

SHINE

families
worship

Read Luke 19:28–40 or “Hosanna!” on page 260 in *The Peace Table*. There are a few speaking parts besides the narrator: Jesus (verses 30–31, 40), the colt’s owners (verse 33), the disciples (verse 34), and Pharisees (verse 39). If you wish, different people could read those lines and you could all join in on verse 38. For worship music connected to this story, see the QR code.



Illustration by Suling Wang

Talk About the Story

- I wonder how the disciples felt as they were searching for the donkey colt.
- I wonder what the owners of the colt thought when the disciples told them, “The Lord needs it.” Do you think they found out how it had been used?
- I wonder why the Pharisees (teachers of the law) thought Jesus should tell the people to stop shouting.
- I wonder what it was like to be part of the big crowd as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey.

SHINE
everywhere



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

Dear Families,

When families worship together, faith grows stronger—not just in children, but in parents too. Church is more than a place to show up on Sunday; it's a community where you and your children are known, supported, and encouraged to follow Jesus.

In an increasingly disconnected world, church is a place to develop friendships that provide practical support during both crises and celebrations. They're who you invite to a birthday party for your child. They're who brings you meals when you have a baby. They're who shows up to help you load the U-Haul when it's time to move. They pray for you when a health crisis changes everything. Your church becomes an extended family that offers friendship, prayer, and practical help when you need it most.

At church, your children find friends who share your values and adults who model faith in everyday life. When your children are at church activities, they make friends with caring adults and with the other children.

Getting these benefits takes a commitment on your part, but the rewards are real. You find yourself in friendship networks in which you give and receive practical help. You experience the presence of Christ in your church relationships. You and your children grow a faith that carries you through life.

May it be so! We are cheering you on!

Shana Peachey Boshart

Shine Everywhere Project Facilitator, for the Shine Team

Connect Church and Home

Here are simple ways to connect church and home. Pick the ones that fit your family best.

Taking Church Home

Wonder About Sunday

On the way home from church or during the next meal:

- “What part of worship did you like best today?”
- “Did anything make you curious or confused?”
- “Where did you see kindness today?”
- For preschoolers: “Draw something you saw at church today.”

Story Echo

Choose one phrase from the sermon or Bible story and repeat it during the week:

- Write it on a sticky note for the fridge.
- Turn it into a short prayer at bedtime.
- Say it together before meals.
- Talk about how it connects to your lives.



Photo by Mitch Stutzman



Parent Tip

Consider creating a “church bag” that contains quiet activities your children can do in church (dolls, figures, fidget toys, sticker books, crayons, paper, Bible-themed activity books). An Amish general store is a great source of toys and activities for this.



Making Church Feel Familiar

Play Church at Home

This is especially for young children. Play “church” during the week to help children feel confident and prepared on Sundays. Children can take turns:

- Welcoming the family.
- Lighting a candle.
- Singing a familiar hymn or song.
- Telling a Bible story.
- Saying a short prayer or blessing.

Church Bag Check

Unpack and repack the church bag together:

- Talk about which items got used most.
- Replenish or replace items.
- Invite children to suggest additional items.





Creative Connections

Church Art Wall

Create a small space at home where children can:

- Display drawings of Bible stories from worship or Sunday school.
- Add new pictures each week.

Music Memory

Play a worship song from church in the car, at bedtime, or during chores.

- Ask “Does this song remind you of church? What do you remember?”
- Let children choose a favorite church song to sing together.

Storytime

Ask your child to retell the Bible story using:

- Toys
- Plush animals
- Drawings

Let the child lead—even if the details change!



Making Friends at Church

Name One New Face

Challenge your family to:

- Learn one new person’s name each time you go to church.
- Look for that person in the directory or pray for them during the week.

Pray for the People We Saw

At bedtime or meals, name people from church:

- Someone who greeted you
- Someone who sang or spoke
- Someone who sat near you

Pray for them by name or by description.

Who Needs Welcome?

Talk together about these questions and then choose one small action to try.

- “Who might need extra kindness this week?”
- “How can our family show welcome like the people welcomed Jesus?”



Wow! Thanks! Hmm!

Mr. Rogers used to sing, “There are many ways to say ‘I love you.’” Worshiping God and loving God are closely related. Just as there are many ways to say “I love you,” there are many ways to worship God! Try these three:

- **Wow!** Worship can be like saying “wow” or feeling amazed by something. You might have a wow moment when you see something cool in nature or hear beautiful music.
- **Thanks!** It’s natural to say thanks when someone does something great. Saying thanks to God is a way we can worship.
- **Hmm!** God can be mysterious. God’s ways are not our ways, and sometimes we pause in silence to wonder, ponder, or listen.

Cut out the images below. Use them as reminders of worshiping God. You could:

- Use them as conversation starters during the evening meal to share when you had a “Wow!,” “Thanks!,” or “Hmm!” experience during the day.
- Pray with the cards by taking turns sharing moments of awe (Wow!), gratitude (Thanks!), and wonder (Hmm!).
- Tape them to a wall in your home as a reminder to notice God’s presence in everyday moments.
- During church, notice when you have a “Wow!,” “Thanks!,” or “Hmm!” moment, then talk about it at home.



Wow!



