

KIDPAK ADVENTURES
LEGENDS
OF


NAME: _____

GRADE: _____

What you hold in your hand is an incredible resource, a tool designed to help us effectively partner with parents and lead children into a growing relationship with God.

Contained within the pages of this booklet you'll find:

- a. Important scriptures, such as our memory verse.
- b. Amazing and relevant Bible stories.
- c. Key points that make up the exciting messages planned for this entire series.
- d. A place to stamp for each service attended.

This booklet was created to inform you of exactly what our children's ministry will speak about each service. You'll be able to review with your children the messages covered, and also look ahead as the series unfolds.

So partner with us and help your children learn responsibility by bringing this booklet each service. Each time they visit, we will put a stamp in their book to show that they attended, and also filled out each point of that day's lesson in this book.

As an added incentive, we'll continue to give a special reward to those who have attended each day.



SCARECROW — SEEK OUT WISDOM

“If I only had a brain.” The moment anyone says that phrase, the first image that pops up is a picture of the Scarecrow from “The Wizard of Oz.” He’s a loyal friend of Dorothy on her way along the Yellow Brick Road, and he only wants one thing: a brain.

He thinks he’s not that smart, mainly because his head is filled with straw. But we know better. After all, wasn’t it the Scarecrow who came up with that clever plan to get delicious apples for Dorothy? And wasn’t it Scarecrow who helped get the group to Emerald City, and defeat the Wicked Witch of the West?

Scarecrow already had what he wanted most of all. He was already pretty smart! And you know something? He shows us all how to be smart as well!

Firstly, don’t get burned! Scarecrow is afraid of fire, and actually, who wouldn’t be? The Bible tells us that our words we speak can start a dangerous fire unlike anything else. Scarecrow seems to know this when he tells Dorothy, “Some people without brains do an awful lot of talking, don’t they?” Those are some pretty smart words for someone who says he doesn’t have a brain!

Next, don’t stop seeking wisdom. Don’t stop trying to stuff new knowledge into your head! Scarecrow spent a long time seeking the great and powerful Oz for wisdom. At the end of his journey, of course, Scarecrow discovered he already had his wish all along. But consider this: so do you! You don’t have to march down a yellow brick road to get wisdom. All you have to do is ask the ever-present God, and He’ll give you exactly what you need.

Finally, just remember what King Solomon told us: Wisdom rules! As a new king of Israel, King Solomon could have asked God for anything at all. Imagine that! Anything! Get this: he chose wisdom over everything else, because he knew its real value. Perhaps that’s why Scarecrow was made ruler of Emerald City – he was considered the smartest of them all.

Know this: wisdom and knowledge are super important, and our Heavenly Father completely agrees. Study to show yourself approved, and seek His wisdom as the magnificent gift that it really is. You’ve don’t have just straw in your head. You’ve got something much more amazing!



SCARECROW

“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is pure. That’s the most important thing about it. And that’s not all. It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It doesn’t pretend to be what it is not.”

James 3:17 NIRV

“Blessed is the one who finds wisdom. Blessed is the one who gains understanding.” **Proverbs 3:13 NIRV**

“It is much better to get wisdom than gold. It is much better to choose understanding than silver.” **Proverbs 16:16 NIRV**

“Listen to advice and accept correction. In the end you will be counted among those who are wise.” **Proverbs 19:20 NIRV**

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity. Let the words you speak always be full of grace. Learn how to make your words what people want to hear. Then you will know how to answer everyone.”

Colossians 4:5-6 NIRV

“If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn’t find fault.” **James 1:5 NIRV**

“Some people without brains do an awful lot of talking, don’t they?” - **Scarecrow**

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1. Don't get _____. Scarecrow is afraid of fire, and the Bible tells us that our words we speak can start a dangerous fire unlike anything else. Scarecrow seems to know this when he tells Dorothy, "Some people without brains do an awful lot of talking, don't they?" Say, those are some pretty smart words for someone who says he doesn't have a brain!

"In the same way, the tongue is a small part of a person's body. But it talks big. Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire." James 3:5 NIRV

A. BURNED

B. EXCITED

C. SCARED

2. Seek Him for _____. Scarecrow spent a long time seeking the great and powerful Oz for wisdom. But at the end of his journey, Scarecrow discovered he already had his wish all along. But consider this: so do you! You don't have to march down a yellow brick road to get wisdom. All you have to do is ask the ever-present God, and He'll give you exactly what you need.

"If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn't find fault." James 1:5 NIRV

A. POWER

B. WISDOM

C. FLYING MONKEYS

3. _____ rules. As a new king of Israel, King Solomon could have asked God for anything at all. Imagine that! Anything! He chose wisdom over everything else, because he knew its real value. Perhaps that's why Scarecrow was made ruler of Emerald City – he was considered the smartest of them all. Know this: wisdom and knowledge are super important, and our Heavenly Father completely agrees. Study to show yourself approved, and seek His wisdom as the magnificent gift that it really is.

"To start being wise you must first get wisdom. No matter what it costs, get understanding." Proverbs 4:7 NIRV

A. KNOWLEDGE

B. COURAGE

C. OZ

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Memory Verse:

"To start being wise you must first get wisdom. No matter what it costs, get understanding." Proverbs 4:7 NIRV

NOTES

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TIN MAN — CREATE A NEW HEART

Of the four main heroes in “The Wizard of Oz,” you certainly wouldn’t call the Tin Man heartless. He’s a hero, and he’s so concerned about Dorothy that he joins a rescue effort to save her and all of the land of Oz. And yet a heart is all he ever wants. In fact, that’s the only reason he wants to go down the Yellow Brick Road in the first place. If I only had a heart he sings!

We all know he had one all along. But it does bring up a good question: Where is your heart? The Tin Man may have been wondering where he could get one. And if you’re curious about where your heart is, Jesus has the perfect answer. Your heart is found in who you serve and love the most. Where your treasure is, there also is your heart. If you’re thinking of others, that’s where your heart is, and that’s where it should be. If you’re thinking of yourself, then you’re living a pretty hollow life!

In Emerald City, Tin Man does get a new heart, something he always wanted. And if we look to the Bible, we see that Tin Man has a lot in common with a guy named David. When David felt his spirit wasn’t right with the Lord, he asked God to help him change his heart. You know that’s something that God can do, of course. It’s never too late to ask, because God can be in your heart, and make it just like new!

Once you start showing love to others, be like the Tin Man and don’t get rusty. Seriously, love is a verb. It’s an action, something you do for others. It’s putting others first and doing things in service to others. That’s the way Jesus showed us how to live, instead of sitting around, frozen in place and rusty. Get some oil, and get those joints moving. Show some service, show some kindness, and show some heart!

In the end, the Tin Man got his heart, although we knew he had one all along. And we know you have one too. God can make it just like new, and you can show His love to everyone when you serve others and shine His light to the world. You’ll be kind and be gentle, and awful sentimental, because you have a heart!



TIN MAN

“Do not gather for yourselves riches on earth. Moths and rats can destroy them. Thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, gather for yourselves riches in heaven. There, moths and rats do not destroy them. There, thieves do not break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your riches are.

“The eye is like a lamp for the body. Suppose your eyes are healthy. Then your whole body will be full of light. But suppose your eyes can’t see well. Then your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light inside you is darkness, then it is very dark!

“No one can serve two masters at the same time. You will hate one of them and love the other. Or you will be faithful to one and dislike the other. You can’t serve God and money at the same time.”

Matthew 6:19-24 NIRV

“God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you.”

Psalms 51:10 NIRV

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.” **Matthew 22:37 NIRV**

“But the seed on good soil stands for those with an honest and good heart. Those people hear the message. They keep it in their hearts. They remain faithful and produce a good crop.” **Luke 8:15 NIRV**

“He made his light shine in our hearts. His light gives us the light to know God’s glory. His glory is shown in the face of Christ.” **2 Corinthians 4:6 NIRV**

“A heart is not judged by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others.”

– **The Wizard of Oz**

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1. Where's your _____? The Tin Man didn't have a heart, and was wondering where he could get one. And if you're curious about where your heart is, Jesus has the perfect answer: your heart is found in who you serve and love the most.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21 NIV

A. AXE

B. HOPE

C. HEART

2. Create within a new _____. The Tin Man wanted a new heart, and he's got a lot in common with a guy in the Bible named David. When he felt his spirit wasn't right with the Lord, he asked God to help him change his heart. It's never too late to ask for that new heart. I hear a beat – how sweet!

"God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you."

