

Village Families
Devotional

BIGGER THAN US

Advance the Gospel.
Impact Generations.





This Guidebook belongs to:

Start Here

For Parents / Guardians / Significant Adults

As a church, we are talking about what it means to believe in a God **Bigger Than Us**. For five weeks, we want to take what is being taught through the Sunday sermons, in Village Kids, and Jr. Youth and bring it home to your family.

Over this series, we will talk about a **Story**, a **God**, a **Mission**, a **Legacy** and a **Future** that is ***Bigger Than Us***. We encourage you to gather your whole family and dedicate some time to read through and do the activities in this devotional.

There is one devotional each week for five weeks. We encourage you to pick a time that works best for your family and commit to covering all five weeks before the end of June.

Each devotional has a section to read aloud and a set of questions to discuss as a family. The Family Application and the **Bigger Than Us** Action are optional activities that will help bring together what you have just read by doing something together as a family.

Ultimately, our goal through the **Bigger Than Us** series, the initiative, and this devotional is for families to commit to the process and experience a life-changing encounter with a God who is bigger than us.

We trust this unique and exciting chapter in the history of our church will be a fantastic time for your whole family, and we will be praying for you.

Blessings,

VILLAGE CHURCH FAMILY MINISTRIES

Week 1

A Story Bigger Than Us

Devotional

Gather your family together and read the following.

One of the most amazing things about the Bible is that it tells one big story, even though it's made up of 66 books written by 40 different authors. Some parts tell us how the world began and how God created everything. Others describe the history of Israel—God's chosen people—or talk about kings, future promises, and the many ways God has kept his word over and over again.

However, the most important moment in the story happens when Jesus comes. His birth, life, death, and resurrection change everything! And the story doesn't stop there. It continues as the early church spreads the good news of Jesus, reaching people all over the world. Then, at the very end, we get a glimpse of the future—when Jesus returns to make everything right again.

You see, the Bible is God's big story about how sin separated people from him. But God had a plan. He promised to fix what was broken by sending his Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our sins by dying on the cross. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, our relationship with God can be restored, and sin and death no longer have the final say. And the best part? The story ends with a promise—one day, Jesus will return, sin and death will be gone forever, and we will be with him always.

Read Ephesians 3:20-21 (*have someone read it out loud*)

This is an amazing story, but it's so much **BIGGER THAN US**, yet we are invited into the story. Jesus wants to meet with us. Jesus wants to know us. Jesus wants to be the center of our lives. But it is not just us; Jesus also invites our friends, family and community. Jesus wants to do "*immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (v20)*".

That means that Jesus wants to do **BIG, HUGE, EPIC** things in our lives, and he wants us to be part of those things. Spoiler: because we know how the story ends (Jesus comes back), but between now and then, the story continues.

God's BIG story is so much **BIGGER THAN US**, but it's worth celebrating because it's not just a story for me and you, but for the whole world.

Questions



1. What stood out to you?
2. What are some of the parts of God's big story that we remember? Let's make a list as a family.
3. Age-specific questions:

Preschool:

What do you think is the most exciting part of God's big story?

K-3:

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus wants you to be part of his big story?

Gr. 4-5:

What is one way you can be part of sharing God's story with others?

Jr. Youth:

What do you think it means that Jesus can do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine"?

Whole Family:

How can we, as a family, live like we are part of God's big story every day?



Family Application

This week, as a family, let's list the **BIG, HUGE, EPIC** things we want God to do in our family over the next five weeks. Let's write the list together and place it somewhere we can all see. As God shows up and does "*more than all we ask or imagine (v20)*" let's check it off the list.

Bigger Than Us



God's big story is worth celebrating, and when we look at it, we see a story of people in relationships with each other and showing generosity by opening up their homes. As a family, plan to invite others into your home or plan a gathering somewhere. Ensure everyone in the house invites someone, not just adult friends. As a bonus, consider inviting people who may have never been in your home.

Remember, it's not about being fancy, putting on a show or spending lots of money. It's about gathering people and building new or deeper relationships.

Week 2

A God Bigger Than Us

Devotional

Gather your family together and read the following.

