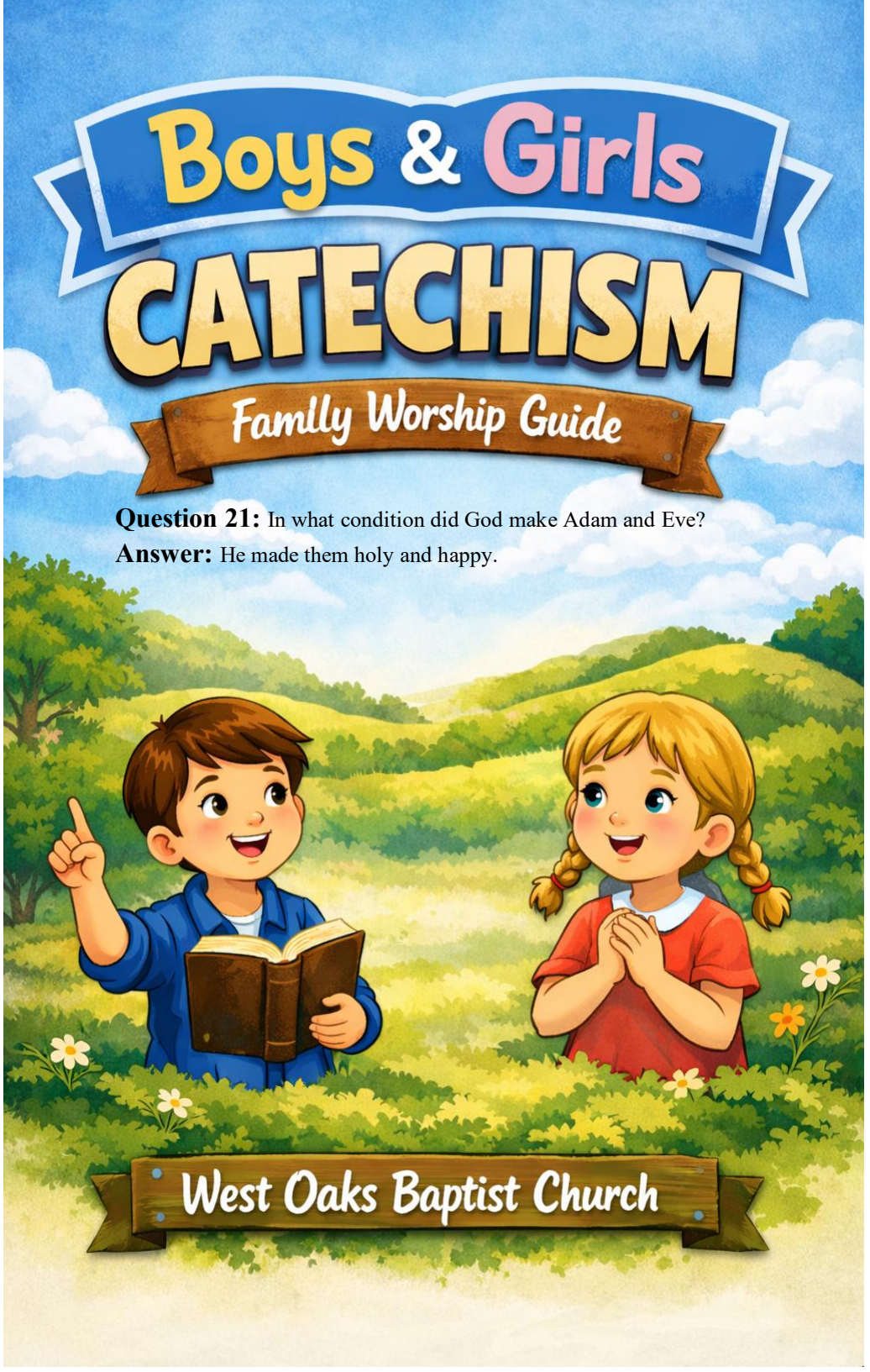
Questions
Everyone pick something to share that makes you happy in the course of a regular day. Does becoming a Christian take away these things that make you happy? If not, what actually changes about your pursuit of happiness?

