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Study Guide for “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe”

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The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is a fantasy story written by C.S. Lewis. Lewis wrote this story for his Goddaughter Lucy Barfield. In this study we will journey with the characters and explore some of the biblical themes and references that parallel our own faith stories. While this has been designed as an adult study guide, the questions can easily be adapted for use with children.

This study guide provides a brief introduction to the story, divided by chapters and is followed by a list of questions you can use for discussion. The questions are designed only as a guide to help you engage in the story. Please use only what you feel is appropriate for the group you are leading and feel free to add questions of your own.

Chapters 1 & 2

In the first chapter, we are introduced to four children, Peter, Susan, Lucy and Edmund who are placed in a safe house to be free from the war and destruction that threatens their existence.

Psalm 46 vs. 1-7 "God is our refuge strength, a very present help in trouble..."

How is Professor Kirke's home a refuge for the children?

In a sense, the professor's home provides a refuge or sanctuary for these children. It is in this place of sanctuary that these children, through their adventures in Narnia, learn how to better understand themselves, the world in which they live and powers greater than themselves.

Although we are not living in a time of war in Canada, we do live in a broken world, where injustice, hatred and violence can threaten us, can harm us, can lead us to live in fear.

How do we as the church becoming welcoming places of sanctuary for those who are suffering in our communities?

How do we as Christians provide refuge for others who are suffering?

Matthew 13:3 “And Jesus told them many things in parables.”

Jesus used stories to engage his listeners. It is in seeing ourselves in these stories, we are taught, nurtured, guided and directed to a better understanding of the mystery of a loving and compassionate God who is with us, and to a better understanding of our own calling as children beloved of God.

Lewis referred to his story as a “supposal” – Suppose the God of the Bible were to enter a different world from our own, what would it look like?

How can this story help us to better understand how God works in our world?

How do the characters of the four children, illustrated in their relation to the animals they hope to encounter, reflect our own human characteristics?

Peter imagines eagles, stags and hawks, that reflect an essence of nobility, majesty and strength. Lucy thinks of badgers, generally thought to be friendly, loyal and hard working. Edmund thinks of foxes, beautiful, but sly, not wholly trustworthy and Susan thinks of rabbits, timid, shy and gentle.

Which character best describes you? Why?

The Wardrobe

As the story continues, the four children decide to explore the safe house on a rainy day and discover a room that is empty except for a large wardrobe. Three of the children leave the room and Lucy, the youngest of the children, stays behind, intrigued by this large wardrobe and enters in. Once inside she finds a world called Narnia where it is always winter, but never Christmas. Seeing with the eyes of a child full of awe and wonder she enters and happens upon a creature that is half man and half goat. A Faun whose name is Tumnus, he recognizes this human child as a child of Eve, and invites her to tea.

Unbeknownst to Lucy, the faun has ulterior motives for this invitation and intends to capture her for the evil White Witch who rules this strange land, but after getting to know her decides to let her go free and takes her back to the lamp post that marks the way back through the wardrobe.

How does the Faun (Tumnus) reflect the realities of our broken human condition?

How are we sometimes like Tumnus, in our preconceived notions about others?

How in this part of the story does getting to know Lucy change the Faun's heart?

What does that teach us about how relationship with someone different from ourselves can transform our own preconceived notions and prejudices?

The End and the Beginning

When the children leave the magical world of Narnia, they enter again their own world. Changed from their encounter with the “other” they are called to live out what they have learned in their own lives. We too are called...

The following is the covenant we make in our Baptismal vows. Where in this story can we apply these vows?

- Believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and God the Holy Spirit;
- Continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers;
- Resist evil, and whenever we fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord;
- Proclaim the good news of God in Christ;
- Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves;
- Strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being.

How might we better apply them in our own lives?

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adventure and he says they will return again one day to Narnia, but not through the wardrobe, they will find other ways.