We believe in a God who's **Bigger Than Us**, but sometimes, we can lose sight of that. As a family, we have things that overwhelm us sometimes – at school or work, there can be challenges that seem impossible, and when we look at the world around us, we can feel like there are no solutions.

But Jesus reminds us that we believe in a God who can do **BIG, HUGE, EPIC** things. Let's read a story about Jesus, reminding the disciples that God can use what we have to make a big difference.

Read Matthew 14:13-21 *(have someone read it out loud)*

There were more than 5,000 people at the gathering. That number just included the men, but there were also women, children, and whole families there to hear from Jesus that day. So, when the disciples saw this situation, they felt overwhelmed. They did not have enough money to feed everyone.

Yet Jesus asks for what they do have, and they bring him “*five loaves of bread and two fish* (v17)”. When Jesus blessed the food that would have been a meal for a few people, it fed 5000+ with 12 baskets of food left over.

Jesus took what was offered in the five loaves of bread and two fish and multiplied it in a way that seems impossible to us, but God is a big God.

He does it not only because it meets the needs of the people at that moment but also because it furthers his story in the world. People's needs are met, but the story of God gets shared within the community.

We may have moments as a family where what we are going through seems impossible, but we can remember that God is **Bigger Than Us**. He wants to meet our needs and comfort us when we feel overwhelmed. But he also wants us to share those stories and moments with the people around us.

Jesus can multiply what we have to meet the needs of the moment and more. All we need to do is bring what we have to Jesus.

Questions

1. What stood out to you?
2. What seems impossible or overwhelming for your family right now?
3. Age-specific questions:

Preschool:

What would it have been like to see Jesus feed so many people with just a little bit of food?

K-3:

When have you felt like you didn't have enough to help, and how could Jesus use what you have?



Gr. 4-5:

How do you think Jesus can help your family when everyone feels overwhelmed?

Jr. Youth:

Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to bring what they had instead of making food appear on his own?

Whole Family:

How can we bring what we have to Jesus and trust him to do big things with it?

Family Application

God is **Bigger Than Us** and one of the ways we can remember that as a family is to spend some time together praying.

Prayer Ideas

1. Smarties Prayer (Younger Kids):

Give everyone a small box of Smarties, and one at a time, pull one out and pray based on the colour.

- Pink/Red - Thank God for loving you
- Orange/Yellow - Thank God for the people in your life
- Green/Blue - Pray for someone you know
- Purple/Brown - Pray for your teachers/coworkers

2. Popcorn Prayer:

Everyone prays out loud at the same time; it's loud and crazy but fun.

3. Prayers by Flashlight:

Sit side-by-side and throw a spare sheet over the top of you to create your prayer tent, then pray together by flashlight. (Or build a living room fort and go inside!)

4. ACTS (Older Kids):

Pray through the ACTS prayer acronym

- Adoration - Praise God for being awe-inspiring
- Confession - Pray for forgiveness for things in your life
- Thanksgiving - Thank God for his provision
- Supplication - Pray for the needs in your life





Bigger Than Us

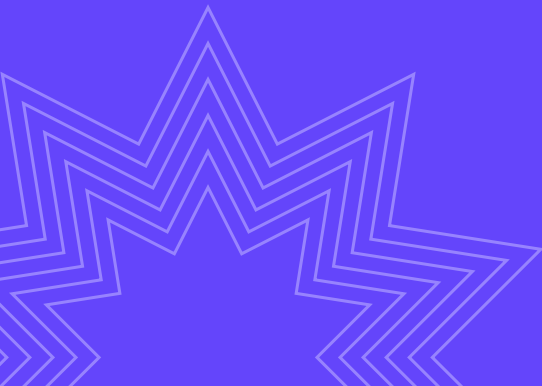
This week, let's practice what we have learned, take what we can offer, and reach out to people in our community. Let's pick one of the following activities to do as a family.

Option 1: Blessing Bags

As a family, gather simple items like granola bars, water bottles, socks, and small toiletries and pack them into bags. Then, you can keep them in our car to distribute to community members when there is an opportunity.

