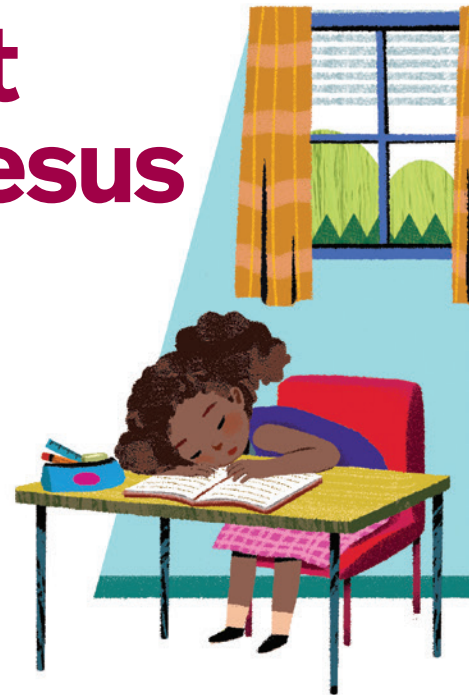




Children's Readings

# Living for Our Best Friend Jesus

BY LINDA MEI LIN KOH  
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Illustrations: Xuan Le

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## A Strange Book

**Memory Gem: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right” (2 Timothy 3:16, ICB).\***

**K**eke walked into this strange “Christian” school to learn English. The American teachers were very kind and patient with him. But they seemed to always use some black book as their lessons.

“Sir, why is this black book so special?” asked Keke curiously. “I have never seen it before.”

“This is the Bible! It’s God’s Word that teaches us to be good,” said Pastor Thompson.

“Really? I must read it. Maybe it can help me change and be good, which my mother would definitely want!” exclaimed Keke with a twinkle in his eyes.

As soon as Keke finished his homework, he opened the black book that he borrowed from Pastor Thompson. “I need to know what’s inside,” Keke mumbled to himself.

“Stop reading that black book, Keke!” Mother demanded. “Don’t get all these strange ideas from these Christians. Don’t forget! We are Buddhists!” warned Mother angrily.

“I love this book because it has some strange, funny ideas! They

ask me to be kind to my enemies; turn my left cheek to them if they slap my right one; think of others first; no crying at death; pray without stopping. Wow, I can’t imagine what my friends would say!” exclaimed Keke.

“What has come over you?” snorted Keke’s friends. “You just drop us and don’t play with us anymore,” his friends complained. “No more tricks and pranks. No eating pork. No more fun!”

Months later, Keke went to meet his teacher with an unusual request.

“Pastor Thomson, I need to speak to you right now. I believe in Jesus, the Bible, and everything in this book. I want to be baptized!” Keke declared firmly.

“Praise the Lord!” exclaimed Pastor Thomson.

### DIVE IN DEEP

- How has the Bible helped you in your life at home and at school?
- Which Bible texts specifically speak to your heart?
- Do you find it challenging to keep reading the Bible? Why?
- Is it possible to live our lives according to what the Bible teaches?

### LIVE IT OUT!

Develop a poem or a song about the Bible and its values and share it with your friends at church or at school.

Make a personal timetable for regular daily study of the Bible. ☺



## Forgiving Papa

**Memory Gem: “Do not be angry with each other but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13, ICB).**

**J**uni was just getting ready for bed when his papa’s heavy footsteps were thumping up the stairs. Immediately his body began to shake with fear as he quickly crawled under the bed. All of a sudden he felt a pair of strong hands pull him out from under the bed.

“Help! Help!” Juni yelled loudly as he tried to free himself from his papa’s hand, “Don’t hurt me! Please don’t hurt me!”



Before Juni could escape, Papa beat him.

“Don’t think you can escape from me! Ha! Ha! Ha! You’re just like your mama! Bad woman! Bad woman!” shouted papa as he was about to flop over, too drunk even to care. “You bad boy! Bad boy!”

The next day after Papa’s alcohol wore off, he felt bad about beating Juni. He was calm, but Juni was too terrified even to get near him.

For two years after Mama left, Juni’s father had been drinking himself to death. He thought he could cover up the pain of losing his wife, but the alcohol didn’t help. Instead, he beat Juni night after night. Poor boy!

“Lolo, Lola, please let me come and stay with you,” begged Juni. “I can’t take it anymore. He will kill me soon!”

“You poor boy, we must take you out of your father’s hands,” said Lolo and Lola adamantly.

Juni was grateful spending the rest of his teen years with

Lolo and Lola. No more beatings! No more fear! No more injuries and bruises!

