

Victory Sports Outreach

2010 Winter Season

Basketball

Weekly Devotions Overview

Fall Season/Theme Verse:

1 Corinthians 1:27, 29, "But God uses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."

If you're new to Victory Sports, each weekly sport practice concludes with a short devotional time. Our passion is to make Jesus Christ known to the children and families that attend Victory Sports functions. In an age of confusion about spiritual matters, the Bible is our only completely reliable source of truth. We want there to be no mistake that we are presenting Jesus of the Bible. We use a fictional story to begin each devotional session which leads into a short Bible lesson. Each session ends with prayer.

This season we'll continue the adventure of Richard and his twin sister Elizabeth of Weaver Hill. Last season (soccer), we saw Richard get a chance to train to become a knight, his greatest wish as a 7-year old, due to the kindness of Sir Edward and Lady Anne who live in the manor house. Elizabeth soon joins her twin brother to train as a lady-in-waiting. After the initial seven years of training, as young teens, they are given a chance to go home for a month. When the month is over, they must decide whether to go back to the manor house to continue their training or stay home and help their aging parents take care of the family farm.

During the winter (basketball) season, we will see how their decision to return to the manor house yields both rewards and problems as they meet other trainees who are difficult to get along with. They must learn how to prepare for the exhibition tournament and at the same time protect their integrity in the midst of being bullied by well-to-do peers. Many twists and turns await Richard and Elizabeth as they seek to obey God's Word in their relationships.

The conclusion of the story (part 3) will be during the spring (baseball/volleyball) season. Hopefully, children will want to come back and see what happens. The story and devotions are just a starting point. If you have a personal experience or can think of other verses that also fit the topic, please share what is on your heart. Feel free to tailor the story and questions to your age group as well. As with any lesson, the devotions work best when you have had a chance to look over them beforehand.

We hope you enjoy the story and the Bible lessons as much as the children enjoy hearing them. Here are the weekly topics:

Week #1: Putting Others Down- Proverbs 21:23

Week #2- Pride- Proverbs 16:18

Week #3- Lying- Psalm 120:2

Week #4- Good Samaritan- Luke 10:33

Week #5- Pray for your enemies- Matthew 5:44

Week #6-God uses the foolish to shame the wise- 1 Cor. 1:27, 29

Week #7- Saving Faith-Romans 10:9

Week #8- Summary

Week #1- Putting Others Down/Using Words Wisely

Proverbs 21:23, “He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.”

The Challenge Within: Chapter 1~

Young James sat on his grandfather's lap; his eyes were wide with excitement. "What did they do, Grandfather? What did they decide?"

Grandfather knew how much James wanted to know if Richard and his twin sister Elizabeth ended up staying home to help their parents run the farm or if they went back to the Weaver Hill manor house to finish their training to become a knight and lady-in-waiting.

"Alright, alright!" Grandfather laughed as he continued, "Richard and Elizabeth... went back to the manor house to finish their training."

"Is that the end of the story??" James asked, a little disappointed.

"Oh no- there's much more. Once they returned, they were sent to live on opposite sides of the manor. Elizabeth went to room with the other girls in training and Richard went to live with the other knights in training.

Richard's official title was Squire of the Stables. That meant he had to take care of all of the horses. You know, things like feeding them and cleaning out their stalls, and making sure even the horses had armor for battle."

"I don't think I'd like to clean out the stalls." said James.

"I don't think he had any choice." laughed Grandfather. "Anyway, Elizabeth was given the title of Guardian of the Royal Cookery. That meant she was in charge of planning and preparing the meals for the manor."

"Were there a lot of other people training with them?" asked James.

"I'm glad you asked that, " said Grandfather, "because as a matter of fact there were quite a few others who were training for

various positions. There was one group in particular that gave them quite a hard time. These people came from very wealthy families and thought they should be treated better than anyone else. They called themselves '*The Knights of the Golden Circle*' even though they weren't even knights yet. Their leader gave himself the nickname Hercules because of how strong he thought he was. Somehow he found out that Richard and Elizabeth came from one of the village farms and would laugh at them. He would say that they might as well go back home because they didn't belong at the manor.

