

MYSTERY



Blessed Are Who?

Story and Service Guide

Overall Learning Objective: The kids will learn that in Jesus' kingdom their amazing gifts are just as important as anyone else's in helping others.

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Day One: Esther the Courageous Queen

Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the merciful**, for they will receive mercy.

Key Scripture: Esther 1 - Esther 10

Guiding Question: How do we do we make sure everyone has access?

Overview: Today the kids will learn about Esther and help to create an accessibility plan for your home to help them understand today's beatitude.

Learning Objectives:

- Because Esther and Mordecai were from a different country and had a different faith, they were treated differently and sometimes that treatment was mean or threatening.
- Esther and Mordecai never gave up faith that God was with them.
- Esther could have hidden her faith and been safe but instead she stood up for what she believed and for her family.
- Jesus has taught us to create a world where people who are different are loved and appreciated.
- Faith in Jesus means that we no longer have to fight one another, we can always find a way to live together. In this way we are all blessed more than can be measured!

Intro Learning Activity: Handicapable

Supplies Needed:

- Handicap Sign Sheets (provided with this guide)
- Markers

Instructions:

1. Give each kid at least two copies of the handicap sign sheet (included at the end of this day's section) by printing them off or by drawing your own. Remind the kids that someone who has a handicap may be



different but is definitely a beloved child of God. In fact that person is probably capable of things that they are not.

2. Challenge the kids to imagine that Esther or another amazing queen or princess was in a wheelchair. Maybe that queen had an accident or was born needing a wheelchair. Encourage the kids to decorate their first handicap sign as if it were for royalty. They could add a crown, horses, jewels, golden wheels, or anything they can think of.
3. Encourage the kids to decorate their second sign as imaginatively as possible. They could make the wheelchair look like it has rockets, or sits on top of a mountain, or make the person in the wheelchair an astronaut in a spacesuit or a deep sea diver. They could use symbols like hearts, the peace sign, the cross, a dove, or flowers.
4. Also encourage the kids to write a phrase of support such as:
 - "Respect the chair!"
 - "Super Capable!"
 - "Spot reserved for the most awesome."
 - "Jesus loves you."

Remind the kids that Jesus wants us to make sure that everyone is protected and loved just as they are.

Video: Esther the Courageous Queen

Use the video provided online (coming in early June) to familiarize the kids with the story of Esther. Here are some questions to go along with the video:

- What type of religion did Esther and Mordecai practice?
- What special position in the kingdom did Esther gain?
- Did Mordecai receive a reward for saving the emperor?
- Why was it dangerous for Esther to go to the emperor for help?
- Why did Esther go to the emperor even if she could have been killed?



Service Learning Activity: Accessibility

Make an accessibility plan for your home so that you are ready to show hospitality to anyone who shows up at your door.

Supplies Needed:

- Computer Paper
- Markers
- Walker (optional)
- Wheelchair (optional)
- Crutch/Cane (optional)
- Blindfold (optional)
- Computer Printer (optional)

Questions to ask the kids while you're serving together:

- What are some reasons why a person can't walk?
- How do people who can't walk for those reasons get around?
- Who uses a wheelchair to get around?
- Who uses a walker to get around?
- Who uses crutches to get around?
- How do we show others who get around differently that they are included?