Psalm 51:10 NIRV

A. HEART

B. TWISTER

C. COMMANDMENT

3. Don't get _____. Don't forget that love is a verb. It's an action, something you do for others. It's putting others first and doing things in service to others. You're not meant to sit around frozen in place and rusty. Get some oil – you know the kind. Get those joints moving. Show some service, show some kindness, and show some heart!

"Dear children, don't just talk about love. Put your love into action. Then it will truly be love." 1 John 3:18 NIRV

A. RUSTY

B. SLEEPY

C. CONFIDENT

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Memory Verse:

“God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you.”
Psalm 51:10 NIRV

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COWARDLY LION — FIND YOUR COURAGE

When we first meet the Cowardly Lion, he's a character that is not to be messed with! He chases everyone around and for just a moment, everyone is quite frightened of him! But it doesn't take long to realize that he really is a Cowardly Lion.

Fortunately, by the end of his story, he begins to understand what courage really is, and we all realize that he's had it all along. His problem was not realizing that we all feel fear from time to time, and that's completely natural. Fear will always be around, but that doesn't mean you have to bow down to it all the time. Remember that courage isn't the lack of fear. Instead, it's boldly stepping forward to do the right thing despite whatever you feel. The Cowardly Lion was afraid of quite a bit, and it's okay to feel fear, because we all do. But to quote a famous writer, "the true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid."

Just know that the Lion is always beside you. No, we're not talking about the Cowardly Lion. Jesus is the Lion of Judah, and he is always by your side. He went up against the devil and beat him from top to bottomus! That's why we too can have courage. Not because of anything we ourselves have done, but because of all He has done and all He is.

So step forward boldly, because yes, you can be king of the forest! Not queen, not duke, not prince! All you need is confidence in yourself. You have been made royalty, and you have a role that everyone looks up to. People see you and expect you to act like a king, doing right and boldly leading the way! So as the Cowardly Lion likes to say: "Put 'em up! Put 'em up!"

What Oz told the Lion can apply to you as well: "You have plenty of courage, I am sure. All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid, and that kind of courage you have in plenty."



COWARDLY LION

"When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?" **Psalms 56:3-4 NKJV**

"Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go."
Joshua 1:9 NIRV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." **2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV**

"The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion."
Proverbs 28:1 NKJV

"I can do all this by the power of Christ. He gives me strength."
Philippians 4:13 NIRV

"I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world." **John 16:33 NIRV**

What makes a King out of a slave? Courage!

What makes the flag on the mast to wave? Courage!

What makes the elephant charge his tusk, in the misty mist or the dusky dusk?

What makes the muskrat guard his musk? Courage!

What makes the sphinx the seventh wonder? Courage!

What makes the dawn come up like thunder? Courage!

What makes the Hottentot so hot? What puts the "ape" in apricot?

What have they got that I haven't got? Courage!

- The Cowardly Lion

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1. What makes a King out of a slave? _____! Don't be a slave to fear. It'll always be around, but that doesn't mean you have to bow down to it all the time. Remember that courage isn't the lack of fear. Instead, it's boldly stepping forward to do the right thing despite whatever you feel. The Cowardly Lion was afraid of quite a bit, and it's okay to feel fear, because we all do. But the true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid.

"When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear." Psalm 56:3-4 NKJV

A. FEAR

B. COURAGE

C. THE JITTERBUG

2. The _____ is beside you. Jesus is the Lion of Judah, and he is right behind you, always by your side. He went up against the devil and beat him from top to bottomus! That's why we too can have courage. Not because of anything we ourselves have done, but because of all He has done and all He is.

"Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go." Joshua 1:9 NIRV

A. NET

B. LION

C. HOTTENTOT

3. You can be _____ of the forest! Not queen, not duke, not prince! All you need is confidence in yourself. You have been made royalty, and you have a role that everyone looks up to. People see you and expect you to act like a king, doing right and boldly leading the way! So as the Cowardly Lion likes to say: "Put 'em up! Put 'em up!"

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

A. DUKE

B. PRINCE

C. KING

KIDPAK ADVENTURES
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Memory Verse:

“When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear.” Psalm 56:3-4 NKJV

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OZ — IT IS BETTER TO BE GOOD THAN GREAT

Before there was Oz the Great and Powerful, he was just a scheming trickster named Oscar Diggs. Oscar was a selfish performer on stage, and he really wanted to become a great man, not just a good one. But he was going about it all the wrong way, because goodness is better than greatness.

You see, like Oscar Diggs, we all have a desire to become a great person. And yes, that may be a nice ambition. But goodness is a Fruit of the Spirit, and in God's eyes, it is even better to be a good person. Temptation may come along the way, urging you to do things you know you shouldn't or be the person you shouldn't. To become something great, many people become selfish, or do things they shouldn't – just like Oscar Diggs. God wants us to not get caught in that whirlwind of trouble. He wants us to remember it's more important to be good.

Oscar does indeed flee, but only because all his trouble has caught up with him. That's how he winds up in this whole new world, flying to a happy place called Munchkinland. But he's not so sure he could make it there. The problem for Oscar is that there's a bubble barrier that lets people pass by, but only if they have a good heart. This is cause for alarm! Oscar is not so sure he'll make it! Before you start laughing at Oscar, here's a question for you: Would you make it through? How is your heart?

The wonderful thing about heaven is that we all have an answer to those questions. Fortunately, we have a way to get to heaven that gives us that clean heart: His name is Jesus. His grace gets us through.

By the end of "Oz the Great and Powerful," Oscar Diggs does become something great. But it is only because of grace, and it is only because he uses his gifts and talents to serve, and help save the people of Emerald City. His lesson is clear: you must be good to become great. And from that moment on, that's exactly what he becomes, the Great and Powerful Oz.

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OZ

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” **Galatians 5:22-23 NIRV**

So does belonging to Christ help you in any way? Does his love comfort you at all? Do you share anything in common because of the Holy Spirit? Has Christ ever been gentle and loving toward you? If any of these things has happened to you, then agree with one another. Have the same love. Be one in spirit and in the way you think and act. By doing this, you will make my joy complete. Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves. None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others.

As you deal with one another, you should think and act as Jesus did.

In his very nature he was God.

Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus didn't take advantage of that fact.

Instead, he made himself nothing.

He did this by taking on the nature of a servant.

He was made just like human beings.

He appeared as a man.

He was humble and obeyed God completely.

He did this even though it led to his death.

Even worse, he died on a cross!

So God lifted him up to the highest place.

God gave him the name that is above every name.

When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone will kneel down to worship him.

Everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will kneel down to worship him.

Everyone's mouth will say that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And God the Father will receive the glory.

Philippians 2:1-11 NIRV

“I don't want to be a good man, I want to be a great one.” - **Oz**

“You are capable of more than you know.” – **Glinda the Good**

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1. _____ is better than greatness. Oscar Diggs was a stage performer with a dream to be something much greater. That may be a nice ambition, but even better than that is to be a good person. Temptation may come along the way to do things you know you shouldn't or be the person you shouldn't. Flee from that, and remember it's more important to be good.

"So when we can do good to everyone, let us do it. Let's try even harder to do good to the family of believers." Galatians 6:10 NIRV

A. TALENT

B. GOODNESS

C. FEAR

2. _____ will get you through. The way to Munchkinland is through a bubble barrier that lets people pass by, but only if they have a good heart. Oscar is not so sure he'll make it! Would you make it through? Fortunately, we have a way to get to heaven that gives us that clean heart: His name is Jesus.

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" John 14:6 NIV

A. GOOD WORKS

B. GRACE

C. A CHICKEN

3. Using your abilities to help _____ is what makes you great. By the end of "Oz the Great and Powerful," Oscar Diggs realizes he was wrong. He thought he didn't have any useful skills to help save the people of Emerald City. But he did, and so do you. God has given us great talents and abilities, and Oscar discovers for himself that he could be something great – but only when he uses those gifts to save others.

"Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves." Philippians 2:3 NIRV

A. OTHERS

B. YOURSELF

C. GLINDA



Memory Verse:

“Don’t do anything only to get ahead. Don’t do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.” Philippians 2:3 NIRV

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DOROTHY — BE CONTENT

The hero of “The Wizard of Oz” is of course Dorothy Gale, and by the end of her first adventure in Oz, she’s learned some important things. Of course, the most important lesson is simply this: be content. Be content with what you have, who you’re with, where you are, and who you are.