Read Matthew 27:52-53

In these final scenes we see that with Aslan's resurrection, those who were entombed in stone are brought back to life and with his help the final battle with victory over the evil witch. Edmund proves he has been transformed from his misguided ways by acting bravely and intelligently in the battle against the witch. The children then rule as Kings and Queens under Aslan's guidance for many years, yet somehow when they return through the wardrobe, they are children again and time has stood still.

The children are called to be Kings and Queens to rule the land of Narnia. If we as Christians are called to help build God's kingdom here on earth, what might we learn from Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy about how we are to participate?

What does the character of Peter teach us?

What does Susan teach us?

What does Lucy teach us?

What does Edmund teach us?

How can stories help us to relate to and better understand and live out our own faith stories?

Have we ever had the experience of prejudging another only to find that when we get to know them our judgments are changed?

Mark: 10:15 "Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

How are we like Lucy called to become like little children, open to another reality beyond what we know?

Matthew: 22:39 "You shall love your neighbour as yourself".

Tumnus was very different from Lucy. How did she relate to him?

What does that teach us about how we might better relate to others who are different?

How do the symbols from Greek mythology and other pagan religions fit into this story?

What does it have to say to us about inclusivity?

Chapter 3 & 4

When Lucy returns through the wardrobe from the land of Narnia, she is excited and tells her siblings of her adventure. She is surprised to learn that she has only been gone a few seconds and invites her siblings into the wardrobe. This time though it is just a wardrobe and the mystical land of Narnia is nowhere to be seen. When Lucy insists on her

experience, Peter and Susan tolerantly assume she is making up stories, while Edmund taunts and teases her.

On the next rainy day, they are exploring in the house and Lucy decides once again to enter the wardrobe. This time with a heart and intent to make fun of his little sister, Edmund follows her in, and he too enters the strange land of Narnia. But instead of encountering his little sister, he is met by the White Witch, who upon discovering that he is human invites him onto her sled and gives him a wonderful treat called Turkish Delight to gorge himself on. While Edmund is initially afraid of this foreboding queen, he soon forgets those warnings while experiencing the pleasures of the Turkish delight. During his time with the queen, she asks him many questions about his family and learns that his youngest sister has already been to Narnia and met the Faun. The witch then encourages Edmund to bring all of his siblings back to Narnia and promises him more Turkish Delight and the chance to be prince, if he does her bidding. When the evil queen drops Edmund back at the lamppost he meets Lucy there and she tells him again of seeing her friend Tumnus. She tells him of her relief that the evil White Witch didn't harm her friend for his betrayal of her and during their conversation; Edmund makes the connection between the White Witch and the Queen of Narnia with whom he enjoyed the Turkish delight, but decides she is not evil as Lucy suggests. He and Lucy go back through the wardrobe to Peter and Susan.

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God"

How does this part of the story communicate hope for us in times that might seem hopeless?

How does the scene after Aslan's resurrection parallel Easter Morning?

Just as in the risen Christ, the power of sin and death are removed, so too with Aslan in this story.

What does that teach us about our own power over sin and death?

Chapter 16 and 17

After the celebration Lucy and Susan climb on Aslan's back and ride quickly to the witches castle. Aslan breathes on the statues and they immediately come back to life. All of them accompany Aslan to where Peter and Edmund are fighting their battle against the witch. At first, they are loosing badly until Edmund discovers that if he destroys the witch's wand, instead of trying to attack the witch they may have a chance. He does this, but is wounded badly. When Aslan and all of the revived loyal followers arrive they quickly defeat the witch and the children take their rightful place to rule Narnia virtuously for many years. Peter was known for his valor and strength, and was called King Peter the Magnificent. Susan was known for her beauty and grace, and was called Queen Susan the Gentle. Edmund, famous for his intelligence and fairness, was called King Edmund the Just. And Lucy was known as Queen Lucy the Valiant for her brightness and gaiety. One day on a quest for the white stag, they find themselves back at the lamppost and back into the room where the wardrobe stood. They tell professor Kirke of their

As in Jesus journey to his death on the cross, he was accompanied by women. In relating to Susan and Lucy's experience how do we see ourselves walking with Christ in his passion?