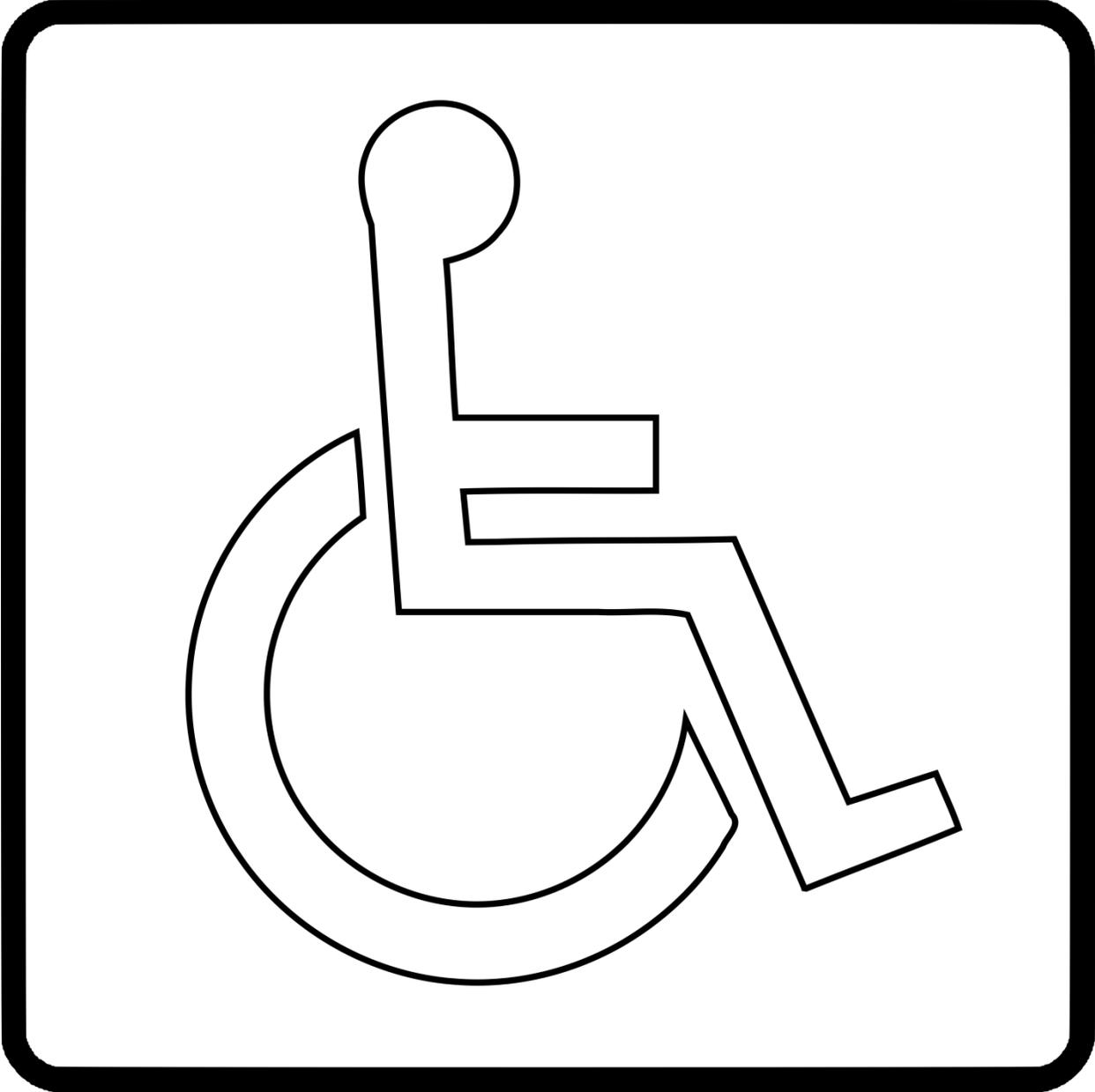
Instructions:

1. Draw a map of every floor of your home.
2. On the map identify all the most important parts of your home for a guest: entrances/exits, bathroom, place to sleep, place to eat.
3. Next have the kids consider how you would make your house accessible to each of the following people. Accessible means that they could get to and use each of the most important places you identified in step 2.
 - A person who is blind.
 - A person who is in a wheelchair.
 - A person who is deaf.
 - A person who uses a walker.
 - Anyone else you can think of.



4. Help the kids to draw or write their plan onto the map of your home that they have created. Stairs are probably the hardest thing to figure out. It's up to you whether you want to focus on the ground floor of your home, which might eliminate the need to think about stairs. Unless, someone would have to use stairs even to get into your house! Just make sure whatever plan you come up with includes access to the house itself, a bathroom, a place to sleep, and a place to eat. Saying that a person would just have to stay outside does not cut it!!!
5. *Optional:* With adult supervision, have the kids test out your plan by using a blindfold or, if you have access to these things, a wheelchair, walker, crutches, or cane.