Though she longs to be somewhere over the rainbow, Dorothy realizes the truth: there’s no place like home. By the end of the story, she learns she already has everything she needs to be the hero of her story: wisdom, love, courage, friends, a family, and a wonderful home. And you have everything you need as well. Even when storms and challenges come, don’t run off! You’ve got everything you need to be the hero in your own adventure.

Just be sure to stay on that straight and narrow, just as Dorothy and her friends stayed on that Yellow Brick Road. Sometimes life throws us something tempting that draws us off the path God set us on. They’re like those poppies in the story of “The Wizard of Oz.” They looked very nice, but they were super dangerous! Temptation can be just like that. When temptation appears, don’t give it a second glance. Stay on the path God put you. Follow the Yellow Brick Road!

In the end, she stays on that path, and spends a great deal of time helping her new friends. In fact, she’s able to defeat the Wicked Witch of the West by accidentally splashing her with a bucket of water. Of course, Dorothy had no idea all it took was a bucket of water to save the day. It was so simple, and yet by trying to help her friend Scarecrow, she was able to save all of Oz! When you consider Dorothy’s actions throughout the story, she was always helping others. She encouraged them, gave them hope, and guided them along. We learn from her something very important. The secret to being a hero isn’t too complicated. All you have to do is show love, and serve others.

Dorothy Gale learns quite a bit on her adventures in Oz, but along the way, we learn quite a bit from her as well. Be content in all things, and help others find their way, and you’ll be a hero too. You don’t even need to wear ruby shoes to be one.



DOROTHY — BE CONTENT

“You gain a lot when you live a godly life. But you must be happy with what you have.” **1 Timothy 6:6 NIRV**

“But the gate is small and the road is narrow that leads to life. Only a few people find it.” **Matthew 7:14 NIRV**

“Watch and pray. Then you won’t fall into sin when you are tempted.”
Matthew 26:41 NIRV

“The most important person among you will be your servant.”
Matthew 23:11 NIRV

“I have put my rainbow in the clouds. It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” **Genesis 9:13 NIRV**

“If I ever go looking for my heart’s desire again, I won’t look any further than my own backyard. Because if it isn’t there, I never really lost it to begin with!”
– **Dorothy Gale**

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1. Be _____. Though she longs to be somewhere over the rainbow, Dorothy realizes the truth at the end of the story: there's no place like home. Looking around, she realizes she already has everything she needs to be the hero of her story: wisdom, love, courage, friends, a family, and a wonderful home. Even when storms and challenges come, don't run off! You've got this.

"You gain a lot when you live a godly life. But you must be happy with what you have." 1 Timothy 6:6 NIRV

A. CONTENT

B. BRAVE

C. SINGING

2. Stay away from the _____. To be a hero, we need to stay on the straight and narrow – just like Dorothy and her friends stayed on that Yellow Brick Road. But sometimes life throws us something tempting that draws us off the path God set us on. They're like those poppies in the story of "The Wizard of Oz." They looked very nice, but they were super dangerous! Temptation can be just like that. When temptation appears, don't give it a second glance. Stay on the path God put you.

"Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted."

Matthew 26:41 NIRV

A. WATER

B. POPPIES

C. YELLOW BRICK ROAD

3. _____ others along the way. Dorothy had no idea all it took was a bucket of water to save the day. It was so simple, and yet by helping one person, she was able to save all of Oz! When you consider Dorothy's actions throughout the story, she was always helping others. She encouraged them, gave them hope, and guided them along. The secret to being a hero isn't too complicated. All you have to do is show love, and serve others.

"The most important person among you will be your servant."

Matthew 23:11 NIRV

A. HELP

B. PUSH

C. SPLASH

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Memory Verse:

“You gain a lot when you live a godly life. But you must be happy with what you have.” 1 Timothy 6:6 NIRV

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LEGENDS OF



DEVOTIONAL



DAY ONE

LEGENDS OF OZ

“The main street of the city was made out of gold. It was gold as pure as glass that people can see through clearly.” Revelation 21:21 NIRV

If you want to go to Emerald City in Oz, you have to take one very famous road: the Yellow Brick Road. Back when “The Wizard of Oz” was first written, it is said that the author Frank Baum got his inspiration for this road when he looked out a window after a rain shower, and saw the sunlight glimmering on a wet cobblestone road.

Ever since then, this may be the most famous road in any book or movie. How many of us have ever wished to skip along the Yellow Brick Road? Wouldn't it be amazing to be there in Oz? Of course, there's just one destination at the end of that path, and that's Emerald City. It's a place everyone wants to visit in Oz.

The idea of a Yellow Brick Road may have been inspired by sunlight on a cobblestone road, but our Bibles mention another street of gold thought up long before the land of Oz was even thought of. It's a street of gold that everyone should want to be walking along. It's mentioned in the book of Revelation, where God tells us that the main street of the new city of Jerusalem is made of pure gold! Can you imagine that?

Friends, that's a street of gold we want to meet you on some day. You really don't want to miss it! Along the way, Dorothy brings her friends along that yellow brick road to their happy destination. She's going there, but she makes sure she brings others along too.

And that's just like our journey too. We're on our way to heaven. We're on our way to a place where the main street is made out of pure gold. But before we get there, our job is to show love to others, and make sure we bring friends and family along as well.

Some may not know what they need to know in order to get there. Others may need help with their hearts. Still more may need help finding the courage to make that trip. Like Dorothy, we should do all we can to see everyone make it there safely. We can't wait to see you there too, arriving at a beautiful place where there are no more sorrows, where all of us will see a happily ever after.



DAY TWO

LEGENDS OF OZ

“God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you.”

Psalm 51:10 NIRV

Of the four main heroes in “The Wizard of Oz,” you certainly wouldn’t call the Tin Man heartless. He’s a hero, and he’s so concerned about Dorothy that he joins a rescue effort to save her and all of the land of Oz. And yet a heart is all he ever wants. In fact, that’s the only reason he wants to go down the Yellow Brick Road in the first place. If I only had a heart, he sings!

We all know he had one all along. But it does bring up a good question: Where is your heart? The Tin Man may not have been wondering where he could get one. And if you’re curious about where your heart is, Jesus has the perfect answer. Your heart is found in who you serve and love the most. He told us, where your treasure is, there also is your heart. If you’re thinking of others, that’s where your heart is, and that’s where it should be. If you’re thinking of yourself, then you’re living a pretty hollow life, with nothing inside to show for.

In Emerald City, Tin Man does get a new heart, of course. It’s something he always wanted. And if we look to the Bible, we see that Tin Man has a lot in common with a guy named David. When David felt his spirit wasn’t right with the Lord, he asked God to help him change his heart. You know that’s something that God can do. It’s never too late to ask, because God can be in your heart, and make it just like new!

In the end, the Tin Man got his heart, although we knew he had one all along. And we know you have one too. God can make it just like new, and you can show His love to everyone when you serve others and shine His light to the world. You’ll be kind and be gentle, and awful sentimental, because you have a heart!



DAY THREE

LEGENDS OF OZ

“Dear children, don’t just talk about love. Put your love into action. Then it will truly be love.” 1 John 3:18 NIRV

Remember how they found the Tin Man? He was sitting there, frozen in the woods, rusted to a point where his joints didn’t move. I think we can all agree that this wasn’t an ideal situation for anyone. He wasn’t able to help himself, and he certainly wouldn’t have been able to help Dorothy on her adventures along the Yellow Brick Road.

How did he even get that way? As you probably know, the answer is simple: he got caught out in the rain, and then one thing led to another, and he got rusty right away.

At least he has an excuse. A lot of people get rusty, just like the Tin Man, stuck in one place, not helping anyone, or even doing anything for themselves. We’re not talking about literally being rusty, of course. We’re talking about being frozen in place, stuck somewhere, not serving and not making any progress in life at all. This happens when we spend too much time on the cell phone, or on social media, or playing video games, or even worse, getting caught in bad habits that God isn’t pleased with. The list goes on and on.

You see, we’re put on earth to do something, and not sit around getting rusty. We’re put on earth to show love to others, serving others, and making this world a better place. When you spend too much time not doing that... you can get like the Tin Man. You can get rusty. And rust can grow and cause permanent damage. You don’t want that!

It’s time for some oil. In the Bible, oil represented the Holy Spirit. Basically, we’re saying if you feel yourself getting rusty, then it’s time to pray, and start showing God’s love to others. Remember that love is a verb. It’s an action, something you do for others. The Tin Man had a heart in the right place, helping and serving others. And that’s the best strategy of all if you don’t want to get rusty! Put others first and do things in service to others. After all, that’s the way Jesus showed us how to live.

Are you ready to get those joints moving again? Show some service, show some kindness, and yes, show some heart!