What are some of the things Susan and Lucy are feeling? How do we feel when we remember Christ died for us?

Chapter 15 Deeper Magic from before the Dawn of Time

After Aslan is killed the witch and her followers leave to prepare for the final battle. Susan and Lucy spend most of the night crying in agony after witnessing Aslan's death until finally they decide to go to Aslan to try and untie him. They remove his muzzle, but the ropes are too tight. Just then, many mice appear and chew through the ropes. Just as the sun begins to rise Susan and Lucy hear a loud crack. They turn and Aslan is gone and the stone table is broken in two. They wonder if this is more magic to which the risen Aslan replies that indeed it is. This is magic from before the dawn of time that says when an innocent victim gives his life to save another, the spell will be broken and death will be no more. Susan and Lucy ask if Aslan is a ghost and he breaths on them to assure them he is not. Lucy and Susan rejoice and celebrate with Aslan's in his resurrection for a time marveling at the new life springing up around them.

This chapter refers to a magic that is before the dawn of time that the witch does not know about. Almost like the resurrection that was not known or understood until after it happened.

How do the experiences of Lucy and Edmund speak to us of the reality that our own potential for being led to good and evil is determined by the purity of heart or our own intentions?

Luke 12:34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

How does Edmund's attachment to the Turkish Delight contribute to his own denial of the presence of evil?

What does that say to us about our own attachments?

Chapter 5

Our story continues with Lucy telling her Peter and Susan of her latest adventures in Narnia and is excited that now Edmund can back up her story. However, Edmund does not back up her story or tell of his experience in the land of Narnia; instead, he chooses to tell Peter and Susan that he and Lucy were just playing a game.

How does Edmund's pride contribute to him not being able to tell the truth to Peter and Susan?

Are there ways sometimes in which our own pride moves us to deny that we have made a mistake and to perpetuate an untruth?

How can our choices potentially do harm to ourselves and to others?

How was Lucy harmed in this instance?

Not knowing what to believe and fearing for their little sister, Peter and Susan seek the counsel of Professor Kirke who invites them to open themselves to the possibility of another realm of being. He also invites them to hear the stories of their siblings with an ear to what they know about their character.

How does Professor Kirke invite them to be open to the possibility of another world of something more than they can see, touch, smell, taste or hear?

Proverbs 12:17 “Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness speaks deceitfully.”

What can we learn from Edmund and Lucy with regards to how our own integrity and actions can have an effect on how others perceive us?

If we can look at this story as a metaphor for our experience of God, how does Lucy’s experience of having others understand her encounter with “the other” parallel our own faith story? How do we respond to doubt?

How does Edmund’s denial of his experience at this point prevent him from allowing this experience to enter into him and to potentially transform him?

Are their times in our own spiritual lives when our wants and needs, our pride and prejudice

How are we potentially transformed by this sacrifice?

Chapter 14 The Triumph of the Witch

As soon as the witch leaves, Aslan announces that they must move camp away from the stone table. As the day goes on, he becomes more despondent and even intimates to Peter that he may not be present at the final battle. That night, Susan and Lucy worry about Aslan, and go to find him. He is walking away from the camp and they beg to follow. Aslan agrees and the three of them make the journey together, Susan and Lucy comforting Aslan while at the same time drawing strength from being in Aslan’s presence. When they reach the Stone Table, Aslan tells them to leave and Susan and Lucy agree, but hide behind a tree to watch. Hundreds of monstrous creatures surround the Stone Table with the witch at the centre. The witch instructs her minions to tie Aslan up. They shave his mane, muzzle him, kick him, jeer and humiliate him. The witch approaches Aslan with a stone knife and tells him after he is dead she will kill the human children anyway and rule Narnia again forever.

Read Matthew 27:27-31

It seems that Lewis in this part of the story is leading us through the mystery of the cross. How does the sacrifice of Aslan’s life to save Edmund mirror the sacrifice of Christ?