Poor Richard and Elizabeth. They knew they had been invited to the manor from the village and what a great privilege that was. But Richard and Elizabeth didn't want to stoop to his level and return insult for insult, so all they could think of to say was from Proverbs 21:23, "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity."

Hercules didn't know what the word "calamity" meant, so it made him mad when they said this to him. He asked other members of the *Golden Circle*, but none of them knew what it meant either. In this way, even though Hercules continued to make fun of Richard and Elizabeth he began to think about his own words.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did Richard & Elizabeth decide to do?
2. What was the name of the gang of bullies? The lead bully's name?
3. What did the leader do to Richard & Elizabeth?
4. How did Richard & Elizabeth respond?

Bible Thought~

In our story today, we see that there was a group of other people training to be knights, the *Knights of the Golden Circle*. The leader of this group felt like he was better than Richard and Elizabeth and began putting them down. How does it make you feel when others put you down or call you names?

I'm sure Richard and Elizabeth didn't like it either, but they didn't try to just get back at Hercules. They used the Bible as

a defensive weapon. Our verse for today is the same one they used in the story. Proverbs 21:23, “He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.”

Hercules didn’t know what calamity meant. Does anyone here know what calamity means?

It means trouble! The verse means that our mouth can get us into a lot of trouble!! Has your mouth ever gotten you into a lot of trouble?

God wants us to use our mouth to *help* people, not *hurt* them, right? When we put others down, we are not obeying the Golden Rule- Matthew 7:12, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. That *doesn’t* mean- Do to others what they have *done to you*, amen?! It means to show others the same respect as you want to receive. I don’t think you would want others to treat you badly. Don’t we want others to treat us nicely?

The Bible also tells us not to show favoritism. That’s like prejudice. James 2: 9 says, “But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.”. That means we are not to treat certain people better than others. It doesn’t matter how much money you have or what kind of clothes you wear.

What matters most of all is what’s inside your heart. Do you love Jesus? Do you have a special relationship with Him? Is He your Lord and Savior? That’s the kind of thing that matters.

Only God sees what is inside our hearts. We cannot make those judgments from the outside. Let’s say we made fun of our teammates. Do you think we’d have a good solid team that works together well? I don’t think so. As we leave, let’s think about how we can use our mouth to help each other and build each other up.

Pray to close the session.

Week #2: Pride

Pr. 16:18- “Pride goes before destruction”

The Challenge Within: Chapter 2~

Months turned into years and even though Hercules still made fun of Richard and Elizabeth, there was something about the two of them that he secretly wished he had. One day in mid-November, one of Sir Edward’s personal messengers called all of the squires and manor staff together for a big meeting. Everyone was quite alarmed for they thought something must surely be wrong. Sir Edward had never called everyone together before. Was a battle going to happen? Were they to host an important guest?

As all of the staff and squires gathered together, Sir Edward approached with a smile. “Friends of Weaver Hill Manor, I have an announcement that I think you will like. In the spring, we shall have an exhibition tournament to show all of our squires’ skills. We shall invite all of the villagers to watch the tournament and have a feast with us. So there will be much work and preparation to do. I expect you to do your best to make this a wonderful event. Good ladies of the crockery, I cannot wait to see what you will plan for our meal and Squires, your participation in this tournament will have an impact on my decision concerning your knighthood.

Everyone went away excited even though they all knew they would have extra responsibilities to prepare for the big tournament. The squires would have to perfect their jousting and battle skills as well as be in top physical condition for the foot races and wrestling matches. They would have to hunt for extra meat and have the grounds and horses in excellent condition. The ladies would have to prepare the food and decorations. As Elizabeth was now Guardian of the Crockery, this placed a great responsibility on her. And as Richard was Squire of the Stables, he too, had an important role. Hercules was Squire of Hunting and Hawking. Each of them had younger pupils under them that they would have to teach and help them get ready for the big event.

