



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Paul felt lonely—and worse, he felt guilty for feeling lonely. Both of his two best friends were busy keeping lonely or sick people company, and Paul felt bad for wanting them to be with him instead. Knowing it always made him feel better, Paul picked up his drawing notebook and pencils. After sketching himself and expressing his feelings of loneliness, Paul really did feel better. He decided to shoot hoops in the driveway.

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Some time later, Paul’s older brother Mike joined him in the driveway. He was holding Paul’s drawing. “This is a great drawing you did of me. I was really lonely last night when Mark went to the movies and I had to stay home!” Paul explained that he had drawn the picture of himself, not of Mike. “Sounds like we could both use some company!” Mike declared. As they began a game of one-on-one, Paul felt glad he had drawn the picture, and that God has used Paul’s ability to draw to help him—and his brother—feel a little less lonely.

Paul felt lonely. And worse, he felt guilty for feeling lonely.

Dee was spending the weekend at her grandmother’s house. Her grandmother lived alone in a huge, old farmhouse. Whenever she could, Dee spent one weekend a month with her Oma to keep her company.

Cy’s family was at home, but Cy’s dad was very, very sick with cancer. People were beginning to whisper that Cy’s dad wasn’t going to live for much longer. Cy didn’t really say anything about it, but Paul knew that Cy was purposely spending all the time he could with his dad.

Still, Paul felt lonely. And he felt horribly selfish for wanting to be with his friends when Dee was helping her grandmother and Cy was in anguish. Laying on his bed with his feet up on the wall, Paul noticed his drawing notebook and pencils sitting on his desk.

“Drawing always helps me feel better,” he thought to himself. Seating himself at his desk, he began to sketch. He drew a picture of himself, sitting alone on the floor in the middle of an empty room. He had pulled his knees up to his chest and was resting his head on top of them. His face was turned away. As Paul drew his feelings, he really did begin to feel better. Finally, his picture finished, he decided to go outside and shoot hoops in the driveway.

Later that afternoon, Paul’s brother Mike came out of the house. He was holding Paul’s drawing.

“Paul!” he said. “This is great!”

“What?” wondered Paul.

“This drawing you did of me!” Mike said. “This drawing shows exactly how I was feeling last night when Mark went to the movies with his friends and I had to stay home.”

Mark was Mike’s twin brother. They usually did everything together, but Mike was grounded because of a bad grade.

“Actually, that drawing is of me,” Paul said. “I was feeling lonely because Cy and Dee are both busy this weekend.”

“Well, either way, this picture is great! You have a real gift, Paul,” Mike said. “I didn’t know you were feeling bad. I’ve been feeling pretty lonely, too. It sounds like we could both use some company, then! How about a little one-on-one?”

“Sounds great! If...you’re ready to lose!” Paul said, feeling very glad he had drawn that picture. He always knew that his talent for drawing made him feel better when he was down. But it had also helped his brother, too!

Paul quickly thanked God for his brother, and for using Paul’s ability to draw to help them both feel a little less lonely.



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

A new family had just moved in across the street from Dee. But this family wasn’t like Dee’s family—or any other family she knew. They had dark skin, and dressed differently, and even cooked with strange-smelling spices. “We should invite the new boy to church,” Cy decided. “I’ve never seen anyone like him at church before.” Together, Dee, Cy, and Paul nervously walked across the street to invite Dee’s new neighbor to church.

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

“I’m Raj,” said the friendly boy who opened the door. Paul introduced himself and invited Raj to Dee, Cy, and Paul’s church—the church where Paul’s father pastured. “Actually, one of the reasons we moved here was to be part of your church.” Dee, Cy, and Paul were surprised. Raj continued and explained that he was a Christian who’d been attending church since he was born. Raj invited his new friends inside to see his new room and meet his family. Dee, Cy, and Paul gladly accepted the invitation, but felt sorry that they had assumed he was “different” just because of his appearance.

The moving truck had finally rolled away from the house across the street from Dee’s, revealing her new neighbors.

A new family had moved in across the street. But it wasn’t a family like Dee’s.

This family consisted of a mother, a son, and two grandparents. They all had dark skin, even darker than Cy’s, but not as dark as Paul’s. The grandmother wore long, flowing clothes, sandals, and a red dot on her forehead. When Dee and her mom had taken over cookies to welcome to the new neighbors, Dee had noticed a strange aroma wafting from the kitchen.

“That’s curry,” Mrs. Morgan explained to Dee. “It’s a very popular spice in certain kinds of cooking.”

“It smells nice,” Dee said. “Just... different.”

The son looked just about the same age as Dee, Cy, and Paul. “We should invite him to church,” Cy said. “I’m sure he’s never been to a church before.”

“Why do you think that?” Paul wondered.

