

Questions for Cubs

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

Lesson

The Promise of Sin Is a Lie

Key Verse

But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:14–15 NIV)

Ear Check (Story Comprehension)

- Q: Who does The Club say is a hoodlum?
A: *Hugh McClaw*
- Q: What did the owl offer Goliath?
A: *To be king over Shadow Valley*
- Q: Where does Ava live?
A: *In the tower of the palace*
- Q: What type of animal is Dr. Laubach?
A: *A mouse*
- Q: Why is Goliath in great pain?
A: *His wound is not healing because he is fighting it*

Heart Check (Spiritual Application)

- Q: In the cave, the owl tempts Goliath with the opportunity to be king over Shadow Valley. Once Goliath is king, he could then gather an army to chase the bandits off the mountain. Though the bandits are a scourge on the mountain, it is wrong for Goliath to accept such an offer. Why?
- A: As is often the case, the temptation came as a “half-truth,” which is much more dangerous and confusing than an outright lie. It was not wrong for Goliath to want the bandits chased off of the mountain. But deep down, Goliath knew that what he really wanted more than anything else was power. He allowed himself to believe the half-truth so he could have a chance to gain power, even if it meant sacrificing innocent lives. This sin led to his sentence in Shadow Valley.

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Q: The owl tempted Goliath by appealing to his greatest desire—power. How do we keep ourselves from giving in to temptation?

A: The Bible says that while we will always be tempted to sin, God will never allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist it. God will even give us a way to escape the temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)! But the best time to fight temptation is long before we are tempted. We must recognize that sin is damaging and dangerous. It is an act of rebellion against God (Romans 3:10–18). If we have to sin to get something we want, then the very thing we want is really a trap set by Satan for us. We should be careful to avoid such traps. We can be confident that God will give us good things in His perfect time (Matthew 7:7–11). In the end, obedience and patience will draw us closer to Him.

Q: Ava explains to Goliath that he is in Shadow Valley because he turned his back on God and embraced his sin. She also explains that Goliath needs God's forgiveness in order to be free. How is Goliath's relationship to God like our own?

A: Though we will never wake up and find ourselves in an actual "Shadow Valley," we can find ourselves trapped in other ways by our sin. Something inside of us whispers a lie that says, *If you just cover up your sin with another one, things will get better and it will all be over soon.* That voice inside us is our sin nature. However, if we are truly children of God, the Holy Spirit is also whispering to us, telling us the truth that says, *You do not have to be a slave to sin and its destruction. You can come to Me, and if you will let Me, I will lead you to all the good things I have ready for you. Come back to Me and surrender.*

As Goliath demonstrates, surrender is difficult for us. But the truth reveals that we are all surrendered to something. Sin may feel like freedom for a time, but in the end it leads us to loss and destruction. Our surrender to God will lead to forgiveness, healing, and transformation. Whether we like it or not, we are serving either God or sin. We must choose which one we will serve (Romans 8:5–9).

"I" Check (*Personal Application*)

1. Have you ever felt trapped by a sin? For example, have you ever told a lie and then had to tell more lies to cover up the first lie? What happened to break you free from the sin?
2. In what ways are you tempted to sin? What can you do to keep from giving in when you're tempted?
3. Goliath wanted to rule as king because it would make him feel more important than he actually was. Read Mark 10:42–45. What does Jesus say about true leadership?

Director's Notes

I have so much to tell regarding Shadow Valley. For me, Shadow Valley represents our condition of being trapped by our own sin. The simple truth is that some sins carry greater consequences than others. Some sins trap us so deeply we cannot get ourselves out. While trapped, we often hold a strange and twisted hope that may keep us from realizing just how bad our situation really is. As long as we cling to this false hope, it will keep us from repenting and coming to God for forgiveness. Our thought process goes something like this—"Sure, my sin trapped me, but I truly believe that by sinning even more I will be able to win my freedom." Though prevalent, this thinking is a kind of insanity. The suffering that results is often profound, but worse yet is the fact that this twisted hope seriously distracts us from our need to humble ourselves before God.

The deception of sin is another theme that I want to display here. The worst kind of lie is a half-truth. Yes, there is pleasure in sin. What is in the fine print, so to speak, is the price. It is always more than we could have imagined. We may steal and become rich, but we will never have the peace and well-being we thought it would bring. Instead, we consume ourselves with keeping others from stealing from us. The thing we sinned to possess now possesses us. This theme is played out over and over with only minor changes to suit the particular sin.

Crazy Ava is an important character tool for me. She is keenly aware of her sin and the consequences. She even admits that they play an integral part in her being, well, *crazy*. Her partial insanity plays with her mind, making her keenly aware of what she must do to be free, but she chooses not to do it. "You must ask God to forgive you," she tells Goliath, but she will not ask for herself. She prefers to hold her high position in an outpost of hell than to humble herself before God. Her choice is not as rare as we might think. Many people know what to do and know the blessings that will result, but they are unwilling to trade the few foul toys they hold in their hands for God's rich and eternal rewards. Though this thinking is common, it is absolutely nuts.



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