DAY FOUR

LEGENDS OF OZ

“When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” Psalm 56:3-4 NKJV

When we first meet the Cowardly Lion, he’s a character that is not to be messed with! He chases everyone around and for just a moment, everyone is quite frightened of him! But it doesn’t take long to realize that he really is a Cowardly Lion.

Fortunately, by the end of his story, he begins to understand what courage really is, and we all realize that he’s had it all along. His problem was not realizing that we all feel fear from time to time, and that’s completely natural. Fear will always be around, but that doesn’t mean you have to bow down to it all the time. Remember that courage isn’t the lack of fear. Instead, it’s boldly stepping forward to do the right thing despite whatever you feel. The Cowardly Lion was afraid of quite a bit, and it’s okay to feel fear, because we all do. But to quote a famous writer, “the true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid.”

Just know that the Lion is always beside you. No, we’re not talking about the Cowardly Lion. Jesus is the Lion of Judah, and he is always by your side. He went up against the devil and beat him from top to bottom! That’s why we too can have courage. Not because of anything we ourselves have done, but because of all He has done and all He is.

So step forward boldly, because yes, you can be king of the forest! Not queen, not duke, not prince! All you need is confidence in yourself. You have been made royalty, and you have a role that everyone looks up to. People see you and expect you to act like a king, doing right and boldly leading the way! So as the Cowardly Lion likes to say: “Put ‘em up! Put ‘em up!”

What Oz told the Lion can apply to you as well: “You have plenty of courage, I am sure. All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid, and that kind of courage you have in plenty.”



DAY FIVE

LEGENDS OF OZ

“So when we can do good to everyone, let us do it. Let’s try even harder to do good to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:10 NIRV

Before there was Oz the Great and Powerful, he was just a scheming trickster named Oscar Diggs. Oscar was a selfish performer on stage, and he really wanted to become a great man. In his words, he didn’t want to be a good man, he wanted to be a great one! But he was going about it all the wrong way, because goodness is better than greatness.

Now, just like Oscar Diggs, we all have a desire to become a great person. And yes, that can be a nice ambition. Wouldn’t it be amazing to have everyone look to you with respect and admiration and cheers and... well, I’m starting to sound like Oscar a bit here, aren’t I?

That’s why instead of greatness, let’s talk about goodness first. Goodness is a Fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22 tells us the Fruit that the Holy Spirit produces is “being patient, kind, and good.”

Paul was writing there and he was reminding us that it is even better to be a good person. Temptation may come along the way to do things you know you shouldn’t, or be the person you shouldn’t. And to become something great, many people become selfish, or do things they shouldn’t. This is the trap that Oscar Diggs falls into, and it brings him all sorts of problems. God wants us to not get caught in that whirlwind of trouble. He wants us to remember it’s more important to be good.

By the end of “Oz the Great and Powerful,” Oscar Diggs does become something great. It’s because he’s been shown grace. But it is also because he uses his gifts and talents not for selfish gain, and not to become something great. He uses his gifts and talents to serve, and help save the people of Emerald City. His lesson is clear: you must be good to become great. And from that moment on, that’s exactly what he becomes, the Great and Powerful Oz.



“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” John 14:6 NIV

In the story of “Oz the Great and Powerful,” Oscar Diggs is able to escape from danger, thanks to a powerful friend named Glinda. In fact, he’s amazed as he floats along inside a flying bubble, escaping with his friends.

Up ahead is Munchkinland, a whole new world, and a happy place. They’re speeding towards it, when something suddenly becomes very worrisome to Oscar. He’s not so sure he could make it there! The problem for Oscar is that there’s a bubble barrier ahead. He’s going to run right into it!

Glinda smiles and lets him know that the barrier lets people pass by, but only if they have a good heart. And that’s when Oscar really starts to panic. This is cause for serious alarm! Oscar is not so sure at all that he’ll make it through that barrier!

Before you start laughing at Oscar, here’s a question for you: Would you make it through? How is your heart?

The wonderful thing about heaven is that we all have an answer to those questions. Fortunately, we have a way to get to heaven that gives us that clean heart: His name is Jesus. His grace gets us through that barrier. It doesn’t matter what we’ve done, good or bad. The only way we can get through to heaven is with Jesus. You could be someone like Oscar with a shady past, but when you confess to Jesus that you are a sinner, and when you repent and turn your life over to Him, you won’t have to worry about getting through to heaven.

Like Oscar, we’re all rapidly approaching that barrier. And there’s something wonderful on the other side! Today, make sure your heart is right with Jesus, and have confidence that when this life is over, you’ll be in a whole new world, a happy place with friends and loved ones: heaven.



DAY SEVEN

LEGENDS OF OZ

“You gain a lot when you live a godly life. But you must be happy with what you have.”

1 Timothy 6:6 NIRV

The hero of “The Wizard of Oz” is of course Dorothy Gale, and by the end of her first adventure in Oz, she’s learned some important things. Of course, the most important lesson is simply this: be content. Be content with what you have, who you’re with, where you are, and who you are.

Though she longs to be somewhere over the rainbow, Dorothy realizes the truth: there’s no place like home. By the end of the story, she learns she already has everything she needs to be the hero of her story. She has wisdom, love, courage, friends, a family, and a wonderful home.

But you have everything you need as well. Never forget that God has given us all we need in life. Storms and challenges may come, and of course they do for Dorothy. In her adventure, a mean-tempered lady named Almira Gulch wants to take away Dorothy’s pet dog Toto. And a literal storm appears too, a twister in a storm that none of us can ever forget.

In our lives, things like this can happen too. Jesus reminded us that it rains on everyone, the just and the unjust. That simply means that storms come to us all, both real ones and those made up of nothing but bad news.

The thing that Dorothy discovers, and the thing that we have to learn is this: running away from it all won’t solve anything. We may feel so overwhelmed and we may even feel like we’re all alone in this. But God is for us, and not against us. He’s given us what we need, and He’ll help us when we face trials and challenges.

Somewhere over the rainbow is a place that you will be someday. But until you get there, trust in the Lord, and be content with where you’re at and who you’re with. Even when storms and challenges come, the don’t run off. You’ve got everything you need to be the hero in your own adventure. As Dorothy reminds us over and over again, “There’s no place like home.”



DAY EIGHT

LEGENDS OF OZ

“But the gate is small and the road is narrow that leads to life. Only a few people find it.”
Matthew 7:14 NIRV

Follow the Yellow Brick Road! We all know the instructions Dorothy is given, don't we? In fact, there's a pretty catchy song about it! All she has to do to get where she needs to be is follow the Yellow Brick Road. It's not necessarily a straight and narrow path, but it is a golden path to success.

We've got one of those. In life, imagine a path that God has set before us, a way to make it through our adventure safely. Along that path, we'll find friends, and along that journey, we'll find exciting stories to tell as well!

It's easy to stay on the golden path that God has set us on. All we have to do is read His Word, spend time in prayer with Him, and be with friends and family going along that same road. As we do that, we can go forward together, and be confident we'll make it to where God wants us to go.

Just be sure to stay on that straight and narrow, just as Dorothy and her friends stayed on that Yellow Brick Road. Sometimes life throws us something tempting that draws us off the path God set us on. They're like those poppies in the story of "The Wizard of Oz." They looked very nice, but they were super dangerous! Temptation can be just like that. When temptation appears, don't give it a second glance. No, stay on the path God put you. Follow the Yellow Brick Road!

Glinda saved our heroes from those dangerous poppies, and so much better than that, we have a Heavenly Father that will step in to save us as well. If you've found yourself going off the right path, just call out to the Lord for help, and He'll guide you where you need to be.

In the end, heroes make it to Emerald City. But you've got a place even more wonderful, one where the streets are paved with yellow gold. If you want to be there, it's so easy. Just stay on the path He's made for you, and get ready for a wonderful adventure!



“The most important person among you will be your servant.” Matthew 23:11 NIRV

By the end of “The Wizard of Oz,” Dorothy stays on that Yellow Brick Road, and spends a great deal of time helping her new friends. When each of them wants to come along with Dorothy on her journey, she agrees completely, because that’s the kind of person she is. She helps others!

In fact, the entire reason she’s able to defeat the Wicked Witch of the West is because she’s helping someone else. She accidentally splashes her with a bucket of water, and you know how that goes.

Of course, Dorothy had no idea all it took was a bucket of water to save the day. It was so simple, and yet by trying to help her friend Scarecrow, she was able to save all of Oz in the process. When you consider Dorothy’s actions throughout the story, she was always helping others. She encouraged them, gave them hope, and guided them along. We can learn from her something very important. The secret to being a hero isn’t too complicated. All you have to do is show love, and serve others.

