



The Shoebox Gift That Gives Hope

Lola's Lion

TEACHER/PARENT GUIDE



Use this guide to help children learn the importance of prayer from watching the new Samaritan's Purse short film, "Lola's Lion."

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A cuddly toy (Consider bringing your childhood favourite to the class if you still have it.)
- If time allows, ask kids to bring their favourite cuddly toy to class.
- Sheets of paper, pens, pencils, markers, crayons

BEFORE VIDEO:

Discussion: 5-7 minutes

Show the class your cuddly toy.

Ask class: Tell me about your favourite cuddly toy. (*Affirm answers given.*)

Ask class: Why are cuddly toys so special to us? *Because they are good listeners, they help us to not feel alone at night, they are always there for us, they were given to us by someone special, etc.*

Say: Cuddly toys are a good reminder that we are loved even when the people that love us cannot be with us.

Ask class: Who else is:

- Someone special?
- A good listener?
- Someone who helps us to not feel alone at night (because He IS with us)?
- Always there for us no matter what (in fact, He never leaves or abandons us)?

JESUS!

Say: I love my cuddly toy ___ but I know it is only a toy. But, it can be a good reminder of God's love for me!

Let's watch this video together to see what happened with a very special cuddly toy lion.

PLAY VIDEO

Video length: 12 minutes

Tip: Give YOUR attention to the video (as much as you can while maintaining order) in order to help kids keep focus also! When you are distracted, they will be too!

AFTER VIDEO:

Discussion: 7-10 minutes

Ask class: What was the most special thing in the gift box that Lola received? *The Lion.*

Ask class: Why was the Lion special?

- He was just what she wanted.
- The note talked about the Lion.
- The Lion was the coolest toy.
- The Lion wanted to be her friend.
- The Lion reminded her that she was never alone and that Jesus loved her.
- God was able to show her that He knew the deepest desires of her heart and that He heard her prayers!

Ask class: How did the Lion get to Lola? *It came in a shoebox.*

Ask class: Did Emily, who packed the box, know that it was the perfect gift for Lola and that she had a picture of a Lion on her wall? *No, but God did!*

Ask class: So how did the Lion's box get especially to her? *Emily prayed that it would be the perfect gift for the child who received it.*

Ask class: What is prayer and how does it change things? *Prayer is talking to God. Prayer itself (just saying words) can't change anything, but GOD can! When we pray to God, trusting that God hears us, we know that He will listen to us and that He will do what is best. Emily prayed and trusted God to do what she could not do. She trusted God to know who the right child was to get her box with the Lion. The Bible says that things that are impossible for us,*

are possible with God. Jesus was talking about a difficult thing in Matthew 19:26 when He said, "With people, this is impossible. But with God, all things are possible."

ACTIVITY

Time: 10-15 minutes

Say: Let's do an activity! We are going to write a prayer for a child who will receive a shoebox. We are going to see that when we send our prayers to God, He is able to hear our prayers and change things for someone else! We sometimes call that kind of prayer "intercession." The Bible has a lot of examples of people praying for other people to know God's love, feel His hope, or have deep joy!

Listen to these Scriptures:

"I pray that he will use his glorious riches to make you strong. May his Holy Spirit give you his power deep down inside you. Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in him. And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. May you have power together with all the Lord's holy people to understand Christ's love. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is" (Ephesians 3:16-18, NIRV).

And:

"May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope" (Romans 15:13, NIRV)

As you give out supplies ask: Do you know that the most important thing to put into a shoebox is hope, joy, and love? How do you put hope, joy, and love into a shoebox? Can you buy it at the store? "One gallon of love please?" No! We put hope, joy, and love into a shoebox through prayer! God's Spirit can fill all of the nooks and crannies of a box with hope, joy, and love if we ask Him. Even if we have already packed our shoeboxes, God's love, His joy, and His hope can sneak down into every single place so that a child who opens a box feels loved by God. And, when we write our notes in shoeboxes, we can tell the children who get the boxes that we love them too!

So, we are going to write a prayer for a shoebox recipient. How do we start a prayer? [Go through an example of how to write a prayer being sure to pray for the child to feel the love of God and open their heart to the truth about Jesus!]

Instructions:

- Give each child a sheet of paper and have them write a prayer on it. Allow them to spread out and do this quietly. OR, work together to write one prayer as a class.
- Demonstrate how to fold it into a basic paper airplane shape.

- Send it on a flight to the other side of the room. Have someone pick up the prayer(s) and then send them on to somewhere else.
- Review again how our prayers help us send hope, joy, and love to another person.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As Time Allows

- "Let's Be Friends" Sheet
- Maze
- Word Search

Challenges:

Scripture Memorization - Jesus teaches us how to pray. Challenge kids to memorize the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13

Pack a Special Box - Challenge kids to return the following Sunday with one item that God has put on their heart that a child should receive and pack a box as a class.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH:

Read: *“O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether”* (Psalm 139:1-4).

Watch: “Lola’s Lion”

Share: The Lord knows all things and is in all things. He knows exactly where you are and exactly what you want and need before you even say it! All of those things matter to Him, and His greatest desire is to share His love with us. That’s why He sent His Son—because He so loved the world, He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him would receive the greatest gift of all—adoption into the family of God!

He can use something as simple as a lion to show us how He cares for us, like He did with Lola. And, we can be a part of sharing His love through prayer and giving like Emily! Think about a time when you needed something like a hug, or a present, or a Band-Aid, and someone else in your life met that need. You can meet that need for another little boy or girl across the world by packing a shoebox gift and praying that it would be the perfect gift for the child that receives it.

The most important thing you can put into a shoebox is hope and love! How do you put those things into a shoebox? By praying!

Activity: Let’s do an activity! We are going to write a prayer for a child who will receive a shoebox and we are going to see that when we send our prayers to God, He is able to hear our prayers and change things for someone else!

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