Drifting off to sleep, Richard and Elizabeth both thought of how wonderful the tournament would be. They looked for ways to serve the villagers and make the event wonderful. Hercules, however, saw this as an opportunity to show off his own skills and show Sir Edward that he was ready to be made a knight now instead of at the end of his training. He wanted to be the star of the show and began looking for ways to do it. He thought that if he made Richard and Elizabeth look dumb in front of Sir Edward and Lady Anne, they would send them back home. He even enlisted the help of some of the other *Golden Circle* members.

Apollo was one of these members who didn't like Richard and Elizabeth either. He jumped at the chance to make them look foolish, so both he and Hercules began to hatch a plan that would begin the very next day.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was the big announcement?
2. How did Richard and Elizabeth respond?
3. How did Hercules respond?

Bible Thought~

This week's verse goes a lot with last week's verse. In our story, Hercules is at it again. He is still trying to make himself look the best while making Richard and Elizabeth look foolish or get them into trouble.

Pr. 16:18- "Pride goes before destruction" is our verse for this week. What is pride?

Pride is thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to. Humility is the opposite of pride. It is having a correct view of yourself in front of God. It has been said that the best view of yourself is when you are on your knees before God. When we know that we are really nothing without God and that everything we have comes from God, it makes us have a proper perspective of ourselves and God.

Pride can ultimately destroy us. Why is that? When we say or do things out of pride, we hurt our reputation. We hurt our character. Others get to where they cannot trust you anymore. Our character is something that is easily ruined, but very difficult

to rebuild.

Think about some of the nicest people that you know. What makes them nice? Do they think of others more than themselves? Or do they always put themselves first and leave others in the dust?

When we are prideful, we are taking glory away from God. God is big on God because there isn't anything else bigger for Him to be big on, amen?! When we are humble, we are really giving glory to God by giving Him the credit that He deserves.

When we start thinking that we deserve things or a certain treatment from others, we take glory away from God, too. We are not letting Him decide what is best for us.

Here are two verses that give us some of God's own thoughts about what pride can do.

Pr. 11:2- "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility come wisdom."

Pr. 29:23- "A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor."

It almost seems backward, doesn't it? To gain honor, we must become low and serve others and wisdom comes with humility, not pride.

That's because God's ways are not our ways. His ways and His thoughts are higher than ours. This world's system is completely backward from God's system. And that's exactly how the devil wants it. He is completely opposite of everything that God is.

So if we want to be great for God, we should seek to serve others. How can we serve others on the basketball court? (Not arguing with a coach, or ref; passing the ball to others; allowing everyone to play; playing by the rules; obeying the coach, etc.)

Let's think this week about serving others instead of being prideful and putting ourselves first.

Pray to close the session.

Week #3-Lying

Psalm 120:2, “Save me, O LORD, from lying lips, and from deceitful tongues.”

The Challenge Within: Chapter 3~

Hercules came to breakfast while Apollo snuck down to the stables and scattered the horse feed all over the barn floor. He then snuck behind the manor house into the back of the kitchen. While everyone else was sitting down to breakfast, he crept over to the big fireplace where the meals were cooked. He put out the fire then grabbed a biscuit that was left nearby. Apollo quickly slipped back into where everyone else was eating breakfast. He sauntered back in and gave Hercules a sly smile and a nod.

After breakfast, the two of them went right to Sir Edward. “I’m afraid I have bad news, Sir Edward,” lamented Hercules, “it seems that Richard and Elizabeth have not completed their duties this morning. There is feed all over the stable floor and the fire has gone out of the hearth. I *hate* to get anyone in trouble, but if we don’t keep up with our own tasks, things will get out of hand.”

“Yes, quite right.” said Sir Edward. “I’ll send one of my assistants to check it all out. I’ll speak to them myself if it is warranted. Of course, I will keep your names out of it. I don’t want any bad blood between my squires.”