Remember why they all think the Wizard of Oz is such a wiz? It’s “because of all the wonderful things he does.” Dorothy reminds everyone that they’ll get help, if “the wizard is a wizard who will serve.” What makes him wonderful, and what makes Dorothy such a hero is the fact that they serve others.

Yes, that’s what makes you wonderful too. It’s also what we’re supposed to do. We can’t be exactly like Jesus, but that’s the goal, of course. He lived a life worth modeling, because he did more wonderful things than all the books in all the world could ever list. At the Last Supper, while his friends were arguing about who was the greatest amongst themselves, suddenly Jesus put all that to rest by taking off their shoes, and washing their feet. He said it pretty clearly: if you want to be the greatest, you have to serve others. No one did it better than he did, but at the same time, if you want to be a hero in your own adventure, the way you do that is simple: serve and help others. You don’t even need to wear ruby slippers to do that.



“In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of one another. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part shares in its joy. You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.”

1 Corinthians 12:25-27 NIRV

“Return to Oz” is a rather peculiar adventure, one where Dorothy comes back to Oz in order to once again save the day. Just as before, she makes friends easily there in her journey, and one of those friends is a remarkable creature known as the Gump.

First of all, you should know that a Gump is a large creature in Oz, somewhat like a moose. Now picture one of those moose heads, mounted on the wall, and that’s just the beginning of what Dorothy’s new friend looks like. You see, when they were in danger, Dorothy and the others put together two sofas for a body, palm tree limbs for wings, a broom for a tail, and that Gump head at the front. Then they tied it all together with clotheslines and ropes, and poured the Powder of Life on it. Suddenly, they all had a way to escape, flying off on the back of their new friend, the Gump.

What an odd creation. But notice how everything worked together to help save our heroes. The Gump is made up of all kinds of different things, but each one is necessary. The palm tree limbs help it fly, and the sofas put together gave our heroes a place to sit. The Gump’s head was important to see where to go, and to talk with everyone. And the broom tail was important for steering in the air.

Each of the parts worked together to save those who were in trouble. And yes, that’s just like the church should be. We’re all different, with unique skills and talents. But we all serve an important function in the church, with one goal: to save the lost.

If just one person is not there, or if just one person chooses not to do their part, the entire body truly suffers. If just one person falls away, the whole purpose of the church is in danger, because there won’t be anyone lost rescued.

Today, do your part. You can do much more than a broom tail or palm tree limb wings. You’re a part of the Body of Christ, and you’re helping the church take flight to save the day.



DAY ELEVEN

LEGENDS OF OZ

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding.”

Proverbs 3:5 NIRV

Has it ever bothered anyone else that Dorothy had the power to go home all along? She goes on this epic adventure, all because Glinda tells her the only person who might know how Dorothy can get back to Kansas is the Wizard of Oz himself.

Then, after walking all the way there, and even after battling the Wicked Witch of the West, Glinda tells her, “You’ve always had the power to go back to Kansas.”

Dorothy is stunned. She asks, “I have?”

Scarecrow speaks up for all of us and says, “Then why didn’t you tell her before?”

At which point, Glinda tells everyone, “Because she wouldn’t have believed me. She had to learn it for herself.”

There are two reactions at this point, one of which could be, “Are you kidding me? I could have gotten out of here all along, and you didn’t at least tell me?” She could have been upset, and perhaps ready to throw another bucket of water, this time at Glinda.

The other reaction is gratitude. The truth is, she had a wonderful adventure. She helped others along the way, including Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, and all the people of Oz. She was used to bring salvation to Emerald City and all the Winkies that were enslaved by that Wicked Witch of the West.

Many times in life, we go in directions that leave us puzzled. Why did this happen? Why are we with these people? Why are we in this class or at this job or in this school or at this church? Why, why, why?

The answer is simple: trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. Simply put, God has a plan for us, and there are things up ahead that are so amazing that you just won’t believe it. But in order to get there, sometimes we have to go along a path, or go through something we’ve never experienced before. Sometimes we have to take a whole lot of steps through places we’ve never been before. Sometimes we have to do things we’ve never done before, or even fight battles we’ve never fought before.

Why do we have to do this? Why doesn’t God just tell us what’s going on all the time? Because, my friends, sometimes we just won’t believe it. We just have to learn it for ourselves.



“Blessed is the one who finds wisdom. Blessed is the one who gains understanding.”
Proverbs 3:13 NIRV

“If I only had a brain.” The moment anyone says that phrase, the first image that pops up is a picture of the Scarecrow from “The Wizard of Oz.” He’s a loyal friend of Dorothy on her way along the Yellow Brick Road, and he only wants one thing: a brain.

He thinks he’s not that smart, mainly because his head is filled with straw. But we know better. After all, wasn’t it the Scarecrow who came up with that clever plan to get delicious apples for Dorothy? And wasn’t it Scarecrow who helped get the group to Emerald City, and defeat the Wicked Witch of the West?

Scarecrow already had what he wanted most of all. He was already pretty smart! And you know something? He shows us all how to be smart as well!

Firstly, don’t get burned! Scarecrow is afraid of fire, and actually, who wouldn’t be? The Bible tells us that our words we speak can start a dangerous fire unlike anything else. Scarecrow seems to know this when he tells Dorothy, “Some people without brains do an awful lot of talking, don’t they?” Those are some pretty smart words for someone who says he doesn’t have a brain!

Next, don’t stop seeking wisdom. Don’t stop trying to stuff new knowledge into your head! Scarecrow spent a long time seeking the great and powerful Oz for wisdom. At the end of his journey, of course, Scarecrow discovered he already had his wish all along. But consider this: so do you! You don’t have to march down a yellow brick road to get wisdom. All you have to do is ask the ever-present God, and He’ll give you exactly what you need.

Finally, just remember what King Solomon told us: Wisdom rules! As a new king of Israel, King Solomon could have asked God for anything at all. Imagine that! Anything! Get this: he chose wisdom over everything else, because he knew its real value. Perhaps that’s why Scarecrow was made ruler of Emerald City – he was considered the smartest of them all.

Know this: wisdom and knowledge are super important, and our Heavenly Father completely agrees. Study to show yourself approved, and seek His wisdom as the magnificent gift that it really is. You’ve don’t have just straw in your head. You’ve got something much more amazing!

“One of them was cutting down a tree. The iron blade of his ax fell into the water. ‘Oh no, master!’ he cried out. ‘This ax was borrowed!’” 2 Kings 6:5 NIRV

Fun fact: did you know the Tin Man’s real name is Nick Chopper? He used to be an ordinary person, believe it or not. But unfortunately, the Wicked Witch of the East was pretty ... well, wicked. She actually enchanted the axe that Nick Chopper used to cut down trees, and by the time all was said and done, every single part of that woodsman was replaced with a piece of tin metal. We meet him in “The Wizard of Oz” as a completely metal man, made of tin!

Despite it all, he did hold on to that axe. And it’s a good thing he did, as it has helped him chop up wood to create bridges and rafts. He also used it as a weapon in the original book, battling forty dangerous wolves.

If you want to dress up as the Tin Man at any costume party, you simply must carry an axe around with you. It’s part of his look. Wherever the Tin Man goes, there goes his axe. It’s a big part of who he is, and his livelihood too. It would be a big deal to him if it were lost!

Some time ago, there was another team of people working with wood, cutting down a few trees by the Jordan River. One man had borrowed an axe and was helping out, cutting up logs to build a place to live. But as he was cutting down one tree, the ax head fell off the handle and into the river!

Oh no! It was gone! Fortunately, the prophet Elisha was nearby, and he heard the man cry out, “Oh no, master! It was borrowed!”

That’s when Elisha did something amazing. He saw where the ax head fell into the water. Then he cut off a piece of wood and threw it into the water at that same location. What happened next was a miracle! The axe head actually floated up to the surface of the water, and the man was able to reach down and get the ax head back!

Many miracles in the Bible involve healing or provision, or victories against mighty armies. Literally, the next thing to happen in the Bible was a story about God delivering Elisha from a large fighting unit with horses and chariots. God blinded the bad guys! That’s a big miracle there! But you know something? The story of the ax head was just as miraculous, and it shows us something wonderful about God. He cares about us, He loves us, and He’s wanting to help us. That’s true, whether we’re facing a huge army, or even just a missing ax head. He cares about us deeply, no matter how big or small the trouble we’re facing.