“Well, look at him,” said Cy. “I’ve never seen anyone like him at church before.”

So Dee, Cy, and Paul walked across the street and rang the doorbell. It always made them feel a little bit nervous to invite a new person to church, but they each felt especially nervous about inviting this boy.

“Hi,” said the smiling boy as he opened the door.

“Hi!” said Dee, Cy, and Paul at the same time, then laughed, embarrassed.

“I’m Raj,” said the boy politely.

“I’m Paul Shepherd, and these are my friends Dee and Cy,” Paul began. “We’d like to ask if you’d like to come to church with us this Sunday.”

“Oh? Which church?” asked Raj.

Paul gave him the name of their church. “My dad is the pastor there,” he explained.

“Oh, right! Pastor Shepherd!” Raj said. “Actually, we’ve been planning to attend your church for a long time. My mom and I visited it once. In fact, one of the reasons she wanted to move to this neighborhood was to be part of your church!”

“So you’ve been to church before?” wondered Cy, surprised.

“Oh, sure. I’ve been going to church since I was born,” Raj answered.

“Oh!” said Dee. “Well, that’s great! So, what are you doing today?”

“Unpacking,” Raj answered, rolling his eyes. “The very worst part about moving. But I like my new room a lot. Would you like to come in and see it? And meet my family?”

“Sure!” answered Dee, Cy, and Paul. They were glad to have made a new friend, but felt sorry that they had assumed Raj was “different” just because of his appearance. He was still one of God’s children—and a Christian, too!



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee sadly said goodbye to Cy and Paul after walking home from school. “What’s the matter?” wondered Mrs. Morgan after Dee came inside. “There’s a birthday party this weekend,” Dee explained. “That doesn’t sound so bad,” Mrs. Morgan replied. “But every girl in the class is invited but me!” Dee said, beginning to cry. “I don’t know why Kelsey doesn’t like me, but she never has!” Dee was devastated.

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

“That’s a hard situation, Dee,” Mrs. Morgan sympathized. “Doesn’t it make you glad that you’re invited to the biggest party of all?” Mrs. Morgan explained that nobody in the whole world is left out when it comes to being invited to God’s party in heaven. “The party in heaven is going to be 100 times better than any party on earth!” Even though she still felt bad about being left out of Kelsey’s party, Dee rejoiced that everyone got an invitation to the most important celebration of all!

“See you in the morning, Dee!” Paul said as he waved goodbye. As they did most days, Dee, Cy, and Paul had walked home from school together.

“Yeah, see you,” replied Dee. She hadn’t had much to say on the walk home. Cy and Paul were two of her closest friends, but she didn’t think they would really understand why she was upset today.

Chip, Dee’s dog, came bounding up as Dee opened the door, his golden tail wagging. Dee made an effort to scratch his head, even though she felt horrible. Chip fell in step with her as she walked down the hall.

“Hey, honey,” said Dee’s mom as Dee hung up her backpack. “How was school?”

Dee shrugged. “All right.”

“Sure it was,” said Mrs. Morgan. “Why don’t we try again. What’s up?”

“There’s a birthday party this weekend.” Dee said.

“Oh, yeah?” Mrs. Morgan asked. “Well, birthday parties are usually good things, aren’t they?”

“They are when you’re invited,” Dee answered. “But I’m not invited to this one.”

“Oh, well, that’s all right, too,” Mrs. Morgan replied. “Not everyone gets invited to every party.”

Dee burst into tears. “But everyone else is invited, Mom!” she wailed suddenly. “Kelsey handed out invitations at lunch to every girl in class—every girl except for me!”

Dee’s mom gave her a hug. “Oh, I’m so sorry,” she said to Dee. “Now I see why you’re so upset!”

Dee cried for a few minutes, then settled down. She blew her nose, making Chip lift his head and perk up his ears. Dee and her mom sat down to a snack of carrot sticks before talking it over.

“I don’t know why Kelsey doesn’t like me,” she said, “But she never has. Ever since the first day of school I’ve tried to be extra nice to her just because I knew she didn’t like me, but it doesn’t make any difference!”

“That’s a hard situation, Dee, especially since it sounds like it’s out of your control,” Mrs. Morgan replied, thinking. “Doesn’t it kind of make you feel more glad than ever that you are invited to another huge party—the biggest party of all?”

“I am?” wondered Dee.

“Of course—and for this party, *nobody* is left out when the invitations are given—everybody gets one! It’s the invitation to the big party in heaven—the party God throws for those who believe in Him!”

“It’s just so hard to think about that,” Dee said. “I mean, I can’t see the invitation I have to God’s party, but I could see the invitations Kelsey handed out.”

“God’s Kingdom is invisible, but it doesn’t make it any less real,” explained Mrs. Morgan. “And the party we’re going to in heaven is going to be 100 times better than any party on earth!”

