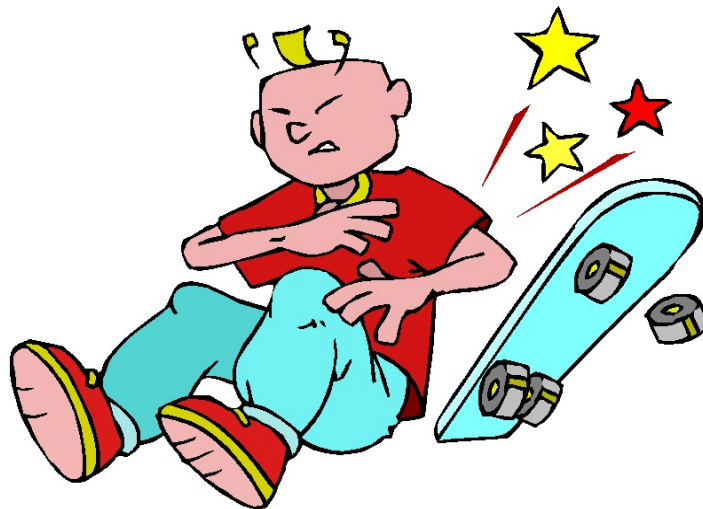


VSO Spring 2012

Devotion Booklet



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Victory Sports
Spring 2012 Devotions
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If you're new to Victory Sports, you are in for a *real treat!!* VSO is a unique, one-of-a-kind community sports league, whose mission is to share the love and life-saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through sports! God has taken this ministry from 80 children in the winter of 2004 to averaging about 500 today. Praise God for His faithfulness!!

When games begin on Saturdays, the Gospel of Jesus is presented in weekly increments using the salvation colors model as follows:

- Gold represents God's glory
- Black represents man's sin
- Red represents Jesus' blood
- White represents purity or cleansing
- Green represents the new Christian's growth
- G- go to God in prayer
- R- read the Bible
- O- obey God, parents, teachers
- W- witness, tell others about Jesus

During the weekdays, however, instructional practices end with a short devotion. A fictional story begins the devotional time and Biblical principles are drawn out to apply to our lives. That's where you come in. Please be prepared to either read or summarize the lesson each week. Feel free to use easier language for little ones and add your own experiences if you have something you feel would add interest to the lesson.

Of course, we will have printed copies of the booklet available, but if you forget your booklet or come straight from work, you can also view and print the weekly lessons from the VSO website. Just go to victorysportsoutreach.org and look at the navigation bar on the left side of the home page. Toward the bottom, click on "devotions." This will take you to the devotions page where you can see a weekly schedule and view or print what you need for the week.

☆This fall for our weekly devotions, we step back into the lives of Jake Smith and his single mom Amy. In this final installment, Jake discovers that pride really does go before a fall!

Wanting to impress Mr. Fred's granddaughters, Jake tries a trick on his skateboard, which lands him at the urgent care center with a broken arm. For ten year old Jake, this is devastating! Will he learn humility and the perseverance it takes for his arm to properly heal?

Note: All names, events, and places are purely fictional and at the discretion of the author. Any similarities to Victory Sports participants and families is purely coincidental.

Here's what you can expect each week...*

Week #1- The Pride Before the Fall- Proverbs 16:18

Week #2- Humility- Philippians 2:3

Week #3- Count Your Blessings-1 Thessalonians 5:18

Week #4- Foolish Schemes- Proverbs 12:15

Week #5- Encouragement Matters- 1 Thess. 5:11

Week #6- Stronger Than Before- James 1:3-4

Week #7- Summary

***NOTE: There are only 7 weeks of devotions even though the season is 8 weeks long. This takes one week of weather-related cancellations into account. If further weather conditions force more practices to be cancelled, weeks 6 and 7 can be combined.**

Week 1- The Pride Before the Fall!

Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

The Ollie Follies: Chapter 1-

It was a beautiful spring Saturday- the kind you don't want to ever end. Warm and sunny; not too hot and not too cool. Amy and Jake had packed a picnic lunch and were ready to take off to spend the afternoon at Chesterfield Park.