Lesson Reflection: For someone who is considered different, being included means a lot. Jesus wants us to create places where everyone is automatically included regardless of what differences they have. Esther had to fight to be included. She was not a person in a wheelchair or using a walker but as a Jew in Persia she was seen and treated differently. Her people were in danger because of who they were. Jesus helps us not just to make sure that others aren't in danger but also that they are included and appreciated for who they are. Jesus' beatitudes teach us to live so that others are not just treated fairly but loved.





Day Two: Mary Magdalene the Blessed Believer

Key Scripture: John 20:1-18

Key Beatitude: Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they will see God.

Guiding Question: How do we honor the forgotten?

Overview: Today the kids will learn about Mary Magdalene and create movie trailers for forgotten historical figures to help them understand today's beatitude.

Learning Objectives:

- When Jesus was arrested, some of his followers ran away and some stayed with him like Mary. Jesus' love for all of his followers never faded.
- When Jesus died, all of his followers were sad including Mary.
- When Jesus came back to life he didn't want his followers to be sad any more but he also didn't want them to keep their happiness to themselves. They had to share the good news.
- Jesus chose Mary as the first person to send out with the good news because her heart never stopped being filled with his love.
- Jesus' resurrection is so amazing that our hearts should be pure like Mary's. That means they should be so full of all the emotions of life and love that Jesus shared with us that they are overflowing! In this way we are all blessed more than can be measured!

Intro Learning Activity: A Full Heart

Supplies Needed:

- Regular Balloons (at least 1 per kid)
- Pushpin
- Confetti
- Vacuum (optional)



Instructions:

1. Give each kid a balloon but tell them not to blow it up. Explain that these balloons will represent their heart and that they are going to create a heart that is full to the point of bursting like Mary's.
2. Show the kids how to stuff a balloon with confetti and then let them stuff their own. (You may need to make your own confetti by tearing paper into little pieces or by setting the kids loose on some paper with a whole puncher. It's great to recycle used paper for this purpose!)
3. Next have the kids blow up their confetti filled balloons.
4. Either have the kids pop their balloons by taking turns or pop all the balloons at once. The pushpin is for anyone who needs help popping their balloon. Remind the kids that Jesus calls us to have pure hearts. A pure heart is a heart so full of love that it is ready to burst and share the good news of Jesus' resurrection!
5. Pick up or vacuum up the balloon and confetti pieces.

Video: Mary the Blessed Believer

Use the video provided online (coming in early June) to familiarize the kids with the story of Mary Magdalene. Here are some questions to go along with the video:

- Was Mary's life tough or easy before she met Jesus?
- What did Mary do to show her love for Jesus?
- How did Jesus die?
- Who stayed with Jesus all the through the crucifixion?
- Who saw Jesus first when he was resurrected?
- What did Jesus send Mary out to do?



Service Learning Activity: Untold Hero Stories

Today you'll help the kids make movie trailers for a hypothetical movie about a forgotten figure from history. Examples of forgotten figures are included below.

Supplies Needed:

- Smartphone or Tablet
- Costumes and Props

Preparing for the Activity:

1. Look on your device's app store for free video-making apps. imovie comes preloaded on some apple devices and has a trailer feature. You are looking for something that allows you to add video, pictures, and titles to a preset movie trailer template.
2. Gather together things that your kids can use as props and costumes for your movie trailer.

Instructions:

1. Explain to the kids that they will be making a trailer for a pretend movie. The movie is about a historical figure who was heroic and important yet forgotten by most people. The kids will be recorded with your smartphone or tablet and then you or they will combine the clips and photos together into a movie trailer.
2. Help the kids to pick out a historical figure for their movie trailer by describing the recommended figures listed below, someone you have come up with, or someone that they are able to name. Keep in mind what costumes and props you have ready when picking a figure.
3. Give the kids 5-10 minutes to cast their trailer and put on costumes.



4. Use the smartphone or tablet to capture the necessary video and photos.
5. Help the kids brainstorm a title for their make believe movie. The titles provided for the Bible characters for each day of Mystery Museum are good examples. Ask the kids to think of a simple adjective and noun to describe their historical figure.
6. Once your movie trailer is complete, and if you are comfortable doing so, invite the kids to share it with their friends and family.

Recommended Historical Figures:

- **Alice Coachman** – In 1948, at the age of 25, Coachman became the first African-American woman to win a gold medal at the Olympics. She paved the way for millions of black female athletes reaching for the gold.



