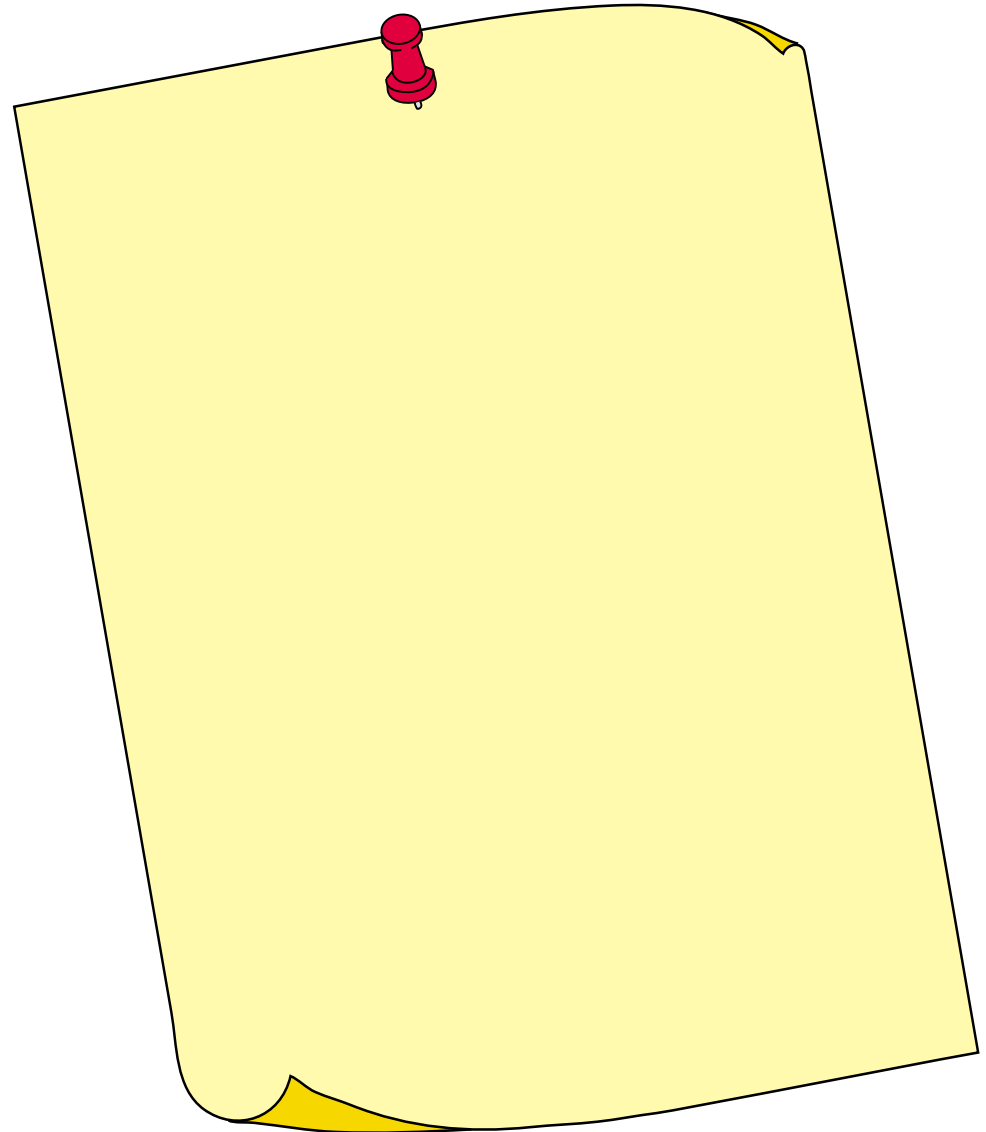


Picture This

Watch for ways your family is trying to draw closer to God this week. Keep the verses from this week's lesson in mind. Have you been studying the Scriptures as a family? Talking about them? Draw a picture below of how you and/or your family has tried to carry out God's plan this week.



A Surprise for Carla

Julie and Carla sat side by side on the front porch steps of Julie's house. Both girls looked very sad. Across the street, a moving van was parked in front of Carla's house.

Carla cried, "I don't want to move to Texas!"

Julie wiped away a tear. She said, "I don't want you to go, either. I'm going to miss you so much."

Carla jumped up. She exclaimed, "I don't see why we have to go live with Grandma. Papa has other brothers and sisters that could go!"

Julie replied, "Your mom told my mom they all refused to do it. Your dad was the only one willing to move."

"He would! Come on. I want to go to the school. We can swing or something."

Julie got up and said, "We better tell our parents."

Carla said, "They're all busy packing stuff. They won't miss us."

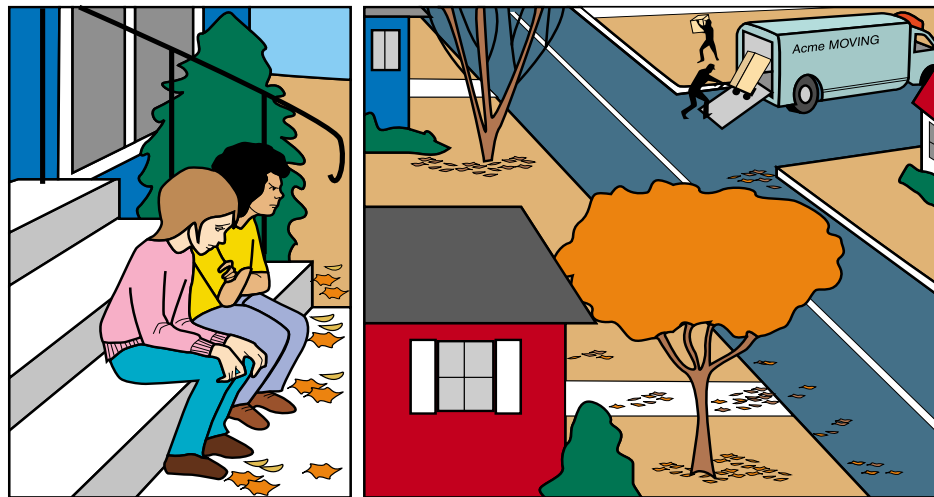
The girls hurried down the street to the school. The colorful leaves that had fallen from the trees swirled around their feet.