Jake was dawdling as usual. "I'm walking out the door, Jake. Do you have everything?" Amy asked.

"Oh wait- I need my skateboard!" Jake yelled, running back into his room.

Seven minutes later they pulled into the parking lot. And it took Jake exactly *two* minutes to get out of the car and begin zooming down the sidewalk on his skateboard.

Amy grabbed the picnic basket and a good book and noticed that Jake had forgotten his helmet and elbow and knee pads.

"Ja-a-a-ke! Come get your helmet and pads on!"

Jake pouted all the way over to the car to retrieve his safety gear. He put them on in record time and got back on his beloved board. As he rounded the next turn of the sidewalk, he noticed his neighbor, Mr. Fred, sitting on one of the benches along the path. He was sitting with *two girls*! He didn't think Mr. Fred knew any *girls*.

Jake stopped to say hello. "Hey, Mr. Fred! How'ya doin'?"

"Great!" Mr. Fred replied. "Have you met my granddaughters? This is Aubrey and this is Abigail. They're visiting me from out-of-town this weekend. Girls, this is Jake from next door."

Jake gave a little wave hello. Somehow learning that they were just his granddaughters made him feel a little better. Jake had spent so much time with Mr. Fred in the past few months (since he went to Mr. Fred's shop every day after school), he began to feel like Mr. Fred was kind of like his own grandfather.

Suddenly an idea popped into Jake's head. Not a brilliant idea, mind you, but an idea fit for a ten-year-old.

"Hey girls, wanna see me do an ollie?" Jake suggested.

"What's that?" Abigail asked.

"That's what the lady at the bank asks mommy if we can have," Aubrey announced, shaking her head up and down.

"I think that's a *lolly-pop*, not an *ollie*," Mr. Fred was trying to explain.

Jake laughed. *This is perfect* he thought to himself. *I really haven't practiced an ollie very much, but even if I don't do it exactly right, they won't know the difference. They'll think I'm really cool!*

"An ollie is a trick on the skateboard. Watch this!" Jake announced. And off he went, speeding down the sidewalk.

A few seconds later, he crouched down on the skateboard and popped up. The skateboard kept going and flipped up in the front. But Jake's feet, which were supposed to land back on top of the skateboard came down too far to the left side.

The *top* half of his body flew past the *bottom* half of his body, and it seemed like his *whole* body landed on his *left arm*.

Jake was screaming out in pain, not caring at all who heard him. His mom, Mr. Fred, and both girls ran over to see what happened. Abigail and Aubrey started to cry too.

"Let's get you to the urgent care," Jake's mom said, helping Jake up and getting him to the car.

"I'll grab the skateboard and bring it by later. Come on girls," Mr. Fred said as he scooped up the girls and the skateboard.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was Jake trying to do?
2. What ended up happening?

Bible Thought~

In our story today, Jake tries to show off in front of Mr. Fred's granddaughters. He tried to do a trick, which he hadn't practiced that much, so that the girls would think he was cool. When he ended up falling and getting hurt, he didn't look so cool then, did he?

The Bible calls this kind of attitude *pride*. What is pride? (Let them answer if they can).

Pride is thinking or believing that you are better than others in action or appearance. It can also be wanting others to admire you for these things.

Pride says...

I'm the greatest.

Everyone should be like me.

I know everything.

I'm better than you are.

I'm more important than you are.

They love me best.

The Bible warns us that pride will lead us into something bad. Today's verse is Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." Other words that have the same connotation as pride are: being vain, conceited, arrogant, or selfish.

When we're being prideful, we're believing a lie. We're believing we're better than other people. We ought to be looking at ourselves compared with God and His righteousness. God is so holy and perfect, even our best days still fall short of perfection. (Rom. 3:23) God is the only one who can claim to be truly great because there is none greater than He. When we claim to be great, however, there is someone greater- God.

This doesn't mean that we are not valuable to God. He loved us enough to die for us, so we understand that our value comes from Him, not from comparing ourselves to other people.