Dee smiled. She still felt bad about being left out of Kelsey’s party, but rejoiced that everyone got an invitation to the most important celebration of all!



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

“Calm down, everyone,” said Mrs. Trujillo, Cy’s Sunday school teacher. “I’d like to introduce you to the newest member of our class!” Cy and his classmates looked around. They hadn’t noticed anyone new in class that morning. Mrs. Trujillo explained that while the new student wouldn’t actually be joining them in class, she was part of their church, and part of Christ’s family. Cy was confused. How could he have a new Sunday school classmate who didn’t attend his Sunday school?

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Mrs. Trujillo explained that the new student, Rachel, lived in a remote African country called Burkina Faso. “Mrs. Trujillo, how is there a church in a country that none of us has even heard of?” Mrs. Trujillo described how believers had answered God’s call to take His Word to all people living everywhere! Cy and his classmates were amazed. Even in a small country so far away, people were learning about and worshiping Jesus! The students excitedly began writing their first letters to their new classmate.

“All right, everyone; calm down,” began Mrs. Trujillo. “I’d like to introduce everyone to the newest member of our Sunday school class!”

Cy, with the rest of his classmates, looked around. He hadn’t noticed anyone new in class.

“Who is it?” whispered a number of students.

“This person won’t actually be joining us in our classroom, but she is part of our church, and part of the family of Christ, and now, she’s part of our class!”

Cy looked at Mrs. Trujillo, confused. How could they have a new Sunday school classmate who didn’t attend their Sunday school?

Mrs. Trujillo pointed to a large map she had posted on the board. “Who knows what part of the world is featured on this map?”

Cy raised his hand, along with most of the class. “It’s Africa,” he answered, after being called on.

“That’s right!” Mrs. Trujillo now pointed to a blob in the middle of Africa that had been outlined in red. “And who can tell me what this place is called?”

The class was silent. No hands were raised.

Mrs. Trujillo laughed. “I was pretty sure about that,” she said. “Our new classmate, Rachel, lives in a small African country called Burkina Faso. We’re going to use our offering money to send support for her and her church. She’ll be sending us letters, and we can write to her, too.”

“Burkina Faso?” Cy thought to himself, then asked, “Mrs. Trujillo, how is there a church in a country in the middle of Africa that none of us has even heard of?”

“Because believers around the world have answered God’s call to take His Word to all people, living everywhere!” Mrs. Trujillo answered.

“Are there a lot of Christians in Burkina Faso?” another student asked.

“The country is about 30% Christian,” Mrs. Trujillo answered. “But that number has been growing.”

“Wow!” said another student in Cy’s class. “That’s got to be a lot of people!”

“It’s really exciting,” Mrs. Trujillo agreed. “We can ask Rachel about any new Christians who are part of her church, and even pray for people who are considering becoming Christians.”

“Cool!” said Cy. “Today can we write letters to send to B-..., Burky-..., wherever?”

Mrs. Trujillo laughed. “Burkina Faso, Cy. And the answer is yes—that’s exactly what we’re going to do today!” she said, handing out a form for each of the students to write their letter on.



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee missed her mom. Dee’s Aunt Jacque, Mrs. Morgan’s sister, had gotten sick with pneumonia. She was recovering, but Mrs. Morgan had flown out-of-state to help her take care of her kids while she was sick. “Please help Aunt Jacque feel better, God,” Dee hastily prayed. “I’m supposed to make cupcakes for the school bake sale tomorrow,” Dee explained to her dad. “Well, I may not make cupcakes as good as Mom’s, but we can give it a shot!” Mr. Morgan replied.

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Dee and her dad spent the rest of the afternoon working on the bake sale project. Dee laughed as Mr. Morgan stirred the batter so fast his face was coated with flour. As they wiped the last bit of frosting on the last batch of cupcakes, the door opened. “Mom!” said Dee. Mrs. Morgan explained that Aunt Jacque had gotten much better the previous day, and so Mrs. Morgan had decided to come home early. Dee was amazed—God had answered her prayer that Aunt Jacque feel better. Even more, He had given her even more than she dared to ask for—her mom home early!

“Dad,” Dee said to Mr. Morgan. “What day is Mom coming home again?”

Mr. Morgan looked up from the newspaper and at the calendar hanging in the kitchen. “Not for another three days, I’m afraid,” he answered. “Aunt Jacque has been getting better, though. It’s good Mom’s there to help her.”

Quickly, in her head, Dee prayed for her Aunt Jacque, as she had often in the past week. “Please let her feel better, God,” she hastily prayed. Dee’s mom’s sister, Aunt Jacque, had come down with pneumonia. She was getting better, but Dee’s mom had flown out-of-state to help Aunt Jacque care for her three kids.