Years passed and Juni graduated from college. One day his grandparents approached him with a strange request.

“Juni, we didn’t tell you earlier. Your papa has been in jail and is very ill. Won’t you go and visit him?” asked Lolo and Lola earnestly.

“What? You want me to visit him? No way! He’s not my father, and I don’t have a father like him,” said Juni angrily.

“No matter what he has done, he’s still your papa. He started drinking only after your mama left,” Lolo explained kindly. “Do forgive him.”

“We will be praying for you that God will help you to forgive,” Lola said reassuringly, her Bible in her hand.

Finally, after months of struggling with himself, the day came for Juni to visit his father in jail. When they met, both father and

son hugged each other, sobbing and crying.

“I’m so sorry, Son, for all the hurt I have caused you!” cried Papa.

“I forgive you, Papa! I forgive you!” wailed Juni with tears streaming down his face. It was indeed a joyful reunion! Forgiveness comes only through Jesus Christ.

#### **DIVE IN DEEP**

- What did Jesus mean when He said that we should forgive 70 times seven (Matthew 18:21, 22)?
- Why is it good for us to forgive, even though it’s difficult?

#### **LIVE IT OUT!**

- Pray for your friends or classmates who give you a hard time at school, so that you will learn to like them.
- Write an encouraging message to someone you don’t especially like. ☺



MONDAY

## Jesus' Little Missionary

**Memory Gem: “But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong” (Galatians 5:22, ICB).**

“Oh, Mama, there are so many children around our house who don’t know about Jesus,” sighed Elena.

“Can I do something for them? Jesus loves all the children of the world,” Elena asked with excitement.

“That’s a marvelous idea!” said Mama. “What do you want to do?”

“Guess what? I have just received my Talking Backpack. I can form a small group and share the good news with them. I can teach them songs about Jesus, and I will tell them Bible stories,” Elena said excitedly.

“Let’s get started right away. I’ll invite my friends to come to the house every Friday evening,” Elena said.

Elena invited one special friend, and her friend invited other friends, and on and on. The first night 12 children came to Elena’s house. She told them Bible stories and gave each one a pin that said “Jesus loves you.” She helped her mother bake cookies for the children. What a joy and encouragement it was for Elena!

“Wow, Mama, there are so many children coming every week. I’ve lost count of the number, but they sure love the Bible stories about Jesus. I’m going to pray that they will accept Jesus as their special friend someday,” exclaimed Elena jubilantly.

After one year of running her small group, several of her friends accepted Jesus and were baptized. Great joy filled Elena’s heart!

#### DIVE IN DEEP

- Which fruit of the Spirit do you find difficult to practice in your life? Why?
- In today’s world of violence, fear, and terrorism, can you still have peace in your heart? Identify one Bible text that shows how you can have peace.
- Is it possible to love your enemy, or someone who hurt you? Why? Why not?

#### LIVE IT OUT!

- Discuss with your parents or Sabbath School teacher one or two projects you can do to show love and kindness to those who are less fortunate.
- Pray for the children whose parents are in prison. Find out the names of a few of these families and write cards to encourage them. ☺

## TUESDAY

# Sleepyhead

**Memory Gem: “You should know that you yourselves are God’s temple. God’s Spirit lives in you. If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him, because God’s temple is holy. You yourselves are God’s temple” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, ICB).**

**K**atrina Foster, do you know what time it is? Go to bed NOW!” demanded Mother.

“I’ll go soon, but I just have to finish my project. Don’t worry; I’ll be fine,” replied Katrina, reassuring Mother.

“Oh, my dear, I’m worried about you. You’re destroying your health!” said Mother anxiously.

“I’m OK,” Katrina said.

“Can’t you start your project earlier? You have the whole afternoon to do it, but you spend too much time on Instagram and texting with friends,” Mother said impatiently.

“I’m fine, Mom! Mothers worry for nothing!” snorted Katrina.

Weeks passed and Katrina was caught falling asleep in class several times. She fell asleep four times in one week. Her teacher, Mrs. Bouchett, was concerned.

“Mrs. Foster, you really need to monitor Katrina’s sleep hours,” Mrs. Bouchett told Katrina’s mother. “She fell asleep four times this week alone! She was grouchy, and snapped at her classmates often.”

“OK, I’ll try to work with Katrina on this,” Mother reassured the teacher.

“Katrina, I’m greatly disappointed with your teacher’s report about you,” exclaimed Mother sadly. “Do you know that your body is the temple of God? If you destroy it by sleeping only three or four hours a night, you’ll lose energy and power to think,” said Mother.