The problem with believing the lie of pride is that we will eventually be confronted with the truth. That's what happened to Jake in the story. He was confronted with the truth that he really wasn't as good of a skateboarder as he thought he was.

We do have different gifts and abilities which are given by God, but we're all equally valuable in God's eyes. He created us all. We don't have to wonder if God loves us or not. We can be ourselves with God and others because our worth comes from Him. He knows us better than we know ourselves and He still loves us.

Let's stop and thank God for creating us and giving us our worth.

Pray to close the session.

Week 2- The Value of Humility!

Philippians 2:3, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”

The Ollie Follies: Chapter 2-

Jake didn't like being at the urgent care center. His arm hurt, not just a little, but a *lot*. He sat and waited to be seen, but he could barely stand the pain. “Oooooooooohhhhhh, mom, it hurts so much,” Jake moaned.

Just then, the door opened and Jake's name was called. He hobbled along after the nurse, holding his left arm still with his right one.

“Well, Jake,” the nurse said, “what are we seeing you for today?”

“I was trying to do an ollie when my feet slipped and I landed on my arm at the park.” Jake tried to explain as his face contorted in pain.

“What's an ollie?” the nurse asked as she put the thermometer in his mouth.

“Tsa skay-ord trk.” Jake tried to answer, but couldn't get the words out right with the thermometer stuck in his mouth.

“He fell off his skateboard at the park,” Amy said. “I think he may have broken it.”

“The *skateboard*?” the nurse asked with a grin.

“No, his *left arm*,” his mom replied.

“Alright,” the nurse responded, “let's get you over to the x-ray machine,” the nurse said as she took the thermometer out and recorded a normal temperature.

Twenty minutes later, Dr. Fox walked into the room and announced, “Well, Jake, that's one of the finest broken arms I've seen this month! Such a perfect break- right across the radius bone!”

“Is that good?” Jake asked, a bit surprised.

“Actually, it is a good clean break. No worries. You'll just need to wear a cast for about 6 weeks, and you'll be as good as new.”

“A *cast*?” Jake's eyes got wide with fear. “Will I be able to ride my skateboard?”

“Sorry, no can do, buddy,” the Dr. Fox replied, “Better to just keep that arm still until it's healed up. What's your favorite color?” Dr. Fox asked.

“Uh.... army green.” said Jake glumly.

“Great- we have some army green wrapping material right here,” he said as he and the nurse began to prepare the cast.

When the doctor was finished, he told Amy to just call Jake's regular doctor and let them know what happened. His regular doctor would be fine to take the cast off in six weeks.

Getting into the car was not a problem, but strapping in was. With the cast on, Jake now needed help securing the seat belt. Hopefully, this was not a picture of things to come.

Jake took a nap when he got home. He slept all afternoon and was still ready to go to bed at his regular time.

But when Jake went to put his pajamas on for bed, he again found that he couldn't get his shirt off. “*Oh no!* I'm going to have to ask mom to help me *undress!*” This was definitely not cool!

Of course, Amy was nice about helping, but Jake still felt like he was a little kid again, needing his mom's help to dress & undress. He wasn't so sure he would be able to manage for *six weeks* with this cast on!

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What happened to Jake's arm?
2. What could he not do after that?

Bible Thought~

In today's story, Jake receives some pretty bad news, and then he finds out he can't even get dressed for bed! Talk about being humbled! Have you ever been embarrassed or had things happen that made you feel really low?

Last week we talked about pride. Remember, pride is thinking too highly of yourself. It's doing something selfish because you think you're great or better than someone else.

This week we're going to talk about the opposite of pride and that is humility. What is humility? (Let them try to guess).

Humility is valuing others more than yourself. It is also having a correct opinion of yourself in front of a holy God. We are sinful people, but loved by that same holy God. We are important, but remember, our importance comes from God.

Today's verse is Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." God loves it when we put other people's needs above our own. Do you know why? Because we're imitating Jesus when we do that. Jesus died for us, knowing that was the only way to satisfy God's justice against our sin. He put His own heavenly life aside so He could come down to earth and die for His own creation. Wow! Can you even grasp that? That Jesus gave up everything for us is simply amazing!! He loves us that much!!

