

S PRING IS FINALLY HERE!

HOPEFULLY THAT MEANS MORE
 "OUTDOOR" DAYS FOR YOU AND
 YOUR CHILD AFTER WHAT MAY

HAVE BEEN A LONG AND COLD WINTER INDOORS.

But then, April is the month of "showers," as the saying goes, and sometimes rainy days can keep you home-bound -- and dampen your spirits, as well.

As children, many of us dreaded the rainy days that kept us inside -- they were boring and gloomy -- but now as adults we wouldn't do away with the rain because many of us have known years of drought. And we know that no rain, or not enough, is far worse than the inconvenience of a few days of cloudy, wet weather. We know that rain is necessary for life, health and growth.

Did you know that in the Bible God's Word is compared to rain? Look at this verse:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: it will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:10-11).

God is real and very present in our lives, and He has communicated with us in His Word. What He says is living; like water, it is necessary to us for spiritual health and growth, for the true life that flourishes. We need this "water" every day.

APRIL SHOWERS



But for moms and dads of preschoolers, finding time to give even a few minutes of focused attention to God's Word every day can seem nearly impossible, especially if we feel pressured to get it in early in the morning or late at night. Weariness can make it difficult. And it can become just another task to check off our list of things to accomplish.

Keep the goal in mind: to make God's Word part of our everyday living. The Bible is not something high

and separate from our day-to-day realities. Reading a few isolated verses quickly in order to fulfill a duty is not what will bring the strength and life-giving refreshment that we so desperately need.

THE BIBLE IS NOT SOMETHING HIGH AND SEPARATE FROM OUR DAY-TO-DAY REALITIES.

What time of day is your BEST time? When do you have a couple of minutes to stop and

turn your heart to the Lord? Maybe it's during lunch break at work or while your child naps in the afternoon. Most of the time these moments don't happen unless we make a conscious effort

to set them aside for God -- and to put other things aside. The newspaper and the laundry can wait.

There are also things you can do throughout the day to keep God's Word before your mind. Keep an open Bible in your work area and read a phrase or two here and there. Then think about what the phrase means as you go about your daily tasks. Turn the phrase over in your mind, asking God to help you understand it. This is what the Bible means when it talks about "meditation." If you find a verse especially helpful to you, consider memorizing it so that you can call it to mind at any time. This is how the Holy Spirit renews our minds with His Word.

Put on some praise music or listen to Christian radio as you drive home from work or carpool kids from school. Throughout the day, lift up a prayer in every situation you face; carry on a dialogue with God. Are you frustrated or overwhelmed? Seek God's peace. Take a moment to breathe a prayer of thanks for the sunshine on your face or the encouragement of a friend.

And don't forget that God's Word accomplishes what He sends it to do. It WILL encourage and strengthen you -- and teach you about Him. And you will begin to see spiritual fruit in your life.

YOU [GOD] CARE FOR THE LAND AND WATER IT; YOU ENRICH IT ABUNDANTLY. THE STREAMS OF GOD ARE FILLED WITH WATER TO PROVIDE THE PEOPLE WITH GRAIN, FOR SO YOU HAVE ORDAINED IT. YOU DRENCH ITS FURROWS AND LEVEL ITS RIDGES; YOU SOFTEN IT WITH SHOWERS AND BLESS ITS CROPS. (PSALM 65:9-10)

This verse describes a biblical view of weather and seasons, crops and growth: God set up nature for our good -- it is only with His blessing that ultimately we can eat and live abundantly. You can teach your child that when God set up the process of nature, it was perfect.

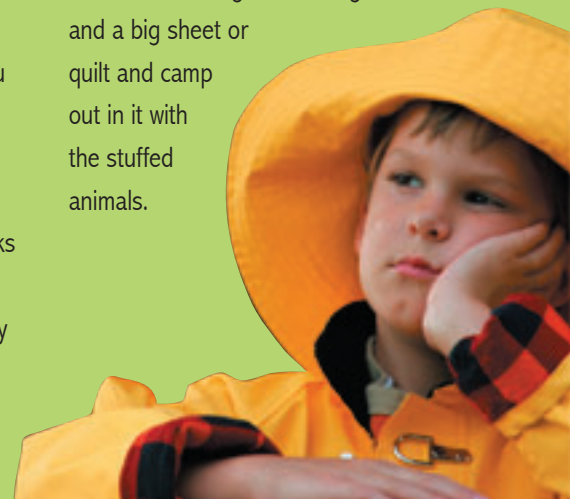
But when sin entered the world, it affected nature, and it still does. Things like tornados and tsunamis are not from God. You can teach your child to pray and ask God to help anyone who has been hurt by bad weather and ask Him to protect us and others, too. Teach her to thank God that good things still happen in nature. Remind her (and yourself) that the rain is God's

way of watering the plants that farmers grow for our food. You might be able to find a children's book at the library that follows the "history" of a loaf of bread, or some such, showing how the bread we bring home from the supermarket started as a grain of wheat in the ground. Explain to your child how God causes it to grow -- that this is how God cares for us. Read Psalm 65:9-10 to your child in a Bible version she can understand and explain the hard words, like "ordained." You could even memorize this verse as a family.