“Why? Is there something you need from her?” Mr. Morgan asked.

“Well, we’re having a bake sale at school tomorrow,” Dee explained. “I’m supposed to bring cupcakes, but I don’t know how to make them. I’ve done it with mom before, but I’ve never made them by myself.”

Mr. Morgan smiled and stood up. “Well, I may not make cupcakes as good as Mom’s—in fact, I’m pretty sure I won’t. But I think you and I may be able to give it a shot. What do you say?”

Dee smiled. “Okay, Dad.”

Mr. Morgan and Dee spent the rest of the afternoon working on Dee’s bake sale project. Dee found her mother’s recipe in the recipe box. She and her father went to the store together to buy extra milk and eggs.

Dee laughed as she watched her dad stir flour into the batter—he stirred so fast that a trace of flour dusted his face when he looked up. Chip was there too. He was always underfoot when Dee’s dad cooked. Chip knew Mr. Morgan tended to drop more food than Dee’s mom.

Finally, they took the last batch of cupcakes out of the oven. “This last bunch is for us, Dee,” Mr. Morgan said as he wiped frosting on the top of the last cupcake. “I think we’ve earned it.”

Dee laughed. Just as she was about to enjoy her first bite, the front door opened, and Mrs. Morgan walked in. Chip barked and happily wagged his tail. “Mom!” Dee said. “I thought you weren’t coming home for three more days!” she said, hugging her mom.

“I wasn’t supposed to,” Mrs. Morgan answered, hugging Dee and giving Dee’s dad a kiss. “But Jacque woke up yesterday feeling much better, and wanted to get out of bed. I stayed through the day and this morning to make sure she was okay, but this afternoon she told me to go home!”

Dee was amazed. God had answered her prayer—and then some! Not only had Aunt Jacque gotten better, but her mom had been able to come home, too—more than she had even dared to hope for! “Try a cupcake, Mom!” Dee said.

“Thanks!” said Mrs. Morgan, taking a bite. “Delicious!”



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee and Cy were playing a board game at Dee’s house when Paul ran in, holding an envelope. A letter from Luis! Dee read the letter aloud to Paul and Cy. Luis described how he had met a new friend in a neighboring village—a friend who happened to be deaf. Luis explained that where he lived, many people believed that when people were born disabled, it’s because they were being punished, and other people avoided them. When Luis began to spend time with his new friend, his other friends began to warn him—and then didn’t want anything to do with Luis, or the new boy!

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Luis continued to be a good friend to the deaf boy, loaning him his Bible so the boy could read the stories about how Jesus healed the sick and disabled. Slowly, Luis’ friends saw that nothing bad was happening to Luis, and began to accept Luis’ new friend. “Luis sure is brave—it would be really hard to have your friends not talk to you anymore,” Dee, Cy, and Paul agreed. They determined that Luis was different—in the best possible way. He was set apart by God to help spread His Word!

Paul burst into Dee’s house, holding up an envelope. “Hey, guys, look what I got in the mail!”

Cy recognized the red and blue stripes on the outside of the envelope—that meant “air mail.”

“A letter from Luis!” Cy said, putting down his cards from the game he and Dee had been playing.

“Yeah!” Paul replied. “I haven’t opened it yet—let’s read it together! Dee—will you read it? You always make Luis’ letters sound so interesting.”

“Sure,” Dee answered, taking the letter from Paul. The kids sat down together on the floor. Chip, Dee’s dog, lay down with his head in her lap. Dee began to read.

*Dear friends,*

*I hope you are all doing well! Thanks for your last letters. It’s always so cool to hear about what you are doing. Cy, we are all praying for your family and your dad.*

*This month has been pretty exciting. I met a new friend in the village just down the road from ours. He’s great—and deaf. The problem is that in these villages, many people believe that when someone is born with a disability, it’s because they have done something bad and are being punished. People stay away from them so they won’t “catch” the “badness.” Sometimes parents even reject disabled children! Thankfully, this boy lives in a good family, but the people in the village—especially the other kids—have been pretty cruel to him.*

*Anyway, I met him and we started hanging out. He doesn’t speak much, but he is always borrowing my Bible, wanting to read stories about Jesus. He especially likes the stories where Jesus cares for people who are disabled.*

*At first, the other kids warned me to stay away from this boy. But I knew Jesus would have continued to care for him, so I did, too. It was hard for a week or so—many of my friends didn’t want anything to do with me. But then they saw that nothing bad was happening to me, and that my friend is actually a great person! It’s taking time, but slowly the other kids are beginning to accept my new friend!*

*Well, that’s all the news from my world. Write soon!*

*Luis*

“Wow,” said Paul. “Luis sure is brave!”

“Yeah,” Cy agreed. “It would be really hard to have your friends not talk to you anymore.”

