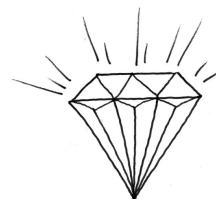


DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH



Theme: *God uses our trials to turn us into diamonds*

Scripture: *James 1:12*

Props: *A piece of coal and a diamond (a diamond ring?)*

I have a mystery item to show you today. (*Show the piece of coal.*) What do you think that is? It's coal.

Coal has a very special ability: although it's a rock, it can burn. And a lot of people around the world use coal to heat their homes. Now, this piece of coal is not very pretty. In fact, it's kind of ugly. But if you applied thousands of pounds of pressure to it and heated it up to 2,000 degrees, do you know what you'd get? One of these: a diamond. (*Show diamond.*)

They don't look very much alike, do they? But they are. A piece of coal has to go through an awful lot to get to be a diamond. And you know what? You and I are pieces of coal that God is turning into diamonds, too. But just like the piece of coal, we have to go through as awful lot to become diamonds.

Let me read you what James says: he says, "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life."

Bad things are going to happen to all of us. But God uses all those trials and hardships to slowly turn us into diamonds. That's why James says we should count it all joy to have trials: because if we stand the test we won't be coal any more – we'll be beautiful diamonds.

That's something we should pray about: Loving Father, we know we'll have many trials in our lives. Help us to endure them all so that one day we can be turned into diamonds and receive the crown of life you have waiting for us. We pray this in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Song: *"Change My Heart, O God"*