do you think is going to happen in the last chapter?

Scripture to Read:

Have you ever wondered how God sees *you*?

Song of Songs 4:7 *All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you.*

Family Activity:

What does your name mean? Take time to discuss the meaning of your names. Look the meanings up on the internet if you need to. If God were to change your name, what would you want to be called? Make paper dog tags with yarn and construction paper or whatever you have at home. On one dog tag put your given name and on the other dog tag put the name you hope God would give you. If you like your name the way it is, use your first and last names instead.

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Father, You are speaking great things over me always. Help me to hear your voice always, especially when it comes to my identity as a son or daughter in your Kingdom. I long hear Your heavenly reminder of who I am so that I will never forget it. Amen.

Chapter 25: Deeper Still

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Where does Princess Pearl meet Jasper? Why is this appropriate?
- 2.) Sandy has climbed to the heights. Now with Jasper she would dive to the depths of the Father's love. What was that like for her?
- 3.) Jasper tells Pearl that she is ready to be sent back to the Wastelands. Do you think that this is true? Why or why not?
- 4.) At the end of the chapter, Princess Pearl's friends make proclamations from their map books. Which proclamation resonates the most deeply for you and why?

Scripture to Read: *Share any special verses that you have treasured during this journey.*

Family Activity:

When we come to the end of a journey, there is often a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. If the journey is especially good, we want to linger and talk about it some more. Sometimes we even begin to plan the next trip. Take some time to talk about *Jasper* as a whole. What were your favorite parts of the book? What do you imagine Sandy doing in the future? What will her next adventure be? Or do you imagine Jasper transforming yet another Child of the King?

Bedtime Prayer:

Dear God,

Thank You for this book and the lessons that it brought us. Please help us to learn and grow just like Sandy did and help us to be all that You intend for us to be for Your Kingdom and for Your name. Amen.