“I don’t know if I could do what he did!” Dee chimed in. “I guess that’s why Luis and his family are missionaries—because they are so brave!”

“Luis is different in the best possible way,” Paul said. “He is set apart by God to help spread His Word!”

“Let’s write Luis a letter right away!” Cy suggested. “We can encourage him to keep being a great friend for Jesus.”

Dee and Paul nodded as Dee went to get pens and paper.



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

**Introduction** (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Paul hung up the phone and shook his head. “Who was that?” Mr. Shepherd wondered. Paul explained that he had invited his friend Jimmy to Kids’ Club at church—again. Not only didn’t Jimmy want to go, he also wanted Paul to stop asking him to come to church. “I just really thought I could make Jimmy interested in Jesus and become a Christian!” Paul explained to his dad.

**Conclusion** (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Mr. Shepherd explained to Paul that he couldn’t make anyone change or believe anything. Nobody—not Paul, or Mr. Shepherd, or even Paul in the Bible—could change a person. Only God could change a person’s heart. “So what do I do?” Paul wondered. “Continue being his friend, and keep praying—God may have some surprises in store for Jimmy!” Together, Paul and his dad prayed that someday Jimmy would know the truth about Jesus.

“Oh, okay,” Paul said into the phone quietly. Mr. Shepherd looked at Paul, who turned away from him. “Sorry—I won’t ask again. See you at school on Monday.”

Paul hung up the phone and shook his head.

“Who was that, Paul?” his father asked.

“It was Jimmy,” said Paul. “I was asking if he wanted to come to Kids’ Club on Wednesday night.”

“And he didn’t want to?” Mr. Shepherd asked.

“Well, no. I’ve asked him a few times before. I thought he was interested. When I first met him at school, he was really interested in hearing about Jesus and church and stuff. So I’ve been inviting him to church on Sundays, and sometimes to Kids’ Club.”

“But he’s never come?”

“Nope,” Paul answered. “And now he just told me he doesn’t want me to invite him to church anymore. He said he’s not really interested, and that I’m begging him too much.”

“Ouch,” Mr. Shepherd said.

“I’ve been praying for him a lot, Dad,” Paul continued. “I just really thought I could make Jimmy be interested in Jesus. I’d love to make someone become a Christian.”

“Well, that may be part of your problem, son,” Mr. Shepherd said. “You can’t make anyone change, and you can’t make them believe anything!”

“But you tell people about Jesus all the time, and they all become Christians!” Paul protested.

“Not so many as that,” Mr. Shepherd replied, chuckling. “The truth is that nobody—not you, or me, or even Paul in the Bible—can change a person. The only One who has the ability to change a heart is God Himself.”

“So I might never make someone become a Christian?” Paul asked sadly.

“You will never make anyone become a Christian, but you may have the opportunity to play a part in God changing someone’s heart and turning them to Jesus,” Mr. Shepherd explained. “Take Jimmy, for example. He’s not ready to become a Christian yet, but he’s curious about Jesus. You’ve explained a lot to him about Jesus, and have been his friend. Maybe you’ve built a foundation that someone else will build on someday.”

“So what do I do about Jimmy?” Paul wondered.

“The most important thing you can do is continue to be his friend,” Mr. Shepherd answered. “Jimmy needs to know that he’s not just a ‘project’ for you, but that you really are his friend whether he becomes a Christian or not. And keep praying—God may have some surprises in store for Jimmy!”

Paul agreed, and prayed with his dad for Jimmy.



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

“Hey, look, guys!” Jimmy shouted to his group of friends on the playground. “It’s the Jesus freaks!” Paul and Cy looked over—Jimmy was talking about them! “We’re going to play basketball at the park tonight, but you probably have Bible study,” said another boy. Paul and Cy walked away. Paul had tried to be friends with Jimmy after Jimmy asked him about Jesus. But after Paul invited Jimmy to church a few times, Jimmy told Paul to stop ‘bugging’ him. Now Jimmy and his friends were making fun of Cy and Paul for following Jesus! What could they do besides pray for Jimmy?

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

“I wonder if they really are going to play basketball tonight. They can’t keep us from showing up!” said Cy. “For a couple of freaks, you and I have a pretty good basketball game!” Cy explained that by showing up to the basketball game, maybe the other boys would see that, even though Cy and Paul followed Jesus, they weren’t weirdos. Paul thought it sounded difficult, but Cy reminded Paul that in the Bible, Paul and Barnabas were often challenged when they taught about Jesus. “Okay,” Paul agreed. “See you there, Barnabas—I mean, Cy,” Paul said.

“Hey, look, guys,” Jimmy shouted on the playground. “It’s the Jesus freaks!”

Paul and Cy looked over at the group of boys standing together. “Uh, Cy?” Paul said. “I think they’re talking about us.”