“I’m sorry, Mom. I’ll try to get to sleep earlier. Please pray for me,” begged Katrina.

“Yes, we need to ask Jesus to help you plan your day properly. You can finish your homework and still have time for your friends. I’m taking away your cell phone every night before bedtime,” said Mother adamantly.

“You can’t do that!” demanded Katrina. “I guess I have no choice, right?”

“You’re absolutely right!” replied Mother with a smile.

#### DIVE IN DEEP

- Why did Paul say that our body is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3)?
- Why is a lack of sleep not good for our bodies?
- Why is God concerned about the health of His children?

#### LIVE IT OUT!

- Make a daily schedule of your activities after school and follow through.
- With the help of your parents, plan a one-week menu with nutritious foods. ☺

WEDNESDAY

## Being the Hands of Jesus

**Memory Gem: “Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ Also, ‘You must love your neighbor as you love yourself” (Luke 10:27, ICB).**

**M**om, can we prepare food for those street children around our church?” asked the twins, Larinee and Sarinee.

“Great idea, girls!” exclaimed Mom. “But how much money do we need to have to feed every one of them?” asked Mom with a puzzled look.

“Well, maybe in church we can ask every member to donate ingredients for us to use. I’m sure they want to help too,” the twins echoed simultaneously.

“Isn’t this what Jesus said we should do? What is that text in which Jesus said something about helping others?” asked Larinee.

“Yes, in Matthew 25 Jesus said that when we help someone, giving food to the poor, visiting and praying for those in prison, we are doing it to Him. Jesus is our best model for serving others,” explained Papa.

For the next two days, Larinee and Sarinee were busy making telephone calls to church members to ask for donations of vegetables and fruit for their special project.

“Mr. Janu, could you donate some vegetables and other

foods for us to cook so that we can feed the street children next Saturday?” explained the twins when they called the head elder.

“That’s an excellent idea, girls! I’m happy to support your project. I’ll ask my wife to help you with the cooking too,” suggested the head elder with a twinkle in his eye.

When Sunday arrived, Larinee and Sarinee, with lots of help from Mama, Mrs. Janu, and several other women from the church, cooked eight big pots of soup. Papa and some elders and deacons of the church helped to transport them to the park, where they met the street children. What a hectic day it was!

“Thank You, Jesus, for helping us. Just think, we fed 80 hungry youngsters!” exclaimed the twins with big smiles on their faces, “We want to be like Jesus!”

### DIVE IN DEEP

- Read Matthew 25:31-41 and discuss why it’s difficult when you follow the model of Jesus in serving others.
- Based on the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), how can we become modern-day Samaritans?

### LIVE IT OUT!

- Work with your parents or Sabbath School teacher to identify one project you could do to serve like Jesus in your community.
- Find two to three friends and go on a prayer walk around your community to pray for different businesses and families. ☺



THURSDAY

## Brian’s Testimony

**Memory Gem: “So if you eat, or if you drink, or if you do anything, do everything for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, ICB).**

**H**ey, guys, have you seen the latest Harry Potter movie?” asked Zach excitedly. “It’s really amazing how those weird creatures can fly!”

“What’s the title?” Jamie and Jeannie shouted simultaneously. “Maybe we should watch it too.”



"I think we should be careful what we watch," Brian cautioned his friends. "Creatures that fly and do fantastic tricks aren't real."

"It's just for fun and excitement," said Zach. "You have to be imaginative, eh?" he said with a wink.

"Did your mom say you couldn't watch these movies?" asked Jeannie curiously.

"Yes, but it's not just Mom; it's from the Bible!" explained Brian firmly. "If we fill our minds with all these untrue stories, such as witches and wizards, pretty soon we'll believe in them more than in the power of Jesus."

"I think Brian is right! In the Bible, Paul said somewhere in Corinthians that what we watch,

read, or do, we must do it to honor Jesus," said Jamie. "Let's look it up."

"I know that, friends," Zach nodded in agreement. "These fantasy movies get you hooked, then you can't stop watching them."

"OK, let's pray for each other that we choose to read good books, watch good movies, and play wholesome computer games to honor Jesus!" the four friends said in unison.

#### DIVE IN DEEP

- What does it mean to "do everything" to honor God (1 Corinthians 10:31)? Can you identify some of those things?

- Is it easy to practice a good Christian lifestyle in your home, school, or church community?
- What did the apostle Paul mean when he asked us to put on "the full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:10-18)?