So, when we consider others better than ourselves, we're acting in humility, just as Jesus did. Now, that doesn't mean that we constantly think of ourselves as worthless! That's still thinking of ourselves. Humility is simply not thinking of ourselves much at all. It is focusing on others.

Let's apply this to our story. What could have Jake done to treat Aubrey and Abigail more important than himself instead of trying to show off? (Let them try to guess...)

*He could have asked them about themselves-

- ☺ where they lived, ☺ what grade they were in,
- ☺ what they like to do at the park
- ☺ how long they were in town visiting

*He could have offered his skateboard for them to try it for themselves.

* He could have offered to show them how to simply ride the skateboard without the fancy tricks.

* He could have told them how much he enjoyed having their grandfather watch him after school.

So let's pay attention to who and what we focus our attention on- is it always on ourselves, or are we choosing to focus on others?

Let's stop and thank God for His amazing example of humility by dying on the cross for us!

Pray to close the session.

Week 3- Count Those Blessings!

1 Thess. 5:18, “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

The Ollie Follies: Chapter 3-

The sun was shining in Jake’s window the next morning. Jake’s eyes fluttered open as he remembered it was Sunday. His Sunday School teacher said if they behaved this week, she would let them form a human pyramid at the end of class. He turned over to pull off his covers and then he saw it!

Uggh! Jake whined. With the cast on, he wouldn’t be able to support his own weight in a pyramid, let alone other kids! This was *not* turning out well!

Then he remembered that his mom would even have to help him get dressed for church! By now, Jake was so frustrated, he didn’t even want to go to church! Something deep inside him came out- he let out a maddening yell- *Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!*

Amy came running into his room! “What’s wrong?!” Jake seemed nearly hysterical. He tried to explain, but everything got jumbled up as he was half crying, half mumbling. Amy managed to make out the words *pyramid* and *shirt*.

She finally got Jake calmed down enough to get him dressed and ready for church. As they were eating breakfast, she told Jake he should be counting his blessings, not looking at what he *can’t* do right now.

“I don’t see any blessings right now, mom,” Jake announced.

“Well, I see a few,” she countered. “What if you hadn’t been wearing your helmet? Your head could have gotten really hurt then. At least it was only your arm, not your leg. And it wasn’t even the side you write with. So you can at least do school.”

“I would have rather not been able to do school!” Jake whined.

“Jake, I know you’re upset, but just remember there is a good side to this. God doesn’t give us anything we can’t handle, and He’s probably trying to teach us both some lessons in all of this.”

“I’ll try, but it’s not going to be easy for me.” said Jake.

When they got to church, Amy explained to his Sunday School teacher what had happened, and suggested that maybe Jake could do something else if the class made the pyramid.

Meanwhile, in another classroom on the other side of town, Mr. Fred was dropping his granddaughters off at a Sunday School class at his own church. Aubrey and Abigail told the teacher about what happened to Jake and had the class make a Get Well card for him.

On their way home from church, they dropped off the card to Jake along with the skateboard Mr. Fred still had in his car from yesterday. Jake was so embarrassed, he didn’t even come out of his room. Amy accepted the card and skateboard for Jake and thanked them for stopping by.

Aubrey and Abigail still felt bad about what happened and kept thinking that maybe they could do something more to help Jake feel better. After lunch, while waiting for their parents to come pick them up, they saw their PawPaw (what they called Mr. Fred) reading the paper.

Aubrey stared at the back of the newspaper and said to Abigail, “Who is Max Rider?”

“I dunno. Let’s Google him,” Abigail replied.

“You’re gonna do *what* to him?” asked their Paw Paw as he looked up from reading the paper.

“*Paw Paw*, that means looking it up on internet.”

With his help, they found out that Max Rider was a famous skateboarder. Just then, both girls looked at each other and had an amazing idea!

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did Jake's mom try to get him to do (or think of)?
2. What did Aubrey and Abigail do for Jake?