Day 5 – He made them happy #2

Scripture – 1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Yesterday we talked about how Adam and Eve were made to be happy in the beginning. The Bible says that God would come and walk with them in the garden. It was his presence that gave them happiness. When Adam sinned he chose to try and make himself happy by rebelling against God. Since the fall, happiness has not been as easy as it was before. We think we are happy when we are satisfied with temporary things in this life. We try to make ourselves happy by sinning for temporary pleasures. Yet, what God promises is a joy that goes deeper than the happiness the world offers. When we chose to put God first, even when it loses us temporary happiness, we find true joy by loving God. This is the joy that has sustained Christians through the centuries. This is the joy that allows Peter to call us to rejoice even when we suffer. 1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Questions
What is the difference between joy and temporary happiness? Are they always opposed? Always together? Have you found joy in Christ?



Day 1 – God made man good

Scripture – Genesis 1:27,31 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them… And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

We are used to good things happening in the world. We have good days. Some meals are especially tasty. Time with friends and family is sweet. A project we are working on is a grand success. We are happy. At the same time, we are used to bad things happening. We become sick or injured. A dad loses his job. A friend gets mad with us. A natural disaster destroys our home. Under it all we realize sin is eating away at us, at our world, at our happiness. What is it supposed to be like? Is this what we were made for, going back and forth between being happy and sad, excited and depressed? That is not how it was supposed to be. God made all things in the world. He made the earth, the skies, and the seas. He made the animals and plants. Above all those he made people. After making man the Bible says, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." In the beginning God made Adam and Eve and they were good. Only later did they sin and lose the holiness and happiness that should have been theirs. Through Jesus you can be holy and happy once again.

Object Lesson – Pass out paper and have everyone draw a flower and a smiling face (or person depending on ability). After you have all drawn have each person crumple their paper up and then try and smooth it out.
Ask – Does your picture look as good as it used to? Can you still see what was drawn there? **Explain** – Like your picture, our world and each of us was created beautiful and good by God. Sin has crumpled and messed up what God made, but we can still see how it was made to be beautiful. **Go Deeper** – Talk about how God makes his people holy and happy again when then have been saved by Jesus. Does this happen right away? What has it looked like in your lives?

Day 2 – He made them holy

Scripture – Ecclesiastes 7:29 … that God made man upright…

In the beginning God made Adam and Eve holy. What is holiness? Sometimes we talk about holiness in contrast what it is not. Holiness means being set apart from sin. God is holy and sin cannot approach him. Likewise, Adam and Eve were originally made without sin. Holiness can also be talked about in terms of what it is. For Adam and Eve this is probably more helpful since there was no sin initially in the world. Adam and Eve were holy in that they were like God. God made them to have his law written on their hearts. It was natural for them to follow God's law. It was natural for them to love God and to love his character. They were made in the image of God and therefore had his own character. Ecclesiastes 7:29 says that God made man upright. If Adam and Eve had continued in their holy state and not sinned in the garden then they would have continued to love God and to be like him. When Jesus saves his people, he gives us new hearts that grow in holiness. We grow in our ability to love God, delight in his law, and keep his commandments.

Questions
Sometimes holiness is seen as not doing the fun things the world does. Is this a good way of seeing it? Why or why not?

Day 3 – He made them holy #2

Scripture – Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

In the beginning God made Adam and Eve holy. What is holiness? It means to be set apart. God set them apart from sin. Not only did he set them apart from sin, he also set them apart for their purpose and profession. Our first parents were given the job of filling the earth and subduing it. Part of this job was to extend the worship of God to the ends of the earth. Adam and Eve, with their kids, were set apart for the worship of God. Sin destroyed that worship that they ought to have devoted their lives to. In place of worship of God people started to worship themselves. One of the wonderful things about Jesus' salvation is that he restores our ability to worship God. Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. If you believe in Jesus you can become a true worshipper of God.

Questions
If Christians are set apart to worship God, what does that mean for what we do on Sundays? What about the other days of the week?

Day 4 – He made them happy

Scripture – Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Who enjoys being happy? People like things that make them happy; a new bike, a delicious meal, a warm hug, an exciting football game. In fact, happiness is one of the overarching desires that people will give up everything to attain. If you were to ask most people of the world which one was more important, God or happiness, the truthful ones would admit happiness is their goal. Unfortunately, many who claim to be Christian would say God is most important, yet their lives would say a different story. What does your use of time and money say about your own priorities? When we look back at the beginning, God made Adam and Eve holy and happy. This means that originally, happiness was intended to be something that we gained when we loved and obeyed God. Happiness and holiness were friends. In Christ they can be friends once again. Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. It is in the presence of God that true happiness, joy, can be found.

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