“For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 NIRV

Back in 1974, a new play opened in Baltimore based on the story of “The Wizard of Oz,” one with all-new music, and an all-new look that had everyone rushing to the theater to see. “The Wiz” is an extremely popular production that still plays at theaters today, and has been made into a movie, and a few live television events.

It’s basically the same story, of course. Dorothy meets Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion, as they ease on down the road to the Emerald City where they can find the answer to their troubles. Of course, along the way, they encounter adventures and challenges, including a battle with a Wicked Witch named Evillene. She’s the villain of the story, and if you’re ever in Oz, just remember this important rule: don’t nobody better bring her no bad news. If you do, she’ll send the funky monkeys to deal with you!

There are differences in the way this classic story is told, but overall, it’s the same exact adventure, one just told in a different and very unique way.

In our Bibles, you can find a few examples of that. It happens in the Old Testament, where different authors will be writing in separate books about the same event that happened. But nowhere is it more obvious than the first four books of the New Testament. The first four books of the gospel are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and each one tells the same exact story: the ministry of Jesus Christ here on earth. All four authors of these books speak of Jesus gathering apostles, performing miracles, and of course going to Jerusalem where he would go to the cross for all of us. There are miracles you can find listed in all four books, and there are others you’ll only read about in one book or two. There are details listed in one book, and perhaps missed in others. The reason for this, of course, is that there are four different writers.

But despite the extra details in one, or a different way or writing in another, the message of the gospel is always the same: Jesus loves us. He came to serve, and Jesus showed us how to live our lives, and show God’s love to the world.

Like with “The Wiz,” it’s fun seeing a story from a different angle. With the four gospels, you get to read the greatest story ever told from four different angles, each one with that same central theme: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son.



“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death.’ (Isaiah 25:8) And there will be no more sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be.” Revelation 21:4 NIRV

The earliest movies weren't in full color – they were mostly black and white. You may have seen one of these movies before, perhaps watching an old movie at Christmas time. Of course somewhere very early in movie history, these big productions began being filmed in full color, and we've never looked back.

Though it wasn't officially the first full-color movie, “The Wizard of Oz” is thought by many to be the first. This may be because of the way the movie introduced color to the audience. All the scenes filmed in Kansas were done in sepia tone, without any real color. This is what audiences were used to. But when Dorothy walks out that door into Oz, suddenly everyone in the theater saw before them an explosion of color! All the scenes from Oz were filmed in Technicolor, and it helped people watching the movie see how spectacular this world of Oz really was. As Dorothy looked around, she couldn't help but gasp and say these famous words, “Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore.”

Heaven is going to be like that. It'll be as if we're living in a black-and-white world, and then suddenly we walk through the door into something so wonderful. We'll be there with our friends and loved ones in a place so wonderful. There will be no more tears, no more mourning, crying, or pain. There will be no more death. All of those things will be gone forever.

There will be singing songs of joy, and unbelievably happy reunions. There will be peace, and there will be a sense of wonder unlike anything you've ever felt before. It's a place you don't want to miss. It's a place you don't want your friends and family to miss.

No, you're not in Kansas anymore. You're some place much, much better!



DAY SIXTEEN

LEGENDS OF OZ

“Say to those whose hearts are afraid, ‘Be strong and do not fear. Your God will come.’”
Isaiah 35:4 NIRV

One of the most famous movie dogs in history would have to be Toto. Dorothy brings him along for the journey in Oz, and we’ve been grateful ever since. Certainly Dorothy was grateful she had her faithful pet with her. For a time, it just seemed like he was along for the ride, accompanying the team of Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion and Dorothy on their journey to Emerald City.

But there’s one moment where Toto steps up and does something remarkable to help our main heroes. Those who know this story know about the part of “The Wizard of Oz,” where all our heroes are terribly frightened of Oz. And who wouldn’t be? There are flames shooting up everywhere, and this ginormous floating head booming out insults and threats at them. While Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and of course the Cowardly Lion are all paralyzed by fear, leave it to Toto to figure things out, step forward, and save the day.

In our lives, does it ever just seem like we’re just along for the ride? Sometimes it seems like everyone else is calling the shots, doing the heroic things. But your time is coming. Notice how everyone in our story was frozen with fear. They were incapable of doing anything, because they didn’t know what to do.

But God has given you wisdom to sniff out the right path. That’s because He’s promised to never leave you or forsake you. He’s been guiding you along, and He needs you to jump up and be that hero the world needs. You see, we live in a world that’s frequently frozen with fear. They don’t know what to do. But you’ve been given all the answers. You know who God is, and you know that much of what the world fears is just an illusion, because if God is for us, nothing can be against us. Pull back the curtain on all this fear, and show the world the truth of things. Show them there’s nothing to be afraid of, all because of the love of God. And as you do that, you’ll show Him that you’re not just along for the ride in this adventure, but a real hero!



DAY SEVENTEEN

LEGENDS OF OZ

“Lord, you alone are everything I need. You make my life secure. I am very pleased with what you have given me. I am very happy with what I’ve received from you.”

Psalm 16:5-6 NIRV

Throughout the entire movie of “Return to Oz,” there’s this one question all the villains keep asking: “Does Dorothy have the chicken with her?” And because we have no idea why that’s so important, we just think it’s a really odd question.

Think about it. There’s a hero coming to save the day. If that hero had a mighty sword, magical shoes, or even a grand army, then perhaps we’d understand. But no, the thing they’re most frightened about is... a chicken.

NOME MESSENGER: “Your Majesty! She has returned to Oz!”

NOME KING: “Good, good. Keep an eye on her. Well, what’s the matter? What is it?”

NOME MESSENGER: “She has... a chicken with her.”

NOME KING: “A Chicken!?!?”

It turns out that the evil Nome King is amazingly allergic to chicken eggs. In fact, as he unfortunately discovers for himself, they are super poisonous to the evil nome race. Who knew?

This sort of thing happens all the time. No, we’re not talking about people being allergic to eggs. What we are talking about, however, is finding victories from unexpected places. I mean, who would have thought tiny David could beat the giant Goliath with five smooth stones? He went off into battle, and before you say it, we will: he wasn’t chicken. He just knew he had to try and be the hero Israel needed. And sure enough, that day, victory came from a super unexpected place.

Many times in life, we think we need more in order to do something greater and be successful in life. But the truth is that God has given you everything you need to win. It’s probably not a chicken, but He has put you in the place you’re in, nearby the people you know, and with the things you have. All that’s left for you to do is decide, like David, do you want to be a winner? If so, then get ready to step forward and be the hero God has called you to be. No chickens are required.



“This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Mark 1:1 NIRV

In the story of “The Wiz,” the main villain is Evillene, a witch who is pretty upset at Dorothy for landing a house on her sister. Evillene sends her Flying Monkeys to go and stop Dorothy, and she only wants to hear from them if they’re successful. In other words, she doesn’t want to hear any bad news. Or as she puts it, “Don’t nobody give me no bad news!”

It’s a big musical number for the main villain of the story, and despite the fact that Evillene is singing it, there’s a bit of wisdom in looking only for good news.

The fact is that we live in a world that is filled with a lot of bad news. The problem is that many of us turn on the television, and there it is. Or we go to our social media accounts online, and there it is. Certain places online are just filled with people throwing insults at each other, and certain channels try to capture your attention with nothing but amazingly bad news.

It’s at that point that you need to turn it all off. Turn off the television. Turn off the computer. Even turn off the cell phone, and announce to the world what Evillene did: “Don’t nobody give me no bad news!”

It may be bad grammar, but it’s right on. If you keep watching or reading that kind of stuff, bad news can pile up in your spirit and melt your faith, and leave you feeling as hopeless as a puddle of water.

That’s why you need to turn to the Good News. We think you know the kind of news we’re talking about. Time and time again, the gospel of Jesus Christ is called the Good News. The reason it’s called that is because it is Good News. Jesus loves us, and when we open our Bibles, we’ll read remarkable stories that will help lead and guide us in our faith. God’s Word is a love letter to each of us, and each word is written in a way that will empower us, give us hope, and strengthen our faith.

If you find yourself feeling down, don’t go to the television or the internet for help. And you don’t have to start a big musical number about bad news either. Instead, just turn to God’s Word, the Holy Bible. You won’t have to worry about bad news there. It’s filled with nothing but Good News.