Option 2: Food Bank

Let's commit to spending an afternoon collecting food or donations for a local agency we like as a family or for our local food bank. We could create some flyers, contact our friends and family, etc., to get the word out about what we want to do.



Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

Matthew 14:19

Week 3

A Mission Bigger Than Us



Devotional

Gather your family together and read the following.

Jesus is the climax of God's BIG Story, but as we have talked about, the story continues after Jesus. One reason for this is that after Jesus' death and resurrection, the last thing he does is give what we call the "Great Commission". You can think of this as Jesus giving his disciples one last command or direction that still applies to us today. Let's read the "Great Commission" together and discuss how it impacts our family.

Read Matthew 26:16-20 *(have someone read it out loud)*

Jesus is asking every one of us to go into our world and tell his story. To go and tell the Good News that in Jesus, we have been rescued from sin. Through Jesus, our relationship with God is fixed, and we can do impossible things for God.

Jesus gives us that command because he knows that each of us has something to offer. Just like the five loaves and two fish, we have something God can use to impact other people.

He tells us to go into the world, including where we live and spend our time. God placed each of us in this family on purpose. The people we see daily, our friends, families, classmates, work colleagues, teammates, etc., are in our lives for a reason.



Jesus also doesn't say that this command is only for adults, people with fancy degrees, or a small group of chosen people. No, Jesus is super clear: anyone who follows him is expected to go into their world to share the Good News of Jesus.

Now, that may sound scary or intimidating because it can be hard sometimes to tell others about Jesus. But Jesus makes a really important promise. It's a reminder that we are not alone and that God's big story has a really fantastic ending.

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

This single promise gives us hope and trust in God. He can do **BIG, HUGE, EPIC** things and is promising to be with us every step of the way, all the way to the end of the story. It means we're not alone and that in Jesus, individually and as a family, we can impact our world, which is epic!

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."



Questions

1. What stood out to you?
2. What are some of the places and people that would make up “our world”?
3. Age-specific questions:

Preschool:

Who are some people you can tell about Jesus?



K-3:

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus is always with you?

Gr. 4-5:

Why do you think Jesus wants us to share his story with others?

Jr. Youth:

What are some ways you can share the Good News of Jesus with the people in your daily life?

Whole Family:

How can we, as a family, share Jesus' love with the people around us?

Family Application

As a family, let's gather some small, smooth rocks and paint them with Bible verses, encouraging words, or simple messages about Jesus' love. Once they dry, let's walk in our neighbourhood or at a local park and place them where others can find them.

Bigger Than Us

God is doing some big things through Village Church all around the world right now. Let's take a look at some of the ways Village Church is participating in the Great Commission by partnering with other organizations:

1. Ally Global Foundation:

Ally is a global organization that works to protect, restore, and empower women and children who have been affected by abuse and human trafficking. We partner with Ally in Nepal and Cambodia.





2. International Justice Mission:

IJM is a global organization protecting the poor from violence throughout the developing world. IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems.

3. Kuwasha:

Kuwasha provides Christ-centered education for children from the most vulnerable homes in rural Uganda and medical care for the community through their hospital onsite at the school.

4. Impact Ministries:

Impact Ministries offers Christ-centered education for children from impoverished backgrounds in rural Guatemala.

5. FH Canada:

Food for the Hungry walks alongside the most vulnerable communities as they strive for sustainability. FH is committed to an integrated, holistic approach to development, including priorities such as education, agriculture, health, and gender equality. We partner with FH in Ethiopia.

6. Dusty Sandals:

Dusty Sandals' main objective is to uplift and encourage Indian believers in their work and to enable their ministry through the translation of Bible study materials into their languages.