Bible Thought~

In today's story, Jake kind of flips his lid, doesn't he? He gets so frustrated because he's looking at the problem, and not the blessings. Now granted, when bad things happen, it is difficult to see the good in the situation and be thankful. Notice that it is *difficult*, not *impossible*. There is always a reason to praise the Lord and be thankful because He never changes. He is always all wise, all loving, and all knowing. He is with us wherever we go if we have a relationship with Him.

Today's verse is 1 Thess. 5:18, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

What were some of the things Jake could be thankful for? Have you ever had a situation where something bad happened but you were still able to be thankful for something? (Maybe give an example from your own life).

When we're thankful, it takes the focus off the problem and puts it onto the God Who has all the answers! It's really a matter of focus and we have a choice as to what we focus on. The Bible doesn't say it's easy.

But if we have a relationship with Jesus, we're supposed to be different. Anyone can be bummed out about something bad happening, but we're called to look at the bright side. Poor Jake isn't learning this very well is he? He keeps on looking at what he can't do instead of the fact that things could have been a whole lot worse.

Do you know what? Even if things are a lot worse for us, we could still think, *God, I thank You that ONE DAY, Lord, I'll be with You in heaven, and this problem won't exist anymore.*

Let's take a moment and look at the girls in the story though. They are the ones who are being truly humble. They feel bad for Jake and are trying to encourage him. They want him to feel bad. It's hard to see someone go through rough times, and they aren't thinking of themselves, they're thinking of Jake.

Do you have any idea of what the girls will plan for Jake? (Let them try to guess- just say, *you'll have to wait and see...!*)

Let's stop and pray for the Lord to help us count our blessings in whatever situation we're in because He is with us.

Pray to close the session.

Week 4- Foolish Schemes!

Proverbs 12:15, “The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.”

The Ollie Follies: Chapter 4-

By the time Mr. Fred dropped Jake off at home Monday afternoon after being at the plant shop *Ready, Set, Grow!*, he was ready for a good book, without having to see or talk to anyone! Not only did he have to explain to his friends at school what had happened to his arm, during Sunday School yesterday, Jake’s teacher decided he could use her camera to take a picture of the human pyramid everyone *else* had built. He and his mom probably explained the circumstances of his cast to nearly a hundred folks at church. Jake was sick of this!

He grabbed a comic book off the bookshelf and flopped onto his bed, while his mom made dinner. Maybe something funny would make him feel better. Don’t they say that laughter is the best medicine?

Flipping through the pages of the book, Jake came across a one-box cartoon with a cat chasing a ball of string that was quickly dwindling in size. Jake gazed at the picture and had a monumental idea for a ten-year-old!

If I could just unwrap this cast and just keep my arm really still for the next 6 weeks, no one would ask me what happened- the cast would be gone! My problem would be solved! He thought to himself.

So very quietly and secretively, Jake tried to find the end of the army green wrapping material. Several minutes later, after being unable to find the end, he decided he would have to take more drastic measures.

He went in search of a pair of scissors to simply begin to pry up the wrapping and pull it off that way. He crept down to the hall closet where his mother kept some craft materials and there he saw it- his mother’s new pair of craft scissors. The blades seemed to be just thin enough to get underneath and pry up that wrapping!

He crept back to his room, hiding the scissors in his pocket and sat down on the bed. He pulled out the scissors and very gently at first tried to stick the tip of one side under the wrapping.

Huh- it needs just a little more pressure.

As Jake lifted the blade up, the wrapping did begin to be cut, but suddenly he had a bigger problem- - the tip of the scissor blade broke off!! *Oh no! Mom’s new craft scissors! What am I gonna’ do?*

He thought about getting rid of them, hiding them, and simply putting them back, but figured his mom would probably figure out that he had broken them because he was the only other person in the house.

In the end, he decided to give up and come clean. He was tired of trying to get rid of the cast. There was no way he could make his arm heal any faster anyway. So he very bravely took the scissors to his mom and told her what he had tried to do that made the tip break off.

“Jake, I am very disappointed in you.” Amy said, “You’ll have to buy another pair to replace them with some of your birthday money.”

Jake knew she was being fair. He *had* ruined them and he should get her another pair. He went to his piggy bank and began counting...