Sir Edward indeed sent out one of his personal assistants to check out what Hercules and Apollo had said. Every word of it seemed to be true, so he sent for Richard and Elizabeth immediately and questioned them.

Richard and Elizabeth hardly knew what to say. “Sir Edward,” Elizabeth said in her defense, “I was only gone a short while and when I returned, I saw that the fire had gone out so I relit it.”

“And I,” Richard offered, “when I got back to the stables after having my breakfast, I saw that either the feed sacks had fallen over or they had been dumped over. I am in the process of cleaning it up right now.”

“You have both always done excellent work here.” said Sir

Edward. “Your answers satisfy me for now. But please know that the penalty for lying here at the manor is most severe and your duties must still be done. I pray that this is not something you will be involved with. Now, go in peace.”

Well, being questioned by Sir Edward put them quite a bit farther behind in their work for the day. They had to work doubly hard to get caught up, but they were relieved that Sir Edward believed, at least for now, that they were not to blame.

Richard and Elizabeth had an idea that Hercules and Apollo were somehow involved, but since they didn’t have any proof, they prayed that justice would be served at the right time by the Lord.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did Hercules and Apollo do to try to get Richard and Elizabeth into trouble?
2. Did Sir Edward punish them for not doing their duties? Why not?

Bible Thought~

Today we’re talking about lying. We hear a lot about “little white lies.” But you know, there really are no such things as a little white lie. A lie is a lie. Some may not have as many physical consequences, but a lie always distorts God’s truth and it always breaks God’s heart.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6). If Jesus is the truth, then who must be the “untruth?” That’s right- John 8:44 tells us that the devil is “a liar and the father of lies.” He is a master deceiver. He wants to deceive us into many things, first of which is that we can earn our way into heaven. But we’re not perfect. We can’t do it on our own.

In our story today, Hercules and Apollo told lies about Richard and Elizabeth. All Richard and Elizabeth did was tell the truth and Sir Edward believed them. That doesn’t always happen, though, does it? Sometimes we’re not believed and we still get punished.

We must remember that God sees everything. He knows who is telling the lie and who is getting in trouble when it’s not

their fault. God is the supreme judge. Everyone will get their just reward when the time comes. That even goes for things we see on the news that go unpunished. God sees it all and He will judge it all. Today's verse is Psalm 120: 2, "Save me, O LORD, from lying lips, and from deceitful tongues." When we are in a situation like this, we should pray to God for Him to help us!!

Although it is not always easier to tell the truth, it is always the best way. Even if you just say a quick prayer of "help!", God will give you the strength to do the right thing.

But what do we do if we do the wrong thing and lie about something? If we have that special relationship with God, He is faithful and just to forgive us when we confess our sin to Him. See, we have the Holy Spirit inside of us, convicting us when we break God's law, when we break God's heart. We will feel bad when we have told a lie. Then we know it's time to ask for forgiveness.

Let's stop and ask the Lord to help us speak the truth this week.

Pray to close the session.

Week #4

Lessons from the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:33, "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him."

The Challenge Within: Chapter 4~

Since the exhibition tournament would not only be for the manor household but the entire village, much more food would be required. This made Hercules and Apollo and the lads they were training have to hunt and hawk for much more food. They would have to salt and dry the birds and deer (and anything else they were blessed to find) ahead of time so they would have enough for the occasion.

One winter's day, they had gone out in the afternoon, making sure they would be able to get back before dark. Hercules had taken one group of lads down to the lake to watch for water birds.

Apollo had taken his group into the forest to look for deer. A deer was heard and Apollo quietly drew back his bow. All the lads held their breath in silence as Apollo effortlessly released the bowstring and sent the arrow flying into the air.