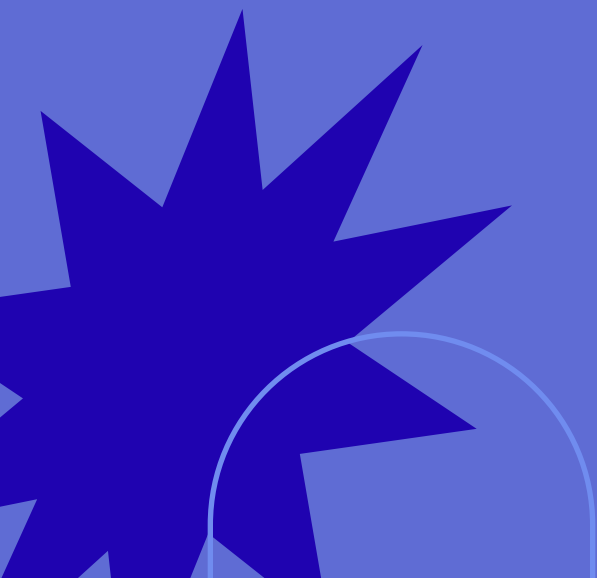
7. Convoy of Hope:

We partner with Convoy of Hope as they respond when disasters hit all over the world so we can be a part of showing compassion and providing practical needs to those impacted.

Learn more as a family or see how you can get connected on our website at **ThisisVillageChurch.com/globalimpact**

Week 4

A Legacy Bigger Than Us



Devotional

Gather your family together and read the following.

When we say **YES** to following Jesus, it transforms our lives. Not only have we been rescued from our sins and brought back into a relationship with God, but we are also made new. This is exactly what Paul is talking about when we read in 2 Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”*

That transformation is immediate, but it also impacts the future. Let’s read the story of Zacchaeus together and see how his encounter with Jesus changed him in the moment and what effect that had on the future.

Read Matthew 26:16-20 *(have someone read it out loud)*

When Jesus meets Zacchaeus in the fig tree, his life changes. Jesus calls Zacchaeus by name, and he goes to his home to eat. Zacchaeus ends up confessing his sin to Jesus, and the crowd gathered nearby. Then Zacchaeus goes above and beyond by paying back four times what he owes. In this moment, Jesus says, *“Today salvation has come to this house (v9)”*.

So, what changed for Zacchaeus? Why did he go from a liar and thief to a follower of Jesus? The answer is simple: he encountered Jesus. He was lost and had been found. That encounter radically changed Zacchaeus’ life, but it also impacted his world.



His house was impacted, those he cheated were impacted, and those who were there and saw or heard the story were impacted. Imagine what it would have been like the next time the “crook” Zacchaeus came and knocked on the door to collect the taxes but instead took a fair amount. Or what would the conversations have been like when he went and paid people back four times what he took from them?

Zacchaeus’ encounter with Jesus would have a “ripple effect” in the community, similar to how ripples flow out when you throw a rock into still water. Remember, we are called to go into the world and share the Good News of Jesus, which has an effect that can travel further than anything we could imagine.

The question for us to think about today as a family is - what is our Jesus “ripple effect” in our world? How does it affect the people around us today, and how does that affect us in the future?

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
the new creation has come: The
old has gone, the new is here!”



Questions



1. What stood out to you?
2. Why do you think it matters that Jesus chose to eat at Zacchaeus' house?
3. Age-specific questions:

Preschool:

How do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus called his name?

K-3:

How did meeting Jesus change Zacchaeus, and how does Jesus change us?



Gr. 4-5:

What are some ways we can show others that Jesus has changed our lives?

Jr. Youth:

How can our actions, like Zacchaeus' choice to repay people, create a ripple effect for Jesus in our community?

Whole Family:

What is one way we can create a Jesus "ripple effect" by showing his love to others this week?

Family Application

As a family, let's brainstorm and choose one simple act of kindness we can do together to show Jesus' love (e.g., making and delivering cookies to a neighbour, writing thank-you notes to teachers, or paying for someone's meal). After doing it, let's talk about how this small act could create a ripple effect and inspire others to show kindness and share Jesus' love.

Bigger Than Us

This project is about building a home base for our church called the *Village Church National Ministry Centre* - a place out of which more and more children and adults across Canada will learn about Jesus and make the decision to follow him. Over the coming years it will help us better communicate the gospel, develop leaders, start new churches, and show love to others around the world with new compassion projects. As a family, talk about ways you could contribute to this project because building this *National Ministry Centre* is a brave step of faith that will take all of us working together to make happen.