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did Jake try to do to his cast?
2. What happened to his mom’s new scissors?
3. What did she make him do to replace them?

Bible Thought~

Jake wasn’t being very wise today, was he? In fact, what he did was pretty foolish. Have you ever thought of something that seemed really great at the time and then turned out to really foolish?

Jake thought he could get away with trying to keep his arm still without the cast and that it would heal right. Is that smart? I’m not sure how he could have kept it hidden from his mom anyway. But sometimes we don’t think of all the consequences before we do something. We don’t think it all the way through.

The doctor that put the cast on had done it so his arm would keep perfectly still for 6 weeks so it would heal. The doctor is a whole lot older and smarter than Jake when it comes to medical advice, don't you think?

What would have happened if Jake had succeeded in unwrapping his cast and trying to keep it hidden and still for 6 weeks? Do you think he could have done it without anyone noticing? Do you think his arm would have healed properly?

Today's verse is Proverbs 12:15, "The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice."

Just like Jake, we like to think that we have all the answers. That goes back to the pride that we talked about in the beginning of the season. To put it bluntly, we just don't have all the answers, especially at a young age. We really are totally dependent on God for everything- every breath and heart beat. God sustains all life.

He also allows us to learn as we get older. That's why (generally speaking) older adults can give us good advice that we should follow. People like parents, doctors, teachers, and coaches are there to help us. Following a wise person's advice makes us humble, but also allows us to learn those lessons as well. It makes us wise as well.

Wisdom is knowing how to apply God's truth to a situation and then actually doing it. If we fail to take other people's wise advice, we are truly being foolish.

Let's stop and thank God for wise people in our lives that are there to help us and ask Him to help us obey wise advice.

Pray to close the session.

Week 5- Encouragement Matters!

1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

The Ollie Follies: Chapter 5-

Three weeks later, Jake was now used to the cast being on his arm and had learned how to do some things on his own, even if it was a bit awkward. His follow-up appointment with his regular doctor was in three weeks. Around his house, it was called C- Day, because if all went well, the cast would come off that day. It was marked on the calendar with a big red “X”.

He had managed to stay off his skateboard, but still wished he could practice that ollie. He was trying really hard to be patient, but sometimes it seemed so hard being at the halfway point. On Saturday morning, there was a knock at the door. Amy answered it and there stood Mr. Fred, Aubrey, Abigail, and the girls’ parents. At first, Jake wanted to run into the kitchen. After all, he had embarrassed himself so much the last time he saw the girls.

But then something wonderful happened! Aubrey held out a white envelope to him.

“What’s this?” he asked, sheepishly reaching for it.

“Open it and find out!” Abigail answered.

As he opened the envelope, Jake’s eyes got wider and wider! Two colorful tickets emerged and on the top they read:

PRO SKATE 2012 STARRING MAX RIDER AND FRIENDS

Jake was stunned! For the first time in his life, he was actually speechless! He turned and looked at his mom who was nodding and smiling. Jake quickly found his voice.

“Are these for me?” he asked excitedly.

“Yep,” said Mr. Fred, “We thought you might need a little extra cheering up seeing as how you still have three weeks left.”

“Awesome! When is it?” Jake answered himself as he looked down at the ticket. “This afternoon?! Mom, can we go?”

“I’ve known about it for quite awhile. The calendar’s all clear,” she said with a wink.

“Wahoooooo!” Jake danced around the room.

The Pro-Skate show was amazing! All Jake’s favorite skaters were there doing tricks that Jake had only seen on TV! They had great seats, right in the middle of the arena, and not too high up.

When the show was over, the announcer called began, “Hold on folks, the show would not be complete without giving away a signed skateboard from Max Rider! Will the holder of ticket number 357409 please come to the main gate and claim your prize?”

Jake looked down and it was his number!! As Jake and Amy made their way down to the main gate, Max Rider was there to greet them personally!

“Congratulations, dude!” he said in that famous Australian accent. When he saw Jake’s cast, he added, “Dude! D’ya get that doin’ tricks on your board?” and handed Jake the autographed skateboard.