What happened next was quite unexpected. A loud cry of agony pierced the silent afternoon. It wasn't a deer after all. *Hercules* had been shot! Apollo had forgotten hunting rule #1: make sure you *see* your target before you take aim. Hercules' right arm was bleeding badly. All of the lads in each of the groups panicked and started crying out too. Chaos followed as Hercules lay bleeding. Finally Apollo came to his senses and ran to his injured friend and began ripping his cloak to make bandages to put around his arm.

Hercules was very weak by the time Apollo and the young boys got him back to the manor house. They came up to the back of the house where the kitchen was. The first person to come out and see what was going on was Elizabeth. When she saw that

Hercules was hurt, her first thought was that the Lord had heard their prayers for justice.

Then she thought about the story of the Good Samaritan in the Bible and had to choke down her feelings of not wanting to help him. She quickly prepared the same type of herb poultice that she had used on Richard's eyes when he was a young lad and had a similar hunting accident. Before long, she had his arm wrapped up with the herbs in a sling. Elizabeth knew she had done the right thing, but it was probably the hardest thing she had ever had to do since she came to live at the Weaver Hill manor house.

Slowly but surely Hercules' arm began to heal. In fact, it took several months for him to regain his strength. Even though he was not able to practice much jousting or wrestling during those months, his arm was fully healed just in time for the tournament.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What happened to Hercules?
2. What did Elizabeth do? Was it hard for her?

Bible Thought~

In today's story, Elizabeth had a very hard decision, didn't she? She could have chosen not to help Hercules, or call someone else to help him, but she remembered the story of the Good Samaritan.

Who can tell me the story of the Good Samaritan? (A Jewish man went down to Jericho. A group of robbers beat him along the way. The first man to pass was a priest. He didn't stop to help. Neither did the Levite. But when the Samaritan came along, he did all he could for the man even though Samaritans and Jews hated each other.)

The first 2 men were the ones you would think would've stopped to help the man, not the Samaritan man. Jews looked down on Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews for looking down on them. Jews and Samaritans hated each other so much that they wouldn't associate with each other and would even walk around each other's cities to get to where they were going. So this was a big deal for the Samaritan to help the hurt Jewish man.

Today's verse is Luke 10:33, "But a Samaritan, as he

traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him." What is pity? It is compassion- putting yourself in someone else's shoes and asking yourself what you would do.

How was Elizabeth like the Good Samaritan? (Allow them to answer). She helped someone who was mean to her. She knew how to bandage up his arm and what kind of herbs to mix up as a medicine.

It's hard to do something like that for someone who you don't like or someone who doesn't like you. But it is not impossible. Philippians 4:13 tells us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. We can do whatever God tells us to do. It would be easy just to do nice things for people we like. It is quite another thing to serve those people whom we don't get along with, isn't it?

Let's keep our eyes and ears open for others who need our help this week. Maybe you can be like the Good Samaritan.

Pray to close the session.

Week #5-Pray for your enemies

Matthew 5:44, “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

The Challenge Within: Chapter 5~

At last the day was approaching for the exhibition tournament. The village had been notified and everyone in the manor house was doing their best to make this a delightful event. Really, everything seemed to be going perfectly. A little too perfectly. The horses were groomed to perfection. There was enough meat and vegetables to last for a week’s feast. The squires had practiced to put on their best performance. Everyone that is, except Hercules. Try as he might, he wasn’t satisfied with just making himself look good in front of Sir Edward and Lady Anne and the whole village.

He still wanted to have one last ditch effort at making Elizabeth and Richard look bad. After he had gotten over being mad at Apollo for accidentally shooting him in the arm, they planned their last move.

Two days before the tournament, they awoke early in the morning and unlocked the door to the henhouse and left it cracked open just enough for the hens to get loose. Then they went into the field and caught a black snake. After opening the barn door, they let the snake loose in the stable to scare the horses. Of course, they weren’t thinking about their own horses, so they were spooked too.

When everyone in the manor awoke, the confusion was already well on its way. Elizabeth and the ladies were all running around trying to catch hundreds of chickens. Richard and his lads were likewise running around trying to catch horses that had run off. It’s a good thing the property had a fence around it and that chickens can’t fly. It took half the day to get everything settled back down.