Carla reached the swings first. She swung high into the air. Julie climbed into the one beside her and was soon swinging just as high.

Carla suddenly stopped swinging. Julie slowed to sit beside her. Carla said, "I hate West Texas. It's so dry. They don't even have trees!"

Julie laughed. "Sure, they have trees! They're just different from ours."

"Well, they don't change into



colors like ours do!"

Carla got off the swing and walked toward the monkey bars. The girls had not noticed the gray clouds rolling in. A large raindrop fell on Carla's head.

"Uh-oh!" she cried. "Here comes the rain. Let's sit inside the big cement pipe!"

The girls ran to the huge pipe that sat in the middle of the schoolyard, lying on its side. It was dry there.

"Wow," Julie said. "It's really coming down. Glad there's no lightning."

"Me, too!" agreed Carla. "Huh. I bet it never rains in West Texas!"

"Carla, you know it does! They just don't get as much as we do here in Georgia."

They watched the rain a minute. Suddenly Carla declared, "Julie, I'm going to run away."

Julie gasped and said, "You can't do that, Carla. You just can't!"

"I've got \$20 from my birthday. I'll get a ticket on a bus and go a long way off. Papa said moving to Texas was God's plan for us. Well, I don't care! I'm not going!"

Julie scooted closer to Carla. She asked, "Remember when my dad lost his job?"

"Sure, I do. It was really a terrible time for your family."

"Yeah, it was," Julie agreed softly. "My dad went out every day looking for work. Our church helped us out and prayed for us. Your family was great."

"I remember. But your dad did get another job. Papa said it was even better than his old one!"

"It is, and we thank God for it every night. My dad told me that God loves us and has plans for our family, but he says that sometimes God's plans surprise us. They aren't always what we are expecting."

Carla stretched her legs in front of her and shook them. "Moving to Texas was sure a surprise to me!"

"My dad told me we have to trust God to take care of us even when it gets very hard," Julie said. "I know it's not easy."

The rain continued to fall. Carla reached out and let the drops hit her hand. She said, "I know when Juan

got so sick from that bee sting, we were afraid he would die. My little brother is a big pest, but I prayed and prayed he would be okay."

"And he is!" Julie exclaimed. "God does take care of His families, even when He gives us those surprises."

Carla thought for a moment and said, "I guess running away wouldn't be God's plan for my family."

"No, I don't think so," Julie said, smiling. "As much as I wish you could stay, I know your grandmother needs you more than I do. Actually, I kind of envy you."

"Envy me? Why?" asked Carla.

"It's an adventure! You're going to meet new people, go to a new school, and see new things. I'd like to do that!"

Carla gave a small shrug. "It's kind of scary, too. Oh, look. It stopped raining. I guess we better head back."

Crawling out of the cement pipe, Carla said, "You're right about Grandma needing me. I love her very much."

"Our moms said we could visit each other next summer. That will be great!" exclaimed Julie.

"Yes, and we can e-mail each other everyday on our computers!" cried Carla, laughing.

Julie said, "I'll tell you what I did and you tell me what you did!"

"Julie, help me collect some leaves. I want one of every color. But you have to catch it before it hits the ground!"

"What are you going to do with them?" Julie asked

(Continued on page 4)

Story (continued from page 3)

Carla smiled and said, "I'm going to take autumn to West Texas! Hey! I do know one thing that will be in Texas that's in Georgia, too."

"What's that?" Julie called out as she caught a bright red leaf.

"I know God will be there!"

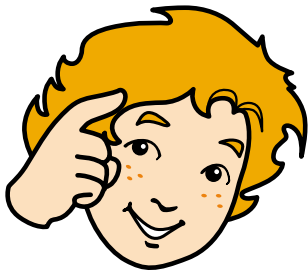
The girls hurried together down the sidewalk, laughing and catching the bright colorful leaves as they floated to the ground.

About the Story

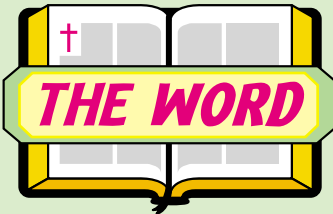
Unscramble the letters to find the word that completes each sentence. Print the correct word in the blank.

1. Carla's _____ (rdmaGna) lived in West Texas.
2. _____ (eJlui) thanked God every night for her father's new job.
3. _____ (lrCaa) decided running away wasn't in God's plan.
4. Carla learned _____ God can have (rusripess) for His families.

Just Do It



A plan is no good if we don't put it into action. Practice the memory verse from this week and make sure you are living it out — forgiving family members as the need arises. Choose one of the other verses from the Bible lesson and memorize it as a family. You will be carrying out God's plan for families to diligently study His Word.



Matthew 6:14-15

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (KJV)

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (NIV)