“Yep- but I only have three more weeks to go before it comes off! Then I’ll be back on my *new* board practicing my ollie.” Jake answered admiring the prize.

“Bummer! I’ve had both my arms broken at one time or another. Just follow the doctor’s orders and you’ll be good as new! Would you like me to sign your cast too?” Max asked.

“Wow! That’d be great!” Jake said as he held out his arm. Now he *knew* he could make it another three weeks!

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did Aubrey & Abigail give to Jake?
2. What advice did Max Rider give to Jake?

Bible Thought~

At the end of last week, we talked about how Aubrey and Abigail were coming up with a plan that was truly humble. They wanted to encourage Jake to wait until his arm fully healed.

Have you ever had something take a really long time? It takes a lot of patience to wait for it to happen or be over. It's easy to become discouraged, especially at the halfway point. You're in too far to turn back, and it seems like such a long way for it to end.

We need encouragement during those times. Today's verse is 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

The word *encourage* (parakaleo) literally means *to call to one's side, or to speak to*. In this verse, it has the connotation of consoling, comforting, or strengthening. When someone comes beside you and speaks to you during a hard time, we receive encouragement, don't we?

How can we encourage each other out on the field or at home? What can we say that will help someone through a hard day? (Let them try to answer...)

Things like:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| *Good job! | *Way to go! |
| *That's it! | *Keep up the good work! |
| *THANK YOU!! | *I LOVE YOU!! |

Did you know that when we encourage each other, we're acting like the Holy Spirit? One of the attributes (characteristics) of the Holy Spirit is to comfort us. Remember that word from the definition? The word *parakletos*, which means *comforter*, comes from the same root word.

After Jesus was here on earth, and died and rose again, He appeared to the disciples and to the crowd of 500 people. When He went back up into heaven, He told the disciples He would send the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, to be their helper and to guide them into all truth. The Holy Spirit helped them (and us) to understand the Bible.

Of course, when we help each other and say kind words to each other, it makes Jesus happy. And it makes others happy, too.

Let's stop and thank Jesus for sending us the Holy Spirit and ask Him to help us encourage each other as the Holy Spirit encourages us by helping us understand God's Word.

Pray to close the session.

Week 6- Stronger than Before!

James 1:3-4, “because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its perfect work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

The Ollie Follies: Chapter 6-

C- Day had finally arrived!! Jake and his mom waited at the doctor’s office.

Jake jumped when his name was called. He was a mere six inches behind the nurse as they walked down the hall. She stopped and looked for an empty exam room and Jake bumped right into the back of her!

“Sorry. Guess I’m just a little excited to be finally getting this off.” Jake apologized.

“We’ll take another x-ray first to make sure the bone is healed enough for it to come off.” said the nurse. “Let’s just go there first.”

In the x-ray room, Jake put his arm on table, remembering how he had done it before. It only took a few minutes to get the pictures.

Waiting in the exam room for the doctor, Jake was so nervous he could hardly sit still. The ten minutes he had to wait seemed like an eternity, but Dr. Rufus soon walked in.

“Well, let’s have a look at that arm.” he said as he pulled the digital x-rays up on the computer screen.

Jake looked closely at the picture, but all he could see was a fuzzy white line where he had broken his arm. He started to get a little worried that it might still be broken.

Dr. Rufus remarked, “Well, this looks exactly like it should. See here?” he pointed with his finger, “This is where you broke your radius bone. And this is the calcium buildup at the point of the break. Your bone sends calcium to the break to strengthen it. As of right now, your bone is stronger there than before the break. It will eventually even back out, but right now, you’re stronger than before. You did good, Jake!”

Jake was confused and excited at the same time. His arm didn’t feel any stronger, but he was so glad the cast would be coming off in just a few minutes!

“Nurse, go ahead and get the saw.” said Dr. Rufus.

“Right away, Doctor,” the nurse replied as she exited the room.

“*Saw!?!?*” exclaimed Jake. “Did you say, *saw*? You’re going to cut it off with a *saw*?”