Sir Edward began to see what was going on and brought Hercules and Apollo in to question them, but since no one actually saw them, he did not punish them directly. But he did have a plan

to try to trap them at their own game. If his hunch was correct, Hercules’ and Apollo’s true colors would be seen at the tournament.

Richard and Elizabeth fell asleep exhausted that night. They too knew that Hercules and Apollo were the ones that had caused everyone so much extra work. They determined in their hearts to pray for them both. Hercules and Apollo needed Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Only God could work a miracle in their lives now.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did Hercules and Apollo do this time?
2. What did Sir Edward decide to do to show everyone what they were really like?

Bible Thought~

All through the story, Hercules and Apollo really made life miserable for Richard and Elizabeth, didn’t they? They spend all of their time trying to make much of themselves by putting Richard and Elizabeth down and trying to get them into trouble.

Were you waiting for Richard and Elizabeth to get back at them during the story? I think they probably wanted to, but they didn’t. They just let Sir Edward take care of that.

In real life, the Bible tells us not to retaliate against our enemies, but to leave that up to God. Romans 12:17 & 19 tell us, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” When we take things into our own hands by trying to get back at those who do us wrong, we are sinning, and then we’re to blame too.

But our verse goes even further than that. Matthew 5:44 tells us, “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” That sounds impossible, doesn’t it? Let’s think about this from God’s view. When we were still sinners (enemies of God), Christ died for us. God loved us even when we were His enemies and died for us. Can’t we be loving to others, too?

Last week we talked a little about Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” That’s how we

can do something that we can't do on our own. We can do it with His strength. We need to pray and ask God for a special gift of strength for that type of love for someone who does wrong to us. Romans 12:21 encourages us with, "Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

Probably the biggest thing to remember is to take care of problems quickly. When we have a fight or disagreement with someone, resolve it so that it does not grow larger and allow bitterness to grow.

We also need to remember that when we are ridiculed or made fun of, God is also ridiculed, because we are His children. If someone hurts God's children, it hurts Him too. He feels things even more than we do. He knows our hurts and He feels our pain. He will help us to forgive and to pray for our enemies.

Praying for our enemies really does help. Maybe they just need to come to Jesus as their Lord and Savior. If they're being hurtful to others, they need prayer. They need Jesus to show His love to them personally.

Let's pray for those who have hurt us and ask Jesus to help us forgive them if we have not done so already.

Pray to close the session.

Week #6-God uses the foolish to shame the wise

1 Corinthians 1:27, 29, "But God uses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."

The Challenge Within: Chapter 6~

Now Sir Edward was a wise leader who had begun to put all the pieces of the puzzle together. He knew everything up until this point had been an attempt by Hercules and Apollo to get Richard and Elizabeth in trouble. But Sir Edward had outwitted many a fox before and so he set his own test for them.

All the decorations had been put out. The field had been cleared for the tournament. The food had been started. The barrels of cider had been brought up from the root cellar.

During breakfast, Sir Edward went down to the stable to check on the horses. He loosened the saddles of Hercules and Apollo's horses just enough that they could still mount the horse from the top with their armor on, but when they leaned over for the jousting tournament, they would fall off. If Hercules and Apollo were really "knight material," they would check and re-check their horses gear before the event.

Edward quickly came back in time to give a speech to all of the manor staff. "Ladies and Squires, I am very pleased with your preparation today. Today is going to show us who is honorable and who has perfected their skills, not only the men, but the women as well. I daresay this will be an excellent day- one we will not forget for many years." Sir Edward went on to recount memories of each of the staff and his speech lasted quite a long time. It lasted so long that the staff seemed to be in a hurry to get going when he was finished.

Everyone was bustling about with last minute preparations. The big moment finally arrived. The villagers had gathered and Sir Edward welcomed them all. The blessing was said and the meal was served. Everyone had their fill and they went over to the field to watch the competition.