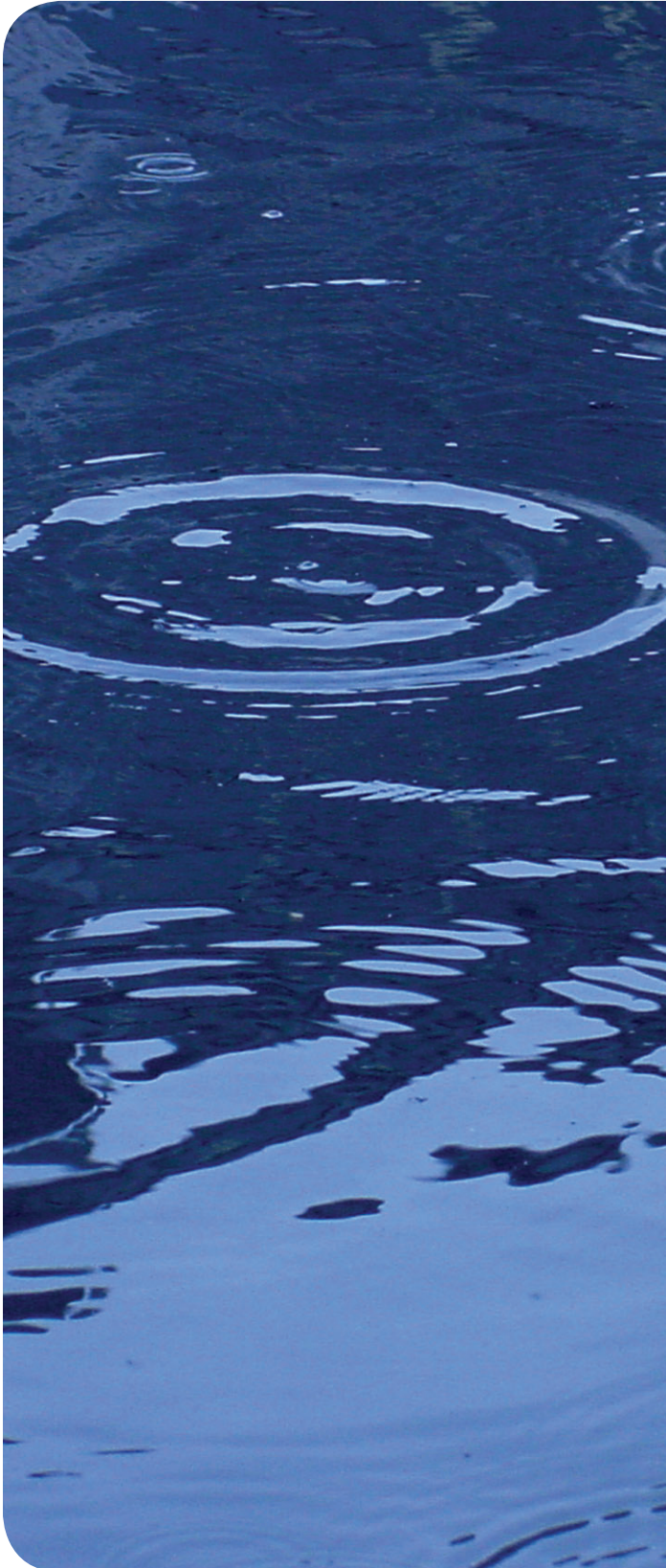
If you have time, make a poster with your child showing how God helps the plants to grow. Then thank God for how He takes care of us. He is so good!

RAINY-DAY IDEAS TO TRY

- Armed with umbrellas and rain boots, venture out into the rain. Splash in puddles, watch water run down into the drains in the street, dodge earthworms and notice all the unusual smells and sounds that a rainy day makes. Then come back home to some hot chocolate and stories. See if you can find good children's books about rain.
- Here are some other rainy-day activities you could try together: making scrapbooks; looking at photo albums of your child as a baby and toddler or of you as a child (be sure to tell all the stories!); finger painting; puzzles (start a big one on the dining room table -- but make sure it's not so hard that your child can't do it); create a tent in the living room using chairs and a big sheet or quilt and camp out in it with the stuffed animals.
- Have a special box just for rainy days. You might want to include simple items like these: modeling clay, a jar of old buttons and some string for stringing them, stencils and colored paper, paper dolls, easy paint-by-number books and paints, old magazines and scissors for cutting them up, board games (make sure they are not too difficult) and maybe some special music tapes or CDs.



CUBBIE BEAR'S C O R N E R



CUBBIES, HERE IS A TRUE STORY ABOUT A MAN NAMED ELIJAH.

Elijah lived a long, long time ago. We can read the story about him in the Bible (1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-45). Elijah was a man who listened to God. He obeyed God and told people God's words. He was called a prophet.

Where Elijah lived, there was a king who didn't worship God. His name was Ahab. God sent the prophet Elijah to King Ahab to tell him that God would make it so that it would not rain for a long time because the king would not listen to God.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF IT DIDN'T RAIN FOR A LONG TIME?

Well, after a long, long time the king changed his mind and began to worship God. Elijah told King Ahab to eat some food because rain was coming. Elijah could hear the sound of the rain from very far away.

Elijah climbed up to the top of a mountain. Far away he saw a very small cloud, and he told King Ahab to get into his chariot and go home quickly because rain was coming.

The Bible says that the sky became black and it got very windy, and then the rain came -- lots of rain!

Don't you think everyone was glad when the rain came? God made it rain again after a very long time. God is in charge of the rain and the clouds and all the weather.

DRAW A PICTURE OF SOMETHING IN THIS STORY.

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Parent

P A U S E

Inspiration and ideas for parents of preschoolers

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Our Club News