“Hey, Cy!” one of the boys yelled. “We were thinking about meeting at the park tonight for a basketball game, but you probably have Bible.”

The other boys laughed. “Just ignore them,” Cy answered. Cy and Paul walked to the other side of the playground, leaving the laughing group of boys behind. “I thought you and Jimmy were friends,” Cy said to Paul.

“I thought so, too,” Paul answered. “He had asked me about Jesus, so I invited him to church a few times. Now he wants me to stop ‘bugging him.’”

“Oh,” Cy said. “What should we do?”

“I don’t know,” Paul admitted. “My dad told me to continue being Jimmy’s friend, but it doesn’t seem like Jimmy’s interested in being friends with a ‘freak.’ So I guess all we can do is to keep praying for him.”

“I wonder if they really are going to meet at the park for basketball tonight,” Cy thought out loud.

“Probably,” Paul said. “They play a few times a week. But I don’t think they were inviting us.”

“Yeah, but they can’t really keep us from showing up, either,” Cy replied. “And so they think we’re ‘Jesus freaks.’ But for a couple of freaks, you and I have a pretty good basketball game.”

“What are you saying?” Paul said. “That we should show up and play? What if they start making fun of us again?”

“They might,” admitted Cy. “But they might also see that just because we follow Jesus doesn’t mean we’re weirdos. We should show them we’d like to be their friends, even if they don’t want to be ours.”

“Yeah,” Paul said, nodding. “It just seems...hard.”

“True, but think about Paul and Barnabas. Sometimes people didn’t respond well at all when they taught about Jesus. But they kept trying!” Cy reminded Paul.

“Yeah,” Paul said as the recess bell rang.

“So, I’ll see you at the park tonight, Paul?” Cy asked.

“See you there, Barnabas—I mean, Cy,” Paul replied, winking.





**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

**Introduction** (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Now that Dee’s new neighbor, Raj, had settled into his new home, he started school. But on his very first day, at the lunchtime recess, Raj decided to do something a little strange. Fourth graders always did one of three things during their recess: played basketball, played tetherball, or sat on the bleachers. But Raj had a crossword puzzle book, and decided to do crossword puzzles at the second-graders’ picnic tables!

**Conclusion** (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

“Whoever heard of a fourth grader doing puzzles at the picnic tables for lunch?” Dee wondered. Cy pointed out that even though Raj’s lunchtime activity wasn’t normal to them, it might have been normal at his old school. And besides, there was no rule saying he couldn’t do puzzles during recess. “Like in the Bible—the Jews followed certain rules, but that didn’t mean that everyone who followed Jesus had to obey those rules, too.” With that, Paul came up with a really crazy idea—they could swing on the swings for recess! Laughing, Dee, Cy, and Paul raced across the playground to the swings.

Now that Dee’s new neighbor, Raj, was all settled into his new home and the neighborhood, Dee, Cy, and Paul were excited to welcome him to their school.

Raj was in a different class than Dee, Cy, or Paul. Finally, they met up when all the fourth graders had recess. “How do you like your teacher, Raj?” Cy asked.

“I like Mrs. Wilson very much,” Raj answered.

“I’ve heard she’s really tough,” said Dee.

“Well, I hope she’s not *too* tough. If she’s a little tough, that’s okay. I like to be challenged,” Raj answered.

“So, what do you want to do for recess, Raj?” Paul asked. “Mostly the fourth graders either play basketball or tetherball, or just sit on the bleachers.”

“Hmm,” Raj answered. “Actually, I brought a book of puzzles from home,” Raj answered. “I thought I might just go sit for a while and work on these.”

“What kind of puzzles?” wondered Cy.

“This is a crossword puzzle book, but I also like to do number puzzles,” Raj answered, showing them the book. “I’ll see you guys later.”

And with that, Raj crossed the playground and sat at the picnic tables (where the second graders sat!). He opened his puzzle book and went straight to work.

“Whoever heard of a fourth grader doing puzzles at the picnic tables for recess?” Dee wondered.

“Yeah—it’s just all wrong!” Paul agreed. “I mean, there’s no rule saying he can’t do puzzles during recess. But it’s just... not normal.”

“Maybe not for us,” Cy replied. “But maybe at his old school, that’s what kids did for fun.” He went on. “There’s no rule saying he can’t do puzzles during recess. But there’s no rule saying we have to play basketball or tetherball, or sit on the bleachers, either.”

“Yeah—like in the Bible,” Dee agreed. “Just because the Jews chose to follow certain rules, didn’t mean that everyone who followed Jesus had to obey those rules, too.”

“I’ve got an idea,” Paul said. “Why don’t we do something really crazy lunch today? Something like, swing on the swings!”

“I haven’t been on the swings since last year,” said Cy. “I wonder if I still remember how.”