“Say with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord.’ Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved.” Romans 10:9 NIRV

Can you believe the most famous song in “The Wizard of Oz” almost wasn’t actually in the movie? Early on, it was actually cut twice from the movie because the directors thought it was too long, too sad, and too slow. What song was that? Surely you know the song, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” by now. It won the Academy Award for Best Original Song that year, and there have been hundreds of different versions of the song made ever since. In fact, there’s one that they play every year at Time Square right at the start of each new year.

The lyrics of this wonderful song tell us of a beautiful place that Dorothy once heard of, over the rainbow. It’s a place where troubles melt like lemon drops away above the chimney tops, and where the clouds are far behind her. The thing is, you have to fly to get there. Oh, but if happy little bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow, why, oh why can’t I?

Just like Dorothy discovered, we all run into trouble on earth. It’s a fallen world. Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God and fell into temptation, all kinds of trouble has flown into this world, bigger than any destructive twister you could imagine. And don’t blame Adam and Eve for all of this, you know perfectly well that you and I aren’t perfect either!

But there is a place that we can be, a place that’s perfect in every way. It’s a place where there isn’t any trouble. There really is such a place. It’s not one you can get to by boat or train. But it’s a place that Jesus is preparing for each of us, one filled with singing, joy, and a place more beautiful than any word can fully describe.

God wants us all there. He doesn’t want any of us to perish. And it’s easy to get there. Right there in the Bible, it tells us, “Say with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord.’ Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved.”

While we’re here on earth, there will always be challenges and spots of trouble to overcome. But it helps to know deep inside that all of us are on a journey to a place beyond the rainbow, one where we’ll all live happily ever after. That’s where you’ll find me, and I can’t wait to see you there.



“The Spirit of the Lord and King is on me. The Lord has anointed me to announce good news to poor people. He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts have been broken. He has sent me to announce freedom for those who have been captured. He wants me to set prisoners free from their dark cells.” Isaiah 61:1 NIRV

In the movie, “Oz the Great and Powerful,” we hear about a prophecy early on in the story. Before moving forward on this yellow brick road, let’s just go ahead and explain that a prophecy is a prediction that someone makes that comes true. In this case, a former king of Oz predicted that a great and powerful wizard by the name of Oz would descend from the sky, save the land, and become their new king.

Over the course of this movie, a hero named Oscar Diggs does in fact descend from the sky in his falling hot air balloon. He isn’t terribly powerful at the start of the story. In fact, he’s not even great. All he thinks about is himself. When he shows up at the palace in the Emerald City, one of the first places he dives into is a vault full of treasure, laughing as he lands in a pile of gold coins.

Oscar has a long, long, long way to go if he thinks he has what it takes to be king. He’s not there to save anyone else but himself!

Many years ago, there were many, many prophecies about a real King that would come and save the land. Prophets like Isaiah, Zechariah, Jeremiah, and David predicted with amazing accuracy how God would send help from above to save the land, and become our new king.

In this story, however, Jesus was great and powerful. He was powerful because he had the ability to heal, save and deliver. He was great because he thought of everyone else before thinking of himself. Jesus spent all his years serving others, and in the greatest act of love ever, gave his life for us, taking on our sins and punishment, even though he himself was perfect.

There are hundreds prophecies about Jesus found in the Old Testament, some written down thousands of years before he was even born in Bethlehem. And the amazing thing is that every single one of them was true. Jesus is great and powerful, and he is the King of kings, one who came to serve, and one who came to save us all.



“God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be.” 1 Corinthians 12:18 NIRV

The Munchkins are super happy! Dorothy and her pet Toto landed a house on the Wicked Witch of the East, and now they want to sing songs and tell Dorothy how grateful they are. One by one, they all come forth, celebrating with proclamations and songs of welcome to Munchkinland. What a wonderful moment, of course. Many of us know every one of these songs by heart.

Right in the midst of this, an unusual trio steps up to Dorothy, letting her know that they're members of the Lollipop Guild, and they wish to welcome her to Munchkinland. They hand her a great big lollipop, and who wouldn't want that? Once they're done with this welcome, everyone cheers some more, and the celebration just keeps going.

But for years, there's been a big question: what exactly is the Lollipop Guild? The short answer is that I'm not sure. And that just makes the question even more fascinating. Other than being a Munchkin, what does it take to become a member of the Lollipop Guild? Do they make lollipops, or do they collect them? Is their job to give them away to other Munchkins and special guests? Whatever it is that brings this special group together, how wonderful to see them step forward in unity, and do something nice for Dorothy.

Within the church, there are different ministries that like to be together. There are musicians, and there are those that help with children's ministry. There are those that work with older youth groups, and some who are called to go on mission trips to foreign countries. There are those that visit nursing homes, and others that help feed the hungry. The list goes on and on, and perhaps there's even a Lollipop Guild in there somewhere. If so, that would be pretty amazing, actually.

But here's the point. All these groups and ministries have something they like to do together, sure. But they do that thing in order to serve others.

So what is it that you are called to do? What is that thing that you like to do at the church? If you haven't found out yet, the way you discover this is easy: try it out! Visit with different ministries, and help serve. Maybe right away, or maybe in just a bit you'll fall in with a group of people at the church who like to do something together, and do that for others. It might not be with the Lollipop Guild, of course (although that would be pretty awesome!). But whatever it is, serving others is more fun, and more effective too, when we do it together with others.



“Wear on your feet what will prepare you to tell the good news of peace.”

Ephesians 6:15 NIRV

Dorothy’s ruby shoes are very special. The moment she gets to Oz, they’re on her feet, and she’s on her way down the Yellow Brick Road, sharing the good news about a man who can help others. Along the way, there’s an enemy that wants those shoes, and wants to get rid of Dorothy. But as we all know, she makes it safely and brings along new friends.

In our Bibles, there are some special shoes mentioned in the book of Ephesians. Paul tells us “Wear on your feet what will prepare you to tell the good news of peace.” Just like Dorothy, we can tell others about someone very special, someone who can help everyone. Of course, he’s no wizard. The one we’re taking people to is Jesus. That’s the Good News that we share, that Jesus has come to help, to serve, and to restore. If you need a clean heart, a restored mind, and the courage to go on, Jesus is the one that can help.

Now along the way, we may have some challenges. It probably won’t be a wicked witch, of course. But along the path, we do face some unexpected tests and trials. But as long as you march forward with the gospel, preparing to tell others how they can find salvation, you’ll stay standing strong. In fact, just two verses before telling us to put on those special gospel shoes, Paul tells us what will happen if we keep them on: “Evil days will come. But you will be able to stand up to anything. And after you have done everything you can, you will still be standing.”

That’s good news! So put on those shoes, and keep them on. Just keep pushing forward, and keep telling others there’s hope and salvation for all.

The enemy may want you to take those shoes off. But that’s because they’re so powerful. They’re your gospel shoes, and no matter what life throws at you, at the end of it all, you’ll still be standing. Or perhaps even skipping!



“I know the plans I have for you,” announces the Lord. “I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come.” Jeremiah 29:11 NIRV

It was 1939 when one of the most influential movies ever was released: “The Wizard of Oz.” To this day, it still stands with the best movies of all time. But to begin with, it didn’t make enough money to cover the cost of making it. After the movie won a few Academy Awards and after word of mouth spread about how great the movie was, the movie did much, much better the next time it came out. In fact, when the movie was rereleased in theaters for a few days in 2019, it actually made over two million dollars! And here’s an interesting bit of information: in 2018, there was a study that was released that said that “The Wizard of Oz” is the most influential movie of all time!

That might be debated, but one thing that is not is that nearly everyone knows the story of Dorothy and her quest to get back home. Along the way, she meets the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion. Each one was searching for something it turned out they already had. For the Scarecrow, it was intelligence. For the Tin Man, it was compassion. For the Cowardly Lion – it was courage. For Dorothy, it was somewhere over the rainbow.

As the adventure unfolds, we realize that our travelers just don’t give up. They keep on going, no matter the odds, and no matter what they face. For many of us, the adventure might have stopped right about the part where there were flying monkeys.

But Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion don’t give up. And though things look rough at points, they still keep marching – and skipping – forward. It’s just like the movie when it was released in theaters – even though it had a smaller start, it just kept going to the point that it is recognized as one of the most famous movies ever made.

There’s something to learn from that, isn’t there? They found their key to success, and it wasn’t ruby slippers or a bucket of water. It was much simpler than that: they just kept going. Even when things looked sketchy, they found success because they just kept going.

You’ll find that success too. God has a plan for you, and it’s a wonderful one. And challenges might come your way, sure. I doubt there’ll be flying monkeys, but you might face a situation that could make you stop dead in your tracks. If that happens, the solution is simple: just keep going, because the only thing that can stop you from God’s plan is you. You’re destined for greatness, so be smart, be filled with love, and be courageous. You’re heading towards an amazing happily ever after.