- **Margaret Hamilton** – This photo was taken in 1969. You may not recognize her name, but Hamilton was the lead software engineer of the Apollo Project. Here she is seen standing next to the code she wrote by hand that was eventually used to take astronauts to the moon.





- **Sybil Ludington** – In April 1777, setting out after dark in freezing rain, Sybil rode 40 miles (twice as far as Paul Revere), fending off a band of highway robbers along the way, to rouse the local militia. Thanks to Sybil's warning, the soldiers made it to the Battle of Ridgefield. Sybil was honored by George Washington for her heroic ride.



Lesson Reflection: Mary Magdalene was clearly very important to Jesus and his story but she is often forgotten or ignored by those who tell his story. We can learn a lot by remembering and honoring Mary Magdalene. We can also learn a lot by remembering and honoring other forgotten historical figures. Yet, we need to remember that Mary didn't follow Jesus so that she could be honored by us hundreds of years later! Mary followed Jesus because her heart was full of love for Jesus and all that he stood for. Mary's full heart was a pure heart. The best way we can honor her is by having hearts full of Jesus' love as well.



Day Three: Deborah the Heroic Judge

Key Scripture: Judges 4 - Judges 5

Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the meek**, for they will inherit the earth.

Guiding Question: How can we provide more healthy foods?

Overview: Today the kids will learn about Deborah and create a vegetable garden in order to help them understand today's beatitude.

Learning Objectives:

- Deborah did a lot. She helped others solve their problems. She shared God's words with the people. She fought for justice. She created music that the people could use to praise God.
- Deborah did not do these things for riches and power. Deborah did all this because ordinary people like her needed her help.
- God does the most amazing things in the world through everyday people who care about doing what's right.
- We all have gifts to share with others and that God uses to make the world better.
- Jesus challenges us all to find what we are best at and to use those gifts not to make ourselves great but to make the world great for everybody. In this way we are all blessed more than can be measured!

Intro Learning Activity: Drawing Seeds

Supplies Needed:

- Computer Paper
- Colored Pencils
- Vegetable Seeds (others seeds optional)

Instructions:

1. Give each kid a piece of paper and some colored pencils. Also give them any seeds you might have at home or that you might have found outside or purchased at a store. Have the kids trace each seed. This will be hard for the small seeds but easy for the big seeds.



2. Next have the kids draw around the seeds they traced anything that helps a plant grow like water, soil, and sunlight.
3. Finally have the kids draw a plant growing up from the seed. They should also draw anything that would grow from the plant and anything that might live in or on the plant. Deborah grew into a strong leader and so can we.

Video: Deborah the Heroic Judge

Use the video provided online (coming in early June) to familiarize the kids with the story of Deborah. Here are some questions to go along with the video:

- Why did Deborah's people need to be freed?
- Was Sisera for or against the people?
- Who did God send to help the people?
- Who gave Deborah's army the strength to defeat Sisera?
- Who finally defeated Sisera?
- What did Deborah do after God's victory?

Service Learning Activity: Vegetable Gardening

Supplies Needed:

- Place to plant seeds (this could be in the ground or in planters, inside or outside your home)
- Vegetable Seeds
- Popsicle Sticks
- Potting Soil
- Watering Can
- Markers

Questions to ask the kids while you're serving together:

- Who eats vegetables?
- Why do we eat vegetables?



- What would happen if you never ate any vegetables?
- Where do you get vegetables? *If the kids answer a restaurant or store then try to work them back to where the vegetables are grown.*
- How could you get vegetables if you had no store to go to or money to buy them?
- Can we grow vegetables to share with others?

Instructions:

1. Explain to the kids that you will be creating a vegetable garden.
2. Make sure your garden area has at least 6 inches of soil. (Disposable cat litter liners make good biodegradable planters.)
3. Use your popsicle sticks and markers to label different areas of the garden such as carrots, beans, or lettuce.
4. Give the kids the seeds to plant and help them to create a small hole. Insert the seed and cover the hole.
5. Give the kids the watering can so that they can water their new garden.