The first event was the jousting tournament. Apollo and Hercules were the first pair to go against each other. All set in their armor, the two set out on their horses on opposite ends of the field. At the moment they were to use their long lances to try to push the other off, they both leaned over and off they both went—both ended up on the ground before their lances touched each other.

Sir Edward had his men right where he wanted them. After the crowd had stopped laughing, Sir Edward called the two men over and asked them to explain what happened. Of course, they had to say that they simply fell off their horses in front of everyone. They also had to say that they had forgotten to check the horses' equipment.

Sir Edward went on to tell them that they have brought calamity down on themselves. He could tell by their puzzled expressions they did not know what the word “calamity” meant. He went on to explain that calamity is trouble. “It’s as simple as that.” he said.

As soon as they limped off the field, they went back and changed. No one saw them the rest of the day. The rest of the events went very well. Richard and Elizabeth outdid themselves. Their parents couldn’t have been happier for them. They clapped and cheered as Richard and Elizabeth were singled out for an award of extraordinary effort. Mom and Dad hugged their children for a long time, knowing that the training was nearly over.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was the test that Sir Edward set for Hercules and Apollo?
2. What happened to Hercules and Apollo?
3. Were Hercules and Apollo “knight material?”

Bible Thought~

We talked a few weeks ago about God’s ways being the opposite of the world’s ways. We also talked about if you want to be great, you must be a servant. This week, we see how thinking you are wise really makes you foolish.

Our verse today is 1 Corinthians 1:27, 29, “But God uses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; so that no human

being might boast in the presence of God.” God uses things that seem foolish in the eyes of the world to shame the wise people of the world. He does this so that they will know there is a God and so they will be humbled and not prideful. Remember, God gets all the glory.

In our story, we see that Hercules and Apollo get their just reward. At the very event where they thought they were going to show off and show that they were ready to be made knights before their training was over, they end up making fools of themselves. Sometimes things like that happen in real life too. I think that God has a sense of humor too!

In real life, those who hurt God or His people will ultimately get their just reward. We do need to let God take His own revenge. Sometimes that is here on earth and sometimes it is for all eternity.

We just need to trust God that He will bring justice to all things in their proper time.

Let’s pray now and thank God for His justice both now and for all eternity.

Pray to close the session.

Week #7- Saving Faith

Romans 10:9- “that if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The Challenge Within: Chapter 7~

After the exhibition was over and all of the decorations were cleaned up and all of the food was put away and all of the villagers had gone home, Hercules approached Richard and Elizabeth. He bent down on one knee.

“I just want to apologize.” said Hercules. “ I understand now that I do not deserve to be a knight. My integrity has failed both you and Sir Edward. I know that you will soon be knighted. It would be my great privilege to forever serve you in your knightly duties. I shall remain a squire forever if you will have me.”

“I don’t know what to say.” Richard answered, quite in shock.

“Please get up. You don’t need to kneel before us.” Elizabeth offered.

“You both are different than any other people I have ever met. I need you to tell me what makes you so different, so confident. You didn’t retaliate once against me. I remember you saying that my tongue would bring me calamity and now it has. Please tell me your secret.” begged Hercules.

“I will certainly tell you if you really want to know. We have a special faith in Jesus. He is not just a person we hear about from the chaplain every Sunday. He is real and we have a special relationship with Him. We read His book, the Bible, and it tells us how to live the way He wants us to.” Richard said.

Elizabeth went on to tell him how Jesus had died on the cross to save them from their own punishment from sin. “In the book of Romans in the Bible, there is a very special verse. It says, ‘that if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be

saved.’ Since Jesus has done this for us and we believe it, we have given Him first place in our lives. He is our Savior and Lord. When we die, we will go to be with Him in heaven.”

“Wow! I want to do that too. I don’t want to live the way I have been living. It’s not right. I have hurt a lot of people and I haven’t been happy. I need to make a change- get a fresh start. Can you help me pray to Jesus now and ask Him to be my Savior and Lord, too?” Hercules asked.