Read Matthew 27:45-51

Chapter 13 Deep Magic from the Dawn of Time

After Peter's battle, Aslan sees another wolf run off and directs his people to follow him. In the meantime, the witch and the dwarf are preparing for battle and decide they need to kill Edmund. Just as they are about to do that Aslan's creatures burst onto the scene and rescue Edmund. A battle ensues but they are unable to find the witch and the dwarf. The next morning, Peter Susan and Lucy discover that Edmund has been rescued and is in the camp. Aslan and Edmund take a long walk together and although they do not talk about what was discussed it is apparent that there is a change in Edmund. A messenger arrives from the witch, wishing to speak with Aslan. They meet and the witch reminds Aslan of the Deep Magic of Narnia, which forfeits all traitors to the witch to be put to death. This deep magic comes from the Emperor beyond the Sea; a higher power than Aslan or the witch. Under these rules, even though Edmund is rescued his life is to be forfeit to the witch because of his betrayal. After a long private conversation, the witch leaves elated and Aslan comes back gloomy. He tells everyone that the witch has renounced her claim on Edmund's life.

How does the witch's character and her power reflect that which is evil in our world and the need for a savior?

How does Aslan respond to Edmund?

As Aslan saved Edmund by his sacrifice, how are we like Edmund in Christ's sacrifice for us?

block us from an experience of God, even when we know God is with us?

This chapter ends with the children trying to avoid a confrontation with the housekeeper who is conducting a tour of the house. In moving from place to place to avoid the tour, they eventually find themselves in the empty room with the wardrobe and all four enter and find themselves in the land of Narnia.

Are there times when we find ourselves pushed to encounter another reality? (the death of a loved one, an illness, an encounter with someone different?)

Chapter 6 In the Forest

Isaiah 11:6 "...And a little child shall lead them."

Together they set out to explore the snowy wood and on the way, Edmund confesses that he has indeed been here before. The others are furious with Edmund. Lucy leads them to Tumnus's house only to find it ransacked with a note to all visitors that Tumnus has been taken away on the charge of treason. Lucy immediately concludes that her friend has suffered because the wicked queen has found out somehow that he helped her and encourages everyone to help her save him. Everyone agrees except for Edmund but he is outvoted and they follow a robin that comes and leads them to the middle of the wood. On the way Edmund suggests to Peter that perhaps, what they are doing is folly after all they do not know which side the robin is on. Even though Peter thinks of robins as friendly and good, Edmund is able to cast doubt in Peter's mind about trusting the robin. He

causes Peter to fear getting lost and not being able to find their way back home.

How is Peter being tested to see if he has learned his lesson from Professor Kirke by examining character and virtue when looking for truth?

Are their times in our own lives when we are invited to apply what we have learned and be led to a deeper trust to what we know to be true in our hearts?

What are some of the logical arguments that can cause us to doubt and fear?

Despite Edmund's efforts to cause doubt, Peter seems to know instinctively what is right and good. How do we determine what is good and evil in our own lives and hearts?

Chapter 7 A Day with the Beavers

While Edmund and Peter are arguing, the robin disappears and the children see a creature in the forest. It is Mr. Beaver who tells them that he is a friend of Tumnus and provides them with a handkerchief that Lucy gave them as proof. The beaver tells them that he was to find them and take them to Aslan who is the only one who can save Tumnus. Not knowing who Aslan was all of the children reacted in their spirits at the mention of his name and they followed Mr. Beaver to his hut and shared a meal with him and Mrs. Beaver.

How did they know to trust Mr. Beaver?

What changes in Edmund when he witnesses the party of animals turned to stone? What does this point towards?

Are their times in our own lives when we have been touched by a compassion for others that has changed us in some way?

Chapter 12 Peter's First Battle

Finally, the group reaches the stone table and the children feel a sense of awe in the presence of Aslan. Aslan explains that they are part of the future of Narnia and it is with them that Narnia will return to its rightful balance. The children then ask Aslan about Edmund and Aslan tells them he can save him but it won't be easy. The children hear Susan's horn as she is being chased up a tree by Maugrim. They all run quickly to help her and Aslan directs Peter to enter into battle to save his sister.