“I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can’t do anything without me.” John 15:5 NIRV

The Wheelies had no idea what they were in for. What are Wheelies? Let’s just say they’re nasty mean-spirited characters that were wanting to gang up on Dorothy. Fortunately, she ran into a character named Tik-Tok, a round, metal robot that waddles about and serves as the Royal Army of Oz.

At first glance, he’s not terribly intimidating. Perhaps that’s why the Wheelies think they’ve got the upper hand. He’s a squat little robot made of copper that seems to move about very, very slowly. But when Dorothy winds Tik-Tok up, this amazing robot starts swinging into action. Literally! He swings his mechanical arms around so fast, those Wheelies don’t know what hit them! The day is saved, and Dorothy does what she does best: makes a new friend along the journey.

In the movie “Return to Oz,” the character of Tik-Tok is a loyal and faithful companion, and very helpful to Dorothy in her adventures. He’s even there to help Dorothy defeat the evil Nome King, and save all of Oz. The challenge with him is this: he needs to be wound up to do anything at all – even think! Well, that’s no problem, just as long as a friend is there to wind Tik-Tok up. He’ll be always there along for the adventure.

In a way, we’re somewhat like Tik-Tok. We’re called to fight the good fight of faith, and God has designed us in such a way to save the day. We’re champions, and warriors of faith!

But like Tik-Tok, we can run out of power fairly quickly. Here’s how it happens: if we don’t keep going back to prayer, our Bible, or to church, we’ll find ourselves losing power, and losing battles. The good news is that when we spend time with God, we’ll find ourselves empowered, and energized to take on the world.

It’s a pretty simple idea. Don’t get run down. Instead, get wound up and ready to take on any challenge that rolls your way. And just like with Tik-Tok, those challenges will have no idea what they’re in for!



“You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he stamped you with an official mark. That official mark is the Holy Spirit that he promised.”

Ephesians 1:13 NIRV

In the original 1939 movie “The Wizard of Oz,” Glinda the Good tells Dorothy about those famous ruby slippers, “Never let those ruby slippers off your feet for a moment, or you will be at the mercy of the Wicked Witch of the West.” But as she does that, she does something else quite subtle, but even more powerful: she gives Dorothy a kiss on the forehead.

In the movie “Oz the Great and Powerful,” you can see her giving that special kiss once more, this time upon the forehead of that scoundrel Oscar Diggs.

So what is this kiss all about? It’s not really brought up in the movies as a big deal, but in the books, this kiss is very, very powerful. In fact, in the original story, this gesture by her is something so powerful that “no one would dare injure a person who has been kissed.” And as we discover in the story, the flying monkeys and the Wicked Witch of the West are powerless against Dorothy because of this mark of protection.

But get this! Did you know that we have a similar mark of protection on us? It’s true! Our Bibles tell us that when you believe in your heart and say Jesus is Lord, you are given an incredible gift. That gift is the Holy Spirit, and Paul says in our scripture above that it is as if you are being stamped with an official mark. You could be a scoundrel like Oscar Diggs, certainly worthy of all kinds of judgement and punishment. But the moment you pray for forgiveness and become a follower of Jesus, you’ve got a seal of protection on you. It’s one that will mark you as His, a child of God, one who has a heavenly destination.

So be confident as you go forward in your great adventure of life. You may not have the ruby slippers, but you have something much more powerful, a seal of protection that will keep you marked as His until that wonderful day we all meet together somewhere beyond the rainbow.



“Jesus wept.” John 11:35 NIRV

Before Oscar Diggs becomes Oz the Great and Powerful, he needs to follow the Yellow Brick Road himself. That’s where he meets a young girl who is broken, and without a family. Literally, she’s broken, because she’s made out of china, a beautiful and very delicate material. In fact, the whole place she lived in was made out of china, and that too was cracked and shattered. China Town was attacked by those awful flying monkeys, and after that, her life just went to pieces. Literally.

Fortunately, Oscar was able help put her back together, and completely restore the damaged areas. And as the story goes on, this China Girl was restored in other ways: she found a family of friends to stay with safely within the Emerald City.

Firstly, let me just go ahead and say how grateful we all should be that there are no flying monkeys on this planet. But even without flying monkeys, there’s enough trouble in this world. There are a lot of bad things that can happen, and as those major events occur, we realize just how delicate we really are. It’s so easy to become damaged by others. Sometimes something can happen that will shatter our world, or try to break our dreams.

We live in a fallen world. Ever since Adam first disobeyed God, the world has been shaken and broken by the power of sin. And don’t blame Adam alone: everyone has sinned, and throughout the history of this planet, only one has lived a perfect life. That one, of course, is Jesus. He’s the only one we can truly call great and powerful, because he has the ability to put our lives back together again. Even better, he wants to. He loves us all so much!

In our Bibles we read a famous very short verse of the Bible: “Jesus wept.” It’s so short, but it’s also so powerful, because of the reason he was crying. He was deeply saddened because he could see the broken people all around him. A few verses later, you can read about how he got busy helping people put things together again.

He can do that for you too. If you feel broken and hurting, talk to him in prayer. He loves you deeply, and wants to help you put your life together again. Nothing is impossible for him – he’s great and powerful! And you’ll find your healing, safety, and a family.



“We are God’s creation. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good works. Long ago God prepared these works for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10 NIRV

Water. That’s all it took to defeat the Wicked Witch of the West. Are you kidding me? A bucket of water? Okay, first of all, why was there even a bucket of water there in the castle when the witch knew it could be the end of her? Secondly, what did she do when it rained outside?

You could imagine Dorothy telling the people of Emerald City later how she defeated the witch, and they’d probably be sitting there thinking she was kidding. Are you telling us that all it took was something so simple, like water? If we’d have known that, we’d have built splash parks all over Emerald City and raised an army with water cannons, water balloon catapults and mega-sized squirt guns!

Away from Oz, this sort of thing happens all the time throughout history. For example, before the Wright Brothers came along, no one had figured out how to fly. But now everyone knows the answer, and it seems so simple. Or look at the telephone, the automobile, or the printing press. All these ideas came from one inventor. But let’s not limit these ideas to inventions. God gives new ideas to people all the time, and not long after that, the rest of the world is sitting there scratching their collective heads, saying, why didn’t I think of that?

There are still new ideas and inventions left to discover. The key for Dorothy’s victory over the witch was this: she just kept moving forward. She didn’t know how exactly she was going to win, but nevertheless, she went forward with faith and just kept trying. And yes, soon enough, the answer presented itself in such an obvious way that everyone in Oz was left there scratching their heads, saying, why didn’t I think of that?

God is waiting to give you some new ideas too, you know. You’re not going to get them staying where you are though. You’ve got to step forward in faith, and just keep trying. Right now, you might not know how you’re going to become the amazing person God has destined you to become. But that doesn’t matter. Just be like Dorothy, step forward in faith, and get ready to make a big splash!



“Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see.”

Hebrews 11:1 NIRV

Dorothy woke up and looked around, and realized she was back in Kansas. She wasn't quite sure how she got back to Kansas, but sure enough, she was there again. All her friends and family were around her, and even though they were telling her it was a dream, she just knew her adventures in Oz really happened.

Later on in “Return to Oz,” she still knows what she experienced, and she knows it was real. There's a doctor and a staff that attempt to convince her otherwise, but she's absolutely certain that she went to Oz. She doesn't have any proof right there in her hands, but nothing can change her mind about it: she really was in Oz.

Many times there can come a challenge to our faith, and just like with Dorothy, perhaps there are people that think you're absolutely crazy for believing what you do.

Fortunately, Dorothy found a key with the word Oz on it to remind her of what she knew was true. And the key to our faith is found within the pages of the Bible, with this verse here from Hebrews 11:1: “Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see.”

Others may not believe it, but God really did do something wonderful in your life. He really did keep you safe, and He really did bring you this far. Even though you may not have seen it, He has seen you, and has taken you down this path. And when you remember all He has done for you, that's when you'll remember what's real: He has a plan for you, and it's a great adventure! Even when you're not sure of things, trust the Lord. He's leading and guiding you, and soon enough, everyone will see that for themselves.

KIDPAK ADVENTURES
LEGENDS
OF


There's no place like home. At the end of her journey, Dorothy realizes how grateful she is for the things she already has. List below as much as you can that you are thankful for!

KIDPAK ADVENTURES
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