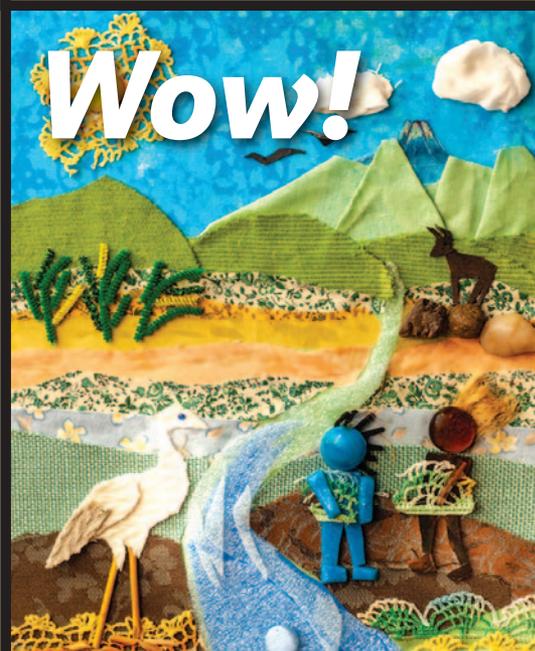
Thanks!



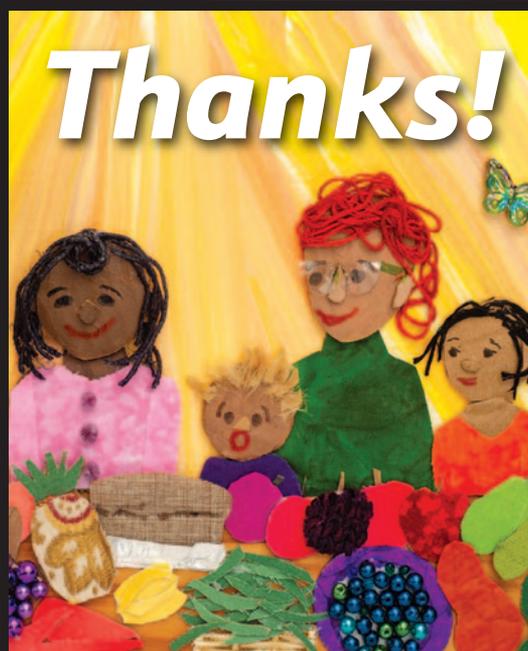
Hmm!



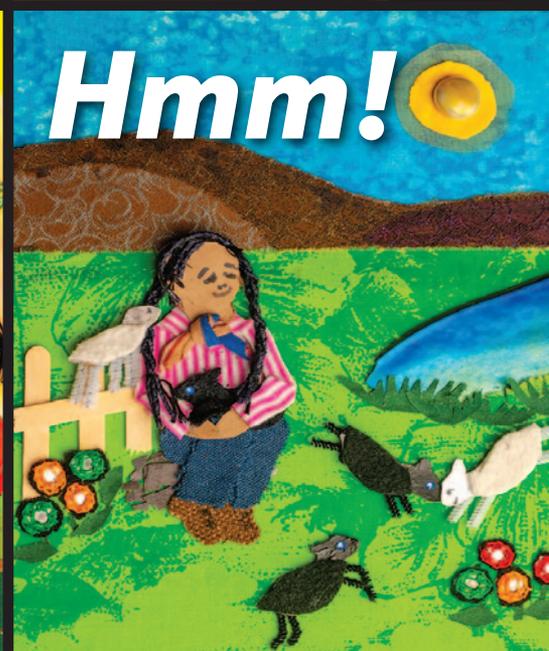
Wow!



Thanks!



Hmm!



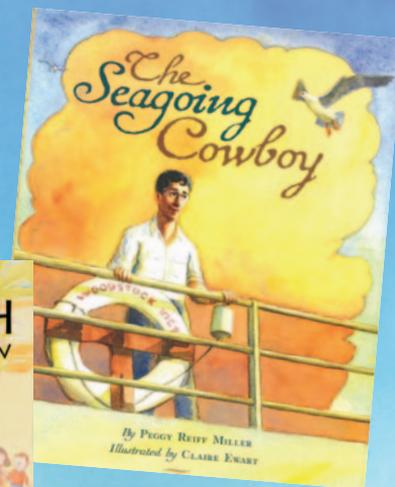
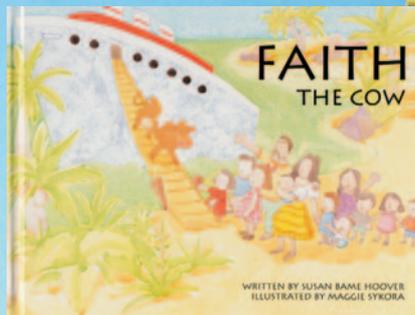
Picture Book Corner

The Seagoing Cowboy and Faith the Cow

In the years after World War II, people in war-torn countries needed help rebuilding their lives. One man had an idea about how to help them: send pregnant cows! How would that help a family, and how did they send cows to another country in the 1940s? Read one of these stories to find out! For older children, *The Seagoing Cowboy* tells the story of a young man who “rode waves” to “herd” farm animals to people who needed them. For younger children, *Faith the Cow* tells the story of the first cow to travel like this.

When Jesus was asked which commandment is greatest, he said, “Love the Lord your God,” and he *added* that the second greatest “is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:36–40 NIV).

When we care for others like the people in these stories—that is one way to worship God.



You can read more about Heifer International by following the QR code.



The Stones Cry Out

When some religious leaders told Jesus to make the crowd stop praising him, he said that if the people stopped, the stones would cry out.

What are the stones below saying? See if you can put the words in the correct order so that they say what the crowd was calling out to Jesus. *Hint:* the answer is in Luke 19:38, in the NRSVue edition of the Bible. You can find the answer upside down on the inside middle page.