Lesson Reflection: When we talk about the many gifts that go into making a person or group great, we call that The Body of Christ. It was Christ Jesus who taught us to be meek like Deborah and to use our gifts humbly as we help others. The seeds we planted will need sunlight, water, rich soil, and air to grow strong. The people we will feed one day with our vegetables will also grow strong. We are all made up of the gifts that God has given us and the people who help and support us. Together we make up a powerful Body of Christ that humbly serves.



Day Four: Tabitha the Beloved Servant

Key Scripture: Acts 9:36-42

Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Guiding Question: How can we better care for our neighbors?

Overview: Today the kids will help to create a map of food pantries in order to better understand the story of Tabitha and today's beatitude.

Learning Objectives for the Kids:

- Tabitha devoted her life to helping others. She cared that the hungry had food to eat and that everyone had clothes to wear.
- Tabitha was very popular but this wasn't because she was rich or pretty or had the best things. Tabitha was popular because she truly cared about other people and worked hard to help them.
- Tabitha's example was so important that Peter even brought her back to life so that her example could continue and spread.
- Tabitha didn't try to change the whole world; she helped people right where she lived and that is just as important. Lots of people helping right where they are can change the whole world.
- Jesus showed us that the people who we should focus on are the people who are most in need and that the people we should be like are those who use what they have to help others. If we all took that message to heart, we would have heaven on earth. In this way we are all blessed more than can be measured!

Intro Learning Activity: Creating Clothes

The kids will create clothes like Tabitha did.

Supplies Needed:

- Popsicle Sticks (at least 2 per kid)
- Fabric Scraps
- Markers



- Yarn
- Scissors
- Hot Glue Gun and Hot Glue (or other glue)

Instructions:

1. Help the kids to cut fabric scraps into 3x6 inch or 2x2 inch pieces.
2. Give each kid two popsicle sticks.
3. Have them glue the sticks together like a lower-case "t."
4. Have them draw a face at the top of the "t."
5. Explain that they will be making clothes for the stick person like Tabitha made clothes for those who needed them.
6. Help the kids cut a small hole in the center of the 3x6 piece.
7. Help them place this over their stick person like a tunic and then tie it on with a small yarn belt that they cut.
8. Help the kids add head cloths held on with string.

Remind the kids that Tabitha spent a lot of time making clothes for others. She used the things around her to help those in need each and every day.





Video: The Beloved Servant

Use the video provided online (coming in early June) to familiarize the kids with the story of Tabitha. Here are some questions to go along with the video:

- What did Tabitha spend her time doing?
- Who was the leader who helped Tabitha?
- Why did Peter need to come to Tabitha?
- What did Tabitha's friends show Peter?
- What did Peter do for Tabitha?
- Why did many in Tabitha's town come to believe in Jesus?

Service Learning Activity: Clothes Collection

The kids will have a small collection drive at home of clothes and toys.

Supplies Needed:

- Computer Paper
- Markers
- Box or Basket (optional)

Instructions:

1. Explain to the kids that they will be collecting clothes and toys for other kids who do not have enough of these things.
2. Designate an area in your home that will be dedicated to collecting items. You may want to find extra boxes or baskets to use in this area.
3. Place signs in your area for all the things that you'll be collecting.
4. Invite the kids to go through their closets, cabinets, attics, garages, basements, laundry rooms and look under their beds, in their old gym bags, and behind your washer and dryer for clothes to donate. You can collect all of these clothes and more:
 - Socks
 - Hoodies
 - T-shirts
 - Pants



- Onesies
 - Overalls
 - Nice Easter and Christmas Clothes!!!
 - Shorts
5. Invite the kids to go through their shelves, closets, cabinets, attics, garages, basements and look under their beds, in their toy boxes, and through their secret stashes for toys to donate. You can even look at the decoration areas you have created for the Mystery Museum and decide on some items to donate.
 6. Once your collections are over, take the donations to any designated collection sites in your area. Any broken, soiled, or incomplete items should be disposed of rather than donated, but be sure to recycle anything you can! **Make sure the sites are still asking for donations before you drop things off.**

Lesson Reflection: Tabitha was beloved by her community because they could always count on her to help. Being like Tabitha means making yourself open and ready to meet the needs of others. Tabitha worked hard to meet the basic needs of others. She understood that if a person at least had food to eat and clothes to wear they could feel dignified and loved. Tabitha had an open spirit—meaning that she was always open to doing what God needed her to do. She was always ready to help others.