How does Aslan react to Susan's cry for help?

How does Peter's battle and victory change him?

Are there times when we have felt called to overcome frightening challenges? What was our experience? Where did we get our strength and courage? How did it affect us?

is always winter, Christmas finally arrives with the arrival of Aslan. As they journey on to the stone table signs of spring abound and give them a sense of hope and security.

How does the introduction of Christmas parallel the advent of the birth of Christ in our own faith story?

The "father" of Christmas, gifts the children and the beavers with tools, not toys, to equip them relative to their own unique gifts for their journey and the challenges they will ultimately face.

How do the gifts give them what they need to bring birth to what is good, life-giving and true within themselves?

How does this reflect the true spirit of Christmas for us today?

The children are worried about their brother and want to save him, but Mr. Beaver explains that only Aslan can save him now.

How does Aslan, as he comes into clearer focus, relate to the Christ who saves us?

How is Edmund's treatment at the hands of the witch different from the first time? Why?

How does Edmund react to the truth about the witch when he witnesses her cruelty first hand?

Are their times when we need to look for signs to know whom to follow?

How was the spirit of Good working within Peter, Susan and Lucy at the mention of Aslan?

Are their times in our lives when we recognize affective signs of the spirit giving us a mysterious sense of peace?

How was the spirit of good working in Edmund at the mention of Aslan's name?

Are their times in our lives when we recognize the spirit of good confronting us where our own intentions are led by fear and doubt and our spirits are in a state of dis-ease?

Matthew 26:26 “While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said take, eat this is my body which is given for you...”

What does the symbolism in the sharing of the meal teach us about our own faith practices?

What are we invited to?

How do we receive it?

Chapter 8 After the Dinner

After the dinner, Mr. Beaver explains that Tumnus was taken by the secret police that work for the White Witch and probably turned to stone. The children want to save Tumnus, but Mr. Beaver tells them there is nothing they can do but go to Aslan.

They want to know more about Aslan and Mr. Beaver tells them Aslan is the rightful king of Narnia and the white witch has taken over and masquerades as queen. Mr. Beaver says that Aslan is not in Narnia often but when he is, things that are wrong are set right. When Mr. Beaver tells the children that Aslan is a Lion, king of the beasts, the children express fear. Mr. Beaver then tells them that Aslan is good, immortal and has awesome power. Mr. Beaver tells them that they will meet Aslan at the Stone Table and reveals Narnia's prophecy that when four of the human sons and daughters of Adam and Eve are standing in their rightful place goodness and peace will be restored to Narnia. In the midst of their discussion, they discover that Edmund is missing. Mr. Beaver tells them that he has gone to join the white witch. They worry about how much he overheard and decide to begin their journey to meet Aslan by routes that the white witch would not expect them to take.

The symbolism in this chapter is very rich; we can see strong similarities in our own biblical stories, what are some of the biblical stories that come to mind when reading this chapter?

Who does Aslan remind us of?

What does this teach us about who we ought to consult when faced with a problem or difficulty?

It is clear now the children are embarking on a quest to meet God and to work for goodness.

How does their journey parallel our own spiritual journey?

Chapter 9 In the Witches House, the real truth begins to confront Edmund

At this point, the focus of the story turns to Edmund as he makes his way through the ice and snow after he has heard the plans that his siblings have made with the Beavers. Along the way, Edmund works hard to convince himself that the witch is actually on the right side and that everyone else is wrong. Thoughts of the Turkish Delight help him along with thoughts of how he will rule Narnia when he becomes Prince.

What prevents Edmund from seeing the error of his ways as he makes his way to the witch's house?

What are some of the signs on his journey that he is on the wrong path?

How does the error of his ways begin to confront Edmund when he reaches the witch's house?

Are there times in our own lives when we can remember ignoring the signs that we were on the wrong path?

What did we learn from them?

Chapter 11 Aslan is Nearer

On the way to the Stone Table Peter, Susan, Lucy and the Beavers meet up with Santa, in a world that