For more information and to give to this project: **BiggerThanUs.ca**



Fundraising Ideas

Here are some ways you can raise funds for whatever project you choose as a family.

- Create a lemonade/drink stand.
- **Kids:** Collect bottles in your community.
- Do extra chores around the house.
- Go door to door and offer yard work help for a donation.
- **Teens:** Donate a portion of the money you will earn at work and consider asking your job if they can match your donation.
- Create/bake something to sell.
- **Parents:** Check to see if your work does volunteer/donation matching or match whatever your kids raise yourself.

Fun Facts

Kuwasha

One of Village Church Global Partners is Kuwasha, and their work has a ripple effect on the community in ways we can probably never truly know. Village Church has also had an enormous ripple effect in that area, helping build the hospital and school. As a family, consider how you can partner with Kuwasha. Maybe it's buying a bag of Maize Flour, getting a goat, building a house, or pooling your resources as a family to support a student monthly. Together, your family and Village Church can continue to have a legacy impact at Kuwasha and the surrounding community.

For more information, visit kuwasha.net/special-gifts

Week 5

A Future Bigger Than Us

Devotional

Gather your family together and read the following.

We started this devotional by talking about how there is **A Story Bigger Than Us** and that God has been writing a big story throughout history. We talked about the fact that the story is still being written, but we also know how it will end.

The book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, paints a picture of how the story of God will end. Let's take a peek at a part of that story in Revelation 21:1-5.

Read Revelation 21:1-5 *(have someone read it out loud)*

John, the author of this book, is painting a picture of **A Future Bigger Than Us**. It's a future where sin has been defeated for all time, and people are in the presence of God forever. It's a future where there will be no more consequences for sin and no more death. Where the *"old order of things has passed away (v4)"* and in its place is God forever and ever.

If you have accepted Jesus in your life and are following him, no matter what happens in between, this is your future. This is why the story of Jesus is called the Good News, because in Jesus, all this and more are possible. That means this is not just the future of the world or the story of what's to come; it's our story now. It's the story of our family and our church.

This is why in Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus says, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Jesus' desire is for everyone to step into the future with him because he is making all things new. One of the reasons we have a glimpse of what God will do when he makes all things new again is to give us hope that no matter what, no matter the circumstance, he is **Bigger Than Us** and promises that we will never be alone.

Questions



1. What stood out to you?
2. What is something God's been teaching you over the last 5 weeks?
3. Age-specific questions:

Preschool:

What do you think heaven will be like?

K-3:

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus will always be with you, even to the very end?

Gr. 4-5:

What does it mean that Jesus is making all things new, and how does that give us hope?

Jr. Youth:

How can knowing the ending of God's story change the way we live today?

Whole Family:

What can we do as a family to share the Good News of Jesus so that others can be part of God's future?



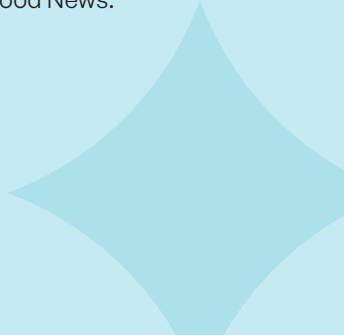
Family Application



Let's gather magazines, newspapers, or print images from the internet that represent beauty, joy, and renewal (flowers, happy families, bright colours, nature, etc.). As a family, let's create a collage representing how God is making all things new. While we are creating, let's talk about what excites us the most about God's future promise and how we can live with that hope every day.

Bigger Than Us

If we genuinely believe in a God who is **Bigger Than Us**, then we should tell others about him. As a family, let's list people we want to share the Good News of Jesus with before the end of the year. When we are done, let's pray for each person by name and go into the world just like Jesus asked us to and tell these people all about him. What happens after that is between them and Jesus; our job is to share the Good News.



Now to him who is
able to do far more
abundantly than all
that we ask or think,
according to the power
at work within us,

to him be glory in the
church and in Christ
Jesus throughout all
generations, forever
and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21



Advance the Gospel.
Impact Generations.



BiggerThanUs.ca