Dee and Paul laughed. “Let’s do it!” they shouted, and ran across the playground toward the swings.



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

**Introduction** (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Paul thought that the space between the two cars had been wide enough for his bike, but as soon as he was between them, he knew he’d made a bad choice. The passenger’s side mirror of Mr. Petrie’s car hit the ground with a crash, and the glass shattered. At first Paul looked around to see if anyone had seen or heard the accident—could he get away with it?

**Conclusion** (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Then Paul felt that little tug, telling him that leaving without telling Mr. Petrie who had damaged his car would be the wrong choice. Mr. Petrie thought that replacing the mirror would cost \$50. When Paul told his mom what had happened, she pointed out that he already had \$25 in his piggy bank, and that he had just received a birthday card that day! When Paul opened the card, he found \$25 inside! He could pay Mr. Petrie right away. Paul knew that the “little tug” had been God’s Holy Spirit directing him. And now that he could pay Mr. Petrie back, he felt more glad than ever that he had listened!

Paul was cutting through the park’s parking lot on his way home from playing basketball. The most direct way was taking him between two parked cars.

It was a tight squeeze, but it didn’t seem too tight. At least at first. But as soon as Paul got between the cars on his bike, he knew he had made a bad choice.

“Oh, no!” he cried.

The passenger’s side mirror on the car snapped off as his bike’s handlebar hit it. It hit the ground with a crash, and the mirror shattered.

Paul looked down at the shiny mirror on the ground, and at the shattered bits of glass. Then he immediately looked up and around the park around him. Had anyone seen him? Had anyone heard the mirror hit the ground? If not, he could just get right back on his bike and ride away—no one would know! He recognized the car—it was Mr. Petrie’s, his next-door neighbor. Mr. Petrie could afford to fix the damage. His bike hadn’t been damaged at all, and...

But even as the thoughts ran through Paul’s head, he felt a tug on his heart. “You already made one bad choice today, Paul,” the tug was telling him. “I’m pretty sure you don’t want to make another.”

Paul looked down. “You’re right,” he whispered back to the tug. “Thanks, God.” Paul sat on the curb next to the damaged car and waited for Mr. Petrie to return so he could explain what had happened.

That night, Paul told his mom what all about it. “Mr. Petrie said it snapped off clean, so he just needs to buy a replacement mirror. He said it will cost about \$50.”

“Well, you’re halfway there, since you have \$25 in your piggy bank,” Mrs. Shepherd answered. “And you’re never going to believe this, but you got an early birthday card today. Maybe you should open it up!”

“Already!” Paul said. “But my birthday isn’t for three more weeks!” Paul’s mom handed him the envelope. He opened it—the card was from his Uncle Jim and Aunt Trisha. And inside?

“It’s \$25!” Paul said. “Now I have \$50! I can pay Mr. Petrie for breaking his mirror right away!”

“That’s great, Paul,” Mrs. Shepherd said. “Why don’t you go count out the rest of the money from your bank?”

As he ran upstairs, Paul knew that the “little tug” he had felt after breaking the mirror had been God’s Holy Spirit directing him. And now that he had the money to pay Mr. Petrie back right away, he felt more glad than ever that he had listened!



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Cy knew. Nobody had said it, but he knew his father was going to die soon. Most of the time, Mr. Yung slept. And when he was awake, he often forgot where he was or who was with him. But one day, as Cy sat with his dad, Mr. Yung awoke and asked Cy to ask Pastor Shepherd to come over. Cy raced to the phone, and soon Pastor Shepherd arrived. Cy went to wait on the front porch. What could it mean?

#### Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Pastor Shepherd spoke with Mr. Yung for over an hour. Finally, when he came outside, Pastor Shepherd said to Cy, “Believe it or not, I have good news.” Cy couldn’t believe it—nothing good seemed to happen anymore. “Your father has decided to ask Jesus to be his Savior. You will meet him again in heaven someday!” Cy couldn’t speak. He had never been so sad—and so happy—in his entire life. God had turned the biggest defeat of Cy’s life into the biggest victory.

Nobody had said anything, but Cy knew. His dad had been sick with cancer for almost a year, and had gotten steadily worse during that time.

Cy couldn’t stand to say it, and almost couldn’t stand to think it, but he knew his father was going to die soon. Mr. Yung was still at home, but either Cy’s mom or another nurse had to be with him all the time. He had a tube going into him to make sure he got enough food and water. And another tube constantly delivered medicine so he wouldn’t feel any pain.

Most of the time, Cy’s dad slept. Sometimes when he was awake, Mr. Yung seemed to forget where he was or who he was with.

Cy was sitting beside his dad one afternoon. Cy thought Mr. Yung was sleeping, but soon he heard his father’s weak voice. “Cy? Can you do something for me?”

“Sure, Dad,” said Cy. “What do you need?”