“Don’t worry, Jake. It’s just a tiny blade that isn’t even as thick as the cast. It just cuts through the tough outer layer so we can pull the soft inner layer off.” Dr. Rufus said as he examined the cast.

Suddenly the doctor saw the rough place on the cast where Jake had tried to unwrap it. “What’s this? Did you try to get the cast off yourself?”

Jake was embarrassed as he closed his eyes and nodded his head.

“Bet you broke some scissor tips, didn’t you?” the doctor asked.

How does this guy know these things? Jake was wondering.

A few minutes later, the doctor was holding up a the cast and asked, “I suppose you’ll want to keep this signature. Max Rider is quite a guy, isn’t he? Let’s try to cut out the signature so you can frame it or something.”

Jake took the piece of cast home as his mom went to find a frame. There in the corner of his room sat the autographed skateboard he had won a few weeks ago. Pausing for a moment, he realized he had learned some valuable lessons on the pitfall of pride and the benefit of perseverance. Maybe that’s what God was trying to teach him all along.

There were still quite a few hours of daylight left as Jake picked up his new board. After all, he had an ollie to work on, but he would take it easy and practice it wisely this time.

The End.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did the doctor say about Jake's arm at the point where it was broken?

Bible Thought~

Jake's arm did finally heal the way it was supposed to. It even got stronger at that point because when a bone heals, it sends calcium to that point. So for a temporary time, that place is stronger than it was before the break.

Let's think about nature for a minute. What does a caterpillar become? A moth or a butterfly, right? What does it do as it changes? It goes into its cocoon or chrysalis and stays there until it comes out as the moth or butterfly.

Did you know that as it comes out of its cocoon/chrysalis, it has to struggle to get out? It's not easy for the moth/butterfly. But the struggle is all a part of God's great plan. If it didn't struggle, it's wings would be really weak and it wouldn't be able to fly. Some predator would come along and eat it quickly.

But since it has to struggle to get out, its wings are made much stronger, allowing it to fly almost immediately. It is the same with us. God allows the trials of our lives to help strengthen us. When we go through a hard time, we can come out bitter or better on the other side of it. It's a matter of what we choose to focus on.

We can see the problem as huge and unconquerable, or we can ask the Lord what He wants to show us through it. Maybe He wants to teach us perseverance, or faith, or humility. The great thing about this is, when God begins a work in us, it's not to be temporary! It's designed to be permanent.

Today's verse is James 1:3-4, "because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its perfect work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

God loves us so much, He wants us to be mature and complete, like our verse says, not lacking anything. Of course, God will be right there with us, helping us along the way. He wants us to persevere through the hard times and not give up. In the real world, He quite often sends people like Aubrey and Abigail into our lives to encourage us through those times.

The word for perseverance here is *hypomone*, which means perseverance, endurance, patience. It is a steadfastness which does not swerve from faith in circumstances.

That is what God wants from us. He wants us to stay faithful no matter what is happening. When we do this, it pleases him (Without faith, it is impossible to please God; Hebrews 11:6).

Let's think about this the next time something hard happens to us. Let's try to stay faithful and persevere through it.

Pray to close the session.

Week 7- Summary

Review the previous week's story and verse/Bible thought, then ask which week was their favorite! ☺

Week 1- Jake shows off in front of Mr. Fred's granddaughters, Aubrey and Abigail, and ends up falling off his skateboard at the park.	Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."
Week 2- Jake learns a bit of humility as he discovers he has a broken arm, must wear a cast for 6 weeks and needs help with everyday tasks.	Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."
Week 3- Jake has a fit with not being able to do things and his mom reminds him to count his blessings, not focus on his problem.	1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
Week 4- Jake tries to unwrap his cast in secret and ends up breaking his mom's new craft scissors. He confesses, but still has to buy her a new pair.	Proverbs 12:15, "The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice."
Week 5- Aubrey and Abigail try to encourage Jake with two tickets to see his favorite skateboard pro, Max Rider. Jake wins an autographed skateboard and Max also encourages him to follow the doctor's orders.	1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
Week 6- Jake finally gets his cast off and discovers the bone is stronger than before for a time.	James 1:3-4, "because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its perfect work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."