“Of course. That would make us both very happy. In fact, we’ve been praying that God would call you into a personal relationship for a long time.” Richard said as he bowed his head and led Hercules in a short prayer.

The Lord did a wonderful thing between them that day. It was almost as if a miracle had happened. In fact, a miracle did happen. Hercules was dead in his sin and then he became alive to Christ. And from that day on Hercules insisted on pledging service not only to Christ but to Richard and Elizabeth as well.

The End.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Why did Hercules come to Richard and Elizabeth once the tournament was over?
2. What was the special secret that Richard and Elizabeth shared with him?

Bible Thought~

In our story today, Hercules met Jesus through Richard and Elizabeth. God used two peasant children to deliver His Gospel to Hercules (remember our verse last week about God using foolish things to confound the wise). Their prayers were answered. Hercules asked Jesus to become his Lord and Savior and you can too! Isn’t that cool?! Elizabeth used today’s verse in the story to help tell Hercules about Jesus. It’s Romans 10:9- “that if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Jesus wants to have that special relationship with you. We can’t get to heaven by ourselves because we are sinners. We need

to tell Jesus we're sorry. Jesus died on the cross to take away our punishment, but He rose again three days later because death could not hold Him in the grave! He has power even over death. If we want Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, we must trust that what He did for us on the cross was totally sufficient.

(If you feel led to give your own personal testimony, this would be a good time to do so.

Have the kids just bow their heads and tell them you're going to say a prayer. Ask them to think about the words and ask themselves if they truly believe that Jesus is our one and only way to God.)

Dear Jesus, thank You for being so holy and perfect and just. But God, we can't get to heaven on our own because we have sin in our hearts. Thank You for dying on the cross for me and taking my punishment and then rising again on the third day. Please take my sinful heart and replace it with a heart that loves You above all. I trust in what You did to make me a member of Your family. Help me to find my satisfaction in You alone. I give my life to You now because you are my Master, my Savior, my King. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Don't ask for a show of hands, but if they have agreed with the prayer in their hearts, ask them to tell a coach or parent or other grown up there.

Devotion Leaders,

We trust this has been a fruitful season for both you and the kids!!

Thank you for all you have done!!

Week #8- Summary

Review the lesson topics/verses and ask the kids what their favorite week was.

<p>Week 1 Proverbs 21:23, "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity."</p>	<p>Richard and Elizabeth go back to the manor for further training and meet Hercules who makes fun of them.</p>
<p>Week 2 Pr. 16:18- "Pride goes before destruction" is our verse for this week. What is pride?</p>	<p>The tournament is announced and Hercules and Apollo want to use it to just show off and make Richard and Elizabeth look bad.</p>
<p>Week 3 God sees it all and He will judge it all. Today's verse is Psalm 120: 2, "Save me, O LORD, from lying lips, and from deceitful tongues."</p>	<p>Hercules and Apollo lie about Richard and Elizabeth to try to get them into trouble.</p>
<p>Week 4 Luke 10:33, "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him."</p>	<p>Apollo accidentally shoots Hercules in the arm with his arrow. Elizabeth takes care of him even though he has done wrong to her.</p>
<p>Week 5 Matthew 5:44 tells us, "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."</p>	<p>Hercules and Apollo let the chickens loose and let a snake into the stables to scare the horses. Richard and Elizabeth pray for them.</p>

<p>Week 6 1 Corinthians 1:27, 29, “But God uses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”</p>	<p>Sir Edward sets up a trap for Hercules and Apollo and they forget to tighten their horses’ girths. They fall on their faces when they dues. They are shamed in front of everyone.</p>
<p>Week 7 Romans 10:9- “that if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”</p>	<p>Hercules apologizes to Richard and Elizabeth. They get to tell him about Jesus and he asks Jesus to be his Lord and Savior.</p>

Pray to close the session.