“I need to talk to someone...someone who knows... I need to talk to your friend’s dad. Can you ask Mr. Shepherd to come over?”

Paul nodded his head and raced for the phone. Soon, Pastor Shepherd knocked on the door. “He’s in the living room,” Cy said.

Cy waited on the front porch for over an hour while his father and Pastor Shepherd talked. Finally Cy’s pastor came outside.

“Thanks for coming over so quickly, Pastor Shepherd,” Cy said. “I’m sorry if I sounded panicked over the phone, it was just...” Cy couldn’t finish the sentence. He looked away so Pastor Shepherd wouldn’t see the tears in his eyes.

“It’s okay, Cy,” Pastor Shepherd replied, patting Cy on the back. “I’m very glad you called me. Because believe it or not, I have very good news!”

Cy wiped his eyes. “I haven’t heard any good news for a long time.”

“Well, I’ll be honest, Cy. I don’t know how much longer your dad will be with us. But I can promise you that you absolutely will see your father again someday.”

“What do you mean?” Cy asked, his heart skipping a beat.

“Your father wanted me to come over to pray with him. He’s been thinking a lot lately, and he decided to ask Jesus to be his Savior.”

Cy couldn’t hold back anymore. He burst into tears. “I...I...can’t...”

“I know, Cy,” Pastor Shepherd said, hugging him. “I’m so very sorry that you have to go through all of this, but your father is going straight into God’s arms.”

Cy couldn’t speak—he didn’t know what to say. His dad was dying, and his heart was breaking. But he was also incredibly happy—Cy had prayed for his dad for years, and now he could rest assured knowing that Mr. Yung would meet him in heaven again. God had turned the biggest defeat of Cy’s life into the biggest victory.



**Teacher**—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends” or the Story based on your time and preference.

### Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

**Introduction** (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

“Jesus freak! Jesus freak!” Paul heard Jimmy and his friends’ taunts as he walked home from the park. “Ouch,” said his sister Susan, who was walking home from a friend’s house. “Is that for you?” Paul explained how he had tried to invite Jimmy to church a few times, but now Jimmy and his friends made fun of Paul. “You’ll never believe it,” Susan said. “But I have a very similar story...”

**Conclusion** (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Susan explained how in the sixth grade, a girl who she had invited to church had convinced all the sixth-grade girls to not be friends with Susan. “I always had Jesus, though,” Susan pointed out. Then came the real surprise. The girl who had made fun of Susan was her friend Cassie, who Susan was leading the high school girls’ Bible study with. “She decided to follow Jesus in the ninth grade,” Susan said. “Isn’t that crazy?” Cy agreed that it was, but then wondered what Jimmy might be like in the ninth grade...

“Jesus freak! Jesus freak!”

Paul heard the boys taunting him as he walked home from the park. He sighed. He would keep trying—he would—but sometimes it sure wasn’t easy.

Jimmy and his friends had lightened up on Paul for the most part. At school—especially when his friends weren’t around—Jimmy had actually started to talk to Paul again. But every once in a while they would start making fun of Paul’s faith.

“Hey, Paul—wait up!” called a voice from behind him. It was his sister, Susan, walking home from a friend’s house. Paul cringed. He could still hear the voices behind him.

Susan whistled. “Wow. Is that for you?” she asked, indicating the boys’ voices.

Paul grimaced. “Yeah, I guess,” he said.

“What happened?” Susan wondered. Paul explained how he had invited Jimmy to church a few times after Jimmy had asked him about Jesus. But eventually Jimmy got tired of Paul asking, and had even started calling him and his friends “Jesus freaks.”

“Ouch,” Susan said. “It’s the funniest thing, though. Because almost that same thing happened to me when I was just a little older than you are.”

“Really?” Paul asked.

“Oh, yeah,” Susan said, nodding. “Not only did a girl call me names, but she eventually convinced all the other girls in the sixth grade not to talk to me.”

“Oh, wow,” Paul said. “At least I still have Dee and Cy.”

“You have plenty of friends,” Susan said. “But even I wasn’t alone when the other girls wouldn’t talk to me. I always had Jesus.”

Paul thought about that. “It’s hard to remember that, though,” he said.

Susan agreed. “But you know what eventually happened?” she said.

“What?”

Susan smiled. “That girl—the one who ruined my sixth grade life—was Cassie.”

“Cassie?” Paul asked. “Aren’t you coming home from Cassie’s house now?”

“Yep!” Susan answered. “In ninth grade, Cassie decided to follow Jesus. And now we’re leading the high school girls’ Bible study together. Isn’t that just crazy?”

Paul agreed—that was crazy. Even crazier than Jimmy thought Paul was. But suddenly Paul felt himself thinking of the future...and what Jimmy might be like in the ninth grade...