

Family Matters

A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

It's Starting to Get Real



As a parent, perhaps you've experienced the following comments from your children already this school year:

- First homework assignment: *"No problem."*
- First test: *"Aced it."*
- First project: *"Ready to go."*

By this time in the school year, the newness has worn off; the luster of new beginnings is turning into the reality of the long haul. Maybe it is going well — your child is making adjustments as needed, keeping up with expectations and making good grades! You may, perhaps, be experiencing a different reality — your child is struggling with the workload, feeling social uncertainty and encountering a subject area that is very challenging. Reality has set in.

How do you respond to a new and challenging reality? Can you see the future ahead of you as well as your child? Are you one who tackles concerns head on? Are you one who addresses issues in small, manageable ways? Do you prefer to focus on areas in which you find success rather than areas in which you struggle?

We all have our preferred go-to behaviors when it comes to challenges. Some of these are very positive and help us address concerns and create viable solutions; other behaviors can be less helpful and can bring negative results. The world in which we live would encourage us to "go it on our own, hunker down, pull ourselves up by the bootstraps, so that we can put our best foot forward." These pithy sayings can soothe us for a moment or two, but in the long run, our cries for support and assistance can go unnoticed and leave us feeling empty and alone.

Where do we go when things get real? To whom do we turn? How do we find hope and healing?

In Matthew Chapter 9, we read about two blind men who are following Jesus when they call out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David" (v. 27). In the follow-up conversation, Jesus asks them if they believe that He can heal them. "Yes, Lord" (v. 28) is their reply. Jesus restores the sight of these two men.

Jesus knew their condition, and He knows our condition. He has compassion. He is interested in helping us just as He was interested in healing these blind men. He knows that we are blind in this life — we don't always see the clear path ahead that He would have us walk. We don't always see the blessings of the Father in the reality of our daily lives. And on that day — our last day, when it will be very real that the end is near — Jesus comes to our side, He sees our reality, our sin, and He announces that His death and resurrection has covered it — we are forgiven and He will welcome us to our eternal home.

Jesus is real. He is present. Jesus is God. He is loving. He walks with us in the realities of life every day. He hears our cry for mercy and responds.

FAMILY LINKS // Activities for families to reinforce Bible truths in the home.

Gather the family together in a comfortable place for study and discussion using the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER

Given by the person who was last to sit down for dinner tonight.

FAMILY DISCUSSION TIME

Ask family members to give a “thumbs up,” “thumbs down” or “so-so” (balancing thumb and pinkie) response to each item below and share why.

I am afraid of...

- > snails
- > spiders
- > snakes
- > kitty-cats
- > lions
- > tigers
- > bears
- > scary movies
- > roller-coasters
- > the dark
- > going someplace new
- > flying in an airplane
- > elevators



FAMILY STUDY TIME

Have someone in the family read Matt. 9:27–31, and discuss the following questions:

- 1 Why did these men follow Jesus?
(They were blind and wanted healing)
- 2 How did they get the attention of Jesus?
(Called out, “Lord, have mercy on us”)
- 3 What did Jesus do?
(He first asked them a question to show they believed)

Then Jesus, upon hearing their confession of faith, restored their sight.

- 4 What did these men do?
(They told people anyway!)
- 5 Why do you think they told others when Jesus asked them not to do this?
(Answers will vary)
- 6 What did Jesus ask them to do?
(Not to tell anyone about their healing)

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Blind Guessing Game

- 1 Obtain a blindfold that will fit everyone in the family.
- 2 Locate any number of simple household items.
- 3 Blindfold members of the family one by one and have them try to guess the item placed in their hands.

Follow-up Questions for Discussion:

- What was hard about this activity?
- What was easy about this activity?
- Was it frightening in any way?
- What would it be like if you couldn’t see?
- How do you think the blind men felt when Jesus healed them?



CLOSING FAMILY LITANY

On a piece of paper, create a list of tough things, challenges, health concerns and struggles that your friends and family are experiencing. Once the list is complete, have a family member read each item out loud one by one, with the rest of the family responding each time with the words, “Lord, have mercy.” Hold hands as a family as you do this.



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