#### LIVE IT OUT

- Have a summer room cleanup day. Get rid of all the videos, books, CDs, etc. that aren't helping you in your Christian life.
- Work together with two or three friends to list the good video games, good books, and good TV programs that are safe to watch. Then pray together, asking God to help you make wise choices. ©



FRIDAY

## Spring-clean Your Brain

**Memory Gem: “So put all evil things out of your life. Get rid of sexual immorality and impure acts. Don’t let your feelings get out of control” (Colossians 3:5, ICB).**

**D**ad and Mom were just getting the family together for evening worship when they noticed that Raymond was still at his computer.

“Ray, don’t you know what time it is?” asked Mom impatiently. “We’re all waiting for you.”

“OK, OK, I’m coming,” Ray said.

When family worship was over, Dad asked the children to remain behind; he had something important to say.

“What’s the problem, Ray? I see you’re spending a lot of time on your computer,” Dad asked his teenage son.

“Maybe he’s watching those naked girls,” remarked little sister Joni. “That’s why our

teachers are warning us about the danger of porn!”

“OK, Ray and Joni, let’s talk about this, so you’ll understand what it is, and why it’s not good for us,” explained Dad.

“Do you know what pornography is?” Dad asked solemnly as both the children shook their heads.

“Pornography is pictures or movies of people with little or no clothes on. They show people doing things that should only be done in private,” Dad continued. “These people do these things to make money.”

“That’s so shameful,” said Joni.

“Do you know why it’s dangerous for children?” Dad continued. “Because it doesn’t represent real love or intimacy. It treats women and men as objects. If you keep watching such pictures, you get addicted to it, like a drug.”

“I didn’t know it was that dangerous, Dad,” Ray said. “I thought it was just a few pictures.”

“Do you know that Paul advised us that we should think on things that are good, pure, true, beautiful, and respected?” Dad reminded the children (Philippians 4:8). “But the devil is out to tempt everyone, includ-

ing children, to spend time on impure things.”

“Thanks for telling us, Dad. Please pray for us to be strong enough to turn away from impure pictures,” said Ray.

### DIVE IN DEEP

- Study Mark 9:47. Did Jesus really mean that we should pluck out an eye if it causes us to watch impure pictures? What was He really saying about how to live our lives?
- What are some temptations related to sexuality that you face? How can you deal with them to live as a victorious Christian?

### LIVE IT OUT

- Give a speech or write an essay to present to your classmates about the dangers of watching pornography (work with your teacher on this).
- Borrow some good books that teach about healthy Christian sexuality and read them. Identify how these books help to answer your questions about sexuality. Discuss this with your parents. ☺



## SABBATH

# Alive Again

**Memory Gem: “Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, even those who stabbed him. And all peoples of the earth will cry loudly because of him. Yes, this will happen! Amen” (Revelation 1:7, ICB).**

**M**ama, Carlos’ grandpa is very sick, and they don’t think he will live more than two days,” said Paulo sadly.

“Yes, dear, death is a terrible thing,” said Mama softly. “It’s sad to lose a loved one.”

“I see Carlos and Belen crying a lot whenever they talk about their grandpa,” Paulo explained to Mama.

“Don’t feel so sad. There’s hope for all of us!” exclaimed Mama joyfully. “Tell your friends.”

“What kind of hope is there after you die?” asked Paulo with a puzzled look.

“The Bible tells us that Jesus will come again to wake those who have died in Him!” Mama said enthusiastically. “Let’s look up 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 to read more about this wonderful promise.”

“Great, Mama!” exclaimed Paulo. “I want to share this hope with Carlos and Belen.”

“Wow, it says here that those who have died in Christ will rise first, and those who are still alive

will be taken up to meet Jesus in the air!” said Paulo excitedly.

“Then Carlos and Belen don’t have to cry anymore!” said Paulo confidently.

“Go and share this wonderful news with your friends tomorrow,” Mama encouraged with a smile on her face.

## DIVE IN DEEP

- Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 with 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 and John 5:28, 29. Why is Jesus’ second coming so important to us regarding death? Would this promise be welcomed by those who don’t believe in Him?
- What was the warning given in Luke 21:34-36 concerning how we should live in these last days before Jesus comes?

## LIVE IT OUT

- Pray together with your parents and/or with two friends for those who have lost loved ones, that they will trust Jesus’ promise of seeing them again.
- Decorate five or six index cards (7.5 cm x 12.5 cm, or 3” x 5”) with Bible texts that give the hope of resurrection when Jesus comes again. Share them with those who have lost loved ones. ☺

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**EVERY CHILD.  
EVERYWHERE.  
IN SCHOOL.**

**#EveryChildInSchool**

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FROM MOSTLY  
PREVENTABLE CAUSES.**

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