

REACH WIDE

HOW BIG IS YOUR WORLD?

By Nancy Tichy

Chapter 8: “An Invitation to Win”

It was a sunny, Saturday morning. Jeremy was trying to remember why he volunteered for his community’s annual “Special Olympics” event. All around him were kids milling about in the springtime sunshine. Many of them, like Max’s brother, Kashir, were politely called intellectually disabled. Jeremy didn’t even like to think about how they were often looked down on and called insulting names. Kashir was nervous and self-conscious, jumping up and down while looking off to the stands where spectators were gathering.

“Slow down,” Jeremy urged. “Max will be here any minute. And look, you can see Foziah over there with the twins. And Cara and my folks have arrived, see? Everybody is rooting for you, Kashir.” Kashir nodded and then, abruptly, sat down on the track.

“Come on, Kashir, come on,” Jeremy urged. “Get up. Let’s do some stretches together. There’s a breeze so you won’t sweat up your tee-shirt, and you know you can run, Kashir. I’ve watched you. You can run like the wind!” Still, Kashir refused to move.

What will I do now, Jeremy wondered. He looked over where kids wearing the same color tee-shirt as Kashir’s were lining up in place. “Oh, Heavenly Father,” Jeremy said softly, a hint of desperation in his voice. “Please give Kashir the courage to run.”

“Come on!” Jeremy put his hand on the younger boy’s shoulder. “Let’s watch you win this race.” And with that, Kashir gave a slight shudder and stood to his feet. Without looking back, he ran to join the others just in time to be in position for the starting whistle.

Later, in a nearby park, the Nicholsons and Max’s whole family found a shady spot with a table. Cara and Mom were unpacking the sandwiches and salad while Dad opened the ice chest full of drinks and watermelon slices. Max’s sister, Foziah, was busy with her three-year-old twins, Halifa and Hasin, while

Kashir looked on, proudly wearing his blue ribbon attached to his shirt. Foziah spoke rapid Arabic with Max, frowning slightly, but eventually she joined in as Dad invited everyone to pause briefly for a prayer of thanksgiving. Later, Max, explained to Jeremy that his sister was uneasy about all that the Nicholsons were doing for them. “She thinks you may have bad ideas about us,” Max shared. “Why would someone give so much and not expect something in return?” Dad overheard the boys talking, but he just smiled and joined Mom who had found a tin of home-baked cookies in the bottom of the picnic basket. Later that evening the Nicholsons closed out their eventful Saturday with a prayer time. There were kudos for Jeremy for getting Kashir to run the race. “I was at my wit’s end, actually,” Jeremy admitted. “I had about given up, and then I remembered to pray. I think Jesus must have moved in then and saved the day.”

REACH WIDE: Idea for Engagement

Learn more about inviting and celebrating diversity without leaving your home! Four staff members from KidZ at Heart are waiting to answer your questions about life in their country and ideas about befriending immigrant families:

- [Sher Lama](#) from Nepal
- [Anny Chinchilla](#) from Honduras
- [Derrick Banda](#) from Zambia
- [Mercy Banda](#) from Zambia

As they share the answers to your questions, watch to see how their country is the same as yours or how it is different. Don’t forget to share with them about your country and your culture as well.

RESOURCES

United: Captured by God’s Vision for Diversity, Trillia Newbell (Moody Publishers, 2014); *Creative God, Colorful Us*, Trillia Newbell (Moody Publishers, 2021); *God’s Very Good Idea*, Trillia Newbell (The Good Book Company, 2017); [Full Podcast Conversation with Trillia Newbell](#)



BE CLOSE: How Do You See It, God?

LOOKING FOR THE LONELY

Lonely people are all around us, but many times we don't notice. They are quiet, sometimes off by themselves and not likely to attract attention. So we need to look for them and see them as God sees them. You may find them in line at the grocery store, in the school cafeteria or at the park shooting baskets by themselves. Can you find them? Look for the lonely this month and invite them into conversation. Learn their name and, of course, ask if you can pray with them. Form a plan to pursue friendship with them before you head home. Together with your family, find a way to keep track of the names of those you talk with and make a note about how you can pray for them. Be sure to spend time together praying this month for those you have met, then check back with them to see how they are doing.



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BE CLOSE: How Do You See It, God?

CELEBRATING STAR STUDENTS

Everyone needs encouragement! And kids that struggle with learning difficulties especially need encouragement. Check with your local school to talk with a teacher of students with special needs. Ask how you and your kids could help—assist with a special class party, share a special hobby or skill with the students, or even read an age-appropriate book to them. Once you find the best way to assist, see if you can volunteer each quarter to deepen your friendship.



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LOVE DIFFERENTLY: How Do You See It, God?

A DIFFERENT DAY OF WORSHIP

Visit a church near you that worships differently from you—a small rural church, a large urban church, a different denomination or a church plant in an unusual location. Prepare your kids that there may be differences and there will be similarities, but we can enjoy new experiences as we worship God in different ways. Introduce yourselves to as many people as you can, trying to remember their names. Be prepared to invite another couple or family to have lunch with you, whether it be a picnic lunch or fast food. At lunch, invite them to answer these questions and share your answers as well:

- What do you like most about your church’s worship? Why?
- How does your church help each other?
- How can we pray for you?



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LOVE DIFFERENTLY: How Do You See It, God?

THROUGH GOD'S EYES

Locate a section of a city that you would easily identify as a place very different from where you live. Walk together through the neighborhood, asking God to show you aspects that are different from where you live. List the things that are different. List the things that would make God delighted. Stop and chat with a few people who are out. Ask if they will help you with your family research project by telling you how they came to live in the neighborhood and what they like about it. Ask how you can pray for them.



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