Day Five: Miriam the Fearless Prophet

Key Scripture: Exodus 2:1-10; Exodus 15

Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the peacemakers**, for they will be called children of God.

Guiding Question: How can more kids have more books?

Overview: Today the kids will help to create a little free library in order to better understand the story of Miriam and today's beatitude.

Learning Objectives:

- Miriam really loved and looked out for her family.
- This fearless loyalty and love extended to all of her people.
- Miriam and her people were slaves in Egypt but God did not want slavery to continue so God directed the siblings Miriam, Aaron, and Moses to lead their people to freedom.
- Even though Miriam started working for freedom when she was only three years old and continued her whole life alongside her brothers, the work was never completely finished.
- Jesus challenges us all to be peacemakers and to work so that everyone can have peace and be liberated. This is a challenge so big that it has been going on for thousands of years and everyone everywhere is called to get to work. But the good news is that Jesus has given us everything we need to make his dream a reality. In this way we are all blessed more than can be measured!

Intro Learning Activity: Miriam's Tambourine

The kids will create a tambourine to help them remember that like the circular tambourine, God's story of the exodus and liberation keeps rolling on and on.

Supplies Needed:

- Paper Plates (at least 2 per kid)
- Beans or Beads (about 1 cup per kid)



- Stapler
- Markers

Instructions:

1. Give each kid two paper plates. Have them draw a circle on both plates. Remind them that the circle represents an ongoing story that keeps going around and around.
2. On one plate, in the center of the circle, they should draw either Miriam or themselves to represent a peacemaker of God.
3. On the other plate, in the center of the circle, they should draw the kingdom of heaven. This represents the goal that our stories are working towards.
4. Once the kids are finished drawing, give them beans or beads to sandwich in between the plates and staple the plates together around the edges.

Remind the kids that Miriam played her tambourine in celebration of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and escaping slavery in Egypt.

Video: Miriam the Fearless Prophet

Use the video provided online (coming in early June) to familiarize the kids with the story of Miriam. Here are some questions to go along with the video:

- What unusual place does Miriam put her baby brother?
- Who finds Miriam’s baby brother and who gets to raise him?
- What is the name of Miriam’s baby brother?
- What do Miriam and her siblings do in Egypt when they get older?
- What does Miriam do after her people escape Egypt?



Service Learning Activity: Book Collection

The kids will have a small collection drive at home of books and come up with ideas of other books they want to donate.

Supplies Needed:

- Computer Paper
- Markers
- Internet Enabled Device

Instructions:

1. Explain to the kids that they will be collecting books to donate to other kids who do not have enough books.
2. Designate an area in your home that will be dedicated to collecting books. You can use the same area you designated for clothes and toys on day four. Make a sign for the book collection box or basket.
3. Invite the kids to go through their shelves, closets, cabinets, attics, garages, basements and look under their beds, in their old backpacks, and behind their desks for books to donate. They can collect all of these books and more:
 - Toddler Board Books
 - Kid's Picture Books
 - Chapter Books
 - Pre-teen Dramas
 - Sci-fi Action Stories
 - Fantasy Adventure Stories
 - Bibles!!!
4. Give each kid paper and something to write with. Task them with listing their three favorite books. It should be easy for the kids to come up with this list because their favorite books are likely the ones they found at your home but chose not to donate.
5. As a group choose some of these books to buy for other kids. You shouldn't just give to others the things you don't want, you should also give away the things you want for yourself. In fact, if you want it, it's probably something great to give away! As a family, you can decide



how much money to spend on these books and even have the kids help to buy them or save up for them out of their piggy banks.

Lesson Reflection: The more everybody reads, the better we all are! Miriam was fearless from a young age. While others would have backed away from the challenges she faced, Miriam trusted in God’s help. Miriam’s story is part of God’s much larger story. We are part of that story too! While Miriam served God as a prophet, leader, and musician, we can serve God in our own way. Together, all of our stories fit into a beautiful kingdom that God is building. Other kids will get to use our books to find amazing stories. We are part of the most amazing story in the world—working as peacemakers to build God’s kingdom.